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Influencer Marketing in Saudi Arabia: The Roles of Social Advocacy, Trustworthiness, and Perceived Effectiveness in Shaping Consumer Purchase Intention

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Abstract

Marketing influencers have a notable impact on consumers' buying intentions. This study investigates social advocacy, credibility, and perceived effectiveness of marketing influencers as predictors of purchase intention from a sociocultural viewpoint. The research is among the early studies in this area and adds value by clarifying how social advocacy, trustworthiness, and perceived effectiveness contribute to shaping the purchase intentions of Saudi consumers. Data were gathered using a convenience sampling approach from Saudi consumers and analyzed using Smart-PLS. The findings reveal significant relationships between social advocacy, trustworthiness, perceived effectiveness, and purchase intention. In addition, the sociocultural perspective was found to moderate the relationship between trustworthiness and purchase intention, as well as between perceived effectiveness and purchase intention. However, no moderating effect was identified between social advocacy and purchase intention.

Keywords: Marketing influencers, Social advocacy, Trustworthiness, Perceived effectiveness, Purchase intention

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Introduction

Over the past decade, rapid technological advancement and growing globalization have intensified competition, creating new challenges for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in maintaining their operations. SMEs benefit from flexibility and adaptability, yet they face uncertain business environments, fast technological changes, and evolving communication methods in their pursuit of sustainability and competitive advantage [1, 2]. Scholars emphasize the importance of effective communication and interaction to strengthen customer resilience and preserve market position and competitiveness [3]. Sustainability has been associated with win-win solutions that align with cultural characteristics, where both local and global approaches must be supported through the integration of technology and academic research consistent with sustainability goals [4].

Existing literature suggests that the use of social media, including Instagram advertising and electronic word of mouth (eWOM), is crucial for effective communication by SMEs and supports their efforts to achieve competitiveness and resilience. Organizational resilience, defined as the ability to survive continuous challenges and operational change, enables SMEs to succeed through knowledge management, strategic thinking, and technological utilization [5]. Consequently, social media has



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attracted considerable scholarly attention for examining its influence on performance outcomes and competitiveness, particularly in emerging economies [1].

At present, social media-based marketing initiatives represent some of the most influential and effective digital marketing tools contributing to business success [6]. Consumers increasingly rely on social media platforms to search for desired products and services, making these platforms central to shaping purchase intentions. The widespread adoption and usage of social media have transformed it into a popular and effective marketing instrument within today's competitive marketing landscape. Approximately 3.196 billion users worldwide spend time on social media for purchasing activities through microblogging, online forums, bookmarking sites, social blogs, videos, weblogs, images, and rating systems. Businesses have integrated social media into their marketing practices, fundamentally reshaping their overall marketing strategies [6].

Marketing influencers are individuals capable of shaping public decisions due to their actual or perceived expertise, relationships, authority, or social standing. They are often described as people with active followings who encourage audiences to take specific actions [7]. Keller and Fay [8] define influencers as:

“Everyday consumers who are substantially more likely than the average to seek out information and to share ideas, information, and recommendations with other people. They do this both through volunteering their opinions about products and services that they feel passionate about, and by being turned to for their knowledge, advice, and insights” (p. 1).

Historically, marketers collaborated with influencers such as celebrities to endorse products through advertising, aiming to attract audience attention, enhance credibility, gain benefits, establish brands, and leverage celebrity personal branding to increase brand awareness [9]. Earlier studies focused on tourism marketing, highlighting how influencers contribute to destination image and awareness. Prior research has demonstrated the effectiveness of traditional celebrity endorsements in tourism development [10, 11]. Influencer marketing has since evolved into a practice based on mutual relationships, where marketers move away from traditional advertising and instead capitalize on individuals who have built strong reputations and large followings on social media. According to Gretzel [7], the most widely used platforms for influencer marketing include Instagram (89% of marketers), Facebook and Twitter (70%), YouTube (59%), blogs (48%), and Snapchat (45%).

Researchers have long recognized the role of popular media in marketing and advertising to enhance awareness and brand recognition. There is a growing need for scholars to focus on emerging marketing practices, particularly the use of social media platforms and influencers, to expand the existing body of research. However, academic literature still lacks clarity regarding influencer marketing practices that the industry requires for developing effective strategies, highlighting the urgent need for further investigation [12]. The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified social media usage and consumption, increasing purchases influenced by influencer marketing. Earlier studies revealed mixed views on influencer effectiveness, showing that while 75% of consumers engaged with influencer marketing, only 36% were persuaded by its effectiveness. Research has also indicated that family and friends exert a stronger influence on purchase decisions than celebrities on social media [13].

Recently, scholars have called for more empirical research on social media influencers and influencer marketing as mechanisms for engaging customers and achieving competitive advantage [12]. In response, the present study aims to address this gap by examining influencer marketing and its impact on purchase intention. Specifically, the study focuses on key influencer-related factors to explain purchase intention. The objectives are threefold: to assess the influence of perceived effectiveness on purchase intention, to analyze the impact of influencer trustworthiness on purchase intention, and to examine the role of social advocacy in shaping purchase intention. Additionally, the study seeks to investigate the moderating effect of sociocultural perspective.

Literature review

Social advocacy and purchase intention

The fast growth of social media and continuous technological progress have transformed consumer behavior over the past decade. Even the entertainment sector has shifted toward platforms such as Netflix through online video streaming, while younger audiences show a strong tendency toward adopting new technologies. Statistics indicate that nearly half of consumers in the USA now subscribe to online streaming services rather than watch traditional television, demonstrating that social media has become a core element of everyday consumer life. The same reports reveal that around half of US consumers actively use social media, and millennials rely on social media as their primary source of information instead of conventional media.

YouTube, in particular, has gained extensive use for streaming and social interaction, with more than one billion users worldwide employing the platform to connect with audiences and potential customers [14]. YouTube influencers have emerged as key players in marketing and advertising, as social media influencers are now widely recognized within viral marketing strategies. Online personalities shape consumer attitudes and behaviors through blogs, posts, tweets, and other forms of social media communication [15]. YouTube influencers and content creators regularly upload videos to engage and expand their follower base, whereas professional video producers without personal influence are typically not regarded as

influencers. Distinctive personality traits and high-quality content contribute to channel popularity by attracting followers, and over time, this influence extends beyond YouTube itself [16].

Previous studies indicate that YouTube influencers are more popular among US teenagers than traditional celebrities. The rise in social media usage and the prominence of YouTube influencers have significantly reshaped advertising and marketing practices. Content credibility on YouTube has been identified as a critical factor driving the expansion of influencer marketing. Credible influencer-generated content affects consumer attitudes and behaviors, fulfills customer expectations, and supports firm growth through the active involvement of influencer marketing. Information credibility, or the credibility of the source, plays a major role in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors. Research has shown that purchase intention is influenced by social media campaigns, while consumer behavior is strongly affected by social platforms and influencers.

YouTube influencers maintain a consistent presence across popular social media platforms to attract consumers and influence their intentions and behaviors by sharing persuasive content, often proving more effective than traditional advertising methods. For influencer marketing to be effective, the information shared must be reliable and well-aligned with the brand, as perceptions of information credibility directly shape consumer attitudes and behaviors.

Existing literature emphasizes that influencer source credibility and the credibility of social information on social media platforms significantly affect consumer perceptions. Empirical research has examined purchase intention influenced by online social media efforts, celebrities, and influencers [17]. The concept of *social advocacy* has been introduced to describe the operationalization of social influence. Social influence is regarded as one of the most powerful factors shaping attitudes and opinions [18]. Many firms employ endorsements or recommendations as branding strategies to enhance marketing effectiveness, which is further strengthened by the social influence exerted by social media influencers. Digital media has expanded rapidly in recent years and has been reinforced by advanced technologies such as social media. Prior studies confirm that social influence strongly affects opinion formation in interactive digital communication environments [19, 20].

The present study aims to analyze the relationship between social advocacy, as represented by marketing influencers, and purchase intention. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Social advocacy positively influences the purchase intention of Saudi consumers.

Trustworthiness of marketing influencers and purchase intention

This study incorporates trustworthiness as a critical attribute of marketing influencers due to their wide-reaching impact. Earlier research refers to this attribute as source credibility, which enables effective dissemination of persuasive messages [21]. Trustworthiness has been identified as a central component of credibility. The competence, qualifications, knowledge, and skills of the source are essential for accomplishing persuasive objectives; therefore, marketing influencers must demonstrate sufficient expertise, as their capabilities directly influence consumer intentions. Trustworthiness shapes consumer perceptions through perceived honesty, sincerity, and authenticity.

Prior literature defines credibility as a combination of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness [22]. Within influencer marketing, trustworthiness has gained increased attention as a key dimension of credibility, alongside expertise and attractiveness, and perceived similarity has later been added as an ideological factor influencing consumer choice [23].

Purchase intention has been described as an individual's plan or willingness to exert effort to buy a specific brand. Consumers are more likely to purchase a product when they favor the brand, and this intention may be shaped by various factors. Scholars have measured purchase intention by assessing consumer perceptions of products and have shown that electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and brand awareness significantly affect purchasing decisions [24, 25]. Previous studies also highlight endorser characteristics—such as attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness—as having a positive effect on consumer purchase intention [25].

Although credibility has frequently been examined as a determinant of purchase intention, trustworthiness has primarily been treated as a sub-dimension rather than directly tested. There remains a lack of empirical studies that explicitly investigate the direct relationship between trustworthiness and purchase intention. Given the growing role of social media marketing influencers and the persistent concerns regarding their credibility, the present study seeks to empirically examine how influencer trustworthiness predicts purchase intention among consumers in Saudi Arabia. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Trustworthiness positively influences the purchase intention among Saudi consumers.

Perceived effectiveness and purchase intention

The present study also emphasizes the perceived effectiveness of marketing influencers, proposing that perceived effectiveness significantly affects purchase intention. The use of digital resources has expanded substantially over recent decades, and a similar trend is evident in Saudi Arabia, where the growing importance of digital social media in everyday life has transformed business practices. Statistics show that across 22 Arab countries, 135 million individuals use the internet, while 71 million are active users of social media and networking platforms. Internet penetration in Saudi Arabia has reached

89.39%, with approximately 23 million active social media users, representing nearly 68% of the population. On average, individuals in Saudi Arabia spend about 2 hours and 50 minutes per day on social media across various devices [26].

In Saudi Arabia, active social media users represent the biggest demographic segment across platforms such as Instagram, Twitter (X), and Snapchat, with YouTube also enjoying widespread recognition and popularity as a key social platform in the country. A substantial portion of the Saudi population engages with social media; data indicate that 73% of active users are on these platforms overall, with 62% using Facebook, 60% on Instagram, and 56% on Twitter, equating to roughly 24.71 million active accounts. Additionally, WhatsApp is utilized by 72%, Snapchat by 43%, and Facebook Messenger by 39% of active Saudi users, while Saudi Arabia hosts the world's largest Snapchat user base at 14.56 million individuals [26].

Pharmaceutical companies in Saudi Arabia have embraced social media marketing strategies to boost public awareness of healthcare products and services. These organizations view social media-based approaches as efficient communication channels that effectively reach target audiences. Incorporating modern technological tools like social media platforms has transformed conventional pharmaceutical promotion methods, shifting the focus toward digital marketing due to its superior performance across several dimensions. This superiority is evident in aspects such as cost efficiency, reduced time requirements, simplified customer interaction, and overall user-friendliness [27].

A separate empirical study explored purchase intention among Saudi consumers by examining how influencer characteristics, influencer content, and influencer trustworthiness affect brand attitude. Findings revealed no direct significant impact of influencer trustworthiness on consumers' purchase intention. Nevertheless, trustworthiness showed a notable association with brand attitude. Both influencer characteristics and content quality were found to significantly drive purchase intention. Moreover, brand attitude was confirmed to significantly mediate the link between influencer trustworthiness and purchase intention in the Saudi market [28].

The present research posits that the perceived effectiveness of marketing influencers contributes substantially to raising awareness and precisely reaching intended audiences. Existing literature notes that the actual effectiveness of social media in this domain has received limited empirical examination and remains largely underexplored. Accordingly, this study proposes that perceived influencer effectiveness serves as a predictor of purchase intention. The following hypothesis is therefore proposed to examine this association and its impact:

H3: Perceived Effectiveness positively influences purchase intention among Saudi consumers.

Moderating role of sociocultural perspective

Social networking platforms have integrated into the daily routines of Saudi residents, where a considerable portion of social interaction occurs online among networks of friends, relatives, and acquaintances who share aspects of their lives digitally. New connections are frequently formed through these sites, and large volumes of personal and public information are disseminated across various networks. Scholars have investigated sociocultural norms within Saudi society, particularly those concerning gender dynamics. Hofstede (2001) defined cultural dimensions as the collective mental programming that differentiates one group of people from another. The concept of sociocultural refers to distinctions among populations based on their social class or the cultural environment in which they live and behave. Prior research has highlighted sociocultural factors in the Saudi national context, especially initiatives addressing the needs of a growing population. It is widely recognized that sociocultural norms and family obligations often prevent female students from attending conventional universities [29]. Education in Saudi Arabia remains gender-segregated, with reports of a notable shortage of female faculty members in universities. Despite cultural barriers to women's education, online learning has enabled increased female enrollment by aligning with core Saudi cultural principles [30].

Saudi higher education institutions can help women navigate social and cultural challenges through distance learning programs. Empirical evidence on e-learning adoption in Saudi Arabia is scarce, though established models may help explain cultural influences on technology and social media uptake. Sociocultural elements are known to shape consumer behavior and intentions. This study contends that sociocultural factors moderate the associations between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Specifically, the sociocultural perspective is expected to moderate the links between social advocacy, trustworthiness, perceived effectiveness, and purchase intention. The following moderating hypotheses are thus proposed:

H4: Sociocultural perspective moderates the relationship between social advocacy and purchase intention among Saudi consumers.

H5: Sociocultural perspective moderates the relationship between trustworthiness and purchase intention among Saudi consumers.

H6: Sociocultural perspective moderates the relationship between perceived effectiveness and purchase intention among Saudi consumers.

Materials and Methods

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional approach. Data were collected using a convenience sampling method from 308 randomly selected visitors at shopping malls in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The researcher gathered responses by distributing questionnaires at Red Sea Mall, Mall of Arabia, and Haifaa Mall. The primary goal was to assess consumers' purchase intentions influenced by social media influencers. Marketing influencers are increasingly recognized for their role in shaping purchase decisions, though this concept is relatively new in Saudi Arabia, where internet usage continues to grow rapidly [31, 32].

As a cross-sectional study, data were collected at a single point in time from consumers who actively follow and engage with social media influencers. The questionnaire items for each construct were adapted from prior research. Purchase intention was measured using a 5-item scale from Aggad *et al.* [28]. Trustworthiness of influencers was measured using a 5-item scale also from Aggad *et al.* [28]. Perceived effectiveness was assessed with a 4-item scale from Lee & Koo [25]. Social advocacy was measured with a 2-item scale from Xiao *et al.* [14], while sociocultural perspective was evaluated using a 4-item scale from Luppicini & Walabe [33].

Measurement scales

Purchase Intention:

The five items for purchase intention were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

1. I am willing to buy fashion products/brands promoted by social media influencers.
2. I prefer purchasing fashion products endorsed by social media influencers over other options.
3. I intend to purchase fashion products advertised by social media influencers in the future.
4. I frequently consider buying fashion products promoted by the influencers I follow.
5. I often recommend products or services promoted by the influencers I follow.

Trustworthiness of Influencers:

The five trustworthiness items were rated on the same 5-point Likert scale.

1. Most social media influencers are reliable.
2. Social media influencers are honest in their promotion.
3. Social media influencers are dependable.
4. Social media influencers demonstrate sincerity.
5. Social media influencers are credible.

Perceived Effectiveness:

Perceived effectiveness was measured with four items on a 5-point Likert scale.

1. I am able to achieve my objectives through social media.
2. Digital platforms are preferable for raising awareness.
3. Social media and digital channels are effective for promotional campaigns.
4. Digital and social platforms attract a significant number of consumers.

Social Advocacy:

Social advocacy was assessed using two items on a 5-point Likert scale.

1. Video audiences hold a favorable opinion of YouTube influencers.
2. Social media influencers attract a large following.

Sociocultural Perspective:

Four items measured sociocultural perspective on a 5-point Likert scale.

1. Understanding local cultural values is important.
2. I perceive issues from a local cultural perspective.
3. Local cultural norms support social media adoption.
4. Cultural values are reflected within social media platforms.

Results and Discussion

Data analysis was performed using Smart-PLS. The analysis followed a two-stage process: evaluating the measurement model first, then assessing the structural model. In the first stage, construct validity and reliability were assessed, followed by testing the proposed hypotheses using the PLS bootstrapping method.

Measurement model assessment

The measurement model evaluation checked the reliability and validity of all constructs using the PLS algorithm. Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) were calculated to confirm construct reliability and convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha above 0.70 indicates acceptable reliability, above 0.80 indicates good reliability, and

above 0.90 indicates excellent reliability [34]. CR values above 0.70 are considered acceptable, and AVE values exceeding 0.50 confirm sufficient convergent validity. **Table 1** presents the Cronbach's alpha, CR, and AVE values.

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha, CR, and AVE Values

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
PI	0.781	0.721	0.502
SA	0.701	0.712	0.539
PE	0.811	0.783	0.601
TRT	0.729	0.791	0.505
SC	0.711	0.771	0.508

Note: Purchase Intention (PI), Social Advocacy (SA), Perceived Effectiveness (PE), Trustworthiness (TRT), Socioculture (SC).

Table 1 presents the results of the measurement evaluation. The reliability and validity of all constructs were assessed using the PLS algorithm, examining Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). The results show that Cronbach's alpha for purchase intention is 0.781, for social advocacy it is 0.701, for perceived effectiveness it is 0.811, for trustworthiness it is 0.729, and for sociocultural perspective it is 0.711, all exceeding the recommended threshold. The CR values were 0.721 for purchase intention, 0.712 for social advocacy, 0.783 for perceived effectiveness, 0.791 for trustworthiness, and 0.711 for sociocultural perspective, confirming construct reliability. Similarly, AVE values were acceptable: 0.502 for purchase intention, 0.539 for social advocacy, 0.601 for perceived effectiveness, 0.505 for trustworthiness, and 0.508 for sociocultural perspective, fulfilling the required criteria. These results indicate that the constructs are both reliable and valid for proceeding to hypothesis testing.

Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity was evaluated by comparing the square root of AVE for each construct with its correlations with other constructs. The square root of AVE must exceed the inter-construct correlations. **Table 2** reports the discriminant validity following the Fornell & Larcker [35] criteria.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity and Criteria

Constructs	PI	SA	PE	TRT	SC
PI	0.650				
SA	0.521	0.612			
PE	0.411	0.383	0.711		
TRT	0.229	0.291	0.432	0.666	
SC	0.411	0.171	0.333	0.543	0.818

Note: Purchase Intention (PI), Social Advocacy (SA), Perceived Effectiveness (PE), Trustworthiness (TRT), Socioculture (SC).

As shown in **Table 2**, the square root of AVE for each construct is higher than its correlations with all other constructs, confirming discriminant validity.

Structural equation model

This stage evaluated the hypothesized relationships among study constructs, including three direct hypotheses and three moderating hypotheses. Bootstrapping in PLS was employed to test these relationships. **Table 3** shows the direct relationships.

Table 3. Direct Relationships

Hypothesis	Path	Beta (β)	t-Statistic	p-Value
H1	SA \rightarrow PI	0.151	2.053	0.004
H2	TRT \rightarrow PI	0.162	3.555	0.000
H3	PE \rightarrow PI	0.173	3.692	0.000

Note: Purchase Intention (PI), Social Advocacy (SA), Perceived Effectiveness (PE), Trustworthiness (TRT), Socioculture (SC).

The direct hypotheses were examined using β coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. A t-value above 1.96 and a p-value below 0.05 were considered significant [34].

- **H1 (Social Advocacy \rightarrow Purchase Intention):** $\beta = 0.151$, $t = 2.953$, $p = 0.004$. This indicates a significant effect, confirming that social advocacy positively influences purchase intention in the Saudi market.
- **H2 (Trustworthiness \rightarrow Purchase Intention):** $\beta = 0.162$, $t = 3.555$, $p = 0.000$. The relationship is significant, showing that the trustworthiness of marketing influencers positively affects consumer purchase intention.
- **H3 (Perceived Effectiveness \rightarrow Purchase Intention):** $\beta = 0.173$, $t = 3.692$, $p = 0.000$. This demonstrates a significant influence, indicating that the perceived effectiveness of marketing influencers positively shapes purchase intention.

Moderating relationships

The moderating effects of sociocultural perspective were also tested. **Table 4** presents these results.

Table 4. Moderating Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Moderating Path	Beta (β)	t-Statistic	p-Value
H4	SA \times SC \rightarrow PI	0.051	1.053	0.134
H5	TRT \times SC \rightarrow PI	0.122	2.535	0.003
H6	PE \times SC \rightarrow PI	0.073	1.991	0.004

Note: Purchase Intention (PI), Social Advocacy (SA), Perceived Effectiveness (PE), Trustworthiness (TRT), Socioculture (SC).

- **H4 (Sociocultural Perspective moderates SA \rightarrow PI):** $\beta = 0.051$, $t = 1.053$, $p = 0.134$. The moderation is not significant, suggesting that the sociocultural perspective does not alter the relationship between social advocacy and purchase intention. Cultural mismatch may limit the effectiveness of social advocacy on purchase intention.
- **H5 (Sociocultural Perspective moderates TRT \rightarrow PI):** $\beta = 0.122$, $t = 2.535$, $p = 0.003$. The moderation is significant, showing that the sociocultural perspective strengthens the influence of influencer trustworthiness on purchase intention in the Saudi market.
- **H6 (Sociocultural Perspective moderates PE \rightarrow PI):** $\beta = 0.073$, $t = 1.991$, $p = 0.004$. The relationship is significant, indicating that the sociocultural perspective enhances the effect of perceived effectiveness on purchase intention. The direct effect is also significant, confirming the key role of perceived effectiveness in shaping consumer behavior.

The analysis revealed that social advocacy has a positive effect on consumers' purchase intention. This indicates that social advocacy can shape consumer behavior, providing social media influencers with opportunities to reach a broad customer base, especially given the rapid growth of the internet and social media users. The examination of the relationship between social advocacy and purchase intention is relatively novel, with limited empirical studies addressing this link. Nevertheless, previous research has suggested that social advocacy impacts information credibility, which in turn affects audience attitudes toward videos and brand perception [14]. The findings of this study align with these observations, confirming that social advocacy plays a meaningful role in marketing-related outcomes.

Trustworthiness emerged as a critical factor in the context of social media marketing. This study specifically evaluated how influencer trustworthiness affects purchase intention. Earlier literature emphasizes that trustworthiness significantly shapes consumer attitudes and behavior. The current results support Lou & Yuan [21], demonstrating that lower trustworthiness corresponds to reduced purchase intention, whereas higher trustworthiness enhances consumers' intention to buy. The study reinforces prior evidence and highlights the importance of increasing trust through credible content on social media to positively influence consumer decisions.

This study also contributes to the literature by empirically examining the relationship between perceived effectiveness and purchase intention. Results indicate that perceived effectiveness of social media marketing has a significant positive impact on purchase intention. This is consistent with previous studies asserting that perceived effectiveness is a key driver of digital marketing success. Enhancing the perceived effectiveness of influencers—through credible, high-quality content—can improve marketing outcomes. In the Saudi pharmaceutical industry, for instance, perceived effectiveness has been identified as particularly influential in shaping consumer behavior [26]. Additionally, the study found that the sociocultural perspective plays a significant moderating role. Specifically, sociocultural factors moderate the relationship between social advocacy and purchase intention, as well as between perceived effectiveness and purchase intention. In contrast, no moderation effect was observed for the relationship between trustworthiness and purchase intention. This suggests that cultural factors may enhance or limit the impact of certain influencer marketing practices but may not significantly alter the effect of trustworthiness on consumers' purchase decisions.

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of marketing influencers on predicting consumers' purchase intention. Marketing influencers have emerged as key factors that shape consumer attitudes and behavior. The Saudi market has become increasingly technology-driven, with a large number of users relying on the internet and social media platforms for purchasing decisions. Social media influencers, therefore, have considerable potential to affect consumers' purchase intentions.

The study focused on social advocacy, trustworthiness, and perceived effectiveness as predictors of purchase intention, while also considering the moderating effect of sociocultural perspective. Findings revealed that social advocacy, trustworthiness, and perceived effectiveness all significantly influence purchase intention. Regarding moderation, the sociocultural perspective did not have a significant effect on the relationship between social advocacy and purchase intention. However, it did play a significant moderating role in the relationships between trustworthiness and purchase intention, and between perceived effectiveness and purchase intention. These results suggest that the social credibility and general acceptability of social media

influencers can shape consumer purchasing behavior. Trustworthy content produced by influencers strongly affects consumer perception, while perceived effectiveness becomes increasingly important as internet usage grows. The research highlights the need for further exploration of the different dimensions of social media influencers' effects on consumer behavior.

Social media has been widely acknowledged as a critical tool in contemporary business. Influencers represent a significant facet of the digital marketing landscape, particularly as digitalization accelerates and social media adoption expands. The study recommends utilizing influencers who are credible, trustworthy, and socially respected to enhance awareness and engagement across platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, websites, and other social channels. However, this strategy mainly targets active social media users. Since some consumers may avoid social media or have trust concerns, marketing approaches should balance efforts to reach both social media users and non-users.

Future research could focus on evaluating influencer content across various products or services, assessing both the strategies employed and their outcomes. Overall, the increasing adoption of technology and social media among consumers reflects the current market scenario, and influencers leverage these platforms to influence and shape consumer behavior effectively.

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