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# **DOCTORAL (PhD) DISSERTATION**

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**The Effect of Online Trust on the Relationship between Social Media  
Networks and Enhancing Brand Image.**

PhD. DISSERTATION

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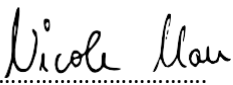
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## **Abstract**

### **The Effect of Online Trust on the Relationship between Social Media Networks and Enhancing Brand Image.**

With the growth of social media, many opportunities are now available for businesses to enhance their brand image by connecting with their prospective consumers. Social Media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram allow businesses to form connections on a deeper, more profound level, which could further increase the consumer's trust in the organization's brand. Social Media as the main connection tool has become more and more common in the past years. Marketers are trying to utilize more social media platforms for their organizations by implementing new social initiatives, exploring new platforms, and maintaining their already established ones. Currently, it has become hard to find any business with no social media presence.

There is literature focusing on the relationship between social media and enhancing a brand's image, which is apparent with the number of businesses using social media; to communicate with their consumer and making it a large part of their brand-building strategy. However, there was a lack of literature that discussed how the customer trust variable affects the relationship between social media and enhancing a brand's image. The present study seeks to support the discussion and argument about social media networks and enhance brand image. And the contribution to the obtainable literature comes from exploring the relationship between social media networks and enhancing brand image

For this study, secondary data was collected by reviewing the literature and previous studies related to social media networks, brand image enhancement, and online trust. The researcher gathered, examined, summarized, and compared data, theories, models, and results from different data sources such as texts, books, articles, managerial journals, electronic sources, and published reports. Primary data was gathered through a questionnaire and multiple interviews conducted with businesses of different sizes and from different industries. Using a mixed method matches with the pragmatism philosophy, descriptive-explanatory purpose, quantitative technique, qualitative technique, both interviews and survey approach to collect primary data.

The sample of the study must accurately represent the population for generalization. Accordingly, the sample size is influenced by: the degree of heterogeneity in the population, desired precision, and the number of subgroups of interest. The questionnaire was distributed to 859 Jordanian participants online, as this study was applied to the social media users in

Jordan. Furthermore, the interviews conducted were with 8 businesses from 4 different industries and from 2 different sizes.

The findings of the study supported the discussion and argument about social media networks and enhancing brand image. Moreover, the results showed that customer trust significantly impacted the relationship between social media and strengthening a brand's image.

Furthermore, the research focused on Jordan and the social media demographics in Jordan and compared the perception of social media in different demographics according to gender, age, and educational level, finally the study compared between the use of social media in small and large businesses of the same industry. The perception of social media had no significant difference among respondents according to gender and academic status. However, the age variable caused a significant difference in perception.

## **1 Introduction**

According to Floridi (2009), the Internet may be considered one of the great scientific revolutions; Floridi believes that the Internet is among the four greatest scientific revolutions in history, and his opinion on the matter still holds to this day.

The Internet began as a tool for sending and receiving messages. However, it experienced rapid growth, changing it to become essential in most people's everyday lives.

The Internet was the key to many current disruptive innovations, such as emails, online video streaming similar to Netflix, online gaming, and social media.

The Internet has become such a pivotal part of our life in the past decade; people could use the Internet in most parts of their activities of daily living, from ordering goods online, working, communicating, and entertainment.

Moreover, in the past year, this usage has increased drastically due to COVID-19 restrictions. Governments and organizations asked people to stay at home, causing most companies to urge their workers to work from home. During curfew hours, people usually communicate with friends and family using social media, which helped many social media platforms to increase their user base.

### **1.1 Social Media**

Zarrella (2010) describes social media as a website or application that allows users to share their thoughts and ideas with others or find people with the same interests. Many considered it a fad in the beginnings of social media, and the buzz surrounding it will soon wear off.

However, many social media websites have been around for over fifteen years and are still growing rapidly, such as Facebook and Twitter. Social media platforms were developed in the early stages to help users connect with friends, family and even meet new people online; while disregarding the concept of geographical boundaries. Macroview was the first company to come up with social networking sites in 1997. After many companies saw the concept of Six Degrees, many other social networking sites came along, most noted sites: HighFive, Myspace, and later on Facebook.

With this rapid growth in social media platforms, businesses took note and began using them in their marketing strategies, which revolutionized how most organizations did their marketing.

The wide dynamic audience is why most marketing campaigns these days are centered on social media marketing. As our representation on social media becomes more imperative than they were a decade ago, so does the representation of the businesses. In order to remain

competitive in the market, firms should carefully choose their representatives on diverse social platforms, have a solid association with their customers, and make the services they provide user-friendly and consistent with the consumers.

Nowadays, social media networks have become a line of research attracting much interest, and organizations should be aware of the importance of social media networks; because of the crucial role of social media networks in adding more value for their brand's image, it becomes one of the important topics of the business and management.

This study will focus on three social media platforms, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram; these are the most popular social media platforms currently in Jordan, and attempt to understand their effects on enhancing a brand's image and how customer trust can affect that relationship.

For this research, the researcher gathered primary from a questionnaire distributed online and through interviews with businesses from different industries and secondary data gathered from the available literature; both resources are important for the study to achieve its aim and answer its questions.

Brand image has become the main reason for organizational sustainability; many believe that enhancing a brand's image is the stepping stone to success.

In any organization, enhancing the brand's image is critical to gaining advantage and is considered one of the most important assets. In addition, many factors increase the importance of the brand image within the organizations, such as growing globalization. Thus, organizations worldwide are trying to gain a competitive advantage and improve their market share by using social media to improve their brands' image.

There are many “brand building models” that organizations use nowadays, the research will attempt to cover some of these brand building models in the literature, and attempt get a better understanding of the usage of these brand building models in the Jordanian market.

The third variable discusses is customer trust, the relationship between enhancing a brand's image and social media is documented. However, the effect of customer trust on that relationship in the Jordanian market is what this research will be attempting.



### **1.1.2 Research Importance**

Nowadays, social media networks have become a line of research attracting much interest; organizations must be aware of the importance of social media networks. Because of the crucial role of social media networks in adding more value for brand image in the firm, it has become one of the important topics of business management. Brand image has become the main reason for organizational sustainability. The brand image is the stepping stone to success. In any organization, efficient brand image is a critical issue to gain advantage and is considered one of the most important assets. Many factors increase the importance of the brand image within the organizations, such as growing globalization. Organizations worldwide are trying to gain a competitive advantage and improve their market share by acquiring an image and using it. The present study seeks to support the discussion and argument about social media networks and enhance brand image. And the contribution to the obtainable literature comes from exploring the relationship between social media networks and enhancing brand image.

### **1.1.3 Research Objectives**

Nowadays, as the world lives under globalization and intense competition with rapid variations, organizations need social media networks. To operate under complete integration through using ICT, CRM to enhance brand image, get customer satisfaction, and improve organizational performance. This dissertation aims to provide and test the effects online trust has on the relationship between social media networks and enhancing brand image. In order to achieve this purpose, some objectives were detailed as follows:

1. To measure the impact of social media networks (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) on enhancing brand image.
2. Investigate the moderating effect of online trust on the relationship between social media networks and enhancing brand image.
3. To attempt to get a better understanding of the demographics of social media users in Jordan.

### 1.1.4 Conceptual Illustration

Based on the study problem and after doing a literature review about social media networks and brand image, it found that the most important social media networks and most spread among users are these mentioned in the model.

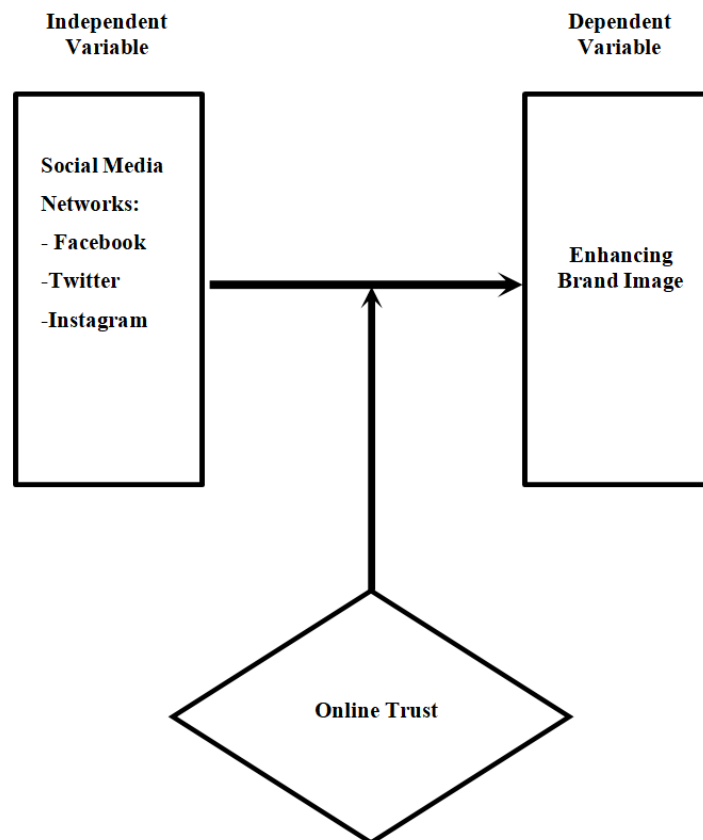


Figure (1): Conceptual illustration  
Source: Own

### 1.1.5 Research Hypotheses

Based upon the literature review and the conceptual illustration provided in Figure(1), the researcher has proposed the following hypothesis:

**H01:** There is no impact of social media networks (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) on enhancing brand image at a level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

Three sub-hypotheses were formulated in this research:

**H01-1:** There is no impact of Facebook on enhancing brand image at level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

**H01-2:** There is no impact of Twitter on enhancing brand image at level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

**H01-3:** There is no impact of Instagram on enhancing brand image at a level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

**H02:** There is no significant moderate impact of online trust on the relationship between social media networks and enhancing brand image at a level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

**H03:** Higher levels of perceptions of Social Media Networks will be associated with higher levels of Enhancing Brand Image.

**H04:** There is no significant difference in perceptions of social media networks among respondents' groups according to demographic variables (gender, education, and age) at level ( $\leq 0.05$ ).

This H04 hypothesis included three sub hypotheses:

**H04-1:** There is a significant difference in perceptions of social media networks according to gender.

**H04-2:** There is a significant difference in perceptions of social media networks according to educational level.

**H04-3:** There is a significant difference in perceptions of social media networks according to age.

The study will take a better look at social media and its use as a marketing tool by defining the variables that should be focused on when using each platform as a marketing tool.

The research will focus on three main social media platforms:

Facebook: one of the largest social media platforms worldwide, and was chosen as one of the main focuses of this research due to it having the biggest user penetration in Jordan.

Twitter: despite not having as many users in Jordan as Facebook, Twitter holds the second largest number of social media users in Jordan and has a large following in neighboring countries, providing opportunities for many businesses in Jordan.

Instagram: Instagram is currently on the rise in Jordan and is a growing platform, especially among younger users. Furthermore, Instagram is home to the largest number of Influencers among all social media platforms and provides businesses with the opportunity of using "Influencer Marketing" as part of their marketing strategy, which the study will discuss at length in later chapters.

Large platforms such as TikTok and Snapchat were taken into consideration when writing the study, but due to them having a smaller user base, and that TikTok; although one of the fastest growing social media platforms, is still in its embryonic phase in Jordan, the study decided to focus on the main three platforms mentioned above.

The study will detail Influencers and Influencer Marketing and will attempt to give a better understanding of how businesses can benefit from using Influencer Marketing in their marketing strategy.

Moreover, the research will explore the concept of "Branding" and "Branding models" and how social media can enhance a brand's image.

Furthermore, it will showcase how social media can enhance a brand's image and take a better look at the concept of online trust and how it affects that relationship.

## **2 The Importance of Social Media**

In the following chapters, the research will go through the literature, attempting to provide the reader with a better understanding of how the Internet and social media changed the world and how the current study's variables have evolved and changed due to the rise of the social media.

Many study variables, such as customer trust and branding, have changed with the Internet and social media introduction. This chapter will discuss how these variables have changed and will attempt to give the reader a better understanding of how businesses could benefit from these variables by using social media.

### **2.1 Social Media**

In this chapter, the study will take a better look at one of the main variables of the study, which is social media and social media marketing, how it began, how it affected us in the more recent years, and its application in marketing. Furthermore, the study will attempt to give a better understanding of this variable, its application, and the three main platforms this study will cover.

Kaplan's (2010) definition of social media; some may consider one of the older and most popular definitions of social media, is a class of websites and applications that have the same ideology and the same technological foundations of Web 2.0, which are focused on allowing users to create and share their web-based content with other users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). There are many current social media platforms. However, they have been all identified as web-based services and applications that allow most users to create public or semi-public accounts and profiles to communicate with other users and profiles, which whom they share a connection with; and allowing them to view the connections other users have made on the platform (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Nowadays, there are many social media platforms that content creators can choose from and share different types of content on. For example, web pages, video-sharing websites, camera videos, video game streaming sites, micro-blogging sites, applications, photograph-sharing websites and applications, and even online forums (Yazdanparast et al., 2016). These websites and applications allow users to share their content, no matter the type and allows them to get feedback from their followers and interact with them, opening up many opportunities for content creators to collaborate and share their content (Yazdanparast et al., 2016).

Furthermore, social media websites and applications allow users to communicate and share information using their computers or mobile phones; the content shared could be their ideas,

pictures, or videos. In addition, the content shared can be interacted with by the user's friends and/or followers; the interaction could be in the form of likes, follows, up-votes, sending messages, tagging a person in a picture or a status, or even rating a product or service (Hansia, 2008).

### **2.1.1 The Beginnings of Social Media**

In this chapter, the study will explore the beginnings of social media, taking a better look at the role of the Internet in communication, and a further look at how this communication evolved through social media.

The Internet's growth over the past two decades has been exponential, people use the Internet in their day-to-day life in every aspect, from work to fill their free time, whether it is watching videos on YouTube or to check your social media feed, the world is currently online (Tuten, 2020).

The Internet phenomena was not in any way planned or foretold. Conversely, the Internet was created to be a static system designed to send and receive small amounts of bytes through one terminal and out through another. Furthermore, the data sent was primarily designed to be small and not read by users, except for the expert coders sending and receiving them (Johnson & Kaye, 2004).

However, in the past twenty years, the Internet has branched into something much larger than anyone expected, the availability of the Internet can govern some people's day-to-day activities. From ordering food, watching movies, playing video games, and even doing their weekly shopping, all that and more can be done online now via the Internet (Dentzel, 2014). The Internet has changed the lives of adults and has changed the lives of children as well. A study conducted by Livingstone S. & Bober M (2004) targeted children from 9 till 19 years old. It has shown that even with the current growth of means of communication such as SMS services and cell phone carriers, children still prefer to communicate via the Internet, whether through online communication applications such as Skype, email, or social media platforms. Livingstone and Bober's (2004) study show that 72% of children communicate online. This number has only grown with the increase in social media popularity; whether it is through email, instant messaging, or through social media platforms, this might be due to Internet-based communication only requiring a stable connection to the Internet, whether through WiFi or data from the cell phone carrier making it free. On the other hand, offline communication mediums still cost money.

Many consider the Internet a disruptive innovation when it comes to communication; the Internet has in many countries made Fax machines obsolete, the communication using the Internet can also be used for customer service purposes; it covers B2B, B2C, and internally (Bulearca & Bulearca, 2020).

As seen in figure (2), according to (Statista 2022), there are currently over 4.66 billion internet users worldwide and 4.2 billion social media users:

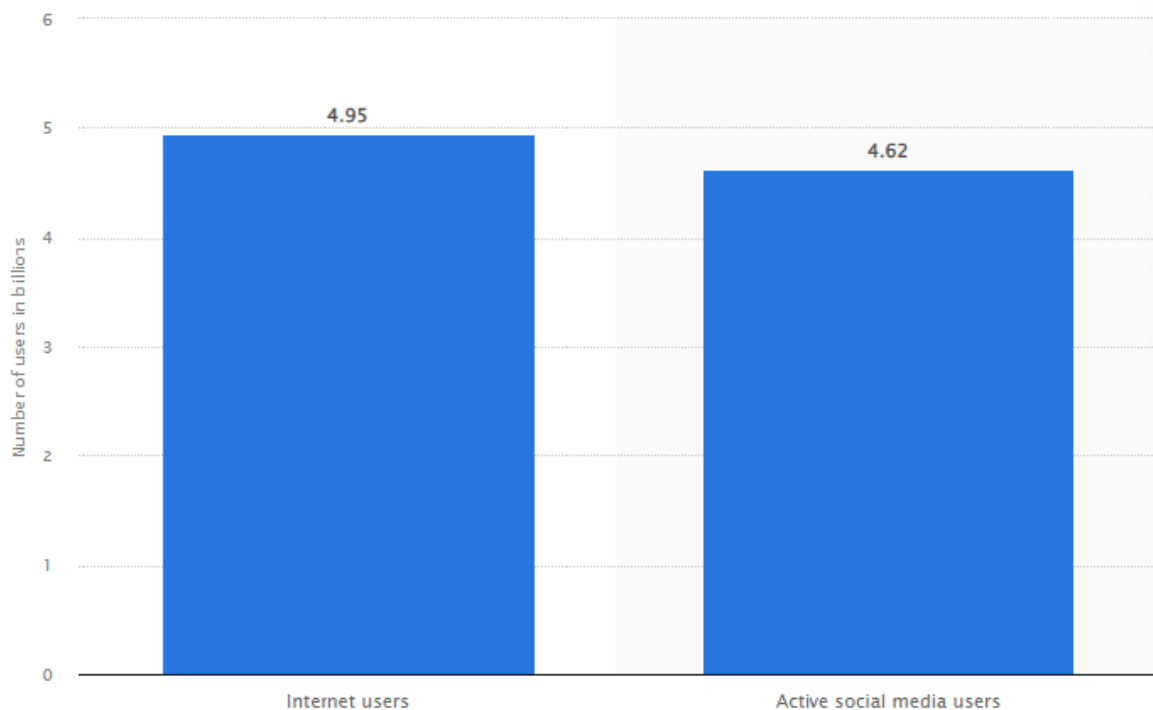


Figure (2): Number of internet and social media users worldwide  
Statista (2022)

This growth in the number of users can be accredited to the current availability of the Internet, the Internet can be accessed using phones anywhere, and in developed countries, free WiFi is available in most public areas for people to access at any time, allowing users to communicate and call other users from anywhere that has a WiFi connection. Currently, the highest internet penetration is in Northern Europe, with up to 96% penetration (Statista, 2021).

With the growth of the Internet and the change produced in the way individuals communicate, communication mediums further evolved through social media.

### **2.1.2 Communication Using Social Media**

In the previous chapters, the study discussed how the Internet changed communication channels. The communication channels provided by the Internet kept growing and evolving. Although in the past decade, one of the main communication applications on the Internet were social media platforms, social media users communicate via multiple applications and channels that enabled them to communicate either in text form, voice calls, video calls, or even through emojis (Nouwens et al., 2017).

Communication was not limited to individual internet users but concerned large businesses and corporations as well. In a study done by Leonardi et al. (2013), the data from the study showed that there are two main ways that social media was used for communication by enterprises for business purposes:

The first way, which is the most common way, is to communicate with external entities; many businesses could use social media to contact and communicate with their customers, vendors, and retailers, and the online community following them on social media platforms.

The second and less common way is internal communication; many large organizations usually have communication software for security reasons. However, it is not unheard of for a large organization to be using online social media platforms as a form of internal communication within the company (Zoonen & Rice,2017).

There are many types of interactions that users and organizations could have on social media. The example talked about the above-discussed interactions between users and was considered consumer-to-consumer interactions (C2C); consumers could share information about products and services they have used. Businesses began to take note and started using these websites to interact with their consumers, making these interactions business-to-consumer interactions (B2C). When consumers rate a product or service, share their experience with a product or service, or provide any type of feedback to the company, it is considered a consumer-to-business interaction (C2B) (Tuten,2020).

Social media provides a great communication channel with a business's consumers, which leads many businesses to use it for marketing their products and services and enhancing their brand's image (Tuten, 2020).

In the past decade, the use of social networking sites by business became an important part of most businesses' marketing and brand enhancement strategies; a study done by Busby et al. (2010) showed that in 2010 almost 94% of marketing managers believed that social media would be used as the main online presence tool by most businesses, and they were right. Two-



thirds of internet users worldwide use social media now, and more than 90% of businesses now use LinkedIn as their primary recruiting tool (Tuten, 2020).

The following chapter will further look into how social media aided during the COVID-19 pandemic and discuss how it assisted users by giving them a sense of normality during this hard time.

### **2.1.3 Social Media in the Pandemic (2020)**

There are multiple ways businesses could have used social media during the pandemic, the study will attempt to ask multiple businesses about how they used social media during that period and attempt to give a better understanding on how smaller and large businesses differed in their social media use during that period.

When the study was written, the COVID-19 crisis struck the world, changing everyone's lives in one way or another. In this chapter, the study will look at the effects of this crisis and how social media assisted in solving many of the problems that arose; by allowing people to keep communicating with each other.

Almost a third of the world is currently undergoing a lockdown; curfews and restrictions are causing organizations to shift their workers from working at the office to working from home. Furthermore, with the vaccine not being available for everyone in many countries, the world health organization is currently suggesting that most employees isolate themselves and stay safe by staying and working from home, which changed the way most workers communicated from "face-to-face" communication to an online format (Dubey & Tripathi, 2020).

Due to these health threats around the world, most companies are currently having to use remote working. Most meetings now are being held online; overnight, all communication between businesses and their employees became online (Dubey & Tripathi, 2020).

The restrictions left many lacking a source for information in the pandemic, information that was once gathered through friends, family, and at work, were now gathered using other means (Saud et al., 2020).

Social media in provided its users with a means to gather and communicate in this time of crisis, users would form communities where they were allowed to share information, ideas, news, images, and other types of content, allowing users to find an alternative source of information (Ochonogor & Mutula, 2020).

The current COVID-19 crisis has not only affected workers and companies but has disrupted the lives of students as well; in many different ways, many governments have now restricted all educational institutions from face-to-face teaching, causing all students to switch from

studying in a classroom with their colleagues to online and virtual education overnight (Daniel, 2020).

Online learning was not a very popular way of teaching before the COVID-19 restrictions; most institutions relied heavily on face-to-face interactions, which caused this overnight shift to impact these institutions heavily (Utomo, 2021). Research shows that primary school students have been having the hardest time coping with communicating online due to them requiring more assistance in their learning, thus adding more stress not only for the students but sometimes for the parents (Ratna et al., 2020). This stress caused many to suffer from isolation and anxiety (Wiederhold, 2020).

Accordingly, the American Psychological Association recommended that parents assist themselves and their children by creating a sense of normalcy and maintaining communication through social media networks to alleviate stress and anxiety. Moreover, people were encouraged to share useful information with their friends and family, which is supposed to help deal with their anxiety. Studies have shown that offering support to another is psychologically beneficial to both parties (Wiederhold,2020).

This growth in the number of users on social media platforms both in the pandemic and prior years led businesses to notice. As a result, marketers now use social media to communicate with their consumers and are part of most businesses' online strategies. Furthermore, some the study will attempt to gauge from different businesses in Jordan if online trust during the Covid-19 lockdown played a role in the relationship between social media platforms and your company's brand image?

## **2.2 Social Media Marketing**

In this chapter the study will discuss one of the main uses of social media for businesses; which is social media marketing. Communicating with an organization's consumers opened many businesses' doors to maintain a relationship with their followers and reach new ones. The following chapter will discuss how marketers made use of this communication channel. After defining social media and discussing communication through social media, this chapter will discuss how organizations can use it in their marketing strategy. Social media marketing can be defined as using social media platforms to promote a company's products or services. Moreover, this type of marketing has become much more effective with the analytic application provided by these platforms, allowing businesses to measure the traffic their marketing is producing, thus allowing businesses to measure the success of their marketing campaigns (Appel et al, 2020).

In the next two sub-chapters, the study will attempt to find the advantages and disadvantages of using social media marketing and provide a better understanding of what businesses should keep in mind when adopting social media marketing into their marketing strategy.

### **2.2.1 Advantages of Social Media Marketing**

There are many advantages to using social media for marketing; this chapter will mention some of these advantages and give a better understanding of why using these platforms could be a benefit for businesses:

**Social interactions:** social media allows users to have many online social interactions by joining a community to get information or share their own experiences. Studies have shown that these social interactions could directly influence a buyer's decision-making, which is a great asset many companies can use for their advantage (Hafele, 2010).

**Interactivity:** social media allows users to interact with other users and the organizations and brands they are following. Consumers can participate in social networking by acts such as commenting, liking, and sharing posts. These acts empower the consumer by providing a two-way communication medium (Sreejesh et al., 2020).

**Targeted advertisement:** organizations can target the audience their advertisements reach based on the consumers' interest. For example: if a user has video games as one of their interests on a social media platform, they are highly likely to attract advertisements for new games, video gaming streams, or even major events that are video game-related (Hill et al., 2006).

**Customer service:** social media allows many businesses to get feedback from their consumers and attempt to fix any issues they may have with the product or service; due to communication being two-ways on social media. Furthermore, a link to a business's "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQ) can help many consumers in solving their problems (Xu et al., 2017).

**Word of Mouth (WOM):** one of the most important social media advantages is spreading word of mouth; social media effectively spreads information about their brand, products, or services. Social media enabled users to obtain information through friends and followers online. WOM and what motivates these users to share the information will be discussed in the upcoming chapters.

Although social media provides so many advantages, as with everything, it has its disadvantages as well.

### **2.2.2 Disadvantages of Social Media Marketing**

In this chapter, the study will mention some of the disadvantages that businesses should keep in mind if they are thinking of using social media marketing as part of their marketing strategy:

**Time-consuming:** although social media provides a business with consumers interaction and live feedback. Maintaining this two-way exchange is exceptionally time-consuming.

Maintaining and growing these online relationships with an organization's followers requires a great deal of focus by the organization. The individual(s) maintaining an organization's social media presence should monitor all social media platforms by replying to comments, answering consumer's queries, and providing content for the users (Barefoot & Szabo, 2010).

**Copyright issues:** many third parties could abuse a company's trademark and copyrights, which forces businesses to try and protect their brand's image by constantly checking for online profiles that could be identical to their brand and name (Steinman, Hawkins, 2010).

**Trust and security issues:** Most online applications that can hold a consumer's personal information can result in the sense of fear over the consumer's data security, making gaining a consumer's trust a harder task than in offline marketing. Online Trust will be discussed in a later chapter (Issock Issock et al., 2020).

**Negative feedback:** social media provides consumers with the means to provide feedback to a business and a great tool to spread (WOM). However, this includes positive and negative feedback; this issue is especially damaging to marketing campaigns, allowing unsatisfied customers or competitors to share disparaging posts about the business.

The next chapter will discuss one of the main advantages of social media marketing at length, which is word-of-mouth.

### **2.2.3 Social Media and WOM**

As discussed in previous chapters, WOM is one of the main advantages of using social media marketing, and this chapter will further discuss this advantage and attempts to explain what motivates consumers to spread WOM on social media platforms, which this study considers one of the main advantages of using social media marketing.

In the mid-twentieth century, the rise of globalization began, with the creation of organizations such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), Trade between countries became much easier, and trade was not limited to goods and services, but also information (İncekara & Savrul, 2012).

With the growth of the internet, information sharing became easier and easier, increasing the effectiveness of word of mouth (WOM), which brought up two fields of research. Firstly being WOM marketing, and secondly being customer brand relationships (Park & Lee, 2009). WOM is not a new concept. According to Arndt (1967), WOM is consumers sharing their experience with a brand's product or service, whether negative or positive, orally or in writing. Where the receiver of this message has the perception that the sender has no commercial gain, its application in social media comes within a community.

However, with the growth of the internet and social media platforms, the concept defined by Arndt (1976) had evolved, WOM had transformed to "Electronic-Word-of-Mouth" (eWOM), and consumer can now post their experiences with a certain brand online, allowing other users to obtain information about a brand or product from friends, family, or community members online.

Many marketers devised different models to help further understand the effects of WOM on consumers. A study conducted by Rajkovic et al. (2020) believes there to be three models that detail the effects of WOM on consumer behavior:

- The oldest model is the simplest one, called the Inter-consumer Influence Model, which is the traditional way of spreading WOM, and it happens with no direct encouragement or intervention from the companies (Kozinets et al., 2010).
- The Second model is called the Linear Marketer Influence Model, and it utilizes the spreading of WOM through the usage of an influential figure in the community and is now called influencer marketing. In this model, the companies actually encourage or sponsor the influencer, unlike the first model. The advantage of this model is that consumers will be repeatedly exposed to positive branded messaging over a long period of time by brand advocates who have online credibility (Google Trends, 2021).
- The third model is The Network Co-production Model and was developed after the rise of Web 2.0, which allows users to share content and quickly interact and share opinions; this model is based on companies participating in this sharing process. Companies provide users with social media pages founded by the companies, which represent a way for them to participate in an online environment in a more controlled manner (Rajkovic et al., 2020).

One of social media marketing's greatest advantages is spreading EWOM. In the next chapter, the study will attempt to gain a better understanding of what motivates these consumers to spread this information online.

On the other hand, research also shows that negative WOM communication affects consumers brand perception, studies have showed that using attributing theory, negative WOM could be attributed to the brand, however for some strong brands with strong brand names, the attribution could negatively impact the communicator instead of the brand (Laczniak et al., 2001).

### **2.1.3.1 WOM Motivators**

Henning-Thurau et al. (2004) created a framework to determine what motivated consumers to spread WOM; and further explored it in his book Entertainment Science (Henning-Thurau & Houston, 2019), and had categorized them into five different types of motivation:

- Focus related utility, which is the need of consumers to contribute towards the community as a whole; it comes from the assumption that each individual should add value to the community, and in online platforms, it can take the form of adding reviews and feedback about products for other community members' interest.
- Consumption utility: refers to when a consumer finds value in another community member's experiences. In the online platform format, it is when a user reads comments or reviews on a product or service done by other users; and finds them helpful, which motivates that user to add their own experience to help others benefit; as he/she benefited previously.
- Approval Utility: refers to when the community benefits from a user's experience and praises them for their contribution. In an online format, this comes in two forms: Firstly, informal approval feedback, which is when either the community users praise the reviewer with either comments or directly messaging them. Secondly, formal feedback and is usually from the site moderators, where reviewers get ranking for their reviews and feedback—motivating the user to give more reviews for praise.
- Moderator-related utility refers to when a third party assists the consumers by relaying their complaints to the company providing the product or service. In an online format, it is when the platform staff moderate the consumers' reviews and relay the complaints to the company providing the product.
- Homeostase utility: this utility is based on the “Balance Theory,” which assumes that an individual strives to keep a balanced state, and when that balance state is skewed in either a positive or negative way, an individual will strive to restore the equilibrium. In an online format, this refers to when a consumer buys a product or service and is impacted majorly by that product or service; in either a positive or negative way, which motivates

them to leave feedback positively or negatively to spread word of mouth about said product or service (Henning-Thurau & Houston., 2019).

Another explanation for the motivation behind WOM by consumers could be explained using psychological ownership theory.

### **2.1.3.2 Psychological Ownership Theory**

One of the other theories in regards to spreading WOM is psychological ownership, understanding the motivators of WOM can help give a better understanding of one of the most important advantages of social media marketing. Applying ownership theory helps clear why users could be enthusiastic when offering word-of-mouth feedback. This could be due to consumers having formed a connection with businesses online; in other words, some users even use terms such as “Our,” “my,” and “mine” when reviewing products of a business they are loyal to (Kumar & Nayak, 2019).

Researchers have defined brand psychological ownership as a mental state where some consumers or brand followers consider a specific brand as a whole or a part of it as theirs.

Some individuals, in many cases, can form a sense of ownership for tangible and intangible items. This sense of ownership could be towards a car, brand, country, or destination.

Possessions constitute the extended self of the customers and play a crucial role in their lives (Dittmar, 1992), and in this pursuit, people keep developing a sense of ownership towards the target of possessions. This is because the objects of possessions tend to satisfy the motives behind the emergence of a state of IPO (Pierce & Jussila, 2009).

According to Lee & Suh (2015), an enhanced sense of ownership by consumers in an online brand community could result in the sense of satisfaction for its members, an enchantment in self-concept, and a positive behavioral contribution towards the rest of the online community.

This satisfaction causes the community members to be more willing to participate in community activities (Casalo et al., 2013). Less and Suh (2015) also argue that brand psychological ownership could result in an increase in its members’ self-esteem or self-enhancement.

These arguments have led researchers to believe that even when there are passive members of an online community, this sense of ownership causes them to be more open to contributing to the community as a whole due to the fulfillment of needs for personal integration and self-enhancement (Kumar J., Nayak J., 2019).

When considering word-of-mouth, the number of users on the platform is always an important factor to have in mind when choosing the platform most suitable for the organization. The

following figure (3) illustrates the social media platforms with the highest number of users worldwide in millions:

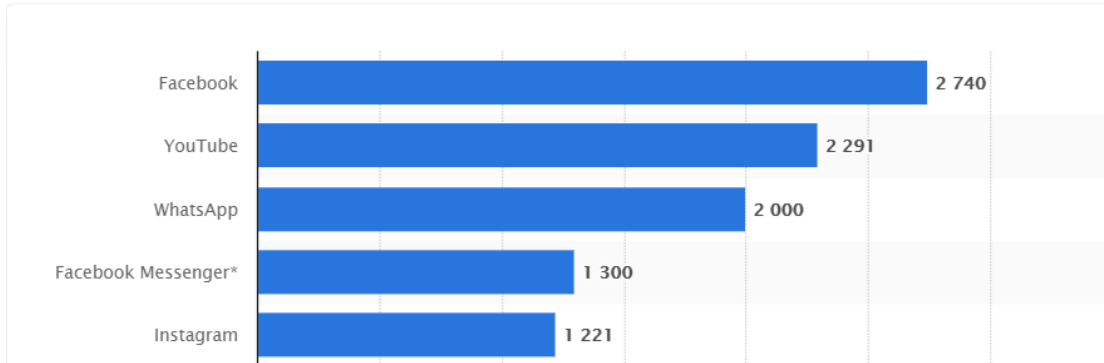


Figure (3): Number of users on the top social media platforms  
Statista (2021)

However, the number of users is not the only criteria an organization has to take into consideration when choosing a platform for their online strategy; other platforms have different inducements that could appeal to businesses as well.

In the next chapter, the study will attempt to discuss some social media platforms and how businesses can use them in their online strategy. There are many social media platforms available to share different types of content (Tuten T., 2020).

The following table showcases of different social media platforms with general information about them and their user base, and some of the opportunity's businesses can benefit while using them:



Platform	Description	Number of users	Largest opportunities	Extra information
Facebook	Social sharing site with over 1.8 billion mobile users.	2.7 billion active users.	Communicating with consumers in a non-obstructive way.	Users share over 4.75 billion pieces of content per day.
Twitter	Micro-blogging social site that limits each post to 280 characters.	353 million active users.	Largest penetration in the United States, however, steadily growing elsewhere.	7500 Tweets happen every second.
Instagram	Social Sharing site that focuses on pictures and now gives the ability to share 60-second videos.	1.2 billion users.	Many brands now post pictures and add Hashtags, and usually post pictures that consumers can relate to.	The most followed company on social media is currently Nike. And the most followed celebrity is Cristiano Ronaldo.
Snapchat	Social sharing application built around pictures videos and filters.	498 million users.	Brands are participating by sharing behind-the-scenes content.	The site hosts over 9000 images per second and 158 active daily users.
LinkedIn	Business-oriented social networking site.	706 million users.	Brands are mostly corporate brands providing their associates a place to connect and network.	79% of the users are over the age of 35.

Table (1): Information about some social media platforms  
(Tuten T., 2020)

Nowadays, marketing on social media sites is not limited to advertisements but is now done by sponsoring individuals with a large following for them to endorse your product, this form of marketing is called Influencer marketing. And will be discussed in the next chapters.

#### 2.2.4 Influencers

One of the newer forms of marketing on social media platforms, is influencer marketing, in this chapter the study will discuss this form of marketing and the influencers that profit from it, and will attempt to showcase how influencer marketing was always around but was not as easily accessible as it is now through social media.

Social media platforms have now over 3.6 billion users worldwide, according to Statista (2021), and the number of users is only expected to grow in upcoming years; with this increase in the number of users across all platforms, users are currently consuming content at a never before pace, which gave many content creators a large number of followers, such content creators are now called “influencers” or “leaders of opinion.”

In a study conducted by Fredberg et al. (2011), influencers were defined as a new type of independent third-party individual or group that organizations can use as an endorser to a

product or service. The influencer usually has a large following due to the audience enjoying their content, whether it's blogs, tweets, videos, or live streaming on a specific platform. Influencers are usually also social media users that gained benefit from being on social networks with a large following, and the benefits are either tangible, such as money, or intangible, such as fame.

Although social media influencers are considered a new concept, the concept of influence is not, researchers have been trying to analyze this concept for a very long time and have not been able to measure it; since influence is intangible (Jahnke et al., 2018).

However, marketers have been using the phenomena of influence and celebrity for many years before the boom of the internet. There are many examples of celebrities used for their influence; for example, Marilyn Monroe was used in an advertisement campaign for Westmore cosmetics in 1952, Michael Jordan is one of the biggest basketball superstars of all time, and with his Nike sponsorship and advertisements, he managed to make Nike one of the leading sports apparel companies in the '90s. (Jahnke et al. 2018).

Many social media users who follow influencers on any social media platform could consider these influencers are role models, which makes many organizations consider them as high business value assets.

In many cases, these influencers are experts in a certain specific field, making their followers interested in that field as well. Today, you can find influencers in almost any field: sports, parenting, musicians, painters, even professional video gamers. Unlike celebrities, influencers could not have a very broad demographic of followers, and on the contrary, they could have a niche number of loyal followers that a company could attempt to target (Geppert et al., 2016).

For example, PewDiePie is one of the biggest YouTubers in the world, with 109,561,457 subscribers; which is the 2nd highest number of subscribers on the entire site, however, you could ask many people who have no interest in gaming, and they would not know who he is (YouTube 2021).

As mentioned previously, being an influencer does not require a user to be a celebrity. However, it requires them to have content; whether it blog posts, videos, photos, or even a streaming channel, which is the reason behind naming them "content creators, and also unlike celebrities, the followers view this content for the influencer's take and experience with a brand; where celebrities are just using their fame to deliver the brand's message, which in many cases makes influencers more relatable to the viewers (Geppert et al., 2016).

The loyalty these followers have for the influencers they are following is usually developed by constant day-to-day “communication” between them, influencers share their content, and the followers usually comment, react, and share the posts. Thus, in order to build trust with the followers, influencers have to create content on almost a daily basis, making it a full-time job. The content created is then reacted to by the followers, making them a constant part of the community (Stanwick & Stanwick, 2019).

The influencer marketing industry is growing rapidly, and unlike previously when you could only measure an influencer through the number of followers, which could have been fake accounts, now marketers are able to use programs and platforms such as Google Analytics, Leadfeeder, Foxmetrics, and many others. Allowing businesses to check their ROI (Return on investment); performance measure used to evaluate the efficiency or profitability of an investment or compare the efficiency of a number of different investments, website traffic, currently as a platform inside the Google Marketing Platform brand ("Analytics Tools & Solutions for Your Business - Google Analytics," 2021).

### **2.2.5 Influencer Marketing**

In this chapter, the research will attempt to define influencer marketing and provide an understanding of how businesses can use Influencers to market their products.

” Influencer marketing” can be defined as a form of marketing in which the focus is placed on specific key individuals rather than the target market as a whole. Influencer marketing on social media opens up a new channel for businesses to connect with consumers more directly, to be more understandable and closer to their audience, and to form a good image of their product. (Glucksman, 2017).

The dissemination of innovations communication theory:

The theory states that a minority of users, called “influentials,” have exceptional capacities in influencing others. (Rogers E., 1962) The given theory predicts that by focusing on these influentials within the network, one may accomplish a huge chain response of impact driven by word-of-mouth with the least marketing costs (Hepp 2018).

There are many types of influencer collaborations. However, the main types are supported content, brand ambassador programs, and affiliate marketing, and the next paragraphs will attempt to summarize and clarify the differences between each of them:

- Supported Content: In many cases, when marketers decide to use influencer marketing, the customer concludes that the interest of the influencer is more commercial than true; it might have a negative impact on the advertisement and would not benefit the

sponsoring company. (Speed & Thompson, 2000). Furthermore, in spite of the fact that the popularity of the sponsored content on Instagram and other social media networks has been developing, the customers are not continuously joyed with the associations of the influencers with some of the brands online due to the lack of validity in paid collaborations. When viewing some of the comments on SMIs' channels, the comments regularly uncover disappointment and outrage from doubtful followers toward sponsored brand content (Uzunoğlu E., Kip S., 2014).

- Brand Ambassador: is someone who is enthusiastic about an organization or its brand and participates in activities, frequently on social media, that give brand meaning for buyers (Ambroise et al., 2014). Brand ambassadors are the organizational representatives who humanize the brand and encourage social connections with an organization (Ambroise et al., 2014).
- Affiliate marketing: is a prevalent sort of web business promotion in which an affiliate is compensated for each visitor, subscriber, or customer they refer. One of the foremost well-known cases is Amazon's "Associates program." Amazon permits websites to connect to Amazon and earn a 15% expense for any sales from customers that came from the partner website. (Biyalogorsky et al. 2003) In this case, the affiliate plays the part of the influencer promoting Amazon.

In this study, some data will be gathered from statistics by Mediakix. Mediakix is an organization founded in 2011; in Venice Beach, California, and is one of the early influencer marketing agencies with over 20,000 sponsored placements; and they aim to provide marketers with the latest strategies to create an effective influencer marketing program (Mediakix 2021)

With data provided by Mediakix (2021), the foremost common important objectives for influencer marketing techniques are expanding the brand awareness – 85%, reaching a new audience – 71%, producing sales – 64%, progressing brand advocacy – 44%, and driving lead generation – 42%. (Mediakix 2021).

The Instagram Audience Credibility Checker is the foremost accommodating instrument for spotting fake followers and inauthentic engagement in order to guarantee productive influencer campaigns and the security of the businesses.

Unfortunately, on the rise of influencer marketing, numerous content creators found a way to control the number of followers and fake the engagement rate on their account, which can end up as a major risk for the reputation of the brands that are planning to partner with them. In order to maintain a strategic distance from any false schemes with the analytics of

Instagram, companies might utilize this instrument and spot the fake accounts. The Audience Credibility Checker is not an official tool of Instagram, but it could be a great platform to guarantee the safety of the business (Johnson et al., 2019).

Another vital issue for the companies working with influencers was the method of finding the proper influencer who can become the representative of their company. Choosing the right influencer is an important factor for the success of the marketing strategy. The proper influencer ought to be reliable within the eyes of the audience, an extraordinary expert in a certain field, which is specifically associated with the business, should be able to deliver the general message and values of the brand.

When looking at different platforms, businesses should always attempt to find the social media platform that works best with their organizational structure and strategy to be able to efficiently enhance their brand's image.

The next chapters in the study will discuss the three main social media platforms in Jordan: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and will attempt to provide a better understanding of how businesses can use these platforms to their advantage.

### **2.3 Facebook**

The first platform to be discussed is the most popular platform in terms of the user base. Facebook started as a small website that Mark Elliot Zuckerberg created with his colleagues in their dorm room in 2004, as a replacement to the hard copy face book for Harvard University, which was similar to a student directory in American universities, this website quickly grew to include other Ivy League universities. It only took two years for this website to start accepting the signing up of any person over the age of thirteen; the press room in Facebook reported over 90 million users (Zuckerberg, 2010).

Instant messaging and commenting served as the new mode of online communication in the early 2000s. All our online conversations relocated from public chat rooms to the world of social networking (Lockhart, 2013).

The first website to be considered a modern social networking site was Six Degrees; it was launched in 1997, many other sites such as MySpace and Hi5 preceded the launch of Facebook. However, none of them had the impact Facebook did, and none of them are still as relevant as Facebook is (Bansal & Voyer, 2000).

Furthermore, Facebook is currently the most popular social networking platform by far; user-base wise, many marketers are coming to a realization that Facebook can be one of the most important digital technology tools, especially if the concept of content marketing is utilized

properly (Ivanova, 2021), content marketing is a recent marketing strategy, that focuses more on the content the organization distributes online rather than the products, this type of marketing strategy is believed to attract and maintain consumers by providing them with valuable, relevant, and consistent content (He et al., 2021).

Even though Facebook is the largest platform in terms of popularity, that is not the only criteria marketers use to determine which platform they should focus on, Jordan has a large Facebook userbase, thus is the reason the study chose the platform as one of its main focuses.

### 2.3.1 Facebook User Base

According to Statista (2021), which is the leading business data platform, there are multiple social media platforms that have gathered over a billion users worldwide. However, Facebook is still considered the top social media platform in sheer user-base numbers, as seen in figure (4):

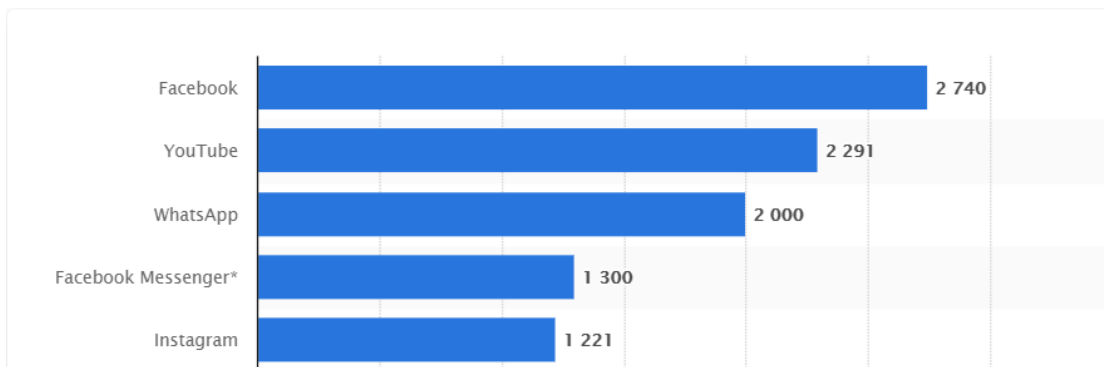


Figure (4) Number of users according to platforms.

Statista (2021)

Facebook had roughly 2.74 billion users worldwide in 2020 and is considered the largest social networking site worldwide. Facebook reached one billion active users almost ten years ago in 2012, making it the first social media platform to reach that number. Figure (5) shows the number of active social media users worldwide since 2008:

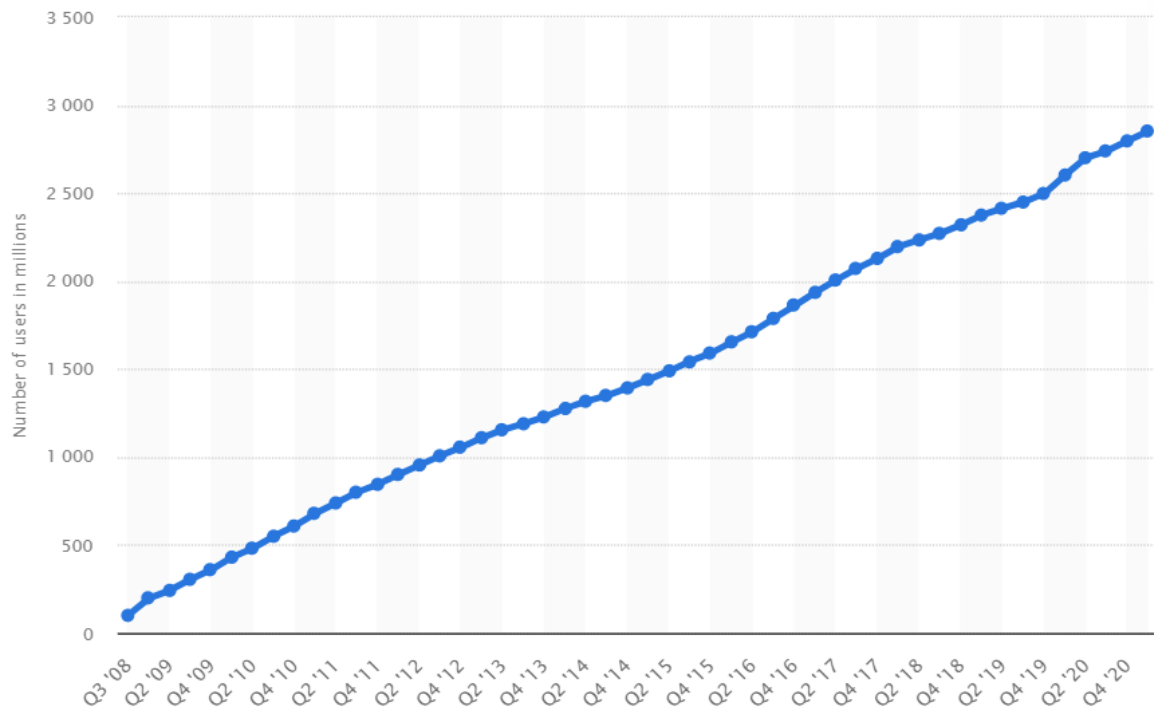


Figure (5):  
Number of active social media users worldwide since 2008  
Statista (2021)

Figure (5) shows that although it's been over 17 years now since Facebook was first created, it is still growing in the number of users; some would argue that this growth has slowed down in the past couple of years. However, the company revenue is still increasing.

Appendix (1G) shows us the Facebook demographics according to gender, and the data shows that 56.3% of Facebook users were male, and 43.7% were female (Statista,2021).

### 2.3.2 Facebook in Jordan

The population of this study will be Jordan; Jordan is an Arab country located in the Middle East, the data provided by Statista (2022) shows that there is a large percentage of the population in Jordan on Facebook, and the Forecast shows that the number stays high even with Facebook's global numbers decreasing:

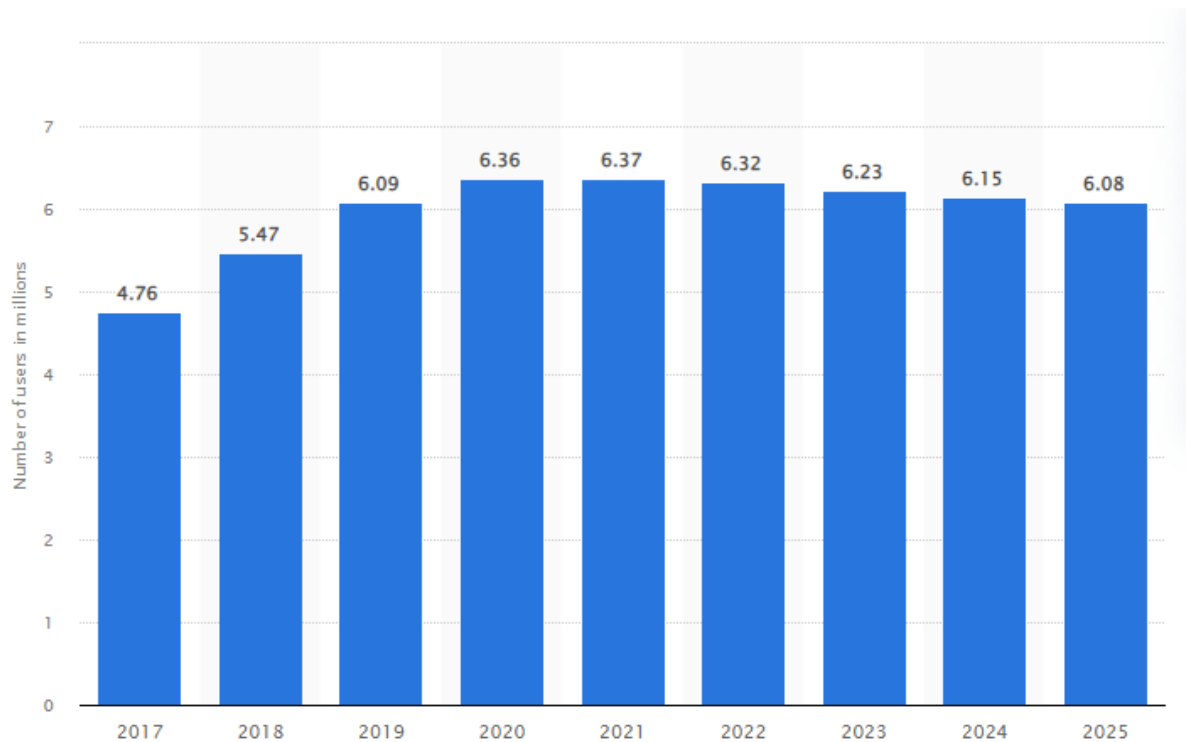


Figure (6): Number of Facebook users in Jordan and the forecasted numbers  
(Statista, 2022)

Furthermore, the data shown in Appendix (1) also reports that; even between other Arab countries, Jordan has a very high number of Facebook users and a high number of daily users in comparison to many other Arabic countries. Jordan has the 3rd most active population on Facebook in the region. On average, the percentage of daily active users on the regional level is 53% of the total.

The following points are some highlights about Facebook in the Arab region:

- Most popular: Facebook is by far the platform with the largest user-base; Facebook had over 5.8 million users in Jordan in 2020 (Statista, 2020)
- Growth: The number of users has doubled during the years between 2014-2017.
- Regional Penetration: there was over 39% of Facebook penetration in Arab users in 2017.
- New Users: Over the past two years, the largest growth in terms of the number of new users joining Facebook was in Egypt (14 million), followed by Algeria (9.4 million) and Iraq (7.3 million).

Statista (2022)



### 2.3.3 Advantages of Facebook

Although Facebook started as more of a socializing website, the business opportunities that were available were countless in regards to marketing or recruitment. Facebook allowed businesses to build a public or private online profile and to create a list of users with whom relations can be developed, which permits businesses to inform their clients about any updates or new products online and in real-time (Carrillat et al., 2014).

There is extensive research that shows that word-of-mouth through Facebook not only persuades the customers to recognize the brand the business is trying to market, it, in fact, notably increases the proceeds of that business and its return on investment (Swani et al., 2013).

Furthermore, an extremely important feature of Facebook is to increase a company's ability to attract and recruit job applicants with high potential and a specific set of skills (Swani et al., 2013).

Facebook gives numerous marketing opportunities to businesses. However, any large or growing business needs to do its research when thinking of adapting Facebook in their marketing strategy; Facebook users will react differently, according to which Facebook marketing strategies these companies may use to market their product and enhance their brand image (Carrillat et al., 2014).

The data shows that Facebook has by far the largest number of users worldwide; with 2.7 billion users, this is definitely an incentive for any business to use Facebook as a social media platform (Statista, 2021).

Moreover, Facebook allows businesses to build a public or private online profile and to create a list of users with whom relations can be developed, which permits businesses to inform their clientele about any updates or new products online and in real-time (Carrillat et al., 2014).

According to Swani et al. (2013), a significant way to spread a message when using Facebook is by having people like a specific post; a single like could spread the message to more than 130 other Facebook users, acquainted with the liker (this number was given based on the average amount of friends Facebook users have).

Thus, if "n" number of likes could allow that post to be shared to "130\*n", furthermore, Swani also showed in his research that a multiplier effect is not accounted for, as some of the friends that the liker has may also like the hit the Like link. Bansal & Voyer (2000), cited in (Swani et al. 2013, pp 285), stated that "Corporate brand naming strategies are effective for B2B Facebook accounts; corporate brand names suggest the reputation and expertise of an organization and are likely to lead to further information search".

Swani also stated that adding an emotional sentiment to a Facebook post is one of the most productive ways to generate likes, and that is mostly used in messages sent from business to customer. Swani concluded that the most successful business messages on Facebook are the ones that contain brand names and sentimental messages (Swani et al.,2013).

Although Swani's research showed an in-depth look at Facebook marketing, the research database contained a number of Fortune 500 businesses. Thus, leaving out the small businesses from his research.

According to “attachment theory” a consumer integrates a brand into one's “self” and is characterized by deep feelings of connection, affection, and passion towards the brand (Pourazad & Pare, 2014). Moreover, in a study conducted by Hinson et al. (2019), which attempted to gauge consumer engagement on Facebook pages through attachment theory, The results of the study show that this attachment to the brand, drove consumers to share and engage the brand on their Facebook page. The results also show that the consumer engagement of brands on Facebook results in positive user-generated contents and consumer involvement

#### **2.3.4 Disadvantages of Facebook**

When choosing what social media platform an organization is planning on using for their online marketing strategy, the number of users is not the only criteria an organization has to take into consideration when choosing a platform for their online strategy; other platforms have different inducements that could appeal to businesses as well.

Accordingly, some researchers believe that although Facebook has the highest number of users, it is currently in decline. Facebook has recently been losing many of its young users to other platforms such as Instagram and TikTok (De Veirman et al., 2020).

Some researchers believe that this decrease in the number of users in the youth is an indicator of things to come. Moreover, with this decrease, Facebook could stop being the go-to platform for socializing and communication (Baer 2018).

According to Statista (2021), Facebook is still growing in the number of users worldwide and has currently had almost 28.5% penetration worldwide, and that number would have been higher if not for the Facebook ban in China, which caused a depressing Facebook penetration in Asia as a whole, with only 19.4% penetration in the whole of Asia.

Appendix (1G) shows the penetration of Facebook worldwide and the demographics of Facebook users; gender and age.

When looking at different platforms, businesses should always attempt to find the social media platform that works best with their organizational structure and strategy to be able to efficiently enhance their brand's image. In the next chapter, the study will attempt to find a better understanding of how Twitter can assist a business in enhancing its brand image.

## **2.4 Twitter**

Twitter is the second platform focused on by the study and this chapter will attempt to give some general information about Twitter, how it started, its user base, and the advantages and disadvantages of using Twitter for marketing.

Twitter is a social networking site that was created by the company ODEO, which is based in San Francisco; it was a side project created by the company. When the co-founder Evan Williams asked the company's developers to brainstorm ideas for a new project, one of the company's engineers, Jack Dorsey, proposed a concept of a service that allows users to share their personal status via short messages.

Twitter launched in 2006 as Twtr, inspired by the sound of birds, and within six months, the name changed to Twitter ("Twitter launches," 2021).

There are currently many social media platforms that support different forms of social media content. For example, Facebook is a social networking site where users of that site can share comments, pictures, links, and even news with their friends and followers.

There are many other forms of social media content, one of the newest forms of social media is micro-blogging; the term "blogging" comes from keeping an online journal or information site, and these blogs appear to reverse chronologically, allowing the latest posts to appear first and was extremely popular in the late ninety's and early two thousand and was followed by "vlogging" which is video blogging. (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

Micro-blogging, on the other hand, is a mixture between blogging and instant messaging, where users share small messages instantly with their followers online. Currently, the biggest micro-blogging site is Twitter, Twitter has over 186 million daily active users, and over 500 million Tweets are sent each day and is extremely popular due to its accessibility through the phone application; many of the Twitter users are checking their accounts via their cellphones, which is an extreme convenience in itself according to the website ("Twitter launches," 2021).

There are many social media platforms at the moment, but none of which is larger than Twitter when it comes to micro blogging, by far the largest micro-blogging site available. Twitter is a platform used by millions, from "normal Joe's" talking about their day-to-day issues to world leaders that decide to air their grievances with their followers. In fact, what

made Twitter a great platform is that they listen to the users' grievances, giving them a chance to help further develop the site.

For example, the “@” symbol was added for users to be able to acknowledge other users or direct their next tweet towards them. The “@” symbol was also adopted by the rest of the social media platforms afterward.

#### 2.4.1 Twitter User Base

Although Twitter is considered one of the older social media platforms, and some may assume that with the emergence of many new popular social media platforms that the number of users would decrease. However, Twitter has been growing steadily year by year; data from Statista (2021) showcases this steady growth as seen in Figure (7):

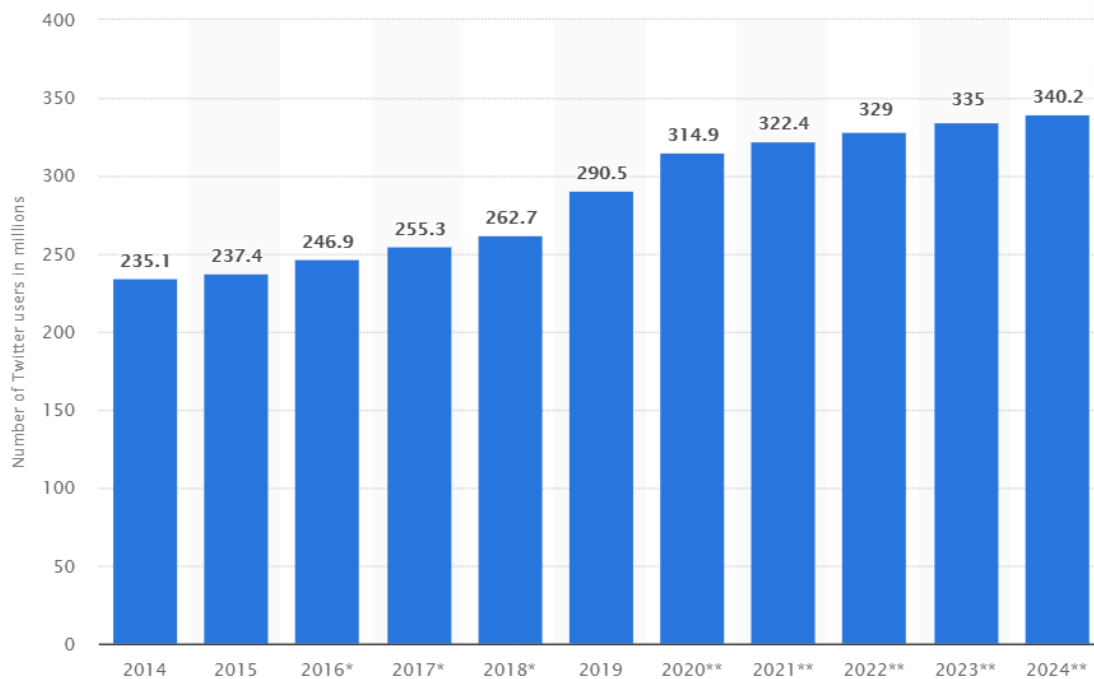


Figure (7): Number of Twitter users worldwide from (2014-2024)  
Statista (2021)

Furthermore, Appendix (2) shows the distribution of Twitter users according to age and gender. It gives a better understanding of the demographics that a business can reach when using Twitter. As seen in Appendix (2), 63.7% of the Twitter users are male users with 36.3% being female users, and the largest age demographic is the (25-35) age group, followed by the (35-49) age group, this could be due to many of the younger users being active on newer platforms such as Instagram and TikTok (Statista, 2021).

Although Twitter users have been increasing steadily, it is not one of the most popular social media platforms in Jordan. Facebook is still the most popular platform in Jordan in terms of the number of users. Figure (8) shows the penetration of Twitter users in Arab countries, and the penetration in Jordan in comparison, as seen even with Jordan having a smaller population, the user penetration is still miniscule in comparison.

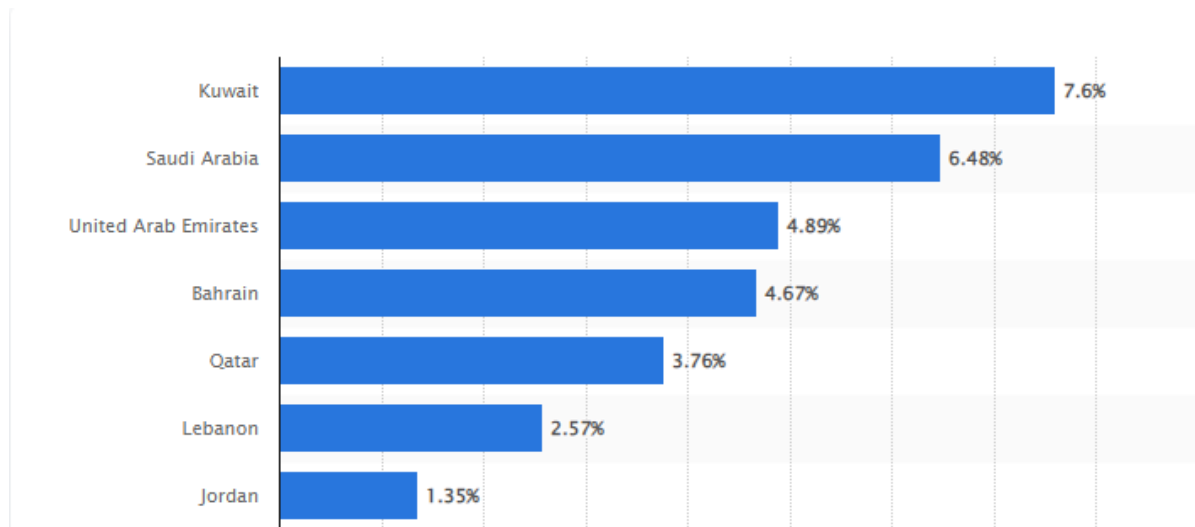


Figure (8): Twitter penetration in selected Middle Eastern countries  
Statista (2022)

Figure (8) shows that Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have the highest numbers of Twitter users in the Arab region. A study was done by the researcher about the usage of Twitter in Jordan; the study was a comparison in the use of Twitter by small and large businesses in Jordan, the data was gathered through interviews. The data from the interviews showed that even though Twitter has a low penetration in Jordan, Twitter could still be a great marketing tool for SME's if the SME's offer their goods and services to neighboring countries with a high Twitter user base; in the case of Jordan, it was Saudi Arabia and Egypt (Al-Zoubi, 2020). Moreover, according to the Statcounter (2022), although Twitter does not have as many users as other platforms in Jordan, the number of users on Twitter are still increasing; between the years (2014-2016), there was a 16% increase in numbers of users in Jordan.

### 2.4.2 Advantages of Twitter

According to Twitter for businesses, Twitter provides businesses with four different ways in which to get leverage in the online market:

- Twitter allows businesses to find out what are the current issues in the industry or market they are currently in. Twitter allows users to join in into relevant. Conversations are happening regarding a topic related to your business.
- Twitter allows a business to expand its brand; being more active on the account and communicating with your followers could attract more followers and impact the brand positively. Twitter even provides further help by using their Twitter Ads, where Twitter markets your product to people who might be interested.
- Many major companies provide customer service using Twitter; it is another method where companies can deal with customers' grievances and solve their problems online.
- Twitter allows businesses to connect with other businesses, influencers, and entire communities online. This allows the business to connect to potential customers or to build valuable connections with other business owners or leaders (Twitter.com, 2021).

Moreover, one of the main advantages of Twitter is that, like other social media platforms, it provides an "Electronic Word of Mouth" (E-WOM) tool. However, Tweets can be analyzed much easier than other forms of content providing businesses with the consumer's sentiment. In a study done in 2009, research showed that when it comes to micro-blogging, more than 19% of these microblogs with mentions contain a name of a brand, and of these microblogs, almost 20% had a brand sentiment; could be a negative or positive sentiment, over 50% of these microblogs were positive and sentiments, and 33% were extreme sentiments relating to the organization or the product the organization is marketing, this study tried to show that even with an automated coding method of analyzing micro-blogs it is still easy to analyze a Tweets sentiments, thus allowing micro-blogging to be an amazing online WOM tool( Zhang et al., 2009).

Twitter as a user provides enough information for consumers to know everything they need about a brand, to the point that in a study done by Wei (2022), they attempted to teach students marketing through allowing them to follow brands on Twitter. The experiential learning theory sees learning as a four-step process: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualism, and active experimentation, and Wei (2022) attempted to replicate this theory by forcing students to follow a brand on Twitter. The results confirmed

that Twitter provided sufficient information for the students to learn more than from any textbook.

As such, the study believes that using Twitter by organizations means that a business is taking advantage of a great online tool for customer word of mouth communications; whether it is a good or bad sentiment, and most corporations should discuss using this platform as a part of their overall marketing strategy (Zhang et al., 2009).

### **2.4.3 Disadvantages of Twitter**

On the other hand, Bulearca & Bulearca (2010) argues that there are many reasons Twitter is not a fit for each business. Firstly, Twitter requires the manager(s) of the profile to be consistent and committed to the process. The manager(s) should fully understand the functionalities and tools provided by Twitter, and it requires them to understand strategic implementation in order to attain the best results possible.

Secondly, the issue of how hard it is to measure the “Return-on-Investment” (RoI) when using Twitter is another problem organizations might face. Thirdly, Twitter requires a great amount of time to be maintained; the organization’s page should be engaging its followers, answering their queries, and updating their page regularly (Bulearca, Bulearca 2010).

Furthermore, some researchers believe that the only way small businesses can use Twitter is they are informed and educated on how to effectively use and manage their time on social media networks that could provide their business with a better return, due to the time used for the promotion is too high for small businesses, due to Twitter followers requiring to be cultivated to keep them engaged with your brand (Geho et al., 2010).

These disadvantages and the fact that Twitter has a very small following in Jordan, could be a reason for businesses to not want to use Twitter in their marketing strategy in Jordan, the study will attempt to understand if Twitter is a viable platform to market on in Jordan through a series of interviews with managers in different industries in Jordan.

### **2.4.4 Examples of Brands using Twitter:**

When following large organizations on Twitter such as Pepsi, it can be seen that a lot of time and money is put into these accounts, from the monitoring of customer’s Tweets and answering them to posting daily updates on their Twitter page.

According to De Luna Y. (2018) Pepsi’s Gatorade has been growing explosively on Twitter when it comes to platform presence. However, this does not come without extra costs. Pepsi’s Gatorade has over five employees working on their Twitter Page alone.

Although Gatorade's online presence is growing rapidly, there is still an uncertainty in the effectiveness of their campaign, as their number one competitor; Coca Cola's Powerade, has a bigger market share and is doing better than Gatorade, although they have a much lower social media presence (De Luna Y., 2021)

Another example of a brand using Twitter successfully is the American fast-food chain "Wendy's" Wendy's is one of the most recognized brands on Twitter; due to its engaging content. One of Wendy's most memorable Twitter exchanges was an exchange between Wendy's and a customer called Carter Wilkerson; Carter asked Wendy's in a tweet, "How many retweets for a year of free nuggets" Wendy's Twitter page responded humorously by answering, "Eighteen million," that tweet was retweeted 3.6 million times and gaining a million likes, making it the most retweeted English language tweet of all time (Read et al., 2019).

The study discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using Twitter and described the Twitter userbase in Jordan, in comparison to other social media platforms Twitter is not as popular in Jordan. Furthermore, Twitter's growth could be considered small as well when compared to Instagram and Facebook. However, it is still used by neighboring countries, the study will attempt to analyze the Twitter usage in Jordanian companies through semi structured interviews conducted in the different industries in the Jordanian market, and will attempt to give a better understanding on if Twitter is a viable platform in the Jordanian market.

## **2.5 Instagram**

The third platform chosen for the study is Instagram, and it is one of growing platforms in popularity in Jordan; especially with the younger demographics, in this chapter the study will talk about the early use of Instagram and the advantages and disadvantages of using the platform.

Instagram is an American photo and video sharing app established in 2010. it was created by Kevin Systrom and was initially called Burbn, and within two years of the release of the platform, it was purchased by Facebook for \$1 billion in cash and stock.

Instagram is one of the most popular applications for mobile users; the app allows users to take photos, edit and add filters to picture before the user uploads them; the pictures could be uploaded with a caption to describe the picture, hashtags, or geotags, which allows the user to share the location of the picture, these additions to the picture can help other users search for these pictures by index. The pictures shared can be viewed by the user's followers or by the public when tagged using a hashtag or geotag.



Furthermore, Instagram is one of the more popular platforms in the younger generation demographic. Generation Z is the generation between 1995 and 2010s (Priporas et al., 2019) and is considered the generation born and raised surrounded by digital communication, which makes them more “tech-savvy.” Many believe that this demographic of audience consumes content more than any other age group.

According to Adobe (2016), many individuals coming from demographics spends up to 11 hours each day consuming content on their digital devices, which makes them more likely to view an advertisement on Instagram rather than any other form of advertising. They prefer to communicate using images online rather than texts like the previous generation, making Instagram a great marketing tool for businesses attempting to target this demographic (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021).

### 2.5.1 Instagram User Base:

Instagram has around 1 billion active users and 500 million active accounts every day. More than 25 million businesses own an account on Instagram by 2020. (Statista 2021)

The statistical information of Facebook (2021) shows that the top reported interests of Instagram clients are travel (45%), music (44%), and food and drink (43%) (Business of Apps 2020). And these numbers are only rising; more and more users are joining Instagram each year, as seen in Figure (9), where the figure shows the forecast numbers of Instagram users over the next two years.

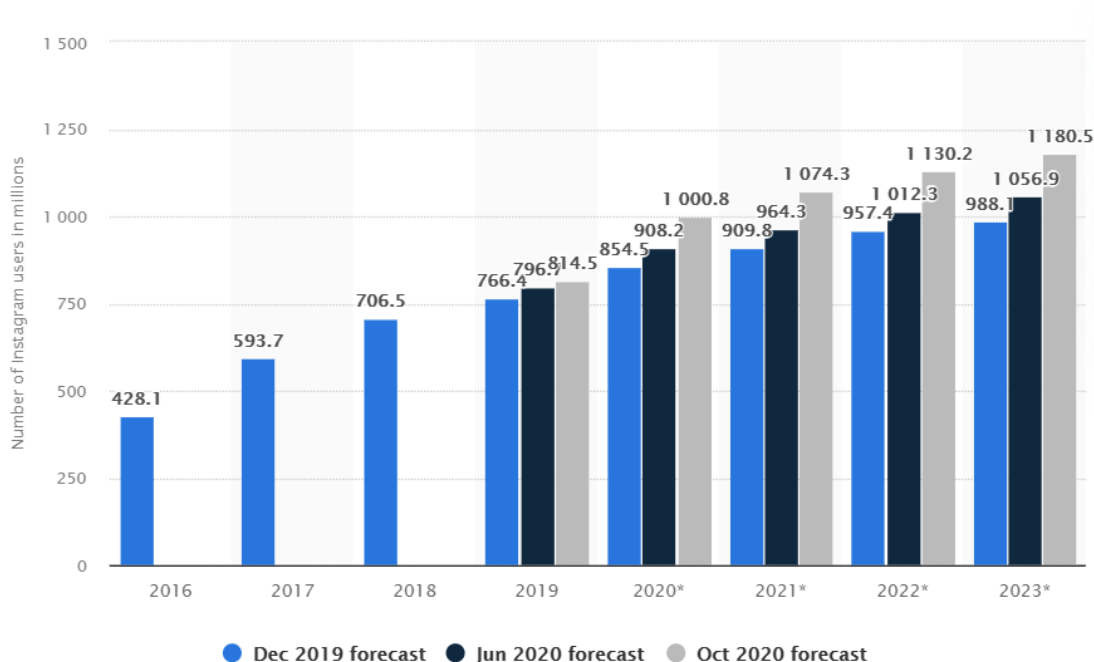


Figure (9)  
Number of Instagram Users Worldwide (2016-2023)  
(Statista, 2021)

Appendix (3E) showcases the countries with the highest numbers of Instagram users, which are India with 150 million, followed by the US with 140 million users, Brazil – 100 million, Indonesia – 86 million, and Russia – 57 million. (Statista 2021).

Furthermore, Figure(10) shows the gender and age demographics on Instagram, which shows that users are typically youthful, with 69.9% of the users being under age 34, making Instagram a great marketing tool for businesses targeting a more youthful demographic.

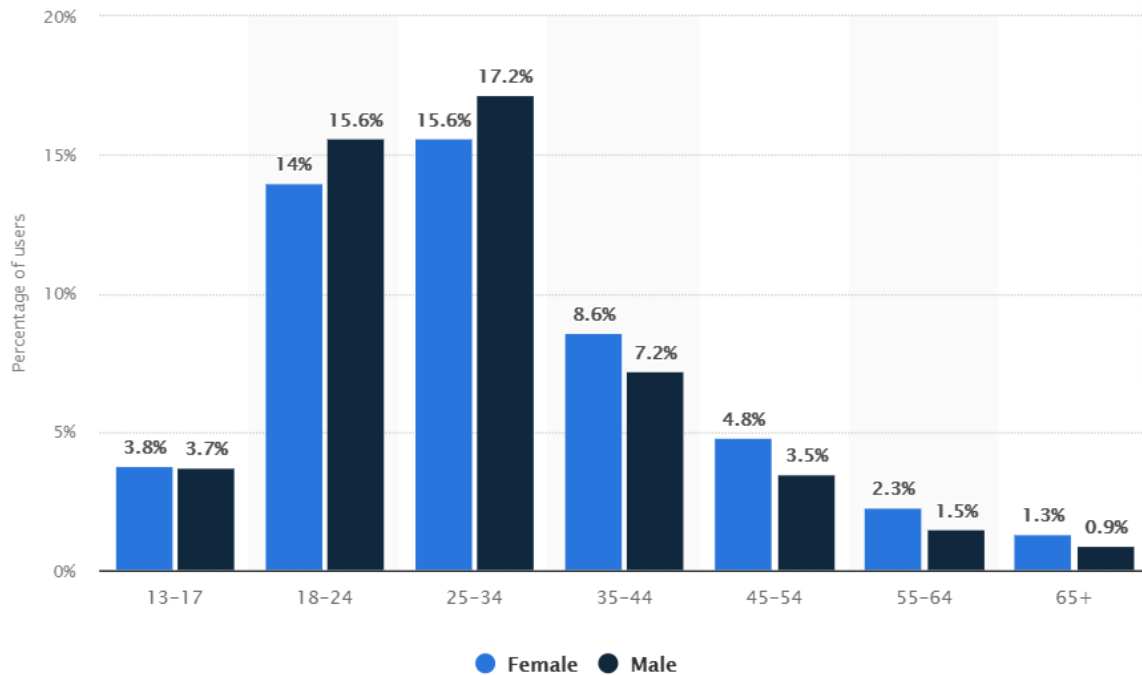


Figure (10)  
Distribution of Instagram users worldwide by age and gender  
(Statista, 2021)

### 2.5.2 Instagram in Jordan:

However, Instagram is not as popular in the Arab region as other social media platforms. According to the Statcounter (2020), there were only 7.1 million users in the Arab region, which is 1.8% overall penetration; the UAE has the highest level of penetration with almost 13% penetration, and Saudi Arabia has the highest number of users, with 2.1 million users as seen in Figure (11):

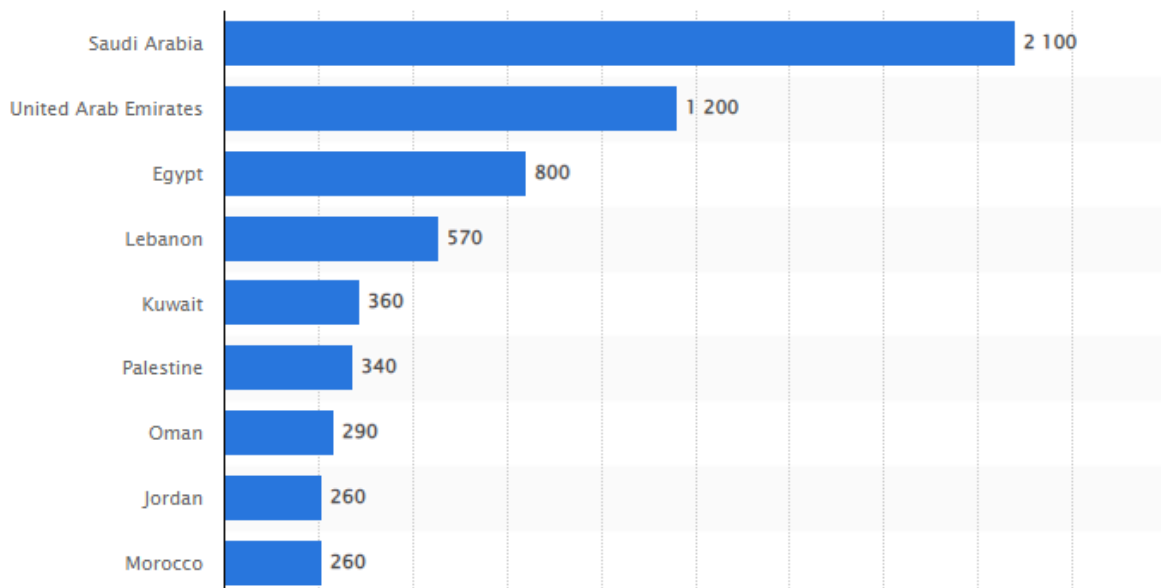


Figure (11)  
Number of Instagram users in Arab states (2021)  
Statista

Appendix (3) includes more information about the usage of Instagram in the Arab region, and globally.

### 2.5.3 Advantages of Instagram:

Instagram has many advantages that can make it a great tool for any business's marketing strategy:

Instagram has the second-highest online presence worldwide, which allows businesses to reach a greater demographic audience. If the business's targeted demographic is a youthful one, Instagram can be a great tool for that business due to its lower age demographic (Statista, 2021).

Instagram posts lead to viral marketing; many of the posts could reach "viral" status by gaining extreme popularity in a short amount of time, millions of viewers can view some pictures within hours (Zhang & Huang, 2021).

The usage of "hashtags" and "geotags" allows users to see images which they may be interested in, which are targeted using a user's history and preferences, which increases visibility and exposure of many posts created by businesses (Fuciu, 2019).

Due to the visual aspect of Instagram and that the content is images or short videos, this usually leads to a higher level of engagement from consumers. The mixture of colors,

videos, and sounds will, in many cases, lead to likes and comments by the users (Fuciu M., 2019).

Like many other social media platforms, Instagram allows targeted advertisements, allowing companies to reach their targeted audience.

Taking after the success of the cooperation with businesses, Instagram introduced the Business profile permitting to see the particular information and metrics such as the number of profile visits, number of profiles reached by a post, how many times was the post saved, age, and sexual orientation of the audience, etc. These highlights offer assistance in analyzing the audience's preferences and which sort of content is more successful (IGTV, 2021).

Nowadays, more marketers are attempting to analyze and work with the calculations of Instagram to create their content more obvious for the customers. One of the foremost popular ways to publicize your product on Instagram is to form a partnership with an influencer. Paid collaborations between brands and SMIs are commonly realized within the shape of sponsored content (Stubb & Nyström, 2019), the use of influencers will be discussed at length in the next chapters.

Jordan is the focus of the current study, and in Jordan the numbers of Instagram users are on the rise (Statista, 2021). However, the demographic of users are mostly from the younger demographics, which could be an advantage for businesses who are targeting younger audience, making it easier to reach younger audiences that have left the more popular platforms such as Facebook.

#### **2.5.4 Disadvantages of Instagram**

According to Fuciu (2019), Instagram has some disadvantages, which could cause some challenges for many companies that decide on using it as a marketing tool:

Technological limitations of some consumers, since Instagram is used mostly on phones, it is hard to reach the audience that does not possess an android or IOS phone.

Copyright issues are another disadvantage that could face companies using Instagram; many of the images that are shared could be copyrighted, which means the images a company has to share are to be original, which requires a great deal of time and effort companies' part.

Within the most recent survey of Mediakix (2021), most companies pointed out that identifying fake followers and inauthentic engagement are their main issues when using Instagram marketing.

Instagram marketing relies on advertisements shown on the website, like many other social media platforms, and on a new form of marketing called “Influencer Marketing,” which was discussed in the previous chapters. Instagram is currently home to the largest number of Influencers out of any other platform, making it a great place for marketers to implement their Influencer marketing strategy.

Furthermore, with Instagram being catered more to younger demographics, some smaller businesses may not be able afford the manpower and time needed to start focusing on Instagram as a platform, if their targeted demographic is not strictly a young demographic.

The study will attempt to gain a better understanding on which platforms large organizations and small businesses focus on in Jordan, through interviews with businesses of different sizes in different industries.

### **3 Branding**

After discussing the first field of WOM, which is WOM marketing, and what motivates consumers to spread WOM and their experiences with products and services online, the study will attempt to discuss the second variable of the study, and will give some information on the early forms of branding and how it changed in our current times.

Branding has the power to elevate a company's name; and in turn it's sales and brand recognition, thus making it one of the main focuses of many companies in many industries.

#### **3.1 Early Branding**

In this chapter the researcher will look at early research to establish how branding was viewed and how it changed with through time. Branding is not a new concept, but it has been redefined constantly with all the innovation the world has been seeing in the recent decades. It has been redefined again now with the growth of the internet and social media.

In the early phases of companies recognizing branding as an important asset, branding was originally defined in Kotler P. (2000) as the name given to one or multiple products in a product line, which is commonly used to associate a source of character for the items of that product line.

Technically when a marketing manager decides to create new logos or symbols or naming for a new item on the product line, this was considered to have created a new brand for that organization (Keller et al.,1993). However, this was before it was redefined to what it is now. Branding has changed dramatically in the past three decades. According to Kapferer (1997), companies in the 1980s would ask their producers for chocolate and shoes, however now they are demanding Snickers and Nike sneakers. Kapferer accredited this change to managers changing their objective from focusing on production capacity and having a placement in the consumer's mind.

Moreover, with all these changes and after it was understood that brands are not just identifiers for products, many researchers focused their studies on branding and how to enhance a business's brand's image, creating multiple brand-building models that many marketers currently use (Guzman, 2005).

The following chapter will discuss how branding models, which is a concept that was proven to be important by many researchers, however is not implemented by many businesses trying to grow their brand.

### **3.2 Brand Building Models**

Brand building models are used in almost every major organization around the world, in this chapter the study will attempt to cover some of these models, and will inquire from the interviews if SMEs and large organizations in Jordan use these models through the interviews. the researchers covered many brand-building models and discussed how each of them could best benefit a business, brand building models are considered by many researchers important for the growth of businesses, however when discusses with businesses in Jordan, many businesses were not familiar with the concepts.

The following chapters will discuss different brand building models and how each focus on a different part of brand building.

#### **3.2.1 Brand Orientation**

The first model that will be discussed is the “Brand Orientation Model”, which was created by Urde (1999), and later used and studied by many researchers, the model was created as a brand-building model; in the brand orientation model, the brand is considered a strategic resource; the entire model is focused on creating, developing, and maintaining the brand’s identity. In a more recent study by Odoom & Mensah (2019) the research discusses how the concept tries to protect the brand’s image while interacting with the consumers in the hope of maintaining a competitive advantage using an organization’s “Brand”, and how with the rise of new innovations, such as social media, the brand orientation model is still used by many businesses.

In figure (12), you can see the Brand Hexagon, where the Hexagon attempts to integrate brand equity and brand identity with the company’s goals, strategy, and identity.

When looking at figure (12), the two blocks on the right side of the model are the “Product Category” and “Product” blocks and are considered the rational side of the model; due to these blocks being analyzed rationally. On the other hand, the model's left side where the “Brand Name” and “Company Name” blocks are located is considered the emotional side due to the analysis of these blocks being based on emotion. Thus, making the Brand Orientation model a mixture of both emotions and rational Urde (1999).

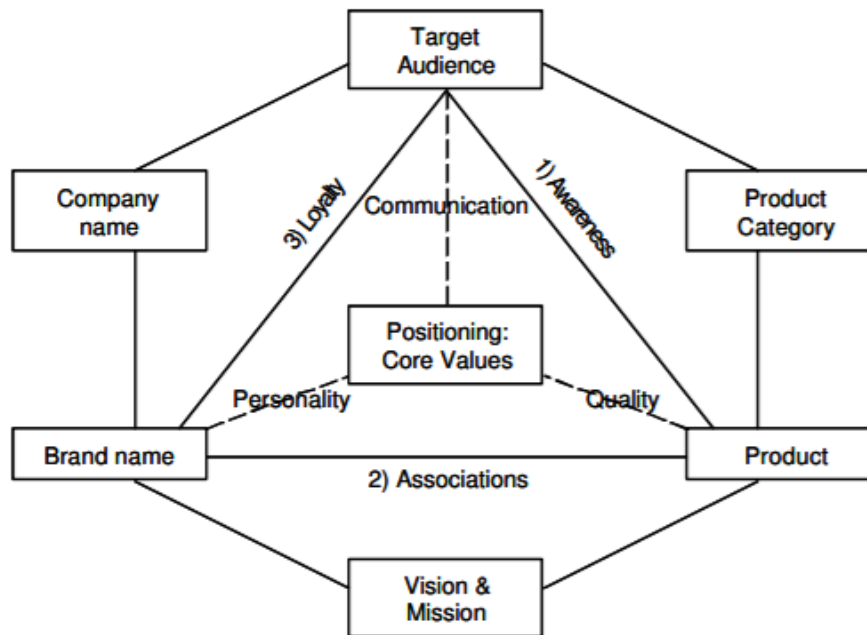


Figure (12): Brand orientation Hexagon  
Urde (1999)

Furthermore, the lower part of the Hexagon is the “Mission & Vision” block, which attempts to reflect the company’s intentions towards the Brand. Moreover, the top part of the model is the “Target Audience” block, which reflects how consumers comprehend the brand’s image. Finally, the center block is the “creative block” and the core process, where “Positioning” and the “Core Values” lie.

In a later study conducted by Sepulcri & Mainardes (2020), in their study they use Urde’s model to show that while building a brand using the Brand Orientation model, marketers should keep in mind that this is a two-part process, the first part being external, which focuses on the relationship between consumers and the company, where the objective is forming a long-lasting relationship with the consumers and creating value.

The second part of the Brand orientation model is the internal part of the model, which focuses on the relationship between the organization and the brand, where the objective is for the company to live its brand.

### 3.2.2 Brand Leadership

The second model is the Brand Leadership model, the model was created by Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000) and focuses on tactics and strategy.

It was explored further by Kirkup & Illes (2019), which explains how in this model the brand manager takes on several different perspectives in this model; a strategic and visionary



perspective, the brand manager in this model is located much higher up in an organization than other models and has a longer employment horizon, where the manager takes on all brand-related issues and is both the strategist and the leader of the communications team. In this model, Kirkup & Illes (2019) reported there are four main challenges to building a strong brand, as seen in table (2):

Challenges	Summary
The organizational challenge	The main objective of the model is to construct processes and structures that lead to a strong brand image and brand leaders and reflect that image to the consumers. One of the challenges is to create common terms, vocabulary, tools, and an information system that can allow communication; with many organizations having offices around the world and could have different products at each office, this task could be challenging. Brand management should be a part of management in total and should not be made into a specialist position.
The brand architecture challenge	Refers to creating other brands and sub-brands and how they concern each other and assign roles for each. Furthermore, brand architecture also attempts to clarify the gains of the consumers from each brand. It attempts to understand how to synergize better between these brands, which helps assign roles for each brand and sub-brand relative to the entire brand portfolio.
The brand identity and position challenge	Refers to creating a brand identity and assigning to each available brand and attempts to situate each brand effectively to create clarity. This step is a long-term step and should be integrated early into the company, so it can become a major part of the organization.
The brand-building program challenge	One of the main challenges is building communication programs and other brand-building activities, developing an identity for the brand, which helps create and implement the brand. Brand building essentially focuses on the activities that change consumer perception, enhancing the brand's image and creating customer loyalty. The main goal of a brand strategy is maximizing the value of the shareholders.

Table (2): The four main challenges to building a strong brand  
Kirkup & Illes (2019)

Figure (13) expresses the four challenges that Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) addressed in their study:

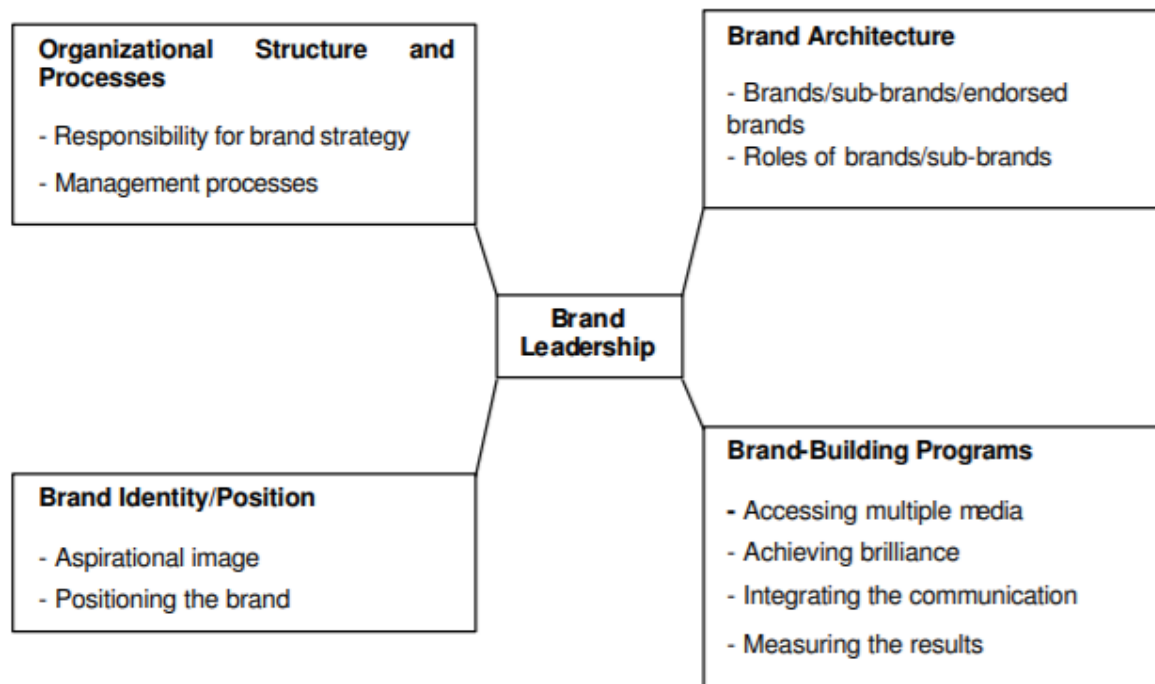


Figure (13): Addressing the challenges of brand leadership  
Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000)

### 3.2.3 Brand Asset Management

Brand Asset Management is a model created by Davis (2002); this model argues that the most important valuable assets to a company are people and the company's brand; thus, making every strategic decision with the brand in mind.

According to Davis (2002), the current top three objectives for any brand strategy are: increasing the loyalty of the consumers, gaining leadership over the market, distinction from the competitors.

Davis (2002) defines Brand Asset Management as “a balanced investment approach for building the meaning of the brand, communicating it internally and externally, and leveraging it to increase brand profitability, brand asset value, and brand returns over time.” This model has caused changes in the traditional brand management activities to a newer model, as seen in Figure (14):

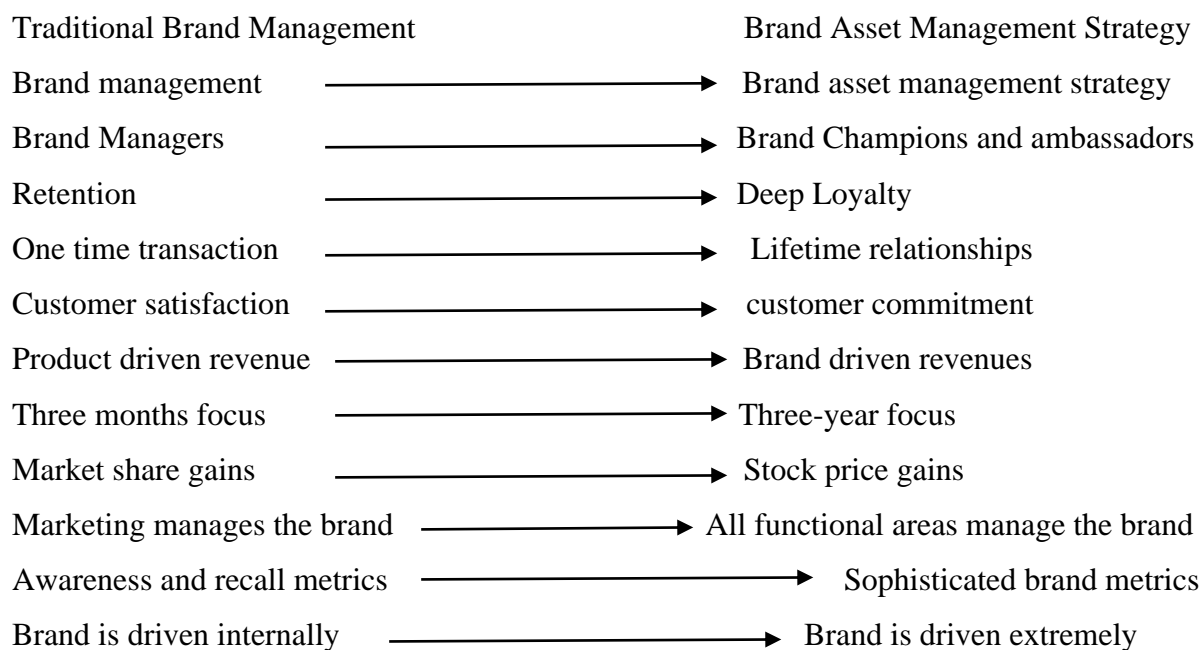


Figure (14): The Shift Traditional Brand Asset Management  
Davis (2002)

The process showcased in Figure (14) is done in four phases, with most phases having multiple steps to follow, each guiding the company into upgrading its current traditional model.

Firstly, developing a brand vision this phase only requires the organization to develop the elements of a brand vision; this step has one goal, which is to determine and articulate what the organization's brand managers and his team need to do to meet the organization's objectives (Guzman, 2005).

The second phase is determining a company's "Brand-Picture," and this phase contains three steps. The steps are: determining what an organization wants their brand's image to be, creating a brand's contract; listing the consumer's perception about the organization and its promises, and brand-based customer model; which allows the organization to understand better consumer behavior, and attempts to determine the driving force behind the consumer's decision-making process (Guzman, 2005).

Phase three is developing an actual strategy for the brand asset management; in order to achieve the brand vision mentioned in phase one, and this phase has five steps: positioning the brand, extending the brand, communicating the brand's positioning, leveraging the brand, and pricing the brand (Guzman, 2005).

The final phase is supporting the brand's assets management culture; this step attempts to maintain and grow the culture that was created in the first three phases and has two steps: measuring the return on brand asset management and establishing and maintaining a brand-based culture. The four phases and each step they contain can be seen in Figure (15):

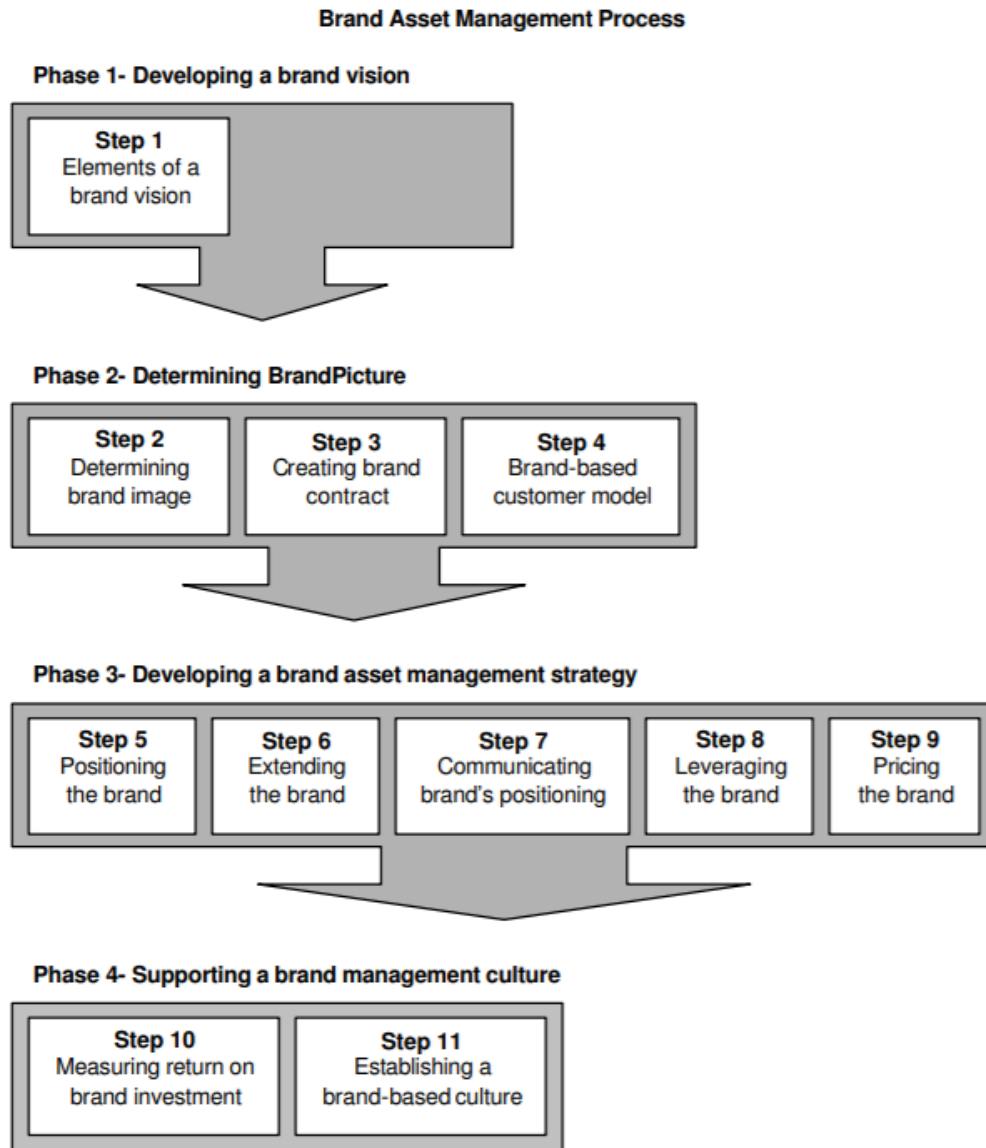


Figure (15): Brand Asset management strategy

Guzman (2005)

### 3.2.4 LOGMAN Model

The final model discussed in this research is one created by Logman (2004); the model is created as a logical brand consistency model and done by answering the following questions:

- Is there any logically justified interaction between the organization's brand drivers?
- Is the consumer perception of the organization's brand drivers perceiving the way the organization wishes it to be?
- Is the consumer perception of the organization's brand drivers perceiving the way consumer wishes it to be?
- Are the external brand drivers perceived by the consumer the way the organization wishes them to be?
- Have you determined any logical consistency between different customer segments and the organization's brand drivers, and have these consistencies been addressed?
- When dealing with different levels of perspective, are there any logical consistencies between an organization's brand objectives?
- Are there any logical consistencies between the brand's drivers over a longer period of time?

According to Logman (2004), answering these questions can attempt to help an organization in identifying the issues they are facing, and can help provide a key driver for the solution, and can attempt to analyze brand policies in a more specific context.

As mentioned each branding model is catered towards a certain type of business, and with the growth of social media and its relationship with branding, most of the large organizations are using a type of branding model, the study will attempt to understand and analyze the usage of branding models in small and large businesses in Jordan, through interviews conducting with businesses of different industries in the Jordanian market.

After discussing the brand models, the study will discuss the relationship between two of the main variables of the study, namely social media marketing and enhancing a brand's image.

### 3.3 Social Media and Enhancing Brand Image

In the previous chapters, the study discussed social media marketing and the concept of branding. In this chapter, the study will use the literature available to discuss the relationship between these two variables.

Social media provides a means of communication between an organization and its consumers through content that is both interesting and fun, keeping the consumers entertained while viewing an organization's content at the same time, for example: viewing entertaining

pictures and videos on Instagram, which attract viewers' attention while they browse their Instagram feed (Merrilees, 2016).

Due to consumers viewing these entertaining posts, pictures, and videos, many believe that this entertainment factor that is available on social media can increase a brand's recognition and recall (Ismail, 2017). Accordingly, the enjoyment of content on social media platforms can form a sense of excitement for the brand, which in turn establishes a positive link in a consumer's mind, making the brand more recognizable, and memorable in a positive Image (Keller, 2013).

As mentioned in previous chapters, one of the biggest advantages of social media marketing is the spreading of "Electronic Word-of-Mouth" (EWOM); recent studies have shown that EWOM on social media platforms is considered exceedingly influential to the process of evaluation of a product or service, due to the information gathered on social media being perceived as trustworthy (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017).

Due to users considering other users' experiences on social media to be trustworthy, many consumers search for specific products or services that they are interested in on social media to be able to read reviews or experiences that other users or expert may have had before buying a product (Severi et al., 2014). Accordingly, positive EWOM that users access on social media platforms could enhance a brand's posts on the social media platform and could cause users to spend more time on the brand's page (De Vries et al., 2012).

In this chapter, the study discussed how social media could help a brand's image online. In the next chapters, the study will discuss how a brand's image affects consumer behavior and the social media variables that can enhance a brand's equity.

### **3.3.1 Brand Image and Consumer Behavior**

As mentioned previously in the study, enhancing a brand's image is a topic that was studied considerably in the past couple of decades, showcasing its importance in increasing the brand's equity.

Accordingly, with the world marketplace becoming more and more competitive, organizations are having to gather more information about their consumers to be able to gain a better understanding of the consumer's insight, perspective, and behavior, at the same time, educating the consumers about the organization's brand to establish better marketing strategies (Zhang Y., 2015).

The following will discuss the relationship between the customer's perception of the brand's image and the customer's behavior:

The impact of brand image on customer's attitude towards the brand:

In a study done by Keller (2013) Keller created a new notion under the name "customer-based brand equity," which was a study that noted different customers' reactions towards a branding campaign, from customers had varying knowledge of the brand.

In the study, Keller (2013) established that brand awareness and the brand's image could be considered the basis of brand equity. Keller (2013) also added that projecting a positive image to the consumers can create a strong brand connection that consumers can associate with memories about the brand through marketing campaigns.

Moreover, some researchers formulated an opinion that if a consumer has great confidence in a brand, that will increase the brand's equity. Furthermore, if the consumers are very confident in a brand, they will be willing to pay greater prices for goods or services from that brand (Lassar et al. 1995).

Lassar et al. (1995) believe that consumer's confidence in the brand stems from five major points:

- The ability of the brand to perform and function as intended.
- The brand's social image and social image are associated with buying or using the brand's products.
- The consumer's emotional attachment to the brand.
- The equilibrium between the brand's value and how the brand functions.
- The last point is customer trust which is one of the focuses of this study.

A later study conducted by Netemeyer et al. (2004) further proved that brand equity has a huge impact on the consumer's reaction to a brand's campaign.

Moreover, when it comes to the youth demographic, studies have shown that brand awareness majorly affects brand equity in the youth demographic more than in other age groups. The studies show that the younger generations usually gather information about a product or service online before purchasing the product. Either through online word of mouth by reading the comments and reviews online, whether it's through social media or feedback specialized websites (Sasmita & Mohd Suki, 2015).

Furthermore, the studies show that younger consumers use social media to view the experiences of other users to compare between brands and their respective competitors; the comparison could be in the quality of the products, the price of the products, or in the product's specific features. Thus, making social media one of the most important parts of a company's online strategy (Sasmita & Mohd Suki, 2015).

After discussing how a brand's image can affect consumer behavior and their decision-making when purchasing a product or a service, the study will attempt to better understand the relationship between social media and brand equity. Finally, it will look at the literature to define the variables businesses should focus on when building their online strategy.

### 3.3.2 Social Media and Brand Equity

In a literature review study about the role of social media in brand equity done by Jayasuriya N. et al. (2018), the study attempted to evaluate the key points in the literature regarding the relationship between an organization's brand and its use of social media platforms.

Table (3): shows the research done by previous authors and what their research believed to be the most important social media variables:

Author		
Perera & Perera (2016)	Influence of Social Media Marketing on the Brand Image of Organizations in the Hospitality Industry of Sri Lanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positivity,</li> <li>• Consistency,</li> <li>• Differentiation,</li> <li>• Personality,</li> <li>• Engagement</li> <li>• Opportunities</li> </ul>
Godey et al. (2016)	Social media marketing efforts of luxury brands: Influence on brand equity and consumer behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entertainment,</li> <li>• Interaction,</li> <li>• Trendiness,</li> <li>• Customization, and</li> <li>• Word of mouth</li> </ul>
Kavisekera & Abeyssekera (2016)	Effect of social media marketing on the brand equity of online companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exposure</li> <li>• Consumer engagement</li> <li>• Fan loyalty</li> <li>• Influence</li> </ul>
Tresna & Wijaya, (2015)	The Impact of Social Media Towards Brand Equity: An Empirical Study of Mall X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identity</li> <li>• Conversation</li> <li>• Sharing</li> <li>• Presence</li> <li>• Reputation</li> <li>• Relationship</li> </ul>
Abu-Rumman & Alhadid, (2014)	The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Brand Equity: An Empirical Study on Mobile Service Providers in Jordan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online Communities</li> <li>• Interaction</li> <li>• Sharing of Content</li> <li>• Accessibility</li> <li>• Credibility</li> </ul>
Laroche, Habibi, & Richard, (2013)	To be or not to be in social media: How brand loyalty is affected by social media?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brand community on social media</li> </ul>
Angella J. Kim & Ko, (2012)	Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entertainment</li> <li>• Interaction</li> <li>• Trendiness</li> <li>• Customization</li> <li>• Word of mouth</li> </ul>
(Erdoğan & Çiçek, 2012)	The impact of social media marketing on brand loyalty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advantageous</li> <li>• Campaigns on social media</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant contents</li> <li>• Frequently updates</li> <li>• Popular among the friends</li> <li>• Appears on various platforms</li> </ul>
de Vries, Gensler, & Leeftang, (2012)	Popularity of Brand Posts on Brand Fan Pages: An Investigation of the Effects of Social Media Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vividness</li> <li>• Interactivity</li> <li>• Informational content</li> <li>• Entertainment content</li> <li>• Position</li> </ul>
(Jayasuriya N. et. al, 2018)		

Table (3): The most important social media variables according to different authors

As seen in table (3), authors believe many variables are the most important to focus on when creating your online strategy. However, the most common variables that researchers have agreed upon in the previous literature were entertainment, interaction with your followers, following the current trends, customization, and word of mouth (Jayasuriya N. et al., 2018). After attempting to analyze the variables that some researchers believe to be the main focus when creating an online strategy, in table (3), we look further into the components that could be considered the social media marketing building blocks.

According to Smith (2007), Peter Morville created a honeycomb model for user experience, and later on, Smith adapted that same model and created a social media marketing honeycomb model himself, as seen in figure (16):

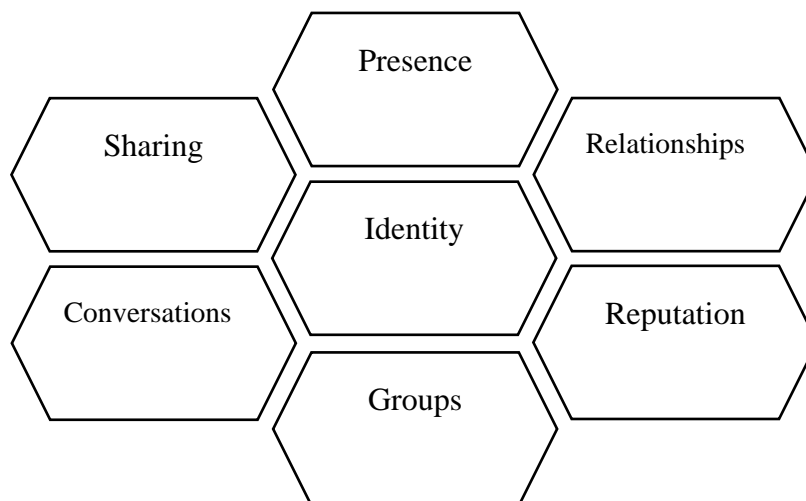


Figure: (16) The Honeycomb Model  
Smith (2007)

As seen in figure (16), the main building blocks for most social media platform's honeycomb models are Identity, presence, relationship, reputation, groups, conversations, and sharing

(Kietzmann et al., 2011). Each of these building blocks can help researchers understand the structure of each social media platform based on the services the platform provides (Khan & Jan 2015). Although these blocks are used to understand social media platforms, that does not mean they are part of every social media platform's building blocks.

Moreover, these blocks are not mutually exclusive; they only assist us in understanding how different levels of social media functionality can be created (Khan & Jan 2015).

The following table presents a summary of each of the blocks; in an attempt to get a better understanding of them in a social media sensation, the original blocks were as mentioned devised by (Kietzmann et al., 2011) but was later adapted by (Silva et al., 2020).

Social Media Function	Summary
Identity	An online Identity is more complex than an offline one. Thus, this block refers to what degree of information users or organizations have to disclose on a social media platform, for example, name, gender, marital status, corporate information).
Conversation	The level of communication between individuals on a specific social media platform.
Sharing	Sharing is in this sense focused on content, or to what extent does an individual share, upload, or consume content on a social media platform.
Presence	The presence block refers to the level at which one user can know if another user is accessible. This dimension includes the ability to know if another user is currently online on the platforms and, in some cases, their physical location.
Reputation	In a social media sense, reputation is about the level at which an individual can understand one's relative position in a society on a social media platform. Reputation on a social media site refers to the users' and organizations' ability to generate traffic to their social media profiles and pages; through creating content, other users and customers can share and give feedback on using likes and dislikes.
Relationships	Relationships in a social media sense are the degree to which users can be associated with each other. Associations in social media mean the level of relations users have (for example, friendship, part of a larger social group, part of the same sub-forum). This block can help understand the sharing and conversation blocks more.
Groups	This block refers to the level at which users can create groups, sub-groups, and communities on a social media site.

Table (4): summary of each of the honeycomb blocks.  
(Silva et al., 2020)

According to Silva et al. (2020), although these structural blocks were adapted to social media websites, most social media sites don't usually contain all these elements. However, most of these sites have at least three of them. Hence, every social media site has a different focus on the elements of the honeycomb model; the following are an example of how each platform's model is different than the other. Furthermore, in more recent years, many researchers adopted the honeycomb model to different social media platforms, as seen below:

The following figure (17) showcases the honeycomb blocks for Facebook, and the more important blocks are represented with, the darker colors:

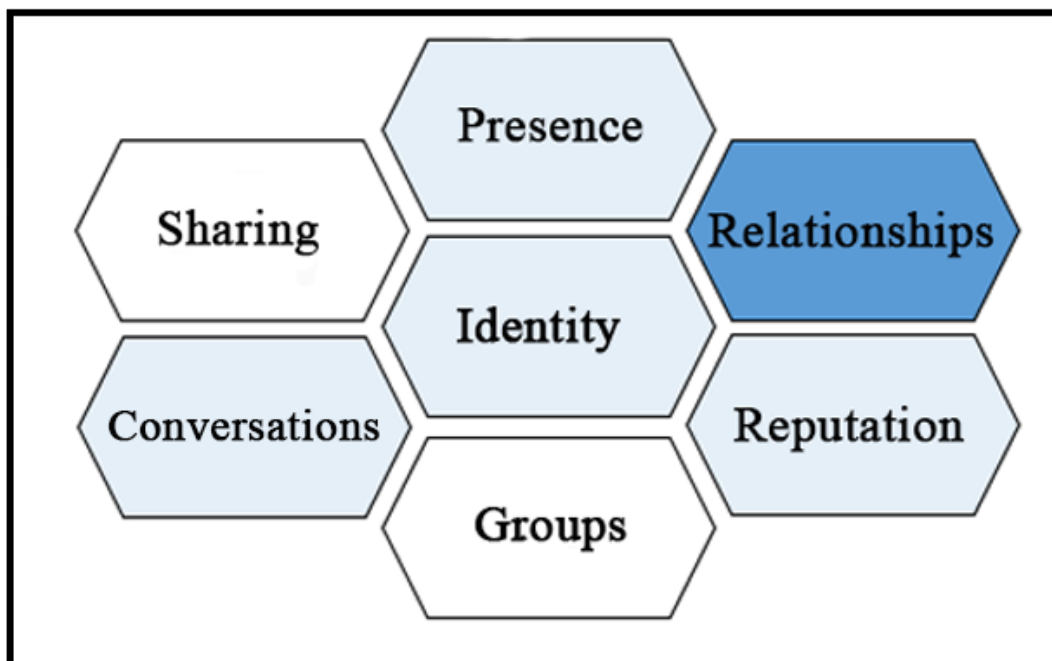


Figure (17): the honeycomb blocks for Facebook  
(Latib, L. et al., 2014)

Similarly, to what Latib, L. et al. (2014) did with the Facebook honeycomb blocks, Veissi, I. (2017) adopted the model for the Instagram honeycomb blocks as seen in figure (18):

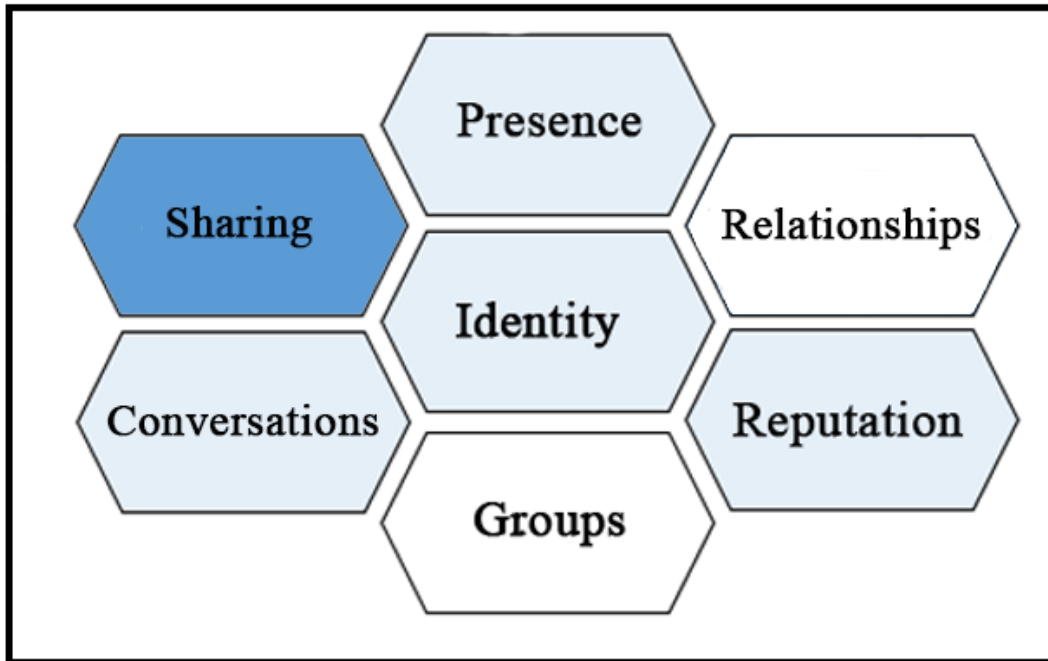


Figure (18): the honeycomb blocks for Instagram  
(Veissi, 2017)

As for Twitter, Hodeghatta U. & Sahney S. (2016) constructed a Twitter honeycomb model as seen in figure (19):

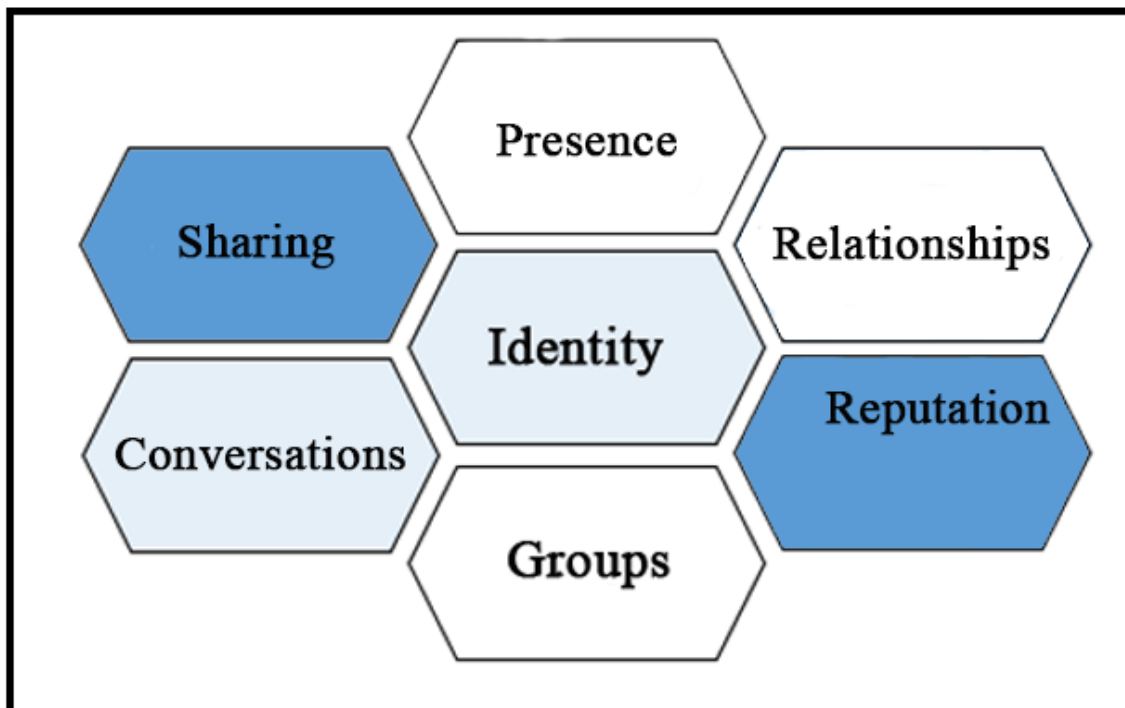


Figure (19): the honeycomb blocks for Twitter  
(Hodeghatta U. & Sahney S., 2016)

In the study done by Latib, L. et al. (2014), the researchers studied the results of Kietzmann et al. (2011) and adapted it to a specific social media platform, which was Facebook, and designed a honeycomb model as seen in figure (16). The honeycomb model for Facebook has (Identity, Presence, Reputation, Conversation) as important focus blocks and “Relationships” as a high priority block.

On the other hand, Twitter does not focus on the “Relationship” block at all; in fact, many Twitter users don’t even follow members of their family on Twitter and are more interested in viral Tweets from leaders of the Industry Hodeghatta U. & Sahney S. (2016). The Instagram honeycomb shows that the site is majorly focused on “Sharing”; which is expected in a photo-sharing platform, and similarly to Twitter, it has a low focus on “Relationships” and “Groups” professional Veissi, I. 2017).

Furthermore, in a study done by Paniagua, & Sapena (2014), that expanded on the results produced by Kietzmann et al. (2012), figure (20) shows us how social media and the resources provided by platforms can assist in the increase the development of business performance in financial, operational and corporate social performances:

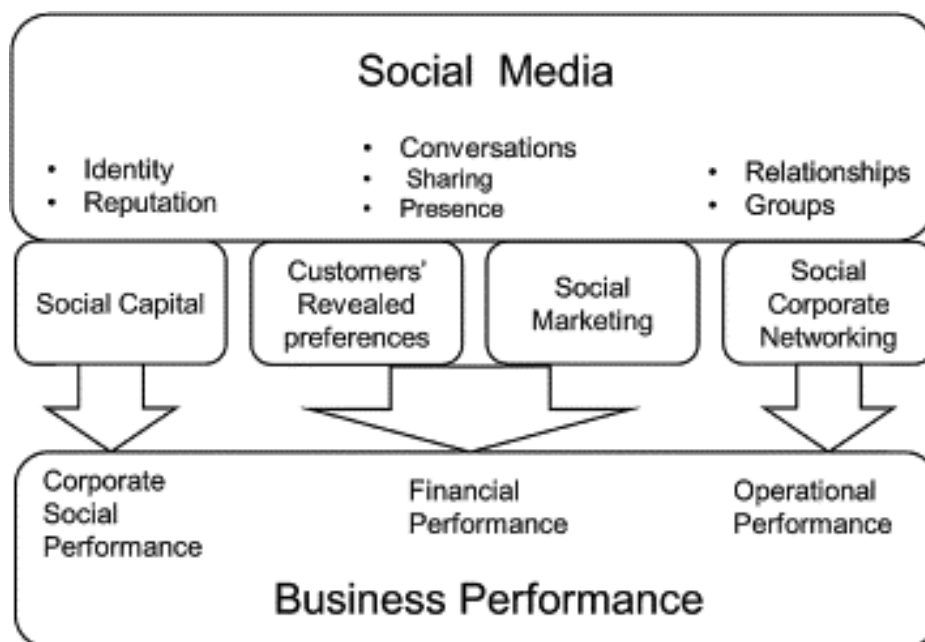


Figure (20): social media and business performance channels

Paniagua & Sapena (2014)

The study attempted to review the literature regarding the relationships between most of its variables, social media, branding, and customer trust. The moderating variable discussed in this study is online trust and how this variable affects the relationships between social media

and a business's brand image. The following chapter will discuss online trust and attempt to define it and provide the key dimension of online trust.

## 4 The Importance of Trust

The third variable which is being discussed in the study is the online trust variable, which in this study is the moderating variable. In this chapter, the study will discuss consumer trust and its importance and how it evolved in an online environment and will look at the effects social media had on online trust.

### 4.1 Customer Trust

Before the rise of the internet, customer trust was defined very differently than it is nowadays, there are many setting in which trust was defined before going online.

In the financial setting, trust was characterized as client trust in the quality and dependability of the administrations offered by the business (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999). It turns into the virtues that are set up to enhance their business-client relationship.

Furthermore, many marketers believed that to build a solid relationship with consumers, both online and offline, the key was gaining consumers' trust. Moreover, Trust was defined as the faith that customers have in these brands and alludes to the honest investment and engagement with the service provider (Peltier et al., 2006).

In business, consumer trust online refers to the certainty that one part of the customer-business relationship, in this case, the customer, has in the brands' dependability and trustworthiness to provide them with the promised goods or services (Chernev, 2018).

Thus, with customer trust being such an important mediator, many researchers have attempted to gain a better understanding of the concept and to understand the key dimensions of the trust concept. According to Shockley-Zalabak et al. (2010), there are four key dimensions to the trust concept:

- **Integrity:** In a brand sense, integrity refers to honesty and truth. There are many forms of integrity a company can demonstrate. Integrity can be demonstrated in the form of trust in the company's product excellence, in the form of trusting the company's commitment to excellence, or trust in the greatness of the product.
- **Competencies:** competencies are the set of skills and technical expertise that allows a company to do successfully perform, which comes as an inventory of expected skills, and behaviors.
- **Consistency:** can be shown in many forms; it could be the ability to trust a company to continue to produce advanced products and services, to trust the company to regularly put forward new innovative ideas and products, or to trust a company to always be able to compete with similar brands.

- Transparency: refers to trusting a company to be able to help its consumers who have had problems with certain products or services, trusting a company to have a financial solution for consumers than limited economic capabilities, trusting a company to create social programs for its community; either online programs or offline, or trusting a company to be able to create products and services that are helpful to its consumers.

Lu, Zhao and Wang (2010) further applied variables that we're close to the previously mentioned variables. For e.g.: familiarity, perceived similarity, structural assurance, and trust propensity as the precursors of trust in an online setting and between customers and other customers (C2C).

Furthermore, Fang et al. (2014) similarly added three variable that affected trust in a vendor online, which were the satisfaction with a vendor, the quality of the site used online, and the reputation of the vendor. However, they could not similarly add familiarity and satisfaction as variables due to insignificant paths on the internet.

The current literature supports the claims that consumers have a positive association between their intention to purchase and the degree of trust; having a higher level of trust in a business increases the consumer's intention to buy products from said business (Oliveira et al., 2017). Furthermore, in a recent study conducted by Issock Issock et al. (2020), their findings showed that customer trust is affected by clients' view of the cost and nature of the product, their demeanor towards such items, and their degree of fulfillment with the presentation of the items. Customer trust, thus, showed a positive effect on the purchase of specific products that the consumers are loyal to. As a focal variable, customer trust was found to be an important mediator in their conceptual model.

The following chapter discussed how consumer trust shifted into an online format and how it changed the dynamic of trust due to the consumer not physically being able to communicate with the retailers.



## **4.2 Online Trust**

The following chapter will discuss the third variable in this study, The study will attempt to gain a better understanding on how the moderating variable “Online Trust”, affects the relationship between social media and enhancing a brand’s image.

### **4.2.1 Early Trust online**

The following chapter will look into early studies of online trust, to gain a better understanding on how people viewed online trust and how businesses on the internet were perceived.

While client trust has been researched extensively by many marketing and psychology specialists, it has additionally gotten pertinent to Information Systems (IS) analysts who study online marketing. Online clients show low trust levels for electronic merchants and online advertising (Culnan and Armstrong, 1999), and that is a significant motivation behind why numerous clients don't shop on the web (Hoffman et al., 1999).

Given the absence of any physical connection, the virtual idea of a web store and web advertising, and frequently the absence of actual stores, client trust is hard to set up. An intermittent declaration of programmers breaking into organization information bases and taking MasterCard numbers and the overall obliviousness of many customers to the strength of encryption utilized today has likewise added to a diminishing in client trust on the web. The continuous discussion about security adds to the anxiety of online customers, further lessening their degree of trust. (Hoffman et al., 1999).

According to a study done by Koufaris M. & William-Hampton (2004) Absence of trust in online organizations is an essential motivation behind why many online clients don't shop on the web. The results of the study showed that demonstrate that an organization’s reputation online and the ability of a customer to customize the items they are about to order online influences the initial trust the customer experiences towards an organization; both in the actual business’s website or while being advertised by on social media platforms. Moreover, how useful the organization's website or social media profile, the convenience of that website, and security control are as well huge predecessors of initial trust.

Due to businesses online having many uncertain aspects, gaining consumers trust and maintaining it is significantly more important, but is much more difficult as well; due to the lack of face-to-face contact and the inability of the consumers to touch, smell, or taste the products being bought or advertised for (Bauman A., Bachman R., 2017).

Moreover, some researchers believe that if initial trust is not established when a consumer visits a business's website or social media page, then there is a slim chance of the consumer returning to the page again (Wang B. et al., 2011).

However, according to Sarkar & Das (2017) with the growth of e-commerce and online marketing, many of these fears and distrusts mentioned above were removed, shopping online in many countries has become the norm, Sarkar & Das (2017) as accredited this change in outlook towards trust online to the following variables: convenience, variety, consumer reviews. comparison shopping, discounts, delivery of products, and return of products.

Furthermore, there is a rapid development in the world of online applications and computer based software, this increase in apps is causing more and more people to be online for long periods of time, which is in turn causing an expand in web-based services, causing a great number of people to register and shop online, this increase in people's online presence has increased their E-Trust, and with multiple uses of online shopping, it increases their E-satisfaction, and with time increased their E-Loyalty (Ismail & Safa, 2014).

After discussing the evolution of online trust, the researcher will look into the variables that affects online trust and try and find in the previous literature the antecedents to gaining trust online.

#### **4.2.2 Online Trust Variables**

The existing literature shows a positive relation between online purchases by consumers, and the level of trust they have in the business they are buying from (Oliviera et al., 2017).

According to Falahat et al. (2019) the literature shows a positive relationship between online trust and the consumer intent of purchasing a product or a service. Falahat et al. (2019) further explores the antecedents and variables that lead to online trust. The study explored from the available literature the variables that affected consumer trust online:

##### **Brand Recognition**

The variable "Brand Recognition" depends in most cases on the previous experiences of users, whether it is a personal experience or the experience of other users that the consumer knows (Yoo & Kim, 2014). A study done by Thoma & Williams (2013) showed that when purchasing online the customers had the belief that the brand names displayed on the top of an e-commerce website, are the most prominent brand's, which affected their purchase decisions. Which showed that consumers in most cases made their purchasing decision based on either their personal preference or due to brand recognition.

### **Service Quality**

In a study performed by Wang & Zhang (2016), the findings showed that service quality is one of the leading factors for online service providers to achieve customer satisfaction and long-lasting development.

### **Customer Satisfaction**

Consumer satisfaction is a measurement of how happy or disappointed a customer feels after comparing the performance of an actual product with their expected performance (Purwanto & Kuswandi, 2017). The product or service should be up to the expectations of the consumer to achieve a high level of customer satisfaction (Purwanto & Kuswandi, 2017).

### **Online Security**

If customers lose faith in the protection of their private information on an e-commerce website, this would lead to the halt or slowing of the growth on said website. Information security and the online protection of a website is an issue amongst most online stores (Skitsko & Ignatova, 2016).

### **Word-of Mouth (WOM)**

The affects of Word-of-Mouth were discussed previously in the literature, and the literature showed that it is a crucial factor that marketers and researchers focus on in their online marketing strategy. Word-of-Mouth is a source of information from an individual, individuals, or even marketers, which can affect the consumers purchasing intent (Hidayanto et al., 2017). Consumer trust has an impact on whether or not they would use or continue to use an e-commerce website (Pavlou, 2003). Some customers are hesitant to shop online because they do not trust e-commerce companies.

The following sub-chapter looks at the effects of social media on gaining consumer trust online and how businesses can gain benefit from using social media marketing to gain the trust of these consumers.

### **4.3 Social Media and Online Trust:**

As mentioned, gaining customer trust could be harder to accomplish in an online environment than in an offline one; due to a lack of face-to-face interaction. However, some marketers believe social media can greatly assist in doing so (Irshad et al.,2020).

Social media provides a space for users to have interpersonal interactions, which makes it a great way of spreading eWOM; social media platforms can be a potential space for users that are interested in a company's products or actual former customers of that company (Henning-Thurau et al., 2004).

Accordingly, when members of the community share their experience with one another, this generates information that generally is considered more trustworthy to other consumers; since the company has no affiliation with the information shared (Lopez & Sicilia, 2014).

Thus, previous members of an online network can help increase the trust in a product by sharing their positive experiences with that product (Hajli et al., 2014), helping other users formulate an opinion about a product they are unfamiliar with (Seifert & Kwon, 2019).

Moreover, online networking actions of individuals help to share values, which further helps in building trust among them (Wu et al., 2010).

This could be further explained by the Trust Transfer Theory, and the theory occurs when “the unknown target [is] being perceived as related to the source of the transferred trust” (Stewart, 2004).

The theory is much easily applicable in an online format; companies use their social media pages and communities to appear as a part of the community, which causes the company to seem more relatable and personal (Rajkovic et al., 2020).

On the other hand, social media platforms provide companies with the ability to target their consumers with advertisements, tailoring and personalizing the ads to their targeted consumer demographic, based on what they have bought recently their interests and preferences, or even their browsing history (Bleier & Eisenbeiss, 2015).

Although one could assume that the personalizing advertisements could be more appealing to the consumers, some researchers believe that targeted ads could be damaging a consumer’s trust in the company (Bleier & Eisenbeiss, 2015).

Many consumers reported that they found the advertisements to be manipulating, invasive to their privacy, causing them to feel deprived of their freedom of choice when targeted with ads that are unseemly close to their preferences (Tucker C., 2012).

Edelman is a global communication company that partners with many companies around the world in order to assist these companies in maintaining and protecting their brands and reputation. In a study done by Edelman (2020), the data showed that 53% of consumers reported that trust in a brand is the second most important factor when viewing a product on social media platform; the first being the price, 70% reported that trusting a brand today is much more important than it was in the past; the belief was shared among all age groups, gender, and educational levels of the study, and 74% believe that the brand's impact on society is one of the main reasons why in this day and age brand trust is much more important (Edelman, 2020).

## 5 Methodology:

In this section of the study, the writer will focus on describing and outlining the methodological approach used in the study. This chapter will also showcase the tools used to gather data, and they were implemented to analyze the collected data.

### 5.1 The Research Paradigm

The paradigm wars have been going on and evolving for more than a century, researchers have been labeled as either positivists or interpretivism, causing a debate that revolves around the most effective way to gain knowledge. The research philosophy adopted by the researcher is considered to show the way that researchers view the world around them, as shown in figure (21), the research onion shows some of the research methods that will be discussed in this sub-chapter (Saunders et al., 2003):

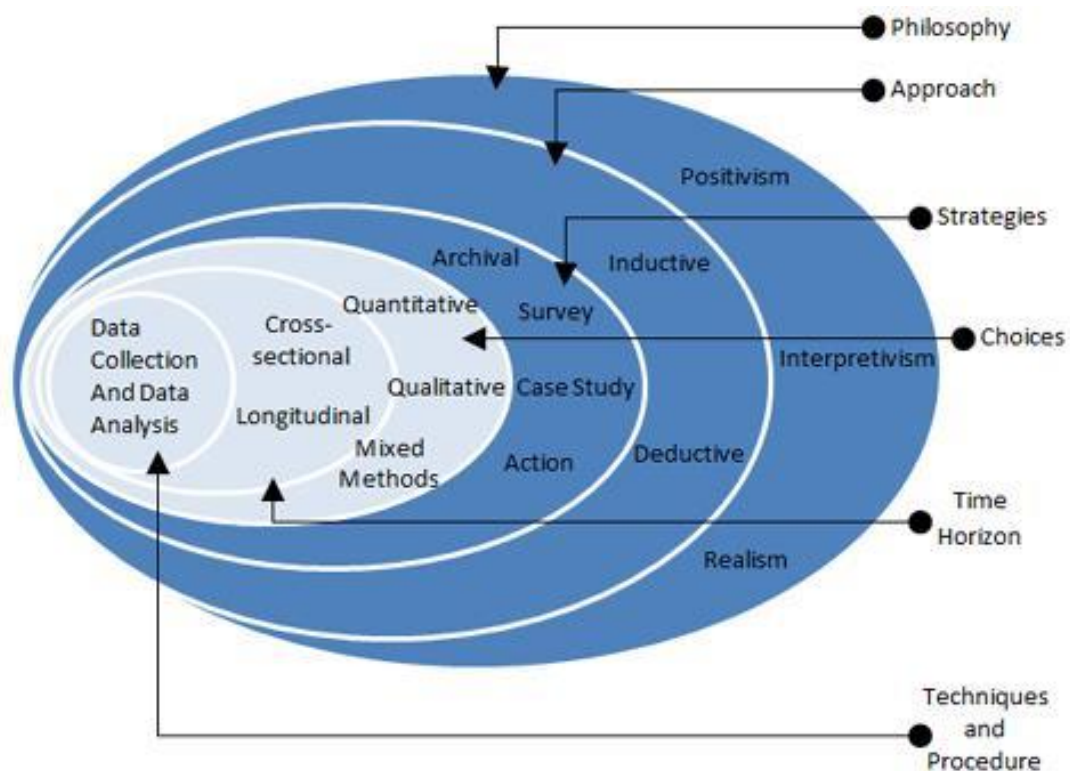


Figure (21) Research Onion

(Saunders et al., 2003)

Ontology is one of the branches of metaphysics and is the study of being. Ontological suppositions are focused on what people perceive as reality; it helps researchers find the true nature of how everything is and how it works in the world (Scotland, 2012). Epistemology is the study of the essence and construction of knowledge and how it came to be. Epistemology

is focused on what is considered an acceptable type of knowledge in a certain field of study (Saunders et al., 2003).

Ontology and epistemology focus on the truth of the knowledge attained. On the other hand, Axiology deals the values and ethics. Furthermore, most paradigms are based on their pillars of ontological and epistemological beliefs; each paradigm has its own ontological and epistemological outlooks, these paradigms have a different outtake on reality and knowledge. These differences are not strictly on their views but also in their methodology and methods of gathering data (Scotland 2012).

The two paradigms being discussed in the study are put under the labels post-positivist and interpretivist. Firstly, post-positivists, which is a western theory that helps the study of society and states that knowledge should come from sensory experiences and that the only method to gather data should be quantitative, as according to positivism, research findings are usually observable and quantifiable. Post-positivist research tends to be objective, and researchers try their best to avoid their own ideas affecting the results, and they critically analyze their findings to avoid being bias (Saunders et al., 2003).

The second paradigm is labeled under interpretivists, and in interpretivism it is believed that the researcher should interpret all the components of a study, interpretivism studies are usually more emphasis on the meaning behind the data and try to showcase different aspects of an issue, the method of data gather in interpretivism is qualitative in most cases. In qualitative research the approach tends to be inductive, researchers start their research with no pre-determined hypothesis, meaning they look for a pattern or meaning from the data gathered from interviews and other methods. However when choosing which paradigm to follow for this research, a third paradigm came to light; which is called pragmatism, pragmatism is a paradigm that focuses on the problem at hand and how to solve it; which aligned with the research objectives of this study, and it advocates the use of mixed methods in research, in this paradigm pragmatism refuses to make a choice between one method or the other if neither will work to achieve the best results for the study, thus pragmatism uses the research methods of both paradigms, in some cases qualitative and quantitative research methods are done simultaneously, and in other cases one after the other allowing the second method to expand on the results of the first method (Margolis 2003).

In this study, the researcher believes that the best way of gaining the specific information needed for the research is to use the mixed method to gain the knowledge needed through sensory experiences.

## **5.2 Research Strategy**

Tesch (1990) believes that qualitative is the only method to examine a hypothesis based on the social world functions. On the other hand, scholars such as Fred Kerlinger believe that everything can be quantifiable and that everything goes back to either one or zero.

The debate regarding the two methods has been going on since the 1980s; where some expected one to emerge victorious over the other, but what has been learned is that both are not mutually exclusive nor interchangeable, which shows that the use of one method is related to the type of study the researcher is doing, and in many cases using both maximizes the strengths of a study (Newman & Benz 1998).

Researchers have been debating which research method is considered the best when data gathering for a study, both quantitative researchers and qualitative ones have valid points to their argument.

However, in this research the method that will be used is a mixed method; which as the name suggests will be both quantitative and qualitative, carrying a mixed method research includes gathering, analyzing and clarifying all the information collected by using quantitative and qualitative methods, there is an increase in the number of researchers that are finding mixed methods as best of both worlds (Onwuegbuzie, Leech 2005).

## **5.3 Research Type: Applied**

Research could be categorized into applied business research and basic business research according to the area of its purpose. Researchers used applied business research to address a particular decision for a precise business or industry. While basic business research (pure research) is manipulated without a particular decision or judgment; and it typically does not meet the requirements of precise firm research. Moreover, basic research tries to increase the boundaries of knowledge in common; consequently, the two natures of research are not separated. This is because basic research frequently provides the fundamentals for future applied research.

#### **5.4 Population and Sampling of the Research**

The population is the whole collected entity with a particular set of shared characteristics. The sample size is a part of the population chose in a certain kind of method, which depends on the population of the study and work field. Sample must accurately represent the population for the purpose of generalization. Accordingly, the sample size is influenced by: the degree of heterogeneity in the population, desired precision, and the number of the subgroup of interest. And this study will be applied to the social media users in Jordan and the sample size will be 859 questionnaire takers for the questionnaire part and two companies of different sizes from each four different industries for the interviews.

#### **5.5 Data Collection Methods**

Data can be gathered from primary and secondary resources, and both resources are important for the study to achieve its aim and answer its questions. Each resource has its own tools to be collected. Sekaran (2006) argues that the tool of data collection depends on many factors such as the researcher's expertise, the degree of accuracy needed, the time frame for the study, and the availability of expenses and resources to conduct the data collection process. Secondary data can be collected from secondary sources, for example, company records or archives, industries and companies Web site, the internet, books and articles, and so on. In comparison, primary data can be collected through a questionnaire as the researcher knows precisely what is needed and how to measure the intended variables. Otherwise, the researcher should select another method like interviewing or observation (Sekaran, 2006; Zikmund et al., 2011).

For this study, secondary was collected through reviewing the literature and previous studies that related to social media networks, enhancing brand image, and online trust. The researcher gathered, examined, summarized, and compared data, theories, models, and results from different data sources such as texts, books, articles, managerial journals, all electronic sources, and published reports.

Primary data was gathered through a questionnaire distributed to 859 users online, and was distributed through social media groups on multiple social media platforms, and to friends and followers of the researcher online.

Furthermore, the Interviews were conducted with the managers or the employees in charge of social media in multiple businesses. The businesses were taken from four different industries and were from two different sizes for comparison purposes.

Using both methods was a way for the researcher to gather information from both consumers and businesses regarding their social media use.



The questionnaire questions were distributed as follows:

Question 1-10: social media and demographics questions.

Question 11-20: branding questions.

Question 20-33: customer trust questions.

For further information regarding the questionnaire questions please find the questionnaire in appendix (5).

As for the interviews questions and the interviewees please check appendix (6) to see the list of interviewees, the industries they were picked from and the questions for the interviews.

## **5.6 Research Quality Standard**

There are two main factors that influence the research outcomes, namely: validity and reliability. These two factors are defined as research quality Sekaran (2006). Research quality is about evaluating the research accuracy and correctness through effective, efficient, and easy-to-use measurement instruments. Accordingly, reliability and validity are the main factors to evaluate the measurement tools in order to reduce the possibility of getting any wrong answer (Blurnberg et al., 2011). In the same contest, Zikrnund et al. (2011) stated that reliability and validity are the two elements for assessing the measurement tools as the quality of research.

## **5.7 Statistical Methods Used**

The study applies correlation and descriptive statistical analysis to express the population sample and examine hypothesis via SPSS software, establishing descriptive analysis to consider frequencies and standard deviations, in addition to the survey's reliability depending on Cronbach's Alpha test. The relationship between variables (dependent and independent) was verified by multi regression test, hierarchical multi regression test, t-Test, F-Test (ANOVA). Furthermore, to define the significant level of each independent variable, Pearson correlation is applied to measure the correlation between independent and dependent variables.

## 6 Analysis

### 6.1 Descriptive Analyses of Demographic Characteristics

The descriptive analysis presents the main characteristics of all the respondents as 859 units to portray the frequencies of all the answers collected from the demographic characteristics, namely gender, age, and educational level.

#### 6.1.1 Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	406	47.3%
Female	453	52.7%
Total	859	100%

Table (5): Respondents' Gender

Table (5) describes the respondents' gender. The sample of study includes 406 males with a percentage of 47.3% and 453 females shaping a percentage of percent 52.7%.

#### 6.1.2 Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 20 Year	18	2.1%
20 – Less than 30	125	14.6%
30 – Less than 40	308	35.9%
40 – Less than 50	285	33.2%
Over 50 Year	123	14.3%
Total	859	100%

Table (6): Respondents' Age

Table (6) summarizes the respondents' age. The age of the largest group of the sample was (30 – Less than 40) years old with a percentage of 35.9%. The second-largest group was (40 – Less than 50) year old with a percentage of 33.2%. The third-largest group was (20 – Less than 30) year old with a percentage of 14.6%. The fourth-largest group was (Over 50 Years) old with a percentage of 14.3%. The smallest group was (Less than 20 Years) year old with the percentage of 2.1%.

### 6.1.3 Educational Level

<b>Educational Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Less than a high school diploma	7	0.8%
High school diploma	28	3.3%
University degree (Bachelor's degree, diploma)	632	73.6%
Higher education (Master's, PhD)	192	22.4%
Total	859	100%

Table (7): Respondents' Educational level

Table (7) summarizes the educational levels for respondents. The most frequent level 632 of respondents' education was reported as a university degree (Bachelor's degree, diploma) with a percentage of 73.6%. The second most frequent level 192 of respondents' education was reported as Higher education (Master's, Ph.D.) with the percentage of 22.4%. While the third group of respondents in terms of educational level 28 was reported as High school diploma with the percentage of 3.3%. The fourth group of respondents in terms of educational level 7 was reported as having Less than a high school diploma with the percentage of 0.8%.

### 6.2 Descriptive Analyses

The descriptive analysis presents the answers of all the respondents as 859 units to portray the frequencies of all the answers collected.

#### **Do you follow any brands or companies on social media?**

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	716	83.4%
No	143	16.6%
Total	859	100%

Table (8): Sampling unit answers to a question "Do you follow any brands or companies on social media?"

Table (8) describes the Sampling unit answers to the question " Do you follow any brands or companies on social media?". The sampling unit includes 716 Yes with a percentage of 83.4% and 143 No shaping a percentage of percent 16.6%.

**Have you ever followed a company or brand due to a friend following them or shared their content?**

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	673	78.3%
No	186	21.7%
Total	859	100%

Table (9): Sampling unit answers to a question " Have you ever followed a company or brand due to a friend following them or shared their content? "

Table (9) describes the Sampling unit answers to the question, " Have you ever followed a company or brand due to a friend following them or shared their content?". The sampling unit includes 673 yes with a percentage of 78.3% and 186 No shaping a percentage of percent 21.7%.

**Are you most likely to trust a brand that follows on social media?**

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	577	67.2%
No	282	32.8%
Total	859	100%

Table (10): Sampling unit answers to a question "Are you most likely to trust a brand that follows on social media? "

Table (10) describes the Sampling unit answers to the question " Are you most likely to trust a brand that follows on social media?". The sampling unit includes 577 Yes with a percentage of 67.2% and 282 No shaping a percentage of percent 32.8%.

### How many hours a day do you spend on social media?

Items	Value	Mean	St. deviation	18 hours	10 hours	5 hours	2 hours	1 hours	Total
<b>Gender</b>	Male	4.05	2.67	63	104	134	62	43	406
				15.5%	25.6%	33.0%	15.3%	10.6%	100.0%
	Female	4.46	3.95	51	107	209	86	0	453
				11.3%	23.6%	46.1%	19.0%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>Age</b>	Less 20	3.43	1.97	5	3	9	1	0	18
				27.8%	16.7%	50.0%	5.5%	0.0%	100.0%
	20-30	3.40	1.95	10	7	30	56	22	125
				8.0%	5.6%	24.0%	44.8%	17.6%	100.0%
	30-40	3.00	1.91	41	84	112	50	21	308
				13.3%	27.3%	36.4%	16.2%	6.8%	100.0%
	40-50	3.56	1.96	53	70	151	11	0	285
				18.6%	24.6%	53.0%	3.8%	0.0%	100.0%
	Over 50	2.89	1.83	5	47	41	30	0	123
				4.1%	38.2%	33.3%	24.4%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>Edu</b>	High school	3.17	1.50	1	0	1	5	0	7
				14.3%	0.0%	14.3%	71.4%	0.0%	100.0%
	Diploma	3.20	1.57	5	2	9	9	3	28
				17.9%	7.1%	32.1%	32.1%	10.8%	100.0%
	Bachelor	3.11	1.43	87	155	264	113	13	632
			13.8%	24.5%	41.8%	17.9%	2.0%	100.0%	
	Higher Edu	3.09	1.41	21	54	69	21	27	192
				10.9%	28.1%	36.0%	10.9%	14.1%	100.0%

Table (11): the results of the descriptive analysis for spending hours a day on social media

Table (11) shows the results of the descriptive analysis for spending hours a day on social media. The respondents indicate a moderate level of agreement for all the values of gender, age, and education, with mean values higher between 2.89 to 4.46. Among the value, “female” has the highest level of agreement (Mean=4.46; SD = 3.95). Meanwhile, the item “age” in the period less than 20 has the lowest level of agreement and intention the use of social media. Nevertheless, the result of the mean score for gender, age, and education shows that respondents agree that they have a moderate level for spending hours a day on social media. In addition, the values of standard deviation between 1.41 to 3.95 indicate the degree of variation was under normal distribution as suggested by Burn & Bush (2014).

Apart from mean and standard deviations as presented in Table (11), additional analyses of cross-tabulations were computed to compare categorical constructs of gender, age, and

education level. It can be seen that the majority (52.7%) of the respondents who were female possessed a higher mean score for spending hours a day on social media compared to male respondents. While, the case of those who were aged between 30-40 and 40-50 had a higher mean score (35.9%, 33.2%) for spending more hours a day on social media. However, those who were on university degree able to score higher mean for the use of social media on (N=632). On average, when compared to level education and age, youth respondents had a higher mean for focusing their time on several applications on social media with increasing hours spend.

### How many friends/followers do you have on your most used social media platform?

Items	Value	Mean	St. deviation	Less 100	100-300	300-600	600-1000	Over 1000	Total
<b>Gender</b>	FEMALE	3.16	1.50	61	43	128	103	71	406
				15.0%	10.6%	31.5%	25.4%	17.5%	100.0%
	MALE	1.17	1.37	13	115	159	82	84	453
				2.9%	25.4%	35.1%	18.1%	18.5%	100.0%
<b>Age</b>	Less 20	2.33	1.36	7	2	0	8	1	18
				38.9%	11.1%	0.0%	44.4%	5.6%	100.0%
	20-30	1.41	1.26	10	8	72	14	21	125
				8.0%	6.4%	57.6%	11.2%	16.8%	100.0%
	30-40	2.01	1.40	28	42	108	97	33	308
				9.1%	13.6%	35.1%	31.5%	10.7%	100.0%
	40-50	3.19	1.47	23	81	68	34	79	285
				8.1%	28.4%	23.9%	11.9%	27.7%	100.0%
	Over 50	2.21	1.32	6	25	39	32	21	123
				4.9%	20.3%	31.7%	26.0%	17.1%	100.0%
<b>Edu</b>	High school	2.00	1.41	1	0	1	5	0	7
				14.3%	0.0%	14.3%	71.4%	0.0%	100.0%
	Diploma	3.20	1.57	4	4	8	5	7	28
				14.3%	14.3%	28.6%	17.8%	25.0%	100.0%
	Bachelor	3.21	1.13	62	104	252	142	72	632
			9.8%	16.5%	39.9%	22.5%	11.4%	100.0%	
	Higher Edu	2.12	1.48	7	50	26	33	76	192
				3.6%	26.0%	13.5%	17.3%	39.6%	100.0%

Table (12): the results of the descriptive analysis for the number of friend's/followers respondents

Table (12) shows the results of the descriptive analysis for the number of friend's/followers respondents have on their most used social media platform. The respondents indicate a moderate level of agreement for all the values of gender, age, and education, with mean values higher between 3.21 to 1.17. Among the value, "female" has the highest level of agreement (Mean=3.16; SD = 1.50). Meanwhile, the item "age" in the period 30-40 and 40-50

has the highest level of agreement and intention to gain friends/followers on social media. Nevertheless, the result of the mean score for gender, age, and education shows that respondents agree that they have a moderate level for the number of friend's/followers respondents have on their most used social media platform. In addition, the values of standard deviation between 1.13 to 1.57 indicate the degree of variation was under normal distribution as suggested by Burn and Bush (2014).

Apart from mean and standard deviations as presented in Table (), additional analyses of cross-tabulations were computed to compare categorical constructs of gender, age, and education level. It can be seen that the majority (35.1%) of the respondents who were gain in the range 300-600 of friends/followers with the mean score for their most used social media platform. While in the case of those who were aged less than 20 had the lowest mean score (N=18) for interact or developed their circle from the number of friend's/followers on social media. However, those who possessed a diploma or had a bachelor's degree were able to score higher mean for the use of social media to connect more friends/followers on social media to their platform.

### 6.3 Analysis Adequacy of the Data to Test the Study Hypotheses

Before the test the hypotheses of the study, the researcher conducted some tests in order to ensure the adequacy of the data for the assumptions regression analysis; it was confirmed that there is no high correlation between the independent variables Multicollinearity using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and test Tolerance for each variable of the study variables taking into account the Variance Inflation Factor not to exceed the allowable value (10) And that the Tolerance value greater than (0.05).

Were also ensure that the data follow the normal distribution calculates the skewness coefficient, as the data follow a normal distribution if the value of the skewness coefficient is less than ( $\pm 1$ ). Table (13) shows the results of these tests.

No.	Independent Variables	VIEW	Tolerance	Skewness
1	Facebook	5.522	0.396	-0.571
2	Twitter	5.742	0.174	-0.986
3	Instagram	7.613	0.131	0.623

Table (13) Results of Variance Inflation Factor, Tolerance and skewness coefficient

Evident from the results listed in Table (13), there is no Multicollinearity between the independent variables, which confirms that the values of Variance Inflation Factor of the dimensions are (5.522, 5.742, and 7.613), respectively, less than (10) as can be seen that the values of Tolerance are (0.396, 0.174 and 0.131) which is greater than (0.05). This is an indication that there is no Multicollinearity between the independent variables. While to make sure that the data follow a normal distribution, the researcher calculates the Skewness coefficient where the values were less than ( $\pm 1$ ).

#### **6.4 Study Hypotheses Test**

In this section, the researcher divided into three hypotheses, the first hypothesis testing in simple regression analysis. The second hypothesis was tested through T-test and One-Way ANOVA. The third hypothesis was tested through Means and Standard Deviations.

In this section, the researcher divided the main hypothesis into three sub hypotheses the all-hypothesis testing in simple regression.

##### **6.4.1 First: Testing of the First Main Hypothesis**

**H01:** There is no impact of social media networks (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) on enhancing brand image at a level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

A Simple linear regression test is conducted to investigate Ho hypotheses. Results of the test are shown in table (14). From the table, the (R) value represents a good correlation and is (61.8%), which indicates that the relationship between social media networks and enhancing the brand image is generally considered a good impact size. The value of the coefficient of determination has been ( $R^2=0.382$ ), which means that (38.2%) of the change in the dependent variable (enhancing brand image) is caused by independent variables (social media networks); while the remaining proportion (61.8%) can be explained by other variables are not included in the regression model.

ANOVA table provides an F-test to determine whether the model is a good fit for the data. According to this p-value, it is. Since  $F(1, 857 \text{ degrees of freedom}) = 530.347$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ , which indicates that, overall, the regression model is statistically significant (a good fit for the relationship between social media networks and enhancing brand image).

The Coefficients table provides the necessary information to predict the enhancing brand image from various social media networks, as well as determine whether social media networks contribute statistically significantly to the model. Besides, B values for social media networks have reached (0.701), which indicates that predicting (70.1%) of the enhancing



brand image from social media networks. In other words, the results can be interpreted as (For every unit increase in social media networks, there is a (70.1%) unit increases in the predicted enhancing brand image).

Based on these results, accept the alternative hypothesis, and the null hypothesis should be rejected.

Dependent Variable	Model Summary		ANOVA			Coefficient		
	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	Sig.	B	t	Sig.
Enhancing Brand Image	0.618	0.382	530.347	1	0.000	0.701	23.029	0.000
				857				

Table (14): Simple linear regression analysis to ensure the impact of social media networks on enhancing brand image

### Three sub-hypotheses were formulated in this research:

H01-1: There is no impact of Facebook on enhancing brand image at level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

H01-2: There is no impact of Twitter on enhancing brand image at level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

H01-3: There is no impact of Instagram on enhancing brand image at a level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

**H01-1:** There is no impact of Facebook on enhancing brand image at level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

To test this hypothesis, the researcher uses simple regression analysis to ensure the impact of Facebook on enhancing brand image, as shown in Table (14).

A Simple linear regression test is conducted to investigate H01-1 hypotheses. The results of the test are shown in table (14). From the table, the (R) value represents a good correlation and is (57.8%), which indicates that the relationship between Facebook and enhancing the brand image is generally considered a good impact size. The value of the coefficient of determination has been ( $R^2=0.334$ ), which means that (33.4%) of the change in the dependent variable (enhancing brand image) is caused by independent variables (Facebook); while the remaining proportion (66.6%) can be explained by other variables are not included in the regression model.

ANOVA table provides an F-test to determine whether the model is a good fit for the data. According to this p-value, it is. Since  $F(1, 857 \text{ degrees of freedom}) = 430.159, p \leq 0.05$ ,

which indicates that, overall, the regression model is statistically significant (a good fit for the relationship between Facebook and enhancing brand image).

The Coefficients table provides the necessary information to predict the enhancing brand image from various Facebook, as well as determine whether Facebook contributes statistically significantly to the model. Besides, B values for social media networks have reached (0.670), which indicates that predicting (67%) of the enhancing brand image from Facebook. In other words, the results can be interpreted as (For every unit increase in Facebook, there is a (67%) unit increases in the predicted enhancing brand image).

Based on these results, accept the alternative hypothesis, and the null hypothesis should be rejected.

Dependent Variable	Model Summary		ANOVA			Coefficient		
	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	Sig.	B	t	Sig.
Enhancing Brand Image	0.578	0.334	430.159	1	0.000	0.670	20.740	0.000
				857				

Table (15): Simple linear regression analysis to ensure the impact of Facebook on enhancing brand image

**H01-2:** There is no impact of Twitter on enhancing brand image at level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

To test this hypothesis, the researcher uses simple regression analysis to ensure the impact of Facebook on enhancing brand image, as shown in Table (15).

A Simple linear regression test is conducted to investigate H01-2 hypotheses. The results of the test are shown in table (15). From the table, the (R) value represents a good correlation and is (52.9%), which indicates that the relationship between Twitter and enhancing the brand image is generally considered a good impact size. The value of the coefficient of determination has been ( $R^2=0.280$ ), which means that (28%) of the change in the dependent variable (enhancing brand image) is caused by independent variables (Twitter); while the remaining proportion (72%) can be explained by other variables are not included in the regression model.

ANOVA table provides an F-test to determine whether the model is a good fit for the data. According to this p-value, it is. Since  $F(1, 857 \text{ degrees of freedom}) = 333.509$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ,

which indicates that, overall, the regression model is statistically significant (a good fit for the relationship between Twitter and enhancing brand image).

The Coefficients table provides the necessary information to predict the enhancing brand image from various Twitter, as well as determine whether Twitter contributes statistically significantly to the model. Besides, B values for social media networks have reached (0.529), which indicates that predicting (52.9%) of the enhancing brand image from Twitter. In other words, the results can be interpreted as (For every unit increase in Twitter, there is a (52.9%) unit increases in the predicted enhancing brand image).

Based on these results, accept the alternative hypothesis, and the null hypothesis should be rejected.

Dependent Variable	Model Summary		ANOVA			Coefficient		
	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	Sig.	B	t	Sig.
Enhancing Brand Image	0.529	0.280	333.509	1	0.000	0.529	18.262	0.000
				857				

Table (16): Simple linear regression analysis to ensure the impact of Twitter on enhancing brand image

**H01-3:** There is no impact of Instagram on enhancing brand image at a level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ). To test this hypothesis, the researcher uses simple regression analysis to ensure the impact of Facebook on enhancing brand image, as shown in Table (16).

A Simple linear regression test is conducted to investigate H01-3 hypotheses. Results of the test are shown in table (17). From the table, the (R) value represents a good correlation and is (55.5%), which indicates that the relationship between Instagram and enhancing the brand image is generally considered a good impact size. The value of the coefficient of determination has been ( $R^2=0.308$ ), which means that (30.8%) of the change in the dependent variable (enhancing brand image) is caused by independent variables (Instagram); while the remaining proportion (69.2%) can be explained by other variables are not included in the regression model.

ANOVA table provides an F-test to determine whether the model is a good fit for the data. According to this p-value, it is. Since  $F(1, 857 \text{ degrees of freedom}) = 381.943$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ,

which indicates that, overall, the regression model is statistically significant (a good fit for the relationship between Instagram and enhancing brand image).

The Coefficients table provides the necessary information to predict the enhancing brand image from various Instagram, as well as determine whether Instagram contributes statistically significantly to the model. Besides, B values for social media networks have reached (0.555), which indicates that predicting (55.5%) of the enhancing brand image from Instagram. In other words, the results can be interpreted as (For every unit increase in Instagram, there is a (55.5%) unit increases in the predicted enhancing brand image).

Based on these results, accept the alternative hypothesis, and the null hypothesis should be rejected.

Dependent Variable	Model Summary		ANOVA			Coefficient		
	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	Sig.	B	t	Sig.
Enhancing Brand Image	0.555	0.308	381.943	1	0.000	0.555	15.943	0.000
				857				

Table (17): Simple linear regression analysis to ensure the impact of Instagram on enhancing brand image

#### 6.4.2 Second: Testing of the Second Main Hypothesis

**H02:** There is no significant moderate impact of online trust on the relationship between social media networks and enhancing brand image at a level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

The hierarchal multiple linear regression test results in Table (17) indicate the second study hypothesis testing. The study variables were entered into two models. In the first model, social media networks are entered as independent variables and the enhancing brand image as a dependent variable. Then, the interaction between social media networks and online trust entered into the dependent variable to detect the moderating role of the online trust and how the online trust contributes as a moderating variable in the relationship between social media networks and enhancing brand image.

Table (17) shows the moderate impact of online trust on the relationship between social media networks and enhancing brand image. The first model reflected based on the results the value of the correlation coefficient ( $R = 0.618$ ), which demonstrates that there is a positive

correlation between social media networks and enhancing brand image. The results also show the statistically significant impact of social media networks in enhancing brand image, with an F value of (530.347) since the p-value is less than (0.05). As the value of the coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.382$ ), this indicates that the social media networks explain (38.2%) of the variance in enhancing brand image.

In the second model, the entry of the moderate variable (online trust) to the regression model increased the value of the correlation coefficient to become ( $R = 0.720$ ), as well as the value of the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) increased (0.136), and this percentage statistically significant, where the value of ( $\Delta F = 243.292$ ) and the significance level (Sig.  $\Delta F = 0.000$ ) which is less than (0.05) as the slope value ( $B = 0.338$ ) at online trust and the (t Calculate) value was (15.598) since the p-value is less than (0.05). This confirms that there is a statistically significant impact of online trust (moderate variable) on the relationship between social media networks and enhancing brand image, where the percentage of interpretation of variation in enhancing brand image has improved, the percentage increased from (38.2%) to (51.8%).

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	The First Model			The Second Model		
		B	t	Sig.	B	t	Sig.
Enhancing Brand Image	Social Media Networks	0.701	23.029	0.000	0.677	7.334	0.000
	Social Media Networks × Online Trust				0.338	15.598	0.000
	R	0.618			0.720		
	$R^2$	0.382			0.518		
	$\Delta R^2$	0.382			0.136		
	$\Delta F$	530.347			243.292		
	Sig $\Delta F$	0.000			0.000		

Table (18): The Hierarchical Regression Testing to Test the Moderating Role of online trust on the relationship between social media networks and to enhance brand image

\* The effect is significant at level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ )

### 6.4.3 Third: Testing of the Third Main Hypothesis

**H03:** Higher levels of perceptions of Social Media Networks will be associated with higher levels of Enhancing Brand Image.

#### Descriptive Analysis

##### Means and Standard Deviations

The independent, dependent variables scale included five possible answers: 1: Strongly disagree - 5: Strongly agree to evaluate the perception of the dimensions in this study. The level range is calculated as:  $[(5-1) / 3 = 1.33]$ , which give the three-level ranges: Low (1.00 – 2.33), Medium (2.34 – 3.67) and High (3.68 – 5.00).

##### Means and Standard Deviations of perceptions of Social Media Networks:

The mean score of the total perceptions of Social Media Networks variable is 3.02, with a standard deviation at 0.937.

The perceptions of Social Media Networks variable included 13 items: Creating raffles for customers to join and potentially win. 3.53 (SD 1.352) as the highest rank. And the lowest item answering back to any comment posted on their page. 3.04 (SD 1.435). The mean range (3.04-3.53) and the standard deviation range (1.435-1.352) indicate a medium level in perceptions of Social Media Networks.

No	Item	Mean	SD	Importance	Rank
1	Posting about their products and promotions.	3.44	1.304	Medium	2
2	Posting content on a regular basis.	3.32	1.229	Medium	4
3	They are answering back to any comment posted on their page.	3.04	1.435	Medium	7
4	They were responding to any direct messages sent to them on their platforms.	3.34	1.388	Medium	3
5	Gives valuable information about their products or services.	3.26	1.344	Medium	5
6	Sharing funny and fascinating content. (Unrelated to their produces)	3.24	1.264	Medium	6
7	They were creating raffles for customers to join and potentially win.	3.53	1.352	Medium	1

8	Perceptions of Social Media Networks	3.02	0.937	Medium	
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Table (19): Means and standard deviations of perceptions of Social Media Networks.

#### 6.4.4 Forth: Testing of the Forth Main Hypothesis

**H04:** There is no significant difference in perceptions of social media networks among respondents' groups according to demographic variables (gender, education, and age) at level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

This H04 hypothesis included three sub hypotheses:

H02-1: There is a significant difference in perceptions of social media networks according to gender.

H02-2: There is a significant difference in perceptions of social media networks according to educational level.

H02-3: There is a significant difference in perceptions of social media networks according to age.

To test this hypothesis Independent Sample t-test was run, as shown below:

**H02-1:** There is a significant difference in perceptions of social media networks according to gender.

The result of the Independent T-Test in table (20) points out that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean levels of perceptions of social media networks in terms of gender groups (Sig = 0.550). Therefore, we have to accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative one.

	Size (n)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Deviation	t	Sig.
Perceptions of Social Media Networks	406	-0.047	0.064	-0.748	0.550
	453	-0.047	0.064		

Table (20): Independent t-Test of difference according to gender

**H02-2:** There is a significant difference in perceptions of social media networks according to educational level.

To test this hypothesis, One-way ANOVA was run, as shown below:

The table (21) shows, there are no significant differences in perceptions of social media networks between the respondents' according to educational level groups, since the value of the sum of squares between groups (4.381) at (3) degrees of freedom, and the value (F) calculated was (1.667), and the level of significance (Sig = 0.173), which is definitely greater than (0.05) and not statistically significant, therefore, the null hypothesis should be accepted that refer to “There is no significant difference of perceptions of social media networks according to educational level,” and rejected the alternative hypothesis.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.381	3	1.460	1.667	0.173
Within Groups	749.026	855	0.876		
Total	753.407	858			

Table (21): One-way ANOVA: Difference in perceptions of social media networks according to educational level

**H02-3:** There is a significant difference in perceptions of social media networks according to age.



To test this hypothesis, One-way ANOVA was run, as shown below:

The table (22) shows, there are no significant differences in perceptions of social media networks between the respondents' according to age groups, since the value of the sum of squares between groups (12.668) at (4) degrees of freedom, and the value (F) calculated was (3.651), and the level of significance (Sig = 0.006), which is definitely less than (0.05) and statistically significant, therefore, the null hypothesis should be rejected that refer to “There is a significant difference of perceptions of social media networks according to age,” and accepted the alternative hypothesis.

	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Between Groups	12.668	4	3.167	3.651	0.006
Within Groups	740.738	854	0.867		
Total	753.407	858			

Table (22): One-way ANOVA: Difference in perceptions of social media networks according to age

### 6.5 Study Tool Reliability

Table (23) shown Cronbach's alpha values, was used to determine the internal consistency reliability of the elements. Reliability should be (0.60) or higher to indicate adequate convergence or internal consistency (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

<b>No.</b>	<b>Variable</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Cronbach's alpha Value</b>
1	Social Media Networks		82.9%
	1	Facebook	79.2%
	2	Twitter	78.5%
	3	Instagram	81.4%
2	Enhancing Brand Image		72.2%
3	Online Trust		86.7%
	All Questionnaires		80%

Table (23) : reliability of the Questionnaires Dimensions

### Normal Distribution of Study Variables

In order to verification of the study results, the researcher carried out the Kolmogorov - Smirnov Test to verify the absence of study data from the statistical problems that may adversely impact the results of the test study hypotheses, as is shown in the table (24).

No.	Variables	Kolmogorov – Smirnov	Sig.*	Result
1	Social Media Networks	1.226	0.141	Follows a normal distribution
1 - 1	Facebook	1.821	0.135	Follows a normal distribution
1 - 2	Twitter	1.416	0.081	Follows a normal distribution
1 - 3	Instagram	1.041	0.154	Follows a normal distribution
2	Enhancing Brand Image	1.032	0.166	Follows a normal distribution
3	Online Trust	1.117	0.093	Follows a normal distribution

Table (24): Normal Distribution of Study Variables

Distribution is normal when the significance level ( $\alpha > 0.05$ ).

In view of the above table and at the significance level of ( $\alpha > 0.05$ ), it is apparent that the distribution of all variables was normal where the normal distribution ratio for each variable is greater than (0.05), which is approved level in the statistical treatment of the current study.

### 6.6 Descriptive Statistics

This section presents the summary statistics for all the constructs and their respective measurement items which were confirmed to be good from the preceding reliability and validity tests. The descriptive statistics used comprised of the mean for the measures of central tendency as well as the standard deviation for the measures of dispersion. For all the measurement items, the 5-point Likert scale was used and this meant that the mid-point for the evaluation of the mean rating was 3.0. The respective results for all the constructs and

sub-constructs are presented below. The independent, dependent, and moderating variables scale included five possible answers: 1: Strongly disagree - 5: Strongly agree to evaluate the perception of the dimensions in this study. The level range is calculated as:  $[(5-1) / 3 = 1.33]$ , which give the three level ranges: Low (1.00 – 2.33), Medium (2.34 – 3.67) and High (3.68 – 5.00).

### 6.6.1 Social Media Networks

The summary statistics for the social media networks construct, is presented in Table below. all the mean ratings were greater than the midpoint and this shows that the participants generally agreed with all the measured aspects. The highest mean rating was that posting about their products and promotions ( $\mu = 3.44$ ;  $\sigma = 1.304$ ). On the other hand, the least mean rating was that sharing funny and fascinating content (unrelated to their products) ( $\mu = 3.04$ ;  $\sigma = 1.264$ ). The overall mean rating for social media networks ( $\mu = 3.02$ ;  $\sigma = 0.937$ ) was satisfactory given that this was greater than the midpoint.

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Posting about their products and promotions.	3.44	1.304
Posting content on a regular basis.	3.32	1.229
Answering back to any comment posted their page.	3.26	1.435
Responding to any direct messages sent to them on their platforms.	3.34	1.388
Gives valuable information about their products or services.	3.26	1.344
Sharing funny and fascinating content. (Unrelated to their products)	3.04	1.264
Creating raffles for customers to join and potentially win.	3.25	1.352
<b>Overall Social Media Networks</b>	<b>3.02</b>	<b>0.937</b>

Table (25): Descriptive Statistics - Social Media Networks

### 6.6.2 Brand Image

The summary statistics for the brand image construct, is presented in Table below. all the mean ratings were greater than the midpoint and this shows that the participants generally agreed with all the measured aspects. The highest mean rating was that family or friend recommendations ( $\mu = 3.37$ ;  $\sigma = 1.306$ ). On the other hand, the least mean rating was that the company's social media presence ( $\mu = 3.13$ ;  $\sigma = 1.231$ ). The overall mean rating for brand image ( $\mu = 3.21$ ;  $\sigma = 1.061$ ) was satisfactory given that this was greater than the midpoint.

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
The company's social media presence	3.13	1.231
User reviews on social media platforms	3.28	1.395
Advertisements that pop up on your social media pages.	3.26	1.252
Family or friend recommendations.	3.37	1.306
<b>Overall Brand Image</b>	<b>3.21</b>	<b>1.061</b>

Table (26): Descriptive Statistics - Brand Image

### 6.6.3 Online Trust

The summary statistics for the online trust construct, is presented in Table below. all the mean ratings were greater than the midpoint and this shows that the participants generally agreed with all the measured aspects. The highest mean rating was that Brands are interested in my well-being, not only its own ( $\mu = 3.90$ ;  $\sigma = 0.702$ ). On the other hand, the least mean rating was that I believe that brands I follow on social media act on my best interest ( $\mu = 3.64$ ;  $\sigma = 0.65$ ). The overall mean rating for online trust ( $\mu = 3.63$ ;  $\sigma = 0.377$ ) was satisfactory given that this was greater than the midpoint.

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
I believe that brands I follow on social media act on my best interest.	3.64	0.659
If I require any inquiries, the brands I follow would do its best to help me.	3.84	0.580
Brands are interested in my well-being, not only its own.	3.90	0.702
Brands I follow are truthful in their dealings with me.	3.65	0.648
I would characterize the brands I follow on social media as truthful.	3.65	0.621
If I order from any of the brands, I follow on social media, I am comfortable about my purchase.	3.81	0.624
I believe that the brands I follow will meet their obligations when I make a purchase off their pages.	3.78	0.618
I always feel confident that I can rely on the brands I follow to do their part when I interact with them.	3.75	0.625
Most Internet vendors do a capable job at meeting customer needs.	3.84	0.623
I feel that most big brands I follow are good at what they do.	3.74	0.586
I feel assured that legal and technological structures adequately protect me from problems on the Internet.	3.82	0.664
I feel confident that encryption and other technological advances on the Internet make it safe for me to do business there.	3.81	0.634
In general, the Internet is now a robust and safe environment in which to transact business.	3.86	0.651
<b>Overall Online Trust</b>	<b>3.63</b>	<b>0.377</b>

Table (27): Descriptive Statistics - Online Trust

## 7 Discussion

The first part of the discussion will attempt to analyze the demographics of the questionnaire takers and attempt to gain a better understanding of the social media demographics in Jordan. The data will also be compared against data from previous years.

Table (5) describes the genders of the respondents and shows that the number of female social media users in the sample was slightly higher than male respondents, with the females being 2.7% higher.

According to Statista (2020) the studies reported that in (2020), the number of male users that were on social media platforms in Jordan was at 59%, with the female users being at 41%, which shows an increase in the number of female social media users.

Accordingly, when comparing the (2021) report with the one published in (2014), there is also a significant increase in the number of female social media users; the number of users in (2014) was 61% male users and 39% female users. Moreover, these results also coincide with reports given by the (United Nations; US Census Bureau) in February 2020 where it showed male and female users being at 51% male users and 49% female, which could prove that there is an increase in the number of female users yearly.

This increase in the number of female users could be due to a number of reasons. Firstly, Jordan is a middle eastern country, with a “traditional” and “conservative” culture, and middle eastern culture also focuses on family values and family ties, where women usually assume the wife and mother role in this family; it could be due to the fact that a Jordanian family currently has an average of (5.1) family members per family, with an average of (2.6) children (Jordanian Department of Statistics, 2018).

Moreover, according to Kawar (2000), wages for female workers in the labor force economy-wide are lower than that of men, and many jobs are still segregated, and others are considered male-only. On account of this high wage gap and high fertility rate, women would sometimes be inclined to assume the family's mother role to take care of the children. This could explain the rapid increase of female users; staying home could allow easier access to social media networks.

The impact of the COVID-19 virus caused many Jordanians to have more time on their hands. In a report done by the United Nations Development Program on the impact of COVID-19 on Jordanian households, the report showed that out of all the respondents, only 6.8% reported that their employment terms had stayed the same as before, with almost 63% reporting that

they have lost their employment or they are only getting to work part-time, which can also explain the increase in social media users for both genders in Jordan. (UNDP 2020).

The effects of COVID-19 did disrupt not only the working lives of adults but also the educational lives of students. Many governments had restricted all educational institutions from face-to-face teaching, causing all students to switch from studying in a classroom with their colleagues to online and virtual education overnight (Dubey & Tripathi, 2020), and Jordan was one of these countries.

Research shows that school students were having the hardest time coping with this new form of learning due to them requiring more assistance in their learning, thus adding more stress not only for the students but sometimes for the parents. As mentioned earlier, in many cases in the Jordanian household, the female plays the “mother” or “housewife” role; this led to some female workers having to stay home with the kids, giving them more time to access social media platforms (Putri et al., 2020).

Furthermore, In the interview conducting by the researcher with a number employees in multiple businesses, across multiple industries, when asked about their activities during the Covid-19 crisis most large businesses responded positively, by stating that during the Covid-19 crisis; even when they were not open for business, they tried to keep in touch with their brand’s followers.

Table (6) showcases the age groups of the respondents; as seen in table (6), the age of the largest group of the sample was (30 – Less than 40) years old with the percentage of 35.9%. The second-largest group was (40 – Less than 50) year old with a percentage of 33.2%. The third-largest group was (20 – Less than 30) year old with a percentage of 14.6%. The fourth-largest group was (Over 50 Years) old with a percentage of 14.3%. The smallest group was (Less than 20 Years) year old with the percentage of 2.1%.

However, the data provided in Appendix (1C) shows that the Levant area’s age breakdown, which Jordan is part of, is more skewed towards the (less Than 30) category. Moreover, the Central Intelligence Agency (2020) also considers Jordan a youthful country, with 33.05% being under the age of 14 years.

Furthermore, studies have shown that brand awareness majorly affects brand equity in the youth demographic more than other age groups, the studies show that the younger generations usually gather information about a product or service online before purchasing the product (Sasmita et al., 2015).

This difference in the age groups could be accredited to the data gathered by the questionnaire being mainly gathered through groups and pages on Facebook. According to Lang N. (2015)

and De Veirman et al. (2020), their research has led them to believe that Facebook's popularity has reached its tipping point; the younger demographic numbers, in particular, have plummeted the most, and most younger users are switching to other social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, to be their go-to social media platform.

Moreover, the data provided by Appendix(1C) is also covering the entire Levant area, of which Jordan is a small part. Additionally, due to almost 33% of the Jordanian population being under the age of 14, many of them would not have the means to log into social media platforms or even be exposed to the survey (Central Intelligence Agency, 2020)

Table (7) summarizes the educational levels of the respondents. The largest group of respondents was the university degree holders (Bachelor's degree, diploma), with 73.6% of the respondents being that group. The second-largest group of respondents' educational level reported was the higher education degree holders (Master's, Ph.D.), with 22.4% of the respondents being in the group. In comparison, the third group of respondents in terms of the educational level was reported as High school diploma holders, 3.3% of the respondents belonging to that group. The fourth group of respondents in terms of educational level 7 was the "less than high school diploma" holders, which contained only 0.8% of respondents.

Jordan is a poor country with a low GDP, in contrast to most of the other Middle Eastern countries. However, it prides itself on its trained manpower and education; many of the neighboring more developed countries have used Jordanian engineers and workers to establish their infrastructure (Zughoul, 2000).

The educational level in Jordan is among the highest in the Arab region. Thus, many foreign students have chosen it as a study destination; in the year 2017, there were over 40,000 foreign students studying in Jordan, representing 107 countries worldwide, and the plan was to increase these numbers to over 70,000 by the year 2020 (Ministry of Higher Education, 2017).

Universities in Jordan have a range of study programs and are taught in both Arabic and English, and there are three types of universities and educational institutes in Jordan: Public universities, private universities, and other institutes with special natural features, and are all subject to international standards of accreditation (Ministry of Higher Education, 2021).

There are over 30 public and private universities in Jordan; which is considered a large number for such a small country, and over 50 community colleges (Ministry of Higher Education), and a reported (298819) undergraduate students and (27563) post-graduate students last year (Department of Statistics, 2020).



These high numbers of students, both under-graduate and post-graduate, and the high level of focus on education in Jordan, could explain the high number of university degree holders in the questionnaire respondents, and considering the low number of respondents under the age of 20, this could explain the reasoning of why not many of the respondents were less than high-school diploma holders.

In the following Table (8), respondents were asked, " Do you follow any brands or companies on social media?". The sampling unit includes 716 Yes with a percentage of 83.4% and 143 No shaping a percentage of percent 16.6%.

In the following table (8), respondents were asked, " Do you follow any brands or companies on social media?". The sampling unit includes 716 respondents Yes with a percentage of 83.4% and 143 No shaping a percentage of percent 16.6%.

Nowadays, consumers can contact their favorite brands on social media and expect a response in most cases. Brands can now engage their followers in more interactive ways than before, and large organizations can gain a deep relationship with their consumers through their Brand on social media. These interactions and user-generated content and experience dominates the marketing communication implementation over social networks (Enginkaya & Hakan, 2014) Furthermore, researchers have found five motivations for consumers following bands:

- **Brand Affiliation:** this concept has been studied by researchers and psychologists; in many cases, brand affiliation could be considered a sense of connection between consumers and the brand they follow. When applied to a marketing context, it's when consumers identify and associate themselves with organizations that reflect and reinforce their self-identities (Longinos M., De Maya S., 2011).
- **Conversation:** social media provides a very easy way to contact the brands a consumer is following; it provides consumers with a method to provide feedback to a Brand's product or service. Additionally, the feedback is transmitted instantly without the boundaries of time and space, and it is simple and free (Enginkaya & Hakan, 2014).
- **Opportunity seeking:** this motivation represents the beneficial reasoning of the consumers to follow a brand. Promotions and discount campaigns are usually a big selling point for consumers to follow a brand. Consumers can check for discounts and offers from a brand by just checking the brand's social media page; rather than having to check the physical store.
- **Entertainment:** The entertainment industry on social media has grown massively, and the rest of the entertainment industry has been obligated to yield its power to the social media content creators and their followers. Games, videos, and posts created or shared by the

brand provides an opportunity for many users to have fun spending their time on social media (Cunningham & Craig, 2019)

- Investigation: Investigation is a motivation for users that require information about a certain brand's services or products, most product-related information can be found on social media, and in most cases, the information is reliable, and this allows transparent integration between the brand and its consumers (Enginkaya & Hakan, 2014).

These motivations can provide us with a better understanding of why many of the respondents did follow brands on social media.

In the next table, Table (9) describes the sampling unit answers to a question " Have you ever followed a company or brand due to a friend following them or shared their content?". The sampling unit includes 673 Yes with a percentage of 78.3% and 186 No, shaping a percentage of percent 21.7%.

The information provided in the table agrees with the research of many marketers, "word-of-mouth" (WOM) is one of the main advantages of using social media marketing. In an attempt to understand why users would choose to spread (WOM) about a specific brand, Henning-Thurau et al. (2004) developed a framework to attempt to understand what motivates consumers to share their experiences and had categorized these motives into five categories:

- Focus related utility: the need to add value to the community the individual is part of; focus related utility motivates the consumer to attempt to help his fellow community members by sharing his experience; whether negative or positive.
- Consumption utility: when an individual is assisted by another community member's experience in their own purchase, the individual is then motivated to help the other community members; the same way he was helped.
- Approval utility: When a user receives praise from the online community for their contribution. The praise could be in a formal or informal manner.
- Moderator-related utility: this type of motive is more towards negative experiences, and it is when there is a third party that relays the community's experience to the producers or retailers.
- Homeostase utility: the final type of motivation comes from "Balance Theory," and it is when an individual tries to keep a balanced state; balance state in purchasing is when a consumer buys a product and is either impacted positively or negatively by it, then the consumer tries to praise the product to their community, or vent their frustrations if it was a negative experience.

Furthermore, some researchers believe that psychological ownership is another reason some users choose to spread (WOM); as mentioned in the literature review, researchers have defined brand psychological ownership as a mental state where some consumers or brand followers consider a specific brand as a whole or a part of it as theirs. Some individuals, in many cases, can form a sense of ownership for tangible and intangible items; this sense of ownership could be towards a car, brand, country, or destination and could be a motivator to spreading (WOM).

In the interviews conducted, all managers and employees interviewed, when asked about some of the the reasoning behind using social media platforms, they answered with” Increasing customer clientele and brand awareness”, which also shows importance of spreading (WOM) on social media to managers as well.

In the next table, Table (10) describes the Sampling unit answers to the question " Are you most likely to trust a brand that you follow on social media?". The sampling unit includes 577 “Yes” with a percentage of 67.2% and 282 “No” answers, which was shaping a percentage of percent 32.8%.

As mention in previous chapters, online trust is considered one of the major factors companies focus on when branding online. In a study done by the company Edelman (2020), the data showed 53% of consumers reported that trust in a brand is the second most important factor when buying a product, the first being the price.

An interview with the marketing manager in a large food service industry revealed “there is a good relationship between online trust and the brand's image of our company”. Similarly, in the same industry the general manger of a small food service company replied with “there is a strong correlation between online trust and the brand's image of our retailer”.

While 70% believe that online trust today is much more important than it was in previous years, 81% believe that personal vulnerability is one of the main reasons why brand trust is much more important now, and 74% believe that the brand's impact on society is one of the main reasons why in this day and age brand trust is much more important (Edelman, 2020).

With online trust becoming more and more important to brands, many researchers attempted to find a better understanding of the factors that impact a consumer’s trust in a business. In a study conducted by Robbins and Judge (2007), the researchers believed that there are four key dimensions to the trust concept; which were discussed in depth in the literature review:

- Integrity
- Competencies
- Consistency

- Transparency

Thus, with businesses and researchers being as focused on trust as they currently are, this could give a better understanding of why 67% of brand followers trust the brands they are currently following.

An interview with a marketing manager in a large company in the food industry sector states: "We have to create online trust with those interacting with us in order to maintain a respected brand image". Similarly, an owner of a SME in the same industry mentioned, "there is a good relationship between online trust and the brand's image in all companies operating in Jordanian food industry".

An interview with a social media director in a large company in the computer hardware sector states: "Online presence creates online trust that could influence the perception and brand image therefore yes there is a relationship that results in increasing the sales volume."

The following tables are descriptive tables, made to see the frequency of (Hours/followers) on social media platforms:

The first table (11) shows the results of the descriptive analysis for spending hours a day on social media. As seen in the table, the number of hours was distributed according to gender, age, and educational level. According to the gender section of the table, the highest percentage of male users, which was 33%, end up spend around 5 hours a day on social media platforms, followed by 25.6% of the respondents answering that they spend 10 hours on social media platforms, surprisingly the smallest group of male users answered that they spend an hour a day on social media platforms, with only 10.6% of the respondents providing that answer.

Similarly, to the male section, the biggest group of female users spends 5 hours a day on social media platforms as well, with 46% of the respondents. The most surprising answer for females is that none of the female users answered that they spend less than 2 hours on social media. The table could suggest that, as mentioned previously, many female users in Jordan assume the "mother" role in the family, allowing them to spend more time on social media sites.

The age groups in Table (11) have shown that the highest frequency in the number of hours for most age groups is five hours, with the exception of the (20-30) age group, the highest frequency of respondents answering two hours.

As for the lowest frequency, similar to the highest frequency of respondents, most age groups followed the same pattern. The lowest time spent for most age groups was 1 hour, and similar

to the highest frequency, the only different group was the (20-30) group, which had the lowest frequency of 18 hours.

The final section of the table shows the number of hours in relation to the level of education, the number of hours spent by the group “less than high school diploma” answered that 71.4% of the respondents spend around 5 hours on social media platforms, and the lowest number of respondents answered with (10 hours) and (1hour), this could be due to the small size of respondents in this age group.

The second level of education showcased in table (11) is the “high school diploma” group; the highest number of respondents in this group answered that they spent 5 hours, with 32.1% of the respondents choosing that answer. Equally, the respondents that answered 2 hours were at 32.1%, with an equal number of respondents.

The largest number of users by far in table (11) was the “Bachelor degree holders,” the highest frequency of respondents answered that they spend 5 hours on social media platforms each day, and lowest answered that they spend around 1 hour.

A study focusing on the relationship between educational level and the number of hours has shown that there are no differences in the number of hours spent on social media platforms with regard to the educational level of the respondents (Plas, 2021).

The next Table (12) shows the results of the descriptive analysis for the number of friend's/followers respondents have on their most used social media platform. Similar to the previous table (11), table (12) is also distributed into three sections: gender, age, and level of education.

When observing the number of friends female users have on social media, the table shows that the highest number of respondents have between 300 and 600 friends, with 31.5% of the female respondents being in that category. The second-largest number of respondents answered that they had between 600 and 1000 friends/followers on their most used social media platform, with 25.4% of respondents answering that they had (600-1000) friends/followers. The following group had 17.5% of the respondents, and they answered that they had over 1000 friends/followers. The final two groups were the (100-300) group and the under 100 friends' group, 15.6% of the respondents answered that they had under 100 friends/followers and 10.6% of the respondents; which was the smallest group of respondents were in the (100-300) category.

The second group in the gender section were the male respondents, the highest number of male respondents similarly to the female ones were the (300-600) friends/followers' group, 35.1% of the respondents belonged to that group, followed by 25.4% of the respondents

having (100-300) friends/followers. The third-largest group was the over 1000 friends/followers' group, with 18.5% of the respondents, followed by the (600-1000) friend/followers' group which had, which had 18.1% of the respondents. The smallest group of respondents was the under 100 group, with only 2.9% of the respondents.

The next section of table (12) shows the number of friends/followers on social media platforms in relation to the age of the respondents. The first group was the under 20 group, the highest frequency of respondents answered that they have (600-1000) friends and followers, 44.4% of the respondents were part of this group, with the second-highest group contained 38.9% of the respondents, answering that they had under 100 friends/followers on their most used social media platform. 11.1% of the respondents had (100-300) friends/followers, and 5.6% had over 1000 friends/followers, and none of the respondents answered that they had (300-600) friends/followers on their most used social media platform.

The second age group was the (20-30) year old group; in this age group, the highest frequency of respondents answered that they had (300-600) friends/followers; with 57.6% of the respondents choosing this answer, followed by 16.8% for the over 1000 friends/followers. The respondents that chose the (600-1000) friends/followers answer had 11.2% of the respondents, followed by 8% for the under 100 friends/followers. The smallest group of respondents chose the (100-300) answer, with only 6.4% of respondents.

The next age group is the (30-40) age group which had the highest number of respondents, 35.1% of the respondents in this age group answered that they had (300-600) friends/followers on their most used social media platform, followed by the (600-1000) group which had 31.5% of the respondents choosing that answer, the following group was the (100-300) age group, then the over 1000 friends/followers group, and the smallest group was the under 100 group, these groups had 13.6%, 10.7%, and 9.1% respectively.

The following age group was the (40-50) age group, this highest frequency of respondents in this age group was the (100-300) groups, it had 28.4% of the respondents, followed by the over 1000 friends/followers' group which contained 27.7% of the respondents. The third-largest age group was the (300-600) age group, followed by the respondents who answered (600-100). The smallest group of respondents was the under 100 friends/followers, which had only 8.1% of the respondents.

The final group that shows the number of friends/followers in relation to the age group was the (over 50) years old age group, the highest number of respondents in this age group reported that they have (300-600) friends/followers; with 31.7% of respondents belonging to

this age group, followed by the (600-1000) age group, followed by the (100-300), over 1000, and the under 100 groups respectively.

The final section in Table (12) showcased the number of friends/followers in relation to the educational level of the respondents.

The first group of respondents was the “less than high school diploma” holders; this was the smallest group of respondents, with only 0.8% of the respondents belonging to it. Due to this group having such a small number of respondents, the (100-300) and the over 1000 groups had 0 respondents. The highest group of respondents was the (600-1000) group with 71.4% of the respondents belonging to this group, followed by the last two groups, which were the (300-600) and under 100, with each of them having 14.3% of respondents.

The second educational level group was the “high school diploma” holders, the highest number of respondents in this group reported that they have (300-600) friends/followers on social media platforms; with 28.6% of the respondents giving that answer, followed by the over 1000 group which contained 25% of the respondents, with the (600-1000) group being the third largest with 17.8% of the respondents. The smallest groups were the (100-300) and the under 100 groups, with each of them containing 14.3% of the respondents.

The largest group of respondents by far was the Bachelor’s degree holders, and it had 73.6% of the respondents. The highest number of respondents reported that they had (300-600) friends/ followers on their most used social media platform, with 39.9% of the respondents. Followed by the (600-1000) group, 22.5% of the respondents reported that they belong to this group. The third-largest group of respondents was in the (100-300) friends/followers’ group, with 16.5% of the respondents. The two smallest groups were the over 1000 and under 100 groups, with 11.4% and 9.8% of the respondents, respectively.

The final group was the “higher education degree” holders, the highest number of respondents reported having over 1000 friends/ followers, with 39.6% of the respondents belonging to this group. The second-largest number of respondents reported having (100-300) friends/followers; this group had 26% of respondents. The following group was reported having (600-1000) friends/followers, followed by the (100-300) friends/followers’ group, and finally the under 100 friends/followers’ group.

The Interviews conducted by the researcher showcased some differences in the use of social media between large organizations, and SME’s, these results could help some marketing manager’s moving forward with their social media strategy. Table (28) showcases some of these differences:

Industry	Large Business	SME
Food Industry	“2 employees handling the platforms at any given time”	“1 part timer”
Food Service Industry	“2 full time employees”	“1 person is in charge of the account but he does not post more than once a week .”
Computer Hardware Industry	“1 employee a couple hours of hours a day”	“one of our employees checks up for messages once a day, and posts every couple of weeks.”
Clothing Industry	“We outsource this task to a full-time social media office”	“We have one person that takes the orders every Friday”

Table (28): difference in time/employee spent on social media between small and large businesses across different industries in Jordan.

Table (28), showed the difference in manpower allocated by each business and the difference in focus on social media between small and large businesses. When asked about if their business follows any brand building models, Table (29) shows the answers provided:

Industry	Large Business	SME
Food Industry	brand Orientation Model	No
Food Service Industry	Yes, although its confidential	No
Computer Hardware Industry	Brand leadership model	No
Clothing Industry	yes, customer- based brand equity model	No

Table (29): Companies Brand Building Models



## 8 Findings

In this chapter, the study will discuss the hypotheses and results obtained through the analysis of the data provided by the questionnaire.

### 8.1 The Impact of Social Media Networks on Enhancing Brand Image

The first main hypothesis states:

**H01:** There is no impact of social media networks (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) on enhancing brand image at a level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

The first hypothesis was separated into three sub-hypotheses. However, the study will attempt to initially test the impact of social media in general on enhancing an organization's brand image. The test used was a simple regression test, which showed that there is a moderate impact by social media on enhancing a brand's image. The R-value was calculated at (61.8%), which indicates that the relationship between social media and enhancing the brand image is generally considered a good impact size.

When observing the B value in the analysis, the results can be interpreted as for every unit increase in social media networks, and there is a (70.1%) unit increases in the predicted enhancing brand image.

Furthermore, the analysis showed that social media explains up to 38.2% of the brand's image enhancement, and the final 61.8% are explained by other variables that are not included in the regression model.

Thus, from the information obtained through the analysis, the results show that there is a moderate impact by social media on enhancing a brand's image, which indicates that the hypothesis is rejected.

The results of the interviews conducted with most large organizations interviewed showed similar results, when a director of a large computer hardware company was asked about the extent that social media platforms contribute to building a strong brand image for their companies, she replied with "a brand's image is mainly associated with the contribution towards raising awareness of how businesses can perform better through the right implementation of technology and mobility best practices. Moreover, as a reseller, the association is relative to the companies and manufacturers we partner with. The role of social media here is to promote and build awareness of this potential and how we can help companies capitalize on these opportunities."

On the other hand, all small businesses felt otherwise, most believed that with their small following their brand image was not affected much by their social media activities.

The data provided shows that the first hypothesis was rejected, which concurs with the research done by Cheung et al. (2019), which found that a firm initiated social media marketing strategy is an effective strategy to build a brand's image and increase consumer awareness of the brand.

Moreover, the findings of a study conducted by Barreda et al. (2020) further agreed with the results by stating that social media's interactivity assists organizations in building a stronger brand image.

### **8.1.1 The Impact of Facebook on Enhancing Brand Image**

As mentioned, the hypothesis is separated into three sub-hypotheses according to platforms, which are Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The first sub-hypothesis tested was:

**H01-1:** There is no impact of Facebook on enhancing brand image at level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

The test used to test this sub-hypothesis was also a simple regression test. The simple linear regression test results showed that the (R) value represents moderate correlation and is (57.8%), which indicates that the relationship between Facebook and enhancing the brand image is generally considered a good impact size.

The B values for Facebook have reached (0.670), which indicates that predicting (67%) of the enhancing brand image from Facebook. In other words, the results can be interpreted as (For every unit increase in Facebook, there is a (67%) unit increases in the predicted enhancing of a brand's image).

The (R<sup>2</sup>) value for this test was 33.4% which indicates that 33.4% of the brand's image enhancement is explained by Facebook, while 66.6% are explained by other variables that are not included in the regression model. The data showed that Facebook has a moderate impact on enhancing the brand, which rejects the first sub-hypothesis.

Furthermore, In the interviews conducted in this research across multiple industries, every respondent; whether it was a large organization or an SME, informed the interviewer that they use Facebook in their social media strategy, and it was the platform they spent most of their time on.

In a study conducted by Dehghani M. (2013), the results of the research mirrored that of this research; the results have shown that using Facebook's viral marketing and WOM reach could

enhance the brand image and brand equity, respectively, which increase purchase intention of consumers.

### **8.1.1.2 The Impact of Twitter on Enhancing Brand Image**

The second sub-hypothesis tested was:

**H01-2:** There is no impact of Twitter on enhancing brand image at level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

The test used to test the second sub-hypothesis was a simple regression test as well. The simple linear regression test results showed that the (R) value represents moderate correlation and is (.529), which indicates that the relationship between Twitter and enhancing the brand image is generally considered a good impact size.

The B value for Twitter was (.509), which means that an increase of one unit of Twitter will cause a (50.9%) unit increases in the predicted enhancing brand image.

Furthermore, the analysis showed that Twitter explains up to (28%) of the brand's image enhancement, and the final 72% are explained by other variables that are not included in the regression model.

The data showed that Twitter has a moderate impact on enhancing the brand, which rejects the second sub-hypothesis.

The results obtained by analyzing the data aligned with the results from the research done by Rinaldo et al. (2011), which stated that Twitter increases the interest in a brand and enhances its image, giving an example of Coca-Cola's marketing campaign during the World Cup, which allowed followers to pass around brand information.

However, the interviews showed that none of the businesses interviewed used Twitter in their social media strategy, that could be due to the smaller following it has in Jordan.

### **8.1.3 The Impact of Instagram on Enhancing Brand Image**

The third sub-hypothesis was in relation to the Instagram platform:

**H01-3:** There is no impact of Instagram on enhancing brand image at a level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

Similar to the previous two sub-hypotheses, a simple linear regression test was used to test this hypothesis. The value of (R) showed a moderate correlation between using Instagram and enhancing brand image, the (R) value obtained was (55.5%), which as mentioned indicates that the relationship between using Instagram and enhancing a brand's image could be considered a good impact size.

The ( $R^2$ ) for this hypothesis test was (.308); for this reason, Instagram explains 30.8% of the change in enhancing brand image.

The B values for Instagram have reached (0.555), which indicates that predicting (55.5%) of the enhancing brand image from Instagram. In other words, the results can be interpreted as (For every unit increase in Instagram, there is a (55.5%) unit increases in the predicted enhancing brand image).

The data showed that Instagram has a moderate impact on enhancing the brand, which rejects the second sub-hypothesis.

A study that has reached a similar conclusion was conducted by Maritnus H., Chaniago F. (2017), in the study the researchers used Proud, a new age media company, as a case study, and the results proved that Instagram was an effective tool to enhance the companies brand image while using “Storytelling” as a marketing strategy, the results aligned with the results of this study.

Furthermore, the interviews conducted also shows that all large organizations interviewed were using Instagram in their online strategy.

## **8.2 The Impact of Online Trust on Relationship between Social Media Networks and Enhancing a Brand’s Image.**

The second main hypothesis in this study stated:

**H02:** There is no significant moderate impact of online trust on the relationship between social media networks and enhancing brand image at a level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

For this hypothesis, the research will attempt to measure the difference in enhancing a brand’s image after adding the “Customer Trust” variable. A hierarchical multiple linear regression test was used to analyze the data. There were two separate models, the R in the first model with no moderating variable (Online Trust), the R-value was the same as it was in the first hypothesis testing, which was (61.8%), which shows a positive correlation between the variables. The  $R^2$  for the first model was (0.382), which indicates that the social media networks explain (38.2%) of the variance in enhancing brand image.

On the other hand, after adding online trust to the mode, it increased the value of the correlation coefficient to become ( $R = 0.720$ ) as well as the value of the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) increased (0.136); which indicates that with the addition of the customer trust variable the model explains 13.6% more of the enhancing brand image variable, and this percentage statistically significant.

This increase shows that with the addition of the moderating variable “Customer Trust,” there is a significant impact on the relationship between social media networks and enhancing brand image. Thus, the second main hypothesis is rejected.

In the interviews conducted, when asking the large organizations about the relationship between the use of social media and online trust their companies, the social media director of a large computer hardware company commented by saying “it is a triangle between all three variables social media, online trust, and brand image as a foundation to better business, more networking, and more opportunities.”. Furthermore, the assistant digital marketing manager at an international food industry organization replied to the same question with “When using social media to show our services and products, we also rely on clients comment and confirmation to new audience to build their trust.”

### **8.3 Social Media Perception and Enhancing Brand Image**

In this subchapter, the study will attempt to discuss the findings related to the third main hypothesis, which stated:

**H03:** Higher levels of perceptions of Social Media Networks will be associated with higher levels of Enhancing Brand Image.

In this hypothesis, the data gathered from the questionnaire using a Likert scale which is the sum of responses to multiple Likert items, The independent, dependent variables scale included five possible answers: 1: Strongly disagree - 5: Strongly agree to evaluate the perception of the dimensions in this study. The level range is calculated as:  $[(5-1) / 3 = 1.33]$ , which give the three-level ranges: Low (1.00 – 2.33), Medium (2.34 – 3.67) and High (3.68 – 5.00).

There were 13 items tested for this hypothesis, and all 13 had a medium level of perception of social media. Thus, showing that higher levels of perceptions of Social Media Networks will be associated with higher levels of Enhancing Brand Image. Consequently, the third main hypothesis was accepted.

A study conducted by Mayank Y., Rahman Z. (2017) in regards to social media perception provided further insight towards the subject; the results of the study spoke to how the perceived social media marketing activities positively influenced purchase intention and enhancing a brand’s image, which agreed with the results of the third hypothesis test conducted in this study.

## 8.4 Social Media Perception According to Demographics

The fourth main hypothesis discusses the level of social media perception in the questionnaire respondents according to the demographics (gender, age, and educational level). The fourth main hypothesis stated:

**H04:** There is no significant difference in perceptions of social media networks among respondents' groups according to demographic variables (gender, education, and age) at level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

The hypothesis was divided into three sub-hypotheses:

### 8.4.1 Social Media Perception According to Gender

The first sub-hypothesis relates to the level of perception according to gender:

**H04-1:** There is a significant difference in perceptions of social media networks according to gender.

Due to the study having only two choices for the respondents, A (T-test) was used to measure the responses. The results of the test showed that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean levels of perceptions of social media networks in terms of gender groups. Furthermore, the level of significance value was (0.550). Therefore, we have to accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative one; the first sub-hypothesis was rejected.

### 8.4.2 Social Media Perception According to Educational Level

In the second sub-hypothesis, the study attempted to measure how the educational level affects the level of perception:

**H04-2:** There is a significant difference in perceptions of social media networks according to educational level.

Due to the level of education having multiple choices for the respondents, the study used a One-way ANOVA to analyze the answers provided, the level of significance value was (.173), which is lower than (.05), resulting in no statistically significant difference in the level of perception of social media according to the educational level. Thus, the second sub-hypothesis was rejected as well.

### 8.4.3 Social Media Perception According to Age

The third sub-hypothesis was related to the age of the respondents and how the age could affect the level of perception of social media networks.

**H04-3:** There is a significant difference in perceptions of social media networks according to age.

On account of the age being more than two choices, similar to the education level, a One-Way ANOVA test was used to test the results. The results showed that the significance level value was (.006), which is definitely below (.05). Thus, there is a significant difference in the level of perception of social media according to age, causing the third sub-hypothesis to be accepted.

This significant difference could be accredited to individuals being more perceptive with age, causing there to be an increase in perception due to a change in the way of thinking throughout adulthood. Furthermore, research on the perception of social media levels throughout adulthood showed that adult levels of perception changed from the initial unanimous, strong negative to the more positive but cautious and to the eventual willingness to actually contribute content (Xie et al.,2012).

## 9 New Scientific Results

In this chapter the study will present its new scientific results:

1. Most social media users in Jordan follow brands, as the questionnaire showed that almost 84% of the questionnaire takers followed brands on social media. Furthermore, the questionnaire showed that 67% trust the brands they are following; which was also confirmed through the interviews.
2. The study showed that there was a significant impact of social media on enhancing a brand's image in Jordan.
3. The study also showed that Facebook as a platform also has a significant impact on enhancing a brand's image. Furthermore, the data shows that out of all three social media platforms, Facebook had the highest impact on enhancing a brand's image in Jordan, which was supported by the interviews since all businesses, throughout different industries and sizes were using Facebook as one of the main parts of their online strategy.
4. The second platform to be focused on, in the study was Instagram, the study showed there was a statistical impact from Instagram on enhancing a brand's image. Although, Instagram does not have as many users in Jordan as Facebook, the interviews showed that all large businesses interviewed were using Instagram as one of their platforms in their online strategy, this could be due to them having larger manpower than smaller ones.
5. The study showed that there was a significant impact from Twitter on enhancing a brand's image as well. Although, there was an impact for all three social media platforms, the interviews showed that throughout different industries and different size businesses, none of these businesses used Twitter in their online strategy.
6. The study showed that customer trust positively affected the relationship between social media and enhancing a brand image, which shows that with the addition of the moderating variable "Customer Trust," there is a significant impact on the relationship between social media networks and enhancing brand image in the Jordanian market, and this was also supported by the interviews conducted.



7. The research confirmed that higher levels of perception of social media is associated with higher levels of enhancing a brand's image, and when the study tested the levels of perception in accordance to demographics in Jordan. The demographics of gender and level of education had no effects on the level of perception. However, the age demographic had a significant difference on the perception of social media.
  
8. Through the interviews with small and large organizations, the study deduced that owners and managers of SMEs; in different industries, believed that customer trust and their brand's image are not tied to their social media strategy. On the other hand, when interviewing the large businesses, all participants expressed how much their social media presence, and the online trust of their followers affected their brand's image.

Hypothesis	Decision
Ho1: There is no impact of social media networks (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) on enhancing brand image at a level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).	The results show a moderate impact by social media on enhancing a brand's image, which indicates that the hypothesis is rejected.
Ho1-1: There is no impact of Facebook on enhancing brand image at level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).	The data showed that Facebook has a moderate impact on enhancing the brand, rejecting the first sub-hypothesis.
Ho1-2: There is no impact of Twitter on enhancing brand image at level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).	The data showed that Twitter has a moderate impact on enhancing the brand, rejecting the second sub-hypothesis.
Ho1-3: There is no impact of Instagram on enhancing brand image at a level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).	The data showed that Instagram has a moderate impact on enhancing the brand, rejecting the second sub-hypothesis.
Ho2: There is no significant moderate impact of online trust on the relationship between social media networks and enhancing brand image at a level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).	Accepted for all organizational factors except lack of support
Ho2: There is no significant moderate impact of online trust on the relationship between social media networks and enhancing brand image at a level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).	This analysis showed that with the moderating variable "Online Trust," there is a significant impact on the relationship between social media networks and enhancing brand image. Thus, the second main hypothesis is rejected.
Ho3: Higher levels of perceptions of Social Media Networks will be associated with higher levels of Enhancing Brand Image.	There were 13 items tested for this hypothesis, and all 13 had a medium level of perception of social media. Thus, showing that higher levels of perceptions of Social Media Networks will be associated with higher levels of Enhancing Brand Image. Consequently, the third main hypothesis was accepted.
Ho4: There is a significant difference in perceptions of social media networks among respondents' groups according to demographic variables (gender, education, and age) at level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).	Gender Educational Level Age accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative one; the first sub-hypothesis was rejected. The second sub-hypothesis was rejected. The results show that there is a significant difference in the level of perception of social media according to age, causing the third sub-hypothesis to be accepted.

Table 30: Summary of hypothesis tests  
Own results

## **10 Conclusion and Practical Implications**

Social media is now one of the main online marketing tools for any organization; its growth and increase in the number of platforms forced marketers to incorporate it into their marketing strategies. The study attempted to give a better understanding of social media marketing and its platforms, focusing mainly on three main platforms: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Furthermore, the literature gathered attempted to give a better understanding of “Branding” and branding models.

The relationship between social media and enhancing brand image was explored by previous research in the literature, the literature gathered explored this relationship, and the results of this research regarding this topic mirrored many of the results from previous research.

Furthermore, the research explored the effects of the perception of social media platforms and how it affected brand image enhancements. The respondents showed a medium level of perception, which meant that the higher levels of perceptions did indeed positively affect brand image enhancement.

The following sub-chapters will discuss the new scientific results and their practical applications, and will suggest some ideas on future work that could assist in producing more results on the current topic.

### **10.1 Practical Implications**

The study has some implications that managers in Jordan can make use of when implementing their online strategy. Due to social media platforms in Jordan still being in their growth phase, and with companies still facing many challenges while choosing social media platforms and gaining customer trust online, the study might be of use to businesses, whether a large corporation or small businesses. However, businesses should keep in mind that the data provides a general outlook and that the benefits could vary according to the industry, targeted demographics, and social media platforms used.

Information on the most popular social media platforms in Jordan was provided through the literature, through which marketers and managers could choose which platform they would use according to their businesses and targeted demographics.

The findings of the study provide a better understanding of the social media platforms and demographics in Jordan; this data can provide businesses with the information needed to better understand the demographics of social media users in Jordan and how the perception of social media networks of these demographics can affect their brand's image.

Furthermore, based on the results of the study and the literature, the study shows that businesses should focus on gaining consumer trust online to enhance their brand's image, as it has a significant impact on enhancing the brand. The study suggests that businesses attempt to foster trust in their organization.

The study suggests for businesses to create a social media team to constantly upload and maintain their social media profiles, and to monitor the consumer communication and mentions on social media platforms, the team should read consumers' grievances or recommendations to their businesses carefully, this could help foster a relationship with the consumers and help build trust in the businesses, and by gaining the current followers' trust, WOM can assist in gaining more followers. As highlighted by See-To & Ho (2014) and Lee & Watkins (2016), positive recommendations from peers can enhance consumers' trust and purchase intentions.

As for "Branding," the study gave a better understanding of the concept of "Branding." and provided multiple branding models for businesses to choose from according to the business's strategy.

## **10.2 Limitations and Future Work**

As with every research, some limitations can restrict the researcher from expanding more on the data. In this research, the study sample was restricted to the country of Jordan. Thus, the results cannot be generalized, and the results most likely would differ in other countries due to the social media platform preferences differing from one country to another.

Furthermore, due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the data was gathered through online questionnaires on Facebook, thus not allowing the research to explore what social media platforms the respondents were using at the time; since all the respondents had to have a Facebook account to answer the questionnaire, and this was due to the questionnaire not receiving many answers on other platforms. In the future, a physical questionnaire could give a better understanding of which social media platforms the respondents prefer.

Moreover, due to the questionnaire being distributed through Facebook, which is more used by older users, and due to the respondents being friends, followers, and colleagues of the researcher, the age of the respondents was more skewed towards the age of the researcher. Due to the time and COVID-19 restrictions, the research was not able to take more time gathering data from other platforms.

A more accurate representation would be acquired if more respondents were gathered from other social media platforms, such as Instagram and TikTok, which are more used by younger users.

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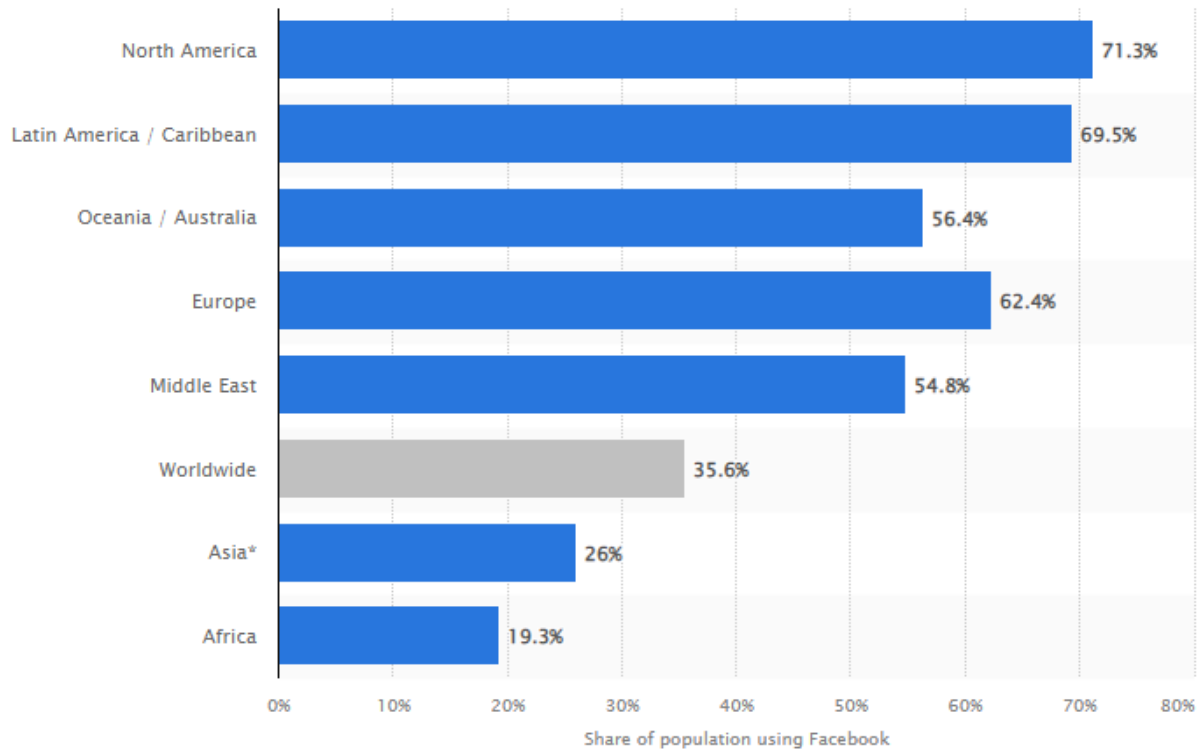
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## 12 Appendices

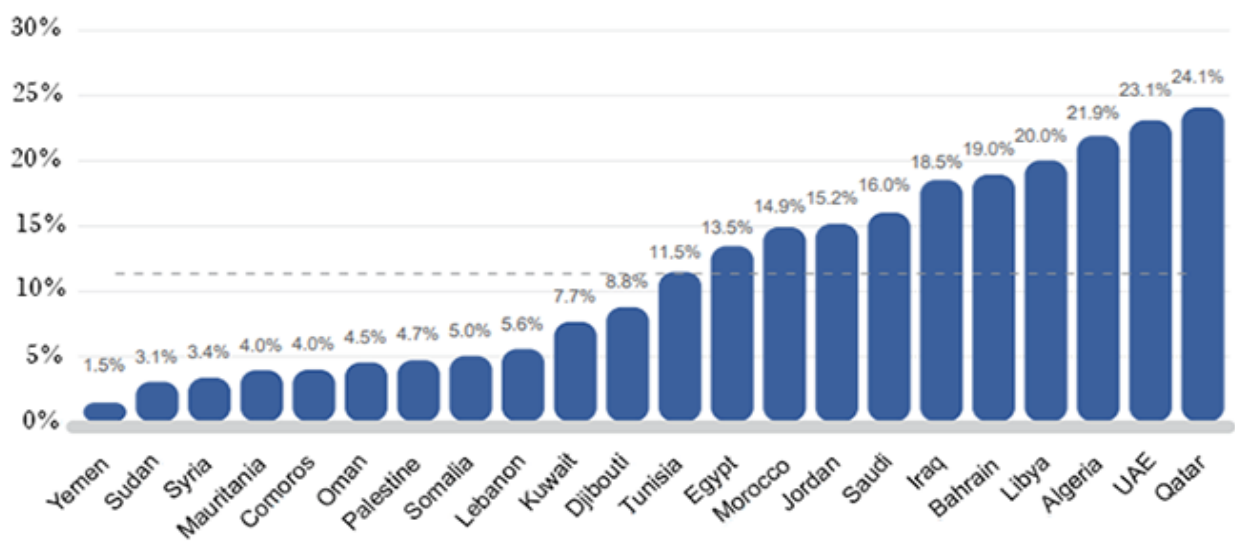
### Appendix (1):

(A)



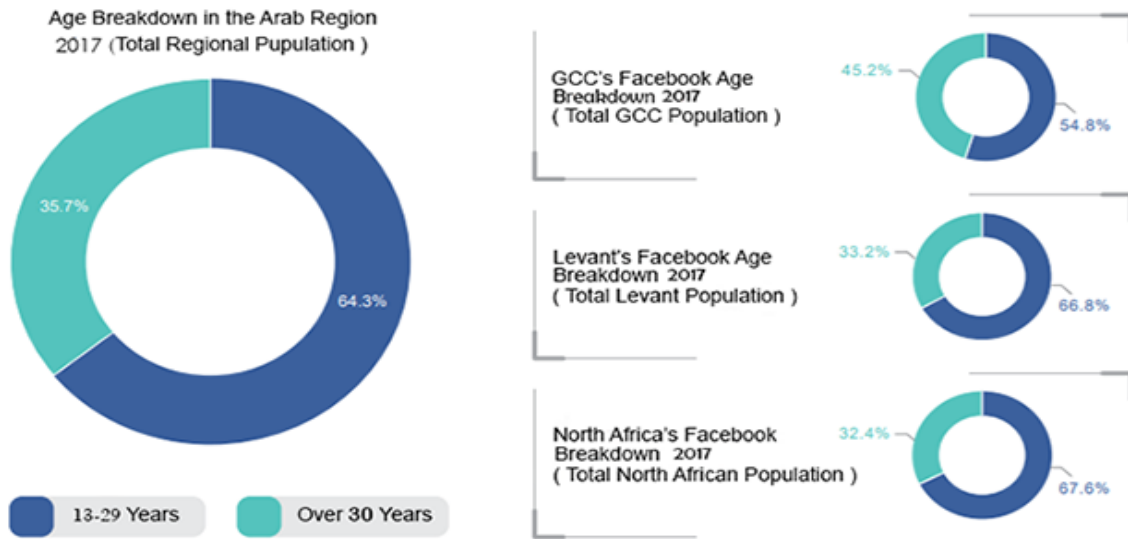
Percentage of Global population using Facebook  
(Statista, 2021)

(B)



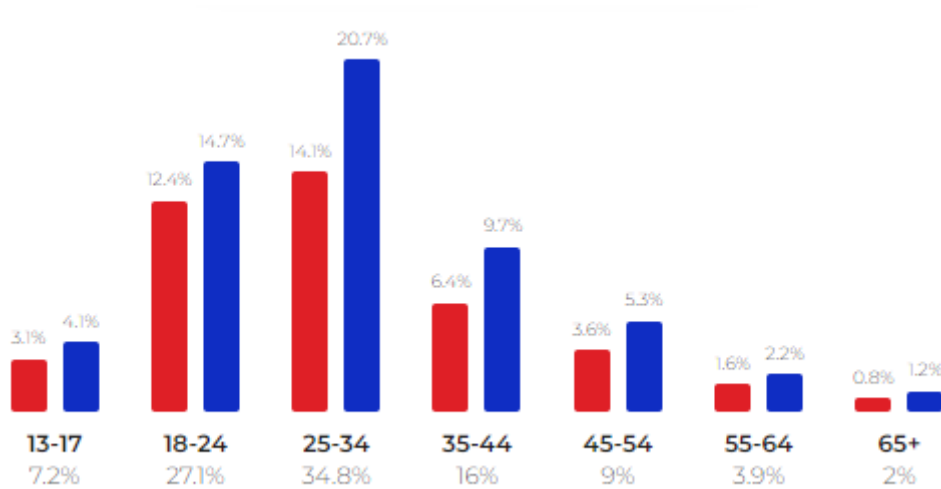
Change in the country-level penetration rates of Facebook  
(2014- 2016)

(C)



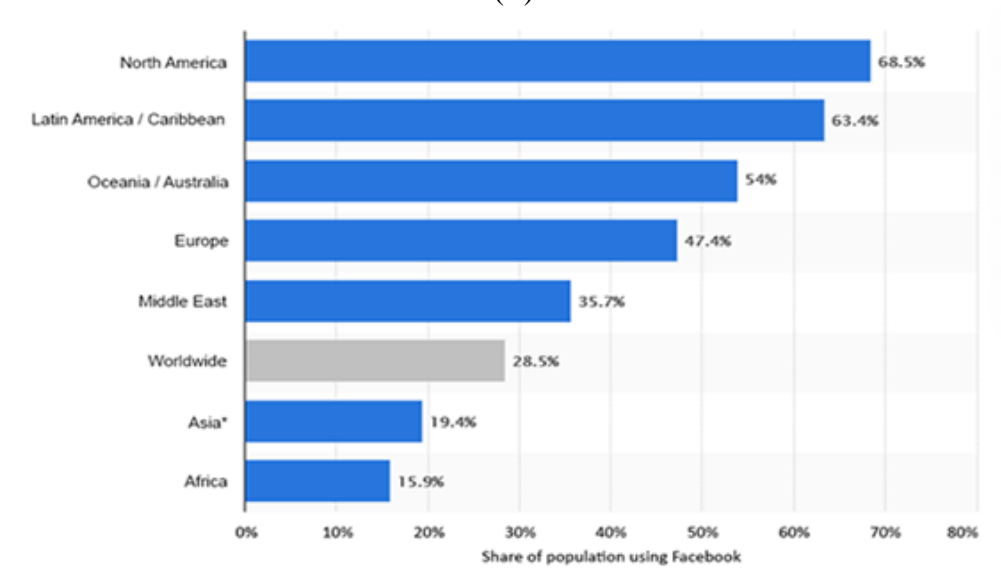
Age breakdown of Facebook users in the Arab region (2017)  
(Mohammed Bin Rashed School of Government, 2017)

(D)



Gender breakdown of Facebook users in the Arab region (2020)  
(Statista, 2020)

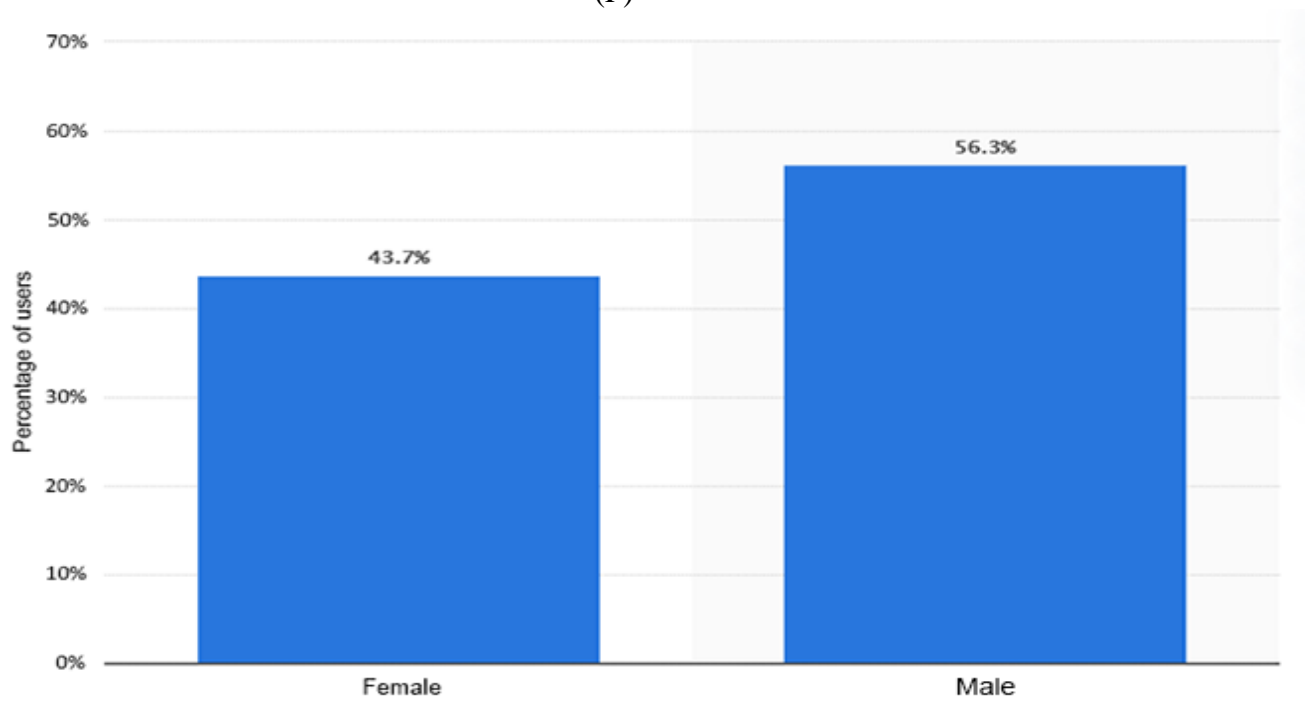
(E)



Percentage of global population using Facebook

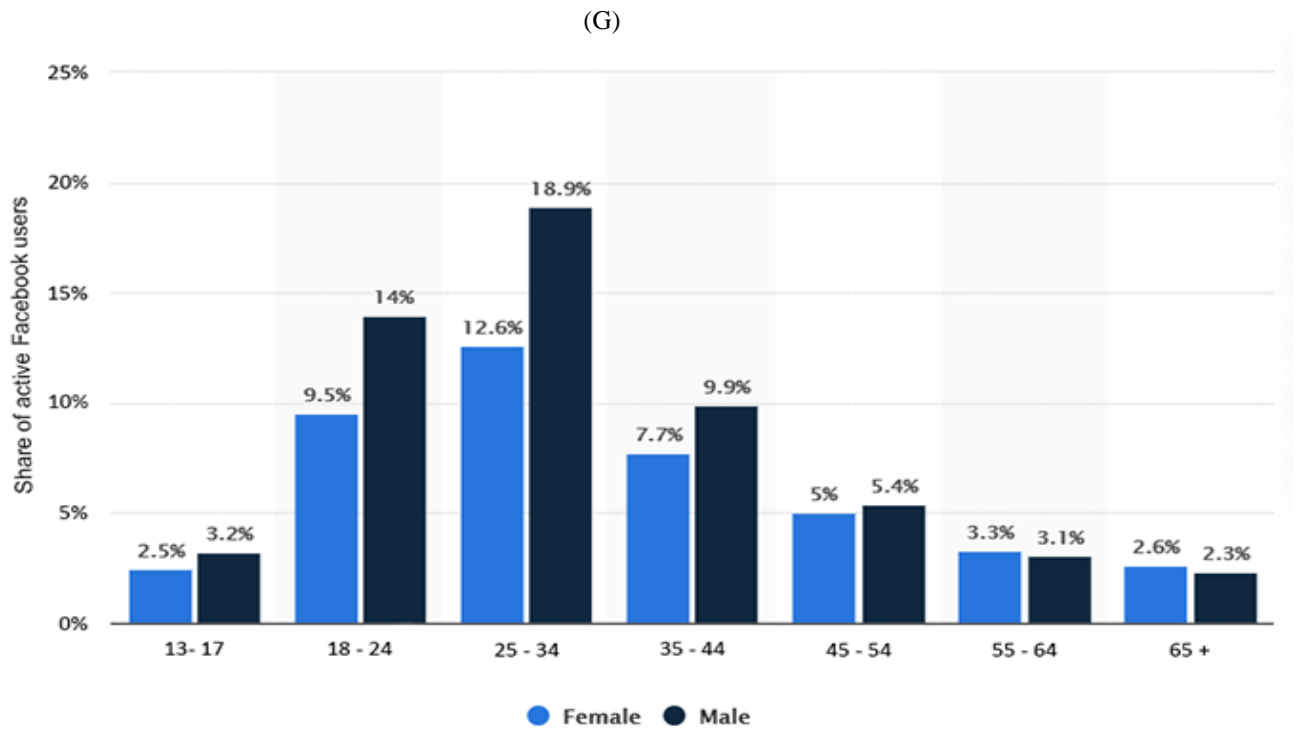
(Statista, 2021)

(F)



Distribution of Facebook users worldwide by Gender

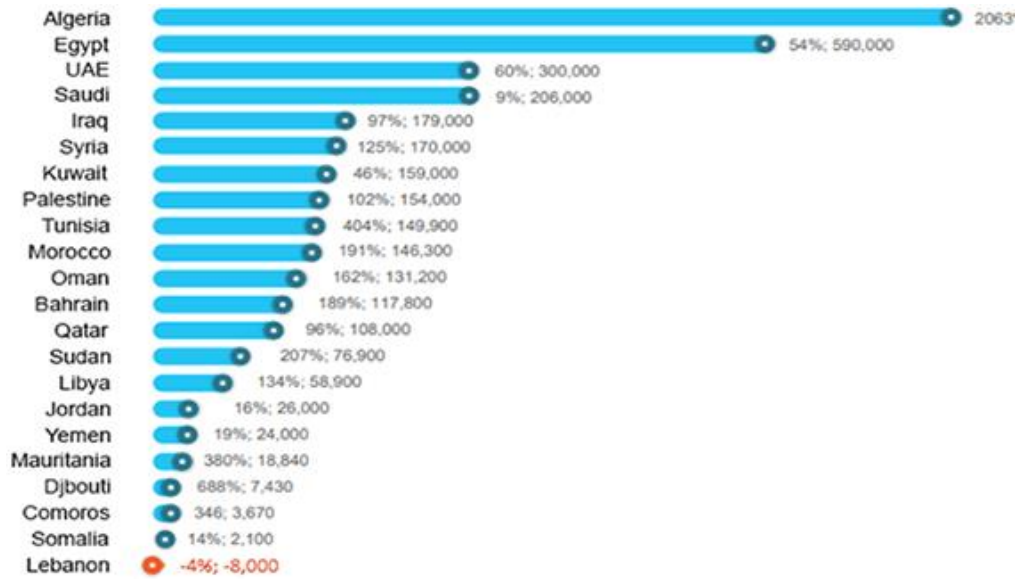
(Statista, 2021)



Distribution of Facebook users worldwide by age and gender  
(Statista, 2021)

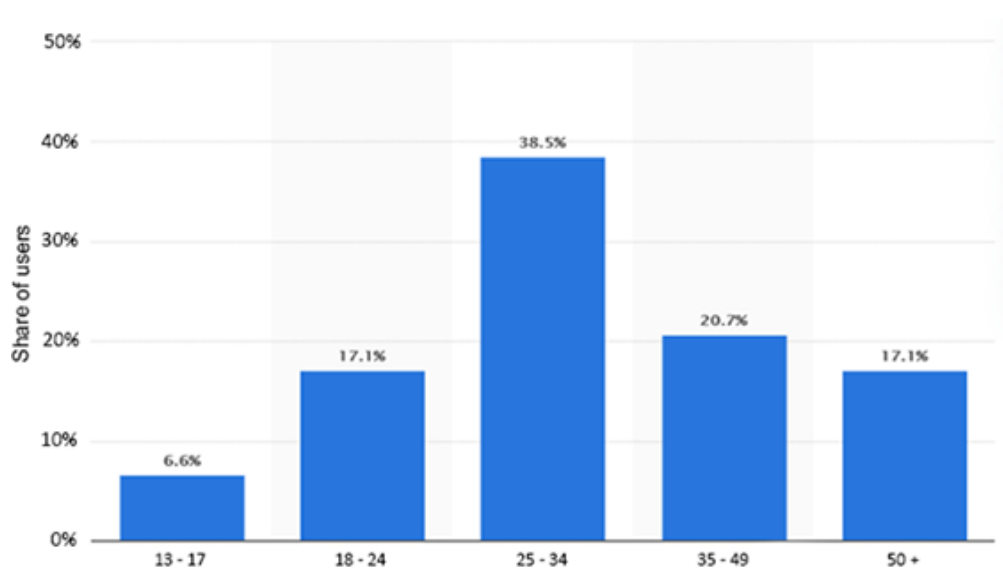
## Appendix (2):

(A)



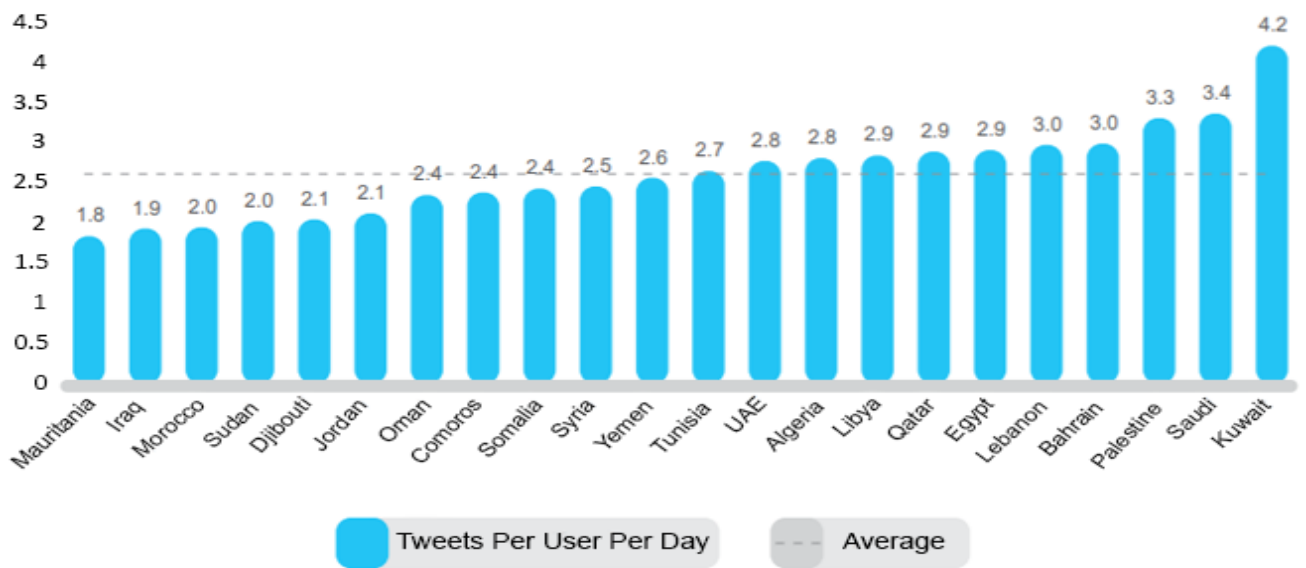
New active Twitter users in Arab states  
(Mohammed Bin Rashed School of Government, 2017)  
(2014-2016)

(B)



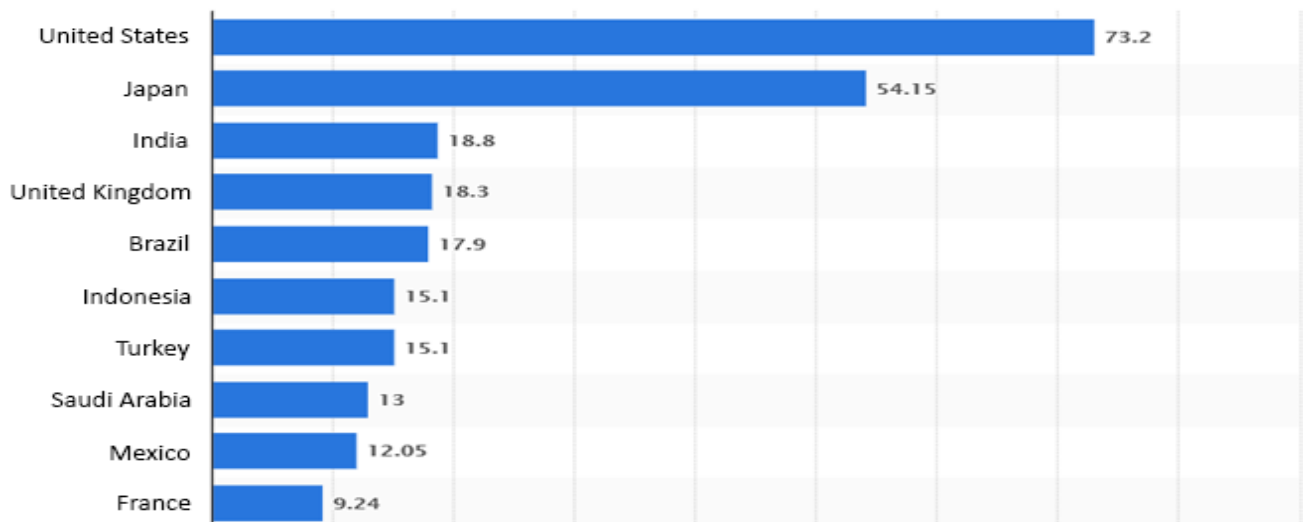
Distribution of Twitter users worldwide according to age  
(Statista, 2021)

(C)



Number of Tweets per user per day in Arab states.  
(Mohammed Bin Rashed School of Government, 2017)  
(March 2017)

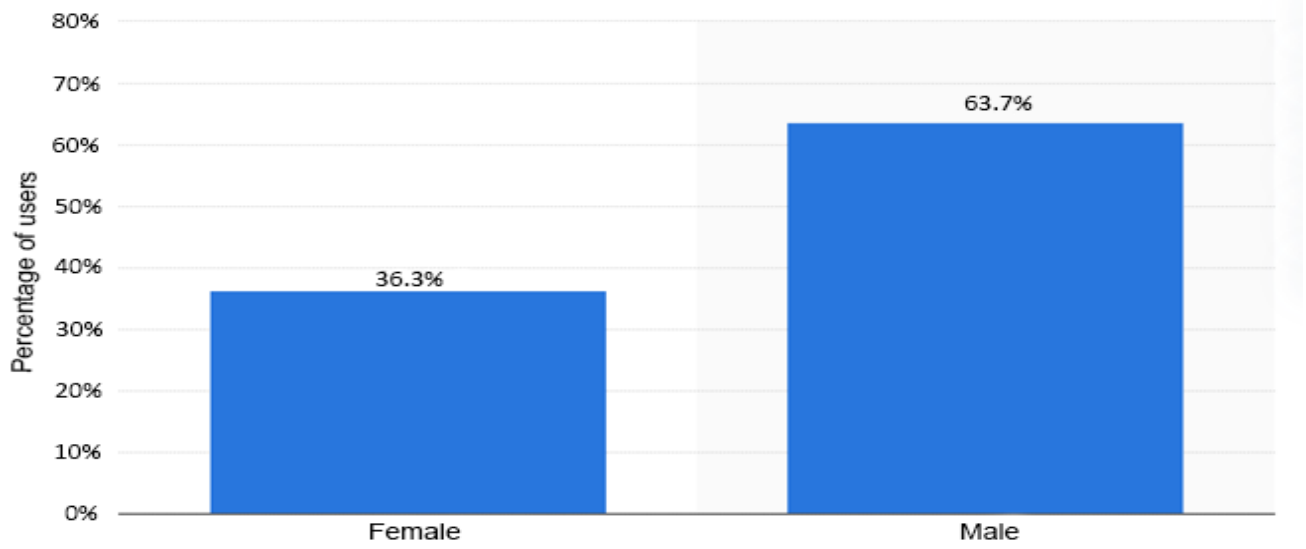
(D)



Leading countries based on Twitter users worldwide (in millions)  
(Statista, 2021)

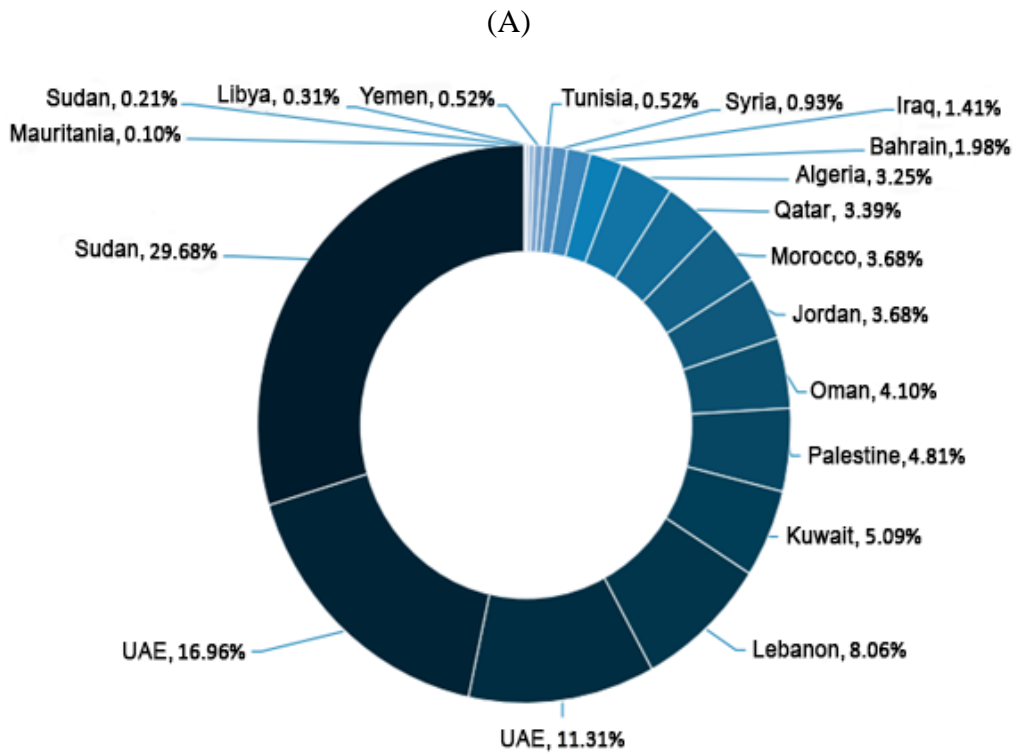


(E)

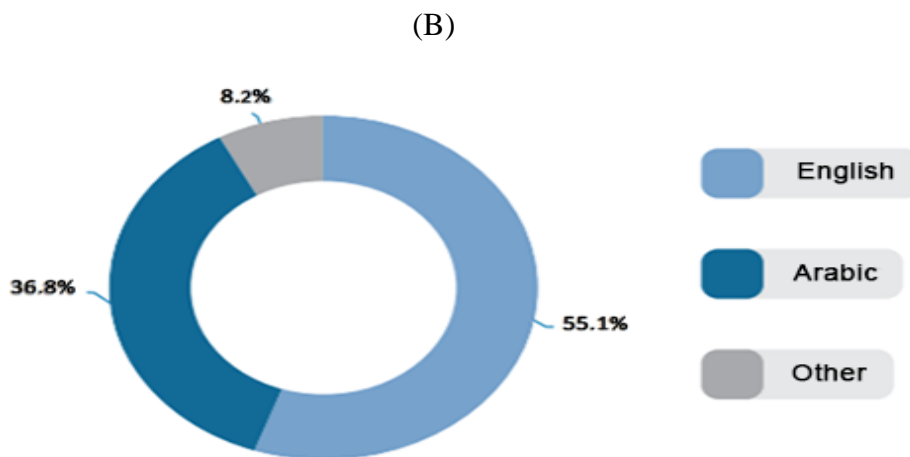


Distribution of Twitter users worldwide according to gender  
(Statista, 2021)

**Appendix (3):**

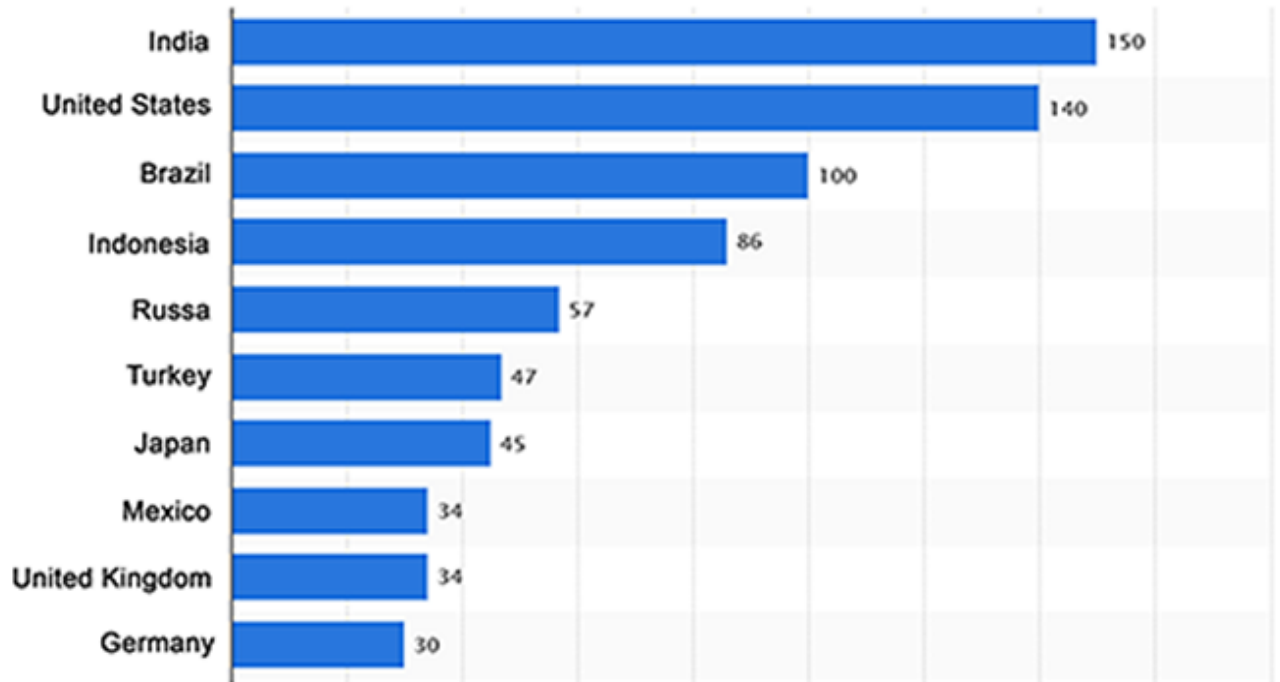


Distribution of Instagram users in the Arab states (2017)  
(Mohammed Bin Rashed School of Government, 2017)



Language used on Instagram in the Arab region (2017)  
(Mohammed Bin Rashed School of Government, 2017)

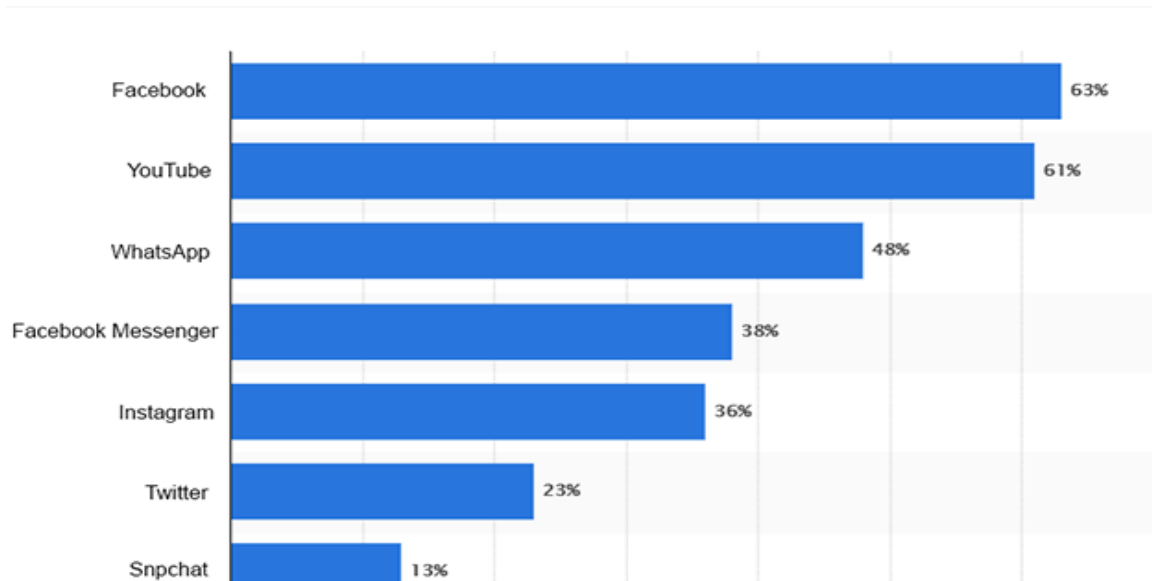
(C)



Leading countries based on Instagram users (in million)  
(Statista, 2021)

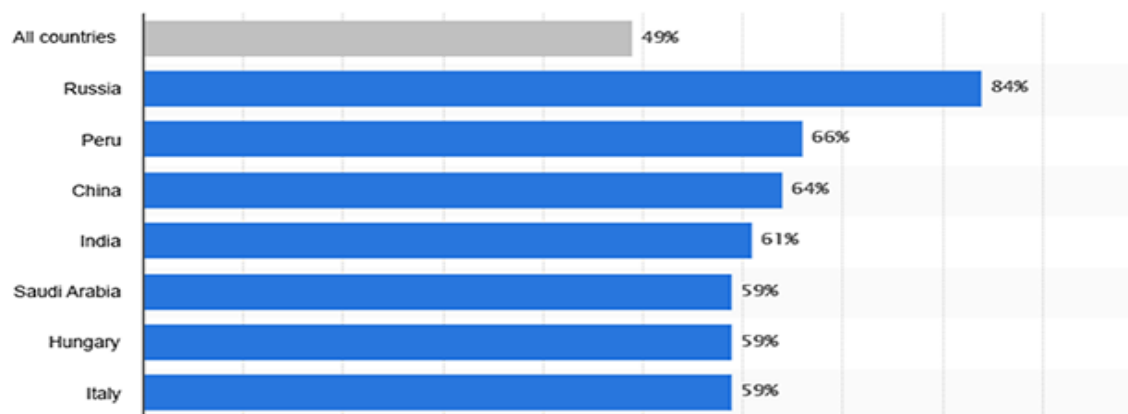
## Appendix (4):

(A)



Global active usage penetration of leading social media networks  
(Statista, 2021)

(B)



Internet users that trust social media companies to ensure factual shared content (June 2019)  
(Statista, 2021)

**Appendix (5):**

## Research Questionnaire:

## 1. Gender:

- Male
- Female

## 2. Age:

- 14 or under
- 15-19
- 20-29
- 30-29
- 40-49
- 50 or above.

## 3. How many hours a day do you spend on social media?

(e.g., Facebook, Instagram.)

\_\_\_\_\_

## 4. Have you done any of the following on social media in the past month?

- Told a friend or family member about a product or service.
- Liked or followed a company's page or a brands page on any platform.
- Added a comment to a company's or a brand's page.
- Negatively reviewed a product or a service on a social media platform.
- Contacted a company for customer support.
- Shared a company's or a brand's product or service.

## 5. How many friends do you have on your most used social media platform?

\_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Do you follow any brands or companies on social media?

- Yes
- No

## 7. Have you ever followed a company or brand due to a friend following them or shared their content?

- Yes
- No

## 8. Please select the social media platforms you use regularly (logged in at least once in the past 30 days).

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- TikTok
- Youtube
- Whatsapp

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Are you most likely to trust a brand that you follow on social media?

- Yes  
 No

● For the following questions please rate the answer on a scale of 1-5 (1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest).

How important is it for you that the brand you are following on any social media platform is :

10. Posting about their products and promotions.

- 1  2  3  4  5

11. Posting content on a regular basis.

- 1  2  3  4  5

12. Answering back to any comment posted their page.

- 1  2  3  4  5

13. Responding to any direct messages sent to them on their platforms.

- 1  2  3  4  5

14. Gives valuable information about their products or services.

- 1  2  3  4  5

15. Sharing funny and fascinating content. (Unrelated to their products)

- 1  2  3  4  5

16. Creating raffles for customers to join and potentially win.

- 1  2  3  4  5

Please indicate how crucial the following characteristics of a brand to your purchase decision:

17. The company's social media presence:

- 1  2  3  4  5

18. User reviews on social media platforms

- 1  2  3  4  5

19. Advertisements that pop up on your social media pages.

- 1  2  3  4  5

20. Family or friend recommendations.

- 1  2  3  4  5

Please answer the following questions regarding customers' trust in the brands they follow:

21. I believe that brands I follow on social media act on my best interest.

Extremely Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Extremely Agree

22. If I require any inquiries, the brands I follow would do its best to help me.

Extremely Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Extremely Agree

23. Brands are interested in my well-being, not only its own.

Extremely Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Extremely Agree

24. Brands I follow are truthful in their dealings with me.

Extremely Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Extremely Agree

25. I would characterize the brands I follow on social media as truthful.

Extremely Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Extremely Agree

26. If I order from any of the brands, I follow on social media, I am comfortable about my purchase.

Extremely Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Extremely Agree

27. I believe that the brands I follow will meet their obligations when I make a purchase off their pages.

Extremely Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Extremely Agree

28. I always feel confident that I can rely on the brands I follow to do their part when I interact with them.

Extremely Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Extremely Agree

29. Most Internet vendors do a capable job at meeting customer needs.

Extremely Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Extremely Agree

30. I feel that most big brands I follow are good at what they do.

Extremely Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Extremely Agree

31. I feel assured that legal and technological structures adequately protect me from problems on the Internet.

Extremely Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Extremely Agree

32. I feel confident that encryption and other technological advances on the Internet make it safe for me to do business there.

Extremely Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Extremely Agree

33. In general, the Internet is now a robust and safe environment in which to transact business.

Extremely Disagree       Disagree       Neutral       Agree       Extremely Agree

**Appendix (6):**

Interview questions:

General Questions	How many employees do you have run your social media platforms/ how many hours a day do they spend on these platforms?	What platforms does your company use in their social media strategy?	What is the reasoning for the use of these platforms?
Branding	Does your company follow any specific brand building models? (e.g., Brand Orientation Model, Brand Leadership Model, etc.)	To what extent does social media platforms contribute to building the strong brand image of your company?	Does online trust during the Covid-19 lockdown play a role in the relationship between social media platforms and your company's brand image?
Online Trust	Is there any relationship between online trust and the brand's image in your company?	Is there any relationship between the use of social media and online trust in your company?	

List of Interview Questions

Interviewees:

Industry	SME	Large Organization
Food industry	Dana Restaurant's owner.	McDonald's assistant digital marketing manager.
Food Service Industry	Prime Market's Manager.	Safeway online marketing manager.
Computer Hardware Industry	Smart barcode's assistant manager.	MariaSoft director of social media.
Clothing Industry	Haddad Clothing Store's owner.	Zara's assistant marketing manager.

List of interviewees and their position in their organization



### **Acknowledgement**

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## Declaration

DECLARATION, I the undersigned **Munif Al Zoubi**, by signing this declaration declare that **“The Effect of Online Trust on the Relationship between Social Media Networks and Enhancing Brand Image.”** my PhD thesis was my own work; during the dissertation, I complied with the LXXVI. And the rules of the doctoral dissertation prescribed by the Doctoral School, especially regarding references and citations. Furthermore, I declare that I did not mislead the supervisor (s) or the program leader with the dissertation.

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Sopron, 2021 October 8th

*Munif Al Zoubi*

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PhD candidate

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