

UNIVERSITY OF BAHRAIN

**College of Business
Administration**



**Department of Management
and marketing**

Influencers advertising on social media and customers' purchase intention: Evidence from Saudi Arabia

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Master Degree in Business Administration

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Kingdom of Bahrain

February 2022

جامعة البحرين

كلية إدارة الأعمال



قسم الإدارة و التسويق

المؤثرون المعلنون على وسائل التواصل الإجتماعي ونية العملاء للشراء: أدلة من المملكة العربية السعودية

مخطط بحث لاستكمال متطلبات الحصول على درجة الماجستير في إدارة الأعمال

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فبراير ٢٠٢٢

الملخص

الغرض: الغرض من هذه الأطروحة هو استكشاف تأثير القيمة الإعلامية للمؤثر على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي ومصادقية المؤثر على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على نية العملاء للشراء. تم تعميق التحليل من خلال تسليط الضوء على التأثير المعتدل للكلمات المتداولة إلكترونياً ودراسة أثرها على العلاقة بين القيمة الإعلامية للمؤثر على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي والثقة في العلامة التجارية المعلن عنها في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي وبين مصادقية المؤثر على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي والثقة في العلامة التجارية المعلن عنها في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي. بالإضافة إلى دراسة التأثير للوسيط وهو الثقة في العلامة التجارية المعلن عنها في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي ودراسة أثرها على العلاقة بين القيمة الإعلامية للمؤثر على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي ونية الشراء للعملاء وبين المصادقية ونية الشراء للعملاء.

التصميم \ المنهجية \ المنهج: تم تنفيذ هذه الأطروحة بأسلوب كمي. تم جمع البيانات من المستجيبين من خلال مقابلات مجموعة التركيز. تم جمع أسئلة الاستبيان بعناية من الدراسات السابقة وتم إعدادها للمقابلة. بلغ عدد المستجيبين الإجمالي ١٣٨ مستجيباً تم تقسيمهم إلى إجمالي ١٥ مجموعة تركيز. تم إجراء تحليل البيانات بواسطة SPSS& Smart pls

الآثار العملية: يمكن أن تساعد هذه الأطروحة المسوقين والمعلنين في تحديد كيف ينظر مستخدمو وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي إلى المؤثرين وكيف يمكن لهذا التصور أن يؤثر على ثققتهم في العلامات التجارية المعلن عنها على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي ونية شرائهم لهذه العلامات التجارية. يجب على المديرين والممارسين منح فهم أفضل لهذه التركيبات بالإضافة إلى المساعدة في العثور على مجال اهتمام مستخدم وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي والذي يؤدي إلى الهدف الأساسي المتمثل في رفع مستوى نية الشراء لدى العملاء. يجب على الممارسين استخدام المنشورات الدعائية الإيجابية لزيادة شعبية وتأثير إعلانات المؤثرين.

النتيجة: كشفت النتائج أن القيمة الإعلامية للمؤثر على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي ليس لها تأثير إيجابي على الثقة في العلامة التجارية المعلن عنها في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي ولا على نية العملاء للشراء، بينما وجدت مصادقية المؤثر على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي تأثيراً إيجابياً على الثقة في العلامة التجارية المعلن عنها في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي وعلى نية العملاء للشراء. كان التأثير المعتدل للكلمات المتداولة إلكترونياً بين القيمة الإعلامية للمؤثر على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي وثقة المستخدمين في العلامة التجارية المعلن عنها على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي فعالاً بينما كان التأثير المعتدل للكلمة الإلكترونية على العلاقة بين مصادقية المؤثر على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي وثقة المستخدمين الاجتماعيين في العلامة التجارية المعلن عنها على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لم يكن فعالاً. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تبين أن ثقة المستخدمين في العلامة التجارية المعلن عنها على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لها تأثير إيجابي على نوايا العملاء للشراء. أخيراً، تبين أن الثقة في العلامة التجارية المعلن عنها على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لا تتوسط في الربط بين القيمة الإعلامية لمستخدمي وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي وبين نية العملاء للشراء، ولكن وُجد أنها تتوسط في الربط بين مصادقية المؤثر على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي ونية العملاء للشراء.

القيود: مثل أي دراسة أخرى، فإن هذه الدراسة لها بعض القيود. أولاً، تم الحصول على النتائج وفقاً لتقييم العملاء، ومع ذلك، سيكون أكثر موثوقية إذا اعتمدت الدراسة طريقة مراقبة لمراقبة سلوك العملاء بدلاً من الاعتماد على

تقييماتهم الخاصة. أيضًا ، العديد من التراكيبات التي تعتبر عاملاً ذا صلة كانت حاسمة لتضمينها مثل الوباء العالمي المعروف باسم فيروس كورونا.

الأصالة: تكمن أصالة هذه الدراسة في كونها واحدة من أولى الدراسات في المملكة العربية السعودية التي تختبر التأثير الوسيط للثقة في العلامات التجارية المُعلن عنها على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي بين مصداقية المؤثرين على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي والقيمة الإعلامية ونية الشراء لدى العملاء. بالإضافة إلى التحقيق في الدور الوسيط لـ E-WOM في الربط بين مصداقية المؤثرين على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي والقيمة الإعلامية والثقة في العلامات التجارية المُعلن عنها على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.

التوصيات: يجب أن تحدد الدراسات المستقبلية منصة واحدة فقط يكون المشاركون من خلالها أتباع بعض المؤثرين ليكونوا أكثر تحديدًا. ممكن أن تضيف الدراسات المستقبلية المزيد من البحث في أمور أخرى مثل اختبار التأثير المعتدل للجنس والعمر. يمكن للدراسات المستقبلية أيضا أن تختبر تأثير كل بُعد من أبعاد المصداقية وحده ، وهم الجدارة بالثقة ، والخبرة ، وأوجه التشابه ، والجاذبية.

الكلمات الأساسية: قيمة إعلامية، مصداقية، ثقة، نية شراء، علامة تجارية، وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، مؤثر، أزياء.



Thesis Discussion Committee Decision

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The Discussion Committee met on 15-Feb-22 In Online (VIVA voce meeting). Upon discussing the student whose details are stated above in public, the discussion committee recommends the following:

The student is awarded a grade A in the thesis subject.

- ☐ Without making any changes to the thesis.
- ☒ After making the modifications attached with this decision.

Discussion Committee Members Approval:

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Declaration of Originality

Hereby, I declare this submitted thesis entitled (Influencers' advertising on social media and customers' purchase intention: Evidence from Saudi Arabia) represents my original research investigation. I have not used any other sources except as documented by citations. Also, it does not contain any material previously written or published by other authors or fabricated content.



Signature:

Date: 2/1/2022

As supervisor of the candidate's thesis, I certify that the above statements are accurate to the best of my knowledge.
Dr. Sarra Berraies (Supervisor)



Signature:

Date: 2/1/2022

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to everyone who helped me during my study, especially my lovely kids, Maria and Hassan, and the origin of my success, my beloved husband, Ali, who supported me from the first day of my study journey until today.

Acknowledgments

Foremost, I would be happy to express my deepest sincere gratitude to my supervisor DR. Sarra Berraies, for her continuous support, patience, motivation, enthusiasm, and scientific contributions that led to accomplishing this work.

I have obtained a lot of knowledge during the development of this thesis process, from the birth of the idea until the work was submitted. It has been an inspiring and encouraging task. I appreciate all the people who have contributed to this work because it would have been impossible to complete this thesis without them.

Finally, I would like to gratitude everyone who participated in helping me make this piece of work available.

Abstract

Purpose: This thesis aims to explore the effects of the Informative value of social media influencers and their credibility on customers' purchase intention. We extended the analysis by highlighting the moderating effect of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) between the informative value of social media influencers and trust in brands advertised in social media and between the credibility of social media influencers and trust in brand advertised in social media. The mediating effect of trust in brands advertised on social media was also investigated between the informative value of social media influencer and customers' purchase intention and between credibility and customers' purchase intention.

Design\ methodology\ approach: This thesis is focused on a quantitative approach. Data were collected from respondents through focus group interviews. A questionnaire was prepared for the interviewee and integrates the scales of measurement develop by prior studies. We targeted Saudi social media users who are followers of social media fashion influencers. The total number of respondents was 138 respondents. Data analysis was performed using SPSS and SMART PLS.

Findings: The results revealed that the informative value of social media influencers does not have a positive effect on trust in brands advertised on social media nor in customers' purchase intention. In contrast, the credibility of social media influencers was found to positively affect trust in brands advertised on social media and customers' purchase intention. The moderating effect of E-WOM between social media influencers' informative value and users' trust in the brand advertised on social media was significant. In contrast, the moderating effect of E-WOM between social media influencers' credibility and social users' trust in the brand advertised on social media was not significant. In addition, users' trust in the brand advertised on social media positively affects social media customers' purchase intentions. Finally, results highlighted that trust in brand advertised on social media does not mediate the link between social media influencer's informative value and social media customers' purchase intention. However, they revealed that trust in brand advertised in social media partially mediates the link between social media influencer's credibility and social media customers' purchase intention

Practical implications: This thesis can assist marketers and advertisers in determining how social media users perceive influencers and how this perception can affect their trust in brands advertised on social media and their purchase intention of these brands. According to our findings, businesses should target the right influencers who have a high level of credibility, who is trustworthy and expert in the domain of the advertised products. In addition, practitioners should use sponsored posts to increase the popularity and the influence of social media influencers and increase the effect of positive E-WOM and at the same time reduce the amount of negative E-WOM.

Limitations: Like any other study this study has some limitations. First, the results were obtained according to the customers' evaluation however, it would be more reliable if the study has adopted an observational method to observe the customers attitude instead of depending on their own evaluations. Also, several constructs that are considered as relevant factors are crucial to include such as the worldwide pandemic known as corona virus.

Originality: The originality of this study lies in being one of the first study in Saudi Arabia testing the mediating effect of trust in brands advertised on social media between social media influencers' credibility and informative value and customers' purchase intention. In addition, this thesis pioneers the investigation of the moderating role of E-WOM in the link between social media influencers' credibility and informative value and trust in brands advertised on social media.

Recommendations: Future studies should specify only one platform through which the participants are followers of some influencers to be more specific. Further research could add other perspectives such as testing the moderating effects of gender and age. Future studies could test the specific impact of each social media influencer's credibility dimension which are trustworthiness, expertise, similarities, attractiveness.

Keywords: informative value, credibility, trust, purchase intention, brand. Social media, influencer

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Glossary of terms

AVE: Average Variance Extracted

E-WOM: electronic word of mouth.

WOM: word of mouth.

Pls: Partial least squares.

SMU: social media use.

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

PLS-SEM: Partial Least Analysis-Structural Equation Modelling.

Chapter 1: General introduction

1.1 Overview

Social media has become a part of people's daily practice in today's digital era. It is a channel proposing bondless gain of access to an unlimited amount of global information (Pentina et al., 2018). Since the plethora of social media platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, Instagram, and YouTube, and the rapidly growing number of social media users, marketers perceive social media platforms as a critical marketing platform to increase interaction with customers(Chetioui et al., 2020). Accordingly, due to the increased use of social media platforms, social media influencer has become a critical Digital Marketing tool helping companies promote their brands. Social media influencers have emerged as critical third-party endorsers (Freberg et al., 2011). They can be portrayed as digital influencers, famous micro-celebrities, online opinion leaders, and content generators who have expertise in specific areas, who continuously narrate their personal lives, whether visually or textually, who add marketing value to brands through producing valued content in social media regularly and who have followers from enormous social networks(Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019).

The firms' posts about their products on their social media pages may be perceived as a pure advertisement by individuals (Saima & Khan, 2020). However, when firms employ well-known social media influencers to provide information, promote and recommend their products and brands related to their expertise in a specific domain, consumers tend to believe the posts and reviews of these influencers as they consider them as a more

credible source rather than traditional advertisements (AlFarraj et al., 2021; Appel et al., 2020). A recent report mentioned that the return on investment (ROI) of influencers' advertisements results in 11 times the return of the traditional advertisement. Also, 94% of marketers found influencers marketing campaigns to be very effective (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

This new trend in digital marketing could be beneficial for businesses to expand their customer portfolio and in inducing brand awareness and encouraging them to purchase their brands (Raji et al., 2019; Saima & Khan, 2020; Taillon et al., 2020). Some researchers have raised questions about which influencers' characteristics may influence followers and how the latter will react to the influencers (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). The influencers' perceived experience, knowledge, and informative value can be crucial in retaining the followers' intention and persuading them to purchase the brands. Also, the influencers' perceived credibility has retained the attention of many academicians and practitioners as an essential factor influencing the followers (AlFarraj et al., 2021). A newly published report by AlFarraj et al., (2021) highlighted that 49% of customers consider the recommendations offered by social media influencers when making purchasing decisions.

As the brand purchasing decision process involves risks for customers, customers' trust in brands and their willingness to consider that the brands will meet their hopes and deliver on their promises play a crucial role in reducing risk. In this line, consumers tend to seek recommendations from people they can trust (Leite & Baptista, 2021). The uncertainty reduction theory offers a valuable framework that explains how specific characteristics of social media influencers (endorsing influencers) can build trust in recommended brands by reducing the uncertainty and perceived risk of purchasing these endorsed brands (Leite and Baptista,

2021). Winer., (2009) has stated that marketers don't have absolute control over the disseminated message of their brands on social media. Indeed, customers can also be influenced by the opinions and comments of other individuals on social media on any brand's page without permission from those brands(Gensler et al., 2013). Consumers tend to consider information about the brands they will purchase by looking into the comments of other customers on social media. The development of social media has spread the importance of E-WOM as the consumers are also considered as content-generators. A positive or negative E-WOM can affect positively or negatively trust in the brand.

With the astonishingly rapid growth in the number of social media influencers' followers, the chance of influencers' marketing has increased in various industries (Lang & Joyner Armstrong, 2018). One of these industries is Fashion, where social media influencers marketing has been commonly considered in the latest years (Chetioui et al., 2020). With the increasingly expanding demands in the Fashion industry, customers' purchasing behaviors are highly impacted by social media influencers' fashion trends and advertisements. Social media fashion influencers are considered strong players in the fashion industry because of their ability to attract followers interested in fashion trends or stylish fashion things, which leads them to purchase (Park & Kim, 2016). Fashion influencers are easily identified as attractive since the appeal of the fashion sector (Leite and Baptista, 2021; Schouten et al., 2020). However, little is known about the influence of social media influencers within the Saudi context. The number of current populations in Saudi Arabia is 35.08 million, and around 27.80 million are active social media users, which means 72.38% of the total population(Saudi Arabia Social Media Statistics 2021 (Infographics) - GMI Blog, 2021).

This thesis investigates the characteristics related to fashion influencers advertisements and their impact on customers' purchase intention in Saudi Arabia with considering the mediating effect of e-trust and the moderating role of E-WOM.

1.2 Thesis problem

Our thesis problem mainly lies in the following:

- 1- Social media influencers' appearance made dynamic changes in the way of customers connection with brands as customers become accustomed to seeking information from social media influencers so businesses must utilize the best match social media platforms and influencers campaigns to attract more customers and enhance their business profit (Lee et al., 2020; Lou & Yuan, 2019).
- 2- Fashion industries need to indulge in market research to find the customers' preferences and increase the customers' intention to purchase (de Wagenaar et al., 2022).
- 3- Businesses require an understanding of which influencers' characteristics attract customers and enhance their purchase intention (Chloe Ki et al., 2022).
- 4- The literature review showed a research gap regarding the mechanism through which social influencers' credibility and informative value could influence social media customers' purchase intention and how followers could be affected by the comments of other followers (Abdullah et al., 2020).
- 5- Many studies highlighted that brand trust is critical in influencing consumers' purchase intention so it is critical to study the effect of trust on Saudi social media users. (Chae et al., 2020; Sanny et al., 2020).

As per our research knowledge, none of the previous studies were in the context of influencers' fashion advertisements in Saudi Arabia. nowadays the influencers' fashion advertisements in social media became essential for shaping customers' purchase intention. Customers consider social media as a key source of fashion information(Park & Kim, 2016). Businesses need to research the impact of influencers on the promotion of their brand, their advertising effectiveness, and their brand purchase increased. Furthermore, among the features of social media influencers that can affect customers' purchases, researchers argued that social media influencers' informative value and credibility were influential and important among customers (Podder & Tanjee, 2021). Customers tend to intend to purchase the products advertised on social media if they believe the information provided by the influencers and if they see good comments about these products on social media (Lee et al., 2020). Despite the importance of this topic, few studies have been carried out in Saudi Arabia about the impact of social media influencers on followers' attitudes.

1.3 Thesis Questions

The major two research questions are as follows:

- 1- Does trust in a brand advertised on social media mediates the link between social media influencers' perceived values and customers' purchase intention?
- 2- Does E-WOM moderate the link between social media influencers' perceived values and trust in the brand advertised on social media?

The above questions are supported by supplementary thesis questions which have to be answered:

- 1- Does social media influencers' informative value have a positive effect on customers' purchase intention?

- 2- Does social media influencers' credibility have a positive effect on customers' purchase intention?
- 3- Does social media influencers' informative value have a positive effect on trust in the brand advertised on social media?
- 4- Does social media influencers' credibility have a positive effect on trust in the brand advertised on social media?
- 5- Does trust in a brand advertised on social media have a positive effect on customers' purchase intention?
- 6- Does E-WOM moderate the link between social media influencers' informative value and trust in the brand advertised on social media?
- 7- Does E-WOM moderate the link between social media influencers' credibility and trust in the brand advertised on social media?
- 8- Does trust in the brand advertised on social media mediate the link between social media influencers' informative value and customers' purchase intention?
- 9- Does trust in the brand advertised on social media mediate the link between social media influencers' credibility and customers' purchase intention?

1.4 Major objectives

This thesis examines the effect of social media influencers' perceived values, focusing on perceived informative value and perceived credibility value, on social media customers' purchase intention in Saudi Arabia. It deepens the analysis by concentrating on the mediating effect of trust in brand advertised on social media between social media influencers' perceived values and social media customers' purchase intention and the moderating effect of E-WOM between social media influencers' perceived values and trust in brand advertised on social media.

The thesis aims to perform a literature review to define the main concepts of this thesis and to formulate hypotheses related to the link between our thesis variables, and test these hypotheses empirically in the context of Saudi Arabia to accomplish the below objectives:

- To investigate the effect of perceived values of social media influencers fashion advertisements, focusing on influencers' informative value and credibility on social media customers' purchase intention.
- To investigate the mediating role of trust in brand advertised on social media in the link between perceived values of social media influencers fashion advertisements and social media customers' purchase intention.
- To examine the moderating role of E-WOM in the link between perceived values of social media influencers and trust in brands advertised on social media.

1.5 Significance of the Thesis

This Thesis will enrich the Saudi literature in social media marketing. This study is one of the few studies that considered the influence of the four dimensions of social media influencers' credibility on their followers' attitudes. It is one of the earliest to test if E-WOM moderates the link between the informative value of social media influencers and trust in brand advertised on social media and if E-WOM moderates the link between the credibility of social media influencers and trust in brand advertised on social media.

The originality of this study lies in testing the mediating effect of trust in brands advertised on social media between social media influencers' credibility and informative value and customers' purchase intention. In comparison, Lou & Yuan, (2019) have examined the mediating effect of

trust in branded posts between the informative value and four components of social influencers' credibility and brand purchase intention. We instead focus on this study of the mediating role of trust in brands advertised on social media. None of the studies were conducted on Saudi found the effectiveness of influencers' fashion advertisements.

Furthermore, we pioneer the investigation of the moderating role of E-WOM in the link between social media influencers' credibility and informative value and trust in brands advertised on social media. Many researchers have studied the influence of E-WOM on customers' purchase intention (Gusti et al., 2019; Farzin & Fattahi, 2018). López & Sicilia (2014) researched the impact of E-WOM and customers' perceived trustworthiness on the purchase decision in another context than social media. Our study outlines the need to know if, in the context of social media, E-WOM moderates the link between social media influencers' informative value and credibility and trust in brands advertised in social media in Saudi Arabia. Finally, examining the influence of social media influencers' credibility and informational value on the attitude of the influencers is vital for marketers and brand managers. This study aims to assist marketers and advertisers in determining how social media users perceive influencers and how this perception can affect their trust in brands advertised on social media and their purchase intention of these brands.

The present thesis is intended to study the perceived value of influencers' fashion advertisements and how it is related to purchase intention in the Saudi digital market. The result will provide insights for marketers and contribute to understanding customers' acceptance of social media influencers' fashion advertisements. Also, it will offer fashion brands' marketers a set of the components and characteristics of influencers to generate more purchases within this new marketing field. This thesis is of

interest to marketers of fashion brands as it helps them create marketing strategies for influencers.

Finally, examining the influence of social media influencers' credibility and informational value on the attitude of the influencers is vital for marketers and brand managers. This study aims to assist marketers and advertisers in determining how social media users perceive influencers and how this perception can affect their trust in brands advertised on social media and their purchase intention of these brands.

1.6 Thesis setting

A quantitative approach was adopted in this thesis. The respondents' data was collected through focus group interviews. A questionnaire was carefully prepared for the interviewee. The total number of respondents was 138 respondents. A total of 15 focus groups that consist of 6 groups of 10, 4 groups of 7, 3 groups of 11, 1 group of 9, 1 group of 8 participated in the focus group interview. Each group meeting took around 40-50 minutes, and each participant was able to tell her/his opinion in influencers' fashion spontaneously. To analyze the result of the collected responses, SPSS and Smart PLS were used.

1.7 Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured in five chapters. The first chapter presents the general introduction of this thesis that includes an overview of the thesis in general to show the purpose of it where a piece of brief information is given about social media influencers marketing and its effectiveness on customers' purchase intention and the importance of the thesis variables, the thesis problem, the thesis objectives, the study significance, the study setting, and the thesis structure.

Chapter two focuses on the literature review. We will define our thesis variables, the thesis framework and analyze the past studies to justify the hypotheses we will formulate to build our thesis model.

Chapter three explains the thesis methodology, design, sampling techniques, data collection, and the statistical tools used to analyze the data collected.

Chapter four highlights the results of the data analysis and the discussion of these results.

Chapter five presents the conclusion of this study along with the thesis' theoretical contributions, managerial implications, the limits ,and thesis perspectives.

1.8 Thesis Terminology

Advertisement: promotions of objects or services to attract viewers. The advertisements can be done in many ways, like interacting videos or pictures (Seo & Park, 2018).

Celebrities: those who created their influence from the traditional way such as radio, TV, and magazine(Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Credibility: the person's ability to make his talk honest and believed by others(Weismueller et al., 2020).

Customer: people who exchange money to buy goods or services from vendors (Alalwan, 2018).

E-commerce (electronic commerce): the process of online shopping where a person can buy or\and sell online (Filieri et al., 2015).

E-trust (electronic trust): the willingness of being vulnerable to another party when dealing online(Ahorsu et al., 2021).

E-WOM (electronic word of mouth): actual or former or potential customers' statements about a brand or organization that remains on the internet for a crowd of people and organizations to review(Yanti & Suryani, 2021).

Followers: Those who give complete supports or loyalty to the people they follow(Tafesse & Wood, 2021).

Informative value: content with reliable and useful information that could help people guide their actions and decision-making (Hsu et al., 2013).

Marketing: An activity of communicating, creating, delivering, and sharing significant offers for consumers or all society(Wibowo et al., 2020).

Purchase intention: A sign of consumers' behavior toward purchasing objects or services and the extent of consumers' readiness to pay (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019)

Social media: a technology that facilitates sharing ideas, knowledge, and thoughts through computers, tablets, smartphones(Rusli & Nurdin, 2021).

Social media influencers: People who have created their knowledge, reputation, and expertise in specific areas. They have many followers who pay attention to the uploaded posts regularly (Abidin et al., 2015; (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019)

Trust: trust is a crucial factor known as the confidence of one party in another party based on reliability and integrity offered (Octavia & Tamerlane, 2017).

Trust in the brand: the customers' expectations or beliefs of future behaviors toward the brand that it will meet their expectations(Uzir et al., 2021).

WOM (word of mouth): former or potential or actual customers' opinions about an organization or a brand (Yanti & Suryani, 2021).

1.9 Summary

This chapter included a general introduction to this thesis. It started by giving an overview of the topic followed by thesis problem, thesis questions, major objectives, the significance of the thesis, thesis setting, thesis structure. Finally, thesis terminology was presented to give a brief definition of essential terms that are used in this study.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework and literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Social media has altered customers' way of communicating and interacting with firms. In the line of influencer marketing, firms use social media influencers to drive brand messages to influence the target audience and promote their services and products. The latter tend to get influenced by social media influencers who act as brand ambassadors and stay updated about the latest trend of products (Munnukka et al., 2016). In the marketing era, the rise of social media users has significantly affected its practices. To sustain existence in this digital era, businesses are investing more in digital marketing to boost their presence in social media; the marketers estimate that in coming years, they expect companies to expand their marketing budget up to 86.9 % (Survey-Results_by_Firm_and_Industry_Characteristics, 2020). In this technological era, social media marketing is considered an expansion of traditional and digital marketing communication tools that monitor and facilitate interaction and collaboration among the customers and respective brands (Tracy L. Tuten, 2021). In the domain of social media, trust plays a significant role in exploring the consumer responses toward various interactions through online activities, and it also explains the efforts taken up by the marketers to increase equity and loyalty towards the brand (Tatar & Eren-Erdoğan, 2016; Warner-Söderholm et al., 2018). However, based on vigorous literature, there is still a need for more research to recognize the influence of influencers' advertisements on customer perception (Seo & Park, 2018). Researchers categorized the studies on social media into

four main classifications: brand communities, network analysis, E-WOM, and product-harm crises (Gensler et al., 2013). Further, these classifications are subdivided into groups through which the first group explores the social media role based on the advertisements' activities; second group studies the role of social media in the relationship management of customers; third identifies the role of the informative influence of social media on customers' behavior; finally, the group highlights the aspects that impact the adoption of the social group by customers, all these studies explore the social media based on the organization perception (Alalwan et al., 2017). In this thesis, the light will be shed on the role of social media based on influencer advertising activities.

In this chapter, the researcher does a vigorous review of the relevant literature to enhance the understanding of social media influencers' perceived values and their influence on purchase intentions. In this line, a deep sight will be given carefully on the various existing relationship and relevant theories, particularly the communication-persuasion matrix of McGuire (2001), the commitment-trust theory, and social identity theory, to justify the links between our thesis variables.

2.2 Social media influencer's perceived values

2.2.1 Social media influencer

Influencers' marketing represents a well-known type of online marketing nowadays in this leading edge of purchasing decision making. It provides opportunities for today's firms and defines new roads to market their products and services. Lou & Yuan (2019) define influencer marketing as a marketing and advertising strategy that focuses on the impact of

influential people or opinion leaders on social media users' brand awareness and purchasing decisions. Leban & Voyer (2020) highlighted that traditional marketing is broken as it does not contribute directly and concretely to sales in this new era of social media. They suggested that firms should rethink their traditional marketing strategies. In this line, influencers' marketing is a technique that characterizes and targets the influencers in a market. That materializes the fact that firms collaborate with communities of influencers because the prospects (the followers of these influencers) tend to be influenced by these opinions leaders. In this perspective, marketers collaborate with targeted influencers to build and support their branded content to the latter's followers and the brands' target customers (Lou & Yuan, 2019)

As mass communication channels and media landscapes like TV stations, newspapers, and radios are not anymore considered to be a basis of information for customers when compared to social media, businesses mainly depend on virtual communities or social media channels for building a relationship and exchanging information with the prospects or their customers (Hair et al., 2010). Freberg et al. (2011) portrayed social media influencers as a third party and new types of independent influencers who can form their audiences' attitudes through multiple social media platforms. Even though the marketing research shed light on social media influencers in current years, no standard definition of social media influencers has been stated, and those influencers have been described differently by many researchers. Freberg et al. (2011) defined social media influencers as a third party who can form his\her audience attitude through social media independently. Uzunoğlu and Misci Kip (2014) have defined social media influencers as pioneers in leading opinions and capable of reaching a high amount of social media users through his\her followers.

In comparison, Berryman & Kavka (2017) defined influencers as any individual known for his\her cultural power resulting in his\her association with brands to be considered as an advertiser. De Veirman et al. (2017) conceptualized social media influencers as users of social media who establish a substantial network of followers, post textual or visual narrations daily, and influence his\her viewers. In addition, Cocker & Cronin (2017) defined social media influencers as social media users who accomplish micro-celebrity and share opinions, experiences, and thoughts daily in social media through their content. Those celebrities' way of production and distribution of their content mark them out from celebrities' traditional definition. Lou & Yuan, (2019), added that traditional celebrities, those who created their influence from the traditional way such as radio, TV, and magazine could get influencers' status once they have made their regular content on social media.

Nowadays, marketers are exploiting these opportunities offered by social media influencer marketing. As technology is overgrowing, marketers seek to establish customer engagement on many social media through multiple platforms like Snapchat, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter. The individuals' power is too low when compared to social media influencers who have nontypical power generated from the large audience he\she has(Delbaere et al., 2021). Brands can deal with the right influencers who can connect deeply with customers and opt for the affordable influencers that suit their budget to sign advertising contracts.

Moreover, social media influencers usually establish themselves by specifying their area of interest. Accordingly, customers tend to consider the influencers' opinion about a particular brand, especially when this brand match the influencer's area of expertise(Ki et al., 2020). Referring to the firms belonging to the fashion industry, Solomon (2017) purports that

these firms employ celebrity influencers to promote their services and products, foster products and services, and influence the customers' purchase behaviors. Referring to social media influencers nowadays, the individuals need to satisfy social and personal interests and goals (e.g., the need to be entertained, have a sense of belonging to a society, and get brands updates to simplify purchase decisions. This can explain the exert power of influencers on followers' behavior and impression toward an advertised brand, bolstering up their role as opinion leaders. Likewise, in brand communities, the more they use social media to exchange information, be entertained and make social relations, the greater participation will be on social media, which initiates brands loyalty and trust(Kamboj et al., 2018).

Lou & Yuan, (2019) stressed that the influencers' inherent characteristics work as crucial factors affecting the customers' perceptions of the brands. These authors argue that more studies are needed to understand the fundamental mechanisms that make social media influencers effective. Building on the social media influencer value (SMIV) model identified by Lou & Yuan, (2019), we focus on social media influencers' credibility and informative value as key antecedents of consumer behaviors.

2.2.2 Social media influencers' credibility and informative value

Today, the contemporary social media landscape's view is way different from a few years ago as changes occur rapidly. This context is characterized by the quick spread of information that influencers and social media users explode.

This thesis uses two variables related to social media influencers, i.e., social media influencers' informative value and social media influencers' credibility. Lou & Yuan, (2019) identified the SMIV model that broadens the advertising value's framework by highlighting the importance of source credibility and informativeness value for the effectiveness of influencer marketing.

One of the elements affecting the success of influencer endorsements is perceived social media influencers' credibility (Munnukka et al., 2016). The credibility of the influencers represents the process of judgment taken up by the customers when they believe in some communication. It may also be represented by the fact that the receiver gets highly influenced and positively accepts the communicator's message (Zayyad et al., 2020). Source credibility refers to the communicator's favorable attributes that impact a message's acceptance by the receiver (Ohanian, 2013). Commonly, social media influencers enhance an organization's message (Chakraborty & Bhat, 2017). Credibility is an essential factor while communicating with social media users due to the massive amount of online information that has provoked concerns about the information's origin. Influencers' credibility positively impacts consumer credibility (Munnukka et al., 2016). This concept was conceptualized first by Ohanian (2013) as a triptych including three dimensions, namely attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness. Munnukka et al. (2016) extended this concept to another extent, namely similarity. Lou & Yuan, (2019) conceptualized the influencer-generated content's credibility, attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity. In this line, Munnukka et al. (2016) have found that trustworthiness, similarity, expertise, and attractiveness are strongly correlated.

Trustworthiness refers to recipients' confidence in considering the influencers' content as the most valid. The degree of trustworthiness in the communicator aims to deliver the arguments they believe are the most reasonable (Munnukka et al., 2016). The receivers' view of the social media influencer's honesty, sincerity, or truthfulness is source trustworthiness (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Trustworthiness is one of the credibility components defined as the degree of customers' trust in influencers on what they do and what they say (Chetioui et al., 2020). In addition, social media influencers must be viewed as credible sources of information that provide in-depth and helpful evidence, especially in areas on which they are experts. The expertise refers to the extent of believing in social media influencers as a valid source of assertions due to their expertise in a product or a service. It materializes the degree to which the social media influencer is regarded as a reliable source of information (Munnukka et al., 2016). The competence or qualification of the social media influencers, including their knowledge or abilities, to make particular statements about a specific subject or issue is referred to as expertise (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Furthermore, Torres et al. (2019) revealed that similarities and attractiveness of social media influencers increase credibility and positively impact the perceived value of social media influencers. Likewise, Ki and Kim (2019) raised that social media influencers' prestigious and attractive content affects their perceived value and makes them viewed as opinion leaders, enhancing their followers' desire to mimic them and increasing the influencers' advertisement effectiveness. Similarities refer to the degree of similarity between the social media influencers and the recipients, as the credibility increases with similarities and decreases with dissimilarities (Yuan & Lou, 2020). Social influencers' similarities refer to their perceived similarity to the followers, such as

ideological or demographic elements(Lou & Yuan, 2019). Attractiveness is a source of credibility, and it is related to factors such as familiarities and likeability. It refers to social media influencers' physical attractiveness or likeability (Lou & Yuan, 2019). It positively impacts the credibility of an advertisement, especially when the products require a physical appearance(Yuan & Lou, 2020). Based on the perception of (Wiedmann & von Mettenheim, 2020), in their research study, they have revealed that in this competitive era, the strategy of influencer marketing is growing rapidly in Germany. Thus, the researchers identified which factor is more important in online influencer campaigns. However, the results describe that the main factor in such campaigns is trustworthiness, which can be followed by attractiveness and, in the end, influencers' expertise to attract the customers to purchase the specific products.

Furthermore, the informative value of social media influencers has been identified as a critical factor for influencer marketing effectiveness (Yuan & Lou, 2020). Social media influencers' informativeness is the influencers' aptitude to provide valuable information related to the services or the products advertised on social media (Lou & Yuan, 2019). It refers to the influencers' advertisement's content with reliable and valuable information that helps people guide their actions and decision-making. Over time, it provides awareness about the brand, ultimately resulting in customers' purchase intention(Rahman & Astuti, 2020).

2.3 Global Studies about the effect of social media influencers' characteristics on consumers' behaviors

The below table presents some previous studies from different countries that have focused on similar variables of this thesis. A concise description of these studies is provided, and the limitations of these studies are taken into consideration.

Table(1): global studies

Author (s) Name	Subject	Country	Description	Research Gap
(Wiedmann & von Mettenheim, 2020)	Attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise – social influencers' winning formula?	Germany	The importance of this study dwells in investigating the significance of social media influencers' Attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise. However, this study found trustworthiness as the most significant then, attractiveness and unexpectedly, the significance of expertise is practically nil	It has focused on numeric requirements: the number of followers or viewers. However, the number of followers or viewers does not necessarily mean the followers trust the influencers or find them attractive. There are many other reasons to have many followers or viewers. For example, some followers follow influencers to look

				after influencers' mistakes and destroy their reputation. (Cha et al., 2010; Romero & Ruiz-Equihua, 2020) proposed that numbers of followers are an indicator of publicity rather than influencing
(Chetioui et al., 2020)	How fashion influencers contribute to consumers' purchase intention	Morocco	This study aims to identify the impact of fashion influencers on purchase intentions and brand attitude. As well as exploring customers' attitudes toward fashion influencers. However, the result revealed that consumers' attitudes regarding fashion influencers have a positive effect on brand attitude and customers' purchase intention. Also, it was found that trust,	Although the research covered an exciting topic, It has adopted a snowball sampling Tanique to distribute the questionnaire, which might lead to Chances of bias and Complexities in selecting a truly representative sample. Also, it would be more interesting if a qualitative method was applied to measure the effect of fashion influencers as it allows

			behavioral control, perceived credibility, subjective norms, congruence, and expertise have a positive effect on customers' attitudes.	you to make more probing.
(Dabbous et al., 2020)	Social Commerce Success: Antecedents of Purchase Intention and the Mediating Role of Trust	Lebanon	In the past few years, e-commerce appeared as a new phenomenon. There is still a gap in the literature about it until today. So, little is understood about how online social interactions, consumers' engagement on social networks, perceived economic benefit, and online brand awareness increase purchase intention via social commerce with a mediating role of trust. The findings of this study revealed all the above relations	This study considers only two applications. These applications are Facebook and Instagram. The finding of this study cannot be generalized to any other application, and it is limited for these two applications. Future studies could address more applications in the sample and discuss the impact of changing the platforms. This study overlooked possible effects like culture, individual characteristics, and social features. After

			between variables are fully mediated with trust. Where Social interactions have an immediate positive impact on purchase intentions. Perceived economic benefit significantly impacts trust and intention to purchase via social commerce.	All, future studies could include gender and social norms as moderating variables.
(Anaya-Sánchez et al., 2020)	Analyzing the influence of the presentation of fashion garments on young consumers' online behavior	United Kingdom	This paper tries to distinguish the interaction elements of fashion garments online. The two elements identified to study their impact on the decision-making process and consumers' behavior are fashion information online and product viewing. The study concludes that available product viewing gives the	The data was collected from females only. However, the study would be more significant if data were collected from males and females to compare both. The study sample was ASOS customers. They were taking the interview at the time of beginning the research. However, at the end of the study, many changes had happened.

			consumer a chance to personalize the view and of the garment. On the other hand, aesthetic fashion information offers information and advice about the garments.	So, a comparative approach to comparing old and new consumers will be significant to show the company's improvement.
(Prasad et al., 2017)	Social media usage, electronic word of mouth, and purchase-decision involvement	India	This paper sheds light on the framework of social media, electronic word of mouth, trust, and purchase decision involvement. This study declared that social media usage and E-WOM positively impact customers' purchase decisions and online trust mediate the relationship between the variables.	This study was applied to Millennials or Y generation university students only. It overrides the importance of other generations. Specially generation Z was supposed to be included in this study as this generation was born in an era that is aware of information technologies and social media (Berkup, 2014). A comparative approach should be included to see differences between generations

(Kananukul et al., 2015)	Building customer equity through trust in social networking sites A perspective from Thailand consumers	Thailand	This study intends to empirically examine the following cognitive-behavioral model in the context of fashion brand communities. The model consists of perceived benefits of social networking sites, brand trust, trust in social networking sites, customers equity, and brand loyalty. The finding of this study disclosed that social networking users who believe in receiving social and practical advantages from engaging in social network sites were found trusting the sites rather than directly establishing trust in the brands.	Although the study contained general users of fashion social network brands, the sample of this study was not carefully chosen. High number of the respondents were university students. The sample must represent fair representation in terms of the respondent's age. To increase generalizability, other studies should diversify their representative sample.
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(McLean et al., 2020b)	How live chat assistants drive travel consumers' attitudes, trust and purchase intentions: The role of human touch	United Kingdom	Nowadays, with the continued use of social media, services and products can be marketed globally online easily. There are two important forces of customers' decision-making: trust and familiarity. Although online shopping advocates many choices for customers and more flexibility, the online service provider is responsible for securing the online customers' data.	Around 82% of world travelers used travel provider websites in 2018 (Online Travel Booking,2020). Whereas in this study, only eight websites were included. As a result, the finding of this study cannot be generalized. Moreover, the study needs to explain further and assess artificial intelligent ability that replaces humans with a chatbot.
(Y. K. Choi et al., 2017)	E-WOM messaging on social media Social ties, temporal distance, and message	Korea	This study seeks to discover the intentions of social media users to share E-WOM messages depending on the tie strength and the concreteness of promotional messages.	This paper primarily focuses on studying variables related to the E-WOM sender. However, it should give more attention to the E-WOM receiver. Variables such as credibility and trust of

	concreteness		The finding of this study implies that customers are most likely to share promotional messages with others with whom they have a great relationship rather than those with a weak connection.	E-WOM will enrich the value of the study and make it more significant.
(Shen, 2021)	A persuasive eWOM model for increasing consumer engagement on social media: evidence from Irish fashion micro-influencers	Ireland	This study seeks to explore how E-WOM messages from microblogs fashion influencers can increase customers' engagement on social media. Four types of fashion influencers were identified in the study. These four are opinion leaders, market mavens, brand adopters, and product leaders. The survey result explored that market mavens' E-WOM have the most	This study is mainly focusing on written E-WOM. However, it is known that influencers do not depend on written text only. They use photos and videos to deliver their messages and be more persuasive.

			significant effect on the engagement of social media consumers.	
(Carlson et al., 2018)	Customer engagement behaviors in social media: capturing innovation opportunities	Turkey	This study seeks to test tourists' perceptions of the source of information quality and credibility of the content shared on social media to see whether they influence their perceptions. Gender played a moderating role in the examined relationship. The finding declared that credibility and source information quality have positive effect on tourist perception. Also, gender was found to affect the relationship between variables.	The study was carried out in one region in Turkey. So, the study is supposed to be carried out in different areas to generalize the result. Also, the respondents were given the questionnaire by the time they arrived. Nevertheless, their holiday was still in progress. As a result, anything that might happen days after their arrival may change the respondents' perceptions.

2.3 Brand purchase intention

Purchase intention is the likelihood of a customer buying from a specific brand. The probability of buying increases as the purchase intention increases (Teng et al., 2018). It also indicates the likelihood that a customer is willing or planning to purchase from a particular brand in the future. From the view of marketers, purchase intention is a determining factor in purchase decisions (M. Rizwan et al., 2013). Previous studies suggest that customers' attitude toward certain brands influence their purchase intention (Pradhan et al., 2014). Social media customers' purchase intention is a sign of consumers' behavior toward purchasing the advertised objects or services on social media and the extent of consumers' readiness to pay (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019)

Service industries arranged social media advertisements for the purpose of attracting customers to compete in this technological era to enhance purchase intention. Many service organizations transformed their traditional advertising techniques online to maximize the versatile and cooperative tools available (Hernández et al., 2010; Ramanathan et al., 2020). However, several pieces of research explored factors that impact the customers' intentions to repurchase/purchase services or products through the Internet. Such elements comprise product assurance, timely product delivery, payment methods, and the physical sense of the products. However, it is still not easy for the business to distinguish which aspects of social media enhance customers' purchase behaviors to predict actual demand (San Martín & Herrero, 2012).

Social media marketing has become a challenge for marketing managers, as it assists them to identify the response of the customers, which could positively influence their behaviors, decisions, and purchase intentions which ultimately results in brand building and creating long-term customer

relationships (Chen & Lin, 2019; Dann, 2010; Sano & Kaede, 2014). Thus, marketing managers face a significant challenge: achieving maximum opportunities and benefits for successful brand management through proper social media activities (Godey et al., 2016; Schultz & Peltier, 2013). In this regard, while characterizing the social media marketing activities, five major forces: trendiness, interaction, customization entertainment, and word-of-mouth, are explored that are engaged in identifying the consumers' perceptions through various marketing practices on social media (Yadav & Rahman, 2018). With the assistance of these activities, the organizations can encourage consumers' experiences, which influence the brand's equity and ensure the customers' purchase intentions (Chen & Lin, 2019).

In previous studies, instruments such as quality, brand attitude, knowledge about the brand, and brand image have significantly impacted purchase intention (Rizwan & Waheda, 2013). (McLean, Osei-Frimpong, Wilson, & Pitardi, 2020) studied how live chat assistants drive travel consumers' attitudes, trust and purchase intentions. Based on the social identity theory perspective, the researchers have explored how much live chat services may influence the behavior, belief and attitudes of customers if they get to engage in online travel shopping. Hence, the results support this perception that such human live chats positively impact customer attitudes and trust towards the website and increase purchase intention. In addition, it has been found that E-WOM becomes more effective and powerful that it positively impacts customers' purchase intention when it comes from very well-known personalities like social media influencers (Erkan & Evans, 2016). The amount of information available for customers can also impact their purchase intention. Also, the perceived credibility of E-WOM results in greater purchase intention (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017).

2.4 Customers' trust in the brand

Trust is an essential buyer-seller relationship and constitutes a key antecedent in purchase intention (Takaya, 2019). Trust is defined as the confidence of one party in another party based on reliability and integrity offered (Octavia & Tamerlane, 2017). It may also be described as the willingness of the customer to purchase the product depends on the quality and services of a brand that is provided according to the customer's expectations that results in credibility, benevolence, and ability of product brand to fulfill customers' expectations (Chen, 2009)

Trust can be measured through the emotional or psychological state, but it can also be explored as the individual's behavioral perspectives. According to Amine et al. (2021), trust is the willingness of one party to be vulnerable to the other, based on the belief that the other party is concerned, open, competent, and reliable. Hence, sometimes trust means taking a risk and choosing one option with this possibility to lose another one (Sadiq et al., 2021).

According to Chetoui et al. (2020), trust identifies the expectations of consumers that he/she expects from the firm or brand, that they will provide or deliver the product according to the promises. The term trust explores how the customer chooses to purchase from the store that gives them more benefits (Choi & Ji, 2015). In recent studies, the factor of trust is highlighted as a set of beliefs of a customer on the particular product that is developed over a period from their perceptions of reliability and competence (Kaushik et al., 2015). It has been observed that trust is equally crucial for both offline and online customers (Kim et al., 2011; Kwon & Lennon, 2009). For instance, the trust of the consumer plays a vital role in mobile retail applications while making any decision, because if they do not trust it, they

will not shop products online through mobile(M. J. Kim et al., 2011; Marriott & Williams, 2018).

Moreover, a trust could be defined as consumer willingness to interpret the possibility of loss during the shopping process. As per this definition, trust could be categorized as a behavioral intention(Calefato et al., 2015). According to Kim et al., (2008), trust is identified as a factor that affects attitude and risk. The term trust in a brand plays an essential role because it explores the aspects that generate social and economic interactions among the customers who face ambiguity and reliance while purchasing online (Dabbous et al., 2020). It is also considered as the expectation or beliefs of future behavior received by the consumers that could be favorable or, at least, non-hostile(Lăzăroiu et al., 2020). The term brand can be defined with various ideas as it can be conveyed as the possession of any product or the monetary value. At the same time, it avails an essential factor the promise and trustworthiness of the firm to provide its customer valuable product that consumers expect. A common practice is that the brands make promises and create trust between producers and consumers (“Brand Concepts and Advertising, 2012). Thus, it is found necessary among the firms and brand sellers to establish the trust to sell their products or services online and offline (“Brand Concepts and Advertising,” 2012; Sparks & Browning, 2011). Trust in the brand can be further defined as the firm's mutual experiences and activities to develop a successful relationship between an organization and its customers (Lăzăroiu et al., 2020). The brand trust is based on two major assumptions: first, to have confident expectations of the brand’s reliability, and secondly, brand goodwill that it will support even in unexpected problems(Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005). Therefore, in online marketing and developing trust in the brand, such assumptions provide a crucial factor in

determining the quality of successful relationships between customers and organization (Jang, 2007)

If organizations accomplish the customers' trust in the brand, they become successful in increasing the likelihood among consumers that they will choose their products (Bao & Wang, 2021). Defining trust in the brand is very complicated because it is an abstract and a complex factor. Based on different definitions provided by the literature, trust in the brand is the belief of the consumers that explores their vulnerability of having good faith in sellers after knowing about their products. Kaushik et al. (2019) believe that trust in the brand is a general belief affected by culture as it increases with similarity and decreases with differentiation. Another definition of trust in the brand is the subjective belief that the online sellers' transactional obligations will be fulfilled, as the consumer understands those obligations and expects accordingly (Kim et al., 2008). Trust in brand plays a vital role because if consumers do not find the seller trustworthy, it will ultimately affect their purchase intention to shop (Kim et al., 2011). Literature supports that many factors can influence consumers' trust in the brand. The brand managers should design policies that enhance the consumers' trust based on the reliability and competency of the product. In such factors, security protection, privacy protection, and the quality of the information given about the brand are much more related (Aggarwal & Rahul, 2018).

In this research, we conceptualize social media users' Trust in brands advertised on social media as a subjective belief by the customers that the businesses who advertised their brands on social media are trustworthy to fulfill their obligations, as the consumer understands those obligations and expects accordingly (Shakil & Majeed, 2018).

2.5 Thesis framework

In this line, the communication persuasive matrix offers a valuable framework to understand the links between thesis variables. The model of McGuire (2001) serves as a foundation for this thesis. The importance of this model lies in understanding the critical steps in influencing attitude and behavior through social media. In the perspective of this model, we examine the effects of source and message factors on the attitudes of the followers.

2.6 The communication-persuasion matrix of McGuire (2001)

Many researchers highlighted the role of social media influencers as guides for followers' actions and perceptions (Nair, 2021). The followers' experience with influencers can reinforce or create more relation between influencers and their followers (Janssen et al., 2021). This relation can be described through the communication persuasion matrix of McGuire (2001).

This matrix highlights many factors that affect the communication process and can explain the function of the social media influencers' effect on customers (McGuire, 2013; Lou & Yuan, 2019). The model identifies that persuasive communication is a driver of the influence of social media influencers on followers (Harrigan et al., 2021). The effectiveness of persuasive communication depends on five input components: the source, the message, the channel, the receiver, and the context (Lou & Yuan, 2019). These inputs of the persuasion process can be materialized by this crucial question: Who says what to whom, when, and how? (Rice and Atkin, 2002).

The sources of the message are the influencers on social media. The designers of influencer marketing strategy choose the influencers (source of the message) to communicate the influence message according to their characteristics. The source's three key characteristics are the source's power, attractiveness, and credibility (Rice and Atkin, 2002). The source credibility is a key factor that drives the process of persuasion. The source credibility, i.e., the social media influencer's credibility, is conceptualized as a four-dimensional concept that strongly correlates trustworthiness, similarity, expertise, and attractiveness.

The message relates to the information provided by the source. It can be logical or emotional (Rice and Atkin, 2002). In our study, the message refers to the nature and value of the information communicated by the social media influencer. The most crucial factor about the message is its content (Brunsting et al., 2011). The content of the message should be reliable and helpful to followers to be familiarized with the brand and the product and to guide their decision-making. The followers need online content with reliable and useful information that could help them guide their actions and decision-making, making them more connected with the influencers (Hsu et al., 2013).

The channel is the recipient through which the message will be provided (Rice and Atkin, 2002). It refers in this study to the category of media used to communicate the social media message. McGuire (2001) identified the other inputs as critical factors of the persuasion process related to the receiver characteristics and the context. According to this author, it is also essential to consider the receiver's aspects to achieve the communication-persuasion process effectiveness. The context refers to the environment in which the message is communicated (Rice and Atkin, 2002). In this study,

we focus on the source, the message, and the channel through which this message is delivered.

The communication-persuasion model also includes twelve outputs highlighted as dependent variables. An effective influence of the communicator relies on the fact that the receiver must be exposed to the communication message, attend to the content communicated, understand the message, learn from it, memorize the content, retrieve a new attitude, choose to act on it, and behave accordingly (Rice and Atkin, 2002). These outputs are beyond the scope of our thesis.

2.7 Social Identity theory

Social Identity theory was initially formulated by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1979. It describes the collection of people who assume that they belong to the same social category. Many customers join such groups on social media to participate and exchange their views. These people join such groups on an online platform to satisfy their self-esteem and develop their identity in social media (Trepte, 2017). Unlike other social psychological theories, this theory focuses on the willingness of an individual to belong to specific groups. There are two categories of social identity theory that recognize self-concept or self-esteem. In the first category, the individuals observe themselves, known as the personal identity.

On the other hand, the individuals observe different opinions and perceptions shared on their groups, known as social identity (Pan et al., 2019; Zhu & Bao, 2018). When individuals deal with the personal identity category, they evaluate themselves positively or negatively. This process is also known as self-esteem. According to Trepte (2017), the perception

of social identity is related to collective identity. Tajfel and Turner in 1986 explored that the customers try to develop a personal identity and a collective identity (Chien & Ritchie, 2018). The significant proportion of personal and collective identity interprets when one member belongs to one social group, and the other gets connected with other groups. Hence it has been explored that collective identity or the social identity has a positive and significant impact on the perception of individuals when they deal socially. However, personal identity is explored as the positive evaluation of one's personality (Trepte, 2017).

Social identity theory represents an interactionist social-psychological approach (Santiago et al., 2020). Hoonsoon and Puriwat (2016) used the social influence theory to highlight that reference groups affect the customers' purchase intention under different inputs. In this line, consumers refer to social media influencers as public sources. Identification with a group focuses on a need for self-definition, whereas identification with a person is based on the need to reconcile, copy, or attain the attributes of the other through vicariously acquiring them (Santiago et al., 2020). Youn & Jin, (2017) stressed that the social influence theory could be used within the scope of social media marketing. They purported social media influencers with many followers are seen as more credible. Li, (2013) also outlined that this theory explains how source credibility and the quality of the message communicated by social media influencers are linked to the intention of individuals to behave in a particular manner.

2.8 Commitment-Trust Theory

The relationship between parties who exchange their goods or services is known as the commitment-trust theory. According to Thaichon & Quach (2015), the term commitment describes the maintenance of the valuable

and crucial relationship between customer and organization based on enduring desires of the customer. It reveals the passion for a beneficial relationship and resists if any change occurs in the relationship (Shankar et al., 2003). On the other hand, the term trust can be explored as a multi-disciplinary concept in which one party feels confident about the reliability and integrity of another party. The antecedents of commitment–trust theory is majorly five comprised of relationship benefits, relationship termination costs, communication, shared values, and opportunistic behavior; however, these antecedents provide the five outcome variables that may include acceptance, collaboration, tendency to leave, functional conflict, and uncertainty in taking the decision. Thus, commitment and trust play a keen mediating role between these antecedent and outcome variables. Literature supports that if any organization wants to form the relationships between exchange parties, the theory's central premise of synchronizing adoption of the relationship between commitment and trust as inseparable critical factors should be maintained (Wang et al., 2016).

Thus, researchers revealed that commitment–trust theory can be applicable for launching and maintaining relational exchanges involving dealers, consumers, or organizations (Morgan & Hunt, 2018). Thus, this study adopts this theory to investigate some deals among trust in the brand and consumers' purchase intention. In the business context, commitment and trust play a crucial role in their success. For example, in this rapid growth of technology, if organizations maintain loyalty and trust among their customers, it reduces transaction costs, mainly when customers are unaware of upcoming opportunisms and uncertain situations (Gefen et al., 2003). Furthermore, suppose consumers' trust in the brand was based on the E-WOM followed by them. In that case, their confidence level will also be found on the reliability and honesty of persuasive communications provided by other exchange parties. Hence, the literature explores that

commitment and trust are two key mediators that promote the antecedents and result in outcomes in specific contexts, which helps develop the relationship between the customer and the organization (Wang et al., 2016).

2.9 Effect of social media influencers' credibility and informative value on customers' purchase intention

It is crucial to predict customers' purchasing behavior because it affects the sellers directly (Kim, 2018). In some studies, the perceived value is explored as the antecedent of purchase intention (Song et al., 2012; Calvo-Porrá & Lévy-Mangin, 2017). The commitment-trust theory also supports the fact that the perceived value affects customers' purchase intention because, in this regard, the customer feels committed to the brand and trusts its reliability.

Customers usually utilize social media platforms to gather evidence related to products. The honesty of the perceived information is highly effective and related to the quality of information collected (Cheung & Lee, 2012). The informative value received about the product affects consumers' perception of the value of a social media advertisement. It also affects the entertainment value, credibility, loyalty, awareness about the product, and the customers' purchase intentions (Arli, 2017; Gautam & Sharma, 2017). Research explores that perceived information about the product significantly affects purchase intention. The purchase intention reflects a conscious plan of an individual to choose to purchase a brand (Hsu et al., 2017). Alalwan (2018), found the more related factors to the effectiveness of social media advertisements that could predict customers' purchase intention. He discovered that Customers positively value informative value

significantly affects their purchase intention. Tan et al. (2021) found that informative value and persuasiveness lead to higher purchase intention. The social identity theory supports this discussion because the information in the shape of messages of other customers received from the social groups on the internet affects the customers' purchase intention.

Credibility can be described as a process of judgment taken up by the customers when they believe in some communication. It may also be explored when the receiver gets highly influenced and positively accepts the communicator's message (Verma & Dewani, 2020). The influencers' credibility importance increases when the recipients do not have other sources of information rather than the influencers' advertising messages, but the influencers' credibility claims can only be confirmed via experience. Schouten et al. (2020) stated that credibility is composed of two components. These two are experience and trustworthiness. Expertise can be identified as the extent of believing in influencers to be considered a valid assertions source, while trustworthiness is the recipients' extent of confidence in the influencers that his\her content is considered the most valid. On the other hand, Wang & Scheinbaum (2018) believed that attractiveness is a valuable source of credibility measured by similarities, likeability, and familiarity. Morimoto (2018) considered a three-dimensional scale to measure influencers' credibility through trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise. (Morimoto 2018) suggested that similarities between the influencers and the message receiver in terms of cultural background and values mediate credibility. As the similarities increase, the positive attitudes toward the influencers' advertisement increase; consequently, a high degree of effective advertisements degree will be achieved. As a consequence, customers' purchase intention will increase. The previous study proposes that influencers' attractiveness impacts the advertisement effectiveness more than other dimensions

(Donthu et al., 2020). This is supported by the communication-persuasion matrix of McGuire (2001), as attractiveness is one of the credibility components, which is a crucial factor driving the persuasion process. In addition, Literature reveals that the credibility of the endorser or communicator significantly influences customers' attitudes and purchase intention(Chakraborty & Bhat, 2017; Chin et al., 2019; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Hayes & Carr, 2015). Tzoumaka et al. (2014) found that trustworthiness, similarities, expertise, and attractiveness positively impact customers' purchase intention. For instance, the attractiveness of athlete influencers has been used to charm consumers' attention and increase purchase intention. His study about cosmetic products Choi.,(2021) revealed that influencers' credibility, which was tested by trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise, positively impacted customers' purchase intention. In addition, (Liu & Brock 2011) found that the experience of the product or service presenter has been observed to increase the purchase intention(Liu & Brock, 2011). The commitment - trust theory supports this because when customers receive credible messages from experts, they feel a relationship benefit because of such messages received on social media groups that ultimately affect their purchase intention.

In a research that was conducted by Bao & Wang (2021) which aims to examine consumers' participation on brand microblogs in China from different perspectives such as elaboration likelihood model, social presence and commitment–trust theory. This study explored the new approach introduced to maintain customers' relationships with companies. This new approach is known as the Brand microblogs. However, the results describe two main factors known as the quality and source credibility that companies should maintain in their brand microblog, which can positively enhance the customers' societal commitment and loyalty toward the brand and ultimately promote the purchase intention of customers.

Haron et al. (2017) have similar findings regarding influencers characterizing them as opinion leaders in skincare, fashion, and foodstuff, but his finding of expertise contradicts the abovementioned results as he reached out that expertise does not affect the purchase intention. Moreover, Wu & Lee (2012) has found that trustworthiness was not impacting purchase intention in the context of beauty. This thesis will present a closer consideration to help clarify the interconnection and the contradictory result concerning the effect of influencers fashion advertisements in Saudi. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

H.1.1: Social media influencers' informative value has a positive effect on social media customers' purchase intention.

H1.2: Social media influencers' credibility has a positive effect on social media customers' purchase intention.

2.10 Social media influencers' credibility and informative value and trust in the brand

This section has two parts. The first aims to discuss the effect of social media influencers' credibility and informative value on trust in the brand. The second aims to examine the moderating effect of E-WOM between Social media influencers' credibility and informative value and trust in the brand.

2.10.1 Effect of social media influencers' credibility and informative value on trust in the brand

In this competitive era, social media managers should carefully deal with the customers' trust in the brand because it is perceived as the key to success in business (Kim et al., 2019). In 2020, customers were anticipated to consume almost \$372 billion on apparel products only (Cooley & Parks-

Yancy, 2019). Trust in a brand through the influence of social media influencers is found crucial in many studies(Kocak Alan & Tümer KABADAYI Alev KOÇAK ALAN, 2012). Trust in brand through the social media influencer defines the customer's beliefs on any brands that can provide satisfaction to their desires. This aligns with the social identity theory as the influencers' followers join the influencers' groups on the platform to satisfy their self-esteem.

Nowadays, social media has surpassed all other information sources. More than 90% of millennial women use mobile applications such as Instagram and Snapchat to gather information about products. Also, 70% of united states adults use one social media application to get trusted news and information (Cooley & Parks-Yancy, 2019).

Choi (2021) has conducted a study on active female users of fashion technology who were in their 20s. He found that informative value is partially impacting trust. He discovered that informative value was more important than entertainment as informative value had a positive impact on trust. Young Choi et al. (2021) found that the mediating role of trust between the perceived information and consumers' behavior in a shopping environment is significant in his study about fashion experts. His finding indicates that the sources of information characteristics and informative content are crucial to creating trust. Thus, it is necessary to enhance customers' trust in a shopping environment, which could be achieved by social media influencers who are considered fashion expertise. Fashion experts raise attractiveness perception of customers' perceived informative value, so customers have the usefulness of delivered information. Therefore, it is essential to enhance trust, which can be improved through social media influencers.

Accordingly, the above discussion about trust in brand is highly connected to commitment–trust theory because social media followers receive

information about specific brands from social media influencers whom they committed to, trust, and believe in their reliability while making their advertisements.

The credibility of social media influencers affects customers' perceived accuracy and trust. Social media influencers' credibility dramatically influences people's fashion clothing buying behavior. This is because most customers expect to obtain fashion information from social media influencers and not only from retailers themselves. Accordingly, customers consider them credible sources of information (Cooley & Parks-Yancy, 2019). However, customers do not prefer to read about the advertised product only, but they like to see their trusted sources, the influencer, use the products he/she advertised for. This adds up to increasing the influencers' credibility. Thus, the popularity of mobile applications with picture/video capabilities such as Snapchat and Instagram allow customers to see the advertised products on their actual appearance, which in turn increase trust (Cooley & Parks-Yancy, 2019). This is in line with the communication-persuasion matrix of McGuire (2001). Because applications with video and pictures are a source for persuasive communication which is the driver of influence of social media influencers on followers. According to (Smith, 2010), the credibility of a social media influencer known as the supporter of any political party may positively affect the party's brand image. In the same way, these conditions may also positively affect trust in the brand if it is related to any celebrity of telecom service (Dwivedi & Johnson, 2013). Lou & Yuan, (2019) explored that customers' brand awareness is positively associated with the social media influencers' attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness. It is revealed from the literature that trustworthiness and attractiveness enhanced followers' trust in brand (Sakib et al., 2020). In a study conducted among

Saudi Instagram shoppers, Alotaibi et al. (2019) have revealed that social media influencers positively impact customers' trust in the brand.

Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H2.1: Social media influencers' informative value has a positive effect on social media users' trust in brand advertised on social media.

H.2.2: Social media influencers' credibility has a positive effect on social media users' trust in brands advertised on social media.

2.10.2 Moderating effect of E-WOM between Social media influencers' credibility and informative value and trust in the brand

Social media is considered the best platform where the influential tool known as electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) can be effectively utilized (Canhoto & Clark, 2013; Evans & Erkan, 2015). E-WOM is a modern term based on the Internet used instead of traditional offline WOM that was used to gather interactive communication to explore the experiences and information about products or services (Katz et al., 2017). E-WOM can be defined as the process through which customers' opinions are shared on the Internet to identify the ratings for services rendered. Traditionally the term word-of-mouth (WOM) describes the fair and unexaggerated information about consumers' attitude toward a brand (O'Cass & Grace, 2011). Similarly, E-WOM is also found enormously influential, like offline WOM in different circumstances. E-WOM increases the reliability of the information provided by social media influencers (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2014).

Thus, E-WOM helps manage the reliability of the information received as fair that may fulfill the consumer's expectations by positively affecting their attitudes and purchasing intentions (Litvin et al., 2008). However, E-WOM activity is more effective than traditional offline WOM because it provides approachability, usability, and resolution for required information (Barreto, 2014; Cheung & Lee, 2012; King et al., 2014). It helps the customers to receive information about the product or services through the comments of people who have remained customers of the same product. This activity helps them cope with the anxiety or fear due to which they become unable to trust any product (Pitta et al., 2006). According to them, such pieces of information gathered through the E-WOMs are acceptable as fair and unexaggerated (Mourali et al., 2005).

It has become crucial for digital marketers to identify the brand promotion messages that motivate purchases and encourage sharing promotional messages among the customers and their effects on the brand. This practice shows the growing interest of customers towards the electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM), which can be defined as any potential, actual, or former customers' positive or negative statement about a brand or organization that remains available on the internet for a crowd of people and organization to review (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Yanti & Suryani, 2021). Several researchers are looking at why customers are interested in reading the E-WOM messages and the reasons behind the influence of E-WOM messages on customers' trust in brand (Gupta & Harris, 2010; Jeong & Koo, 2015).

The rapid advancements in Internet technologies have provided many assistances to receive relevant information quickly through E-WOM communication. Numbers of studies revealed that the more online reviews, the more valuable information received by the customers. Thus, the more

the positive, persuasive E-WOM, the higher the trust and sales of the products and services (Knoll, 2015; Y. Liu, 2018). Based on Carlson, et al. (2018)'s study that focuses on Customer engagement behaviors in social media which was conducted in the US and their study describes the importance of social media brand pages that have become a vital instrument for customers to voluntarily share their perceptions for improvement and collaboration with other customers. They revealed that such perceptions are considered valuable in maintaining the innovation effort of brands. Based on the stimulus–organism–response paradigm. Tutgun-Ünal (2021) discussed in his study that was conducted in Turkey, that social media networks have brought a different platform and created an online culture for customers of any age to share their perceptions communicate with other customers concerning their desired products. The researchers have mainly focused on Baby Boomer and X, Y, Z generations in Turkey. The results explore that, levels of acceptance to share their perceptions and communicate with other customers is at a moderate level; the Females' acceptance of sharing is higher than males, and the generation Y has the highest tolerance level of accepting sharing their perceptions. In contrast, generation Z has the lowest level of sharing perspectives. According to (Choi et al., 2017), in their research work that was conducted in Korea. They explored the intention of sharing the E-WOM messages on the related websites to social media. These websites focus on bounding the strength, temporary perception of customers and concreteness of promotional messages. Based on the data collected, the research study explores that the customers only share the promotional messages related to the brand with which they could have strong bounding. If they get a surety to receive the product early, they share concrete promotional messages with their friends. However, if a delay occurs in the delivery of products, such messages affect inversely. A study conducted among Taiwanese that

perceived usefulness and informative value are predictors of high effectiveness of E-WOM(Tien et al., 2019). The social identity theory supports the above discussion as many customers join groups on social media to exchange their information and views through E-WOM.

The term credibility examines the effectiveness of authorization of any statement because the credible sponsor positively affects consumers' perception. Thus, when customers receive information from credible sources like social media influencers, that positively influence the consumers' beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and intentions (S. W. Wang et al., 2017). Trustworthiness represents an endorser's dignity, believability, and honesty. Hence, if customers generally receive valuable content through E-WOM, this process can help in enhancing the trust and credibility among the targeted consumers. However, this may also increase the number of committed customers (du Plessis, 2017). Based on previous literature, it has been explored that E-WOM plays a crucial role in developing the influences on the customers' attitudes and behavioral intentions (Cheung et al., 2008; Jalilvand et al., 2011). Ladhari & Michaud (2015) explored the positive influence of E-WOM on customers' intentions, attitudes, and trust, in the context of hotel services. It has been revealed through the literature that online customers find online opinions and recommendations more credible and trustworthy than those provided by the concerned organization. (Firman et al., 2021). Shen, (2021), revealed that market mavens' E-WOM has the highest impact on the engagement of social media consumers. Also,(Tien et al., (2019) announced that the credibility and perceived usefulness of E-WOM raise the Probability of adoption of E-WOM messages.

As proven in many studies, credibility positively affects overall messages. High-level expertise message senders could convince customers because their message appears more credible, so customers are more likely to trust them (Lis, 2013). Besides, Baber et al., (2016), found out that customers tend to trust the person with a high level of knowledge and experience when overwhelmed. The above discussion is in line with the communication-persuasion matrix of McGuire (1999), as credibility is a critical factor that drives the process of persuasion of the given E-WOM.

The importance of E-WOM provides this research study development of the following hypothesis to explore the moderating role of E-WOM towards the informative value and credibility of social media influencers and customers' trust in the brand. Thus, the bellow hypothesize were generated:

H3.1: E-WOM moderates the link between social media influencers' informative value and users' trust in brand advertised on social media.

H3.2: E-WOM moderates the link between social media influencers' credibility and social media users' trust in brands advertised on social media.

2.11 Effect of social media users' trust in brand advertised on social media on social media customers' purchase intention

With the intense market competition among similar products, creating trust in the brand has become an essential factor for a business to attract customers' purchase intention. Hence, it can be realized that trust is also a necessary factor while developing the beliefs and expectancies of

characteristics of the online seller among the customers in the context of e-commerce. However, it is also revealed that trust is one of the significant long-term barriers faced by e-commerce in developing the potential online environment among the customers (Ramanathan et al., 2020). The concept of trust is explored as the customer's confidence in the quality and reliability of the service offered. Such confidence helps develop the relationship commencement, formation, and maintenance in various exchange contexts (DAM, 2020). Literature has revealed that trust in the brand has a significant impact on the creation of loyalty both offline and online (Ebrahim, 2020). While developing a relationship between the organization and customer, the trust in brand support is the willingness of the customer to be vulnerable to the organization, based on a certainty that the organization will dispose of its product according to the consumer's expectations (Minta, 2018). It is difficult to maintain trust in a brand because of its unstable and dynamic nature, which forms part of the consumer's affective and categorical evaluation. The organizations keep managing different strategies to provide such products that meet consumers' expectations and need and assist them in solving their problems (Minta, 2018). On the other side, the customer seeks information from their memory to measure the first perspective of their serves from the product for the initial assessment. Based on such perception, they compare the performance of the product to get the motivation that gets generated because of that memory which helps to activate the mental plan to evaluate the contribution of additional cognitive effort regarding their perception of the scenario (Herbeth & Dessalles, 2017; Yannopoulou et al., 2010). Thus, if the customer finds any adverse event regarding the brand in their memory, this becomes incredibly harmful to its reputation (Yannopoulou et al., 2010). However, the positive experience achieved from the product performance encourages the emotional response and improves their trust

in the brand. The commitment trust theory highly supports the previous discussion as the customers will be committed and trust the organization as soon as the organization meets their expectations.

Thus, purchase intention is the personal, conscious effort to purchase a brand (Bag et al., 2019). The actual purchase behavior of consumers is highly correlated with the purchase intention; it is known as the possible index and predictor that measures the intention of the consumer that finally leads to purchase behavior. It is crucial to predict consumers' purchasing intentions as it affects the consumers' efforts directly to their purchasing behavior (Kim & Kim, 2018).

Organizations that explore the purchase intention of their customers can easily sustain their brand position in the market along with the successful identification of their business' characteristics (Ramanathan et al., 2020). Thus, with the ongoing growth of the Internet, different researchers have explored other effects that may include the attitude, perception, and behavioral changes of customers while purchasing the brands online and offline like in the marketplace. Different research explored the effect of numerous factors that identify the perceived risk and the benefit influencing the trust in brand and the purchase intention of consumers (Seo et al., 2020). Factors that affect consumers' purchase intention may include brand experiences, satisfaction, brand familiarity, trust on the Web, trustworthiness on e-marketplaces, and changes in consumer behavior due to consumer trust in the brand. Online purchasing has become a common practice among customers worldwide, specifically in well-developed countries (Lăzăroiu et al., 2020)

In online shopping, the customers depend on other parties' recommendations which is considered e-trust. They expect the other party will provide them with promised products and services that will enhance

their purchase intention to buy online (Ganguly et al., 2021). E-trust has become the criterion for social behavior in developing trust in the brand, particularly in the growing trend of online shopping (Edelman, 2011). Consequently, the customers' online purchase intention has also been described as consumers' power to conduct purchasing behavior set through the websites. This situation can be further explored as the willingness and intent of the customer to get involved in online transactions based on online purchase intentions (Wang et al., 2020). Consequently, willingness to buy is influenced by attitude and /risk. Ramanathan et al., (2020), highlighted the importance of customers' trust and product familiarity as the vital driving force for the decision making of online purchases. Thus, the companies remain highly alert to secure the data of online users so that they can take decisions relaxing and chose products according to their demands. Thus, the results support this perception that the online e-trust between the customer and the service company can be established when they feel secure while purchasing online through positive purchase intentions.

Lăzăroiu et al., (2020) conducted a study in Romain where they shed the lights on the factors related to consumers' purchase decision-making, the attitudes and intention of social commerce, the attainment of perceived risk in online shopping, buying behaviour, and customers' loyalty in such online shopping. Their study describes that nowadays, the importance of trust which perceiving online risk that may affect the purchase intention of customers in social commerce is in a great discussion. The results also explored that social media platform users' purchase intentions can be constituted, taking into account the relationship between online trust and perceived risk.

Literature explores that trust in the product, vendor, and organization influences customers' buying decisions (Kim et al., 2008). Hallegatte & Nantel (2009) supported the fact that the lack of trust in the brand, specifically in online shopping, negatively affects the customers' purchase intention. (Bhandari & Rodgers, 2018) explore in their study which was conducted on Qualtrics, a popular online research platform that any negative E-WOM message related to a different brand can reduce customers' trust to purchase that specific brand. Results revealed that customers' purchase intention can be highly affected if they receive any positive or negative brand feedback from E-WOM. According to (Kim & Kim, 2017), the brand's trust positively affects purchase intention while reducing the risk of uncertainty and encouraging purchasing behavior. The commitment–trust theory supports this statement because when customers feel comfortable and reliable while trusting the brand, they ultimately purchase that brand product that expresses their commitment to the brand. In the domain of branding, the literature revealed a positive impact of trust on brand on the brand-consumer relationship (Zehir et al., 2011). According to (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2018), trust in a brand explores the willingness of customers to rely on the brand to fulfill the customers' expectations. In addition, researchers explore that when consumers depend on purchasing through social media, it influences their trust towards a particular brand and results in repurchasing by giving the brand preference (Chinomona et al., 2013).

Moreover, the researchers explored that trust in brands brings growth in customers' purchase intention (Aydın et al., 2014; Sanny et al., 2020; Tariq & Eddaoudi, 2009). Some other research also supported the statement that trust is one of the antecedents of purchase intention (Punyatoya, 2014). Among this research, (Delafruez et al., 2011; Heijden et al., 2003)

highlighted most of the importance of the trust factor influencing the purchase intention. Several studies are also found in e-commerce that has explored the relationship between trust and online purchase intention (Chiu et al., 2010; Grazioli & Jarvenpaa, 2000; A. J. Kim & Ko, 2012; Pavlou & Gefen, 2004). One of the researchers believes that trust in the brand positively affects purchasing intention, specifically in national brands (Aydın et al., 2014). Hence, many researchers have found the impact of trust in the brand on purchase intention that explores if the trust in the brand enhances it will ultimately strengthen the customer purchasing intention (Takaya, 2019). In addition, Kananukul et al. (2015) found trust in fashion brands stimulates brand loyalty, and those consumers who have high brand loyalty were buying from the brand more frequently. However, (Limbu et al., 2012) reveal that effective and proactive social media influencers can develop an effective relationship between trust and purchase intention. In the context of online shopping, (Hsu et al., 2013) has discovered that followers' trust in an influencer could positively impact purchase intention. Accordingly, customers' trust will make them committed to the brand and make their purchases with satisfaction and total loyalty.

If trust in brand is enhanced among customers, they will continue repetitive purchase from the same brand, which results in a customer's commitment towards the brand, which may establish a positive relationship between the brand and the customer (Chinomona et al., 2017). This aligns with the commitment trust theory because customers will repurchase the products or service due to their trust in the brand.

Based on the theoretical analysis, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H4: Users' trust in brand advertised on social media has a positive effect on social media customers' purchase intentions.

2.12 The mediating role of trust in brand advertised on social media

Trust has been explored differently in many disciplines, which may differ in theoretical and methodological approaches. According to the business and management scholars, trust is the psychological state of customers in which they become vulnerable and decide to purchase (Carfora et al., 2019). Notably, online customers are more vulnerable on social media platforms because of the data information they share with their expected trustworthy online sellers.

However, the number of studies that support the importance of customers' perceived values in building trust in brands is scarce (Kaushik et al., 2020). Different research explored that the perceived values positively impact customers' e-trust (Jin et al., 2008). The literature revealed that the study on customers' perceived values examined different variables that were considered the antecedents of e-trust (Harris & Goode, 2004; Herbeth & Dessalles, 2017). Consumers' trust in brands exclusively depends on the high perceived value of a product (Xiao et al., 2018). This fact is aided by the commitment and trust theory because the antecedents of commitment–trust theory also include the welfares, termination costs, communication, shared perceived values, and opportunistic behavior of customers towards the brand.

In the domain of branding, the literature reveals the positive impact of trust in brand on the brand-consumer relationship (Zehir et al., 2011). According to Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2018) trust in a brand explores the willingness of customers to rely on the brand to deliver that fulfill the customers' expectations. Thus, it is further explored that trust in the brand shows the customers' belief towards the brand while being confident that the brand

will continue to be reliable and satisfying the purchaser (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2005). Moreover, the researchers explored that the increase in the trust in brand bring high growth of customers' purchase intention (Aydin et al., 2014; Sanny et al., 2020). The commitment-trust theory supports this fact by showing that the increase of trust in the brand ultimately affects the customers' purchase intention that can be described as customer commitment towards the brand.

The literature explores that the customer trust in brand through e-commerce still needs to understand online consumer needs and demands. Conversely, no new management theory is created to identify the intervention of technology, such as the Internet and social media, and their effects on online sales or customer purchase intention. The primary significant factor that can enhance customer trust in e-commerce is facilitating online transactions for their customers (Filieri et al., 2015). However, it is challenging to measure online trust directly; in this regard, the e-trust as customers' intention to purchase is measured through various characteristics of sales and services provided via online sites (Razak et al., 2014). In addition, many service organizations use social media as the medium of distributor, through Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

Nowadays, every organization is working on this goal to promote their product brands through different brands' influencer marketing campaigns that may enhance customers' trust, provide brand awareness, search the appropriate targeted audiences, and improve sales conversion (Cicco et al., 2020). The organizations invest in influencer marketing campaigns to get attention because of the social media influencers that can boost the brand awareness among the targeted consumers and result in high sales of that brand.

According to (Chetioui et al., 2020), trust in the context of marketing and exchange describes the willingness of a customer to believe and have confidence in the value of information exchange by the other party. The literature argues that the informative value received through the social media influencers is comprised of product reviews and argued that the quality of online messages includes its content element and perceived background similarity that reflects the motive of the message and enhances the customers' e-trust (Racherla et al., 2012). This fact is supported by the social identity theory that reveals the importance of messages received by social media influencers.

In this era of media communication, when customers receive messages on online media, they perceive it as honest, sincere, and trustworthy (Xiao et al., 2018). Researchers in the past have recognized various aspects of credibility. However, expertise and trustworthiness are still regarded as the principal aspects of credibility (Pornpitakpan, 2004). Thus, based on the source credibility model, these two factors are crucial regarding the effectiveness of a message received through social media influencers.

Customers usually use social media platforms to gather information related to any product. The honesty of the perceived information is highly effective and related to the quality of information collected (Cheung & Lee, 2012). The informative value of the social media influencers' sponsored post develops positive trust in the brand, which passage of time provides awareness about the brand that results ultimately as customers' purchase intention (Arlı, 2017; Taylor et al., 2011). Arlı (2017) found informative value to be the second most effective feature from these four (usefulness, informative value, entertainment, and irritation) that positively impact customers' purchase intention. (Lou & Yuan, 2019), revealed that the influencer's informative value of content and credibility positively affect followers' trust in influencers' posts, which ultimately impacts purchase

intentions and brand awareness. The commitment-trust theory supports this by showing that the increase of trust in the brand ultimately affects the customers' purchase intention, which can be described as customer commitment towards the brand. In this study, we postulated that social media influencers' credibility and informative value might affect trust in brands advertised on social media, which in turn may affect followers' purchase intention. Therefore, we suggest the following hypothesis:

H5.1: Users' trust in brand advertised on social media mediates the link between social media influencers' informative value and social media customers' purchase intention.

H5.2: Users' trust in brand advertised on social media mediates the link between social media influencers' credibility and social media customers' purchase intention.

2.13 Thesis model and hypotheses

Figure 1 presents our research model in which customers' purchase intention is considered as the dependent variable, two variables related to social media influencers' perceived values, i.e., informative value and credibility (including trustworthiness, expertise, similarity, and attractiveness of the social media influencers) as independent variables. Users' trust in brands advertised on social media is considered a mediating variable between social media influencers' informative value and credibility and customers' purchase intention. E-WOM represents a moderating variable between social media influencers' informative value and credibility and users' trust in brands advertised on social media.

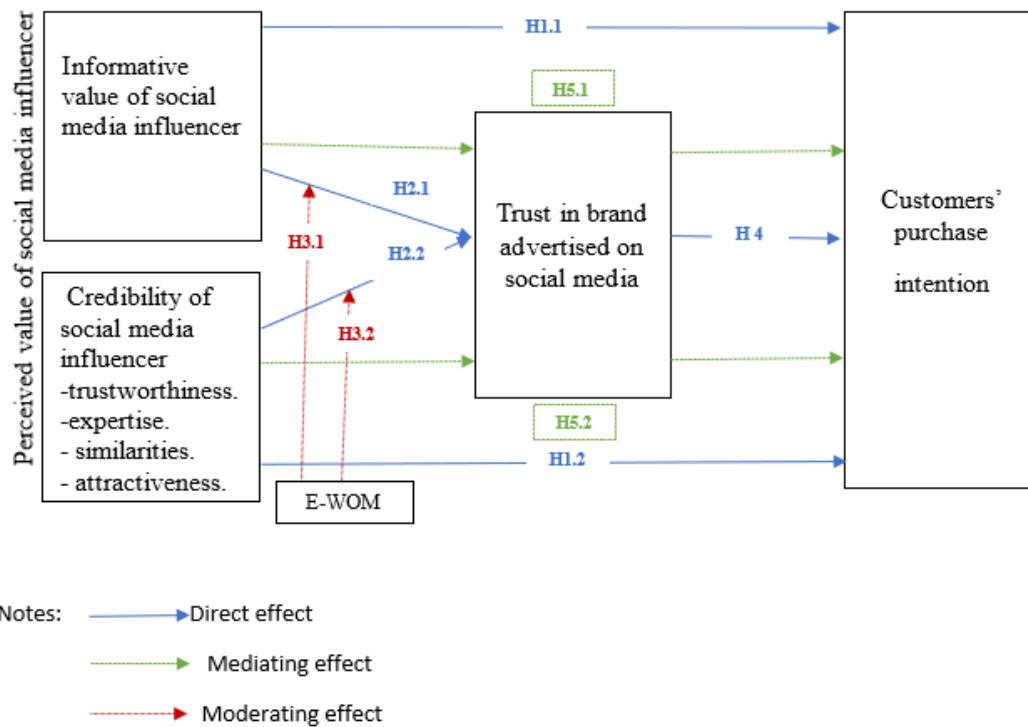


Figure 1 : Thesis model

The hypotheses that we have formulated, and which are related to the links between our thesis variables in the above model are presented below:

H.1.1: Social media influencers' informative value has a positive effect on social media customers' purchase intention.

H1.2: Social media influencers' credibility has a positive effect on social media customers' purchase intention.

H2.1: Social media influencers' informative value has a positive effect on social media users' trust in brand advertised on social media.

H.2.2: Social media influencers' credibility has a positive effect on users' trust in brands advertised on social media.

H3.1: E-WOM moderates the link between social media influencers' informative value and users' trust in brands advertised on social media.

H3.2: E-WOM moderates the link between social media influencers' credibility and social media users' trust in brands advertised on social media.

H4: Users' trust in brands advertised on social media has a positive effect on social media customers' purchase intentions.

H5.1: Users' trust in brand advertised on social media mediates the link between social media influencers' informative value and social media customers' purchase intention.

H5.2: Users' trust in brand advertised on social media mediates the link between social media influencers' credibility and social media customers' purchase intention.

2.14 Summary

Chapter two presented a clear literature review of related previous studies. Also, it includes a table of global studies that present a brief explanation about these studies and their limitation. Then, three theories were discussed as they were attached to the presented relationship between the study's variables. These three theories are the communication-persuasion matrix of McGuire (2001), the Commitment-Trust Theory, and the social identity theory. After that, the relationship between variables was discussed, such as the relation between the independent and dependent variables. Finally, the thesis model and hypothesis are listed at the end of this chapter. The next chapter will include the thesis methodology and design, while chapter four will present the data analysis and finally, the conclusion will be conducted in chapter five.

Chapter 3: Thesis Methodology and Design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological basics of our thesis. To know the real impact of the social media influencers' perceived values, i.e., informational value and credibility on customers' purchase intention living in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the mediating role of social media users' trust in brands advertised on social media in this relationship and the moderating effect of e-WOM between social media influencers' informative value and credibility and users' trust in brands advertised on social media.

The following section aims to specify the epistemological posture and method adopted in this thesis, followed by the thesis method that was chosen to adopt. After that, we will highlight the thesis framework in which we will present the definitions of the research variables and the different hypotheses formulated in this thesis. Then, the data collection process and the sampling technique used will be presented. After that, we will introduce the questionnaire used in this thesis and the measurement scales used to conceptualize the variables. Also, we will highlight the data analysis techniques used in this thesis. Afterward, we will highlight the tests used to assess the psychometric properties of the scales of measurement. The last section will point out the tests and methods used to test the thesis hypotheses.

3.2 Sample and procedures

we carried out a quantitative study, using the questionnaire as the data collection instrument, within a period of two months (June , July, and August 2021). Our target population are active Saudi social media users who are followers of fashion social media influencers. Influencer marketing is more important in the fashion sector compared to the other industries (El-Sayed and El-Fanagely, 2022). The context of Saudi Arabia constitutes a valuable context to study our research problem. 72.38% of the total population in Saudi Arabia are active social media users and are among the biggest users of social media in the world (Saudi Arabia Social Media Statistics, 2021). A study about social media advertising audiences in Saudi Arabia showed a substantial number of monthly active users on Facebook (15 million), Instagram (13 million), Twitter (11.27 million) and Snapchat (13.65 million) (Hoot Suite and We are Social, 2020). These platforms are promising fashion marketing tools and offer opportunities to marketers in the fashion industry in Saudi Arabia to build brand awareness and promote the fashion brands (Trad and Al Dabbagh, 2020).

3.3 Thesis epistemological posture

Epistemology refers to the constitutional research of helpful knowledge (Piaget, 1967). The epistemological paradigm highlights the research practices and the methods of justification of knowledge that a researcher can use. Epistemology is based on our foundations for knowledge, which will be determined by the research design and the types of evidence gathered (Hines, 2000).

We follow in this thesis the positivism philosophical posture, which is the most used by researchers in management sciences to develop a research design, methods, and interpret the results. In line with the positivism

posture, researchers should adopt deductive reasoning (Mathotaarachchi & Thilakarathna, 2021). In this line, they follow a procedure including two steps. First, based on a literature review, they define the research goals by formulating hypotheses to be confirmed or rejected. Second, they perform a data collection to confront these hypotheses with the empirical data they will collect. They can interpret the results of the data analysis and confirm or reject the hypotheses (Hines, 2000). Our thesis fits thus with a positivism posture and deductive reasoning as we have formulated hypotheses based on theoretical analysis, and we aim to test these hypotheses and interpret the results according to the empirical results.

3.4 Thesis method

According to the positivism posture, we choose to follow a quantitative approach for this research. Indeed, researchers following the positivism posture tend to use the quantitative approach. The data they collect through a survey based on objective measurement of variables and analysis is used to test the significance of the links between the thesis variables (Hines, 2000)

This thesis shed light on the effect of social media influencers' perceived values, i.e., informational value and credibility, on social media customers' purchase intention and the mediating role of users' trust in brands advertised on social media in this relationship in the context of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We also deepened the analysis by testing the moderating effect of E-WOM between social media influencers' informative value and credibility and users' trust in brands advertised on social media. We formulated hypotheses to quantify and interpret the nature of the link between our thesis variables. The objective of this thesis based on quantitative research is to accept or reject these hypotheses in the

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia context. As a research tool, we chose to use the focus group interview. Compared to qualitative research, quantitative research allows a more generalization of the findings.

Before presenting the measurement instrument, the data collection, and the data analysis techniques, we present in this section our variables. While digging into previous studies related to social media influencers, there were very few studies conducted in Saudi Arabia. A global gap was noticed on this topic, especially on fashion segments, as most studies were so general or focused on luxury brands or cosmetic products. Social media customers' purchase intention is considered the dependent variable. Two variables related to social media influencers' perceived values, i.e., informative value and credibility (including trust, expertise, similarity, and attractiveness of the social media influencers), are independent variables. Users' trust in brands advertised on social media is considered a mediating variable between social media influencers' informative value and credibility and social media customers' purchase intention. E-WOM as a moderating variable between social media influencers' informative value and credibility and users' trust in brands advertised on social media.

3.5 Sampling techniques and data collection

3.5.1 Population and questionnaire distribution

Active Saudi social media users are the target population of this thesis. To ensure the sample was representative and adequate of the whole population, the sample includes Saudis with different backgrounds, education, economic level, and age.

To achieve thesis objectives, data from respondents were collected through focus group interviews from 15 groups that consisted of 6 groups of 10, 4 groups of 7, 3 groups of 11, 1 group of 9, 1 group of 8. They were 138

interviewees in total. Each group meeting took around 40-50 minutes. To not generate bias, the meeting was conducted without influencing the response of the interviewees and each participant was able to tell her\his opinion in influencers' fashion advertisements in social media spontaneously. All interviewees were assured that their responses and personal information would remain confidential and be used for research purposes only and won't be shared with a third party. However, agreeing on a specific time for a group member was challenging, so advantage was taken through occasions gather as nine groups were interviewed face to face in occasions' gather and the rest were held online.

3.5.2 Fashion Industry

Social media is an effective tool in marketing and has become a very effective place for Saudi society, and it is affecting people's life considerably. The rapid growth of Saudi shoppers using social media has increased as it reached 42% of the entire population(Alotaibi et al., 2019). social media has opened new doors for electronic marketing. However, little research has examined the power of influencers' fashion advertisements. Commonly, influencers are mostly used for fashion industry products. This incident is because most fashion trends develop online (Wiedmann & von Mettenheim, 2020). This thesis sheds light on fashion because we live in a time of change and fashion is one of the disciplines that thrives on change. Though fashion does not only thrive on changing but, it creates the desire to change. Fashion matter because it is very personal as it shows how we think of ourselves and how others perceive us. Clothing can add meaning to us(Faraoni et al., 2019). fashion has the power to fill people with joy, the joy of freedom of choosing the way they want to be seen.

3.5.3 Sampling techniques

This thesis considered a quantitative approach to follow by collecting and analyzing data. The quantitative technique was used through focus group interviews with Saudi social media users. The focus group method's selection will allow the researcher to know each participant's opinion in all constructs. The questions were prepared to fit for a structured interview. The reason for conducting a structured interview is that in an unstructured interview, the interviewees lead the discussions and focus on the crucial points from their perspective rather than the researcher's perspective. A non-probabilistic technique was used for the whole sample population. The interviewees were chosen by using the method of convenience sampling technique. The convenience sampling technique was chosen due to the lack of a social media customers database as well as this method allows saving money and time. After the interview was held, all answers were transferred to Excel and then coded to transfer to SPSS and smart PLS to ease the analysis.

3.5.4 Sample size

This thesis sample size was determined according to general guidelines that match with the method of nonprobability sampling technique. In consideration of the data analysis and In line with (N. Hair et al., 2010), who suggests that the sample must include five questionnaires at least or ten questionnaires per item. Therefore, our sample size meets these conditions.

To ensure that 138 sample size is a significant number of participants and to evade nonparametric distribution, a convincing sampling technique was used to gather data for two reasons. First, to save time and second, this method is lower cost than other methods such as getting data basis of customers (J. F. Hair et al., 2014)

The duration of time to finish the interview was ten weeks. All the 138 participants answered the whole interview questions, so no missing data were noticed during the analysis.

3.6 Measurement scales and questionnaire presentation

To measure our thesis variables, we used existing scales of measurement developed by researchers. To ensure clarity and content validity of the questionnaire, the questions were reviewed by five individuals with different skills and backgrounds. A few errors were detected through this process, and the noticed ambiguities in the questions were fixed. This step helped in articulating clear questions in the last questionnaire version.

Our conceptual model includes five variables: social media influencers' informative value and social media influencers' credibility, customers' purchase intention, E-WOM, and trust in brands advertised on social media.

We considered the influencers' perceived informational value and credibility for social media influencers' perceived values. Social media influencers' credibility was assessed as a multidimensional construct integrating four dimensions: trustworthiness, expertise, similarities, and attractiveness developed by Munnukka et al. (2016) and presented as follows:

Table(2): Scale of measurement of the variables used

SMIIV1	Social media influencers' Advertisements are valuable sources of information for fashion clothes.
SMIV2	Social media influencers' Advertisements tell me which fashion clothes brands have the features I am looking for.
SMIV3	social media influencers' Advertisements help me to keep up to date about fashion clothes available in the marketplace.
SMIC11	I feel my preferable social media influencers are honest.
SMIC12	I consider my preferable social media influencers are trustworthy.
SMIC13	I feel my preferable social media influencers are truthful.
SMIC14	I consider my preferable social media influencers earnest.
SMIC21	I feel my preferable social media influencers who make fashion advertisements know a lot about fashion clothes.
SMIC21	I feel my preferable social media influencers who make fashion advertisements are competent to make assertions about fashion clothes in their advertisements.
SMIC23	I consider my preferable social media influencers who make fashion advertisements are expert on fashion clothes.
SMIC24	I consider my preferable social media influencers who make fashion advertisements are sufficiently experienced to make assertions about fashion clothes.
SMIC31	The influencers I prefer, and I have a lot in common.
SMIC32	The influencers I prefer, and I are a lot alike.
SMIC33	I can easily identify with my preferable influencers.
SMIC41	I consider the influencers that I prefer are very attractive.

SMIC42	I consider the influencers prefer are very stylish.
SMIC43	I think the influencers that I prefer are good looking.
EWOM1	The social media content of online consumers' review is accurate.
EWOM2	The social media content of online consumers review is objective.
EWOM3	The social media content of online consumers review is reliable.
EWOM4	The social media content of online consumers review is complete.
EWOM5	The social media content of online consumers review is useful.
PI1	I would purchase fashion clothes based on the advice I am given by my preferable influencers on social media.
PI2	I would follow fashion clothes brand recommended by the influencers that I follow.
PI3	In the future, I will purchase from fashion clothes recommended by my preferable influencers on social media.
TBSM1	I trust fashion clothes brands advertised by my preferable influencers on social media.
TBSM2	I feel that I can trust fashion clothes brands advertised by my preferable influencers on social media completely.
TBSM3	I feel secure when I buy from fashion clothes brands advertised by my preferable influencers on social media because I know that she/he will never let me down.

The thesis' variables were operationalized using an existing scale of measurements in the marketing literature. Thus, three items of social media influencers' informative value were measured through the scale of measurement of Dao et al., (2015) in their paper social media advertising value: The case of transitional economies in Southeast Asia. Social media influencers' credibility, which includes four dimensions (trustworthiness, expertise, similarities, and attractiveness), was operationalized by four items for trustworthiness, four items for expertise, three items for similarities, and three items for attractiveness, which were all measured through the scale of measurement of Munnukka et al., (2016), in their paper (Credibility of a peer endorser and advertising effectiveness). E-WOM was measured by five items conceptualized by (Tsao & Hsieh, 2015) in their paper (E-WOM persuasiveness: do E-WOM platforms and product type matter?). Social media customers' purchase intentions three items were measured through the scale of measurement (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019) in their paper (The role of digital influencers in brand recommendation: Examining their impact on engagement, expected value, and purchase intention). Social media users' trust in brands advertised on social media was operationalized by three items developed by (Lau & Lee, 1999) in their paper Consumers' Trust in a Brand and the Link to Brand Loyalty.

Structured questions for the focus group interview were carefully selected from previous studies related to social media influencers' advertisements and trust in brands. To measure each item in each scale of measurement, we focused on a Five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree, to interpret respondents' level of agreement. This scale is chosen as it is the most commonly applied by researchers and a good indicator for assessing respondents' attitudes. Additionally, a

nominal scale was used to ask the interviewees general questions like age, education qualification, and occupation status.

3.7 Data analysis techniques

This thesis used two statistical software tools, namely IBM SPSS version 24 and SMART PLS 3. First, SPSS was used to perform descriptive analyses. Second, SMART PLS was used to perform Partial Least Analysis-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to evaluate the measurement instruments' psychometric properties (reliability, validity, etc.) and to test the hypothesized links between the thesis variables. Specifically, this method is well adapted with models containing latent variables and cause-and-effect relationships. It is helpful for testing hypotheses, especially in complex path models, including mediating and moderating variables (Hair et al., 2020). Smart PLS is user-friendly software to use.

The methods used to generate descriptive analysis include computing the mean value, standard deviation, and graphical representation. The mean value is the arithmetic mean mathematically calculated by totaling the values and dividing by the number of values. It is a measure of central tendency (or location measure). It describes the center location of the data (McGrath et al., 2020). Standard deviation is a common measure of dispersion. It indicates the level of distribution or variability around the mean. The high standard deviation value implies a high level of scatternets and vise-a-versa (Andrade, 2020). Data will be represented graphically in Chapter 4 using pie and bar charts. Visualizing the data using graphs is helpful to capture the overall pattern and provides a summary of the first impression.

3.8 Constructs' psychometric quality assessment

To prove the measuring scales used are of quality, reliability and validity must be measured. The concept of reliability and validity mainly concerns the measurement of the random and systemic errors between real and observed scores. In fact, the reliability and validity scale of measurement focused on "what" and "how" respectively. Smart PLS 3 software was used to calculate these indicators. When assessing the psychometric properties of the scale of measurement, a researcher must define if the constructs are measured reflectively or formatively (Hair et al., 2014). Our scales of measurement are reflexive. In this line, we adopt the recommendations of Hair et al. (2014) and Hair et al. (2019) to assess the reliability and the validity of these scales.

3.9 Reliability of the measuring scales

Estimation of reflective measurement models 'reliability includes the evaluation of the Cronbach alpha and the composite reliability to evaluate internal consistency and the assessment of the individual indicator reliability.

The reliability of the constructs aims to test if each item belonging to the scale is coherent compared to other items of the same construct. According to Hair et al. (2020), the first step is to evaluate through the bootstrapping procedure the items' loadings and their significance. In this line, the standardized loadings should be more than 0.708 and a related t-statistic greater than ± 1.96 for a two-tailed test at the 5% level (Hair et al., 2020). Second, the constructs' reliability is evaluated through Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR). These two indicators, Cronbach's alpha and Composite reliability are not identical or equally reliable as composite

reliability is weighted and more accurate while Cronbach Alpha is unweighted and less accurate. The cut-off value for both indicators is to be higher than 0.70 (Hair et al., 2020). However, the values of these indicators must not exceed 0.95, indicating that the items are assessing the same concept and shows redundancy (Hair et al., 2020). In brief, the redundancy implies that the same concepts were measured, and there was no diversity to ensure construct items' validity (Hair et al., 2020).

3.9.1. Convergent Validity

The validity of a measurement scale is defined by its capability to efficiently measure what it is supposed to measure. The convergent validity refers to the extent that the construct converges to explain its item variance. The average variance extracted (AVE) is the metric used to evaluate the construct's convergent validity for all the items on each construct. The AVE must be 0.50 or more to be acceptable (Hair et al., 2014). To get convergent validity in measurement scale, various measurements of correlation of same constructs should be high. As well as several measures of the same construct should be highly correlated with each other (Hair et al., 2019). Assessing the convergent validity of each construct measure is among the steps that (Hair et al., 2019) illustrate after the reliability assessment.

3.9.2. Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity of the variables aims to confirm that the indicators assumed to measure different phenomena are weakly correlated (Hair et al., 2014). The measures of variables that are different are not the same. Discriminant validity assesses the distinctiveness of the constructs (Hair et al., 2020). It is assessed when the shared variance within a construct which is the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), calculated to assess the

convergent validity, is higher than the shared variance between the constructs (Hair et al., 2019). Hair et al. (2020) recommends using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) method. The rules of thumb for these indicators are values of no less than 0.85 and 0.90 (Hair et al., 2019).

3.10 Structural Model Testing

Partial Least Squares (PLS) was developed by Wold (1982), which is a variance-based structural equation modeling (SEM). Recently, PLS has become very common in social sciences and management (J. F. Hair et al., 2014; Nitzl, 2016). PLS method advantages surpass other SEM techniques, so this thesis adopted it.

3.10.1 Quality of the structural model

When performing the PLS technique for SEM, assessing the quality of the SEM model is the first concern. Usually, the quality of the model is evaluated by the following indicator: the coefficient of determination (R^2) (Hair et al., 2020).

R^2 is the coefficient that helps facilitate understanding the contribution of each explanatory variable to predict the dependent variable. The coefficient of determination is related to the dependent constructs only (Hair et al., 2020). To consider the model significant, the R^2 values must be higher than 0.1.

3.10.2. Test of direct effects

The output of SMART PLS enables testing the direct effects. In this study, there are five direct effects hypothesized that will be tested. For the statistical significance, SMART PLS outputs compute the p-value, which allows testing the statistical significance of the direct effects. Any effect

with a p-value lower than 0.05 would be considered a statistically significant effect at a 5% significance level. The critical ratio (t-statistic) corresponding to this significance level must be higher than ± 1.96 .

3.10.3. Test of mediating effect

Two indirect mediating effects are being tested in this study. SMART PLS results allowed interpreting the mediating effect as per the recommendations in the model via the non-parametric bootstrapping approach (Hair et al., 2014). The researcher should assess the significance of the indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable through the mediating variable. The total effect is also assessed between the independent variable on the dependent variable without considering the mediating variable. Hair et al. (2014) also suggested estimating the variance accounted for (VAF), the indirect effect divided by the total effect, to estimate the magnitude for each mediation. There is no mediation if the value of the VAF is below 20%. Partial mediation is assessed if the VAF is between 20% and 80% (Hair et al., 2014). A total mediation is confirmed if the VAF is greater than 80% (Hair et al., 2014).

3.10.4. Test of moderating effect

Two moderating effects are tested in this study. The moderating variable is the e-WOM. The moderating effect was assessed using SMART PLS output through the PLS path modelling. A two-stage approach offered by SMART PLS was used. This method evaluates the latent variable scores of the latent moderating variable and the latent independent variable from the structural model (Hair et al., 2014). These scores are calculated to measure the product indicator that outlines the interaction between the moderating and the independent variables. The software also highlights the direct effect of the moderating variable and the dependent variable, i.e., the effect of e-WOM on social media users' trust in brand advertised on social media.

3.11 Summary

This chapter highlighted the research epistemological posture followed by the research method. The scale of measurements was also listed with the references of the scale of measurements' source. Also, each test used in the thesis was presented in this chapter with a brief explanation to provide readers with the aim and purpose of each test.

Chapter 4: Presentation and discussion of results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the main results and findings generated based on the data analysis of the collected responses. The chapter starts with the sample description section describing the demographic background of the surveyed respondents. The chapter continues then with summary statistics of the main studied variables obtained using IBM SPSS 24. The following section presents the results concerning the reliability assessment and convergent and discriminant validity of each studied variable. The chapter then demonstrates the PLS-Structural Equation Modeling results using SMART PLS about hypothesis testing

4.2 Sample description

This section describes the sample surveyed respondents' characteristics in terms of demographics, including gender, age, education, occupation, and income.

4.3 Respondents' gender

Table 3 and figure 2 show that 79 of the surveyed respondents (57.2%) were females while 59 were males (42.8%).

Table(3) Distribution of sample respondents by gender

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	59	42.8
	Female	79	57.2
	Total	138	100.0

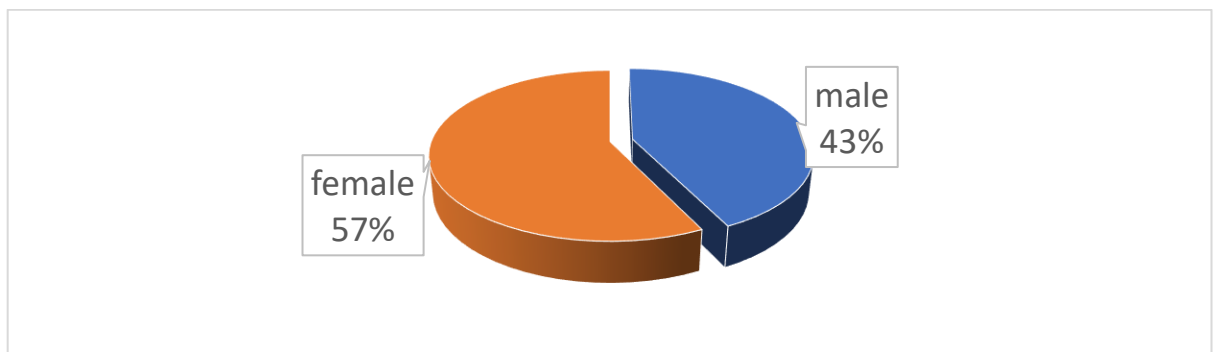


Figure 2: Pie chart of sample respondents' gender

4.4 Respondents' age

Table 4 and Figure 3 show that 51 of the surveyed respondents (37.0%) belong to the age group between 26 to 40 years (Generation Y), followed by 49 who belongs to the age group between 41 to 56 years (35.5%) (Generation X), then 30 who are up to 25 years (21.7%) (Generation Z), 8 which are 57 years or more old (5.8%) (Baby-boomers).

Table(4): Distribution of sample respondents by age

	Age range	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Up to 25	30	21.7
	26-40	51	37.0
	41-56	49	35.5
	57 and more	8	5.8
	Total	138	100.0

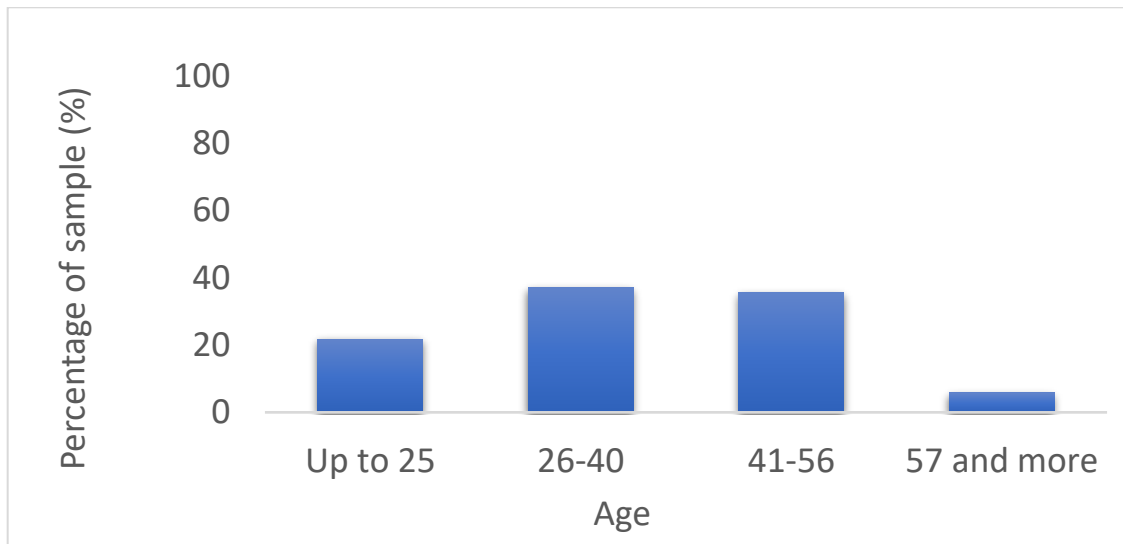


Figure 3: Pie chart of sample respondents by age

4.5 Respondents' education

Table 5 and Figure 4 show that 90 of the surveyed respondents (65.2%) holds bachelor's degree, followed by 34 that have completed high school (24.6%), then 11 have obtained a master degree (8%), and the remaining 3 did not complete school (2.2%).

Table(5): Distribution of sample respondents by education

	Education	Frequency	Percent
Valid	No school completed	3	2.2
	High school	34	24.6
	Bachelor's degree	90	65.2
	master degree	11	8.0
	Total	138	100.0

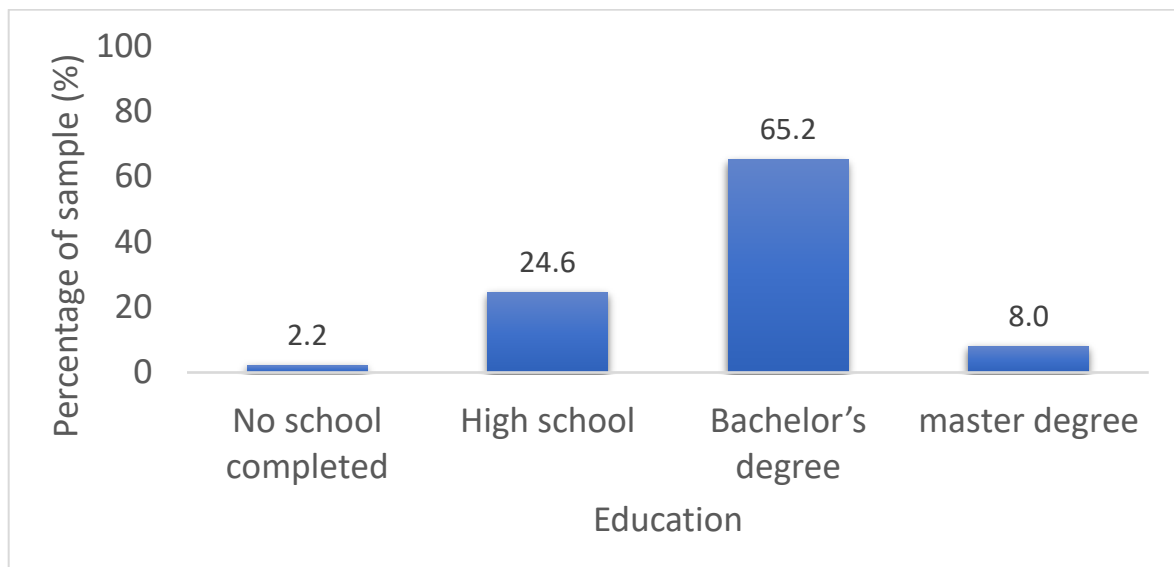


Figure 4: Pie chart of distribution of the sample respondents by education

4.6 Respondents' occupation

Table 6 and Figure 5 show that 68 of the surveyed respondents (49.3%) are employees, followed by 29 students (21.0%), then 28 self-employed (20.3%), 8 retired (5.8%), and the remaining 5 unemployed/homemakers (3.6%).

Table (6): Distribution of sample respondents by occupation

	Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Self-employed	28	20.3
	Unemployed/Home maker	5	3.6
	Student	29	21.0
	Employee	68	49.3
	Retired	8	5.8
	Total	138	100.0

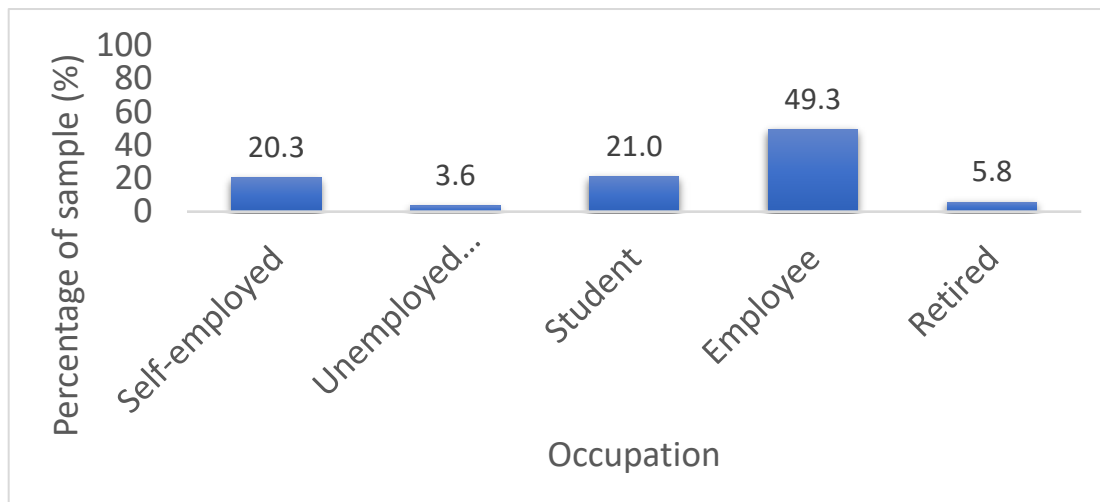


Figure 5: Pie chart of sample respondents; distribution by occupation

4.7 Respondents' income

Table 7 and Figure 6 show that 68 of the surveyed respondents (49.3%) have an income of 7000 SR or less, followed by 50 who earn an income more than 12000 SR (36.2%), and the remaining 20 has income between 7001 to 12000 SR (14.5%).

Table (7): Distribution of sample respondents by income

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	7000 SR or less	68	49.3
	7001-12000 SR	20	14.5
	More than 12000 SR	50	36.2
	Total	138	100.0

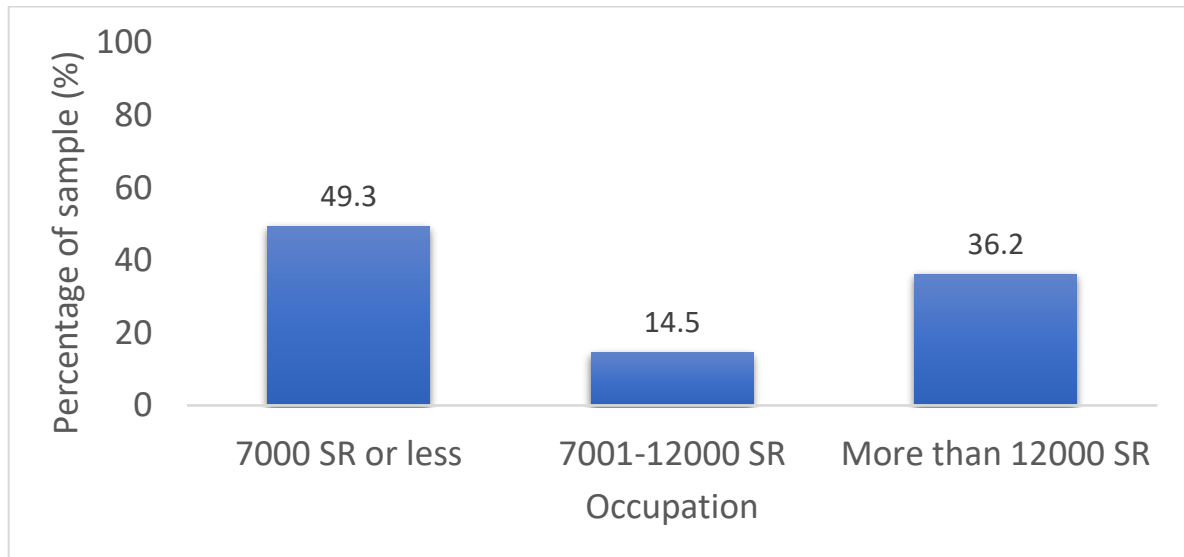


Figure 6: Pie chart of sample respondents by occupation

4.8 Social media use frequency

Table 8 and figure 7 show that 129 of the surveyed respondents (93.5%) have daily social media use (SMU) frequency compared to 9 that have weekly SMU frequency (6.5%).

Table (8): Distribution of sample respondents by SMU frequency

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Weekly	9	6.5
	Daily	129	93.5
	Total	138	100.0

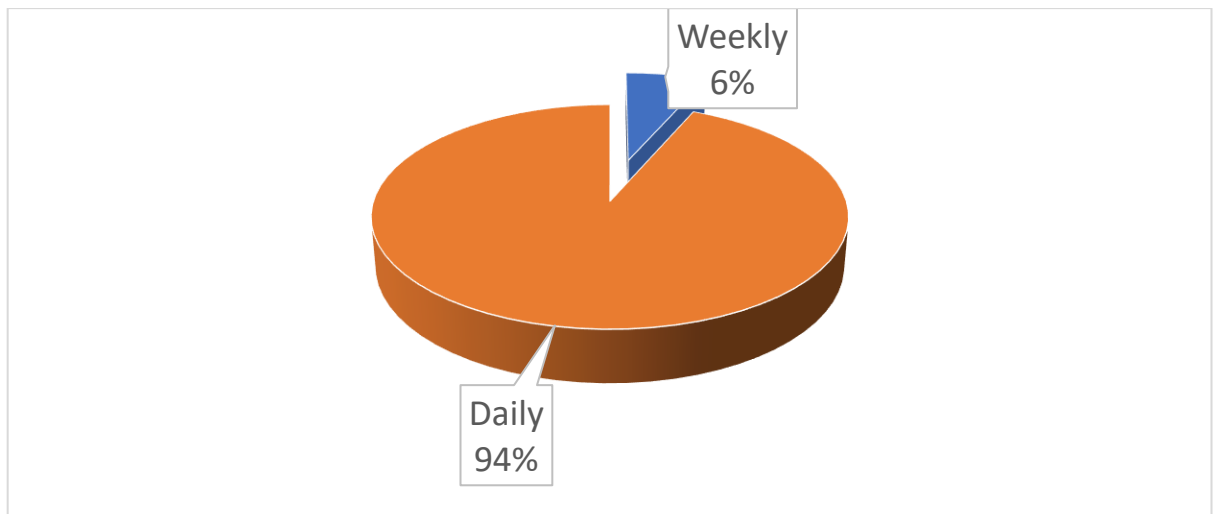


Figure7: Pie chart of sample respondents' distribution by SMU frequency

4.9 Summary Statistics of studied variables

This section presents the summary statistics of the studied variables, which were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The mean values on this scale are shown in Table 9:

Table (9): Interpretation of the Likert scale range of mean values

Aggregated rate range possible (minimum to maximum)	Width (max. – min.)	Agreement level (lowest = strongly disagree, ..., highest = strongly agree)
1.00 - 1.79	0.79	Strongly disagree
1.80 - 2.59	0.79	Disagree
2.60 - 3.39	0.79	Neutral

3.40 - 4.19	0.79	Agree
4.20 – 5.00	0.79	Strongly Agree

Source: researcher calculation

Table 10 shows the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum summary statistics for the Informative value of social media influencers. The mean values ranged from 2.42 to 3.28. This mean value range is interpreted between disagree to neutral.

Table(10): Summary statistics for Informative value of social media influencer

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
SMIV1	3.11	0.987	1	5
SMIV2	3.26	1.076	1	5
SMIV3	3.28	1.081	1	5
SMIV3	2.42	1.213	1	5

SMIV1: social media influencers' Advertisements are valuable sources of information for fashion clothes.

SMIV2: social media influencers' Advertisements tell me which fashion clothes brands have the features I am looking for.

SMIV3: social media influencers' Advertisements help me to keep up to date about fashion clothes available in the marketplace.

Table 11 shows the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum summary statistics for the Credibility of social media influencers (Trustworthiness). The mean values ranged from 2.61 and 2.71. This mean value range is interpreted as neutral.

Table (11): Summary statistics for Credibility of social media influencer (Trustworthiness)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
SMIC11	2.61	0.916	1	5
SMIC12	2.71	0.945	1	5
SMIC13	2.66	0.963	1	5
SMIC14	2.68	1.011	1	5

SMIC11: I feel my preferable social media influencers are honest

SMIC12: I consider my preferable social media influencers are trustworthy.

SMIC13: I feel my preferable social media influencers are truthful.

SMIC14: I consider my preferable social media influencers earnest.

Table 12 shows the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum summary statistics for the Credibility of social media influencers (expertise). The mean values ranged from 2.42 and 2.79. This mean value range is interpreted between disagree to neutral.

Table (12): Summary statistics for Credibility of social media influencer (expertise).

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
SMIC21	2.79	1.143	1	5
SMIC22	2.77	1.142	1	5
SMIC23	2.43	1.139	1	5
SMIC24	2.42	1.213	1	5

SMIC21: I feel my preferable social media influencers who make fashion advertisements know a lot about fashion clothes.

SMIC22: I feel my preferable social media influencers who make fashion advertisements are competent to make assertions about fashion clothes in their advertisements.

SMIC23: I consider my preferable social media influencers who make fashion advertisements are expert on fashion clothes.

SMIC24: I consider my preferable social media influencers who make fashion advertisements are sufficiently experienced to make assertions about fashion clothes.

Table 13 shows the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum summary statistics for the Credibility of social media influencers (similarities). The mean values ranged from 2.38 and 2.70. This mean value range is interpreted between disagree to neutral.

Table(13): Summary statistics for Credibility of social media influencer (similarities).

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
SMIC31	2.70	1.044	1	5
SMIC32	2.38	0.991	1	5
SMIC33	2.42	1.213	1	5

SMIC31: The influencers I prefer and I have a lot in common.

SMIC32: The influencers I prefer and I are a lot alike.

SMIC33: I can easily identify with my preferable influencers.

Table 14 shows the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum summary statistics for the Credibility of social media influencers (attractiveness). The mean values ranged from 2.42 and 3.04. This mean value range is interpreted between disagree to neutral.

Table (14): Summary statistics for Credibility of social media influencer (attractiveness).

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
SMIC41	2.88	1.068	1	5
SMIC42	3.04	1.066	1	5
SMIC43	2.42	1.213	1	5

SMIC41: I consider the influencers that I prefer are very attractive

SMIC42: I consider the influencers prefer are very stylish.

SMIC43: I think the influencers that I prefer are good-looking.

Table 15 shows the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum summary statistics for e-WOM. The mean values ranged from 2.42 and 2.77. This mean value range is interpreted between disagree to neutral.

Table (15): Summary statistics for E-WOM

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
EWOM1	2.62	0.969	1	5
EWOM2	2.73	1.036	1	5
EWOM3	2.77	1.055	1	5
EWOM4	2.63	1.004	1	5
EWOM5	2.42	1.213	1	5

EWOM1: The social media content of online consumers review is accurate.

EWOM2: The social media content of online consumers review is objective.

EWOM3: The social media content of online consumers review is reliable.

EWOM4: The social media content of online consumers review is complete.

EWOM5: The social media content of online consumers review is useful.

Table 16 shows the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum summary statistics for social media customers' purchase intention. The mean values ranged from 2.42 and 2.83. This mean value range is interpreted between disagree to neutral.

Table (16): Summary statistics for social media customers' purchase intention

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
PI1	2.54	1.134	1	5
PI2	2.83	1.113	1	5
PI3	2.42	1.213	1	5

PI1: I would purchase fashion clothes based on the advice I am given by my preferable influencers on social media.

PI2: I would follow a fashion clothes brand recommended by the influencers that I follow.

PI3: In the future, I will purchase from fashion clothes recommended by my preferable influencers on social media.

Table 17 shows the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum summary statistics for trust in brands advertised on social media. The mean values ranged from 2.42 and 2.50. This mean value range is interpreted as disagree.

Table (17): summary statistics for social media users' trust in brand advertised on social media

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
TBSM1	2.54	1.012	1	5
TBSM2	2.50	1.034	1	5
TBSM3	2.42	1.213	1	5

TBSM1: I trust fashion clothes brands advertised by my preferable influencers on social media.

TBSM2: I feel that I can trust fashion clothes brands advertised by my preferable influencers on social media completely.

TBSM3: I feel secure when I buy from fashion clothes brands advertised by my preferable influencers on social media because I know that she/he will never let me down.

4.10 Multicollinearity analysis using Pearson correlation

Table 18 below shows the Multicollinearity analysis using Pearson correlation. Multicollinearity must be resolved in the beginning before the process of modeling data, as it is essential to contribute an accurate result. According to (Midi et al., 2013), if the value of multicollinearity is lower than 0.8, then no Multicollinearity between the constructs which is found in the table below.

Table (18): Multicollinearity analysis using Pearson test

	TBSM	PI	SMIV	SMIC	SMIC	SMIC	SMIC	EWO
				1	2	3	4	M
TBSM	1	.636**	.334**	.573**	.551**	.518**	.379**	.623**
PI	.636**	1	.456**	.521**	.615**	.491**	.543**	.553**
SMIV	.334**	.456**	1	.298**	.463**	.451**	.422**	.342**
SMIC1	.573**	.521**	.298**	1	.548**	.504**	.404**	.509**
SMIC2	.551**	.615**	.463**	.548**	1	.558**	.461**	.530**
SMIC3	.518**	.491**	.451**	.504**	.558**	1	.529**	.481**
SMIC4	.379**	.543**	.422**	.404**	.461**	.529**	1	.515**
EWOM	.623**	.553**	.342**	.509**	.530**	.481**	.515**	1

4.11 Items' reliability

As high as the item loading, the more representative variables will be for the item. Item loading that is higher than 0.708 is significant when the value of the associated t-statistic is more than ± 1.96 (J. F. Hair et al., 2020). According to Table 19 shown below, it is obvious that all items' loadings are higher than 0.708, and t-statistic values are more than 1.96. Accordingly, the indicators of composite reliability for all constructs were higher than the cut-off values and all items loading, and T statistics were significant and sufficient to be used in data collection. As a result, all items are reliable.

Table (19): Indicator Reliability

Variable	Item	Item Loading	T Statistics (O /STDEV)
Electronic word of mouth	EWOM1	0.776	17.971
	EWOM2	0.793	19.463
	EWOM3	0.838	27.024
	EWOM4	0.790	18.842
	EWOM5	0.785	18.515
Social media customers' purchase intention	PI1	0.839	22.897
	PI2	0.827	24.122
	PI3	0.903	45.497
Informative value of social media influencer	SMIV1	0.849	26.978
	SMIV2	0.859	26.613
	SMIV3	0.776	12.556
Credibility of social media influencer -trustworthiness -expertise. - similarities. - attractiveness	SMIC11	0.790	21.649
	SMIC12	0.865	32.402
	SMIC13	0.903	44.805
	SMIC14	0.800	18.932
	SMIC21	0.860	30.005
	SMIC22	0.859	31.547
	SMIC23	0.895	40.651
	SMIC24	0.859	34.191
	SMIC31	0.837	28.531
	SMIC32	0.844	24.476
	SMIC33	0.794	20.239
	SMIC41	0.882	45.214
	SMIC42	0.907	63.903
	SMIC43	0.748	10.421
	TBSM1	0.876	31.973

Trust in brand	TBSM2	0.914	49.664
advertised on	TBSM3	0.908	49.342

4.12 Constructs' reliability and convergent validity

To measure the reliability, two tests were used. These tests are Cronbach Alpha and Composite reliability. According to Hair et al. (2020), rule of reliability acceptance, the Cronbach Alpha value should be higher than 0.7, and the Composite reliability should be higher than 0.7 but not more than 0.95. The convergent validity is assessed through Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which must be higher than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2020). In Table 20 below, the values of Cronbach alpha range from 0.780 To 0.891, the composite reliability range from 0.865 to 0.927, and the AVE range from 0.606 to 0.809. The AVE of all constructs is assessed as they are superior to 0.5, supporting the convergent validity of all the constructs. Consequently, the reliability and convergent validity of all thesis constructs shown below in Table 20 met the conditions.

Table (20): scale reliability and convergent validity

Constructs	Cronbach 's Alpha	Compo site Reliabi lity	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
EWOM	0.837	0.884	0.606
Trustworthiness of social media influencer	0.861	0.906	0.707
Expertise of social media influencer	0.891	0.924	0.754
Similarity of social media influencer	0.766	0.865	0.681
Attractiveness of social media influencer	0.808	0.885	0.720
Informative value of social media influencer	0.780	0.868	0.687
customers' purchase intention	0.819	0.892	0.735
Users' trust in brands advertised on social media	0.882	0.927	0.809

4.13 Constructs' discriminant validity

Discriminant validity is assessed through two tests. The first test is the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, and the second test is the Heterotrimeric Ratio (HTMT).

Fornell-Larcker Criterion was applied to assess the degree of shared variance between the model constructs. The discriminant validity was first assessed through the Fornell-Larcker. It describes the square root of each

construct's AVE values with the latent variable. In specific, the AVE's square root must be higher than its highest correlation when compared with other constructs(Hair et al., 2014). Table 21 shows that the square root of each construct's AVE is larger than its correlation with other constructs. Hence, the discriminant validity of all constructs was assessed.

Table (21): Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Age	E-WOM	Gender	Trustworthiness	Expertise	Similarities	Attractiveness	Social media	informative	Purchase	trust brand
Age	1.000										
E-WOM	0.007	0.778									
Gender	-0.490	-0.002	1.000								
Trustworthiness	0.004	0.515	-0.027	0.841							
Expertise	-0.253	0.535	0.223	0.552	0.868						
Similarities	-0.096	0.488	0.029	0.509	0.560	0.825					

Attractiveness	-0.154	0.512	0.028	0.415	0.487	0.547	0.849				
Social media frequency of use	0.121	0.055	-0.169	-0.019	-0.149	-0.105	-0.126	1.000			
informative value of influencer	-0.236	0.353	0.075	0.303	0.484	0.463	0.441	-0.170	0.829		
user's purchase intention security	-0.133	0.557	0.038	0.528	0.619	0.499	0.564	-0.091	0.471	0.857	
Users' trust in brands advertised	0.030	0.632	-0.047	0.579	0.552	0.522	0.400	0.112	0.362	0.649	0.899

The discriminant validity was also assessed through the Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT). The HTMT is the mean value of the item correlations across constructs. Problems of Discriminant validity appear when the values of HTMT are high. A threshold value of 0.90 was proposed by (Henseler et al., 2015). He also added that when the HTMT value is higher than 0.90, this would reveal that discriminant validity is not present. When constructs are more conservative more distinct conceptually, a smaller threshold value is proposed, like 0.85 (Hair et al., 2020). As shown in Table 22 below, all HTMT values were found to be less than 0.85, which indicates that discriminant validity for the reflective constructs was confirmed.

Table (22): Heterotrimeric Ratio (HTMT)

		Age	E-WOM	Gender	Trustworthiness	Expertise	Similarities	Attractiveness	Social media	informative
E-WOM		0.120								
Gender		0.490	0.057							
Trustworthiness		0.088	0.601	0.038						
Expertise		0.268	0.613	0.236	0.625					
Similarities		0.132	0.599	0.088	0.619	0.672				
Attractiveness		0.156	0.627	0.056	0.479	0.540	0.663			
Social media frequency of use		0.121	0.067	0.169	0.068	0.159	0.153	0.136		
informative value of influencer		0.263	0.424	0.142	0.363	0.555	0.578	0.529	0.203	
user's purchase intention		0.147	0.665	0.097	0.621	0.722	0.621	0.662	0.104	0.570

Users' trust in brands advertised	0.032	0.724	0.070	0.658	0.621	0.631	0.449	0.119	0.406
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4.14 Structural model quality

The quality of the structural model is assessed through the Rsquare indicator for dependent variables (Hair et al., 2020), i.e., social media purchase intention that depends on trust in brand, perceived credibility, and informative value. Users' trust in brand also depends on the independent variables credibility and informative value. Hence, trust in brand is mediating, but in this test it is considered as a dependent because it depends on perceived credibility and informative value. R square must be higher than 0.1 but not higher than 0.9 (Fernandes 2012). Hence, this condition is met because the R square is 0.551 for Social media customers' purchase intention and 0,521 Users' trust in brands advertised on social media. Consequently, both constructs met the conditions.

Table (23): R Square results

Dependent variables	R Square
Social media user's purchase intention	0.571
Users' trust in brands advertised on social media	0.538

4.15 Direct effects testing

Table 24 below indicates the standardized regression coefficient, critical ratio (CR), and p-value of all constructs. It revealed the results of the direct effect relationship between the thesis' variables. As shown below in table 24, hypotheses H1.2, H2.2, H4 were confirmed, and H1.1 and H2.1 were rejected. H1.1 hypothesized the link between the Informative value of

social media influencers and customers' purchase intention. As shown in table 24, the critical ratio (CR) value is not significant $1.588 < 1.96$, with a p-value higher than 0.05. accordingly, H1.1 is rejected. H1.2 hypothesized the link between the credibility of social media influencers and social media customers' purchase intention. As shown in table 24, the critical ratio (CR) value is significant $4.695 > 1.96$, with a p-value lower than 0.05. accordingly, H1.2 is accepted. H2.1 hypothesized the link between the informative value of social media influencers and users' trust in brands advertised on social media. As shown in table 24, the critical ratio (CR) value is not significant $0.053 < 1.96$, with a p-value higher than 0.05. accordingly, H2.1 is rejected. H2.2 hypothesized the link between the credibility value of social media influencers and users' trust in brands advertised on social media. As shown in table 24, the critical ratio (CR) value is significant $3.985 > 1.96$, with a p-value less than 0.05. accordingly, H2.2 is accepted. H4 hypothesized the link between users' trust in brand advertised in social media and social media customers' purchase intention. As shown in table 24, the critical ratio (CR) value is significant $4.239 > 1.96$, with a p-value lower than 0.05. accordingly, H4 is accepted.

As for the control variables, the result shows that social media frequency of use ($P = 0.402 > 0.05$) and social media users' gender ($P = 0.661 > 0.05$) and age ($P = 0.382 > 0.05$) do not have significant effects on social media customers' purchase intention.

Table (24): Results of structural model (Direct effects)

Hypotheses	Independent variable	Dependent variable	B	C.R.	P	Result
H1.1	informative value of social media influencer's	Social media customers' purchase intention	0.113	1.588	0.113	Rejected
H1.2	credibility of social media influencers'		0.388	4.695	0.000	Confirmed
H4	Users' trust in brands advertised on social media		0.361	4.239	0.000	Confirmed
Control variables	Age		-0.062	0.875	0.382	-
	Gender		-0.030	0.438	0.661	-
	Social media frequency of use		-0.062	0.839	0.402	-

H2.1	informative value of social media influencers	Users' trust in brands advertised on social media	-0.004	0.053	0.958	Rejected
H2.2	credibility of social media influencers	on social media	0.376	3.985	0.000	Confirmed

4.16 Mediating effect testing

To test the mediating effect of users' trust in brands advertised on social media in our model, we followed the recommendations of (J. F. Hair et al., 2014) and used the non-parametric bootstrapping method. In this line, these authors recommended testing the significance of the indirect effect between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Our model integrates two independent variables (social media influencer's informative value and social media influencer's credibility) and one dependent variable (Social media user's purchase intention). If the indirect effect is found to be not significant, there is no significant mediating effect of users' trust in brands advertised on social media (J. F. Hair et al., 2014). In this sense, results provided evidence that the indirect effect of the informative value of social media influencers on social media customers' purchase intention is not significant ($\beta = -0.001$, $CR = 0.053$, $P > 0.05$). Thus, users' trust in brands advertised on social media does not mediate the link between the informative value of social media influencers and social media customers' purchase intention. The hypothesis H5.1 is thus rejected. Furthermore, findings highlighted that the indirect effect of credibility of social media

influencers on social media customers' purchase intention through the effect of users' trust in brands advertised on social media is positive and significant ($\beta=0.136$, CR.= 2.671, $P<0.01$). In this line, the relationship between the dependent and independent variable must decrease or turn into a non-significant link to confirm a mediating effect. The total effect of social media influencers' credibility on social media customers' purchase intention is also positive and significant ($\beta=0.524$, CR.= 7.648, $P<0.001$). The direct link between these variables is positive and significant ($\beta=0.388$, CR.= 4.695, $P<0.001$). Along with the results, the effect of the credibility of social media influencers on social media customers' purchase intention has diminished by the effect of the users' trust in brands advertised on social media.

Additionally, (J. F. Hair et al., 2014) suggested estimating the variance accounted for (VAF), which is the indirect effect divided by the total effect. If the indirect effect is significant, the following step determines whether there is partial or total mediation. A total mediation is assessed if the VAF value is larger than 80%, whereas partial mediation is determined if the VAF value is between 20% and 80%.

Results pointed out that the value of the VAF for the mediating effect of the users' trust in brands advertised on social media between social media influencer's credibility and social media user's purchase intention is equal to 26% (between 20% and 80%). Consequently, users' trust in brands advertised on social media partially mediates the link between social media influencers' credibility and social media customers' purchase intention. Thus, hypothesis H5.2 is confirmed.

Table (25): Mediating effect of users' trust in brands advertised on social media

Link	Mediating variable	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect	Total VAF
informative value of social media influencer - Social media user's purchase intention	Users' trust in brands advertised on social media	$\beta=0.13$ (CR.= 1.588, $P>0.05$)	$\beta=-0.001$ (CR.= 0.053, $P>0.05$)	$\beta=0.112$ (CR.= 1.427, $P>0.05$)	No mediation
Credibility of social media influencer - Social media user's purchase intention		$\beta=0.388$ (CR.= 4.695, $P<0.001$)	$\beta=0.136$ (CR.= 2.671, $P<0.01$)	$\beta=0.524$ (CR.= 7.648, $P<0.001$)	20%<26.00%<80% (Partial mediation)

4.17 Moderating effect testing

Hypothesis 3.1 and Hypothesis 3.2 aim to examine if E-WOM moderates the link between the informative value of social media influencers and social media users' trust in brand advertised on social media and if E-WOM moderates the link between the credibility of social media influencers and social media users' trust in the brand advertised on social media, respectively.

Table 26 below shows three points. First, the direct effect of E-WOM on users' trust is positive and significant ($\beta=0.357$, CR=4.173, $p=0.000$, $p<$

0.05). Second, the moderating effect of E-WOM in the link between the informative value of social media influencers and social media users' trust in brands advertised on social media is significant ($\beta=0.185$, CR=2.707, $p=0.007$, $p < 0.05$). Lastly, the moderating effect of E-WOM in the link between credibility of social media influencers and users' trust in brand advertised on social media is not significant ($\beta=-0.108$, CR=1.179, $p=0.239$, $p > 0.05$).

Table (26): Moderating effect of E-WOM

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (O/STDE V)	P Values	Result
EWOM -> Users' trust in brands advertised on social media	0.357	4.173	0.000	Significant
Moderating Effect 1 -> Users' trust in brands advertised on social media	0.185	2.707	0.007	Significant
Moderating Effect 2 -> Users' trust in brands advertised on social media	-0.108	1.179	0.239	Not significant

Moderating effect 1: E-WOM in the link between informative value of social media influencer and users' trust in brand advertised on social media

Moderating effect 2: E-WOM in the link between credibility of social media influencer and users' trust in brand advertised on social med

The structural model below generated by Smart PLS summarizes the results of this empirical study:

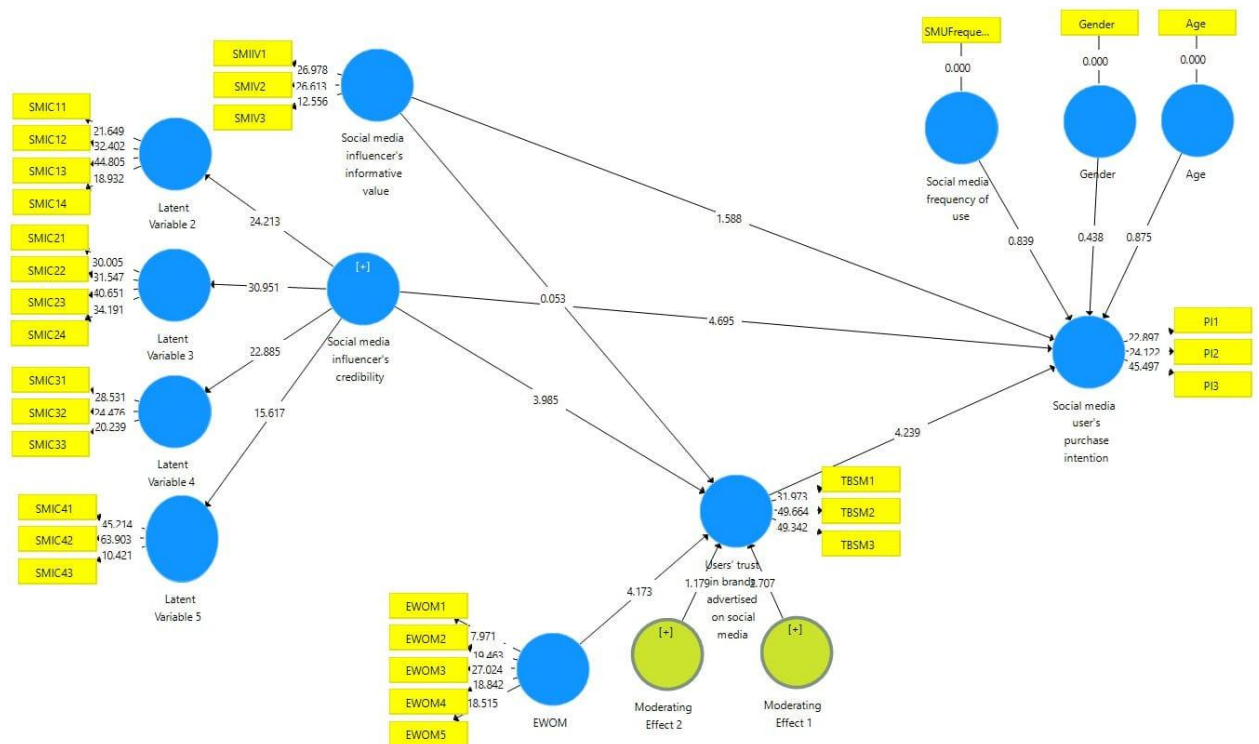


Figure 7: path analysis, outer loading, and R squared

4.18 Results' discussion

Through the use of the communication-persuasion matrix of McGuire (2001), the social identity theory, and the commitment trust theory, this thesis highlighted the effect of social media influencers' perceived values, focusing on perceived informative value and credibility of social media influencers on social media customers' purchase intention in Saudi Arabia in the context of fashion clothes. It deepens the analysis by focusing on the mediating role of trust in brand advertised on social media between social media influencers' perceived values and social media customers' purchase intention and the moderating role of E-WOM between social media influencers' perceived values and trust in brand advertised on social media.

Although some researchers studied the link between the informative value of social media influencers and customers' purchase intention as well as the link between credibility of social media influencers and customers' purchase intention (Hsu et al., 2017; Alalwan., 2018; Tan et al., 2021 Chakraborty & Bhat, 2017; Chin et al., 2019; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017), none of these studies were performed within the context of fashion clothes in Saudi Arabia as well as most of the previous studies were studying brands in general without identifying a specific context. In addition, the link between these constructs in the context of social media influencers' fashion marketing is at an embryonic stage.

The conducted results revealed that hypothesis 1.1, which indicates that social media influencers' informative value has a positive effect on social media customers' purchase intention, was rejected. This contradicts with the previous studies conducted by Arli (2017), Gautam & Sharma (2017), Alalwan (2018), and Tan et al. (2021), who found a positive significant link between these variables. The rejection of the above hypothesis could be because the influencers themselves want to have very effective advertisements, so they present the product as a magical phenomenon, so more followers tend to buy it, and the influencers get more paid. In short, due to the good repetitive information for all influencers' advertisements, a picture has been created in the followers' mind that the influencers' promotions are for promotional goals only.

Hypothesis 1.2, which indicates social media influencers' credibility has a positive effect on social media customers' purchase intention, was accepted. This result match with the studies conducted by Liu & Brock. (2011); Chakraborty & Bhat (2017); Chin et al. (2019); Djafarova & Rushworth (2017); Hayes & Carr (2015) and Tzoumaka et al. (2014). On the other hand, the result of hypothesis 1.2 contradicts the result of Haron

et al. (2017), who found that the influencer's expertise does not significantly affect customers' purchase intention. Therefore, the influencers' perceived credibility is essential for social media influencers' advertisements as it positively impacts the followers' behaviors, attitudes, and, most importantly, customers' purchase intention.

Hypothesis 2.1, which states that social media influencers' informative value has a positive effect on social media users' trust in brand advertised on social media, was rejected. The result of hypothesis 2.1 does not corroborate the results found by Choi. (2021) and Young Choi et al. (2021). This could be because customers assume the influencers could be under the company's pressure to exaggerate in recommending the advertised products, so it becomes hard to trust them. Moreover, the followers might have a bad experience due to their trust in influencers' informative value.

In addition, Hypothesis 2.2 that states social media influencers' credibility has a positive effect on users' trust in brands advertised on social media, was accepted. The obtained results are aligned with the result found by Cooley & Parks-Yancy (2019), Smith (2010), Dwivedi & Johnson (2013), and Sakib et al. (2020). The reason behind accepting this hypothesis could be the influencers' presentation of the product in real-life settings that lead to high perceptions of trustworthiness, influencers' personal experiences on their channels or accounts in social media imply a high level of credibility, especially when the influencer is perceived as interested and specialized in the domain, he\she advertised for. In addition, the perceived similarities and attractiveness could increase the level of credibility as the followers see things in common between themselves and the influencers or have a desire to be like the influencers(Schouten et al., 2019).

Hypothesis 3.1 postulates that E-WOM moderates the link between social media influencers' informative value and users' trust in brand advertised

on social media was significant. This finding is associated with the findings of Firman et al. (2021) and Shen (2021). The significant result of the previous hypothesis means that followers tend to trust the influencers' given information when it's associated with the customers' E-WOM. It appears that followers' comments play an active role in supporting the influencers' informative value. Finding out other customers' comments on the influencers' advertised products is a way to verify customers' feelings about what they perceived. On the other hand, Hypothesis 3.2 states that E-WOM moderates the link between social media influencers' credibility and social users' trust in brands advertised on social media was not significant. The result of this test contradicts with Tien et al. (2019) and Lis (2013). The non-significant result of hypothesis 3.2 could be because the customers care about the influencers' credibility more than the E-WOM as they can follow up with the influencers until they prove their credibility. It seems that E-WOM does not necessarily advance the effect of influencers' credibility on trust in brand.

Hypothesis 4 states that users' trust in brand advertised on social media has a positive effect on social media customers' purchase intentions is accepted. This finding is particularly consistent with the study of Kim et al. (2008), Hallegatte & Nantel (2009); Aydın et al. (2014); Sanny et al. (2020); Tariq & Eddaoudi, 2009. Also, this finding could be supported by the fact that when trust in brand is enhanced among customers, they will continue purchasing the same brand repetitively, resulting in a customer's commitment towards the brand, which establishes a positive relationship between the brand and the customer. Therefore, the followers' feeling of trust in the social media influencer will reinforce and motivate their purchase intention.

Hypothesis 5.1 indicates that users' trust in brand advertised on social media mediates the link between social media influencers' informative value and social media customers' purchase intention is rejected. The takeaway of this result is that the influencers' persuasion process needs attention and fairness. On the other hand, hypothesis 5.2 states that Users' trust in brand advertised on social media mediates the link between social media influencers' credibility and social media customers' purchase intention is confirmed. Indeed, influencers focus on practices that are valued by their followers and influence their purchase behaviors such as creating credible relationships with them. Implementing such a relationship will allow influencers to create a climate of trust within the organization they advertised for. Also, influencers' followers absorb ideas and knowledge that can help them in purchasing

4.19 Summary

This chapter presented respondents' general information, followed by a summary statistic for all the studied constructs. Then the reliability and validity were measured and confirmed. After that, the direct and indirect hypotheses tests were conducted. A structural model generated by Smart PLS that summarizes the results of this empirical study was presented to show all hypothesis results. This chapter ends with the results' discussion.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the results, followed by the theoretical contributions and the managerial implications. After that, the study limitation and the research perspective will be presented, and finally, the summary of this chapter will be the last part of this chapter.

5.2 Summary of findings

In this digital era, influencer marketing generated a key disruption and got the attention of researchers and practitioners. In the line of this topic, through a literature review, we formulated a series of hypotheses to test the links between the thesis variables on the basis of the communication-persuasion matrix of McGuire (2001), the social identity theory, and the commitment trust theory. The variables used in this thesis framework aim to measure the effect of social media influencers' perceived values of social media influencers' fashion advertisement and followers purchase intention with trust in brand advertised in social media as a mediator and E-WOM as a moderator between influencers perceived value and trust in brand advertised in social media. This framework is proved to be interesting regarding the valuable results generated by our empirical study and the managerial implications discussed in the following sections.

In this line, this study aimed to respond to the two major research questions which are:

Does trust in brand advertised on social media mediate the link between social media influencers' perceived values and customers' purchase intention? And

Does e-WOM moderates the link between social media influencers' perceived values and trust in brands advertised on social media?

Through a quantitative approach based on a questionnaire administrated to a sample of 138 Saudi Arabian social media users,

The findings demonstrated that social media influencers' credibility has a positive effect on trust in brands advertised on social media and customers' purchase intention. Also, results highlighted that trust in brand advertised has a positive influence on social media customers' purchase intention. Findings also outlined that trust in brand advertised on social media partially mediates the link between social media influencers' perceived credibility and followers' purchase intention. Through their posts on social media, the influencers can prove their trustworthiness, expertise, similarities, and attractiveness to their followers and encourage their trust among the brands advertised on social media, which in turn boosts their intention to buy these brands.

Moreover, this thesis highlighted that social media influencer perceived informational value does not significantly influence trust in brands advertised on social media and followers' purchase intention. Accordingly, results demonstrated that trust in brands advertised on social media does not mediate the relationship between social media influencers' perceived informative value and followers' purchase intention. However, it was found that E-WOM moderates the link between social media influencers perceived informational value and followers' trust in brand advertised on social media. In this line, social media influencers' perceived informational value has a positive influence on users' trust in brand advertised on social media in the presence of a positive E-WOM. In this line, customers consider that the influencers represent a reliable source of information if they read positive comments about them or the brands they

promote on social media. The followers may think that the influencers could exaggerate in promoting the brands as they know that they are paid by the company and tend to trust the information provided by the influencers and the brands they promote in the presence of positive influencers and brands' reviews on social media as they materialize the customers' shared experience.

Findings highlighted that the moderating effect of E-WOM in the link between social media influencers' perceived credibility and followers' trust in brand advertised on social media was not significant. An interesting result generated by the analysis is the effect of E-WOM on followers' trust in brands advertised on social media. By tracking the comments and reviews of other followers, followers tend to build their perception about the influencers and the brand they promote. In the presence of positive reviews, they tend to trust the brands advertised on social media more. Followers evaluate the value of the brands after evaluating the comments and likes on the influencers' advertisements.

This table presents an overview of the results regarding the test of the hypotheses:

Table(27): Hypotheses results

Hypotheses	Result
H1.1: Social media influencers' informative value has a positive effect on social media customers' purchase intention.	Rejected
H1.2: Social media influencers' credibility has a positive effect on social media customers' purchase intention.	Accepted

H2.1: Social media influencers' informative value has a positive effect on social media users' trust in brand advertised on social media.	Rejected
H.2.2: Social media influencers' credibility has a positive effect on users' trust in brands advertised on social media.	Accepted
H3.1: E-WOM moderates the link between social media influencers' informative value and users' trust in brand advertised on social media.	Accepted
H3.2: E-WOM moderates the link between social media influencer's credibility and social media users' trust in brands advertised on social media	Rejected
H4: Users' trust in brand advertised on social media has a positive effect on social media customers' purchase intentions.	Accepted
H5.1: Users' trust in brand advertised on social media mediates the link between social media influencers' informative value and social media customers' purchase intention.	Rejected
H5.2: Users' trust in brand advertised on social media mediates the link between social media influencers' credibility and social media customers' purchase intention.	Accepted

5.3 Theoretical contributions

The main idea of this thesis is to shed the lights on social media influencers' fashion advertisement that none of the studies were conducted on Saudi found the effectiveness of influencers' fashion advertisements nor found the mediating role of trust in brands advertised on social media nor investigate the moderating role of E-WOM in the link between social

media influencers' credibility and informational value and trust in brand advertised on social media.

Trust in brands advertised by social media influencers and its impact on customers' purchase intention is a subject of many research but not fashion marketing (Torres et al., 2019). Even though some research have been conducted studying the relationship between social media influencers' informative value and customers' purchase intention and other research investigated the relationship between social media influencers' credibility and customers' purchase intention, none of these studies applied trust in brands advertised in social media as a mediator between them nor applied E-WOM as a moderator between influencers' informative value, credibility and trust in brand advertised on social media. To the best of our research finding, no study has been performed in the domain of fashion clothes in Saudi Arabia with the above-mentioned constructs.

This thesis goes beyond the traditional links between variables such as the link between E-WOM and purchase intention (Gusti et al., 2019; Farzin & Fattahi, 2018) or the link between E-WOM and purchase decision (López & Sicilia., 2014). This thesis instead outlines the need to know if E-WOM moderates the link between social media influencers' informative value and credibility and trust in brands advertised in social media in Saudi Arabia in the context of fashion. To fill the gap found in the literature, this thesis generated this original framework to examine the effects of source and message factors on followers' attitudes. Moreover, the model of McGuire (2001) serves as a foundation for this thesis. The significance of this model lies in understanding the steps impacting the social media users' attitudes and behavior.

Few studies found a significant effect between informative value of social media influencers and trust in brands advertised on social media (Young

Choi et al., 2021; Choi., 2021), while others found a significant effect between credibility and trust in brands advertised on social media (Dwivedi & Johnson, 2013 Alotaibi et al., 2019; Reinikainen et al., 2020). Most previous studies have considered two or three dimensions of credibility (Morimoto., 2018; Choi, 2021; Liu & Brock, 2011), while this thesis considered four dimensions of credibility: trustworthiness, expertise, similarities, and attractiveness. This conceptualization is in line with Nafees et al., (2021), who recommended that future studies should examine this four-dimensional measure of social media influencers' credibility as a better measure of this variable and to comprehend the dimensionality of this variable.

Moreover, this thesis concentrates on the relationship between trust and customers' purchase intention that not many studies have examined this link, especially in Saudi Arabia. This thesis also considers the moderating effect of E-WOM and its link with the informative value and credibility of social media influencers and trust in brands advertised on social media. Although many researchers have studied E-WOM in social media, none of these researchers studied E-WOM as a moderator between the informative value and credibility of social media influencers and trust in brands advertised on social media in the fashion domain. Nevertheless, most previous studies have studied the relationship between E-WOM and customers' purchase intentions (Gusti et al., 2019; Farzin & Fattahi, 2018).

5.4 Managerial implications

This thesis is primarily beneficial for organizations and marketers as it will help them understand their customers' marketing strategy, which is as follows: the customers see the influencers' advertisements that will nurture their trust in brands advertised and encourage them to purchase the product.

Then, the customer will shape an opinion about the product and forward this opinion to others during communication, whether in face-to-face contact or through E-WOM. This thesis contributes to deeply understanding social media influencers' perceived value by measuring the effectiveness of social media influencers' fashion advertisements. Exploring the influence of social media influencers' credibility and informational value on the customers' attitude is also essential for marketers and brand managers. This thesis can assist marketers and advertisers in determining how social media users perceive influencers and how this perception can affect their trust in brands advertised on social media and their purchase intention of these brands. Also, this thesis focuses on finding whether trust in brands advertised on social media mediates the relationship between the perceived value of social media influencers and purchase intention. In addition to finding if E-WOM moderates the link between the constructs. However, the finding of this thesis implies that informative value does not have a positive effect on social media users' trust in brands advertised on social media or purchase intention. On the other hand, social media influencers' credibility has a positive effect on social media users' trust in brand advertised on social media and customers' purchase intention. Discovering such a relationship is necessary to improve marketing campaigns' effectiveness and to understand customers' interaction with influencers' advertisements. Therefore, the consciousness of social media influencers' informative value and credibility is important so that new communication strategies can satisfy the influencers' followers. Besides, the customers enjoy more benefits in their shopping by following up on influencers' advertisements. The achieved results will contribute in understanding acceptance of social media influencers' fashion advertisements by customers. Moreover, it will

offer a set of the components and characteristics of influencers to fashion brands' marketers to generate more purchases within this marketing field.

According to the obtained results, the influencers' perceived credibility impacts most social media customers' purchase intention. Accordingly, organizations need to have strategies for recruiting influencers with attractive characteristics. Social media marketers must develop partnerships with influencers whose content is more credible, attractive, trustworthy, and expert in the advertisement domain. Influencers should pay attention to how they are perceived by the followers and develop their expertise, attractiveness, trustworthiness, the information they provide to the followers, design good videos, use the right attractive words, and be in a good appeal.

Thus, fashion brands' marketers and practitioners should be aware of the influencers' characteristics, especially the perceived credibility, as it is proven to positively impact trust in the advertised brand and customers' purchase intention. This is crucial to understand how influencers shape the perception of their followers.

In this digital age, managers and practitioners shall grant a better understanding of these constructs as well as helps in finding social media users' area of interest that leads to the primary goal of raising the level of customers' purchase intention. Practitioners should use sponsored posts to increase the popularity and influence of the influencers' advertisements and increase the effect of E-WOM. However, the negative comments should be considered, and community managers should manage these negative comments about the brands.

5.5 Limitations

This study confirms a valuable result and exposes a substantial move ahead in social media influencers' fashion advertisements effectiveness and its effect on customers' purchase intention in Saudi Arabia. It proposes new avenues for future researchers. Like any other study, this thesis is not without any limitations. Although the constructs chosen in this study were identified as the greatest to help in understanding social media influencers' marketing according to our research knowledge, then several constructs were recognized during the process of writing this thesis as a relevant factor that is crucial to include such as followers' persuasion, Para social Relationship, and emotional value as well as the current circumstances of the worldwide pandemic known as corona virus. In addition, this study's results were obtained according to the customers' evaluation however, it would be more reliable if the study adopted an observational method such as observing followers' effectiveness and reaction toward specific fashion influencers' advertisements whom they prefer. Also, this study's results are only applied to Saudi Arabia, so it would be very interesting to assess the model in different countries. Future studies should consider one social media application and larger sample size to hinder the generalizability of the results. Moreover, future studies can adopt other methods to administrate the questionnaire as through the focus group the researcher can influence the response of the respondents, as well as the respondents can be influenced by each other responses.

5.6 Thesis recommendation

This thesis highly recommends fashion industries enhance their marketing campaigns through social media influencers' advertisements where the influencers generate useful information about the advertised product. This study proved the informative value effectiveness when it is associated with

positive E-WOM. Managers should manage the customers' comments and try to get more positive E-WOM. Businesses should deal with influencers with high credibility who is trustworthy, have expertise in the same domain of the advertised products, have similarities with the targeted audience, and choose those who have attractive appearance. As well as influencers should be socially responsible and focus also on showing the products in their real appearance without using filters or fabricated pictures. In addition to showing the dark side of the product instead of just praising the product.

5.7 Thesis perspectives

Future studies should specify only one platform through which the participants are followers of some influencers to examine social media marketing specifically because it's convincing that people have a different perspective on influencers' content and the perceived message modality of social media influencers according to the used application. Further research could add other perspectives such as testing the moderating effect of gender and age to see if the different generations perceive the social media influencers' advertisements differently. Moreover, future studies could test the impact of each credibility dimension alone and test other characteristics of the influencers.

5.8 Summary

This chapter answered the two main thesis questions regarding the moderating and mediating variable and presented all the gained results clearly by listing them in a table. Also, theoretical contributions and managerial implications were mentioned. Finally, some of this thesis's limitations were presented, followed by the thesis perspectives to provide enriching recommendations for practitioners, marketing managers, and social media influencers.

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Appendix 1

Below are the questions used in the focus group interview

- Informative value

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
When I see my preferable influencers' fashion clothes advertisements on social media, I think:					
social media influencers' Advertisements are valuable sources of information for fashion clothes.					
social media influencers' Advertisements tell me which fashion clothes brands have the features I am looking for.					
social media influencers' Advertisements help me to keep up to date about fashion clothes available in the marketplace.					

- Influencer's credibility

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel my preferable social media influencers are honest.					
I consider my preferable social media influencers are trustworthy.					
I feel my preferable social media influencers are truthful.					
I consider my preferable social media influencers earnest.					
I feel my preferable social media influencers who make fashion advertisements know a lot about fashion clothes.					
I feel my preferable social media influencers who make fashion advertisements are competent to make assertions about fashion clothes in their advertisements.					

I consider my preferable social media influencers who make fashion advertisements are expert on fashion clothes					
I consider my preferable social media influencers who make fashion advertisements are sufficiently experienced to make assertions about fashion clothes.					
The influencers I prefer, and I have a lot in common.					
The influencers I prefer, and I are a lot alike.					
I can easily identify with my preferable influencers					
I consider the influencers that I prefer are very attractive					
I consider the influencers prefer are very stylish					
I think the influencers that I prefer are good looking					

- E- word of mouth

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
The social media content of online consumers review is accurate.					
The social media content of online consumers review is objective					
The social media content of online consumers review is reliable					
The social media content of online consumers review is complete.					
The social media content of online consumers review is useful.					

- Social media customers' purchase intention.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I would purchase fashion clothes based on the advice I am given by my preferable influencers on social media.					
I would follow fashion clothes brand recommended by the influencers that I follow					
In the future, I will purchase from fashion clothes recommended by my preferable influencers on social media.					

- Social media users' trust in brands advertised on social media.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I trust fashion clothes brands advertised by my preferable influencers on social media.					
I feel that I can trust fashion clothes brands advertised by my preferable influencers on social media completely					
I feel secure when I buy from fashion clothes brands advertised by my preferable influencers on social media because I know that she/he will never let me down.					

Profile of the respondent

1. You are a:

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman

2. What is your Age :

- ☐ 25 years old or less
- ☐ 26-40
- ☐ 41- 56
- ☐ 57 years old and more

3. What is your educational qualification?

- ☐ No school completed
- ☐ High school
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Postgraduate
- ☐ Doctorate or higher

4. What is your occupation?

- ☐ 1 Self-employed
- ☐ 2 Unemployed/Homemaker
- ☐ 3 Student
- ☐ 4 Employee
- ☐ 5 Retired

5. What is your income?

- ☐ 7000 SR or less
- ☐ 7001-15000
- ☐ 3 More than 15000SR

6. How often do you use social media?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never