Customer Purchasing Intention in Saudi Arabia within the Context of Social Media: Conceptual Model

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Abstract---Purpose: *To investigate the impact of influencer's credibility on consumer's intention to purchase within the context of social media. And the impact of trust and attitude as mediators between social media features such as usability.* **Methodology:** *This research was conducted within the social media where Saudi users are commonly known among the top active users in this domain. This study conducted systematic review to prior studies regarding intention to purchase online. While investigating various constructs proposed previously the special case of Saudi which has preference to brick-mortar store and appreciation for social media influencers.* **Main Findings:** *There is a lack of models that explain consumers' intention to purchase within the social media context. Much appreciation has been put on influencer's credibility, yet, trust and attitude found to have critical role on consumers to have positive intention to purchase within the context of social media among Saudi consumers.* **Implication:** *This study spots light to the combination of influencer's credibility, attitude, and trust in order to explain more the intention to purchase among social media users-particularly Saudi context. The context of this study is Saudi social media users who have unique features such as they are the top active users on social media, and there is quit number of influencers who have million followers; and those influencers involve in many marketing campaigns.* **Originality of this study:** *this study investigated purchase intention within social media particularly Saudi context; which is rarely discussed. Moreover; the influencer's credibility as moderator has not been investigated before.*

Keywords--- *Social Media, Influencer's Credibility, Intention To Purchase, Saudi Arabia*

I. INTRODUCTION

Utilizing technology is a significant element to improve the economy throughout supporting the concept of globalization over the prompt growth of global trade. online users nowadays are more likely to utilize technology in different methods as well as platforms based on their preferred needs such as gathering information, buying goods or services, share opinions and so on. Social media brings an innovative channel to get product-related information via peer communication. Furthermore, through social media, consumers have the ability to affect other buyers through reviews of commodities, services purchased, or utilized. Costumers are further affected by some psychological factors such as income level, motivation of buying, product brand, presentation and other demographic influences (age, gender, way of paying, type of the store, and so on). Internet has changed customers, communities, and

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business with wide spread access to data, better social communication and upgraded networking capacities. Hence, social networks are characterized to be websites which connect a wide range of global users with same interests, perspectives and preferences. Blogs, Facebook, YouTube are all forms of social networking that are common among all level of users and customers. This study intended to comprehend the concept of influencers' credibility in social media as well as determining the effects of other variables by examining their impacts on consumers' purchase intention in Saudi Arabia.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The pervasive attractiveness of social media networks, such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook in entire world and Saudi Arabia in particular, have motivated researchers to theorize and understand the user attitude, trust, and intention with social media. It is central in building future comprehension and dissemination of these technologies [36] and comprehend its new elements such as influencers' role, which may lead us to new understanding to the purchase online through these new channels. Due to that many approaches have been followed to investigate that. One approach related to explaining social media usage behaviour drivers was revisiting the technology acceptance model (TAM) [2,28, 36, 44]. This study believes that TAM would not be enough to explain intention to purchase alone, as there are many elements have been appeared since then- due to that many researchers revise it [2,28,36]. New elements such as influencer's role, the high sociability of social network are enforcing us to think in different approach rather than recycle the old theories again and again.

The following subsections demonstrate factors that found have significant impact on intention to purchase within the influence of social media and influencers. Those factors have been selected due to their extensive existence among the literature that have been investigated in this study.

A. Perceived risk

Perceived risk is among the main factors that directly or indirectly impact intention to purchase [28,33]; it considerably influence trust [3,11,42]. Within the context of Taiwan, Pi and Sangruang (2011) found significant role of perceived risk on the intention of purchase through attitude.

B. Perceived value

The promoted product will be acquired by customer, when customer perceives its value that equal to the money that is to be paid [3, 21,28]. Actually, perceived value may be also related to quality [28], service friendliness and service customizations [3]. The closest term related to perceived value in TAM is usefulness, both of them describe the benefit of technology (in this context using social media to purchase). Therefore, this analogy will help us to see the mediation effect of attitude and trust on the association between intention to purchase and perceived value. For instance; the studies of Aldousari et al. (2016); Rauniar et al. (2014) used the term usefulness instead of perceived value to describe the tangible benefits of social media on online purchasing. Wirtz and Göttel (2016) reported there is a lack of employment of TAM with social network, therefore, this study employed it, in addition to other dimensions, in order to give interpretation for intention to purchase within the context of social networks.

It is significant to notice that perceived value has different meaning apart perceived quality as it (perceived value) has a higher level of abstraction and includes a compromise of "give" and "get" components, while perceived quality has the "get" component only [3,22].   There are two kinds of online money-spending values: serviceable value and experimental value [22]. serviceable value is a total assessment of functional welfares counting the price savings, time savings and service excellence. Experimental value is a general depiction of experiential welfares from the entertaining, the interactivity, and visual appeal related to online shopping [22]. The study of Yu and Lee (2019)[45] was thoroughly investigated perceived value and its association with attitude and intention to purchase. the empirical evidence brought by Yu and Lee (2019) proved the connection between perceived value and attitude.

Hereafter, the attention was on money-related perceived value in this study. Then it could be said that there is a connection between trust and purchase intention perceived value [6].

C.   Usability

Usability has been designated as a systems' capability to be utilized by humans efficiently and effortlessly [14, 40]. Usability is a combination of efficiency, effectiveness, safety, learnability, utility, and memorability [14]. Usability has been found influencing positively the attitude in the study of Holden and Rada (2011). Usability is essential for social online communities such as social networks [34], it seems to have influence in trust and attitude of users when those online community used for selling.

D.   Sociability

Sociability is important for successful social software[10, 34]. Sociability as well is important for doing business within the context of social media [20]. The lack of socialness means users are not able to receive a transparent reviews initiated by other users, which violates the nature of social network [12, 37].

Sociability was considerably analysed by Junglas, Goel, Abraham, and Ives (2013) and found it has significant impact on information system as other constructs. Interaction with others in social media bring pleasure to users and may assist them to develop good attitude and may increase their trust in the virtual environment that is eventually leading them to conduct transaction [19]. It is argued that social networks that sells online when socialize with users, it increases the trust [9,12]. Similarly, sociability influences user's attitude [40].   In contrast to many factors, sociability has considered less in common theories describe user's behaviour toward technologies [37].

E.   Attitude

This construct plays significant role in studies that are based on TAM and TPB [2,14]. Ajzen and Fishbein (2005)[1] have studied the impact of this construct on intention rigorously and extensively. It was found considerable role for attitude in forming intention to toward many domains including online purchasing. Attitude was found to mediate the relationships between many variables and intention [1,23]. The study of Lim et al. (2017) investigated mediation role of attitude between influencer's credibility and intention to purchase. Their study helped to determine the considerable role for attitude, yet, this study sees influencer's credibility moderate the association between trust, attitude and intention to purchase because it rarely to rely mainly on the promotion of influencers as major reason to purchase. This study sees considerable mediation role for attitude with intention, and this role in this

study is guided by attitude's role in TAM theory. Mediation role of attitude was proven by Rauniar et al. (2014) with social media- particularly Facebook.

However, this mediation was limited by the Rauniar et al. (2014) with behavioural belief. Similarly, the study of Lim et al. (2017) study the mediation role of attitude with influencer's credibility only. This quite limit the capability of the attitude, yet, this shows the needs to measure attitude in major respect rather than one or two dimensions. Consequently, this study tries to extend the mediation role for attitude to cover many basic constructs and their relations with intention to purchase.

Then, users' attitudes toward purchasing from social media are an essential factor in determining his/her intention to purchase [14]. Attitude significantly influences intention to purchase [37,42]. For instance; the study of Billari, Philipov, and Testa (2009)[4] within the context of Bulgaria finds attitude significantly intention to purchase. on other hand, attitude in many studies play mediation role as it can be seen in the study of [44]. It was empirically proved the mediate role of attitude particularly with perceived value and perceived ease of use. Similarly, the study of Yu and Lee (2019) empirically found mediation role for attitude between perceived value and intention to purchase. Another mediation role for attitude found in the association between perceived risk and intention to purchase [33].

F. Trust

Trust has been broadly investigated since the emergence of online purchasing [9,22, 39). Trust is known by its key role in the relationships among individuals, among organizations, and between individuals and organizations. Yet, trust is possibly among the most extremely challenging in which concepts are hardly agreed upon [7,16]. As Lee and Turban (2001)[20]noticed, trust was involved in numerous contexts such as online purchasing, strategic associations, and labour management.

Overall, trust is distinctly defined as the readiness of a person, organization or object for vulnerability against actions of another individual/organization/object based on the expectancy that the other will achieve a particular act significant to the trustor, notwithstanding of the capacity to follow up or control other party [22, 24]. Morgan and Hunt (1994)[27]identified trust as the confidence that the trustee featured to act in a promising manner. Additionally, they mention that trust is serious in successful associations between partnerships. As such, trust denotes the belief that the trustee will do harmless to the trustor and that undesirable costs will not arise.

In the context of online purchasing, trust turns out to be more significant problem since exchange relations are builtover the objective nature of web infrastructure. Especially, purchasers encounter the challenge of purchasing products or services online from an unaccustomed online stores; furthermore, they cannot essentially see or interact the product. Trust owns a vital role in assisting consumers take over the risk perception and insecurity [26]. Security and Privacy anxieties are among the main blockades behind missing trust that may push consumers to not providing online sellers their personal information [13]. Consequently, online trust is shaped gradually over time as a customer develop experience while going via many transactions [5]. For the sake of the current study, trust definition that is considered is that the customer believes that the online business has no an act of a resourceful manner and that the online purchasing environment is secure sufficient to ensure risk-free transactions.

G.   TRUST-MEDIATION ROLE

It is broadly recognized in prior studies that trust in a business decreases the online-transaction-related perceived risk). However, there are theoretic explanations to assume that there are barriers initiated by perceived risk against trust. Additionally, the available studies indicated that trust is a significant prognosticator of consumer's intention to conduct online transaction[15].

Some empirical studies such as [18, 30] indicate the undesirable effect of perceived risk on purchase intentions. They point out to the fact that users consider risk, which may slow down their engagement in the online purchasing, as they have doubt of receiving a positive payoff. Due to that, this study considers examining the prospective role of trust as a mediator [7] between factors such as perceived value, usability, perceived risk, sociability and intention to purchase. It is noteworthy to reflect consumer's concern regarding the online store's favourably in the interest of the consumer, and gaining trust.

Since a consumer all together cannot precisely envisage the possibility that the online store will perform in a resourceful manner and therefore, can individually estimate the risk degree under doubt, the actual risk awareness will be established based on the disclosure to media regarding related negative occurrences or on prior experiences of shopping. Furthermore, if the risk perceived exceeds the expectation and tolerance of consumers, then the consumer may prefer give up the trusting selection. Consequently, this study proposed model where trust and attitude playing key mediating role between perceived value, usability, sociability and perceived risk from one side and purchase intention from other side.

The above mentioned work was not only study that investigated the mediating role of trust, but many studies available. Qureshi et al. (2009)[35] employed the mediation participation of trust to understand customer online purchasing intention in the context of USA. Also, within the context of India, Ganguly et al. (2009)[9] found mediating role for trust. The work of McCole, Ramsey, and Williams (2010) extended trust into three different trusts: vendor, Internet and third parties, and investigated their mediation role next to attitude on online purchasing in the context ofNew Zealand has been investigated in [25].

Another study that also use trust as a mediator is the study of Singh, Alryalat, Alzubi, and Sarma (2017). They integrated "unified theory of acceptance and use of technology" (particularly UTAUT2) with trust as a mediating variable to comprehend the influence of the core components of the UTAUT2 model such as performance expectancy, facilitating conditions and social influence on it. Similarly, Di Virgilio and Antonelli (2018)[7] integrated trust and attitude with theory of planned behaviour (TPB) to measure behavioural intention. Moreover, the study that brings trust and attitude to study their impact on intention to purchase is by McCole et al. (2010)

Inspiring from the above-mentioned evidences, it is clear that there is a lack of empirical studies to comprehend the influence of factors analysing consumers' online purchase intentions in Saudi Arabia [social media context] and considering the mediation effect of attitude and trust. Consequently, this study investigates the mediation role of trust of consumer regarding conducting online transaction[15, 41]. The aim specifically studies the mediation role of trust in the connection between usability and perceived value, perceived sociability and perceived risk and purchase intention. This study is guided by the research of Hong and Cha (2013) who found full mediation of trust on

intention to purchase and perceived risk. And the work of Singh et al. (2017) that put much expectation from trust as a mediator. This research has extended the mediation role of trust to usability, perceived value and perceived sociability as the author believe that those factors (perceived value, perceived usability, perceived sociability, perceived risk) are contribute positively and/or negatively to trust and trust mediates their relationship with intention to purchase.

Regarding the direct influence of trust on intention to purchase, this study is guided by empirical evidences found in [36] and many above-mentioned studies and formulated the following hypotheses.

H.   INFLUENCER'S CREDIBILITY

Celebrities have been utilized by companies to use their appearances in social media to convince their followers to purchase the products, however, this depends on their credibility [23,38,43]. Consequently, considering the influencer's credibility is recently investigated by researchers. The proposed model intends to measure the moderate effect of influencer's credibility on the relationship between trust and attitude from one side and intention to purchase from other side.

Whether or not the influencers are believing that credibility is critical for their promotion to success; purchasers have considerable appreciation to credibility of sources, including influencers' promotion campaign [11, 12]. Source credibility- including influencer- has been developed to clarify the association between credibility of the source and their capacity to convince [11,17,23]. Regular social media users are more expected to be convinced, when an influencer is represented, or represents itself, as trustworthy[17, 31]. Flanagin and Metzger (2007) [8]developed a definition for credibility, which is credibility is a perceptual construct explaining perception of the receiver for true for information received, and encompassed mainly of a receiver's insights of the reliability and proficiency of a source [12]. Source (influencer) credibility is as well impacted by the influencer's vitality, sociability, and equanimity. Several studies specify greatly the sources of credibility to produce more promising attitudes and behavioursin the responses [11,23,29,32].

Source attractiveness (in this context: influencer) is considered among the factors influence user's trust and attitude [11,23,38]. Actually the study of Guido et al. (2011); Roy et al. (2013) and Wheeler (2009) presented influencer's credibility by three constructs, which are expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness. However the study of Lim et al. (2017) extended by adding Meaning Transfer and product Match Up, but they removed expertise. This study will consider the first two factors because the third factors is more related to expert people-this study follow the style of [23], whereas the context of this study is assumed regular influencer (actor, singer, footballer etc.) with no expertise in the products they promote. Therefore, it was found that influencer's credibility influence positively user's attitude [37,38], trust and intention to purchase [42]. However; this study considers influencer's credibility has moderation on the connection between trust, attitude and intention to purchase. The moderation effect was considered in this study as they essentially help users to think of purchasing, however, it is difficult to say that they mainly and directly affect intention to purchase. In other words, it is difficult to believe that all users would listen immediately to their celebrities and go to purchase.

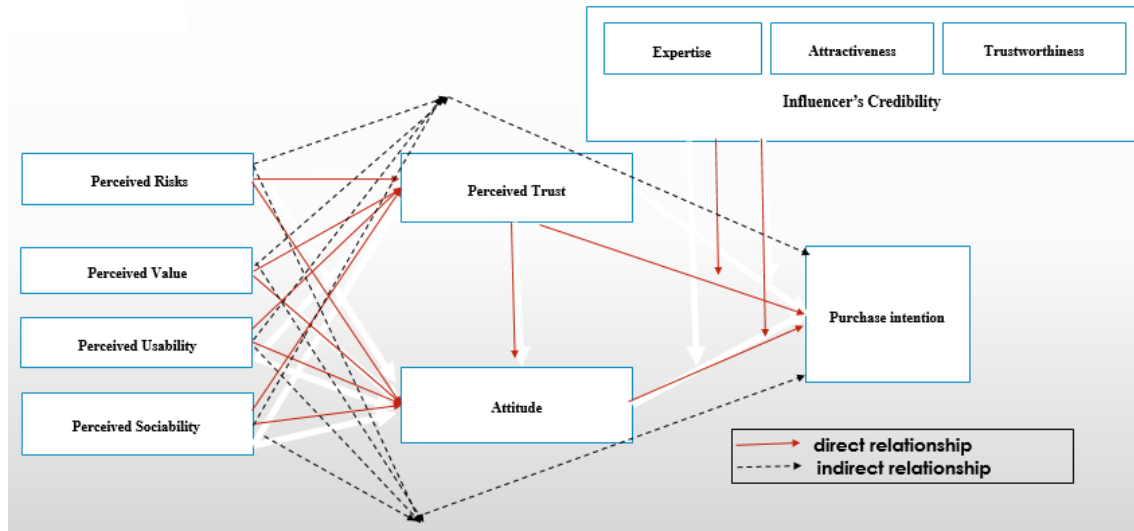To recap above discussion, the figure 1 is presenting the proposed model

Figure 1: The proposed model

III. METHODOLOGY

This study conducted an extensive literature review via using systematic literature review. Many keywords have been used such as "the credibility of the influencers and the purchase intention"; "social media and intention to purchase"; "influencer's credibility and trust" etc. hundreds of papers retrieved from database such as science direct, springer, and ie explorer. Filtering has been conducted to eliminate unrelated papers. Later, an extensive review for the papers remaining in order to find the gaps. Based on gaps, the proposed model has been built (fig 1).

IV. DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS

The extensive review found many gaps. First, the studies found have covered the developed countries or China (including Taiwan), and South Korea. Few studies covered the region of middle east. Second; there is a lack of studies that investigated Saudi users' intention to purchase within the social media context; though, Saudi users are among the top active social media users. Third; many studies have considered influencer's credibility playing mediating role between many constructs and intention to purchase. However, those studies cannot be adopted completely, due to one fact, which is Saudi users have major consideration toward brick-mortar business.

On other hand; Saudi social media include many influencers who are followed by millions. Those influencers currently involve in many marketing campaigns; due to the belief of business of the influencer's impact on their followers. However; this influence has been overestimated by some researchers, as they set mediating role for influencer's credibility. The author's assumption of the overestimation for the role of influencers was due to studies' findings that investigated intention to purchase within online environment in general. Those prior studies have rarely emphasized on the role of influencer. Therefore; this study assumes that influencer's credibility play moderator role, which is less influential compared to mediation role. Finally; trust and attitude are major steps to build positive intention to purchase and many studies consider them either individually or as independent constructs, few considered their mediation role.

V. CONCLUSION

Social media networks have rapidly moved from a place to share family pictures, memories and opinions, to a place for business. Within Saudi context, social media is very active and Saudis are among the top world activists. Currently, influencers (actors, athletes, singers) have been utilized by business to attract their fans to purchase. Previous models either considered only their influencing and ignore other important factors, underestimate their role, or overestimate their role. This study came out with a model that gave more consideration to all factors altogether with influencer's credibility.

LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

This study lacks of empirical evidences to support the proposed model; which will be resolved in future study. This study mainly focused on the features that suit Saudi social context and less concern about other contexts. Therefore; the proposed model might be generalized with concerns of its limitations. This paper reporting a progress work that concern developing a model that explain intention to purchase in social media while influencer's credibility is considered.

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