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The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer' Purchase Decision in (City of Jeddah) in Saudi Arabia

أثر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على قرار الشراء للمستهلك في مدينة جدة في المملكة
العربية السعودية

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شكر وتقدير

الحمد والشكر لرب العزة والجلالة، المُسير والمُدير. الحمد لله الذي أنعمنا بفضله وتوفيقه. وأكرمنا بإكمالنا لهذه المرحلة العلمية من حياتنا والتي استمرت لقراءة العام، كان لنا بها صولاتٍ وجولات، واجهتنا فيها صعوبات، ولكنها تيسرت بفضل الله ثم بدعم ووقوفه منسوبي جامعة الجميع الذكية الموقرة وانتهاءً بطلبة هذه الدفعة المباركة؛

ولهذا فإنه لا يسعنا إلا أن نقدم شكرنا وتقديرنا للمهندس الدكتور / ناصر المحييميد على فكرة إنشاء جامعتنا جامعة الجميع الذكية، والسعي بشتى الطرق والوسائل لإنجاحها على المستوى المحلي والدولي. كما نتقدم بجزيل الشكر والتقدير لمنسوبي الجامعة على حُسن تعاونهم. ومن هذا المنطلق، لا يسعنا إلا أن نقدم جزيل الشكر والامتنان لكلا من: الدكتور / وليد سليمان والدكتورة / فاطمة مصطفى على دعمهم المستمر طوال هذه المدة.

والشكر أيضاً موصول لكل من ساهم معنا وساعدنا في بناء هذا المخرج البحث وكان لهم الفضل بعد الله في نجاحه وهم الدكتور / طارق السليمان

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Abstract

The research focused on evaluating the impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase decisions in (the City of Jeddah) Saudi Arabia. The study involved primary research methodology through a quantitative approach that was applied through two types of respondents who were engaged in surveys, designed through closed-ended questions to find a precise conclusion for the research problem. Under this approach, 431 consumers who are likely to be impacted by social media marketing and 24 CEOs of the companies applying social media marketing were involved. The survey was conducted through the online channel to make sure that a large sample of respondents is covered in the limited timeline, while authentic data was collected without the chance of researchers' bias. By evaluating the results of the surveys, it was concluded that social media has a significant influence on consumer purchase decisions through product marketing, while WhatsApp, Instagram, and Snapchat were found to be the most preferred channels. The opinions of both; the consumers, as well as the CEOs of the companies, were compared and correlated, which concluded that social media can be used as the most effective source for product marketing to achieve better outcomes, as compared to conventional marketing strategies. Social media has currently become the most preferable source of marketing for companies, which can effectively motivate consumers to make purchase decisions. The owners were also found to have a positive inclination toward using social media channels to promote their products. But most importantly, an advanced level of consumer inclination was found towards finding the products through social media, which approves the impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase decisions. However, the significant importance of the word of mouth in terms of product rating, consumer reviews, and recommendations was identified, which proposes that the companies apply enhanced attention while designing social media strategies.

الخلاصة

ركز البحث على تقييم أثر التسويق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على قرارات الشراء لدى المستهلك في (مدينة جدة) المملكة العربية السعودية. اشتملت الدراسة على منهجية بحث أولية من خلال نهج كمي تم تطبيقه من خلال نوعين من المستجيبين الذين شاركوا في استطلاعات الرأي، والتي تم تصميمها من خلال أسئلة مغلقة لإيجاد نتيجة دقيقة لمشكلة البحث. بموجب هذا النهج، شارك 431 مستهلكًا من المحتمل أن يتأثروا بالتسويق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي و24 رئيسًا تنفيذيًا للشركات التي تطبق التسويق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي. تم إجراء الاستطلاع عبر قنوات وسائل التواصل على الإنترنت للتأكد من تغطية أكبر عينة ممكنة من المستجيبين في الجدول الزمني المحدد للدراسة، تم جمع البيانات الأصلية دون تحيز من الباحثين. من خلال تقييم نتائج الاستطلاعات، توصل البحث إلى أن وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لها تأثير كبير على قرارات شراء المستهلك من خلال تسويق المنتجات، بينما وجد أن WhatsApp وInstagram وSnapchat هي القنوات المفضلة للمستهلكين. تمت مقارنة آراء كلا من المستهلكين، والرؤساء التنفيذيين للشركات، من قبل الباحثين وربطهم ببعض، وتم استنتاج أنه يمكن استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي كمصدر أكثر فاعلية لتسويق المنتجات لتحقيق نتائج أفضل، مقارنة استراتيجيات التسويق التقليدية. حيث أصبحت وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي حاليًا أكثر مصادر التسويق تفضيلاً للشركات، والتي يمكن أن تحفز المستهلكين بشكل فعال على اتخاذ قرارات الشراء. وقد تم العثور أيضًا على ميل إيجابي للمالكون نحو استخدام قنوات التواصل الاجتماعي للترويج لمنتجاتهم. ولكن الأهم من ذلك، أنه تم العثور على مستوى متقدم من ميل المستهلك نحو العثور على المنتجات الاستهلاكية التي يستخدمها من خلال وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، والتي تدعم تأثير التسويق عبر وسائل

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Contents

Acknowledgement.....	4
Abstract	6
Table of tables	11
Table of figures	11
Table of Appendix.....	12
1. Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1. Problem Statement	1
1.2. Research Questions	4
1.2.1. Questions from CEOs:	4
1.2.2. Questions from the consumers:	5
1.3. Aims and objectives.	5
1.4. Significance of study	6
1.5. Organization of study	7
2. Chapter 2: Literature review	8
2.1. Introduction	8
2.2. Discussion	8
2.3. Theoretical framework	22
2.4. Conclusion	26
3. Chapter 3: Methodology.....	27
3.1. Research Design	27
3.1.1. Research philosophy	28
3.1.2. Research approach	29
3.1.3. Research strategy	29
3.1.4. Research Choices	30
3.2. Research techniques	31
3.2.1. Data collection	31

3.2.2.	Data analysis	32
3.2.3.	Sample population and sampling methodology	32
3.3.	Validity & reliability	34
3.4.	Ethical considerations	34
4.	Chapter 4: Results.....	35
4.1.	Consumer survey	35
4.2.	Business owner survey	47
4.3.	Conclusion	51
5.	Chapter 5: Discussion	52
5.1.	Introduction	52
5.2.	Implications of social media marketing on purchase decision	52
5.3.	Preferred social media channels and categories.....	56
5.4.	Motivating features to influence consumer purchase decision.	58
5.5.	The impact of word of mouth	60
6.	Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	62
6.1.	Recommendations	64
6.2.	Limitations of the research	65

Table of tables

Table 1: Age of the participants	35
Table 2: Gender information	36
Table 3: Monthly income of the participants	37
Table 4: Are you an active user of social media?	38
Table 5: If you are an active user of social media, what is the average time you spend on social media per day?	39
Table 6: How many business pages do you check to make sure you chose the right brand to buy from?	40
Table 7: Are you really affected by promotion of products through social media?	41
Table 8: How many people do you know have purchased products after being influenced by social media?	42
Table 9: What social media channel do you use?	43
Table 10: What categories of brands do you follow?	44
Table 11: What social media influences drove you to make purchases through social media?	45

Table of figures

Table 1: Age of the participants	35
Table 2: Gender information	36
Table 3: Monthly income of the participants	37
Table 4: Are you an active user of social media?	38
Table 5: If you are an active user of social media, what is the average time you spend on social media per day?	39
Table 6: How many business pages do you check to make sure you chose the right brand to buy from?	40
Table 7: Are you really affected by promotion of products through social media?	41
Table 8: How many people do you know have purchased products after being influenced by social media?	42
Table 9: What social media channel do you use?	43
Table 10: What categories of brands do you follow?	44
Table 11: What social media influences drove you to make purchases through social media?	45

Table of Appendix

Appendix (1) Previous Research Studies Summary	72
Appendix (2) Research Questionnaire (CEOs)	77
Appendix (3) Research Questionnaire (Consumers)	89
Appendix (4) Letter of Verification & Acceptance of CEOs& Consumers' Questionnaires	86
Appendix (5) Acceptance Letter of Manuscript	88
Appendix (6) Approval on Thesis Abstract by International Marrakesh, Morocco Conference	89
Appendix (7) Abstract in Arabic	90
Appendix (8) Cover in Arabic	91

Chapter 1: Introduction .1

Increasing popularity of social media and ease of accessing Internet technology has significantly reshaped the society over the last few decades. This increased usage is not limited to personal networking and individual interest. The current inclination to utilize social media for improving businesses has opened the avenue for widespread research on the subject. As compared to the previous marketing strategies, the Internet can become an inclusively cost-efficient source of marketing the products. This mode of marketing is not only the least expensive, but also has the capacity to produce the largest coverage towards the customers. Based on these advantages, modern business practices are evolving, and social media is becoming a professional part of marketing strategies.

This evolution demands for conducting research and identify new possibilities to enhance business through social media channels. The current research focuses on evaluating the impact of social media marketing on the consumers and the resultant productivity in the form of increased revenue. Considering the subject, the following problem statement can elucidate various aspects of the subject, which has generated the drive to conduct the current research study.

Problem Statement .1.1

Marketing teams in the companies can face numerous challenges while developing their marketing strategy. In the present day, the exclusive focus of the companies remains on social media marketing, which also involves several challenges to integrate their marketing

strategy well the business practices. Promoting creativity to design competitive messages for brand promotion can be a source to attract and motivate the customers while avoiding creating a monotonous impact of the brand (Dahle and Wæraas, 2020).

These brand promotions need to have the persuading capability to increase and retain the customers. Moreover, the content to be used with the marketing strategies should also be authentic regarding the projections, previous statistics, and customer experience. The use of social media for brand promotion should be able to facilitate price, quality and availability of products to the customers, and the modern customers are highly attracted towards the use of social media (Raji, Rashid, and Ishak, 2019). Therefore, the creative message can motivate and influence the sophisticated customers who might be the regular users of Internet.

Consequently, every time they interact with an advertisement, it may create an impact, if it has not immediately converted into practical sale. The main reason behind the increasing popularity of social media as the marketing channel is that it provides the customers with an opportunity to interact with the brand representatives. This way, they enjoy freedom to demand customization of the products and share their willingness in the process of product development, which depends on the nature of the product (Chatterjee and Kar, 2020).

It has been identified that the modern-day customers are getting increasingly difficult for the marketers due to enhanced awareness. This tendency has increased their desire to share opinions, therefore the marketers need to think about various tactics and strategies to fulfill the expectations of the customers. For this very reason the challenge regarding the need of gradual enhancement of knowledge can also not be neglected for the marketers. Therefore, they need

to have consistent focus on developing their knowledge on social media tactics and utilizing the same for enhancing their business revenue (Dolega, Rowe, and Branagan, 2021).

Considering this problem, a focused research study can be very helpful for the marketers to seek knowledge about various productive tactics and strategies around the subject.

It may be noted that several research studies have been conducted on different aspects of social media and its impacts. A consensus among the professionals has already been developed around the idea that the impact of social media is highly positive on every type of business. However, these kinds of general findings may not be enough since the marketers need to know about various other aspects of social media through multiple facets. In this reference, the problem is concerned with the angle of research; on one side, evaluating the experiences of the business owners, who are using social media marketing tactics can be an option. But on the other side, assessing the consumer preference and perceptions is also important for the business entities (Infante and Mardikaningsih, 2022).

Considering this problem, the current research has applied a multifaceted approach.

Consequently, firstly, it studied the experiences of the CEOs of the companies, who have applied these tactics. And secondly, it explored consumer perception on how social media channels influence purchase decisions and benefit the companies in terms of improved revenue and enhancing the competitive advantage of the businesses. The enhanced use of social media marketing can be an indicator of productive results for influencing the performance of the company (Muniesa & Giménez, 2020). However, Further exploration is required to find implications of social media in the context of sales process, and revenue of the

business. Hence, the proposed research addressed this problem and evaluated the influence of the consumer purchase decisions in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Research Questions .1.2

Based on the identified problem, the research has been designed around the following research questions which have been directed to 2 separate sample respondent groups of businesses CEOs and Consumers:

Questions from CEOs: .1.2.1

A- What are the implications of social media on the average sales process of the businesses in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia?

B- Which Social Media Channel do you use for marketing of the products?

C- What brand categories do your product fall in?

D-What is the increase in average revenue through social media marketing?

E- What are your best social media tactics to gain competitive advantage?

F- Which marketing strategies helped in increasing the revenue through social media?

G- If you have a budget, which marketing channel you will choose from the following?

Face to face campaign ·

Social media platform ·

H- Why will you use your chosen method?

Questions from the consumers: .1.2.2

A- Are you an Active user to the Social Media Platform?

B- how much time do you spend daily on the social media Platform?

C- Which Social media platform you have used to purchase most of your products?

D- Which Brands' Names do you purchase and how often?

E-How many social media channels do you review daily till you purchase your favorite product?

F- Have you been influenced by Social Media promotions?

G- How Many people you know have been impacted by social media promotions and purchased from Social Media Platform?

H- What are the social media Influences which have impacted your purchase decisions?

Aims and objectives. .1.3

The research aims on evaluating the impact of social media marketing on consumers' purchase decisions in (City of Jeddah) in Saudi Arabia. The specific objectives of the research are as follows:

- To identify the implications of social media on every sales process of the businesses in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
- To explore the average revenue increase after using social media marketing? and which platform?
- To assess how social media tactics can gain competitive advantage by implementing efficient approaches for increasing business revenues.
- To find the preferred marketing channel among face-to-face marketing and social media platforms.
- To find the frequency of purchase of the products from social media marketing.
- To identify the most used social media platform for purchase of the products.
- To find the factors behind consumer decision to purchase through social media.
- To assess the common platform and frequency of visits for social media advertisement

Significance of study .1.4

It is an unavoidable fact that the Internet and social media have become an integral and frequent part of the daily routine of individuals from different segments of society. Due to these enhanced tendencies, there is no field of life that does not use the internet. Since, internet is easily accessible through cell phones, the use of social media has become highly common to connect people through different channels. The ease of access has enhanced the popularity of social media; therefore, the tendency of introducing social media in organizational practices has also augmented. Considering these aspects, all the business entities have introduced their social media networking to stay connected with the customers and improve the online presence of the business. As a result, the importance of internet and social media has been

multiplied, as compared to the past. Based on these facts, this study is highly significant to identify all necessary findings from the perspective of business, as well as consumers.

The findings of this research study help the marketers in identifying the impact & implications of social media in modern business practices and sales process. Also, it helps businesses to adopt productive strategies and associate the social media with the sales processes as the concept is under evolution. Considering the above, this research is highly significant to support the process of business, improve brand awareness and product image.

Organization of study .1.5

This study comprises six chapters with the following details:

1st chapter presents introduction, research questions, aims and objectives of the research. The 2nd chapter presents the review of the current literature that has been found through various scholars and different authentic sources. 3rd chapter provides complete methodology of the research including the tools and techniques of data collection and analysis. 4th chapter presents the results achieved with the help of data collection. The 5th chapter presents the discussion on the results while also assessing in the context of the literature review. The last chapter presents conclusion and recommendations based on the results of the research.

Chapter 2: Literature review .2

Introduction .2.1

This chapter presents a review of the current literature that is already available around the subject. It identifies the current research studies regarding the impact of social media marketing on consumer' purchase decision in Jeddah Saudi Arabia. It finds how social media marketing can have an impact on the consumer decision making for purchase. It identifies different themes, which are present in the previous literature sources, and evaluates the current information around the research questions. It also identifies various means of marketing, which are catered through social media channels.

Discussion .2.2

Social media marketing can have a significant impact on consumer purchase decisions in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has one of the highest social media usage rates in the world, with a large percentage of the population using platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. As a result, social media has become an essential channel for businesses to reach out to their customers and promote their products or services (Alfeel and Ansari, 2019). Social media marketing can impact consumer purchase decisions in Saudi Arabia through multiple ways. Increased awareness is also one of those ways. Social media platforms offer businesses the ability to reach a large audience quickly and easily. By leveraging the power of social media, businesses can create brand awareness and increase exposure to potential customers (Alatawy,

2022). Influencer marketing is also popular in KSA, as social media influencers have a significant impact on consumer purchase decisions. Many brands collaborate with influencers to promote their products or services to their followers (Leung, Gu, and Palmatier, 2022).

Influencers have a large following and a strong influence on their audience's purchase decisions. User-generated Content is another important aspect of social media marketing. Social media users in Saudi Arabia are more likely to trust content created by their peers as compared to content created by brands. By encouraging user-generated content, businesses can tap into this trust and leverage it to increase their brand's credibility and influence (Jin, Muqaddam, and Ryu, 2019). Real-time feedback can also be significant for the success of the businesses. Social media provides businesses with real-time feedback from their customers. By monitoring social media channels, businesses can gain insights into their customers' preferences, opinions, and concerns. This information can be used to improve product or services quality, availability, and price. Additionally make more informed business decisions (Ardiansyah and Sarwoko, 2020). Overall, social media marketing can have a significant impact on consumer purchase decisions in Saudi Arabia. By leveraging the power of social media, businesses can increase brand awareness, influence consumer purchase decisions, and gain valuable insights into their customers' preferences and opinions (Alatawy, 2022).

To establish and swap values with consumers, a business must engage in marketing. Such a value is created by attending to customer needs and by using a marketing approach, which is a long-term plan for establishment. An organization cannot produce or trade value with clients without marketing, hence marketing performance is essential to a thriving

business. E-marketing (electronic marketing) or online marketing seems to be a type of marketing that concentrates on leveraging data systems for marketing purposes. E-marketing improves the performance and productivity of conventional marketing activities, and the technology alters a number of marketing methods to produce fresh corporate models that either raise client revenue or add value to the product or service (Jaas, 2022).

Modern businesses must consider social media as a key component of their digital marketing strategy. It refers to a category of media that relies on internet conversion and interactivity between users. People today are multi-taskers as well as devote a large portion of one's waking hours gearing into various media channels. These people, who have been dubbed internet natives, are presumably very at ease browsing the internet, messaging their companions, and possibly even communicating on the mobile device while sipping a cup of coffee at the neighborhood café. Nowadays, marketers may target these internet natives using a wide range of new methods. For most organizations now the decision is not about how to integrate digital platforms as a component of the marketing mix, but rather how much to employ (Ansari et al., 2019).

The study of marketing on digital networking has become an extremely important topic. The preceding statistics were created by research by DEI Global (2008), according to which, 70% of buyers used social media channels to find data; 49% of these buyers made a buying decision based on the data they found there; 60% said they might use social networking sites to share details online; and 45% of customers who used social media channels to find details engaged in word-of-mouth marketing. According to the report's

findings, the businesses who do not use social media in their online marketing strategies are losing out on a chance to connect with customers (Alfeel and Ansari, 2019). One consumer is valued a lot greater than what they initially spend due to the word of mouth or data sharing among customers via social networking sites. Businesses should really consider the worth of their clients, as well as how social media affects them (Adamopoulos, Ghose, Todri, 2018). This kind of advertising is distinct because the information is created as a discussion rather than a business monologue, as it would be through a news publication perhaps most company online sites. People who participated can upload information, consult, modify, and rate one another's content, and occasionally these connections are established on such dialogues and proceed offline (Alfeel and Ansari, 2019).

Social media marketing unquestionably leverages the advantages of social advertisements by boosting brand recognition, company reputation, and consumer engagement. The purpose of the study is to determine how social media affects urban consumers' purchasing decisions. There is no question that more online connections than ever have made it possible for customers and companies to interact with one another for the 1st time. After China, India is now the country with the most internet users. Organizations are now taking into account social media's importance in influencing consumer impression, elevating brand value, and influencing purchasing decisions as a result of its increased use. Companies increasingly understand that they may utilize social media strategically to gain a competitive edge over rivals who do not. The literature evaluation and data research on its use and consumers' impression of it can be utilized to discover the best techniques for enhancing client

involvement through social networking and to examine the influence of social media upon customer purchasing behavior (Adamopoulos, Ghose, and Todri, 2018).

It is advised that businesses recognize the critical role that social media plays in marketing and selling their products because it is the most effective technique to draw customers to goods and services. The advertising strategies need to be created in a manner that would appeal to customers of all ages and socioeconomic classes. Bloggers on social media have a beneficial effect on how shoppers decide which products to buy. Because it has the power to alter consumers' perceptions and mindsets, content featuring deals, offers, and celebrities is more appealing to customers. Customers who are affected by social media become more likely to spend four times as much as they would otherwise, and people are so drawn to the goods that they use social platforms to make their purchases within a single day. Social media is efficient and affordable, because it allows for direct customer connection (Kaplan and Mazurek, 2018).

Social media material value has a significant impact, thus it ought to be meaningful to the audience. Social media advertising does not only focus on raising customer perception or promoting the brand itself. It goes beyond that, preserving existing relationships and forging new ones between prospective buyers and businesses. The customer is now the leader, since they have access to all the data about a good or service by just conversing with one another. Thus, businesses and managers should be extremely cautious about spreading negative information on social media since it might enable the company's reputation to somehow be destroyed. Even many customers concur that they can express their opinions and

communicate with businesses and other customers more efficiently through social media.

There is no doubt that social media has reduced the distance between customers and brands.

Considering this, businesses are now exerting every effort to foster a sense of community among customers by enabling them to share their thoughts, ideas, and criticism (Bazi, Filieri, and Gorton, 2020).

The businesses which are adopting an integrated strategic plan with the goal of social media platforms are turning out to be highly effective at attracting, keeping, and impacting customers. The methods that shaped consumers' perspectives and their willingness to purchase are some of the factors that can alter their opinion of a company and their decision to make a purchase. These tactics require a lot of upkeep, and businesses implementing them must be prepared to mend all marketing services to keep their current clientele (Varghese and Agrawal, 2021).

The development of social networking and Web 2.0 technologies has significantly altered people's lives by fostering new forms of communication, teamwork, as well as social interaction. Furthermore, there seems to be a noticeable trend towards internet purchases because of the rising use of smartphones, which offers the pleasure and comfort of delivery service as well as time saving advantages. Social networking services SNSs are utilized as online marketplaces in the recently emerging e-commerce subset known as social commerce (s-commerce). The advent of s-commerce, which combines social networking sites and e-commerce, has altered the rules of the field for both consumers and sellers.

(Customers are now will-fully participating in the entire shopping process, from researching products and evaluating costs to buying things as well as influencing one another's choices with suggestions and opinions, all while taking advantage of the social closeness and togetherness that these networks offer. On the other hand, it is growing increasingly frequent to see corporations and commercial companies creating their own profiles on SNSs like Facebook, Twitter, as well as Instagram, that gives them the chance to advertise their goods and services and build direct lines of communication with their target audiences. According to a latest report, there are over 25 million business accounts on Instagram.

One of the most widely used social media sites for exchanging visual content is Instagram. During 2019, there were one billion regular members per month, which significantly altered how people exchange their images and clips. On average, millennials and post-millennial groups make up most Instagram consumers. Instagram has seen an increase in s-commerce use because of its rising popularity, particularly in Arab nations (Juju, Arizal, and Waldelmi, 2023). Due to Northwestern University in Qatar, across Saudi Arabia or other Arab nations like Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates, Instagram consumption has surpassed Twitter utilization. Also, a study done recently revealed that Instagram seems to be the social media platform which the Middle East's e-commerce sector uses the most.

Furthermore, more than 30 % of Instagram consumers have bought something using their accounts (Alotaibi, Alkhathlan, and Alzeer, 2019). A high proportion of individuals are engaged in commerce as well as fashion, but there aren't many investigations that specifically look at Instagram as a medium for s-commerce within research right now (Alatawy, 2022).

Saudi Arabia has seen a sharp increase in s-commerce consumption especially if it is combined by social media advertising in past years. Around 42% of Saudi Arabian internet buyers have made purchases from social networking sites, expressing a great deal of comfort in being able to quickly obtain suggestions and stories from other customers. Even though Saudis are amongst the most frequent Instagram consumers, little study has been done on its impact on the consumers' purchase behavior. As a result, this study provides insight into how widely used Instagram is as a medium for online shopping in Saudi Arabia and specifically in the city of Jeddah. The goal of the research is to learn more about Saudi customers' purchase processes and the variables that influence them. (Juju, Arizal, and Waldelmi, 2023). SMIs, KOLs, consumer response, and Maroof as just a 3rd party are among these elements. 64% of Saudi consumers who search online to buy goods or services make a transaction and are influenced by social media advertising. With 13 million regular users during 2018, Saudi Arabia continues to have the highest Middle Eastern user base on Instagram. Yet, a few research have investigated the uptake of s-commerce in the nation (Alotaibi, Alkhatlan, and Alzeer, 2019).

Maroof is an online service that seeks to develop Saudi Arabia's e-commerce market and depend heavily on Social Media Advertising to achieve maximum reach of the consumers. The system's administrator as well as creator, Thiqah Business Services, worked with the Department of Trade and Investment to construct it. Maroof serves as a network that makes it easier to assess Saudi Arabian internet shops, which is advantageous to both customers and sellers. The internet merchants who have signed up with Maroof may quickly reach more

clients. They can publish their social media profiles and contact details for their shops via the Maroof platform. Customers can conduct a simple and reliable search for goods and services utilizing Maroof, this can prove to be very beneficial for the social media marketplace in Saudi Arabia (Alotaibi, Alkhathlan, and Alzeer, 2019).

Social media E-commerce is becoming increasingly popular in Saudi Arabia especially if it is combined with Social Media Advertising. This trend is driven by the fact that Saudi Arabia has one of the highest social media usage rates in the world, with around 22 million active social media users, according to a 2021 report by Hootsuite. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter are widely used by businesses in Saudi Arabia to reach and as well as engage with customers. Instagram seems to be very popular among businesses and consumers alike, with many businesses setting up their own Instagram shops to sell products directly to customers (Alfeel and Ansari, 2019). With an emphasis on consumer behavior and/or business challenges, the development and execution of e-commerce in industrialized and emerging nations have been closely researched. Unfortunately, very little has been identified about just how Saudi Arabia's e-commerce has developed. That's why so many E-Commerce websites have utilized different Social Media Advertising Platforms to strengthen their sales revenues and attract a wide range of consumers. Several research that focused on either enterprises or customers have highlighted variables that inspire or impede the expansion with E-commerce in Saudi Arabia. E-commerce is essential for many firms to survive in cutthroat industries, and it also plays a significant role in economic expansion (Alzahrani, 2019). As per an analysis done by Payfort, e-commerce transaction development within the Middle East as well as North Africa (MENA) was 45 % during 2014, and increase is predicted to

reach roughly 52 % by 2020. Throughout 2014, the MENA market had a total worth of roughly \$7 billion (Makki and Chang, 2015).

To reach 95% of the population, Saudi Arabia's smartphone usage ratio has also impressively increased to 1.8. Due to the widespread use of smartphones, businesses have invested heavily in different strategies of social media advertising platforms and tackling various & attractive brand messages to gain the maximum reach of the consumers. Consequently, Social Media usage has dramatically increased across Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is ranked first among nations in the area as well as the globe for social media consumption, according to statistical data and material visualizations (Mathapati, 2019). There is a room for additional research because there hasn't been enough current issues analysis done to examine E-commerce combined with Social Media Advertising Platforms throughout Saudi Arabia, and because there are not many data reports available. There very well may be fewer prevalent factors today than were previously documented by earlier studies. For further research, some additional aspects like social media and cell phone activity could be considered. Mobile internet usage surpassed desktop PCs for the 1st time yet during 2014 in several markets, such as Saudi Arabia, China, as well as India. Further investigation into smartphones and social media platforms may yield more trustworthy conclusions (Makki and Chang, 2015).

There are several factors driving the growth of social media Advertising Platforms in Saudi Arabia, including the country's high internet penetration rate, the popularity of social media platforms, and the rise of e-commerce. In addition, promoting products on different

Social Media Platforms offers several advantages for businesses, including lower costs, wider reach, and more direct customer engagement. However, social media Advertising in Saudi Arabia is not without challenges. For example, there are some concerns about the quality of products and their availability. (Al-Nasser, and Mahomed, 2020). Overall, Social Media Advertising Platforms is a rapidly growing trend in Saudi Arabia, with businesses using social media platforms to reach and engage with customers in new and innovative ways. As technology continues to evolve, it is likely that social media commerce will become an increasingly important part of the Saudi Arabian economy (Alotaibi, Alkhathlan, and Alzeer, 2019).

Advertising on social media in Saudi Arabia seems to be a growing trend as more and more businesses recognize the potential of reaching their target audience through social media platforms. The Saudi Arabia General Authority for Audiovisual Media (GCAM) regulates advertising on social media in the country. The regulations aim to ensure that advertising is truthful, legal, and respectful of cultural and religious values. Popular social media platforms in Saudi Arabia include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat (Al-Khamees, Yecies, and Moore, 2022). Each platform has its own advertising options and targeting features that businesses can use to reach their intended audience. Targeting options in social media advertising in Saudi Arabia include demographics such as age, gender, location, and interests. Some platforms also offer advanced targeting options, such as targeting by job, title, or industry.

Social media advertising content in Saudi Arabia should comply with Islamic values, culture, and traditions. It should also be in Arabic, as this is the primary language spoken in the country. Businesses advertising on social media in Saudi Arabia can pay for their ads through credit cards or bank transfers. Some platforms also offer payment options through mobile payment services. Overall, advertising on social media in Saudi Arabia is an effective way for businesses to reach their target audience, but they need to comply with the country's regulations and cultural sensitivities to avoid any issues (Makki and Chang, 2015).

Saudi Arabia has seen a significant growth in digital media consumption and adoption in recent years, driven by a young and tech-savvy population, increasing internet penetration, and government initiatives to promote a knowledge-based economy. Here are some key facts about digital media in Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia has one of the highest rates of internet penetration in the region, with over 70% of the population using the internet. This has led to an increase in online activities such as social media usage, online shopping, and digital entertainment. Social media is very popular in Saudi Arabia, with platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat being widely used. The Saudi government has also launched its own social media platform, called Tawki, to promote local content and reduce reliance on foreign social media sites (Mabkhot, Isa, and Mabkhot, 2022).

Mobile phones are the most common device used to access the internet in Saudi Arabia, with over 80% of internet users accessing the web via their mobile phones. This has led to a surge in mobile app usage, particularly in the areas of social media, gaming, and e-commerce. Online shopping is growing in popularity in Saudi Arabia, with several local and

international e-commerce sites operating in the country (Mathapati, 2019). The government has also introduced initiatives to support the growth of e-commerce, such as the launch of an online payment platform, called Mada. Saudi Arabia has a thriving digital entertainment industry, with local and international companies producing and distributing digital content such as movies, TV shows, and music. The government has also launched several initiatives to promote the development of the local digital content industry, including the establishment of the Saudi Film Council. Overall, the digital media landscape in Saudi Arabia is rapidly evolving, with a growing number of opportunities for businesses and individuals to engage with online audiences. However, there are also challenges, such as government censorship and restrictions on free speech, that can impact the growth and development of the digital media industry in the country (Ali and Salameh, 2023).

Lately, the globe has grown highly digitalized, which has influenced marketing as well as enterprises; consequently, organizations are racing to improve their digital platforms to stay innovative and thriving. For instance, several businesses have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic's impacts on the market, which have caused significant market distortion. Due to their inadequate capacity to adjust to unforeseen obstacles in the marketplace, numerous of them have perished. Somehow, several of them adopted tactics that work with the recent developments in the globe. The epidemic pushed this transformation even more and influenced how firms sell their products (Alessa et al., 2021).

Social media use has increased dramatically in Saudi Arabia since COVID-19. Social networking sites let participants at COVID-19 stay in contact with their families and

acquaintances, browse online stores, and purchase and sell products and services. Online marketing has become more popular recently, particularly amid the COVID-19 outbreak, on social networking sites. This advertising uses a variety of tactics, such as utilizing influencers to promote corporate brands on their personal social media pages. The fact that these influencers frequently have millions of following makes this beneficial. The major responsibility of an influencer is to capitalize on this by pushing a specific product or service (Mohammed and Ferraris, 2021).

Businesses across the globe underwent quick and significant modifications as a consequence of the COVID-19 quarantine due to the outbreak and its impacts. Many people began investing time on internet platforms, particularly social media, because of the confinement at home. The pandemic triggered a sharp increase in internet sales. To make internet shopping more convenient, the corporate market needs to speed up its digitalization. In summary, the problems brought on by COVID-19 have speed up the development of digital advertising and internet commerce (Othman et al., 2022). Everyone now possesses a mobile device or computer and seems to possess an internet connection, allowing them to regularly reach the social networking sites people desire. Social networking sites have worked deep to become essential marketing channels. This transition and the involvement of social media advertising have been seen to be impactful in the latest generations in KSA. Brand entrepreneurs have found that social media platforms work well for their marketing initiatives to raise the market of their businesses (Mabkhot, Isa, and Mabkhot, 2022).

Theoretical framework .2.3

To evaluate the impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase decisions, Word of Mouth (WoM) is the most appropriate theoretical framework, which can be described as a procedure of conveying the information from a person to another person through oral communication (Huete-Alcocer, 2017). As for literal meaning these are just some words which are said by someone for people to listen. Basic example of word of mouth can be a person telling a story about an actual event happened in real life this us help to persuade the people as they are communicating in real.

WOM can be used in marketing as well, as mentioned by Chen, Luo, and Wang (2017), and it takes place when a buyer's interest in any product or service produced by a company is represented in their communication. It has a great effect upon the buyers and sellers as it is a sort of guarantee given by someone else that may provide assurance to them. Significantly it is a free advertising that is given through the customer experience usually a thing, which goes above their expectation. Its purpose in relation to business can be for advertising and promotion. It helps a business to increase its reach in new audiences and build brand reputation. This is a distinct type of organic means for marketing by utilizing this technique. It may attract consumers and increase the profitability rate while also improving connections with existing patrons. The usage of WOM in marketing can be through giving recommendations, sharing reviews, communicating with friends & family, and leaving reviews online and directly as well.

In the current generation it can be stated that social media has quite a great impact upon the lives of the people especially youth, as mentioned by Adamopoulos, Ghose, and Todri, (2018). People use social media as a medium to improve their connections and widen their network all over the world. Social media can also help to build roots in the economy and market. Word of mouth is used in the business, and it can take place through social media as well and play a significant role in the promotion of business and its marketing. As WOM has a significant and effective impact in making the opinion of the consumers about any business, as a recommendation given by some reliable or trusted source is helpful to bring trust in them, which might promote them to actively participate in purchase activities.

There are various online mediums that help to promote a business by using word of mouth theory as suggested by Infante and Mardikaningsih, (2022). Some of the significant media are Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, and more other applications. Mostly all the people in the present era are on all these applications on social media. People use these sides and build relations with all the people around the world. The businesses use these channels to advertise and launch their company websites online. The people purchase goods & services from the business through the online websites and give online reviews and recommendations, which may help together more customers. Customers buy products from these businesses, and they become a source of recommendation for other people. Social media marketing helps to enhance the image of a business by improving reliability which may increase the brand reputation. They provide recommendations, reviews, and suggestions to other people connected with them by online networks, as well as real life

connections. This type of persuasion and assurance is quite strong for the consumers, and they may trust the businesses while making purchase decisions (Srivastava and Sharma, 2017).

WOM can influence in two ways, positive word of mouth and a negative word of mouth. Positive WOM can be described as a positive review or recommendation given about the product that the buyer purchased if they are satisfied with their purchase. Similarly, a negative WOM can be recognized as the negative suggestions and reviews given about the product or service they purchased if the buyer did not meet his requirements related to the purchase decision. These can have positive effects as well as adverse impacts on the future of any business as it can decide whether the people would like to get services and products from the respective business or not. For example, when a person decides to buy anything from an online business website, they usually check the reviews and recommendations of the company and according to it, they decide whether to make a purchase or not and this depends upon the positive or negative WOM (Talwar et al., 2021).

The digital and online marketing permits the consumers to come across shopping experiences. An observation is that the consumers are interested in research about new products along with their reviews & recommendations by the public. Online marketing and promotion can be modified to provide the customers with efficient products and services which may have crucial impact upon the consumer purchase decision. Social media influencers can also play a significant role in promotion of businesses and, further influence a consumer's purchase decision. Social media has a great share in influencing power towards the businesses and greatly enhances recognition while driving sales & buyer trust through online promotion.

The buyers are more towards researching about the firm they are purchasing from, they try to get into the roots of a business (Chaffey and Smith, 2022).

The buyers are more inclined towards getting interaction from a consumer and the role of social media is quite strong to increase its impact on the consumer purchase decisions as suggested by Talwar et al., (2021). As it is a dynamic source and provides social proof which is significant consideration when making decisions. Social media overall is a strong platform which provides complete assurance and trust to the consumers by providing online proofs, which may help them to make purchase decisions efficiently. Some of the major benefits of social media marketing in relation to purchase decisions can be that social media helps to create a global reach along with international marketing. Local reach promoting traditional marketing lowers the cost. Easier to learn effective targeting has various strategies for business through multiple types of content and lastly increased engagement. Online marketing has a wide scope in relation to business promotion and it also has positive impact upon the customers in accordance with their purchase decisions. This may help to maximize the profit for most of the businesses and help them to stabilize their future in the market.

Conclusion .2.4

The chapter concludes with the finding that social media marketing can have a significantly positive impact on consumer purchase decisions in Saudi Arabia. It was also found that word of mouth (WoM) is a significant factor that can influence consumer decision making through social media. Consequently, it was noted that it will also help the businesses to enhance their revenue through social media marketing. It has been noted that social media has great influencing power over the consumers' purchase decision for the businesses and greatly enhances recognition, while driving sales & buyer trust through online promotion. Further research involving the consumers, as well as the business owners, can help in developing detailed findings in this regard.

Chapter 3: Methodology .3

Research Design .3.1

The current research design has been developed around the context of the country that is KSA, and the city of Jeddah. Therefore, conducting primary research is the most appropriate choice of method for finding the answers to the research question. It is also important because a knowledge gap was noted regarding the availability of literature in the geographic context. Resultantly, opting for primary research can help in getting the required information directly from the target population (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). The study adopted quantitative methodology to find precise information related to the impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase decisions in Jeddah KSA. Incorporating the quantitative approach assisted in collection of accurate and concise quantifiable information, which covered the knowledge precisely from the sample population. This way, accurate and reliable answers to the research question were found to meet the objectives of this research (Queirós, Faria, and Almeida, 2017). The current research applied inductive design, which aimed on conducting the study through identification of research problems and questions for finding the conclusion with the help of collected data. Moreover, positivism was chosen as the applicable research philosophy, since it is appropriate for quantitative research (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020). For this purpose, survey strategy was applied to questionnaires with close ended questions from target respondent groups.

Research philosophy .3.1.1

Concerning the research philosophy for this study, positivism was chosen as the most appropriate idea since this philosophy is suitable for applying empirical results (Bryman, 2016). Therefore, positivism can be helpful to generate statistical evidence regarding the impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase decisions. Impact of social media marketing is an intangible variable; therefore, application of positivism while applying quantitative approach through empirical information can assist in reaching tangible evidence to assist the businesses to take informed decisions for social media marketing. The use of this philosophy is quite justifiable because it aims on identification of the impact of social media marketing, which is comparatively a different approach, as compared to conventional marketing. Other approaches such as pragmatism or realism have been rejected, as these would be more applicable on broader investigation around the communities or scientific testing (Harney, et al., 2016).

Research approach .3.1.2

To conduct this thesis, an inductive approach has been applied to perform exploration according to the research problem and questions. By applying the inductive design, the study investigated the premise that aimed on investigating different aspects of social media marketing in KSA. The focus of this approach is to find answers for the research question and reach a reliable conclusion. Data collection has been done through survey questionnaires built upon the research question. The responses were later analyzed to find the conclusion; resultantly, trustworthy understanding could be developed regarding the impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase decisions in KSA. To adopt the inductive approach for study, theoretical findings were utilized to develop an idea about the subject, instead of testing a hypothesis developed in advance (Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis, 2009).

Research strategy .3.1.3

For this research, survey methodology was applied as the key research strategy for data collection from target respondents. The foundation of the survey questionnaire was from the research question and sub questions, while the objectives of the research were used as the guiding principle. Survey questionnaires in quantitative design generated the responses from the customers and the CEOs of different companies who apply social media marketing strategy. This survey provided quantified results directly from the target population, which offered explicit picture regarding the research question. It was noted that applying quantitative survey as the key strategy was suitable for incorporating positivist approach, because it was

based on the empirical findings, as well as statistical evidence, which was mandatory for positivism (Bryman, 2015).

The process of designing the questionnaire was precisely according to the research objectives, for which, sub-questions were the source of developing the questions from respondents. Therefore, it was effective for obtaining anticipated information (Rice, et al., 2017)

Research Choices .3.1.4

The research has applied a single methodology, based on which quantitative data was collected through survey. Basic objective of adopting this choice is to get comprehensive and accurate findings through research. Therefore, primary data collection was conducted for gathering information with direct involvement of the customers and the CEOs of companies in Jeddah city on their experiences. Consequently, the obtained data set generated statistical information around various aspects of the research questions. The method has been found effective, since it can be analyzed to find conclusions regarding the subjects which cannot be predicted or assumed without statistical analysis, as mentioned by Basias and Pollalis (2018). Application of quantitative strategy can assist in finding precise results within the limited timelines, as collection and analysis of the response is possible in lesser time. Consequently, this methodology can be chosen as the best choice for academic research, and the numerical results can exclude the chance of researchers' bias, that may not take place in statistical analysis.

Research techniques .3.2

Data collection .3.2.1

To data collection, online survey methodology has been adopted. A quantitative survey questionnaire comprising close-ended questions was uploaded on the platform. This method assisted in collecting data online within a limited time frame. Further to this, the entire target population was conveniently accessed without needing to go to everyone. For this survey, two separate samples of target population were chosen: one comprising the customers, and the other one comprising the CEOs of different companies. On uploading the survey at online platform, a link was generated, which was shared with the potential respondents to invite them for participation. The questionnaires comprised two sections, demographic information and questions related to research questions. All the questions comprised multiple choices to choose from, to generate quantitative results based on the frequency of each answer.

The questionnaires (Appendix 1 & 2) were used to collect data through online channels without any complexity. Resultantly, it enabled the researcher to reach out to a wide range of survey participants without the need of physically accessing them in person. This method was not only time efficient, but also cost effective since it did not require too many resources. Also, collecting data from the respondents was easy because of the online data collection system.

The collected quantitative data was available to collect from the website for quantitative analysis. Resultantly, precise details in quantified form were obtained regarding each indicator, evaluated through the questionnaire.

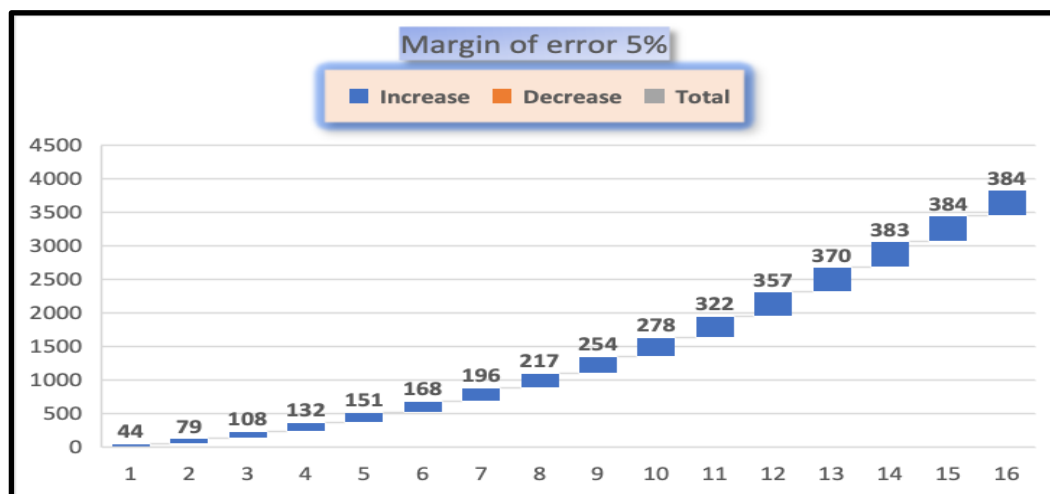
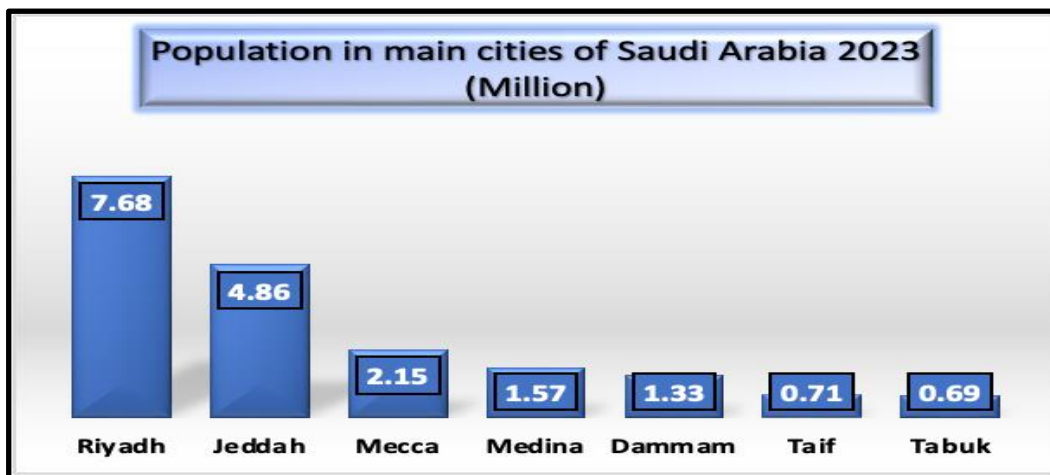
Data analysis .3.2.2

To find the precise understanding on the impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase decision making, quantitative data was analyzed. After completion of data collection through online platform, statistical data was obtained and analyzed to find frequency, mean, and percentage in data. Based on this analysis, conclusions regarding the impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase decisions were found. The online platform provided complete numeric information for each question, along with the visual representation in terms of graphs and charts. Further comparison was made within the same respondent group, as well as with the results of the other group to find the answers through the research question.

Sample population and sampling methodology .3.2.3

For this research, two groups of sample population were identified. The first group comprised the CEOs of the companies in Jeddah who adopt social media marketing strategy to promote their products and attract the customers. The second group comprised customers, who buy products after getting information through social media. Both sample populations were identified from within KSA, Jeddah city, which is the target region of the research. The sample frame includes the customers who are involved with purchase of goods after seeking awareness from social media. The other sample frame only included CEOs of related business companies, which are applying social media marketing in their marketing strategies. For this purpose, systematic random sampling methodology has been applied for identification of the

participants for the research. Based on Jeddah's population of 4.86 million, the simple size/ 5% margin of error should be 384, however 431 respondents were covered, in addition to the participation of 24 CEOs of big companies in Jeddah city. The respondents were targeted through social media by sharing the link of the online survey.



Validity & reliability .3.3

While conducting research, assurance of validity & reliability is a significant requirement for producing a trustworthy study. In this reference, validity of research is based on its coherence with the design, technique, and research findings. Therefore, valid research demonstrates a clear connection between all these components from start till end (Hair et al., 2015). Similarly, research reliability indicates consistency in findings, which have been obtained through data collection. Therefore, research can be considered reliable if its findings remain consistent even if the process of data collection is repeated or replicated (Leung, 2015). It may be noted that the use of online platforms is more appropriate to maintain validity and reliability of findings, since it does not allow any kind of manipulation of the system.

Ethical considerations .3.4

To conduct the research, ethical approval has been sought from the university according to the due procedure. Questionnaires have been submitted to an external consulting company seeking approval for ethics. The questionnaires comprise informed consent from the participants according to which, they were offered freedom to quit the survey at any point during submission of responses. No specific personal information was collected; resultantly, anonymity and confidentiality of responses from the respondents was ensured considering the ethical obligation (Burr and Gibson, 2018).

Chapter 4: Results .4

To conduct the research on the impact of social media marketing on consumers' purchase decisions in (City of Jeddah) in Saudi Arabia, a sample of 431 respondents was surveyed using a quantitative questionnaire. Another sample of 24 participants was surveyed through a separate quantitative questionnaire, who were the owners of different companies which use social media channels for marketing of their products. The details of the results are as follows:

Consumer survey .4.1

The demographic information of the research participants is as follows:

Age in years	
Less than 18	6
From 18 to less than 22	33
From 22 less than 27	123
From 27 to 33 years	96
More than 33	173

Table 1: Age of the participants

Most of the respondents were between 22 and 33 years of age, which shows that all of them belong to a mature age category.

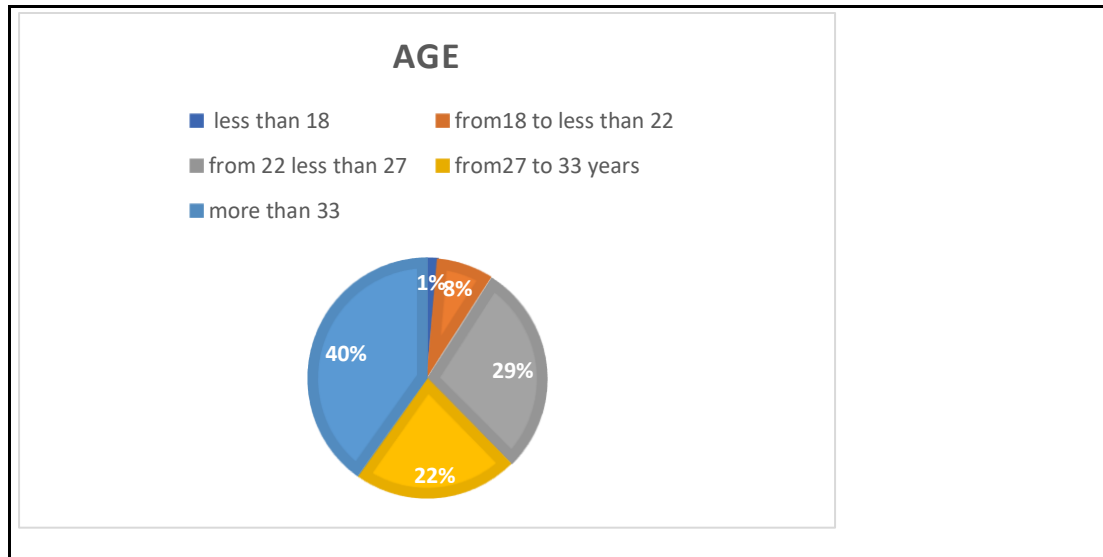


Figure 1: Age of the participants

Gender	
Female	225
Male	206

Table 2: Gender information

Among the total participants of the survey, 52% were females, whereas 48% participants were males.

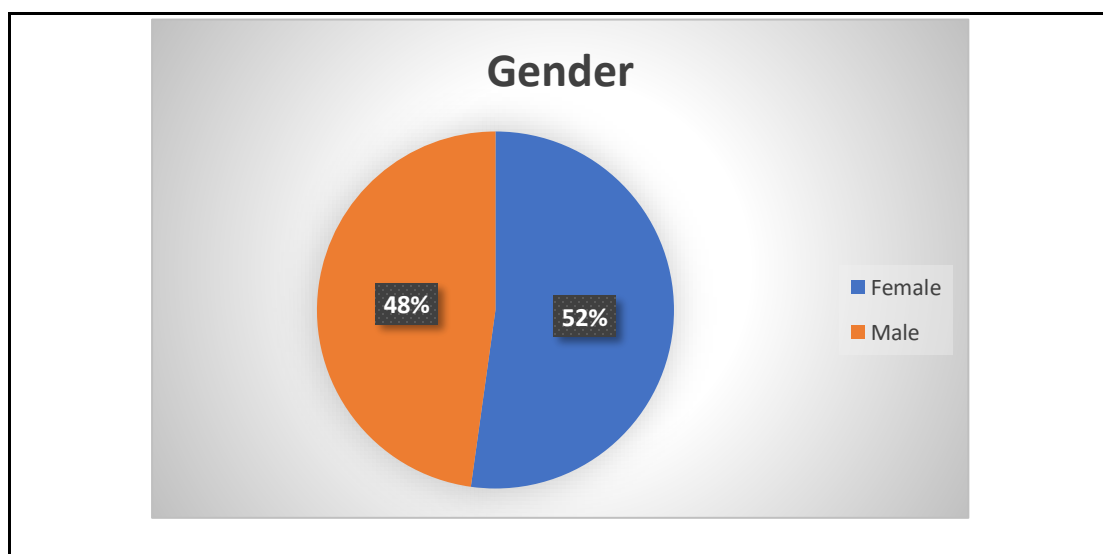


Figure 2: Gender information

Monthly income	
Less than 5000 Sar	177
From 5001 Sar to less than 8000 Sar	66
From 8001 to 12000	81
From 12001 to 20000 Sar	66
More than 20001	39

Table 3: Monthly income of the participants

The highest proportion of respondents were earning less than 5000 Sar, whereas the next category of the respondents earned between 8001-12000 Sar. The proportion of the respondents earning more than 20,000 Sar was very low.

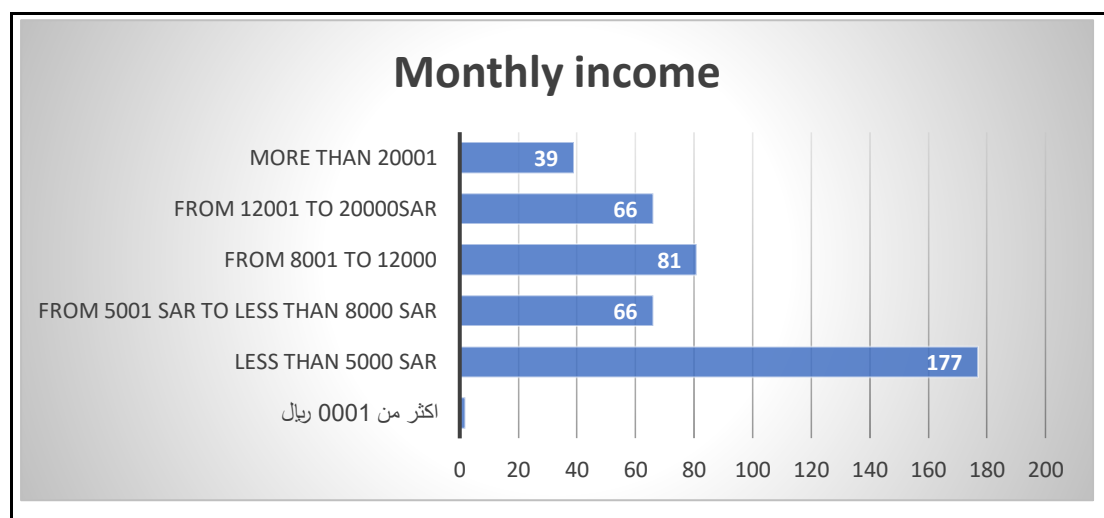


Figure 3: Monthly income of the participants

Are you an active user of social media?	
Yes	428
No	3

Table 4: Are you an active user of social media?

Among the respondents for this survey, only 1% were individuals, who were not the active users of social media. On the other hand, 99% of respondents mentioned that they actively used social media.

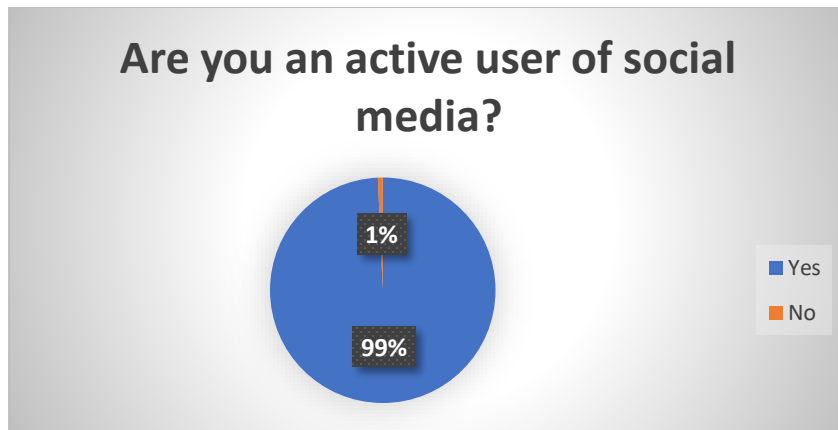


Figure 4: Are you an active user of social media?

If you are an active user of social media, what is the average time you spend on social media per day?	
From half an hour to less than an hour	42
From 1 hour to less than 2 hours	151
From two hours or more	238

Table 5: If you are an active user of social media, what is the average time you spend on social media per day?

Interesting information was obtained from the respondents regarding how much time they spend on social media per day. It was found that the highest proportion of the respondents spent more than 2 hours on social media, and the proportion was more than 50%. Another category fell into the use of social media for 1-2 hours per day.

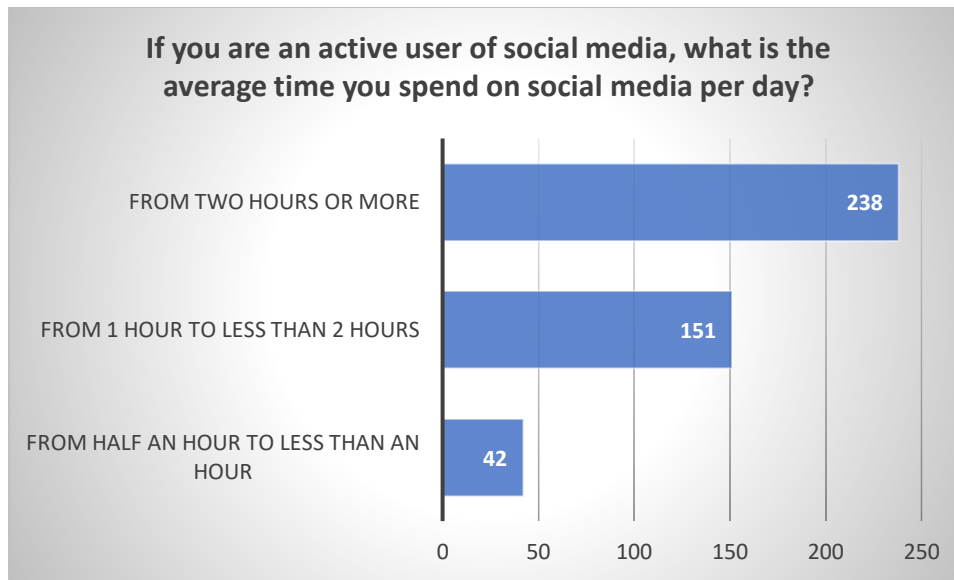


Figure 5: If you are an active user of social media, what is the average time you spend on social media per day?

How many business pages do you check to make sure you chose the right brand to buy from?	
Only one	84
From 2 to 3 channels or pages	238
More than 4 channels or pages	109

Table 6: How many business pages do you check to make sure you chose the right brand to buy from?

The participants of the research were asked about the number of business pages they checked to make sure that they chose the right brand to buy from. It was found that most of the people check at least 2-3 channels or pages to make sure that they are making the right choice for online purchase. The proportion of such consumers was more than 50%, while 109

participants mentioned they check even more pages. These consumers properly research the products on more than 4 pages or channels to make sure that they are going to purchase the right product through online provider.

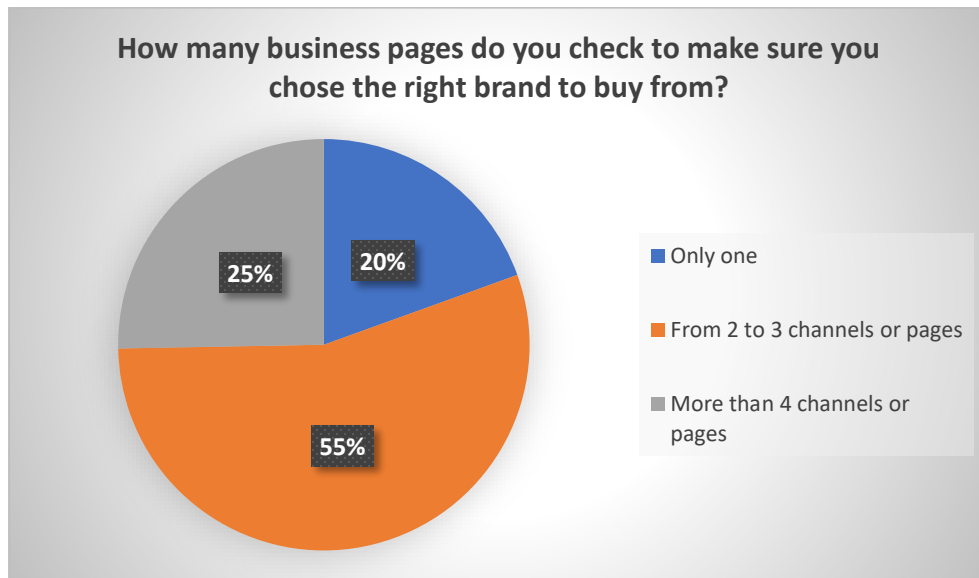


Figure 6: How many business pages do you check to make sure you chose the right brand to buy from?

Are you really affected by promotion of products through social media?	
Yes	337
No	94

Table 7: Are you really affected by promotion of products through social media?

The participants were asked if they are really affected by promotion of products through social media. The number of the respondents who agreed to the effect of social media promotion was very high. Out of total 431 respondents to the research, 337 mentioned that they are really affected, whereas only 94 respondents denied such effect.

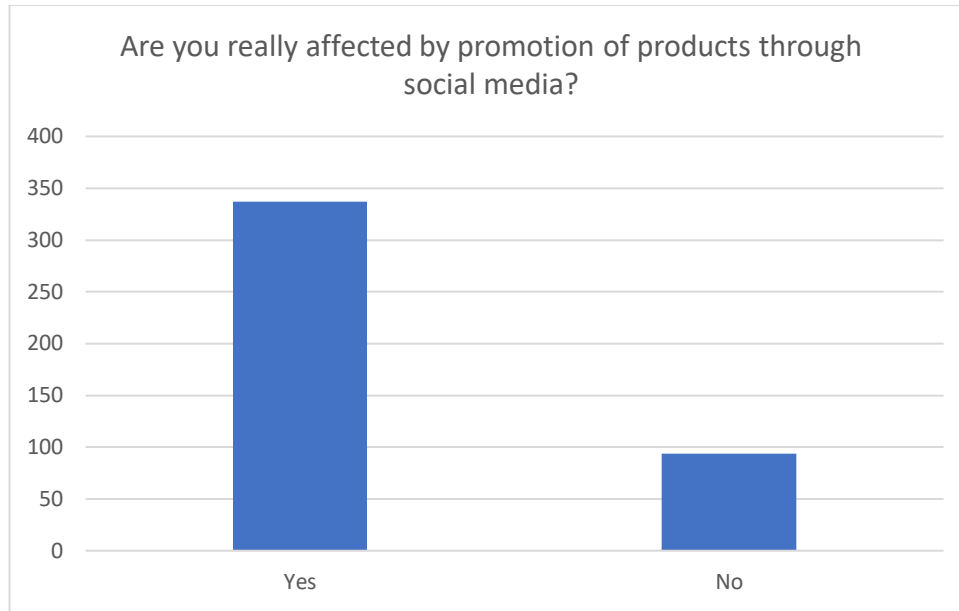


Figure 7: Are you really affected by promotion of products through social media?

How many people do you know have purchased products after being influenced by social media?	
No one	15
Less than 5 people	118
From 5 to 10 people	166
More than 11 people	132

Table 8: How many people do you know have purchased products after being influenced by social media?

Concerning their knowledge regarding the people, who have purchased products after being influenced by social media, 166 respondents mentioned that they know at least 5-10 people, who have purchased products under the influence of social media. Subsequently, 132 participants mentioned that they knew even higher number of people than 11 who have

purchased products through social media. On the other hand, 118 mentioned that they knew less than 5 people who have made such a purchase.

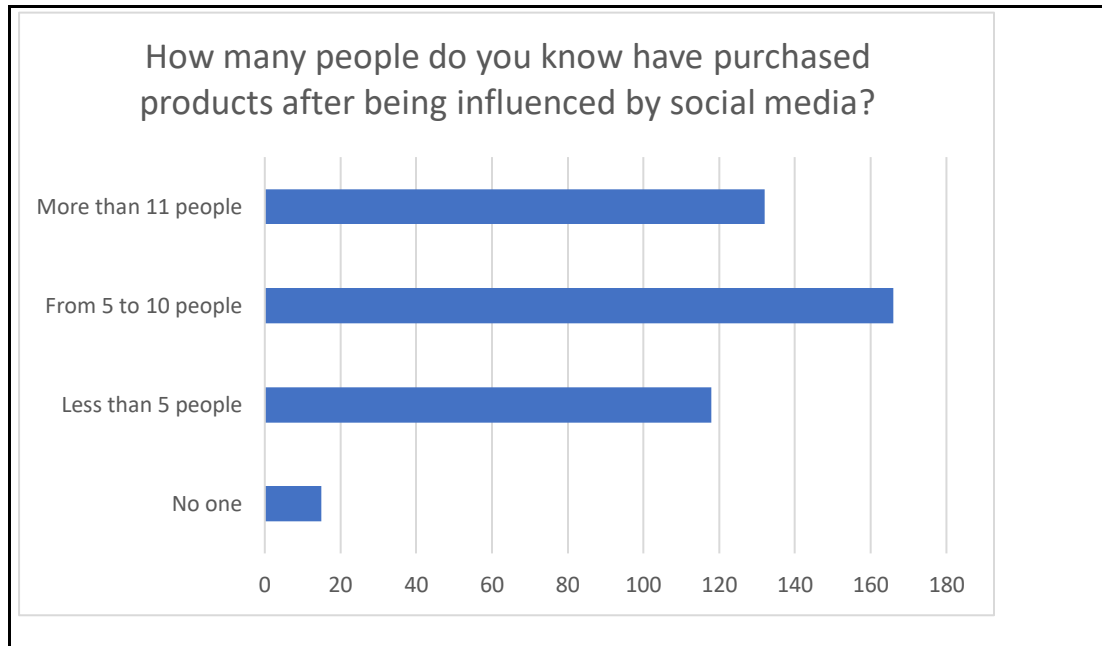


Figure 8: How many people do you know have purchased products after being influenced by social media?

	I don't buy from	To a very small extent	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a high extent	To a very high extent
Facebook	29	45	132	51	102	72
Instagram	91	115	3	159	33	30
YouTube	129	96	69	99	84	54
Snapchat	126	118	136	0	30	21
WhatsApp	63	49	48	168	73	30
Twitter	75	63	93	65	84	135
Pinterest	93	55	0	262	15	6
Public	21	40	210	9	93	58
Haraj.com	3	13	153	21	153	88

Table 9: What social media channel do you use?

Regarding the use of social media channels, the participants were provided with a list of different channels, which are generally used by the people. For these channels, the respondents had a scaling option between no use to strongly agree. It has been found that the highest number of users strongly agreed to use WhatsApp while Snapchat was second. Instagram is the third most used social media channel by the users. The highest proportion of users mentioned that they don't use Pinterest, while haraj.com and YouTube were also less used by the large proportion of sample population. Interestingly, WhatsApp is used by every single respondent who participated in this survey.

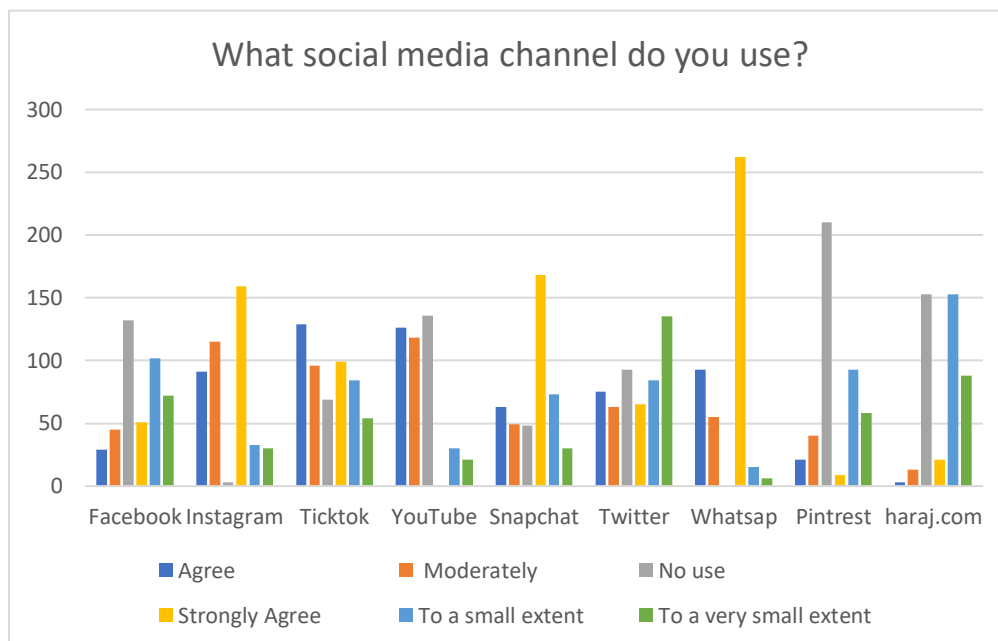


Figure 9: What social media channel do you use?

	<i>I don't buy</i>	<i>To a very small extent</i>	<i>To a small extent</i>	<i>To a moderate extent</i>	<i>To a big extent</i>	<i>To a very high extent</i>
<i>Clothes and shoes</i>	135	84	24	139	27	22
<i>Cosmetics other than perfumes</i>	51	63	123	111	63	20
<i>Household items</i>	51	93	45	78	115	49
<i>Electronic devices other than smartphones</i>	84	111	42	81	76	37
<i>Perfumes and jewelry</i>	61	90	63	99	78	40
<i>Land and real estate</i>	39	9	213	18	114	38
<i>Online services other than applications</i>	79	75	117	58	66	36
<i>Cars</i>	85	63	66	66	76	75
<i>Medicines and dietary supplements</i>	66	70	81	66	91	57
<i>Electrical appliances</i>	48	113	111	57	69	33
<i>Books & magazines</i>	66	55	141	30	73	66
<i>Food and beverages</i>	81	61	60	193	33	3
<i>Smartphones</i>	45	85	78	109	69	45
<i>Mobile applications</i>	52	61	33	144	84	57
<i>Furniture and decorations</i>	21	113	60	93	39	105
<i>Sports products</i>	51	85	72	82	72	69
<i>Wall-art items</i>	42	73	114	30	111	61
<i>Baby products for children and toys</i>	18	114	123	19	66	91
<i>Agricultural and gardening equipment</i>	19	60	210	15	75	52

Table 10: What categories of brands do you follow?

Another important question was about the brands categories, which are mostly followed by the consumers on social media. It was found that food & beverage is the top category that is followed by the maximum number of consumers, since 193 out of 431 respondents strongly agreed. This was followed by mobile apps and clothes & shoes. On the other hand, land & real estate is the category that is least followed by the consumers, followed by Agricultural & gardening products, and books & magazines.

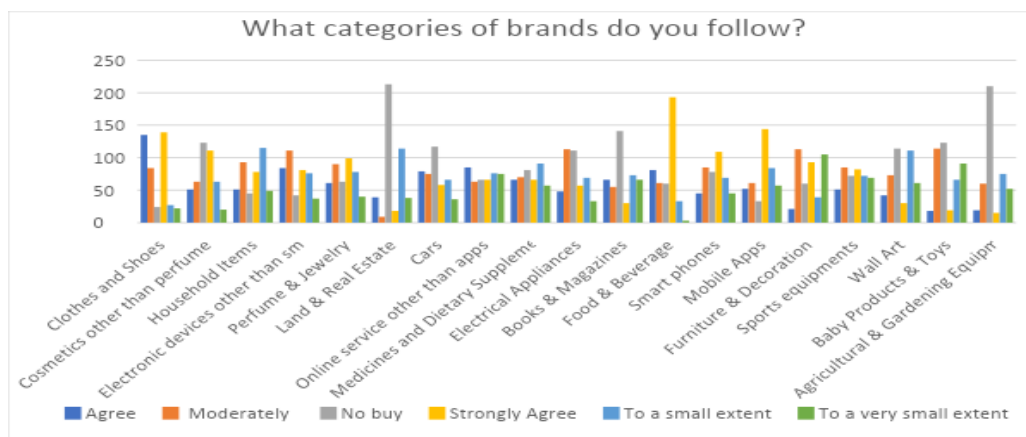


Figure 10: What categories of brands do you follow?

	<i>Big Influence</i>	<i>Little Influence</i>	<i>Moderate Influence</i>	<i>Not Influenced by this Factor</i>	<i>Very Big Influence</i>	<i>Very Little Influence</i>
<i>Product Reviews</i>	42	27	81	30	251	0
<i>Blogs written about the product</i>	138	21	149	30	87	6
<i>The power of videography</i>	81	45	116	6	180	3
<i>Photos of the product</i>	123	34	124	9	126	15

	<i>Big Influence</i>	<i>Little Influence</i>	<i>Moderate Influence</i>	<i>Not Influenced by this Factor</i>	<i>Very Big Influence</i>	<i>Very Little Influence</i>
<i>Product Rating</i>	136	12	46	6	219	12
<i>Followers' recommendations</i>	76	21	112	12	186	24
<i>Influencer Marketing Talk</i>	79	78	142	72	48	12
<i>Distinguished product ads</i>	109	96	109	15	102	0
<i>Widespread discussion on social platforms</i>	151	54	94	24	93	15
<i>Clips from TV shows on the platforms</i>	82	96	127	39	66	21

Table 11: What social media influences drove you to make purchases through social media?

There are different features of social media marketing, which may be impactful for business promotion. During this survey, various influences were listed for the respondents to mention, which influence has the strongest impact on their purchase decision through social media. In this reference, it was found that product review had the strongest impact on consumer purchase decisions for any product. Following this idea, product rating applied the biggest influence on consumer purchase decisions because the second highest number of respondents suggested to have influence from positive product rating. Another important feature was

product specification, which influences consumer purchase decisions if there is a required level of clarity on the social media page. Interestingly, a significant impact was noted regarding the followers' recommendations since the users trusted these recommendations for choosing the product. It was also found that the power of videography had a strong impact, followed by the photographs of the product to motivate the customers for purchasing the product. Considering these views, it was noticed that the influencer marketing talk had the lowest influence on consumer decision making to purchase.

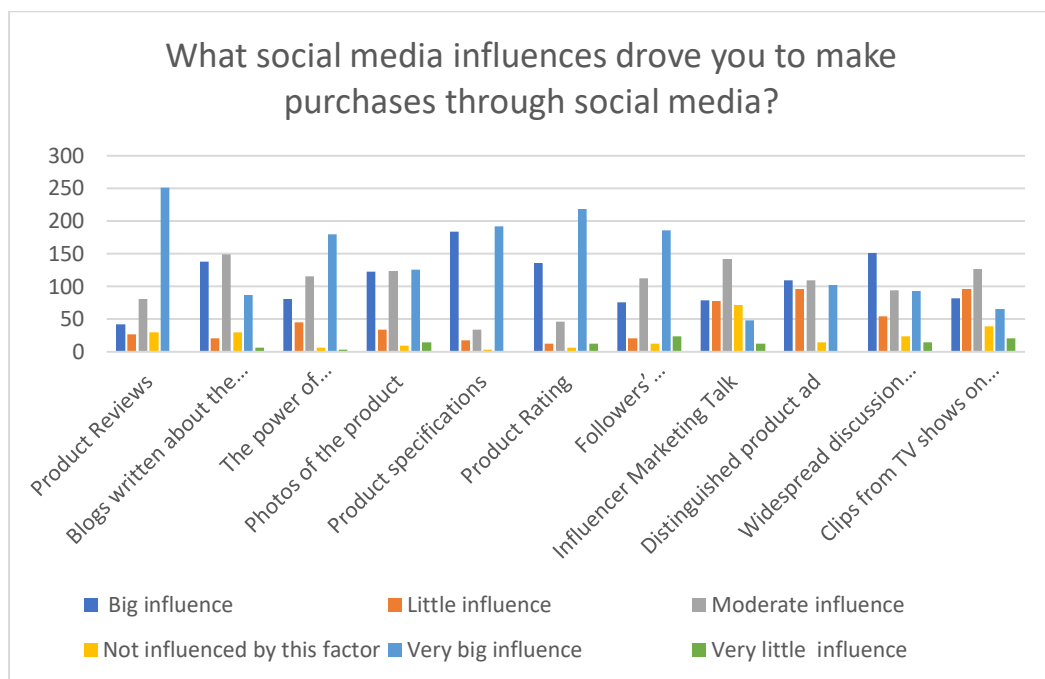


Figure 11: What social media influences drove you to make purchases through social media?

Business owner survey .4.2

The other survey was conducted through a survey questionnaire from the CEOs of different companies who are applying social media marketing tactics to promote their business. This

survey was also designed in quantitative method, which included given choices of the answers for the respondents to select from. Most importantly every respondent was positive regarding the impact of social media on every sales process, as out of 24 respondents, 19 rated as positive, why five of the respondents rated as highly positive. The participants of this survey belonged to different sectors including automotive, beauty products and cosmetics, FMCG, designer apparel and household goods such as Luna, Pepsi, Lays, El.Essai“ OKAM” COMPANY, FINE, Nada, Al.Naqeep Company, Tishop, Toyota “Automotive” , AlKhair, Al.ShifaHoney,Arabia Trading Supplier, Goody, Make Your Mind Social media Company, Rainbow and Cadbury, Sunbula, Treva, Sunbulla, infiniti, Draco “ Real Estate”, Great Gun “ Media Production”, Maserati” Automotive”, Mouawad “ Jewellery”, Kuuru “ Restaurant” and KidZania “ Entertainment”.

FMCG demonstrated the largest representation among the survey participants as 19 respondents were from this sector.

As a result of the survey conducted through the business owners, interesting findings were obtained which could be helpful to guide the other owners of the business to develop social media marketing strategy. According to this strategy, the owners mentioned that they use multiple channels for social media marketing and interacting with the customers. Most of the users mentioned that they engaged their customers through Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat. Whereas WhatsApp is the common means of communication with them, however it was not mentioned as the key source for marketing.

Some of the respondents also mentioned Twitter as their choice to use social media for marketing of their product. Another finding was observed regarding the use of TikTok, which is comparatively a new channel, but it was found as a potential source to conduct marketing through short videos for creating consumer motivation to purchase.

According to these respondents the use of social media marketing has increased their revenue to a noteworthy level. According to 19 respondents, social media marketing has increased around 25% in average revenue for their business, whereas five of them even mentioned that the increase was around 50% which is a significant change. Concerning the social media tactics to gain competitive advantage in the market, most of the respondents mentioned that they apply pictures & visual appeal, and social media influencers. One of them also mentioned about high frequency of ads to be an effective tactic. However, it was surprising that none of the company CEOs had any focus on user feedback & recommendations. This feature was a little different from the consumer survey as the major factor to motivate the consumers was related to consumer feedback, user recommendations, and product ratings. Also, emphasis on developing unique brand messages and detailed description about product specification was not mentioned by any of the participants.

Concerning the approaches, which can be helpful in business to increase revenue through social media, all the respondents applied multiple approaches in this regard. For instance, most of them considered brand Loyalty, involving credible celebrities or influencers for product promotion. However, it was positive that some of the owners of the companies considered the approach to develop attractive brand messages, posting attractive product images, and

provision of clear details about the product specifications, which was a neglected area when the preferred social media tactics were discussed. Concerning the prioritization for the choice of channel for marketing of the product, all the respondents mentioned that they will prefer social media platforms. Another important finding was regarding the benefits of using social media platforms as perceived by the CEOs of the companies. According to them, social media platforms provide an opportunity for easy reach out to customers with ease. It is also preferable because of widespread coverage of the customers to convey the brand messages about specific products.

Also, visual appeal is one of the important features, which declares social media platforms to be a preferred source for product marketing. Another positive feature, which distinguishes social media platforms from face-to-face marketing channels/Consumer activation is the effective communication and widespread reach to the maximum consumers, which can be ensured through this channel. Most importantly social media marketing is the source of profit maximization and cost effective because it does not involve high cost of marketing. On the contrary, budget allocation for the conventional media requires huge amounts, which in turn affects the profit margin/ROI for the companies. By evaluating the responses of the CEOs, it was noted that the inclination towards using social media has been enhanced, and all of them have undisputed consensus on the fact that social media marketing is the best choice for promotion of the products in limited budget.

Considering these findings, it was noted that the CEOs of the companies are completely ready to demonstrate flexibility to transition from conventional approaches to social media marketing. Moreover, it was also observed that the change in the sales revenue that took place as a result of using social media marketing was also a positive indicator, which has motivated the CEOs of the companies to apply different social media marketing tactics which can maximize their profit and enhance their competitive advantage in the market.

Conclusion .4.3

The survey from both respondent groups revealed that the inclination and potential of using social media for product marketing is very high. The CEOs of companies are quite positive towards using social media for their product marketing as they have obtained success in terms of increased sales revenue through social media marketing. Similarly, the customers demonstrated a positive tendency towards making a consumer decision under the influence of social media marketing products. WhatsApp, Instagram, and Snapchat Were found as the most preferred channels which can apply a positive influence on consumer purchase decisions.

These strategies can be applied on almost all at agrees of the products, however high investment sectors, such as real estate and agriculture may receive lesser benefits from social media marketing.

Chapter 5: Discussion .5

Introduction .5.1

This chapter discusses various findings of the research in accordance with the research objectives, as well as the preliminary findings based on literature review. It presents the implications of the results from the surveys, which have been conducted using quantitative questionnaires. Resultantly, two datasets from the CEOs of the companies and the consumers have been compared in terms of the connection with the research objectives. Accordingly, it found the relation of the research findings with the theoretical framework that has been applied for conducting this research. This helped in developing the concluding understanding about the extent of impact, which has been created by social media marketing on consumers purchase decisions in the city of Jeddah.

Implications of social media marketing on purchase decision .5.2

To evaluate the impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase decisions, it is important to explore the perspectives of both; the CEOs who apply social media marketing strategies on their business, and the consumers who are influenced via social media marketing and make purchases. In this reference, the respondent group comprising 431 participants was surveyed around different aspects of this study. Most of the respondents were over 22 years of age, which shows that the entire group comprised mature people who are providing authentic insight into the matter based on their experience. This idea can validate the opinion of Adamopoulos, Ghose, and Todri (2018), who noted that in the current generation, social media

has quite a great impact upon the lives of the people, especially youth. Therefore, young people can become a potential target group for companies to design their social media marketing strategies.

It was also noted that most of them belonged to an average income group as the highest proportion of the participants earned less than 5000 Sar, followed by a group earning 8,001-20,000 Sar. The respondents involved in online purchase of different products were the ones earning under 5000 Sar, which can help in assuming that consumers who have limited budget lines are more inclined towards online purchase. Subsequently, it may be assumed that online purchase gives them more flexibility to maintain their purchases within their budget and make careful decisions. Moreover, they can find social media to be efficient and affordable because it allows for direct customer connection with the brand, as well as the other customers (Kaplan and Mazurek, 2018).

Considering the increasing tendency to use social media as a daily routine, there was no surprise in finding that all the participants were active users of social media, while the highest proportion tended to use social media for more than two hours in a day. This finding can support an understanding that excessive use of social media offers them more opportunity to search for different products online and make their purchase decisions with comfort of their home. It was clearly noticed that the number of users who have been engaged with social media for under half an hour was very low. The same can be validated by Alfeel and Ansari (2019), who mentioned that social media has become a vital channel for businesses to reach out to their customers and promote their products or services.

It was noted by Mathapati (2019) that online shopping is growing in popularity in Saudi Arabia, with several local and international e-commerce sites operating in the country. Resultantly, this inclination was also observed through the survey from the CEOs of different companies, as they also mentioned that they are also using different social media channels for marketing of their products. In this reference, Instagram can be considered as the most common source, which was mentioned by both groups of respondents. Especially regarding the visual appeal, Instagram seems to be a common source that may be agreed upon. Although, the CEOs have not considered the attainment of users' feedback, product rating and recommendations; however, this approach was not found to be excluded, as it may relate with different approaches to be adopted. The CEOs mentioned that developing attractive brand messages, posting attractive product images, and providing clear details about the product specifications are the potential approaches which could increase the revenue for the business. On the other hand, the owners of the business need to enhance their attention on positive reviews and feedback, which could create attraction for the other customers. This has also been mentioned by Ardiansyah and Sarwoko (2020), who mentioned that real-time feedback can be significant for the success of the businesses. It is quite beneficial that social media provides businesses with real-time feedback from their customers and on how consumers are spreading information about the products with other people. this strategy of promoting the products on Social Media Platforms called Viral Marketing Business Strategy. Therefore, monitoring the social media channels can be a good approach for businesses to gain insights into their customers' preferences, sentiments, and concerns. This information can be used to improve

products or services quality, features and even prices and make more informed business decisions to grow revenue from their products.

The tendencies to use social media lead to a better understanding of their interest in viewing different business pages to find appropriate products according to their desire. It was found that the highest number of consumers check at least 2-4 pages before making a purchase decision. This may suggest that social media provides an appropriate level of freedom to the consumers to conduct their own research on different brands and find the best option for themselves (Chaffey and Smith, 2022). Consequently, it may be noted that people compare different products and make careful decisions after assurance of satisfaction that their chosen brand is the most appropriate. This feature of social media marketing seems more supportive for the consumers, who do not prefer to move from one place to the other for comparison of the products and find a good choice to purchase. Instead, their research is based on the available business pages online, where they make up their mind and use their own assessment criteria to find the best option.

While surveying the consumer group, it was a positive indication that a significant number of consumers agreed to have been affected by social media promotion of the products.

Consequently, the evidence of the open impact of social media marketing is quite noteworthy, as the customers are impacted by the promotional pages on different social media channels. At the same time, another finding was quite significant that the respondents knew several people who made a purchase of the products after being influenced by social media. Among the participants, every person knew at least less than five people who purchased the products as a result of social media influence. Consequently, it is positive information that the participants

themselves have purchased products through social media, and know other people who make such purchases. This may support the inclination of the businesses to create brand awareness and increase exposure to potential customers, as they are motivated to purchase through social media (Alatawy, 2022)

Preferred social media channels and categories. .5.3

An important objective of this research was to identify the tendency of the use of social media channels, especially the ones which are preferred by most of the customers. It was found that from the long list of channels, WhatsApp was the most preferred channel in KSA, especially for daily networking and social interaction. It was found that Snapchat was the 2nd use preference among social media channels, while Instagram is also used with high frequency. It was also found by Juju, Arizal, and Waldelmi, (2023), that Instagram has seen an increase in s-commerce demonstrating rising popularity, particularly in Arabian nations. It was a surprise to know that people in KSA are not very much interested in using YouTube as a frequently used channel. Therefore, it can be noted that YouTube videos cannot be a feasible option for social media marketing of the products by the companies. Similarly, Pinterest and haraj.com are also among the least used options on social media. Therefore, the significant finding regarding WhatsApp that it was used by every single respondent offers a clear insight to the social media marketers for its importance in social media marketing. This may elucidate that the businesses should really need to consider the worth of their clients by facilitating them through their preferred channels, as well as how social media affects them (Adamopoulos, Ghose, Todri, 2018).

Another important finding was regarding the preferred categories of the brands followed by the consumers on social media. The analysis of consumer preference on different brand categories revealed that food and beverages is the most preferred category by the consumers to order online. This indicates preference to avail online channels for purchasing these products without needing to reach the outlets. Another preferred category is mobile app and clothes & shoes, in which the category of mobile apps is obvious, because it is connected to multiple sectors. For instance, the current business models by several companies relate to different mobile apps, which provide different services from taxi rides to food order. Correspondingly, preference to buy clothes & shoes through online channels indicates that these two categories can work on careful strategies regarding social media tactics to motivate the customers in purchase. These tactics may be implemented by the business to mend all marketing services in order to sustain their current clientele (Varghese and Agrawal, 2021). On the other hand, it was found that land & real estate and agricultural & gardening products don't receive consumer motivation through online channels. This may suggest that the role of product categories is also important in influencing the consumer purchase decision through social media channels. Based on this, there is no ambiguity left behind for the marketers of the companies in understanding that consumers' impression must be discovered to identify the best techniques for enhancing client involvement through social networking. It will also facilitate examining the influence of social media upon customer purchasing behavior (Adamopoulos, Ghose, and Todri, 2018). Moreover, the businesses should enhance their efforts to foster a sense of community among the customers by allowing them to share their thoughts, ideas, and criticism which may be helpful (Bazi, Filieri, and Gorton, 2020).

Motivating features to influence consumer purchase decision. .5.4

Concerning different features of social media marketing, which can influence consumer purchase decisions for different products, a list of different tactics was provided to the research respondents. As a result, it was found that product review on social media has the strongest impact on consumer purchase decisions. Correspondingly, product rating is another significant influence, which motivates the customers to make a purchase decision. Another finding was aligned with these two influences regarding the influence of followers' recommendations about the product on social media pages. All these findings are strongly aligned with each other suggesting the significance of word-of-mouth WoM, which mainly motivates the customers to trust the brand. In other words, it can also be assumed that the consumers trust a brand, which is supported by the trust of prior users. Consequently, it is clearly notable that the consumers check product reviews by the previous users/buyers when they land on the social media page of a brand.

Following this, they also evaluate the product through product rating, which indicates the quality and authenticity of a product that has been offered through social media. Aligned with the same, followers' recommendations play a very important role in consumer decision making, since this recommendation validates the quality of the product declaring it worth purchasing. These findings indicate that the consumers are more motivated through recommendations and opinion of the real users, instead of conventional marketing through TV

advertising or clips, influencer marketing or blogs. Therefore, there is no ambiguity in the fact that the businesses can capitalize upon user-generated content and tap into this trust to leverage and increase their brand's credibility and influence (Jin, Muqaddam, and Ryu, 2019).

This is an important revelation that the companies which spend a lot of amounts on their advertising through conventional media may not be following a feasible practice. Instead, social media marketing is more effective in a less costly approach, which can ensure wider coverage and enhanced level of trust to motivate the customers. Similar to this finding, Ardiansyah and Sarwoko (2020) also approved that real-time user feedback can also play an important role in the success of the businesses. Resultantly Social media marketing provides businesses with real-time feedback from their customers, who interact with each other online on brand pages.

During the initial research, it was found that Saudi Arabia is ranked first among nations at regional and global level for the use of social media (Mathapati, 2019). And the same has been validated from the research, as the use of social media for online marketing of the products was found very common in Saudi Arabia. Consequently, the research has enabled the marketers from the companies to identify which channels are most preferred to search for different products. Due to these findings, they can develop social media marketing strategy by utilizing the identified channels.

The impact of word of mouth .5.5

The role of word of mouth has been explored in multiple ways in terms of its impact on consumer purchase decisions. Resultantly, it was found through the perceptions of the consumers that consumer purchase decision is significantly influenced by consumer feedback, positive rating of the products, and customer recommendations. This may work in two different ways; firstly, the customers check reviews, ratings and feedback of the previous purchasers and consider their decision to purchase the product (Talwar et al., 2021). And secondly, the users share their purchase experience through their social media, which is spread within their network. Due to the enhanced level of trust, consumers tend to buy the products, which are recommended by their trusted people, who have already made a purchase.

The influence of customer reviews, product rating, and recommendations cannot be undermined, even if it comes from unknown people who have purchased the same product before. Consequently, it was noted from the survey that the consumers conduct their own research by visiting multiple social media pages for the same product category and decide for purchase one of those. In this reference, reviews and feedback were found to be the most significant factor, which could help the consumers to decide, which product is trustworthy to purchase online. The same was also recommended by Chen, Luo, and Wang (2017) as well, who mentioned that WOM can be used in marketing by supporting buyer's interest in a product or service with the help of communication. Resultantly, the potential buyers perceive

the user feedback as a guarantee that has been given by someone else, who may provide assurance to them regarding first-hand experience. Significantly, it has become the source of free advertising for the sellers, which is given through the customer experience that generates promotional outcomes, which are above their expectation. As also mentioned by Infante and Mardikaningsih, (2022), several social media channels are applying WoM; therefore, the companies should consider transitioning to social media advertising strategy to take the maximum advantage of trust-worthy recommendations.

Chapter 6: Conclusion .6

Based on the above discussion, it may be concluded that social media platforms have significant influence on consumer purchase decisions through product marketing. The survey conducted involving the consumers, as well as the CEOs of the companies concluded that social media can be used as the most effective source for product marketing to achieve better outcomes, as compared to the conventional marketing strategies. Due to its enhanced potential of interaction, social media has become the most preferable source of marketing for companies, which can effectively motivate the consumers to make a purchase decision. On the other hand, the CEOs were also found to have a positive inclination towards using social media channels to promote their products.

Based on the identified problem, the research was designed around the research questions, which were directed to separate samples of businesses CEOs and Consumers. The use of social media was found to have a positive impact on the sales process of the businesses in the city of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. From the perspective of business owners, it was found that there is an increase in average revenue because of using social media marketing strategies. For this purpose, WhatsApp and Snapchat were found to be in more frequent use as a common routine. Moreover, Instagram was found to be a common source for marketing of the products since people were attracted by the visual appeal from the images.

Another objective of this research was to assess how social media tactics can gain competitive advantage by implementing efficient approaches for increasing business revenues. It was found that social media platforms provide an opportunity for the sellers to use pictures &

visual appeal to motivate the customers. Secondly, the CEOs of the companies also agreed that writing unique brand messages can be a positive method to interact with the customers and attract them towards their brand. Similarly, this approach can help the customers to develop a better understanding and reach change decisions according to their need and want. It was also noted that social media marketing can offer great opportunities to companies to avail high frequency of ads in minimum cost. This point is highly significant because the cost of conventional marketing is very high, whereas the impact of social media on the customers is way higher than that of conventional marketing through TV channels and other expensive modes. Considering the requirements of the customers, the sellers of the products are now inclined towards writing the detailed descriptions about product specifications. But at the same time, they use social media influencers to promote their brand and attract the customers towards a purchase.

Along with all the above considerations, the importance of user feedback and recommendations was identified to be the most significant in motivating the consumers for purchase decisions. Therefore, the finding is quite significant that the consumer checks multiple brand pages for similar products and makes a purchase decision based on customer reviews, product rating, and recommendations from the people who have already purchased the product. It is also significant that the recommendation coming from the known individuals from one's social media network is more impactful to help the buyers make a purchase decision. Therefore, it can be concluded that the companies should now prefer social media marketing for promotion of the products instead of face-to-face marketing/ Consumer Activation, while this trend has already been initiated. For this very reason, Facebook,

Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat were found to be the most frequently used channels for social media marketing. Whereas WhatsApp was found to be the most frequently used channel for interaction and communication with the customers.

According to the research, the frequency of purchasing products from social media marketing by the consumers is increasing since people find it comfortable to purchase different products, based on knowledge, which could be collected on their desk. Therefore, the companies should develop the circumstances through social media so that they could grab the customer's attention on visiting the social media page. Moreover, there should be sufficient information, feedback, and recommendations to help the customers reach a purchase decision. In this reference, there is no ambiguity in the fact that positive WoM can play an important role as the key factor behind consumer decision to purchase through social media. Therefore, the companies must build their social media marketing strategies to enhance their profitability and reach the wider target audience in lesser time and efforts.

Although social media marketing has become very common in different fields of life, however this area is still under evolution. Therefore, the companies should apply more focus on developing the strategies regarding social media marketing since great potential regarding productivity of these channels can be predicted.

Recommendations .6.1

Based on the above research, following recommendations can be made for the business CEOs, Marketers, and brand strategists in different sectors to utilize social media channels for influencing the consumer purchase decision and increasing the revenue.

- The companies should promote customer reviews and feedback and interact with them to motivate them for positive recommendations. In this reference, the social media team should make optimum efforts to make sure that the customers are provided with the best experiences and after sales quality service.
- The company should develop a clear social media marketing strategy to influence the customers by enhanced social interaction. For this purpose, dedicated staff can be allocated to make sure that all channels are fully active and responsive towards the customers.
- The companies should utilize multiple channels for social media marketing, such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Snapchat with competitive and unique Brand/ Product messages to attract a wide range of the customers towards their brands. Regular consumer surveys through multiple channels can be helpful.
- Future research is recommended for identification of best strategies related to specific channels which have been identified in this research. WhatsApp, Instagram, and Snapchat were identified as the preferred channels; therefore, the future research should focus on exploring further features and potential strategies to utilize these channels for the best marketing outcomes.

Limitations of the research .6.2

Time constraint was the biggest limitation for this research, since the process of data collection involved information gathering from two different sample populations in limited time.

Moreover, the need for data collection was multifaceted from both kinds of respondents, and different aspects of the research problem were to be conducted. Also, identification of such a large sample population in Jeddah City Only was another big challenge, yet a limitation for

conducting this research. However, these challenges were effectively addressed by using online data collection through social media, which addressed the challenges related to timelines. Not only that, but this method also decreased the burden of accessing members of such a large sample; one after another. The commuting time and effort significantly decreased, while the cost of conducting data collection was also minimized.

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Appendix (1)

Previous Research Studies Summary

Study Name	Objectives	Methodology	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Study Most Important results & recommendations
1- The impact of user personality traits on word of mouth: Text-mining social media platforms.	To evaluate how user personality traits can impact word of mouth for text-mining social media platforms.	Quantitative survey	User personality traits	Word of mouth outcomes	WOM from an extrovert user to an introvert peer increases the likelihood of a subsequent purchase, therefore it is recommended to utilize the future potential of social media advertising and advanced microtargeting based on big data and deep learning
2- The Role Social Media Marketing Plays in Customers' Purchase Decisions in the Context of the Fashion Industry in Saudi Arabia.	To explore the role social media marketing plays in customers' purchase decisions in the context of the fashion industry in Saudi Arabia.	self-administered online survey of 106 participants	Social media marketing	Consumer purchase decision	Usage of social media is increased, and clients now prefer to shop online; therefore, the brands should employ SMM to boost brand value, identity, awareness, and WoM
3- Impact of COVID-19 on entrepreneurship and consumer behavior: A case study in Saudi Arabia.	To investigate the impact of COVID-19 on entrepreneurship and consumer behavior.	Case study	Covid-19	Consumer behavior	Negative impact of the Pandemic on productivity of business and profits has forced many businesses for physical closure, therefore, the businesses should study consumer behavior to influence through social media in such conditions.
4- The impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase intention: Consumer survey in Saudi Arabia	To investigate the impact of social media marketing on customers' intention to purchase the products.	Primary data collection through quantitative close-ended questionnaire online.	Social media marketing	Consumer purchase intention	The research found that 92.4% of the customers' intention to purchase was explained by Social Media Marketing. Therefore, the companies should enhance focus on social media marketing.
5- The mediating effect of brand image on the relationships between social media advertising content, sales promotion content and behavioral intention.	To explore how brand-related communications, disseminated on social media platforms, on behavioral intention from consumers	Quantitative survey	Media advertising communication	Consumer behavioral intention	Brand images can mediate the effects on social media content for advertising, sales, promotion, and behavioral intention. However, the relationship between social media advertising content and behavioral intention is insignificant.

Study Name	Objectives	Methodology	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Study Most Important results & recommendations
6- Impact of social media on Consumer Buying Behavior.	To evaluate the impact of social media on consumer buying behavior	Quantitative survey	Social media marketing	Consumer buying behavior	Strangers can influence consumer's opinion & feedback, while SM empowers the consumer. by user generated content via online conversations, while the consumers can play a vital role in making or breaking a brand. The marketers must research on how SM can influence consumers' decision
7- Cultural policy aspirations and the turn in Saudi Arabia's video game industry.	To investigate the unique turn of the video game industry in Saudi Arabia and analyze the major shifts according to <i>Vision 2030</i> .	Secondary research through government policies and documents	Cultural policy aspirations	Major shifts in video game industry	New and potentially unexpected implications have emerged to meet global trends regarding national cultural policy. Therefore, further research may be recommended.
8- Effect of social media influencers on purchase intentions of Saudi Arabian consumers: Instagram as an evaluation tool.	To investigate the effect of social media influencers on purchase intentions through Instagram	Use of Instagram as an evaluation tool	Social media influencers	Purchase intentions	Ordinary people can commonly become influencers on Instagram. Future research has been recommended regarding the impact of SMLs' on Instagram users' purchase intentions to use Instagram as evaluation tool
9- Instagram shopping in Saudi Arabia: what influences consumer trust and purchase decisions?	To evaluate the influence of consumer trust on purchase decisions in Instagram purchase	Quantitative approach and using Partial Least Squares Modeling (PLS-SEM)	Not clear	Consumer trust and purchase decisions	The impact of SMLs and customer feedback increases consumers' trust, which influences intent to purchase from Instagram stores, whereas the impact of Maroof & KOLs can directly influence purchase intention of the consumers...
10- The impact of e-commerce adoption on business strategy in Saudi Arabian small and medium enterprises (SMEs).	To examine the impact of e-commerce on business strategy, especially on SMEs.	Quantitative method through survey questionnaire	E-commerce	Business strategy	Adoption of e-commerce can impact strategies of SMEs, while the introduction of e-commerce has changed the business strategies & plans. Further research on e-commerce commended.
11- Impact of brand awareness and social media content marketing on consumer purchase decisions.	To examine the impact of brand awareness and social media content marketing on the consumer purchase decision	Online survey questionnaire	Brand awareness & social media content marketing	Consumer purchase decision	Brand awareness shows a positively significant relationship with consumer purchase-decision while social media content-marketing shows moderately significant relation with consumer purchase decision.

Study Name	Objectives	Methodology	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Study Most Important results & recommendations
12- How social media marketing influences consumers' purchase decision: A mediation analysis of brand awareness.	To explore the influence of social media marketing on consumers purchase decision	Quantitative survey	Social media marketing	Consumer purchase decision	SMM has a positive & significant influence upon brand awareness & purchase decisions. The study failed to provide evidence regarding the direct & indirect impact of brand awareness upon purchase decisions.
13- The importance of the loyalty of fashion brands through digital marketing.	To evaluate the importance of consumer loyalty through digital marketing.	Literature review	Digital marketing	Consumer loyalty	Digital marketing has become an essential tool to lead brand communication in the market, especially with the younger audiences. Therefore, the marketers are recommended to research the preferences of the young users.
14- Customers' motivation to engage with luxury brands on social media.	To identify Customers' motivation to engage with luxury brands on social media.	25 semi-structured interviews with customers	Social media marketing	Customer engagement	The study identifies 13 motivations grouped into six macro-dimensions: perceived content relevance, brand-customer relationship, hedonic, aesthetic, socio-psychological, brand equity, and technology factors. Various facets of these motivations should be further explored.
15- Understanding the effects of social media and mobile usage on e-commerce: an exploratory study in Saudi Arabia.	To assess the effects of social media and mobile usage on e-commerce	Online survey questionnaire	Social media marketing	e-commerce	Social media & mobile usage can play significant roles in e-commerce in Saudi Arabia. The companies should evaluate the potential preferences of the mobile users regarding social media
16- Association between social media use and the acceptance of COVID-19 vaccination among the general population in Saudi Arabia—a cross-sectional study.	To explore the association between social media use and the acceptance of COVID-19 vaccination among the general population	Cross-sectional study	Social media marketing	Acceptance by public	The study did not find any significantly independent relation between use of social media and consumers' willingness; therefore, the other relevant factors need to be explored.
17- Why do small and medium enterprises use social media marketing and what is the impact: Empirical insights from India.	To explore the empirical insights of using social media marketing	survey of 310 firms and subsequent analysis have been carried out using structural equation modeling. T	Social media marketing	SMEs	Perceived usefulness, ease of use & compatibility can positively impact SMEs through SMM. The facilitating conditions can have an insignificant impact, while the cost can significantly impact. On the other hand, negative impact has been found upon the use of SMM for SMEs therefore these findings can be used in developing SMM strategies & decisions

Study Name	Objectives	Methodology	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Study Most Important results & recommendations
18- Factors influencing user participation in social media: evidence from twitter usage during COVID-19 pandemic in Saudi Arabia.	To identify various factors influencing user participation in social media during COVID-19 pandemic	Survey questionnaire	Various influencing factors	User participation in social media	The study found that the behavior, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms can affect active participation of Twitter users within the crisis. Therefore, consumer surveys may be conducted for identifying consumer participation intent.
19-Silence from the brands: Message control, brand ambassadorship, and the public interest.	To evaluate message control, brand ambassadorship, and the public interest.	Official admission statistics and semi-structured interviews	Brand ambassadorship	Public interest	The study found that the reputation & branding concerns within students' competition, funding, and voice restrictions were used as a preferred strategy for brand alignment, whereas brand ambassadorship was rejected in this regard.
20- Going digital? The impact of social media marketing on retail website traffic, orders, and sales.	To explore the impact of social media marketing on retail website traffic, orders, and sales.	Analysis of data over 12-month period from a major online retailer	Social media marketing	retail website traffic, orders, and sales	The study found that social media can increase web traffic, however it does not increase product orders & sale income to a significant level. Therefore, the study recommends exploring strategies to increase sales and orders.
21- A literature review of word of mouth and electronic word of mouth: Implications for consumer behavior.	To compare the implications of word of mouth & electronic word of mouth on consumer behavior.	Literature review	WoM	Consumer behavior	The study suggests that WOM the most influential source to spread information among the customers, therefore the companies should promote the customers to spread WoM through social media.
22-The Potential of social media as a Means of Online Business Promotion.	To explore the potential of social media as a Means of Online Business Promotion	Qualitative research through literature review	Social media	Online business promotion	Social media marketing can facilitate businesses for cost reduction, which is a great advantage; however, businesses should apply a preventive attitude to conduct business transactions. Therefore, the business owners should develop careful strategies to use social media for business.
23- E-Marketing and Its Strategies: Digital Opportunities and Challenges.	To identify digital opportunities & challenges related to strategies for e-marketing	Descriptive approach combined with survey	e-marketing strategies	Digital opportunities challenges	To apply e-marketing, provision of a positive digital environment, availability of Internet, and arrangement of e-management instigate the need for the success of e-marketing combined with Social Media Advertising

Study Name	Objectives	Methodology	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Study Most Important results & recommendations
24- Instafamous and social media influencer marketing.	to test the effects of two types of celebrities (Instagram celebrity vs traditional celebrity) on source trustworthiness, brand attitude, envy, and social presence.	Randomized two-group comparison	Celebrity type	Self-discrepancy	It was found that the consumers watching Instagram celebrity's brand-posts believe the source as highly trustworthy. Therefore, they show a positive attitude through brand endorsement, stronger social presence and envious as compared to those consumers who watch traditional celebrity's brand posts.
25- Changes and determinants of consumer shopping behavior in E-commerce and social media product Muslimah.	To explore consumer shopping behavior in E-commerce and social media product	Online survey	Social media	Consumer shopping behavior in e-commerce	The study found that product quality & trust can encourage consumers' loyalty, however, brand ambassadors do not have the ability to enhance consumers' loyalty.

Appendix (2)

Research Questionnaire (CEOs)

The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer' Purchase Decision in (City of Jeddah) in Saudi Arabi

أثر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على قرار الشراء للمستهلك في مدينة جدة في المملكة العربية السعودية

1. Do you agree to participate in the survey?

No

Yes

2. What is your age:

18- 22

23-26

27-30

31 and Above

3. What are the implications of social media on the average sales process?

Highly positive →

Positive →

Neither positive nor negative →

Negative →

Highly negative →

4. Which social media channel do you use for marketing of the products? (Check all that apply)

Facebook →

Instagram →

YouTube →

Snapchat →

WhatsApp →

Twitter →

5. What brand categories do your product fall in?

Designer apparel →

Beauty products/cosmetics →

Cellphones laptops →

Household items →

Others (Please explain) →

6. What is the increase in average revenue through social media marketing?

None →

Around 25% →

Around 50% →

Above 50% →

7. What are the best social media tactics to gain competitive advantage?

Pictures & visual appeal →

Unique brand message →

High frequency of ads →

Detailed description about specifications →

Use feedback & recommendations. →

Social media influencers/bloggers →

8. Which approaches can help the business in increasing revenue through social media?

Brand Loyalty →

Involving credible celebrity or influencers for product promotion →

Developing attractive brand message →

Posting attractive product image →

Providing clear detail about product specification →

9. If you have a budget, which marketing channel you will choose from the following?

Face to face campaign →

Social media platforms →

10. Why will you use your chosen method?

Easy reach out to customers →

Widespread coverage →

Visual appeal →

Effective communication →

Profit maximization →

Appendix (3)

Research Questionnaire (Consumers)

The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer' Purchase Decision (City of Jeddah) Saudi Arabia

أثر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على قرار الشراء للمستهلك في (مدينة جدة) المملكة العربية السعودية

1. Do you agree to participate in this questionnaire?

Yes No

2. What is your age in years:

Less than 18 years ·

From 18 years to less than 22 years ·

From 27 years to 33 years ·

Above 33 years ·

3. What is your gender:

Female: Male:

4. Monthly Income

Less than 5000 Saudi Riyals ·

From 5001 Saudi Riyals to less than 8000 Saudi Riyals ·

From 8001 Saudi Riyals to less than 12000 Saudi Riyals ·

From 12001 Saudi Riyals to less than 20000 Saudi Riyals ·

More than 20000 Saudi Riyals ·

5. Are you an active user of social media?

No Yes

6. If you are an active user of social media activity, what is the average time you spend on social media per day?

From half an hour to less than an hour ·

From an hour to less than two hours ·

From two hours and more ·

7- Which social media channel do you use?

	I don't buy from	To a very small extent	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a high extent	To a very high extent
Facebook						
Instagram						
YouTube						
Snapchat						
WhatsApp						
Twitter						
Pinterest						
Public						

8- What brand categories do you follow?

	I don't buy	To a very small extent	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a big extent	To a very high extent
Clothes and shoes						
Cosmetics other than perfumes						
Household items						
Electronic devices other than smartphones						

	I don't buy	To a very small extent	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a big extent	To a very high extent
Perfumes and jewelry						
Land and real estate						
Online services other than applications						
Medicines and dietary supplements						
Electrical appliances						
Books & magazines						
Food and beverages						
Smartphones						
Mobile applications						
Furniture and decorations						
decorations						
Sports products						
Wall-art items						
Baby products for children and toys						
Agricultural and gardening equipment						

9- How many brand pages do you check to make sure you chose the right brand to buy from?

Only one ·

From 2 – 3 pages ·

More than 4 pages ·

10- Are you really affected by the promotion of products through social media?

No. Yes

11- How many people do you know that have purchased products after being influenced by social media?

Less than 5 people ·

5 – 10 people ·

More than 11 people ·

No one ·

12- What social media influences drove you to make purchases through social media?

	I am not affected by this factor	Very little influence	Little influence	Moderately influenced	High influenced	very High influence
Comments on the product						
Blogs written about the product						
The Power of videography						
Photographs						
Product specification						
Evaluation of the product						
Followers' evaluations						
Influencer's comments/recommendations (influencer Marketing)						
A distinctive advertisement of the product						
Many talks about the product in the social media						
Clips from TV shows in the social media						

Appendix (4)

Letter of Verification & Acceptance of CEOs& Consumers' Questionnaires

15 March 2023

To *Everyone's Smart University*



This is to confirm that the student Ms. Enas Taha Mahmoud Timraz (student number 213000706) who is doing her master's degree in "*Everyone's Smart University*" has approached our consulting office to verify and approve the questionnaires that she has prepared as part of her thesis.

Our consulting office has contacted (6) different and highly credible professors from different institutions to review two questionnaires: One related to a questionnaire to be distributed to CEOs of SMG companies and the other questionnaire to be distributed to Saudi consumers.

All six PhD members have reviewed the questionnaires prepared by the students and gave various comments on them which the student has reflected in the final versions.

Therefore, on behalf of the Change Management Consulting office, we confirm the acceptance of the questionnaires to be used for her Marketing study and analysis as part of her thesis.

Dr. Tarik Al Sulimani
Founder and Chief Executive Officer
Change Management Consulting
Mobile 966 50 523 8874
Web www.cmc-ksa.com
Email tarik@cmc-ksa.com

Appendix (4)

Letter of Verification & Acceptance of CEOs& Consumers' Questionnaires

Sample of the Review
Process of the
Questionnaire by the
Judges

3/18/2023 19:39:41	الدكتور: طارق السليمانى	دكتوراه في نظم المعلومات والادارة
3/18/2023 21:15:40	الدكتور: عمار احمد	دكتوراه مالية
3/18/2023 21:21:29	الدكتور: على الصبحيين	دكتوراه تسويق وأدارة اعمال
3/21/2023 18:51:42	الدكتور: على الشعبي	دكتوراه الادارة والتسويق
3/21/2023 19:31:17	الدكتور: حسن الفطافطة	دكتوراه اقتصاد
3/21/2023 20:00:30	الدكتور: احمد الغرايبة	دكتوراه علم نفس

Appendix (5)

Acceptance Letter of Manuscript



Respected Enas Taha Mahmoud,

We are pleased to inform you that our reviewers has been accepted and recommended your manuscript entitled “*The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Purchase Decision in (City of Jeddah) in Saudi Arabia*” for publication in the forthcoming issue (Vol.16, Issue-II: April-June, 2023) of the NICE Research Journal after successfully passing the review process and revisions made by the author/s. All of the accepted manuscripts in this journal will go under advanced English editing by our native editors. The author will also receive the galley proof of the final revision after all of the quality checks and prior to publishing the article.

Thank you for choosing to publish in our journal

Regards

A small, square image of a handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nosheen'.

Dr. Nosheen Rafi

Editor: NICE Research Journal

Email: editor.jfme@newports.edu.pk

Website: www.nicerjss.com

Appendix (6)

Approval On Thesis Abstract by International Marrakesh, Morocco Conference

From: ISER Conference <info@iser.co>
Date: April 29, 2023 at 8:48:52 AM GMT+3
To: tarik@cmc-ksa.com
Subject: Re: Participation in the Int. Conference

Dear Researcher,

Your research paper is selected for our conference and your paper id : (IS-ABMISMARR-120523-001), we are planning to organize the physical conference on 13th May Marrakesh, Morocco, kindly proceed with registration and you will

As per the approval email, the abstract of the Impact of Social media Marketing on Consumer' purchase Decision has been accepted & selected by The International Marrakesh, Morocco Scientific Conference (ICABMIS-2023). Furthermore, the International Conference will be held on 13th of May'23 and the Thesis presentation are prepared to be virtually on 13th of May'23.

Please Note that the International Conference will issue the Acceptance Letter of Manuscript within one Week working days and will be sent to Everyone Smart's University for reference accordingly.

Appendix (7)

Abstract in Arabic

الخلاصة

ركز البحث على تقييم أثر التسويق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على قرارات الشراء لدى المستهلك في (مدينة جدة) المملكة العربية السعودية. اشتملت الدراسة على منهجية بحث أولية من خلال نهج كمي تم تطبيقه من خلال نوعين من المستجيبين الذين شاركوا في استطلاعات الرأي، والتي تم تصميمها من خلال أسئلة مغلقة لإيجاد نتيجة دقيقة لمشكلة البحث. بموجب هذا النهج، شارك 431 مستهلكاً من المحتمل أن يتأثروا بالتسويق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي و24 رئيساً تنفيذياً للشركات التي تطبق التسويق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي. تم إجراء الاستطلاع عبر قنوات وسائل التواصل على الإنترنت للتأكد من تغطية أكبر عينة ممكنة من المستجيبين في الجدول الزمني المحدد للدراسة، تم جمع البيانات الأصلية دون تحيز من الباحثين. من خلال تقييم نتائج الاستطلاعات، توصل البحث إلى أن وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لها تأثير كبير على قرارات شراء المستهلك من خلال تسويق المنتجات، بينما وجد أن WhatsApp وInstagram وSnapchat هي القنوات المفضلة للمستهلكين. تمت مقارنة آراء كلا من المستهلكين، والرؤساء التنفيذيين للشركات، من قبل الباحثين وربطهم ببعض، وتم استنتاج أنه يمكن استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي كمصدر أكثر فاعلية لتسويق المنتجات لتحقيق نتائج أفضل، مقارنة استراتيجيات التسويق التقليدية. حيث أصبحت وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي حالياً أكثر مصادر التسويق تفضيلاً للشركات، والتي يمكن أن تحفز المستهلكين بشكل فعال على اتخاذ قرارات الشراء. وقد تم العثور أيضاً على ميل إيجابي للمالكون نحو استخدام قنوات التواصل الاجتماعي للترويج لمنتجاتهم. ولكن الأهم من ذلك، أنه تم العثور على مستوى متقدم من ميل المستهلك نحو العثور على المنتجات الاستهلاكية التي يستخدمها من خلال وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، والتي تدعم تأثير التسويق عبر وسائل

التواصل الاجتماعي على قرارات الشراء الخاصة بالمستهلك. ومع ذلك، فقد تم تحديد الأهمية الكبيرة للكلمة الشفهية لآراء المستهلكين من حيث تصنيف المنتج، ومراجعات المستهلكين، والتوصيات، ولذلك نقترح على الشركات زيادة الاهتمام بآراء المستهلك أثناء تصميم استراتيجيات التسويق

من خلال وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.

Appendix (8)

Cover in Arabic



جامعة الجميع الذكية/ ميد أوشن
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كلية الإدارة
ماجستير الإدارة

مشروع بحث التخرج لدرجة الماجستير في الإدارة

كود: MGM697

البرنامج: مشروع التخرج

أثر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على قرار الشراء للمستهلك في مدينة جدة في المملكة
العربية السعودية

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