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**THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA
INFLUENCERS AND ONLINE MARKETING ON
CONSUMER PURCHASING BEHAVIOR IN THE
NORTH OF THE WEST BANK IN PALESTINE**

Ibrahim OMARI

Master's Thesis

Supervisor

Asst. Prof. Dr. Özgül ÖZKOÇ

İstanbul, 2024

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The thesis titled “THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS AND ONLINE MARKETING ON CONSUMER PURCHASING BEHAVIOR IN THE NORTH OF THE WEST BANK IN PALESTINE” prepared by IBRAHIM OMARI and submitted on 13/12/2024 has been **accepted unanimously** for the degree of Master of Business Administration.

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I hereby declare that all information/data presented in this graduation project has been obtained in full accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare all unoriginal materials and conclusions have been cited in the text and all references mentioned in the Reference List have been cited in the text, and vice versa as required by the abovementioned rules and conduct.

Ibrahim OMARI

Signature



DEDICATION

To my beloved family, whose support, encouragement, and patience have been the foundation of my journey. Your sacrifices and continuous support have given me strength and motivation throughout my educational journey. I am deeply grateful to my dear parents who taught me resilience and inspired me to achieve my goals. This work is as much yours as it is mine.

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I would also like to thank my dear friends whose support and encouragement have been invaluable throughout this journey. Finally, I dedicate this thesis to myself, acknowledging the commitment, determination and effort that went into achieving this accomplishment. This journey was not without its challenges, especially as an international student far from family. yet, I have proven to myself that I am capable of achieving the accomplishment I have been striving for.

ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS AND ONLINE MARKETING ON CONSUMER PURCHASING BEHAVIOR IN THE NORTH OF THE WEST BANK IN PALESTINE

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The main aim of this study is to investigate the impact of social media influencers and online marketing on consumer purchasing behavior in the northern part of the West Bank in Palestine. Social media influencers have been important individuals for shaping consumer preferences and purchasing decisions, given the wide increase of digital platforms use as TikTok, Facebook, YouTube and many among others. They also understand the consumer-behavior shaping dynamics, which are necessary for businesses. This study mainly focused on acknowledging the factors for consumer engagement with the content of online marketing, the role of social media influencers in shaping trust of brands, as well as the influence of their reviews and recommendations on the decision of purchasing. This study has applied the quantitative approach, where the study tool was the questionnaire for the collection of quantitative data from West Bank participants. The study sample consists of “384” respondents. The SPSS program was also used in this study for the data analysis, using regression, correlation analysis, in addition to descriptive statistics. The main findings revealed that there is an impact of online marketing and social media influencers on consumer purchasing decisions. The findings related to the correlation analysis revealed that most closely related to consumer behavior are “customer loyalty” and “influencer

credibility”, while the credibility is being the most powerful factor in this regard. Conversely, it was found that there is no significant effect of the attractiveness of influencers, and it was also concluded that there is a clear role of the clear communication in shaping and maintaining between brands and their target audience.

Keywords: Social Media Influencers, Online Marketing, Communication, Consumer purchasing Behavior, Palestine.



ÖZET

SOSYAL MEDYA ETKİLEYİCİLERİNİN VE ÇEVİRİMİÇİ PAZARLAMANIN FİLİSTİN'İN BATI ŞERİA'NIN KUZEYİNDEKİ TÜKETİCİ ALIŞVERİŞ DAVRANIŞI ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ

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Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, Filistin'deki Batı Şeria'nın kuzey kesiminde sosyal medya etkileyicilerinin ve çevrimiçi pazarlamanın tüketici satın alma davranışı üzerindeki etkisini araştırmaktır. Sosyal medya etkileyicileri, TikTok, Facebook, YouTube ve diğerleri gibi dijital platformların kullanımının yaygınlaşması göz önüne alındığında, tüketici tercihlerini ve satın alma kararlarını şekillendirmede önemli kişiler olmuştur. Ayrıca, işletmeler için gerekli olan tüketici davranışını şekillendiren dinamikleri de anlarlar. Bu çalışma esas olarak, tüketicilerin çevrimiçi pazarlamanın içeriğiyle etkileşiminin faktörlerini, markalara olan güveni şekillendirmede sosyal medya etkileyicilerinin rolünü ve satın alma kararı üzerindeki incelemelerinin ve önerilerinin etkisini kabul etmeye odaklanmıştır. Bu çalışma, Batı Şeria katılımcılarından nicel veri toplamak için çalışma aracının anket olduğu nicel yaklaşımı uygulamıştır. Çalışma örneklemini "384" katılımcıdan oluşmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, tanımlayıcı istatistiklere ek olarak regresyon, korelasyon analizi kullanılarak veri analizi için SPSS programı da kullanılmıştır. Ana bulgular, çevrimiçi pazarlama ve sosyal medya etkileyicilerinin tüketici satın alma kararları üzerinde bir etkisi olduğunu ortaya koydu. Korelasyon analiziyle ilgili bulgular, tüketici davranışıyla en yakından ilişkili olanların "müşteri sadakati" ve "etkileyici güvenilirliği" olduğunu ortaya koyarken, güvenilirliğin bu konuda en güçlü faktör olduğu ortaya çıktı. Tersine, etkileyicilerin çekiciliğinin önemli bir etkisi olmadığı bulundu ve ayrıca markalar ile hedef kitleleri arasındaki şekillenme ve sürdürülmede net iletişimin açık bir rolü olduğu sonucuna varıldı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal Medya Etkileyicileri, Çevrimiçi Pazarlama, İletişim, Tüketici satın alma Davranışı, Filistin.



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ABBREVIATIONS

CPB : Consumer Purchasing Behavior

DP : Dependent Variable

FOMO : The Fear of Missing Out

ID : Independent Variable

OM : Online Marketing

SEO : Search Engine Optimization

SMIs : Social Media Influencers

SPSS : Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms have been emerged as an important element of modern marketing strategies, due to the increasing use of social media as a main tool for communication, as well as the rapid development of digital technology (Ki, Cuevas, Chong, & Lim, 2020). They have not only been as strong and dominating tools for businesses to connect with their audiences, but they also revolutionized the way individuals share information and communicate with each other.

Social media influencers are those individuals who have gained a large following due to their expertise, charisma, or communication skills, and they also play a critical and significant role in shaping consumer preferences and perceptions. (Kwiatek, Baltezarević, & Papakonstantinidis, 2021). They have a great influence on brands promotion; as they are engaging target audiences in more personalized and interactive methods (Sijabat, Rantung, & Mandagi, 2022).

Influencer marketing mainly depend on the credibility and trust that influencers develop and create with their followers, giving companies the opportunity to directly communicate with a more precisely targeted audience compared to traditional marketing (Bakker, 2018). As consumers face an influx of online advertising, the relationships that influencers build with their audiences have become an effective way to increase sales and brand awareness (Thilina, 2021). However, the careful selection of influencers who are reliable and qualified to change followers' behavior through real-time interactions and insightful material is important for influencer marketing. Finding influencers that best fit this context's brand identities and marketing values is a challenge for businesses.

Influencer marketing has become increasingly significant in a time when many people actively look for methods to avoid traditional advertising. Users are increasingly using services like Netflix and Spotify, which provide ad-free experiences through paid subscriptions. (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2020). Furthermore, browser extensions and programs that prevent the display of advertisements on a user's screen can be used; an example of one such tool is an ad blocker (Sołtysik-Piorunkiewicz, Strzelecki, & Abramek, 2019). Influencer marketing has become as an interesting substitute for traditional advertising because of these developments.

Influencer marketing has shown to be a potent substitute for conventional types of advertising in recent years (Okonkwo & Namkoisse, 2023). Influencer marketing provides a more genuine and approachable means of connecting with potential clients as people grow less receptive to traditional advertising, particularly those seen on billboards, television, and print media (Rathod, Meghrajani, & Vidani, 2023). Customers can now interact with material that speaks to their own interests and preferences rather than being inundated with impersonal advertisements; this content is frequently suggested by influencers who they closely follow or look up to. The adoption of a more tailored marketing strategy has enabled firms to establish more robust connections with customers, cultivating a sense of trust and allegiance that is frequently absent from conventional marketing campaigns (Dwivedi Y. K., et al., 2020).

The marketing landscape has become more inclusive due to the emergence of influencers as contemporary opinion leaders (Judijanto, et al., 2024). Influencers are more approachable to particular audience groups because, in contrast to traditional celebrity endorsements, they frequently come from a variety of backgrounds and specialty communities. Smaller companies and brands may now reach highly engaged and devoted audiences without having to pay the astronomical prices linked to extensive celebrity endorsements thanks to this democratization (Ao, Bansal, Pruthi, & Khaskheli, 2023). Additionally, it has empowered customers by providing them with access to a greater variety of services that they might not have learned about through conventional marketing channels. It is challenging to obtain the same level of credibility through other forms of marketing as influencers do because of their capacity to explain and endorse things in an authentic manner based on their personal experiences (Agustian, Hidayat, Zen, Sekarini, & Malik, 2023).

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the prevalence of social media platforms in Palestine reached about 66%, and the rates of use of social media by gender were distributed as follows: 51% for males versus 49% for females (the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

2. GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS

2.1.1 Concepts of Social Media Influencers

Influencers of social media have deep knowledge of a specific field or domain, and they can easily change the audience's actions and even their beliefs. They have had great recognition and a number of followers on various platforms. (Han & Balabanis, 2023). Thus, they are now of paramount importance for the determination of online discourses and trends among consumers, because of the fame and popularity of certain platforms mainly TikTok, Instagram, in addition to YouTube channels. Their endorsements then would have a great and direct impact on sales (Durazo, Feijoo, & Feijoo, 2023).

According to (Nurliza, et al., 2024), the idea of influence has changed in the age of digital technology. In the past, influence was limited to public figures in certain fields or celebrities. However, social media has become accessible to everyone, democratizing influence, so that ordinary people can achieve fame by sharing their knowledge, original ideas, or perspectives. As a result of this change, there is a wide variety of influencers who appeal to different interests and demographics, enabling companies to target specific customer bases in their marketing campaigns (Manzoor, Farooq, & Bhat, 2023).

Influencers have an impact that goes beyond marketing. Compared to traditional media celebrities, they interact with followers more deeply, create a sense of community, and share personal histories (Manzoor, Farooq, & Bhat, 2023). Since their followers are looking for real connections and trustworthy guidance, their success mostly rests on their relatability and honesty. Because of this, influencer partnerships enable marketers to reach a very specific and devoted audience (Venciute, Mackeviciene, Kuslys, & Correia, 2023). Influencers are powerful outside markets since they can also start social movements, advance causes, and alter public opinion (Albadri, 2023).

Further, the relationships of power between followers and influencers are dynamic in nature (Shahzad, Rashid, Nadeem, Bilal, & Ahmad, 2023). According to (Xu, 2023), influencers have more tools at their disposal to interact with audience as platforms roll out new features like stories, live broadcasts, and e-commerce integrations. The heightened level of

involvement has cemented influencers' position as essential participants in the digital marketing field, rendering them crucial in contemporary brand tactics (Albadri, 2023).

2.1.2 Evolution of Social Media Influencers in Digital Marketing

Within the digital marketing sphere, there are clear changes in the development of influencers of social media over the previous ten years (Manzoor, Farooq, & Bhat, 2023). Influencers used to mostly be bloggers and YouTubers who posted content on technology, fashion, beauty, and lifestyle. As a result of their constant production of insightful and interesting content, their following increased (Karimkhan, 2024). Influencers adjusted to the growing and varied social media landscape by utilizing Instagram, Snapchat, and subsequently TikTok, all of which offered distinctive chances for content production and audience engagement (Kim, 2022).

As social media's significance grew, marketers realized the potential of influencer partnerships as a genuine and straightforward type of advertising (Leung, Gu, Li, Zhang, & Palmatier, 2022). Traditional advertising was frequently met with mistrust because it was so impersonal; however, influencer marketing gave dependable and natural method for the consumers' connection. The incorporation of native advertising elements into platforms, such sponsored posts and stories, hastened this change (Eyada & Milla, 2020). Influencers are extremely effective at influencing consumer behavior because of their relatability and trustworthiness, which has resulted in an exponential rise in influencer marketing initiatives (Vidani & Das, 2021).

The emergence of micro-influencers is a significant advancement in the development of influencers in digital marketing (Wei, Dai, & Liang, 2021). They usually have smaller but very engaged followers, give marketers access to niche markets, in contrast to standard celebrity endorsements (Rios, Casais, & Camilleri, 2021). Compared to initiatives run by bigger influencers, these influencers have a closer relationship with their audience and can build credibility and trust more effectively (Berne-Manero & Berne-Manero, 2020). The emergence of micro-influencers has transformed digital marketing tactics, facilitating the engagement of influencers by small and medium-sized enterprises (Erwin, Karystin, & Alam, 2024).

According to kim (Kim, 2022), data are now essential for determining how successful influencer efforts are. Brands can make well-informed decisions about potential influencer collaborations with the help of data-driven methods, which guarantees impactful and reasonably priced campaigns. In this regard, marketers today use sophisticated technologies to monitor conversion rates for transactions or sign-ups brought about by influencer postings, in addition to engagement metrics like likes, shares, and comments (Chopra, Avhad, & Jaju, 2020).

2.1.3 Types of Social Media Influencers

According to (Lyu & Brewster, 2020), “influencers of social media can be classified into a different group according to their follower’s number, platform preference, and niche. The most popular classification is based on the size of the followers; this comprises super-, macro-, micro-, and nano influencers.”

Mega-influencers frequently work with big brands to heavily market products, and they usually have a following of over a million. This kind of influencers who have great numbers on social media platforms and they are superbly famous on these platforms could be normal people or even famous people “celebrities”. (Conde & Casais, 2023). Conversely, macro-influencers have a fan base that varies from a few hundred thousand to a million. They are frequently very powerful inside their specialty and experts in particular subjects, including technology, fashion, or fitness. Because they strike a mix between reach and engagement, these influencers appeal to marketers that want to reach a wide but niche audience (Şenyapar, 2024).

Micro-influencers are known for having a good and extremely close relationship with their target audiences, where they have a few thousand to a hundred thousand followers (Gerlich, 2023). Although they have a small number of followers, they often have much greater rates of engagement than mega-or macro influencers. Consequently, their followers deeply believe their views and they are normally devoted to their suggestions (Harst & Spyros, 2024). Famous brands frequently work and deal with micro-influencers in terms of those initiatives targeting local markets or specific categories, since they are honest and relatable (Hogsnes, Grønli, & Hansen, 2024).

According to (Conde & Casais, 2023), “the smallest category, known as nano-influencers, often has less than 10,000 followers. Nano-influencers have a great deal of influence inside their communities, despite having a lesser reach”. Their opinions are highly respected since they are frequently viewed as common people who have real-life relationships to their audience (Şenyapar, 2024). For hyper-local or niche marketing efforts, where personal relationships are more important than the number of followers, this kind of influencer is perfect. Brands can maximize their impact by collaborating with nano-influencers to reach a niche audience inside close-knit network (Kilipiri, Papaioannou, & Kotzaivazoglou, 2023).

2.1.4 Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Influencers

2.1.4.1 Credibility influencing the influencers’ effectiveness

Credibility and trust are two of the most important components. Influencers that are well-liked and regarded by their followers are more likely to receive favorable feedback on sponsored content (Coutinho, Dias, & Pereira, 2023). Influencers who stay open and honest with their audience typically outperform competitors in marketing initiatives, given that genuine and continuous engagement develops trust over time (Niloy, Alam, & Alom, 2023). In a study conducted by (Serman & Sims, 2020), they found that the following variables are affecting their intents to follow the blogger's advice: credibility, sponsorship, trust, attractiveness, experience and subjective norms.

In accordance with (Wies, Bleier, & Edeling, 2022), “one important measure of an influencer's efficacy is their engagement rate”. It gauges the degree to which the public engages with the influencer's material by looking at likes, comments, shares, and other interactions. (Liu, Li, & Lee, 2021) indicated that a micro-influencer with a smaller, more engaged audience may be more effective than an influencer with a large follower count but poor engagement. Engagement is directly related to the authenticity of the material. Inauthentic or excessively promotional content can be easily detected by followers, hence diminishing confidence. Engaging their audience is more likely for influencers who stick to their brand and preserve their own voice (Hogsnes, Grønli, & Hansen, 2024).

Additionally, regular posters are more likely to remain at the front of their audience's consciousness since they keep them interested (Wen, Jingjing, Chen, & Luyu, 2022). A decrease in engagement may result from inconsistent publishing schedules because

followers may become disinterested (Hogsnes, Grønli, & Hansen, 2024). The efficacy of influencers is influenced by factors unique to each platform. The characteristics, target demographic, and content style of each platform vary, thus an influencer's success on Instagram could not translate to YouTube or TikTok. Influencers may maximize the effect and reach of their material by understanding these dynamics (Niloy, Alam, & Alom, 2023).

2.1.4.2 Customer loyalty influencing the influencers' effectiveness

Customer loyalty is one of the key factors that greatly influences the authenticity of influencers. Audience loyalty, which demonstrates their commitment and belief in the influencer, is a crucial element in the success of any influencer-led marketing campaign (Kim, 2022). Gan stated that customer loyalty is related to the audience's willingness to follow the influencer's recommendations, agree with their opinions, and take action. Establishing a personal connection with the audience is the first step in fostering consumer loyalty (Gan 2024). When an influencer demonstrates real interest in their audience by interacting with them directly, responding to their inquiries, and candidly discussing their own experiences, audiences feel a personal connection with the influencer.

A lasting relationship with the audience is another factor that helps to boost consumer loyalty. When an influencer builds a strong community around their content and encourages a sense of community among their audience, they win the audience's enduring loyalty, which translates into ongoing support for their marketing campaigns (Habib, Hamadneh, & Hassan, 2022). Last but not least, a loyal audience tends to endorse and enhance the influencer's reputation with others, a force that increases the effectiveness of influencers. This natural support plays a significant role in increasing the influencer's legitimacy and expanding their reach (Shevchenko, et al., 2022). Therefore, customer loyalty is not just an added bonus, but a key element that helps influencers succeed and increase their impact on audiences and markets.

2.1.4.3 Attractiveness influencing the influencers' effectiveness

An influencer's ability to influence their audience is influenced by their appearance. This concept is actually based on physical attributes, which are only one aspect of attractiveness; other elements include a strong, likeable personality, a sense of style, and an emotional connection with followers (Suryakrisna and Susanti 2024). Beautiful influencers have a

much greater impact because of their unique ability to attract and retain viewers and influence their decisions (Sun and Cheng 2023). Aesthetic appeal is among the most important factors in this regard. This relates to how an influencer conveys their content through images, videos, or designs (Dong 2024). Thus, visually appealing content can instantly grab users' attention, leave a good impression, and encourage engagement.

According to (Suryakrisna and Susanti 2024), when followers feel that an influencer understands their needs and aspirations, they are more likely to be receptive to their messages and follow their recommendations. Another equally important element is charisma; influencers are more likely to create closer connections with their audience if they have a warm, entertaining, or motivating personality. They are therefore more effective because they are more connected to their audience due to their ability to empathize, understand, and constructively engage with followers (Dong 2024).

2.1.5 Future Trends in Online Marketing and Social Media Influencers

There are several significant factors that are expected to influence social media influencers in online marketing in the future. The significance of video content is one of the most prominent developments. Many people now prefer short-form video content due to the growing popularity of services like TikTok and Instagram Reels (Koç, 2023). As organizations search for fresh approaches to engage with their audience, influencers with the ability to produce interesting and entertaining video content will only grow in popularity (Ooi, et al., 2023).

Live streaming is also becoming more popular, giving influencers the chance to communicate with people in certain time and enhance their relationship with them (Joshi, Lim, Jagani, & Kumar, 2023).

The use of artificial intelligence and machine learning in influencer marketing are another future trend (Nalbant, Aydın, & Eryılmaz, 2022). AI tools are currently being utilized to more successfully measure performance metrics, identify influencers, and forecast campaign outcomes. According to (Ramachandran, et al., 2024), AI is being used by brands to identify influencers who share their values and target market, improving return on investment. Influencers may now provide their fans more relevant and targeted content by using AI to help create tailored marketing tactics.

Additionally, shopping tools are being added to social media platforms more often, enabling influencers to directly sell goods through their postings (Shuqair, Filieri, Viglia, Mattila, & Pinto, 2024). The ability to shop on Instagram and the integration of TikTok with Shopify are two excellent instances of how social media is increasingly driving e-commerce. Because of this trend, influencers have even more power to shape customer behavior because they can now provide a smooth transition from discovery to purchase on a single platform (Joshi, Lim, Jagani, & Kumar, 2023).

2.2 ONLINE MARKETING

2.2.1 The Importance of Content Relevance in Influencer Effectiveness

According to (Chen, 2023), “Content relevance is the extent to which tastes and requirements of the influencer’s intended audience is reflected through their material. When a content that specifically meets and speaks to the needs of their audience is produced, they are most successful, increasing involvement and trust.”

In this regard, a number of significant factors affect how effective social media influencers are at increasing brand engagement, awareness and interaction (Devle & Gumgoankar, 2024). Content relevance is one important element to the target audience. Influencers’ values, interests, and preferences must match those of their followers so as to be successful (Chen, 2023). For instance, an influencer in the fitness industry who promotes health supplements is more likely to connect with a wellness-focused audience than one from a different industry. Therefore, brands have to carefully choose influencers whose audience fits their target demographic (Majidian, Vashan, & Hakimpour, 2021).

2.2.2 The Effect of Advertising Exposure to on the Audience

Exposure to influencer marketing is now a significant factor in influencing audience decisions, purchasing patterns, and purchases. Followers often interpret influencer ads as personal endorsements rather than commercials (Wardhani and Gunawan 2019). This effect stems from the nature of the relationship between influencers and their audience; followers respond better to ads when they see influencers as trustworthy sources or virtual friends. For example, advertising that is relevant to the audience's needs and interests encourages positive

experiences with the product or service and increases the likelihood that the audience will purchase (Çerçi and Köylüoğlu 2021).

Advertising effectiveness is diminished when it is overly repetitive or does not match the audience's interests. This might result in a state of saturation or frustration (Wardhani and Gunawan 2019). On the contrary, creative ads that combine entertainment and information achieve better results, as they attract the audience's attention and make them interact naturally without feeling forced (Russo, et al. 2020). Therefore, it can be said that exposure to advertising through influencers is not just a process of displaying products, but rather a dynamic strategy based on a deep understanding of the audience's needs and how to present solutions in an innovative and attractive way (Çerçi and Köylüoğlu 2021).

2.2.3 The Role of Perceived Value in Enhancing the Effectiveness of Influencers

One of the factors that affects how successful influencers are in achieving their goals and persuading their followers at all levels is perceived value. It conveys the audience's own views, beliefs and opinions concerning the benefits or even qualities of the goods or services that the influencer is promoting (Jingwu 2024). When the influencer can clearly and compellingly portray the value of the product, the audience is more likely to respond favourably, increasing the marketing campaign's efficacy (Al-Mu'ani, et al. 2023).

Jingwa observed that perceived value is primarily determined by two factors: direct experience and credibility (Jingwu 2024). When the influencer shares a real and personal experience with the product or service, this gives the audience a sense of confidence that this product is of real value. For example, if the influencer shows how the product has improved their life or solved a specific problem, this creates a direct connection between the product and the audience's needs, which increases the likelihood of their adoption (Yan, et al. 2024).

2.2.4 The Evolution of Online Marketing Strategies

Online marketing methods have evolved from the early days of the internet, when companies started experimenting with digital spaces as a new avenue to contact consumers (Dwivedi, et al., 2020). Since the internet was still in its infancy in the 1990s, static websites that offered basic information about businesses and their products served as the main focus of online marketing (Constantinides, 2004). In accordance with (Seymour, Frantsvog, & Kumar,

2011), search engines, including Yahoo and the initial iterations of Google, began to assist users in locating pertinent webpages. Nevertheless, email marketing and banner ads, which are sometimes viewed as obtrusive, were the only marketing strategies used. Companies did not have access to advanced metrics and tools to monitor the success of their web marketing at that time (Dsouza & Panakaje, 2023).

The early 2000s have witnessed a great shift in the industry, with the advent of search engine optimization and pay-per-click (Kritzing & Weideman, 2013). Businesses started to understand the significance of showing up on the initial page of Google search engine as a dominating factor in the market search engine. As a consequence, search engine optimization (SEO) was created, whereby websites were enhanced with pertinent material and keywords to raise their search engine rankings (Simmons, Flannery, & Byali, 2023). In the meanwhile, according to (Szymanski & Lipinski, 2018), PPC advertising gave businesses the ability to bid on keywords and show tailored ads to people who were actively looking for similar goods or services, especially when using Google AdWords (now Google Ads). In addition, online marketing became more data-driven as companies were able to track click-through rates, conversion rates, and ROI more precisely (Alfiana, et al., 2023).

According to (Dsouza & Panakaje, 2023), “online marketing goes through some notable and important changes due to the rapid expansion of social media platforms in the mid-2000s.” Social media marketing has been an important element for any digital strategy, since it gives businesses the capacity to build and grow relationships with consumers through customer service, influencer alliances, and content sharing. (Fan, 2023). Social media platforms, mainly Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, in addition to YouTube, have given businesses with more rooms for deep interaction with their target audience (Jeswani, 2023).

In accordance with (Ates & Odzic, 2023), targeted advertising, which allows firms to reach particular demographics based on users' interests, habits, and personal data, was also made possible by social media. This degree of audience targeting precision increased the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of internet marketing. Viral marketing initiatives have gained popularity as companies sought to provide content that could be shared naturally on social media platforms, expanding their audience without significant advertising costs (Haleem, Javaid, Qadri, Singh, & Suman, 2022).

Online marketing tactics have further evolved in the 2010s and beyond due to the spread of mobile devices, developments in artificial intelligence (AI), and the emergence of e-commerce platforms (Davenport, Guha, Grewal, & Bressgott, 2019). (Tarnanidis, 2024) indicated that with smartphones replacing other devices as the main means of internet access, mobile marketing gained importance and gave rise to innovations such as location-based services, push notifications, and app-based marketing. According to (Babatunde, Odejide, Edunjobi, & Ogundipe, 2024), AI-powered technologies such as chatbots, recommendation engines, and programmatic advertising have made it possible for marketers to scale up the personalization of consumer experiences by offering customized content and product recommendations based on user behavior and data. E-commerce marketing has also changed as a result of the rise of platforms like Amazon, Alibaba, and Shopify, which give companies access to enormous marketplaces and tools for running online stores (Haleem, Javaid, Qadri, Singh, & Suman, 2022).

2.2.5 Role of Social Media in Modern Marketing

Social media evolved as important tools for modern marketers. This has increased brand recognition, and eventually boosted revenue. (Khanom, 2023). Social media platforms, particularly YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook were informal forums for interactions among users. Businesses witnessed a great chance to leverage and update such platforms as marketing tools, given the fact that they have been developed to hundreds of thousands and millions of users (Filo, Lock, & Karg, 2015). A level of unattainable immediacy and personalization have been given to brands by social media platforms, by which they interact directly and in real-time with their target audience (Khanom, 2023). Social media is a strong tool for engaging customers, building loyalty and trust, and promotion. Brands can run advertisements, foster community conversations, and produce content. (Khan, Geng, Larsari, & Sain, 2023).

Social media plays an important part in contemporary marketing strategies by enabling bidirectional connection between companies and customers (Tarnanidis, 2024). Customers can communicate directly with brands using social media by leaving comments, sending messages, and sharing content, in contrast to conventional advertising platforms that were primarily one-sided (Filo, Lock, & Karg, 2015). Through this engagement, the audience feels heard and respected, which strengthens relationships and increases consumer loyalty

(Kim, 2022). Furthermore, social media platforms are now necessary for customer care since they allow companies to quickly address questions from customers and fix problems. By using real-time audience feedback, this quick feedback loop assists brands in managing their reputation and improving their goods and services (Loitongbam, Sorokhaibam, & Singh, 2023).

Social media platforms provide never-before-seen chances for precise and targeted advertising in addition to involvement. Companies can now target specific demographic groups on the basis of their habits, and demographic characteristics, because of the highly advanced ad targeting technologies created by platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. (Khan, Geng, Larsari, & Sain, 2023). In accordance with (Daou, 2020), in comparison with traditional advertising, social media marketing is economical because of this level of accuracy, which allows firms to customize their campaigns to specifically target their desired clientele. Additionally, social media networks that incorporate AI and machine learning allow for automated ad optimization, which helps companies optimize return on investment (ROI) (Gao, Wang, & Hu, 2023). Nowadays, brands can monitor specific data like consumer behavior, conversion rates, and engagement rates, which enables them to continuously improve their marketing tactics (Daou, 2020).

The emergence of influencer marketing is among the most important marketing trends of social media that has been changed over time (Salhab, 2024). Influencers are those individuals who have large and active fan bases on platforms of social media like TikTok and Instagram. So, they are important elements and pillars in marketing goods and services. (Fan, Chan, Wang, Li, & Prieler, 2023). Influencer partnerships let brands connect with specialist audiences in a genuine and relatable way (Leung, Gu, Li, Zhang, & Palmatier, 2022).

Because they frequently have a close relationship with their followers, influencers can produce more personal and trust-based marketing than traditional advertising (Balaban, Mucundorfeanu, & Naderer, 2023). (Adebayo & Omamode, 2023) observed that this tactic has proven particularly successful in sectors where influencer endorsements influenced decisions of consumer purchasing. User-generated content and influencers will become increasingly significant in shaping brand perception and consumer behavior as social media continues to develop and grow. (Baruk & Wesołowski, 2021).

2.2.6 Trends in Digital Marketing: A Global and Regional Perspective

Digital marketing is now dynamic and constantly changing due to factors including regional economic conditions, changing consumer behavior, and technology improvements (Sharma, 2024). Artificial intelligence (AI), personalization, and data-driven marketing have revolutionized online promotion for firms worldwide (Bell, Olukemi, & Brooklyn, 2024). Increasingly, brands are using real-time data analytics to customize their marketing tactics, which is why personalization is a major trend in international markets.

Today's consumers demand tailored experiences, whether through product suggestions derived from their browsing and purchase history, targeted advertisements, or tailored email campaigns (Aggarwal, Sharma, & Saxena, 2024). Machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) are major drivers of this shift toward personalization, which enable organizations to handle vast volumes of data and forecast customer behavior with ever-increasing precision (Shevchenko, et al., 2022).

Another significant worldwide trend is the increasing significance of video content, especially short-form videos (Manic, 2024). Platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram have made video content one of the most effective ways to engage users, especially among younger audiences (Babu, et al., 2024). As a result, corporations are allocating a substantial percentage of their marketing resources to video production in numerous countries. These formats include live streaming, instructional, and user-generated content (Ali, 2022). Long-form videos, such as webinars and product demos, are becoming more popular in addition to short-form content, especially for B2B marketing (Aggarwal, Sharma, & Saxena, 2024). Video content has become increasingly important in digital marketing strategies due to the global acceleration of high-speed internet and mobile device consumption (Paendong, et al., 2023).

However, digital marketing trends differ greatly between regions due to cultural norms, technology infrastructure, and local preferences (Shevchenko, et al., 2022). Influencer marketing, for example, is still quite popular in North America and Western Europe, where companies are working more and more with social media influencers to reach specific audiences. In these areas, social responsibility and sustainability are also heavily emphasized

in marketing efforts since consumers are more inclined to support companies that share their beliefs (Jarrar, Awobamise, & Aderibigbe, 2020).

In contrast, mobile marketing has become the main focus of emerging markets in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Mobile-first tactics, such as mobile apps, SMS marketing, as well as location-based services, are effective. (Krajnovic, Ninčević, & Bosna, 2015). The widespread use of smartphones in such regions makes mobile marketing an important element of digital campaigns.

The development of social media and the rising use of mobile technologies in (MENA) area have an impact on digital marketing. Localized content is essential in MENA markets since language preferences and cultural sensitivities greatly influence consumer behavior (Gharios & Khalaf, 2024). Platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, and WhatsApp are important platforms and channels for companies looking to engage with younger customers, because of their immense popularity (Rahman, Mutum, & Ghazali, 2022). Influencer marketing has been quite popular in this area, and firms are using it to reach a wide and interested audience. Video marketing is especially popular on TikTok and YouTube. Companies that customize their advertising to represent regional customs and values frequently see higher levels of success (Baruk & Wesołowski, 2021).

2.2.7 Consumer Engagement Through Online Marketing Channels

In order to strategies of online marketing to be successful, consumer engagement in digital sphere has become an important element these days. (Wan, 2023). Businesses in today's digital environment are promoting two-way interactions that help them develop stronger bonds with their audiences rather than only broadcasting messages (Zhao, 2023). According to (Lin & Rauschnabel, 2016), online marketing channels enable companies to communicate with customers directly. These channels include social media platforms, email marketing, websites, and mobile apps. Businesses can reply to consumer questions, get feedback, and promote brand-related events like surveys, competitions, or user-generated content campaigns via these platforms. These actions build consumer community and brand loyalty (Habib, Hamadneh, & Hassan, 2022).

Marketers are now able to directly communicate with their audience through social media platforms. They in turn have changed consumer engagement completely (Niloy, Alam, &

Alom, 2023). Customers may easily engage with their favorite brands through private messages, shares, likes, and comments (Liu, Li, & Lee, 2021). Businesses can use the insightful information about consumer preferences, issues, and habits that this degree of participation offers to better target their future marketing campaigns (Habib, Hamadneh, & Hassan, 2022). Furthermore, live streaming capabilities on Facebook and Instagram let marketers interact with their audience in real time, encouraging openness and promptness (Gilbert, 2019). According to (Shevchenko, et al., 2022), customers are encouraged to ask questions and offer comments during Q&A sessions or product demonstrations, for example, which helps them feel more engaged with the business and its products.

According to (Habib, Hamadneh, & Hassan, 2022), “one of the best ways to engage customers is still through email marketing, especially when it's customized and targeted.” (Surjandari, Gunawijaya, & Puspita, 2024) observed that modern email marketing is highly segmented, sending messages to particular customer groups based on their prior habits, past purchases, or demographic data, in contrast to old mass email campaigns. Email campaigns also frequently have calls to action (CTAs) to encourage clients to visit the website, complete a survey, or take advantage of a limited-time offer, among other actions that encourage additional interaction (Shevchenko, et al., 2022). Moreover, email marketing is a great means of preserving long-term client relationships by offering insightful information, like newsletters, that keeps the company at the forefront of mind (Thomas, Chen, & Iacobucci, 2022).

The importance of mobile apps and websites for consumer engagement is growing, particularly as more people shop and browse on their smartphones (Baruk & Wesołowski, 2021). A user-friendly, well-designed website or app makes it easy for users to navigate and guarantees that they can interact with the company whenever and wherever they choose (Rahman, Mutum, & Ghazali, 2022). Businesses are able to give timely and personalized updates, like new product launches or unique discounts, due to features like push notifications and in-app messaging (Constantinides, 2004).

To further increase engagement, organizations can incorporate interactive components like chatbots to offer real-time customer support. Additionally, blogs, product reviews, and user forums on websites provide a platform for interaction between customers and brands, fostering a sense of community around the latter (Baruk & Wesołowski, 2021).

2.2.8 Digital Marketing Channels: SEO and Paid Media

Kritzing and Wideman (Kritzing & Weideman, 2013) identified SEO as the process of improving architecture to raise its position on search engine results pages without having to pay for placement. SEO is a financially sensible digital marketing approach because, despite the time and resource commitment, results are long-lasting and don't demand ongoing expenditure (Alfiana, et al., 2023).

Since more people rely on search engines like Google to find new products, services, and information, SEO has become increasingly important. A higher ranking on SERPs increases a brand's visibility and can lead to increased trust and credibility in the eyes of consumers (Usmany, et al., 2024).

According to (Lovett & Staelin, 2016), the term "paid media" refers to advertising strategies that involve paying for visibility and engagement. Examples of these strategies include display advertising, pay-per-click advertising, social media advertising, and influencer partnerships. There is an advantage of paid media, which is manifested in the fact that it is highly targeted. That is, brands can target certain interests, beliefs, demographics, and behaviors, and interests. This degree of targeting can result in more qualified leads and boost marketing campaigns' return on investment (ROI) (Ilori, 2023).

There are two important digital marketing elements, paid media and search engine optimization. They both work in tandem to reach audiences via online platforms in different but complimentary methods (Berman & Katona, 2012). Improving organic visibility is the aim of SEO, as this can result in more long-term traffic and brand awareness. Researching keywords, on-page optimization, technical SEO (enhancing site speed, mobile friendliness, etc.), and constructing backlinks from reliable websites are all important components of SEO. When used properly, SEO aids in establishing brands as reliable information sources within their sector (Ilori, 2023).

2.3 COMMUNICATION

2.3.1 Frequency of Interaction in the Effectiveness of Communication

Frequency of interaction is a vital communication feature and one of the most important components of building a successful relationship between an influencer and their audience (Franc, Bahboub and Kubík 2019). This refers to how frequently an influencer engages with their followers via posts, comments, or even direct messages, building a consistent presence that encourages a personal bond between them (Bigoni, Potters and Spagnolo 2019). When engagement is frequent and regular, audiences feel that the influencer is available and interested, which increases their trust and responsiveness to their messages.

Frequent engagement also increases audience engagement with the content, which leads to stronger bonds and increased engagement through likes, comments, and shares. For example, an influencer who posts regularly and engages with comments shows a commitment to their audience, which increases their loyalty and willingness to support them or accept their recommendations (Niloy, Alam, & Alom, 2023). Furthermore, regular engagement contributes to the effectiveness of an influencer's marketing messages. When audiences get used to a recurring pattern and high-quality content, they become more engaged with the content and less likely to be distracted by other content (Hogsnes, Grønli, & Hansen, 2024).

2.3.2 Clarity and Consistency in the Effectiveness of Communication

Clarity and consistency are driving forces for reaching effective and good communication between influencers and their followers (Nixon, et al. 2016). They both make sure that the messages presented are clear, understandable, and simple, whereby information are being transferred and presented in an understandable and straightforward manner so as confusion, uncertainty and misunderstanding are minimized through communication process (Phillips 2024).

Consistency and clarity should be side by side across platforms and communication channels to ensure message coherence, trust and credibility (Bigoni, Potters and Spagnolo 2019) . Clear and consistent communication help enhance trust between individuals or organizations, increasing understanding and engagement. For example, using a systematic approach and clear language would eventually promote the effective exchange of ideas in

professional or academic contexts, thus increasing the likelihood of achieving goals and success (Phillips 2024).

2.3.3 Response Time and Quality in the Effectiveness of Communication

The effectiveness of communication is greatly influenced by the response time and quality, which would eventually and directly affect the interactions' outcomes in organizational, professional, and personal contexts (Ahmad and Chowdhury 2022). Responding quickly shows that you care about and respect the other person, which builds trust and commitment (Karimi, et al. 2024). On the other hand, a delayed response can lead to annoyance, miscommunication, or the appearance of neglect, all of which can damage relationships or prevent the achievement of goals (Ahmad and Chowdhury 2022).

The quality of the response, which reflects the depth, relevance, and clarity of the message, is equally important. An excellent response responds effectively to the underlying issues or questions raised, remains relevant to the topic and future expectations, and offers practical advice as needed. The speed and level of response ensures stronger, more successful conversations, and increases engagement (Bigoni, Potters and Spagnolo 2019).

2.3.4 Social Media as a Communication Tool for Marketing

Social media has become a potent marketing communication tool, changing the way organizations communicate with customers and establish connections (Singh, 2024). Unrivalled chance is presented to businesses through platforms of social media like TikTok, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to captivate big audiences and interact with them instantly, whereby brand loyalty is being built (Jibril, Kwarteng, Chovancová, & Pilik, 2019). Social media's interactive feature facilitates a two-way conversation between businesses and customers, allowing them to promptly answer questions, address concerns, and spread their messaging in addition to listening to client feedback (Lee, Huat, & Ramayah, 2023). Customers were originally passive recipients of information in traditional marketing methods, but with the advent of immediate and direct contact, they are now actively involved in brand storylines and have a dynamic, engaging experience (Shevchenko, et al., 2022).

According to Ates and Odzic (Ates & Odzic, 2023), "The ability to connect with a very specific audience is the major benefit of using social media as a marketing communication

method.” Various industries and businesses can divide their audience based on online behavior, demographics, hobbies, and past purchases through the use of the data analytics and algorithms of platforms, while ensuring marketing messages are seen by the right people at the right time. (Gomes & Meisen, 2023). Traditional media, which functioned on a larger, less focused scale, was unable to achieve this degree of precision. Examples of these media include print ads and television. Campaigns for social media advertising can be customized to target those that are most likely to be interested in the good or service being advertised, increasing engagement.

Platforms of social media provide a variety of cost-effective advertising choices that can be scaled in accordance with a company's budget, in contrast to print and television advertisements, which can be costly and frequently incur significant production and delivery costs (Shareef, Mukerji, Dwivedi, Rana, & Islam, 2017). This makes social media an approachable marketing strategy that may nonetheless yield big results for tiny firms (Rosário & Dias, 2023). If an article strikes a chord with the audience, even organic, unpaid content has the ability to go viral and gain enormous exposure without incurring any more expenses. Additionally, these platforms' analytics give businesses the ability to assess the effectiveness of their campaigns in real-time, enabling them to swiftly and effectively modify their tactics (Shevchenko, et al., 2022).

Social media platforms enable businesses to exhibit their beliefs, personalities, and products through a variety of innovative and varied content formats, including photographs, videos, tales, and live streams, thereby increasing brand visibility and recognition (Cheung, Pires, & Rosenberger, 2020). Regular social media posting and interaction can greatly raise brand recognition and keep the business at the forefront of customers' minds (Smith, Johnson, & Davis, 2024). Furthermore, social media content's sharing quality increases reach since fans may quickly forward it to their networks, increasing the brand's exposure outside of its immediate audience. Since customers are more likely to believe suggestions from peers and influencers in their social circles than from direct brand marketing, this organic sharing increases social proof and credibility (Albutra, Pornes, & Almagro, 2024).

2.3.5 Impact of Social Media Influencers on Brand Communication

Influencers have grown to be essential in establishing brand communication plans because they provide companies with a very efficient means of connecting and interacting with their target markets. Influencers act as dependable go-betweens for marketers and customers on websites like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Twitter. They frequently have sizable and devoted fan bases on these platforms. Their capacity to provide real, relatable material makes them indispensable for audience-relevant product and service promotion. Brands may boost consumer trust, boost brand visibility, and impact purchase decisions by working with influencers and utilizing their reputation and influence (Shevchenko, et al., 2022).

Influencers influence brand communication in a number of important ways, one of which is the authenticity of the messaging they contribute. Influencer marketing is centered on genuine personal recommendations from followers. Influencers humanize brands and facilitate consumer relatability by frequently sharing their own perspectives and experiences with items. Through using influencers' pre-existing relationship with their followers, marketers may convey their messaging in a more genuine and reliable manner (Gautam & Jaitly, 2021).

Brands can select influencers based on attributes such as age, interests, geography, or industry that align with target market. This strategy increases the engagement and conversion by ensuring that the brand's message reaches them by focusing on the right audience. For example, knowing that a health influencer's followers are already engaged in fitness and wellness, a fitness company might partner with them to sell their products. Broad, generic marketing attempts are significantly less effective than this highly targeted approach. (Galdón, Gil-Pechuán, AlFraihat, & Tarabieh, 2024).

Influencers also help brands create and engage with content more effectively. This content, which seamlessly integrates brand elements into the influencer's daily life, often takes the form of unboxing videos, product reviews, tutorials, and lifestyle updates. These posts increase product awareness and boost user engagement through likes, comments, and shares. Influencer partnerships give brands access to well-created, more relevant content that feels less like traditional advertising. Additionally, influencer-led initiatives typically see higher

engagement rates because followers are more likely to connect with content provided by someone they trust.(Gautam & Jaitly, 2021).

Influencers can raise brand awareness and create viral trends (Galdón, Gil-Pechuán, AlFraihat, & Tarabieh, 2024). An effective influencer campaign can take off fast, particularly if the content is shared on social media by followers. Influencers frequently start trends that their followers are eager to follow, whether it be by utilizing a certain product, joining a hashtag challenge, or taking up a particular way of life. This potential for virality can quickly increase a brand's awareness by reaching influencers' direct following as well as larger networks. For instance, when influencers include products in their postings, fashion and beauty firms usually witness a surge in sales and increased brand recognition as a result of the products becoming viral.

2.3.6 Two-way Communication in Social Media and Its Role in Consumer Trust

The dynamic and engaging interactions between brands and their customers have changed dramatically since the advent of social media for two-way communication. Unlike traditional marketing strategies, which typically use a one-way communication model where businesses broadcast messages to consumers, social media enables brands to engage in conversations with their audiences. Through this interactive communication, customers can provide feedback and their honest reviews; they share their opinions and may ask questions which promotes the experience of users. As a result, stronger relationships can be built, and customer retention can be improved with the target audience and main market by businesses. This would eventually lead to active engagement and trust in two-way communication. (Favret & Elatroush, 2024).

One of the most important benefits of two-way communication is the improved responsiveness it provides. Customers want quick service in today's digital world, and companies that engage with their social media followers respond more to complaints, address issues, and answer inquiries promptly. This level of responsiveness demonstrates that, in addition to meeting customer needs, the company values its customers' opinions and concerns. For example, a quick and thoughtful response can greatly improve a customer's perception of a company when they reach out on social media with a complaint or question.

This responsiveness is essential for building trust because consumers are more likely to feel safe with a company that truly cares about them. (Tshabukole, 2022).

Additionally, two-way communication fosters a sense of belonging among customers. Platforms facilitate communication and provide a room for sharing experiences by allowing users to interact with brands and each other. By encouraging user-generated content projects, hosting Q&A sessions, or arranging discussions on topics relevant to their target audience, brands can cultivate a loyal following. Building trust is closely linked to building community, given that customers are keener to trust brands they perceive as engaging and accessible. When brands are seen as a part of the community, consumers' loyalty and trust increases and their emotional connection to them deepens. (Favret & Elatroush, 2024).

Customizing offerings in terms of services, products, and marketing strategies allows brands to better meet their customers' expectations. For example, a company might use surveys or social media polls to get feedback on the quality of its products, which could lead to modifications that customers find appealing. In addition to enhancing the brand's offerings, this engagement with consumer feedback demonstrates a commitment to exceeding customer expectations, which builds trust. (Tshabukole, 2022). Additionally, social media's two-way connection enables firms to obtain insightful data about their customers. Brands may better understand consumer preferences, behaviors, and pain areas by actively listening to their audience (Lyu & Brewster, 2020).

2.3.7 The Role of Online Reviews and Recommendations in Purchasing Decisions

In the digital age, reading online reviews and recommendations has become quite important when making decisions about what to buy (Appel, Grewal, Hadi, & Stephen, 2020). Reviews posted on websites like Amazon, Yelp, Google and social media impacted people's thoughts and actions as more people turn to the internet to research products. This shift in how consumers get information is indicative of a broader trend that is radically changing how brands communicate and market by placing a higher value on peer reviews than traditional advertising methods. (Permatasari, Mapuasari, Yuliana, & Ahmad, 2020).

One of the main factors contributing to their significant influence is the perceived validity of online evaluations (Langhe, Fernbach, & Lichtenstein, 2015). In a time when customers are leery of marketing strategies that seem artificial or phony, authenticity is especially

crucial. A favorable review can inspire confidence and assurance in prospective customers, motivating them to proceed with a transaction (Cornwell, 2019). Negative reviews, on the other hand, have the potential to discourage customers from purchasing a good or service, underscoring the significant influence that internet reviews may have on sales and brand reputation (Gautam & Jaitly, 2021).

In addition, the abundance of information on the internet enables customers to perform thorough research prior to making a purchase (Honka, Seiler, & Ursu, 2024). Shoppers may obtain a vast range of reviews, ratings, and suggestions with only a few clicks, offering insightful information on the functionality, quality, and general satisfaction with the product (Mofokeng, 2021). Because there is so much information available, customers can compare various companies and goods based on actual experiences, which enables them to make well-informed judgments. For instance, a buyer wishing to purchase a new smartphone can quickly peruse evaluations of different models and assess the benefits and drawbacks according to customer input (Panwar, Anand, Ali, & Singhal, 2019).

Moreover, social proof is a potent psychological phenomena that increases the sway of internet testimonials and suggestions (Park & McCallister, 2023). Potential customers are more likely to feel secure in their choice to buy when they see that a large number of other people have had great experiences with a product or brand. This phenomenon is especially noticeable in the context of social media user-generated content, as influencers and regular consumers discuss their product experiences (Chen, et al., 2024). Brands can gain more exposure and trust in the market by utilizing this social proof in conjunction with smart marketing techniques, including working with influencers or encouraging customers to share their experiences (Park & McCallister, 2023).

2.3.8 Influencer Marketing: Bridging the Communication Gap between Brands and Consumers

Influencer marketing has become a successful tactic for the communication gap reduction between companies and their customers (Favret & Elatroush, 2024). Through partnering with influencers who share their values and appeal to their target audience, brands can produce content that is specifically targeted to customers and effectively fosters a sense of

community and engagement that is often difficult to achieve with traditional marketing strategies (Nurliza, et al., 2024)

Influencer marketing's capacity to forge genuine connections between companies and customers is one of its main advantages (Okonkwo & Namkoisse, 2023). Influencers advocate products and services based on their own experiences, which makes their recommendations seem more relatable than those found in traditional advertising (Collini, et al., 2022). Influencers who share their genuine thoughts not only increase the brand's legitimacy but also entice customers to learn more about the products and maybe make a purchase. By adding a human touch, brands are able to stand out in crowded markets and convey messages that are more memorable and impactful (Gautam & Jaitly, 2021).

According to (Şenyapar, 2024), influencer marketing also enables brands to tap into niche audiences that can be difficult to reach through conventional advertising avenues. Influencers frequently specialize in particular fields of knowledge or passion, drawing ardent followers who share their enthusiasm. For example, a company that specializes in eco-friendly products can work with sustainability influencers who promote living sustainably. In this regard, (Tafesse & Wood, 2021) indicated that higher engagement and conversion rates follow from the brand's ability to speak directly to customers who are already interested in sustainable practices. With the correct audience, brands can effectively convey their value propositions thanks to this focused strategy, which eventually fosters more meaningful interactions and possible consumer loyalty.

Another important advantage of influencer marketing is that it enhances user-generated content (UGC), which increases brand engagement and recognition (Ali, 2022). Followers are often inspired by the interactions made by influencers with their favorite brands, which increases the audience and exposure of brand itself. And because people are more likely to believe what their peers say, user-generated content (UGC) acts as a powerful form of social proof. (Alhassan, Majeed, Gideon, & Shani, 2023). Brands are being visible through the actual support and promotion of user-generated content. Additionally, organizations are provided with useful data about the actions of the target market of these organizations and their preferences through user-generated content; thus, improving their strategies of marketing (Baruk & Wesolowski, 2021).

2.4 CONSUMER PURCHASING BEHAVIOR

2.4.1 Definition of Consumer Behavior

(Nassè, 2021) defined consumer behavior as “the study of how people, groups, or organizations use, choose, pay for, and discard products, ideas, experiences, or services so as to fulfill their desires and needs.” According to (Shukla, 2022), “consumer behavior includes all the acts and decision-making processes—emotional, psychological, and social—that affect consumers' purchase decisions. Numerous factors, including social groupings, marketing campaigns, cultural influences, personal preferences, and economic status, can affect consumer behavior.”

The analysis of external and internal factors influencing purchasing decision is another important aspect of consumer behaviour research. Internal factors include psychological influences as perceptions, motivation, attitudes, and beliefs, while external aspects contain social influences like friends, family, advertising campaigns, culture, and many others. (Ayoker, 2021). Further, consumer behavior is subject to change and dynamic because of changes in economic fluctuations, societal norms, and technological and digital advancements. Accordingly, companies can effectively divide their target markets and develop strategies that appeal to certain segments of customer. (Suherlan & Okombo, 2023). This thorough awareness of consumer behavior has fostered brand loyalty and long-term customer connections with sales are being boosted (Kumar, Ahluwalia, Hazarika, Singh, & Goswami, 2022).

2.4.2 Theories of Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior theories provide a framework for understanding the motivations and ways consumers behave. These theories examine a range of psychological, social, and economic elements in order to understand the complex processes involved in consumer decision-making (Roy & Datta, 2022). Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory is among the well-known concepts. This theory states that consumers are motivated to fulfil their desires in a specific order, starting with the most basic physiological needs such as food and shelter and moving on to more complex psychological demands such as self-actualization and self-esteem. (Mustofa, 2022). For this reason, consumers prioritize their purchases according to

their position in the hierarchy and seek out items that satisfy their immediate needs before targeting higher-order goals such as luxury goods or personal fulfilment (TRIVEDI & MEHTA, 2019).

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), another well-known theory, contends that intentions, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence consumer behavior (Ajzen, 1991). TPB assists marketers in comprehending how consumers formulate intentions and how outside factors, such accessibility or societal norms, impact purchase decisions. For instance, even if a customer may feel favorably about eco-friendly products, their actual purchase behavior may not reflect their intentions if they think these products are hard to find or too costly (Bosnjak, Ajzen, & Schmidt, 2020).

Another important theory that describes the processes customers take while making judgments about what to buy is the “Consumer Decision-Making Process Model”. It demonstrates the intricacy of consumer decision-making by demonstrating that purchases are typically the outcome of a planned process rather than being made on the spur of the moment (Santos & Gonçalves, 2021). The approach usually includes five steps: problem identification, information gathering, alternative evaluation, purchase choice, and post-purchase behavior (Mishra, 2018). Through the use of this model, marketers can comprehend how customers progress through each step and what factors influence them at each turn. For example, consumer’s choices may be influenced by some elements like reputation of brand, reviews, and price, so options should be weighed by the consumer (Panwar, Anand, Ali, & Singhal, 2019).

The Cognitive Dissonance Theory is an important theory that explains the unease that people experience when their behavior deviates from their beliefs. This theory is frequently used to explain post-purchase emotions in the context of consumer behavior, where a customer may feel buyer’s regret (Bose, 2012). Customers may read reassuring reviews or justify their purchase in order to lessen cognitive dissonance. In order to assist consumers, feel less bad about their decision and feel more reassured about it, marketers can help alleviate cognitive dissonance by delivering satisfaction guarantees, follow-up support, or positive product messaging following a purchase (VAIDIS & Bran, 2019).

2.4.3 Factors Influencing Online Consumer Decision-Making

(Grant, Clarke, & Kyriazis, 2010) observed that many factors shape how consumers choose products and services online. Easy access to information, such as product details, reviews, and comparisons, can aid decision-making. However, too much information can overwhelm consumers, making it difficult to choose. Hence, there is a need for a balance between giving potential customers enough information to make an informed purchase and without overwhelming them (Bhatt & Nagvadia, 2021).

User experience (UX) and website design are important factors that influence online consumer decision-making. User-friendly, well-designed websites have a big impact on how people behave online (Sinha & Fukey, 2020). According to (Camilleri, 2021), easy navigation, concise product descriptions, quick page loads, and safe payment methods all contribute to a satisfying user experience that increases the likelihood that customers will finish their purchases. On the other hand, a badly designed website that performs slowly, has unclear layouts, or lacks trust signals (privacy policies or secure payment badges) may turn off visitors (Alkuwaiti, Alremeithi, Alobeidli, & Adeyemi, 2023). Additionally, mobile optimization is essential since a growing number of consumers purchase smartphones and tablets. Websites that are not optimized for mobile devices risk losing out on a large amount of prospective revenue (Putra & Setiawan, 2020).

According to (Bhatt & Nagvadia, 2021), “customization and focused advertising play a critical role in shaping the choices made by internet users.” Platforms of e-commerce and digital marketers use data analytics and artificial intelligence, in order to customize the online purchasing experience for each customer (Meedanphai, Jayasurya, & Swapna, 2023). A more relevant and interesting experience for customers is produced via customized email campaigns, personalized product recommendations, and tailored advertisements that are based on browsing history, past purchases, and demographic information (Shen, 2014). By showcasing products that are more likely to fit a customer's wants and interests, this tailored approach can increase the chance of conversion. Moreover, tailored deals or discounts can engender a feeling of urgency and exclusivity that drives customers to make swift judgments.

2.4.4 Consumer Behavior in the Digital Age

Because technology, the internet, and mobile devices have been so widely used, consumer behavior has fundamentally changed in the digital age (Yuan, 2023). In contrast to the conventional consumer behavior of the past, when people mostly depended on physical storefronts, word-of-mouth, or restricted information sources, modern customers have access to an extensive range of internet resources that have a substantial impact on their purchasing decisions (Gupta & Chopra, 2020). One of the biggest changes is that consumers can now easily study products, compare prices, and read reviews in a matter of minutes thanks to easy access to information (Pan, 2023). As a result, the customer base has grown more knowledgeable and independent, depending more on their own ability to obtain data rather than solely on marketing messages. Because of this, companies must offer precise and thorough information through all digital platforms (Saura, Reyes-Menendez, Matos, Correia, & Palos-Sanchez, 2020).

The increasing use of social media as a tool for decision-making is another noteworthy change in consumer behavior. Social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube have grown to be important venues for customers to learn about new products, engage with brands, and tell others about their experiences (Jeswani, 2023). Social media gives users the opportunity to communicate with businesses and other customers in real time (Krishnamurthy, Chandra, & Mukhtar, 2023). It is impossible to overstate the impact that user-generated content—such as reviews, suggestions, and unboxing videos—has on influencing the attitudes and choices of consumers. According to (Lizardou, 2021), stronger ties, greater loyalty, and greater visibility in a cutthroat market are all possible for brands that use social media to interact with their customers.

In the digital age, convenience and immediacy have also come to define consumer behavior. Modern consumers frequently choose internet buying over traditional brick-and-mortar establishments because they anticipate seamless, quick, and simple shopping experiences (Yuan, 2023). The emergence of mobile applications, e-commerce, and same-day delivery services has raised consumer expectations regarding accessibility and immediacy (Mahatanankoon, Wen, & Lim, 2005). In order to satisfy these high standards, firms must modify their operational and logistical models; otherwise, they run the danger of losing

clients to more nimble rivals (Saura, Reyes-Menendez, Matos, Correia, & Palos-Sanchez, 2020).

2.4.5 Cultural and Socioeconomic Factors Affecting Consumer Choices in Palestine

In a culture where Muslims make up the majority, certain religious precepts influence consumer behavior, especially when it comes to clothing and food. To ensure that they adhere to Islamic dietary regulations, many customers, for example, look for products that have received the halal certification (Umair, Naeem, & Rashid, 2024). Similarly, modesty in fashion—particularly for women—plays a significant role in the apparel sector. While companies that ignore these religious sensitivities may find it difficult to win over Palestinian customers' confidence and loyalty, those who recognize and address them might build stronger relationships with them (Abdalrahman, 2020).

According to (Abdalrahman, 2020), “Palestine's socio-economic challenges, including high unemployment, political instability, and slow economic growth, significantly influence consumer behavior. Many consumers prioritize affordable goods that meet basic needs over luxury items or brand loyalty.” This value-driven mindset has led to a market dominated by local, often less expensive goods, making it challenging for international companies to attract budget-conscious consumers (Rabayah, Maree, & Alhashmi, 2021).

In Palestine, people's purchasing habits are greatly influenced by the local economy. Small businesses and local manufacturers are highly valued for their contributions to the local economy and sense of national identity, in addition to being very affordable (Abdalrahman, 2020).

The researcher believes that the unique combination of cultural and economic factors that shape decision-making processes drive consumer behavior in Palestine. Cultural norms and values significantly influence consumer preferences, especially for goods associated with family, community, and religion. Given the strong emphasis on family ties and community well-being in Palestinian society, household purchases often reflect collective needs and cultural norms. Moreover, religious holidays such as Eid al-Fitr and Ramadan, which are characterized by giving and celebration, fuel increased spending on food, clothing, and gifts.

2.4.6 Psychological Drivers of Purchasing Behavior in Online Settings

Convenience is one of the main psychological factors that affect online buying behavior, influencing how users engage with digital platforms and make decisions about what to buy, and it has a big impact on why people shop online (Djan & Adawiyyah, 2020). The convenience and efficiency that come with being able to shop from home, avoid crowds, and make purchases whenever you want appeal to consumers. This ease of use is frequently combined with rapid access to product details and reviews, which streamlines the selection process even more (Mehta, Kumar, Kumar, & Goyal, 2023).

Additionally, the fear of missing out, which is commonly used in internet marketing tactics, is an important psychological component (Hodkinson, 2016). Customers may make impulsive purchases as a result of this haste overriding more thoughtful decision-making processes. When it comes to social media, FOMO is particularly potent since it allows users to observe other people making purchases, which increases their own inclination to do the same (Alfina, Hartini, & Mardhiyah, 2023).

According to (Park & McCallister, 2023), social proof is a psychological factor influencing online shopping behavior. Customers are greatly impacted by the actions and viewpoints of others, especially when they are shopping in a setting where they are unable to touch or feel the objects. Customers feel more secure in their decisions when they read online reviews, ratings, and testimonies because they offer confirmation and assurance. This social proof is used by websites like Amazon and TripAdvisor that prominently show user reviews to lower doubt and boost confidence (Masłowska, Malthouse, & Bernritter, 2017). Influencer marketing, in which reliable people promote things on social media, also makes use of social proof to increase engagement and conversion rates (Park & McCallister, 2023).

Besides that, personalization is a key factor in shaping online customer behavior. Online retailers can customize the shopping experience for each customer by using algorithms and data analytics to make product recommendations based on browsing history, past purchases, and demographic data. The buying experience is improved by this degree of personalization, which makes it seem more relevant and interesting (Aggarwal, Sharma, & Saxena, 2024). A sense of connection between the customer and the brand is established through personalized email campaigns, product recommendations, and targeted advertising, which

raises the possibility of conversion (Devle & Gumgoankar, 2024). Online companies can satisfy their customers' need to be appreciated and acknowledged by providing personalized content, which encourages repeat business and brand loyalty (Ates & Odzic, 2023).



3. MATERIAL AND METHOD

3.1. THE PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

The main purpose of this study is to understand how social media influencers and online marketing influence consumer purchasing behavior in a certain geographic region, namely the North of the West Bank. In addition, the research explores the communication role as an important factor in shaping behavior of consumers, including aspects such as the frequency of interaction between consumers and brands, the clarity and consistency of messages, and the response time and quality.

3.2. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Leveraging the influence of social media celebrities can be a game changer for businesses in the North West Bank, where traditional marketing methods may be limited. Businesses must acknowledge how consumer behavior is influenced by some factors in order to remain competitive. By learning more about these dynamics, businesses can successfully tailor their marketing strategies to the preferences of the target audience.

Consumer responses to online marketing and social media endorsements in Palestine may be shaped by specific cultural, economic, and social factors. By focusing on this region, this research provides to an understanding of the interplay between global marketing trends and local characteristics. This information is particularly valuable for companies operating in or targeting this region, enabling them to implement effective marketing strategies tailored to the local context and culture.

It should be noted here that consumer behavior has changed significantly in the digital age, with online platforms emerging as important venues for product comparison, discovery, and acquisition. Like many other areas, the North of the West Bank is seeing a rise in the number of people seeking information about goods and services online through social media interactions, influencer endorsements, and digital marketing initiatives. Businesses looking to maximize their marketing efforts must comprehend how these aspects influence consumer decisions. This study clarifies the behavioral and psychological processes by which online marketers and social media influencers affect customer decisions, providing useful information for advertisers hoping to reach this expanding digital consumer base.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) form the backbone of the Palestinian economy, and many of them increasingly rely on online marketing strategies to expand their customer base. However, given the context of the region, the effectiveness of these strategies – particularly those that use social media influencers – has not been thoroughly examined. This research is important because it provides SMEs in the northern West Bank with evidence-based insights into how to use social media influencers to increase their visibility and credibility with customers. Understanding the nuances of how online marketing impacts consumer behavior can help SMEs develop more targeted and effective campaigns that maximize their limited resources.

This study examines the relationship between audience and influencer in terms of trust and how it impacts consumer purchasing choices. In doing so, it provides marketers with ways to select and work with influencers who share the same values as their brand and the expectations of their target audience. Although social media influencers and online marketing are becoming increasingly popular, there is a significant lack of research specifically examining their impact in the northern West Bank. This lack of local research hinders the ability of local businesses to effectively implement these strategies. Most existing research focuses on global trends or other regions, leaving a knowledge gap about the northern West Bank. By providing insights into the dynamics of social media and online marketing in this specific context, this study fills this gap.

Finally, this study significantly advances theoretical understanding and practical applications. It advances our knowledge of how social media influencers and online marketers influence customer behavior in an emerging industry. In practical terms, the study provides insights into how businesses, particularly those in the northern West Bank, use digital tools to improve customer engagement and boost sales. This research is a vital tool for researchers and practitioners alike. The findings of this study can be used as a basis for creating more successful marketing tactics and opening up new research directions.

3.3. TYPE OF THE RESEARCH

Quantitative research is an approach based on the collection and analysis of numerical data, and is often used in social and economic research to measure certain variables and identify relationships between them. This type of study relies on large samples, where data is

analyzed using statistical tools to extract results (Ghanad, 2023). According to (Rana, Gutierrez, & Oldroyd, 2021) , quantitative research contributes to providing results that can be generalized to the larger study community, enabling researchers to understand and predict behavioral patterns based on the variables studied.

This study is quantitative and uses a descriptive and correlational approach. This type of study seeks to determine how online marketing initiatives and social media influencers influence customer behavior in northern West Bank, Palestine. Questionnaires are the primary data collection tool that enables the collection of numerical data about participants and their purchasing patterns. This type of research not only finds connections and similarities between many factors but also helps in accurately describing the topic under study.

3.4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.4.1 Research Questions

- a. Do Social media influencers and its dimensions (Credibility, Customer Loyalty, Attractiveness) have an impact on consumer purchasing behavior?
- b. Do online marketing and its dimensions (Content Relevance, Advertising Exposure, Perceived Value) have an impact on consumer purchasing behavior?
- c. Do communications and its dimensions (Frequency of Interaction, Clarity and Consistency, Response Time and Quality) have an impact on consumer purchasing behavior?

3.4.2 Scope and Limitation of Research

This study focuses on the northern West Bank region in Palestine, and investigates the impact of social media influencers and online marketing on consumers' purchasing patterns. It aimed to ascertain the extent to which different marketing strategies and influencers influence consumers' preferences, brand loyalty, and purchasing trends. The study takes into account several demographic parameters, including age, gender, and income, to ascertain how these factors affect the interaction between influencers, online marketing, and customer behavior.

However, this study suffers from several limitations. Its spatial focus on the northern West Bank may limit the findings generalizability. Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported data through surveys increases the potential for bias. Finally, the findings may not remain consistent over time, given the fact that the nature of social media and marketing trends is changeable and dynamic.

The focus is also on the communication aspect between consumers and brands in the North West Bank. This includes how frequency of interaction, clarity and consistency, and response time and quality affect consumers' behavior, trust, and loyalty to brands. However, there are some limitations related to the communication aspect; language and cultural differences affect how consumers understand and interpret marketing messages. This would limit the generalizability of the results.

3.4.3 Research Model and Hypotheses

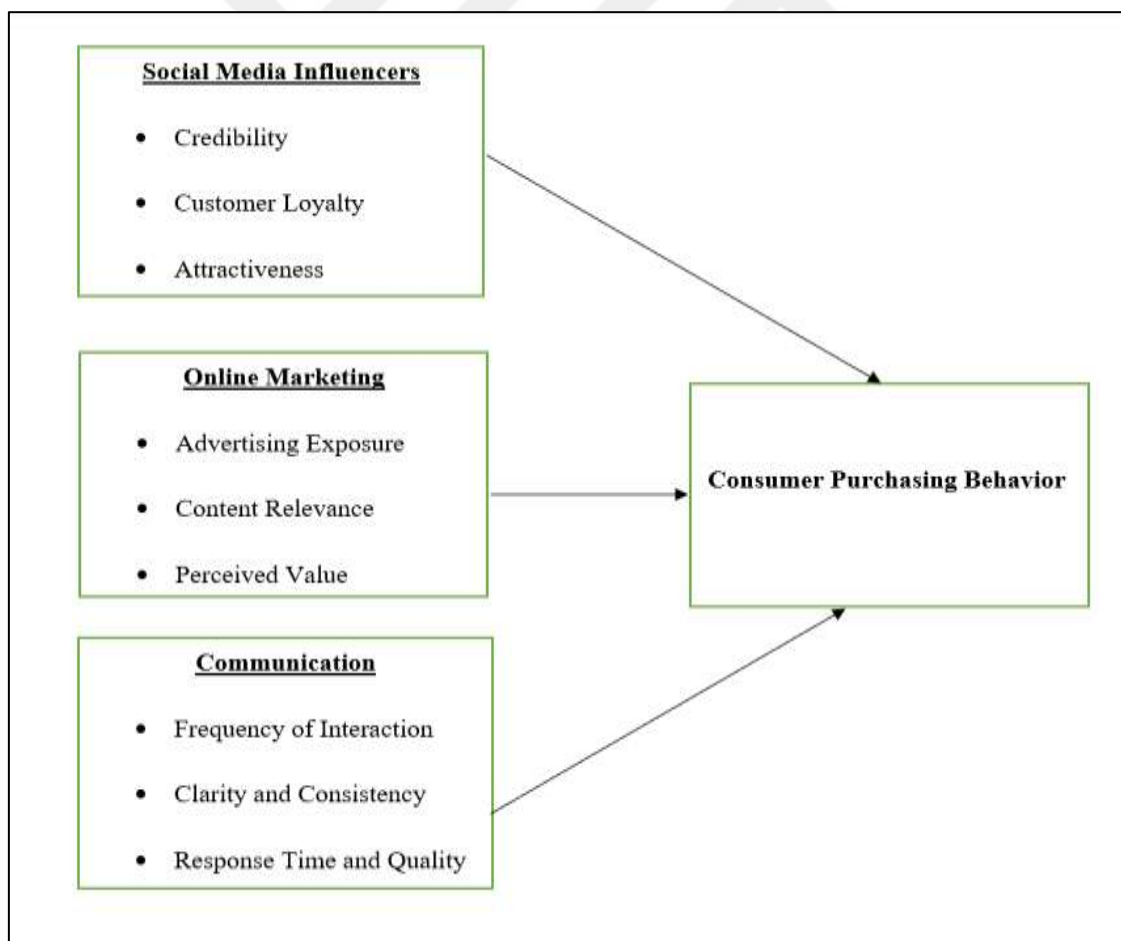


Figure 3.1: Research Model.

Variables are divided into two parts: Dependent, and Independent Variables.

Independent Variables:

1. Social Media Influencers: This category can include various aspects related to influencers:

- a. Credibility.
- b. Customer Loyalty.
- c. Attractiveness.

2. Online Marketing: Explore different aspects of online marketing strategies:

- a. Advertising Exposure.
- b. Content Relevance.
- c. Perceived Value.

3. Communication:

- a. Frequency of Interaction.
- b. Clarity and Consistency.
- c. Response Time and Quality.

Dependent Variable:

Consumer Purchasing Behavior.

The Hypothesis and Sub-Hypothesis of this study are as follows:

H1: Social Media Influencers have a positive impact on Consumer Purchasing Behavior.

- a. H1a: The credibility of social media influencers has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.
- b. H1b: Customer loyalty toward social media influencers has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.

- c. H1c: The attractiveness of social media influencers has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.

H2: Online Marketing has a positive impact on Consumer Purchasing Behavior.

- a. H2a: Advertising exposure of online marketing has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.
- b. H2b: Content relevance of online marketing has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.
- c. H2c: Perceived value of online marketing has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.

H3 Communication has a positive impact on Consumer Purchasing Behavior.

- a. H3a: Frequency of interaction of communication has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.
- b. H3b: Clarity and consistency of communication has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.
- c. H3c: Response time and quality of communication has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.

3.4.4 Research Population and Sample

The population of this study containing households residing in the northern part of the West Bank in Palestine; they are active on social media and online marketing channels. The study sample consists of a random sampling of “384” participants. In order to promote the findings’ accuracy and specificity, the scope of this study was solely limited to the region of the Palestinian part “The West Bank”. There was also the demographics collection part, containing the following information, daily use of social media, monthly income level, education level, age, gender, as well as preferred use of social media.

The population of the West Bank is exceeding one million. In regard to the sample size, and in accordance with Krejcie and Morgan (1970), A sample size exceeding 1 million population should be determined at 384 (Krejcie, 1970). Considering that this study’s

sample is on a national scale (West Bank), we aimed to collect 400 participants and ended up with 384 as the final sample.

3.4.5 Data Gathering Tool and Method

The primary data collection tool used for this study is an online survey distributed via Google Forms. The choice of Google Forms was driven by several factors. First, it provides easy access to the target audience, allowing for a wide and efficient reach within the northern region of the West Bank, Palestine. Google Forms also saves time, as it enables quick distribution and responses, reducing the need for in-person data collection, which would be more time-consuming and costly. The survey is structured using Likert scale questions (1-5), meaning that the answers are on a five-point scale, with each number representing a certain level of agreement or evaluation. For example: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree. This helps measure participants' attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors toward social media influencers and online marketing.

The survey covers three main areas: (1) social media influencers, (2) online marketing, and (3) communication that may affect consumer purchasing behavior. In terms of the data collection tool, Google Forms was used to distribute the survey online, making it simple for participants to access. Because responses are automatically captured and arranged within the platform, this strategy also makes data administration and analysis more efficient. Google Forms is a suitable and efficient way to collect precise and representative data from the target audience, which supports the selection of this tool for data collection. It is the perfect option for this study because of its affordability, ease of use, and capacity to reach a sizable and varied population. Furthermore, the online format makes it easier for individuals to participate, especially in an area where internet usage is common.

3.4.6 Questionnaire Used in The Research

The questionnaire contains five sections. The first section contains demographic questions of consumers, including their gender, age, education level, monthly Income Level, Daily Social Media Usage, and Preferred social media usage. Other sections are concerned with measuring the variables included in the study. Section two consists of 10 questions related to social media influencers. The questions for this variable were adopted from (Chan, 2022).

The third section will measure online marketing, which consists of 11 questions adopted from (Kaur, Mishra, & Mallik, 2021). The fourth section measures consumer purchasing behavior, which consists of 8 questions adopted from (Maina, 2021). The final section measures communication, which consists of 16 questions adopted from (Rodrigues R. V., 2021).

The questionnaire was translated into Arabic to ensure that the questions are clearly understood by participants. It then be reviewed and validated by experts in business administration. Finally, the questionnaire was converted into an online format and distributed to consumers.

3.4.7 Data Analysis Method

The questionnaire used in this study was in the form of goggle and it was sent via online sources and platforms, aiming to collect data from the sample of those customers residing in the West Bank. Then the program of SPSS was used for the statistical analysis processes. Then the program of SPSS (version 23) was used for the statistical analysis processes.

Descriptive statistics, which aim to identify the characteristics of the sample and its basic variables, were used to begin the analysis. To give an overview of the trend and variance of the data, this included statistical calculations such as the arithmetic mean, median, standard deviation, and range. In addition, the researcher used frequency analysis so as to understand the distribution of demographics, which contributed to providing a sound basis for understanding the nature of the sample and the distribution of its characteristics.

Correlation analysis was also used in this study through the use of Pearson's correlation coefficient, with the aim to identify the link between the variables after the analysis of the distribution characteristics. Further, the connections between the studied variables was also examined through the regression analysis A regression analysis was carried out to examine the connections between the variables and how they affected the purchasing decisions of the customers. We can learn a lot about how these factors influence customer choices by analysing the direction and intensity of these interactions.

3.4.8 Ethical Permission

Ethical permission had to be obtained to distribute the survey and confirm its use before this research was conducted. Consequently, the Altinbas University Ethical Board received an ethical form and approved it, granting ethical authorization with consideration number E-96136591-050.04-72421. Date:12.11.2024. Before the distribution, the goal of the study was explained in order to obtain consent, along with the information that participants' identities will remain anonymous, and their participation is entirely optional.



4. RESULTS

4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Table 4.1: Gender.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	158	41.1
	Female	226	58.9
	Total	384	100.0

The above table shows that there are “384” male and female participants. There were 58.9% (226 participants) females and 41.1% (158 participants) males. When evaluating the results of this study, the gender distribution should be taken into account because different gender distribution ratios can provide different results.

Table 4.2: Age.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	18-25 years	228	59.4
	Above 25 years	156	40.6
	Total	384	100.0

This data indicates the age distribution of a sample of 384 participants. The youth group between 18 - 25 years old, with 228 participants, representing 59.4% of the total sample represents the most dominating group, followed by those participants whose age is over 25 years old, with 156 participants representing 40.6% of the sample, reflecting a significant presence of the older age group. This distribution reflects that the majority of respondents are young, which may affect the results of the study and bias it towards the interests and orientations of this age group.

Table 4.3: Educational Level.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Undergraduate	252	65.6
	Master's Graduate	92	24.0
	PhD Graduate	40	10.4
	Total	384	100.0

In addition to the demographics of gender and age, educational attainment was also provided to provide more context for the participants' descriptions. It is clearly noted from table 4.3 that the majority of participants were undergraduate, with 252 participants, representing 65.6% of the total sample. 92 participants were master's holders, representing 24% of the sample. In contrast, only 40 participants, representing 10.4%, were PhD holders. This distribution reflects the dominance of undergraduate students in the sample.

Table 4.4: Monthly Income Level

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	below \$ 1000	245	63.8
	\$1000-\$3000	108	28.1
	Above \$ 3000	31	8.1
	Total	384	100.0

Additionally, it is noted from the monthly income level data of the participants within a sample of 384 individuals that the largest percentage of participants falls into the income category of less than \$1,000 per month, with 245 participants, representing 63.8% of the sample, followed by the income between “\$1,000” and “\$3,000”, which includes 108 participants, representing 28.1%. As for the participants whose income is more than \$3,000, their number was only 31 participants, representing 8.1% of the sample. The majority of participants fall into the low-income category, which makes the study reflect the challenges and concerns specific to this category.

Table 4.5: Daily Social Media Usage.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Up to one hour	33	8.6
	1-3 hours	98	25.5
	3-5 hours	132	34.4
	More than 5 hours	121	31.5
	Total	384	100.0

As for Table 4.5 above, it shows the distribution of a sample of 384 participants based on their daily social media usage hours. The data shows that the largest proportion of participants (34.4%) use social media for 3 to 5 hours per day, with 132 participants. This is followed by participants who spend more than 5 hours per day on these platforms, with 121 participants, representing 31.5% of the sample. 98 participants, representing 25.5% use them from “1 to 3 h” each day,. In contrast, only a small proportion (8.6%) spend up to 1 hour per day on social media, with 33 participants. These results reflect the tendency of most participants to spend a relatively long time, which may impact their lifestyles and digital behaviors.

Table 4.6: Preferred Social Media Usage.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Facebook	94	24.5
	Instagram	175	45.6
	TikTok	77	20.1
	YouTube	38	9.9
	Total	384	100.0

Table 4.6 shows that 175 users, representing 45.6% of the sample preferred the use of Instagram. Facebook is next in preference, with 24.5%, and 94 users. TikTok is used by 77 participants, representing 20.1% of the total sample. Finally, YouTube came in the least preferred, with only 38 users, representing 9.9%.

4.2 RESULTS RELATED TO THE QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

The first question of this study is as follows: “Do social media influencers and its dimensions (Credibility, Customer Loyalty, Attractiveness) have an impact on consumer purchasing behavior?”. To answer the first question of this study, the means and standard deviations of these dimensions were calculated. Findings related to these dimensions are presented in Table 4.7 to analyze how they influence consumers’ purchasing behavior.

Table 4.7: Analysis of The Impact of Social Media Influencers on Consumer Purchasing Behavior: Mean and Standard Deviation of Key Dimensions.

Social media influencers	Mean	Std. Deviation
Credibility		
I find [SMI]’s content credible	3.2422	1.03777
I find that [SMI]’s content is believable.	3.4896	1.02700
I find that [SMI]’s content is authentic.	3.5495	.93253
Customer Loyalty		
I have no inclination to switch to another brand even if its brand endorsed by [SMI] is more expensive than other brands.	3.1302	1.06877
I have a positive attitude toward the brand or product recommended by the [SMI].	2.9922	1.03588
I have an intention to repurchase the brand or product recommended by the [SMI].	3.3307	1.11832
I have a willingness to purchase the brand or product recommended by the [SMI].	3.2292	1.08615
Attractiveness		
When looking at [SMI]’s social media, I feel close to him/ her.	3.1927	1.12848
I find [SMI]’s content attractive.	3.0729	1.11944
I find [SMI]’s content visually appealing.	3.0651	1.15550
Social Media Influencers	3.2294	.58461
Valid N (listwise)		

The paragraph “I find that [SMI]’s content is authentic.” has the highest mean of 3.5495 (with standard deviation= 0.93), indicating that consumers feel that influencers’ content is authentic. This criterion is a key component of building trust and credibility. When consumers perceive that content comes from a trusted and authentic source, they tend to rely more on that influencer’s recommendations. Authenticity reflects the influencers’ candor and transparency, which makes the content seem more real and tangible to consumers. Therefore, the audience’s feeling that the content is real and not exaggerated increases their response to the recommended products. These results also indicate the importance of choosing influencers who have a good reputation and provide content that honestly reflects their personal experiences.

On the other hand, the paragraph: “I have a positive attitude toward the brand or product recommended by the [SMI]” had the lowest mean, indicating that consumers do not feel sufficient loyalty towards the brand promoted by the influencer. The mean of 2.99 shows that the general attitude towards the brand is not very positive, which may mean that the audience needs more convincing or reinforcement to turn into true loyalty. The standard deviation of 1.035 also indicates that there is a variance in consumer opinions, as some individuals may have positive opinions of the brand, while others may feel uneasy or uninterested. This variance can be due to multiple factors, such as different personal experiences with the brand or the products not fitting the needs of consumers.

These findings highlight the importance of focusing on building trust through credibility in content. Brands should enhance their public image by collaborating with influencers who provide honest and engaging content. It is also essential to work on improving brand image through marketing campaigns that focus on customer experiences and reviews. In addition, brands should regularly monitor and analyze audience reactions to their campaigns. If there are signs of dissatisfaction or discord, companies should reevaluate their marketing strategies and adjust messages or improve products to attract consumers’ attention and increase their loyalty.

Accordingly, there is an impact of social media influencers on consumer purchasing behavior, but this impact varies across different dimensions. Credibility has a clear positive impact on purchasing behavior, as consumers’ sense that the content is authentic and honest increases trust in influencer recommendations and thus influences purchasing decisions. As

for customer loyalty, the impact is relatively weak, as consumers do not feel strong loyalty towards brands recommended by influencers, indicating that this dimension needs to be further enhanced to stimulate actual loyalty. Attractiveness has a moderate impact on consumer behavior, as consumers find the content attractive, but this does not necessarily translate into strong purchasing behavior.

The second question of this study is as follows: “Do online marketing and its dimensions (Content Relevance, Advertising Exposure, Perceived Value) have an impact on consumer purchasing behavior?”. To answer this question of this study, the means and standard deviations of these dimensions were calculated, which helps in understanding their impact on purchasing behavior. The results related to these dimensions are presented in Table 4.8 to analyze how they influence consumers’ purchasing behavior.

Table 4.8: Analysis of The Impact of Online Marketing on Consumer Purchasing Behavior: Mean and Standard Deviation of Key Dimensions.

Online Marketing	Mean	Std. Deviation
Content Relevance		
The website layout helps me in searching and selecting the right product while shopping online.	4.1198	.98353
I prefer to buy from website that provides me with quality of information.	4.0000	1.04219
I only buy products that suit personality.	4.0495	1.04227
My society culture affects my buying behavior.	3.7943	1.03559
My age determines the things I buy.	3.3880	1.09733
Advertising Exposure		
I use social networking sites to spot the latest fashion trends.	3.2865	1.14997
Perceived Value		
While shopping online, I prefer to purchase from a website that provides safety and ease of navigation and order.	4.1380	.91931

Tablo 4.8: Analysis of The Impact of Online Marketing on Consumer Purchasing Behavior: Mean and Standard Deviation of Key Dimensions (Table Continued) .

I feel safe and secure while shopping online. Online Shopping protects my security. I like to shop online from a trustworthy website	3.4974	1.12646
I consider my financial condition during shopping.	3.2214	1.15189
My family are the most influential people that affect my buying behavior.	3.6875	1.05278
I often change to another product if I had bad experience with the previous one.	4.0651	.91602
Online Marketing	3.7496	.55316
Valid N (listwise)		

It is clearly noted from the above table that the paragraph “While shopping online, I prefer to purchase from a website that provides safety and ease of navigation and order.” received the highest mean score (4.1380), indicating that consumers place great importance on security and ease of use when shopping online. Security and ease of navigation contribute to consumer confidence, making them more likely to shop from sites that offer these features. Feeling secure is a critical element, as verifying that a site is secure and easy to navigate provides consumers with a positive experience and makes them more willing to buy.

The paragraph “I use social networking sites to spot the latest fashion trends.” had the lowest mean (3.2865), indicating that consumers’ use of social media to keep up with fashion trends does not have a significant impact on their purchasing decisions. This may be because consumers rely on other sources for reliable information about products or because social media is used more for social purposes than as a primary source for shopping.

Accordingly, there is an impact of online marketing and its dimensions (content relevance, advertising exposure, perceived value) on consumer purchasing behavior, but this impact varies depending on the dimension. The results showed that content relevance and perceived value have a strong impact on purchasing behavior, as the items related to safety, ease of use, and quality of information obtained high arithmetic means. This means that consumers tend to make positive purchasing decisions when they feel that the content is relevant, safe, and provides real value.

The dimension of exposure to advertising, such as using social media to follow fashion trends, showed a relatively weak impact, as it obtained the lowest arithmetic mean. This may

indicate that consumers do not consider advertising alone to be sufficient to influence their purchasing decisions, and may rely on other factors such as friends' recommendations or detailed information about the product.

The third question of this study is as follows: "Do communication and its dimensions (Frequency of interaction, clarity and consistency, and response time and quality) have an impact on consumer purchasing behavior?". The results related to these dimensions are presented in Table 4.9 to analyze how they influence consumers' purchasing behavior.

Table 4.9: Analysis of The Impact of Communication on Consumer Purchasing Behavior: Mean and Standard Deviation of Key Dimensions.

Communication	Mean	Std. Deviation
Frequency of Interaction		
The SMI encourages followers to offer feedback.	3.2943	1.07152
The SMI facilitates the two-way communication between them and their followers.	3.2526	1.04531
The SMI gives followers the opportunity to talk back.	3.4010	1.00682
The SMI is effective in gathering customers' feedback.	3.1745	1.07099
Clarity and Consistency		
The SMI is a good source of product information.	3.2031	1.07202
The SMI provides timely information.	3.4375	.98355
The SMI is a good source of up-to-date product information.	3.3333	.99257
The SMI is a convenient source of product information.	3.3151	1.02307
The SMI supplies complete product information.	3.3620	1.00220
Response Time and Quality		
SMIs posts are entertaining.	3.5547	.95984
SMIs endorsements are fun.	3.2552	1.07304
SMIs endorsements are entertaining.	3.3307	1.02067
SMIs posts are enjoyable.	3.3464	.98147
The SMI makes me feel like they want to listen to their followers.	3.3516	1.03910

Table 4.9: Analysis of The Impact of Communication on Consumer Purchasing Behavior: Mean and Standard Deviation of Key Dimensions (Table Continued).

SMIs posts are fun.	3.4453	.98931
SMIs endorsements are enjoyable.	3.3177	1.03873
Communication	3.3359	.60062
Valid N (listwise)		

The paragraph “SMIs posts are entertaining.” received the highest mean (3.5547), indicating that consumers value the entertainment aspect of influencer posts. This paragraph shows that entertaining and engaging content is an important element in attracting consumers’ attention and making them interact more with the influencer, which may motivate purchase decisions.

The paragraph “The SMI is effective in gathering customers’ feedback.” had the lowest mean score (3.1745), indicating that consumers do not perceive influencers to collect their feedback effectively enough. This may be due to a lack of effective communication channels to collect feedback or because some influencers may not devote enough time to interacting with their followers about their personal opinions. This lack of engagement may negatively impact consumers’ sense that their opinions matter, which may limit their willingness to interact with the influencer or make a purchasing decision based on their recommendations.

Accordingly, communication and its dimensions (frequency of interaction, clarity and consistency, response time and quality of interaction) have an impact on consumer purchasing behavior, but this impact varies between dimensions. The highest arithmetic mean in the “response time and quality” dimension shows that entertaining content has a positive impact, meaning that consumers are attracted to influencers who provide entertaining and attractive content. This increases their desire to follow the influencer and perhaps be influenced by his recommendations. The weak interaction in collecting customer feedback, as shown by the lower mean, indicates that consumers do not see this dimension as very effective. Although this dimension has an impact, its impact is relatively weak compared to other dimensions.

4.3 RELIABILITY TEST

Reliability statistics give an idea of how reliable or consistent a set of items are in measuring a particular concept. These statistics are commonly used for the assessment of the research tools accuracy, such as questionnaires and psychological scales. It is worth noting that for the items' internal consistency to be measured, there was a need to use the Cronbach's Alpha, where the value exceeding "0.7" meaning a good reliability, while exceeding "0.8", they are considered excellent. That is, all the scale items "45 items" provide consistent and reliable results. 45 items were used to assess reliability. The more items, the greater the chance of improving reliability, provided that these items are properly interrelated. Overall, these results indicate that the 45-item scale has high reliability, meaning that it measures the intended concept in a reliable and stable manner across its various uses.

After collecting 384 participants, the researcher conducted a reliability test for each variable through Cronbach's alpha to further assess the questionnaire reliability. The results for all dimensions had values exceeding 0.70, meaning that the questionnaire is considered generally reliable.

Table 4.10: Full Sample Reliability Test.

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Social Media Influencers	.737	10
Online Marketing	.740	11
Communication	.873	16
Consumer Purchasing Behaviour	.716	8
Total	.880	45

4.4 NORMALITY TEST

It was essential to conduct a normality test before proceeding with any form of analysis testing. The normality test helps identify whether the data distribution is normal, which in turn dictates appropriate analysis methods for the current study (Das 2016).

This study employed visual and statistical methods to test normality. Visually, a histogram was used to examine the distribution curve, allowing for an initial assessment. In addition, a Q-Q Plot confirmed the normality of distribution by examining skewness and kurtosis. For all variables, skewness values were within the range of -2.0 to 2.0; most of which were close to zero, indicating a symmetrical distribution. Kurtosis values also fell within the -2.0 to 2.0 range, further supporting the assumption of a normal distribution (Tabachnick, 2013). For Social Media Influencers, the mean was 3.2294, with a skewness of 0.018 and kurtosis of 0.155. Online Marketing had a mean of 3.7496, with a skewness of -0.411 and kurtosis of 0.903, showing a slightly left-skewed but normal distribution. Communication had a mean of 3.3359, skewness of -0.209, and kurtosis of 1.770.

Consumer Purchasing Behavior had a mean of 3.4574, with a skewness of 0.115 and kurtosis of 1.106, all indicating normal distribution characteristics. The closeness of mean, median, and mode across these variables further supported the normality assumption. The data followed a normal distribution, justifying the use of parametric methods for hypothesis testing.

Table 4.11: Normality Skewness and Kurtosis.

	Social Media Influencers	Online Marketing	Communication	Consumer Purchasing Behavior
Mean	3.2294	3.7496	3.3359	3.4574
Median	3.2180 ^a	3.8015 ^a	3.3147 ^a	3.4338 ^a
Mode	3.00	4.00 ^b	3.13	3.25
Std. Deviation	.58461	.55316	.60062	.56150
Skewness	.018	-.411-	-.209-	.115
Kurtosis	.155	.903	1.770	1.106
Range	3.40	3.82	4.00	4.00

4.5 CORRELATION TEST

Table 4.12: Pearson Correlations.

N		Social Media Influencers	Online Marketing	Communication	Consumer Purchasing Behavior
Social Media Influencers	Pearson Correlation	1	.171**	.538**	.361**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.000	.000
	N	384	384	384	384
Online Marketing	Pearson Correlation	.171**	1	.353**	.573**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		.000	.000
	N	384	384	384	384
Communication	Pearson Correlation	.538**	.353**	1	.432**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	384	384	384	384
Consumer Purchasing Behavior	Pearson Correlation	.361**	.573**	.432**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	384	384	384	384

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A basic correlation test was conducted, which is the first test required before evaluating the hypotheses (Schober, Boer and Schwarte 2018). Pearson correlation analysis was chosen as the standard method in order to accomplish this. All values were statistically significant below 0.01, which is a critical threshold for significance, indicating that all independent variables have a strong positive association with the dependent variable. According to the results, the variable “Online Marketing” showed the strongest correlation with the dependent variable (consumer purchasing behaviour) with a correlation value of .573**, indicating a strong positive correlation. It was followed by the variable “Communication” with a

correlation value of .432**, and then “Social Media Influencers” with a correlation value of .361**

It was found there is a correlation between “communication” and “social media”, with a value of “ .538**”, while having a significant correlation between “communication” and “online marketing” with a value of “ . 353**”. It was also found that there a correlation between “social media influencers” and “online marketing” with a value of “.171**”. This indicted that these variables are statistically significantly related to each other, as shown in the results.

4.6 HYPOTHESES TESTING

After ensuring that the distribution was normal, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether the variables under study – attractiveness, credibility, and customer loyalty – had an impact on consumer purchasing behavior. Since there were multiple independent variables rather than just one, multiple linear regression was chosen. Furthermore, instead of a cause-and-effect relationship, which requires direct linear regression, we examined the effect of interdependent factors. The following tables present the results for the variables and their dimensions:

Table 4.13: Multiple Regression Model Summary for Social Media Influencers.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.374 ^a	.140	.133	.52281

a. Predictors: (Constant), Attractiveness, Credibility, Customer Loyalty

It is noted from the above analysis of the multiple linear regression that there is a moderate correlation between the independent and dependent variables, by which the R value is “0.374”, while the R Square has a value of “ .140”, meaning that 14% of the variance in the dependent variable (consumer behavior) can be manifested and elaborated by the independent variables in the model. It was also reaffirmed through the above analysis that there is suitability of such statistical model, considering independent variables number, with a value of “0.133”. In addition, there was an accuracy of the model prediction with an estimate of the Std.error of “0.52281”.

Table 4.14: Multiple Regression ANOVA Test for Social Media Influencers.

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16.888	3	5.629	20.595	.000 ^a
	Residual	103.867	380	.273		
	Total	120.755	383			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Attractiveness, Credibility, Customer Loyalty

b. Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchasing Behavior

The results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicate the suitability of the statistical model that includes the independent variables (attractiveness, credibility and customer loyalty) in explaining consumer purchasing behavior as a dependent variable, as the sum of the regression squares reached 16.888, which reflects the amount of variance explained by the model, while the sum of the residual squares reached 103.867, which represents the unexplained variance in the model. With three degrees of freedom for the regression and 380 degrees of freedom for the remainder, the average regression square was 5.629 and the average residual square was 0.273. The F value for the model was 20.595, which is a high value indicating that the model is statistically significant, and this was confirmed at a significance level of 0.000, which means that the effect of the independent variables on consumer purchasing behavior is statistically significant.

Table 4.15: Coefficients For Social Media Influencers.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.243	.158		14.187	.000
	Credibility	.142	.040	.180	3.504	.001
	Customer Loyalty	.198	.049	.238	4.075	.000
	Attractiveness	.033	.037	.051	.875	.382

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchasing Behavior

Table 4.15 presents the results of the regression analysis that aims to explore the effect of (credibility, customer loyalty, and attractiveness) on consumer purchasing behavior. The model shows that the constant value (intercept) is equal to 2.243 with a standard error of 0.158. Despite the absence of these factors, there is a basic effect on consumer purchasing behavior. As for the credibility factor, the unstandardized coefficient value was 0.142, meaning that a one-unit increase in credibility leads to an average increase in consumer purchasing behavior by 0.142. This relationship also showed strong statistical significance

(Sig. = 0.001), indicating the importance of this factor. As for customer loyalty, the coefficient value was "0.198" with strong statistical significance (Sig. = 0.000). This means that customer loyalty has a significant and positive effect on consumer purchasing behavior. As for the attractiveness factor, the coefficient value reached "0.033", which is a statistically insignificant value (Sig. = 0.382).

Table 4.16: Multiple Regression Model Summary for Online Marketing

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.578 ^a	.334	.329	.46012

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Value, Advertising Exposure, Content Relevance

The multiple regression model, with an R-squared value of 0.334, indicates that the independent variables—perceived value, exposure to advertising, and content relevance—explain approximately 33.4% of the variance in the dependent variable. The adjusted R-squared value of 0.329 represents the number of independent variables used in the model. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient of 0.578 indicates a moderate to strong relationship between the independent and dependent variables. With a standard error of estimate of 0.46012, the model demonstrates a reasonable level of predictive accuracy and highlights the significant impact of the studied components on the dependent variable.

Table 4.17: Multiple Regression ANOVA Test for Online Marketing.

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	40.305	3	13.435	63.460	.000 ^a
	Residual	80.450	380	.212		
	Total	120.755	383			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Value, Advertising Exposure, Content Relevance

b. Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchasing Behavior

The sum of squares of the regression was 40.305, which is the variance explained by the model in consumer purchasing behavior, while the sum of squares of the residual was 80.450, which is the unexplained variance. These values were divided based on degrees of freedom, where the degrees of freedom of the regression were 3 and the degrees of freedom of the residual were 380. The average square of the regression was 13.435, compared to 0.212 for the average square of the residual. The F value of the model was 63.460, which is a high value indicating that the model is statistically significant, meaning that the

independent variables significantly explain the variance in consumer purchasing behavior. This is confirmed by the significance level (Sig.) 0.000, which is less than 0.05, indicating the importance of the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

Table 4.18: Coefficients for Online Marketing,

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.269	.162		7.836	.000
	Content Relevance	.325	.040	.387	8.026	.000
	Advertising Exposure	.036	.022	.075	1.654	.099
	Perceived Value	.218	.045	.242	4.808	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchasing Behavior

The table above shows the constant value (1.269), which indicates that there is a basic effect on consumer purchasing behavior in the absence of these factors, with strong statistical significance (Sig. = 0.000). As for content relevance, the results show that the unstandardized regression coefficient is 0.325. This means that a one-unit increase in content relevance is associated with an average increase in consumer purchasing behavior by "0.325". This relationship is also strongly statistically significant (Sig. = 0.000), indicating that content relevance is an important influencing factor.

For exposure to advertising, the coefficient value was 0.036 and not strong statistical significance (Sig. = 0.099), indicating that this factor is not considered to have a significant effect on consumer purchasing behavior. As for the perceived value, its coefficient was 0.218, which is statistically significant (Sig. = 0.000), indicating that increasing the perceived value has a significant and positive effect on consumer purchasing behavior.

Table 4.19: Multiple Regression Model Summary for Communication.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.442 ^a	.195	.189	.50570

a. Predictors: (Constant), Response Time and Quality, Frequency of Interaction , Clarity and Consistency

The correlation coefficient R , which is approximately 0.442, indicates a moderate association between the independent and dependent variables. The R -squared value shows a value of 0.195, which means that 19.5% of the variance in the dependent variable can be explained by these variables. The adjusted R -squared value, which is 0.189, considers the number of independent variables in the model, which more accurately reflects the level of fit of the model. In addition, the standard error of the estimate of 0.50570 reflects the accuracy of the model's prediction, indicating that although there is a large effect, there is still some unexplained variance in the results.

Table 4.20: Multiple Regression ANOVA Test for Communication.

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	23.577	3	7.859	30.731	.000 ^a
	Residual	97.178	380	.256		
	Total	120.755	383			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Response Time and Quality, Frequency of Interaction, Clarity and Consistency

b. Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchasing Behavior

The ANOVA test in Table 4.18 shows the validity of the statistical model that tests the effect of the independent variables (response time and quality, frequency of interaction, clarity and consistency) on the dependent variable (consumer purchasing behavior). The sum of the regression squares was 23.577, which reflects the variance explained by the model in consumer behavior, while the sum of the residual squares was 97.178.

These values were distributed over the degrees of freedom, where the degrees of freedom for the regression were 3 and the degrees of freedom for the residual were 380. The mean square of the regression was 7.859, while the mean square of the residual was 0.256. As for the F value for the model, which was 30.731, it indicates that the model is statistically significant, which means that the independent variables significantly explain the variance in consumer purchasing behavior. This conclusion is reinforced by the significance level (Sig.) of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, indicating that the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable is statistically significant.

Table 4.21: Coefficients for Communication.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.093	.146		14.296	.000
	Frequency of Interaction	.169	.045	.221	3.722	.000
	Clarity and Consistency	.040	.051	.052	.799	.425
	Response Time and Quality	.201	.059	.230	3.399	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchasing Behavior

It is clearly noted from the above table that the constant value (2.093) shows a basic effect on consumer purchasing behavior, with strong statistical significance (Sig. = 0.000). For interaction frequency, the unstandardized regression coefficient is 0.169, which means that an increase in interaction frequency by one unit is associated with an average increase in consumer purchasing behavior by 0.169. This relationship showed strong statistical significance (Sig. = 0.000), indicating the importance of this factor in influencing consumer behavior. As for clarity and consistency, the coefficient value was 0.040, but it was not statistically significant (Sig. = 0.425), indicating that this factor has no significant effect on consumer purchasing behavior in this model. Finally, for response time and quality, the regression coefficient was 0.201, with strong statistical significance (Sig. = 0.001).

H1: Social Media Influencers have a positive impact on Consumer Purchasing Behavior.

- a. H1a: The credibility of social media influencers has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.
- b. H1b: Customer loyalty toward social media influencers has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.
- c. H1c: The attractiveness of social media influencers has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.

The p-value, which is considered highly statistically significant, is (Sig = .000 < .05). Therefore, we can say that social media influencers influence the way people buy things. In addition, the unstandardized model coefficients show that the credibility and customer

loyalty components have positive values; the b-values of credibility and customer loyalty are 0.142 and 0.198, respectively. With a b-value of 0.033 and a p-value of 0.382, attractiveness does not seem to have a statistically significant effect. Taking everything into account, we can say that H1 is partially supported because, unlike attractiveness, credibility and customer loyalty have a positive and significant effect on consumer purchasing behavior.

H2: Online Marketing has a positive impact on Consumer Purchasing Behavior.

- a. H2a: Advertising exposure of online marketing has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.
- b. H2b: Content relevance of online marketing has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.
- c. H2c: Perceived value of online marketing has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.

The second hypothesis investigates whether consumer purchasing behavior is significantly influenced by online marketing. The p-value, which is considered highly statistically significant, was found to be ($\text{Sig} = .000 < .05$). Thus, we can say that aspects related to online marketing influence the way customers buy. Additionally, the unstandardized b-value for content relevance is positive, at 0.325. With a positive b-value of 0.218, perceived value shows that consumers are more likely to make a purchase when they believe that the advertised good or service is valuable. With a p-value of 0.099 and a b-value of 0.036, on the other hand, exposure to advertising does not seem to have a significant effect on consumer behavior in this model. Therefore, we conclude that H2 has some support.

H3 Communication has a positive impact on Consumer Purchasing Behavior.

- a. H3a: Frequency of interaction of communication has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.
- b. H3b: Clarity and consistency of communication has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.
- c. H3c: Response time and quality of communication has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.

The third hypothesis explores whether communication has a significant impact on customer purchase behavior. Sig = .000 < .05 is the p-value, which is considered highly statistically significant. Furthermore, interaction rate has a positive unstandardized b-value of 0.169, indicating that customers are more likely to buy from you if you interact with them frequently. Similarly, quality and response speed have a positive b-value of 0.201, indicating that distinctive and fast brand responses positively influence consumer choices. However, clarity and consistency had no significant impact on consumer behavior, as evidenced by the p-value of 0.425 and b-value of 0.040. As a result, we can say that H3 has some support.

4.6.1 Hypotheses Analysis Results Summary

Table 4.22: Hypotheses Status Summary.

Research Hypotheses	P Values	Status
H1: Social Media Influencers have a positive impact on Consumer Purchasing Behavior.	.000	Supported
H1a: The credibility of social media influencers has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.	.001	Supported
H1b: Customer loyalty toward social media influencers has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.	.000	Supported
H1c: The attractiveness of social media influencers has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.	.382	Not Supported
H2: Online Marketing has a positive impact on Consumer Purchasing Behavior.	.000	Supported
H2a: Advertising exposure of online marketing has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.	.099	Not Supported
H2b: Content relevance of online marketing has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.	.000	Supported
H2c: Perceived value of online marketing has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.	.000	Supported
H3: Communication has a positive impact on Consumer Purchasing Behavior.	.000	Supported
H3a: Frequency of interaction of communication has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.	.000	Supported

Table 4.22: Hypotheses Status Summary (Table Continued).

H3b: Clarity and consistency of communication has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.	.425	Not Supported
H3c: Response time and quality of communication has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior.	.001	Supported

It is possible to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that actually influence consumer purchasing behavior after evaluating all the hypotheses. First, it is concluded that the influence of social media influencers on consumer behavior is positive. The p-value (Sig = .000) indicated a high statistical significance, meaning that social media influencers significantly influence consumer purchasing behavior. When analyzing the correlation results, it was found that influencer credibility and customer loyalty were the two independent variables that had the highest correlation with consumer purchasing behavior. Influencer credibility came out on top with a high correlation value, followed by customer loyalty.

After conducting a regression analysis to determine which independent variable had the greatest influence on consumer behavior, the unstandardized b-value showed that the independent variable with the greatest influence was influencer credibility, which had the highest unstandardized b-value (0.142), followed by customer loyalty (0.198). In addition to the positive nature of the results, we can analyze the significance and validity of this effect. Whereas influencer credibility and customer loyalty had a significant impact on consumer behavior, as their unstandardized b-values were close to 0.5.

On the other hand, influencer attractiveness did not have a significant impact, as its value was (0.033) and p-value (0.382) were insignificant. Accordingly, it is concluded that the hypotheses support the influence of social media influencers, reflecting the importance of influencer credibility and customer loyalty in shaping consumer behavior.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

With the global spread of social media and its status as an integral part of most people's daily lives, influencer marketing has emerged as an innovative and modern marketing method adopted by brands to enhance their presence and push their products to the forefront of consumers' interests. With the emergence of influencer marketing, consumers are exposed to content that contains support and promotion from these influencers, which increases their desire to interact with the products and services offered.

In this context, studies have addressed several important dimensions that explain the direct and indirect influence of social media influencers. According to previous research, as stated in the study (Thilina, 2021), the number of followers is considered one of the main indicators to determine the extent of influencers' influence on social media platforms, as this is attributed to the increased likelihood of the message reaching a wider audience. However, (Hogsnes, Grønli, & Hansen, 2024) indicated that factors such as authenticity and distinctiveness play a fundamental role in shaping consumers' purchasing intentions, showing that there are other aspects to consider besides the number of followers.

In the context of studying the increasing influence of social media influencers and online marketing on consumer purchasing behavior in the northern West Bank, statistical data indicate interesting trends. One of the main findings was that the average rating of the influence of "social media influencers" was 3.2294 with a standard deviation of 0.58461, indicating a general acceptance and significant influence of these influencers, as the number of followers and authenticity played a prominent role in enhancing consumer confidence and prompting them to make informed purchasing decisions ((Gupta & Chopra, 2020); (Pan, 2023).

Moreover, the results of the influence of "online marketing" with an average of 3.7496 with a standard deviation of 0.55316 showed that digital advertisements, especially those regularly displayed on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, enhance brand visibility and increase the likelihood of consumers engaging with products (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2020).

While social media platforms were the most popular among local audiences, regression data showed that the impact of variables such as “perceived value” and “advertising exposure” had a direct impact on purchasing behavior, with ad content value (.325) and perceived value effectiveness (.218) showing a positive and statistically significant impact. Statistical Analysis and Core Links The correlation results also provide insight into the nature of the relationship between these variables. “Social media influencers” showed a positive association with “online marketing” ($r = 0.171$, $p < .01$), suggesting that the integration of influencer-promoted content and frequent exposure to it on platforms enhances the impact of marketing campaigns. It is worth noting that frequent engagement with audiences via influencer responsiveness and content clarity are positively associated with increased customer loyalty and purchasing behavior ($B = .201$, $p = .001$).

Dhingra conducted a study that found that social media significantly affects the choices and behavior of consumers. Personalized, social proof, engagement, exposure, and influencer marketing were found to be important determinants of customer behavior (Dhingra, 2023).

Mohammed and Maheshwari conducted a study among 135 customers, and it showed that customers concur that influencer marketing outperforms traditional marketing in terms of impact and effectiveness. According to these users, influencers can appear more credible by giving glimpses into their daily lives and easily integrating adverts. This allows the influencers to become "friends" with their followers (Mohammed & Maheshwari, 2023).

An exploratory study was conducted by (Schutte & Chauke , 2022). It is stated by this study that digital marketing, according to millennial consumers, helped them find better deals on the products and services they wanted to purchase.

Phung and Khan conducted another study among a sample of 200 respondents, and they found that social media is a valuable resource when making purchases, and social media influencers are crucial to that process (Phung & Khan, 2021)

Raita and Gavrielatou conducted a qualitative study that showed that macro social media influencers shape the behavior of their followers by creating communities and content that encourages users to consume more and more, seek out specific experiences through consumption, or act in particular ways either individually or collectively (Raita & Gavrielatou, 2021).

Rodrigues found that customers' perceptions of a product and their propensity to purchase are significantly enhanced by each of the active components of SMIs: communication, product congruence, source legitimacy, and source attractiveness (Rodrigues R. , 2021). Additionally, (Heinonen, 2021) conducted a study that showed that millennials in Finland use social media and influencers to confirm their purchases and identify the latest information.

In a study conducted by Alhassan et al. (Alhassan, Majeed, Gideon, & Shani, 2023), they found that there is a strong correlation between social media marketing and consumer purchase behavior.

In a study conducted by Costa (Costa, 2019), it was found that consumers' opinions and purchase intentions are significantly influenced by influencers' posts on Instagram regarding particular goods and services. Venkat conducted a study that showed there is a correlation between consumer perception and purchasing behavior and the characteristics of digital marketing. (Venkat, 2022)..

There is growing evidence that the level of engagement with influencer content affects purchasing behavior. In the local context, studies have shown that followers' engagement with influencer posts, through comments, shares, or likes, increases the chances of influencing purchasing decisions. These interactions act as social proof that builds consumer confidence, increasing the likelihood of making a purchase decision. A study by (Kim, 2022) indicated that high levels of engagement can enhance consumers' perceptions of product quality and value, which contributes to significantly improving purchase intention.

Many influencers rely on using emotional marketing elements ranging from personal stories to emotional engagement with the audience. (Devle & Gumgoankar, 2024) found that this type of emotional marketing increases consumer attachment to the brand, as content that highlights emotions helps build a deeper connection with consumers, increasing their tendency to respond positively to the content and enhancing their purchase intentions. Therefore, it is recommended that local marketers invest in producing emotional content that resonates with the interests and culture of the target audience.

Consumers, especially young people, are increasingly willing to support brands that adopt a sustainable and environmentally conscious approach. Recent studies, such as (Albutra,

Pornes, & Almagro, 2024), show that influencers who demonstrate environmental awareness or talk about sustainability topics attract a loyal following, which increases their positive influence on purchasing decisions. In the local context, it is important for companies to promote collaborations with sustainability-focused influencers to engage with this growing trend among young people.

The results showed that influencers' quick response and immediate responses to audience inquiries play an important role in building trust. Studies such as (Albutra, Pornes, & Almagro, 2024) have indicated that these direct interactions contribute to creating a sense of personal connection between the consumer and the influencer, which enhances brand loyalty. Companies in the local market are advised to encourage influencers to respond effectively and quickly to build audience trust and attract them to purchase.

In addition, engaging with cultural and social trends is an important factor when considering influencer marketing campaigns. In communities with a strong cultural identity, such as the West Bank, targeting the audience with content that aligns with their culture and lifestyle is a key step to attracting their attention. (Ooi, et al., 2023) indicated that influencer campaigns that take into account local traditions and customs are more effective, as the audience feels in harmony with the marketing message, which increases the likelihood of them engaging with the content and the tendency to purchase.

Based on the data presented, some important conclusions and future recommendations emerge. First, it is essential for local marketers to understand the impact of psychological factors, such as authenticity and the influencer's connection to the local community, which are key to boosting consumer trust. Based on the findings of high consumer engagement with influencer-related content, companies should increase their focus on collaborating with local influencers who can create an emotional and authentic connection with their audience, to boost purchase intentions and drive brand loyalty. It is also recommended to use the most popular social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, as the main channels for online marketing, while enhancing the integration of influencer marketing strategies and targeted advertising to ensure the highest level of engagement.

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APPENDIX A QUESTIONNAIRE

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS AND ONLINE MARKETING ON CONSUMER PURCHASING BEHAVIOR IN THE NORTH OF THE WEST BANK IN PALESTINE

GENERAL INFORMATION

I am currently enrolled as a student at Altinbas University, specializing in Business Administration within the Institute of Graduate Studies. This questionnaire constitutes a pivotal element of my master's degree thesis, essential for meeting the academic requirements of the Master of Business Administration (MBA) program. Its exclusive purpose is to serve the academic objectives of this research endeavour. Your participation in completing this questionnaire is earnestly solicited and greatly valued. Your commitment of time and contribution to this study is deeply appreciated. Thank you for your invaluable involvement and dedicated support.

A. Demographic Features

1- Gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

2- Age:

- ☐ Below 18 years
- ☐ 18-25 years
- ☐ Above 25 years

3- Educational level:

- ☐ Undergraduate
- ☐ Master's Graduate

- ☐ PhD Graduate

4- Monthly Income Level:

- ☐ Below \$1000
- ☐ \$1000-\$3000
- ☐ Above \$3000

5- Daily Social Media Usage

- ☐ Up to one hour
- ☐ 1-3 hours
- ☐ 3-5 hours
- ☐ More than 5 hours

6- Preferred social media usage

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ TikTok
- ☐ YouTube

Social Media Influencers						
NO	Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1-	When looking at [SMI]'s social media, I feel close to him/ her.					
2-	I find [SMI]'s content attractive.					
3-	I find [SMI]'s content visually appealing.					
4-	I find that [SMI]'s content is believable.					
5-	I find that [SMI]'s content is authentic.					
6-	I have no inclination to switch to another brand even if its brand endorsed by [SMI] is more expensive than other brands.					
7-	I have a positive attitude toward the brand or product recommended by the [SMI].					
8-	I have an intention to repurchase the brand or product recommended by the [SMI].					
9-	I have a willingness to purchase the brand or product recommended by the [SMI].					
10-	I find [SMI]'s content credible.					

Online Marketing					
11	While shopping online, I prefer to purchase from a website that provides safety and ease of navigation and order.				
12	The website layout helps me in searching and selecting the right product while shopping online.				
13	I prefer to buy from website that provides me with quality of information.				
14	I only buy products that suit personality.				
15	I feel safe and secure while shopping online. Online Shopping protects my security. I like to shop online from a trustworthy website				
16	My society culture affects my buying behavior.				
17	I consider my financial condition during shopping.				
18	I use social networking sites to spot the latest fashion trends.				
19	My family are the most influential people that affect my buying behavior.				
20	My age determines the things I buy.				
21	I often change to another product if I had bad experience with the previous one.				

Consumer Purchasing Behavior					
22	I can buy the products anytime 24 hours a day while shopping online.				
23	I get on-time delivery by shopping online.				
24	It is easy to choose and make comparisons.				
25	Online shopping takes less time to make purchases and decisions.				
26	I feel that it takes less time to analyze a product when all its features have been listed while shopping online.				
27	I feel safe and secure while shopping online.				
28	Websites and online stores protect my security information and passwords.				
29	I only like to shop online on a trustworthy website.				
Communication					
30	The SMI is a good source of product information.				
31	The SMI provides timely information.				
32	The SMI is a good source of up-to-date product information.				

33	The SMI is a convenient source of product information.					
34	The SMI supplies complete product information.					
35	SMIs posts are entertaining.					
36	SMIs endorsements are fun.					
37	SMIs endorsements are entertaining.					
38	SMIs posts are enjoyable.					
39	The SMI encourages followers to offer feedback.					
40	The SMI makes me feel like they want to listen to their followers.					
41	SMIs posts are fun.					
42	SMIs endorsements are enjoyable.					
43	The SMI facilitates the two-way communication between them and their followers.					
44	The SMI gives followers the opportunity to talk back.					
45	The SMI is effective in gathering customers' feedback.					