

**T.C.
ANTALYA BILIM UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF POSTGRADE EDUCATION**

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

MASTER THESIS

**THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER MARKETING ON BRAND
TRUST AND IMAGE: THE CASE OF IRAQ**

Fatimah Amir Moosa AL.NAAMI

APRIL 2023

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This thesis was accepted by the jury (with unanimous vote / majority vote) on the date / / 202.... in MASTER PROGRAM of BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION.

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DECLARATION

Master Thesis of this study named “The Impact of Social Media Influencer Marketing on Brand Trust and Image: The Case of Iraq”, which I presented, I declare that scientific moral principles were followed in the preparation of this study, in case of benefiting from the works of others, reference is made in accordance with scientific norms, no falsification has been made in the data used, and that any part of this study is not presented as another academic study.

... / ... / 20..

[signature]

Fatimah Amir Moosa AL.NAAMI

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ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER MARKETING ON BRAND TRUST AND IMAGE: THE CASE OF IRAQ

Fatimah Amir Moosa AL.NAAMI

Master Thesis in Business Administration

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Abubakar Mohammed ABUBAKAR

April 2023; 51 pages

This research focuses on the reshape of social media influencer marketing on brand image and brand trust in Iraq. This thesis aims to see the effect of social media influencer marketing on brand trust and in image the Iraqi market, with the rise use of social media and the growth of influencer marketing. The study uses a quantitative research method, regression analysis with Jamovi, to analyze data from an Iraqi consumer survey. The study's findings show a significant positive correlation between social media influencer marketing and both brand image and trust. The research findings' implications are discussed in terms of theory and management. The conclusion also discusses the research limitations and future research suggestions. This research strengthens the current body of knowledge by demonstrating the effect of social media influencer marketing on brand image and trust. This study's findings have implications for marketers and businesses looking to take advantage of influencer marketing to build their brands in the Iraqi market. The research draws on many theoretical frameworks and concepts linked to influencers, social media marketing, and customer behavior and how this form of marketing influences them. These theories may include social impact, trust, credibility, and brand image.

KEYWORDS: Brand Image, Brand Trust, Influencers, Iraq, Social Media.

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ÖZET

SOSYAL MEDYA INFLUENCER PAZARLAMANNIN MARKA GÜVENİ VE İMAJ ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ: İRAK ÖRNEĞİ

Fatimah Amir Moosa AL.NAAMI

İşletme Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Danışman: Doç. Dr. Abubakar Muhammed ABUBAKAR

Nisan 2023; 51 sayfa

Bu araştırma, Irak'ta sosyal medya etkileyici pazarlamanın marka imajı ve marka güveni üzerindeki etkisine odaklanmaktadır. Bu tez, sosyal medyanın artan kullanımını ve etkileyici pazarlamanın büyümesi ile Irak pazarında sosyal medya etkileyici pazarlamanın marka imajı ve güveni üzerindeki etkisini görmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, Iraklı bir tüketici anketinden elde edilen verileri analiz etmek için nicel bir araştırma yöntemi olan JAMOVI ile regresyon analizi kullanıyor. Çalışmanın bulguları, sosyal medya etkileyici pazarlaması ile hem marka imajı hem de marka güveni arasında önemli bir pozitif ilişki olduğunu göstermektedir. Araştırma bulgularının çıkarımları teori ve yönetim açısından tartışılmaktadır. Sonuç bölümünde ayrıca araştırma sınırlamaları ve gelecekteki araştırma önerileri tartışılmaktadır. Bu çalışma, sosyal medya influencer pazarlamasının marka imajı ve güveni üzerindeki etkisini ortaya koyarak mevcut literatüre katkı sağlamaktadır. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, markalarını Irak pazarında oluşturmak için etkileyici pazarlamanın gücünden yararlanmak isteyen pazarlamacılar ve işletmeler için çıkarımlara sahiptir. Araştırma, etkileyiciler, sosyal medya pazarlaması ve müşteri davranışı ile bağlantılı birçok teorik çerçeve ve kavramdan ve bu pazarlama biçiminin onları nasıl etkilediğinden yararlanıyor. Bu teoriler sosyal etki, güven, güvenilirlik ve marka imajını içerebilir.

ANAHTAR KELİME: Etkileyenler, Irak, Marka İmajı, Marka Güveni, Sosyal Medya.

JÜRİ: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Abubakar Mohammed ABUBAKAR

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SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Symbols

β : Beta (Slandered Estimation)

ρ : p value

Abbreviations

B2B : Business to Business

WOM : Word of Mouth

TAM : Technology Acceptance Model

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PERFACE

Influencers have become an influential tool for brands to connect with their intended consumers more personally and engagingly. Social media platforms have become an important part of people's daily lives. This thesis aims to look into how social media influencer marketing affects brand trust and image from the perspective of Iraqi brands. Iraq has a rich culture and a distinct market, and social media influencer marketing is still a relatively recent phenomenon. The goal of this study is to fill a gap in the literature by investigating how social media influencer marketing can be used effectively to improve brand trust and image among Iraqi customers.

I thank my supervisor and professors for their direction and encouragement throughout this research journey. Their insightful comments and encouragement have been extremely helpful in shaping this thesis. I also want to thank the people involved who were kind enough to share their opinions and lived experiences, without whom this study would not have been possible. Finally, I hope this thesis adds to the expanding body of information on social media influencer marketing and provides valuable insights for brands looking to build trust and improve their image in the Iraqi market.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become a vital component of how we live our lives, providing a platform to connect, share, and discover new information. The rise of social media has also given birth to a new form of marketing known as influencer marketing, in which brands work with social media influencers to advertise their products and services. The effect of social media influencer marketing on brand image and trust is a topic of significant interest and research in marketing.

In recent years, social media influencer marketing has skyrocketed, becoming a popular way for brands to reach their target audience. However, while influencer marketing can significantly impact brand image and trust, it is critical to comprehend the nuances of this form of marketing and how it can be effectively used to achieve the desired outcomes.

This thesis intends to explore the effect that of social media influencer marketing on brand image and trust and, provide insights and recommendations for brands seeking to use this form of marketing effectively. Through a comprehensive analysis of the literature and empirical data, this thesis will examine the key variables affecting the efficacy of social media influencer marketing campaigns and how these campaigns can be optimized to build brand image and trust.

The study's findings will contribute to understanding the alteration of social media influencer marketing on brand image and trust, and provide practitioners with useful insights seeking to harness the power of this marketing tool.

1.1. Context (the Case of Iraq)

Iraq is a country located in the Middle East, with a rich cultural heritage and diverse population. In recent years, Iraq has seen significant growth in its use of social media, particularly among the younger generation. This growth in social media usage has led to the emergence of social media influencer marketing in Iraq, as brands seek to connect with and interact their potential customers through these platforms.

Social media influencer marketing in Iraq involves partnering with individuals who have a large social media follower and are considered influential in their community. These individuals promote the brand to their followers through sponsored posts or product mentions. In Iraq, social media influencer marketing is being used is particularly relevant for brands targeting younger audiences, as this demographic is highly active on social media.

However, regardless of the rise of social media influencer marketing in Iraq, there is a need to make more research on its impact on brand image and trust. And further researches on understanding the efficiency of influencer marketing on social media in Iraq and to emphasize the advancement of their best practices in the country.

Overall, social media influencer marketing presents a valuable opportunity for brands in Iraq to reach and engage with their target audience, particularly the younger generation. As it is critical for brands to carefully consider the modification of influencer marketing on

brand trust and image, and to develop strategies that are consistent with their overall marketing objectives.

1.2. Problem Statements

Regardless of whether the social media influencer marketing has grown into a useful approach by brands to reach and engage with their target audience. However, the transformation of social media influencer marketing on brand trust and brand image remains to be seen. Therefore, brands need to comprehend the efficacy of this marketing tool to allocate their resources and achieve their marketing goals effectively.

While research has explored various aspects of influencers' marketing, more studies need to examine the impact of social media influencers' marketing on brand image and trust. This gap in the literature makes it difficult for brands to determine the best approach to influencers' marketing and measure their campaigns' success.

This thesis seeks to fill a gap in the literature by investigating the impact of social media influencer marketing on brand trust and image, specifically in Iraq. This research will provide a comprehensive understanding of the link among both social media influencer marketing and brand image and trust, as well as identifying the important aspects that affect the success of this marketing tool.

By exploring the work of social media influencer marketing on brand trust and image in Iraq, this research aims to provide practitioners with useful information and inform the advancement of best practices for constructive influencer marketing.

1.3. Objectives and Contributions of the Dissertation

Objectives: The objectives of this thesis are to:

1. Investigate the modification of social media influencer marketing on brand trust and brand image.
2. Identify the key elements that impact the efficacy of social media influencer marketing in building brand image and brand trust.
3. Examine the connection between social media influencer marketing and brand image and brand trust.
4. Provide insights and recommendations for brands seeking to effectively build brand image and trust, and the use social media influencer marketing.

Contributions: The contributions of this thesis are:

1. This research will add to by adding to the existing body of knowledge a comprehensive understanding of the effect of social media influencer marketing on brand trust and image.
2. The findings of this research will show the development of best practices for effective influencer marketing and help brands allocate their resources more effectively.
3. The findings of this study will help to advance academic debate on the effectiveness of social media influencer marketing.

4. This research will provide a valuable resource for marketers, practitioners, and researchers who are seeking to understand the impression that social media influencer marketing makes on brand trust and brand image.

1.4. Structure of the Dissertation

This research is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction, which seeks to clarify the general idea of the research as well as the concepts of the research topic.. The second chapter is the literature review, which explains the research topic "The impact of social media influencer marketing on brand trust and image: The case of Iraq" as it provides an in-depth review of the social media marketing, influencers, brand image, and brand trust, in spite of current research findings on components of these topics. The second chapter additionally offers the theoretical foundation for developing the research hypothesis that was utilized in this study. The third chapter attempts to clarify the study's methodology, including the technique, sampling method, sample size, the process of gathering data, survey constructions, measures, and data analysis. The fourth chapter shows the results of the survey analysis, including the descriptive statistics in correlation, regression, reliability and validity of various variables, and tests the hypothesis concluded in the second chapter with the results and tables. Finally, the final chapter, chapter five, presents a review of the results with examples of the brand chosen for this research, a summary of the findings, as well as the theoretical and practical implications of these findings. Furthermore, the chapter describes the study's limitations as well as future research directions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Social Media Marketing

According to the marketing perspective, recent years' researches established the significance of social media and how it has become a fundamental part of everyday life. However, that leads to more difficulties in how marketers deal with new challenges and choices. Therefore, new marketing practices must always mean new strategies and tactics (Li et al., 2021).

2.1.1 Social Media Marketing and Consumer's Consumption Habits.

Due to social media, users believe they have more influence over other people's opinions. Therefore, it has led to a change in consumer consumption habits throughout the past century, especially in the last couple of years. The change in their communication with the brand or other consumers and assessing, choosing and purchasing goods and services occurred as a result of providing them with new ways of looking for new options via the internet and online marketing on social media (Li et al., 2021).

Accordingly, the communication between the firms and consumers can make consumers connect to different brands and entities at any time, and helps with the loyalty of the brand in advertising and promoting the goods or services to build a connection with the consumers, which will lead to having loyalty, awareness, brand recognition, and brand recall (Li et al., 2021).

Specifically, if the target is a younger group, it will be more necessary to do social media marketing, not traditional marketing (with the Tv, billboards, and Radio). In 2018, the statistics showed as US citizens of age 16-24 prefer social media to television, Video streaming platforms, for example (13% 16-19 years, 18% 20-24 years), and social media content (19% 16-19 years, 21% 20-24 years) (Richins, 2015).

2.1.2 Social Media Applications

The present studies rely on the most used advertising platforms in different fields. One of the most known platforms is Instagram, as it is mostly used platform for fashion, beauty products, and visual marketing. Due to the of Instagram's aesthetic appeal as a social media platform that focuses on video and photo sharing while also endorsing luxurious lifestyles and influential luxury brands (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). It becomes the use of Instagram more popular and reaches wider audiences for these services and goods. Other platforms including Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn are more about the advertising part than the private part of social media platforms.

With that information, the application has been categorized as the most basic and known social media application, specifically in marketing, including social networking sites (Facebook, Snapchat, and LinkedIn), content community sites (YouTube, TikTok), and blogs or microblogs (such as Twitter) (Storm, 2022).

Facebook:

The usual number of monthly active users on Facebook is (2.91 billion), mostly 31.5% in the age group of (25 – 34), which is primarily composed of male consumers. The percentage of Male consumers is 57%, and the percentage of the female consumers is 43%. Plus, the average daily Facebook usage is 33 minutes per day.

From Facebook 2022, demographics show that:

- Despite the intense competition, specifically after the apocalypse of YouTube and Instagram, and the increase of competition, Facebook so far remains the most prominent social platform in marketing among consumers.
- For the past five years, there was a slight change in Facebook usage per day, as the usage per day has fallen (it became 33 minutes per day, where it was 38 minutes per day) whereas, on the other social media platforms usage per day has gone up.
- As shown in figure 2.1. even with the increase in consumer growth rate in 2021 by 0.8%, the growth rate has been slower than ever before.

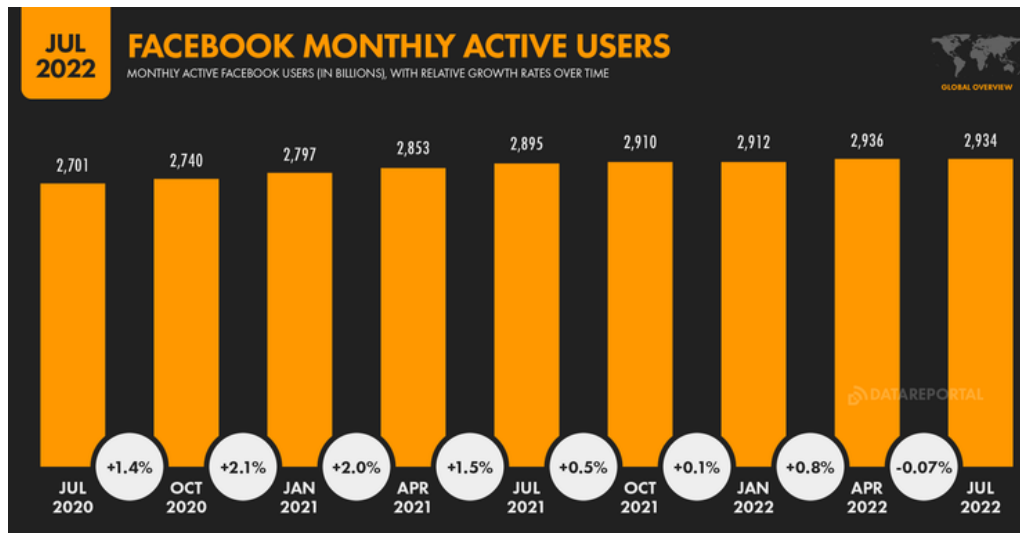


Figure 2. 1. Facebook monthly active users

Source: (Datareportal, 2022)

- Even with the increase in consumer growth rate in 2021 by 0.8%, the growth rate has been slower than ever before.
- Identical to 2021 statistics data, young consumers use TikTok and Snapchat instead of Facebook and Instagram.
- One of the main ways of social media marketing is using Facebook ads, as the ad revenues keep escalating.

Instagram:

The average of monthly active users on Instagram is (2 billion), mostly 31.2% in the age group of (25 – 34) with 31% close behind in the age group of (18-24), which is primarily composed of male consumers. The percentage of male consumers is 51.8%, and the percentage of the female consumers is 48.4%. Plus, the average daily Instagram usage is 29 minutes per day.

- For the past three years, the Instagram platform number of consumers has doubled the number of consumers and reached 2 billion with such great stats, Instagram has become a solid platform.
- With TikTok introduced to the social media platforms, most young consumers shifted their use to it, which made Instagram not as trendy as it used to be for young consumers, as shown in figure 2.2.

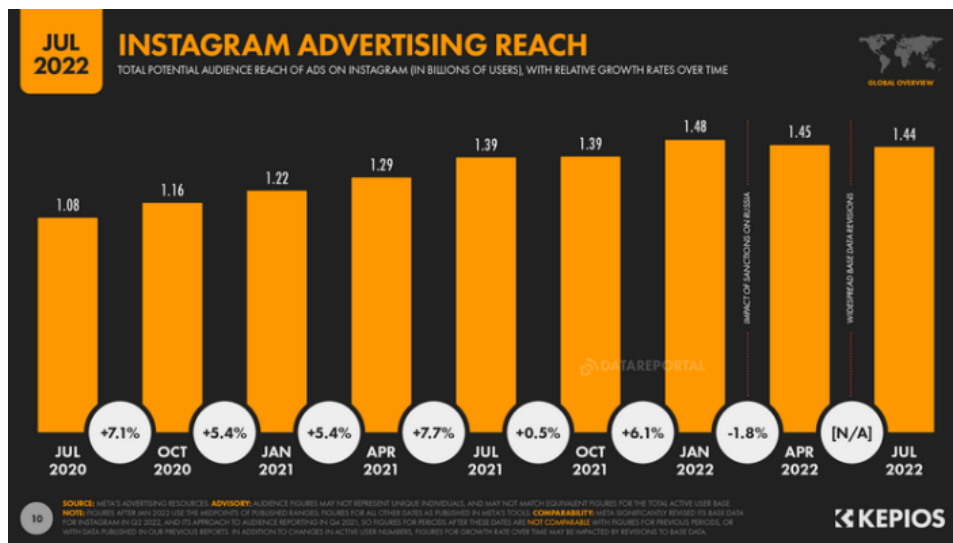


Figure 2. 2. Instagram monthly active users

Source: (Aslam, 2020)

- With that in mind, the millennials and generation Z still hold a significant portion of Instagram consumers today.
- The recent updates to Instagram like marketing ads, are converting Instagram to become more of an eCommerce place.
- One of the updates that happened to Instagram was Instagram's Reels. However, with its popularity, TikTok still keeps influencing young generations and shifting them away from Instagram.

TikTok:

The usual number of monthly active users on TikTok is (1 billion), mostly 25% in the age group of (10-19), which is primarily composed of female consumers. The percentage of male consumers is 39%, and the percentage of the female consumers is 61%. Plus, the average daily TikTok usage is 89 minutes per day.

- The growth rate in TikTok was ten times more than the last social media demographics breakdown, and it was an extraordinary result.
- Its growth rate is increasing, as consumers spend more than 89 minutes daily on this platform.
- Approximately 40% of generation Z get directly influenced by products and influencers on this platform, as shown in figure 2.3.

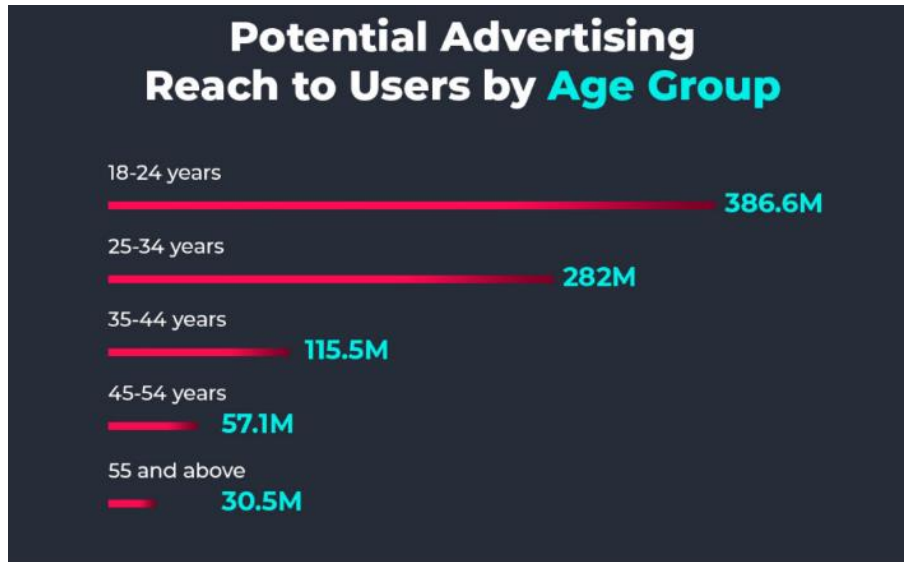


Figure 2. 3. TikTok users by the age group

Source: (Woolf, 2023)

- Lately, more brands are noticing the influence that TikTok is making and adjusting their marketing strategies.
- Accordingly, the platform is advancing more to meet the change in consumer and brand needs, including advanced ads and CRM integration.

Twitter:

The usual number of monthly active users on Twitter is (211 million), mostly 42% in the age group of (18-29), which is primarily composed of male consumers. The percentage of male consumers is 61.6%, and the percentage of the female consumers is 38.4%. Plus, the average daily Twitter usage is 31 minutes per day.

- The growth rate from year-to-year was mainly steady.
- Regardless of the growth rate from last year (187 more), it was concluded from research that the other platforms would make twitter lose its users in the next five years, as shown in Figure 2.4.

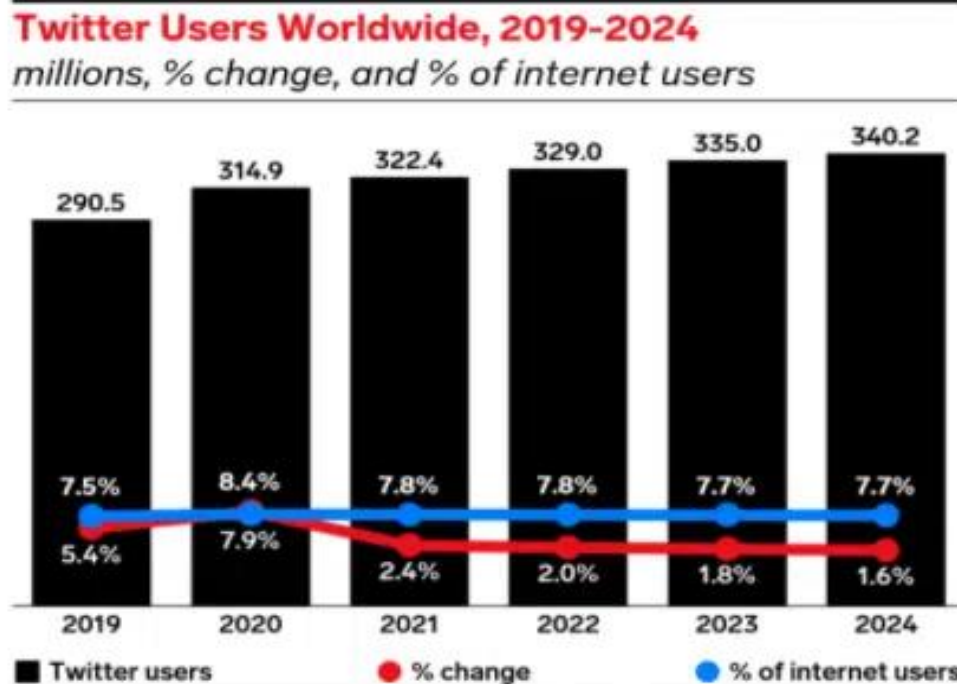


Figure 2. 4. Twitter users worldwide 2019-2024

Source: (Beveridge, 2022)

- Contrary to other platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and others. Twitter is considered a platform for sharing news and discuss events, and it is rarely an advertising platform.

LinkedIn:

The usual number of monthly active users on LinkedIn is (810 million), mostly 58.4% in the age group of (25-34), which is primarily composed of male consumers. The percentage of male consumers is 52%, and the percentage of the female consumers is 48%. Plus, 63% of the platform users use it weekly, while 22% use it daily.

- Generally, LinkedIn is known to be for the older audience, but as shown in the research, Millennials dominate the platform, as shown in figure 2.5.

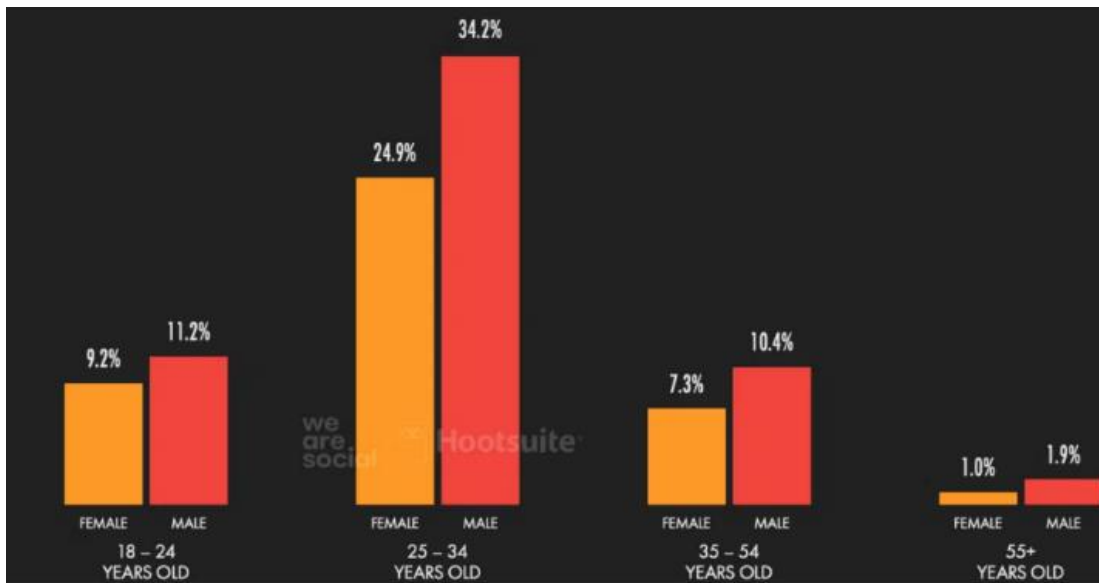


Figure 2. 5. LinkedIn users in age groups

Source: (Newberry & Beveridge, 2022)

- In 2020, an increase happened, due to the interest of new jobs and job applications, which led to increase the record revenue LinkedIn usage during the Covid-19 and the pandemic era.
- The most earning on this platform is B2B, which makes LinkedIn a great source of supply for advertisement.
- It has impressive international users, and only 180 million (25%) are in the US.

Pinterest:

The usual number of monthly active users on Pinterest is (431 million), mostly 38% in the age group of (50-64), which is primarily composed of male consumers. The percentage of male consumers is 78%, and the percentage of the female consumers is 22%. Plus, the average daily Pinterest usage is 14.2 minutes.

- In 2021, there was a massive growth in male users.
- It is considered as the largest product-focused platform among the other social media platforms and has big advertising chances.
- Approximately 70% of the users consider this platform a trustful platform to research the products they want.
- The demographic data is scarce with the age split (32% in 18-29, 34% in 30-49, and the biggest is 38% 50-64) as shown in figure 2.6.

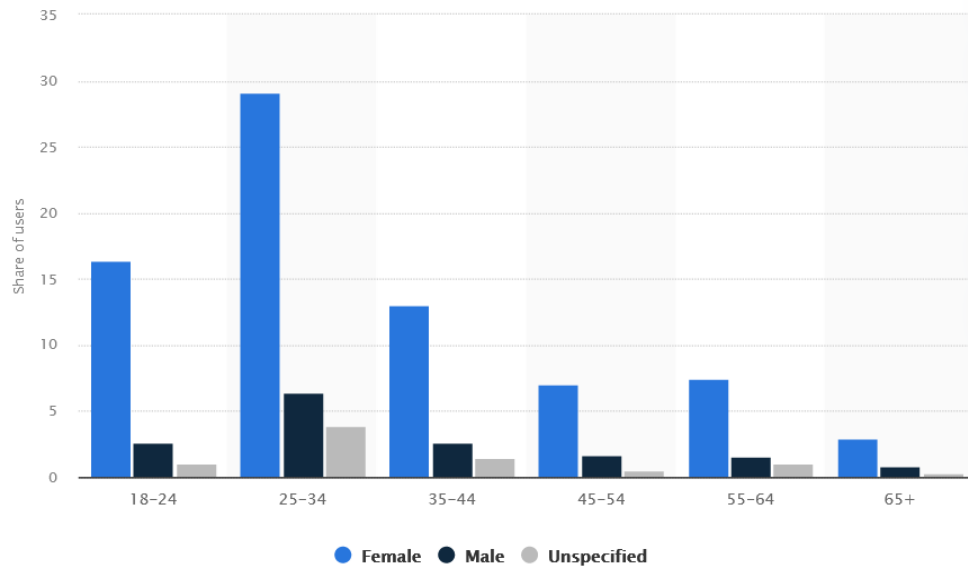


Figure 2. 6. Pinterest users in age groups

Source: (Statistica, 2023)

Snapchat:

The usual number of monthly active users on Snapchat is (319 million), mostly 48% in the age group of (15-24), which is primarily composed of male consumers. The percentage of male consumers is 54.4%, and the percentage of the female consumers is 44.6%. Plus, the average daily Snapchat usage is more than 25 minutes.

- Current year's show that Snapchat is losing its younger users (generation Z), as seen in figure 2.7.

Age gaps in Snapchat, Instagram use are particularly wide, less so for Facebook

% of U.S. adults in each age group who say they ever use ...

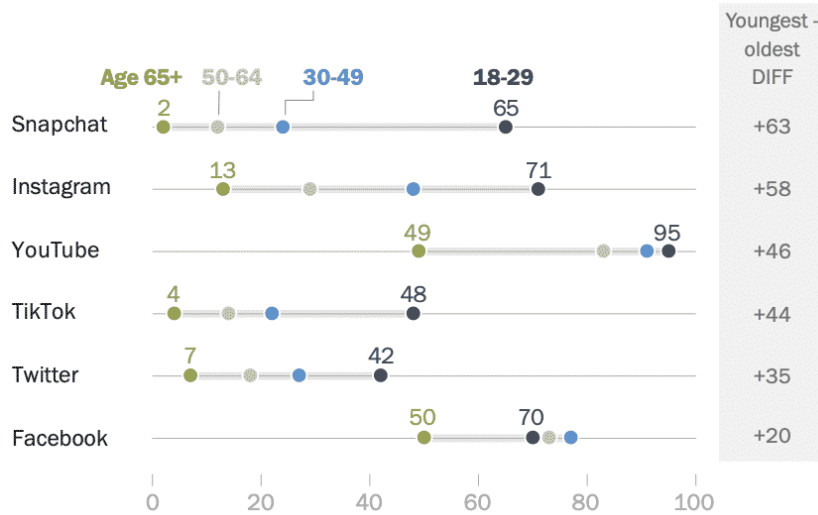


Figure 2. 7. Snapchat and other platforms age gap

Source: (Hirose, 2022)

- Even though the 57% year over year revenue growth broke the \$1 billion barrier, Snapchat is not growing yet.

YouTube:

The usual number of monthly active users on YouTube is (more than 2 billion), mainly in the age group of (15-35), which is primarily composed of male consumers. The percentage of male consumers is 54%, and the percentage of the female consumers is 46%. Plus, the average daily YouTube usage is 30 minutes per day.

- One of the most famous and requested content is video content. As a result, YouTube significantly benefited from that continuing and long-term shift, as shown in table 2.1. among US consumers.
- Hence, it is also a significant opportunity for advertisements that appear in the middle or beginning of the video, which makes many products and brands and their brand image well known worldwide. As shown in table 2.1., There has been an increased use of YouTube by social media marketing influencers.

Table 2. 1. Social media platforms planning to use influencer marketing

platform	Dec. 2019	March 2021
Instagram	97%	93%
Instagram Stories	83%	83%
TikTok	16%	68%
Facebook	79%	68%
YouTube	44%	48%
Instagram Reels	-	36%
Pinterest	29%	35%
Twitter	35%	32%
Snapchat	16%	26%
Blogs	24%	25%
Twitch	5%	13%

Source: (Barnhart, 2022)

- The revenue has increased almost 43% year over year, which makes it a go-to streaming service.
- Even though it is an excellent platform for advertising, more users say they use YouTube for entertainment rather than to find brands and products.

2.1.3. Social Media and the Firm and Consumers

Social media marketing is considered an important marketing activity like marketing research, branding, service provision, customer relationship management, and sales promotion. Furthermore, different social media platforms enable communication with a wider audience without the need for a systemic position (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Moreover, this was due to various studies that have additional evidence of the positive impact of having social media platforms and using social media marketing. Despite the numerous studies that provide supporting insight of the advantages offered by social media advertising to businesses and brands, several countries have yet to incorporate social media into their primary marketing strategies.

Studies that analyze social media marketing strategies from the consumer and firm/organization perspectives will be examined.

The studies that focus on firms/organizations:

Firstly, it discusses the extent to which brands/firms/organizations use and benefit from social media.

One study used a content analysis of the innovative strategies displayed in the social media content shared by a fragment of top brands. The results show which social media platforms or channels use intuitive, creative strategies. Moreover, these methods and channels pertain to consumer participation in branded social media. This study shows many researchers how it is vital to stay fresh and frequent for consumers' social media, and the importance of frequent incentives and updates for consumers. In addition, many strategies accumulated with consumer engagement specifically experienced and exclusivity messages. Regardless of the value of brands' creative procedures, most branded social content can be classified as functional. Branded social campaigns provide increased details that improve the consumer's essential connection with the brand story. It can improve consumer-brand relationships, assist marketers in identifying recurring themes in user feedback, and encourage consumers to engage with online content. The experiment is founded on a variety of correlations with the brand in consumer memory, which includes contact points, conceptions, images, feelings, and thoughts. The brand can employ social media marketing as an integrated component in a marketing communication series of micro-campaigns or channels specifically designed for digital acknowledgment. The previous study also argues academic literature that observed heavily on the context prevalent in the branded social context and on the aim and characteristics of consumer participation in social channels. Brand agencies care about these brand decisions, because character theory advocates that a brand pledge connects a consumer to a stable set of self-meaning that produces steady lines of activities, like purchase behaviors. Self-expansion theory advocates that consumer communicate with brands due to lapping identities and parasocial relationships with the brands. Brands also only tolerate if they are consistent with the consumers' personality or identity. With that in mind, marketers or brand agencies get advice regarding delivering the message on social media. They also need guidance on how various message strategies will affect the processing engagement and, eventually, receive the wanted brand outcomes like brand loyalty and equity (Zhang, 2010).

The previous study focused on:

- The most commonly used are social networks and microblogs.
- When the firm conducts the website, it will have more blooming results.

Social media marketing is a limited use in some sectors (such as tourist destination management organization, health, and B2B).

Secondly, social media marketing results in the strategies' development and impact.

As explained in these articles, the WOM theory and review, one of their findings, argues that the network of communications gives four strategies: embracing, evaluation, explanation, and endorsement. Each of these strategies gives a character communication, narrative, forum, nature of marketing promotion, and communal norms. They consider this narrative model which explains that communal WOM does not increase. However, it strengthens the marketing message and their meaning; this shows it has distinct pragmatic on

how markets should target and plan. Another article studies the Hokey Pokey popular ice cream retailer “Super Premium”, which has a dozen outlets based in India. In that, they explained and showed how firms are more and more investing in new marketing channels boosting technologies, and how the brand is becoming more famous and having more consumers through viral marketing in social media marketing. Electronics, consumer brands, and automobiles are focusing an expanding portion of their marketing budgets on engaging customers through social media platforms. The essential nature of social media platforms for the consumer as they interact with, and are influenced by the brand, where they get a direct impact on the communications, and get higher customer engagement and response rates in comparison to the traditional marketing methodologies that they focus solely on the consumers of the firm, and there is also in the social media platforms the benefits of WOM.

The different findings that were found by the previous study:

1. Exclusive framework and a collection of measures to apprehend the value of individual WOM in terms of both the viral impression and the net sales it facilitates.
2. It resolved this framework by making and deploying a social media strategy for active retailers Hoky Poky.
3. It measured and anticipated the personal impact of WOM on Hoky Poky consumers and precisely calculated the ROI (return on investment) of social media for this retailer (Zhang, 2010).

The previous study focused on:

- Social media attitude and judgment have an enormous impact on a firm stock performance more than traditional media.
- Word of mouth are messages that are altered messages by the senders to suit the receiver.
- Consumers’ high levels of engagement on social media for a product or a brand give the company a view of its most valuable parts.
- Social media marketing is a primary marketing form used to increase sales.

Thirdly, the unethical and abusive usage of those strategies.

The aim of researching alcohol marketing in social media was to give an idea of social media marketing of several leading alcohol beverage companies in the United Kingdom and to limit the implications for regularity policies and further research. Moreover, the result of the study was that a collection of top trends was encountered. These continued using interactive games, real-world tie-ins, and time-specific approaches to drinking. These methods display a strategy of branded conversation stimulus, which is preferred by social media marketing. It concludes that several obvious marketing methods are utilized by alcohol brands when using social media. These inhibit policies that pursue changing social media norms around drinking, especially the regularization of daily consumption. (Zhang, 2010).

In many nations, restricting alcoholic beverage marketing on social media has been a sensitive topic. Alcohol advertising and marketing, including social media marketing, is strictly regulated in various countries. In other countries, however, there needs to be more regulation or an ambiguous regulatory framework that allows for interpretation. There are no explicit restrictions in Iraq for alcoholic beverage marketing on social media. This may result

in a gap in managing and monitoring alcoholic beverage brands' marketing activity on social media platforms. This chasm may have negative repercussions, such as encouraging excessive alcohol use or targeting underage persons with alcohol advertising. Furthermore, a lack of regulation may raise ethical concerns about the transparency and authenticity of content shared by social media influencers who promote alcoholic beverages. As a result, influencers may engage in misleading or dishonest advertising without defined guidelines, resulting in brand trust and reputation loss.

As a result, transparent and effective regulations governing the marketing and advertising of alcoholic beverages on social media in Iraq are required. This can guarantee that marketing operations are carried out responsibly and ethically, supporting moderate alcohol consumption while maintaining public health and safety. Social media marketing also raises questions concerning the adequacy of the reactive regulatory framework

- Consumers may engage in risky actions as a consequence of the firms' social media promotion.

The studies that focus on consumer behavior have four significant parts of research:

Firstly, studies of social media's influence on consumers' increased consumption.

One research investigation investigates the impact of alcoholic beverage social media marketing on the percentage of likes and shares, relying on the ad type: anti-binge drinking vs. alcohol advertisement. Furthermore, as a purpose of the message, show advertisement type and virality, it also explores how assessments of alcohol assessments of alcohol advertising statuses and the display of advertising messages anticipate social media users purposed to consume alcohol followers' viral behavior motives like intention to share, comment on, and like any updates or posts were more accurate in anticipating their motive to consume alcohol. The researchers claim that alcohol social media advertising indicates a social pattern of alcohol intake that inspires followers to intake more alcoholic beverages. The paper's findings argue within the frame of convincing theories and policy changes regarding the adjustment of alcohol marketing on social media. Whether it was causing deaths or health costs, there is a significant amount of alcohol abuse, but mostly young adults aged from 18 to 24 have an even higher risk of alcohol use and abuse, due to the convincing theories on social media and how significantly they are susceptible to similar marketing and advertising strategies, it made young adult the most common and excessive binge-drinkers and alcohol consumers. The substantial risk of abusing or using alcohol within and between young adults, combined with their extensive use of social media as well as networking sites (Zhang, 2010).

The different findings that were found by the previous study:

- Social media advertisements and the messages they give about the products help elevate the targeted products' consumption.
-

Secondly, studies of social media consumers' usage, sharing, and searching information.

This study explores how persuasive messages (like post popularity, argument quality, and post attractiveness) can affect consumers to like, comment, and share messages on social media marketing activities. A survey established in this research shows that the three types of persuasive messages are essential to share on social media. Post popularity is substantial and works through peripheral and central routes according to research models. Additionally, different consumers and different message patterns have different communication behaviors. Moreover, only persuasive and touching messages can change consumers' behaviors toward the brand and induce wanted interactions. Social media marketing enables context sharing, relationship building, information diffusion, and fan cohesion and is an effective marketing method these days. Thus, marketing managers must unconsciously attract their consumers to share the message with friends and acquaintances. Therefore, effective broadcasting of information becomes crucial factor in social media marketing success, and influencing the consumers to the firm promotions is paramount for recent marketing research (Zhang, 2010).

The different findings that were found by the previous study:

- People are significantly influenced, whether with the people around them or online, as they benefit from social media whether in searching or sharing more information.
- In social media, marketing is different by the diversity of the product category like (utility product strategies marketing is different from hedonic products)
- The trending applications in social media are the ones that allow them to post photos or any personalization.
- The publicity of a post, affect its sharing.

Thirdly, studies of social media's influence on the customer perception against brands. One of the studies aimed to explore the collaborative relationship standards in Facebook communication between the consumer with their brands, and to comprehend how the standards affect consumers recognized dissatisfaction with the brand message. As a result, it was disclosed that out of 8, 7 brands operated depending on exchanging relationship standards in interactions with their consumers/fans, considering one brand regulated identically to the communal relationships standards. Furthermore, 161 Korean college students participated in a sample to see how character resistive and correspondence styles affect the perceived level of irritation caused by known brands messages on Facebook. The results were that those in high-oddy reactors anticipated the exchange communication more disturbing than those in low-oddy reactors. However, there wasn't any difference among low and high-reactance characters in their recognized disturbing communal communication.

Furthermore, there is another advertising impression option that the social media provides by establishing an internet environment, as it makes the social media members swap information and opinions about the services or products (e.g., after an individual becomes a fan of a particular brand/page on Facebook the brand posts and content shown on the newsfeed of that fan, and after they do a 'like' or 'comment' on a post, the post will appear on the fans friend newsfeed). This method is known as "Earned Impressions" as it is an ad-free, automatically generated advertisement. As it showed, it is a method that has distinct benefits in establishing and upholding a close connection with the consumers not only because it is fast and free extending, but also because it is a direct advertisement. It can be masked as less

profitable, which is more appropriate for Facebook consumers as the context comes from their friends. This study aims to give a deep understanding of the effect of the paid advertisement using Facebook as advertising media.

Another study mentioned the social media marketing literature, highlighting the emotional aspect of social media applications and the traits of event marketing. This fast development of social media has challenged managers to revise how to form their traditional marketing practices. Where they find the emotion that is more shown on the Facebook page does have a consequential impact on the anticipated customers. The authors find that customers displaying emotions on Facebook posts have a crucial impact on the usefulness and enjoyment of this type of social media marketing. This led to affecting the consumers' attitudes and objectives toward an event. After studying the various industry set ups that implied analyzing the marketing capability of social media websites like Twitter and Facebook, the insight and implications that were given by the events were discussed accordingly (e.g., by building a social media presence, Starbucks has absorbed more than 19 million fans on Facebook and more than 1 million on Twitter to date, with that effect of social media, Starbucks can not only connect with followers and fans but also check their criticism and suggestions). Besides only having a page on Facebook, many other firms have endorsed a page to achieve awareness about special events or other information about the brand to connect with other possible consumers and even increase the connections with the current consumers.

The research purpose leads to two critical questions:

1. How will the recognition of the event page as an authorized marketing tool will be a reflection of the emotions of their consumers?
2. How is the admission of a mechanism affect their consumers' intention to tend to the events of the brand?

Furthermore, to answer these questions, the authors recognized the technology acceptance model TAM as the establishment to seek the role that consumer's emotions play not just in the pages as an event marketing entity, but in their aim to attend events simultaneously. The conclusion of such discoveries can take advantage of the event industry, as it seeks to understand better, and impact consumer emotions and behavior along social media (Zhang, 2010).

The different findings that were found by the previous study:

- Social media advertisement and its messages contribute to enhance the perspective while also increasing word of mouth and customer perceived value.
- Arranging the wanted brand post at the top of the fan page to increase its popularity and fame.
- The graphic, expressive, life-like brand post characteristics increase the post's popularity and likes.
- The more a post has several likes, the more it will have a progressive word of mouth or any other type of shares.
- People have different characters and identities, and react differently to the same marketing strategies and attempts.

- Instagram and Facebook recently have the best chances of improving the consumer image and behavior towards the brand.
- The popularity of a post is evaluated by the time consumed by the post's followers and their number.

2.2. Social Media Influencer

As mentioned before, social media marketing has been greatly valued in the last decade. Certainly, internet-based applications and influencers play an important role in today's social media value, due to their consistency in recognizing and focusing on getting influential consumers and inspiring them to advocate for a particular brand or a product.

2.2.1. Who are Social Media Influencers?

The effect of opinion leaders and how they can significantly influence other's opinions was recognized by (De Veirman et al., 2017). They are daily, and frequent internet users who acquire a large followers on some social media applications with a video or text content on their private lives and routines, and cast their audience by making advertisement or information in their content on the social media accounts (Gräve, 2019). Moreover, now through social media and its activities with posting videos or content, new opinion leaders were recognized as social media influencers who could influence consumers' behaviors, purchase decisions, and attitudes online (De Veirman et al., 2017). Influencers share their viral ideas on their social media networks and this is how they spread different and new ideas among followers. Furthermore, with that their ideas would be distributed quickly and rapidly. Therefore, they usually empower the audience, whether it is through a viral topic or another way (De Veirman et al., 2017); a platform like Instagram makes it easy to assist the user in having a self-brand and publishing themselves; due to this, many influencers' audience feel relatable to the influencers, and have more perceptions of authenticity and credibility (Pick, 2021), by that it influence and make the user more drawn to their opinion (De Veirman et al., 2017). It also considered the influencers as they set the topics of their posting, their communication with audiences, the status group of social media influencers, the importance of a following, and their eagerness to cast their activities as added criteria (Enke & Borchers, 2019).

2.2.2. Social Media Influencers and Celebrities

It was also referred as a third-party, as the influencers act in a place of the independence of a third-party advocate that forges the audience behaviors with content created as videos, blogs, photos and other social media users. Previous studies indicated only two levels, Micro and Macro (Kay et al., 2020); other study indicate three levels of classification, which are Micro, Macro, and celebrities, but the most used were the two levels of classification for several reasons. Furthermore, the Micro and Macro influences depend on considering many followers and how it affects the brand.

Most brands aim to take social media influencers and not celebrities, one of the many reasons that influencers' are believably reachable, easy to relate to, and more intimate than a celebrity (De Veirman et al., 2017). Another reason is that influencers have a different approach to the consumers from traditional celebrities, which makes a big difference in

marketing to be considered a relatable brand and relatable. In contrast, traditional celebrities have found fame in acting, sport, politics, or music, earning their audience from their work, network relations, and interviews. Instead, the influencers made their brand with their posts and activities on social media (Kay et al., 2020).

Moreover, due to its approximated newness and the inexperience of the users to the social media influencers marketing strategies, it is little to be a trigger persuasion observation that could affect unfavorable attitudes (Kay et al., 2020).

2.2.3. Social Media Influencers Roles

A study hypothesized that there are roles for social media influencers (opinion leaders), and the roles differ depending on the influencer audience's reach. Hence, there are some functional equivalents of social media influencers (Enke & Borchers, 2019):

- **Creative agencies:** Brands and other organizations usually employ external creative agencies to carry out and develop a strategy for the communication messages, where they take consultation from the professional in creativity. In this way, social media influencers co-create the content. They function similarly to creative agencies as they implement their content production expertise to improve the brand or organization. As the influencers have visual or narration styles, any organization that deals with them eventually opens itself up to these styles and new creative work.
- **Advertising media:** Social media influencers also offer the function of advertising the strategic communication messages of the brand. It is also likely that the function of advertising media only bounds the social media influencer functions. In this situation, they do not use the creative agency's functions as in the content but purely for the distribution of the content and the comprehensive strategic messages delivered through their networks. Nonetheless, as opposed to the services supplied by traditional advertising media, social media influencers can create content. Thus, this means creating the content and getting the function of creative agencies and advertising media synchronic.
- **Journalistic media:** Social media influencers create content differently, where sometimes it applies to the organization and sometimes it does not apply to it, as they create relevant content without being connected to clients; in this case, social media influencers achieve the function like the journalistic media's functions. However, unlike professional journalists, social media influencer communication lacks training routes, professional ethics, and editorial quality standards.
- **Testimonial givers:** It is commonly contributed by the people who display the product in a strategic communication message like in a TV commercial. If social media influencers adopt the lead role, they typically share testimonials and lend their stage persona to the organization. The research categorized the testimonials into three types: typical person testimonials, celebrity testimonials, and expert testimonials (Tomczak et al., 2008). Social media influencers serve and combine all three types. They are like micro-celebrities, so their status can attract significant attention from their cooperation partners. Simultaneously, their peer status, which is helping to build some parts of their accessibility, gives the social media influencers a chance to present a typical person testimonial. Lastly, many social media influencers pursue topics like

veganism, fashion, gaming, or sports. Social media influencers can also provide expert testimonials with a specific theme that focuses on expertise. However, the social media influencer strategy goes further than the written statement strategy. The testimonial givers are mainly defined by the protagonist's role, while the social media influencers also serve the other roles.

- **Opinion leaders:** opinion leaders are likely to influence other people in their immediate environment as social media influencers have the power to change the decision-making process. They are often described as opinion leaders in research. According to Barak, Lehmann, and Shidlovski 2006, opinion leaders can be one of two, skilled in a specific topic or preserver of the connection to many other individuals. In contrast, social media influencers are possibly a combination of the two aspects. On the contrary, some social media influencers create their status by obtaining expertise in a specific field. With their activities, they create relationships with many social media users. Conversely, opinion leaders grant limited resources to cooperation, especially the number and quality of their relationships and their skills to influence the audience's knowledge, attitude, and behaviors.

2.2.4. Influence Framework

The influence framework that demonstrates the power dynamic in the marketing context, in the time of the marketing strategy to influence the target and affect their behavior and choices (R. B. Kim & Chao, 2019).

This dynamic is based on four primary steps:

Firstly, the influence attempts: When an influencer chooses the resources of the power, they want to use to influence their target audience. Social media influencers can expand their influence through their approach to controlling the power resources their audience values. These resources present the basis of power that covers prestige, information, attractiveness, expertise, and service. The Instagram platform is always considered the most visualized platform where attractiveness can occur as a power resource (whether in the profiles, hashtags, texts, usernames, hearts, comments, location check-ins, images, and videos). It is illustrated engagingly. Instagram connect can also give a high-quality prestige extent that is needed for the power resource. While also, Instagram posts showcase the knowledge and the expertise of the influencer as the power sources. With that, the post content is informative, and its service is also the interactive power source here.

Secondly, the audience or target perspectives and attitude toward it: As the influencer tries to persuade a target by managing the power resources, the target's attitude will be affected by their technique. If the power resources were successful, the audience usually would show two primary attitudinal responses (trust and satisfaction). Such as, if the target audience recognizes that a social media influencer's post on Instagram is visually appealing, shows expertise, conveys prestige, and is interactive and informative, the audience might classify the social media influencer as more favorable than others, by that representing satisfaction with the social media influencer as a taste leader and by that trust in the social media influencer as an opinion leader.

Thirdly, the audience or target motive to comply: Subsequently, the audience builds up a positive attitude responding to the influence proposal, then the audience chooses to go along with the influencer invitation or not. The audience's eagerness escalates when they observe more good reasons to be involved in the behavior that the influencer pursues. Such as, a targeted audience might feel encouraged by the lifestyle preferences, style, or the actions of those they perceive as relevant role models. In this regard, the more constructive an audience's attitude towards a social media influencer, the stronger their eagerness to comply.

Finally, the audience behavioral outcomes: The more favorable performance outcomes reveal to the audience's observance the more the audiences project a good behavioral outcome. Such as if they are influenced to pursue the social media influencer's taste, lifestyle, or fashion style. They may indicate a desirable social outcome, like following, sharing, or liking the post. Moreover, they may show a positive behavioral outcome, like the motive to buy the same lifestyle products or fashion that the social media influencer displayed.

The consumer's doppelganger effect and focused the significance of the desire to comply and, more specifically, the meaningful role of the desire to mimic. The theory defines the experience as when the audience mimics others' behavior, intentionally responding to a desire to act or to look like those they are mimicking—applying a role model consideration. It was suggested in a study that demonstrated analytically and theoretically that an audience doppelganger imitates consumption attitude of people viewed as consumption role models deliberately. Based on the text, the attitude toward mimicking can either be unconscious or conscious. It was implied that both the mimicker and the mainly mimicked do not recognize the mimicry. In unconscious mimicry has been comprehensible in a observable situation in which a person unintentionally mimics a conversation partner's facial expression, like smiling, an attitude in an arm or leg position, an emotional reaction like sadness, and physiological expressions like laughing or crying.

On the other hand, other researchers were in line with the mimicry research and showed how it could also be a willful and conscious action. Hence, it is not always a casual reaction to stimulants but can be a deliberate behavior aimed at growing closer to the person being mimicked. Conscious mimicry, for example, has been defined in various consumption texts as adopting the fashion of one's identified influencers, product, clothing, brand, and store choices. Whether unconscious or conscious, mimicry is essential in influencing the audience's behavioral and social choices between the mimicked and the mimicker. Furthermore, several researchers have recommended that mimicry affects social relationships. For instance, it serves the mimicker, and the mimicked creates compatible interactions and empathy, develops rapport, establishes a social link, and communicates feelings of connection and desire. In this regard, mimicry impacts not only ones, not social attitude but also social attitude. Therefore, brands need to choose influencers highly valued by their audience to praise their products. It had been demonstrated in earlier research that there was a positive relationship between attitude towards the influencer and attitude towards the brand. Likewise, it was established that associating a brand with positively classified artists results in positive attitudes toward the brand. Likewise, brands must be deliberate and mindful in choosing the right influencer to define their brand, and decide who carries the

most applicable and required characteristics concerning the brand, as the impression of the influencer may alternate with the brand under the endorsement. Consumers adopt brand products to communicate their personality and identity to others and classify others based on their adoption and consumption behavior.

2.3. Brand Image

What defines the brand, according to the American Marketing Association, is the signs, design, name, terms, or a mix of all that, meant to characterize the service or the good from the owner or the group of owners so they can be more notable from the other competitions.

In a study that declared that brands have an essential strategic role as a separator between the products provided by a company with their competitor, a recognizable and credible brand is invaluable. It also clarified consumers' interpretation of the brand, at the same time, they interoperate it as an assortment of product performance steadiness and contribute any benefit (as an image or a style of the brand) consumers search for while buying specific brands or products. Moreover, the brand is a commitment to the consumers by specifying its name. Therefore, the brand could be a description and a product contribution. It also has a purpose and function that is given by the brand image (Chi et al., 2009), and brand image can be demonstrated as:

1. Brand image is a recognizable design.
2. Brand image is regular agreement and assurance of the value, and consumers will have the impression of contemplation and added value before and after making a purchase.
3. The brand image communicates related product information to benefit consumers when purchasing.

In summary, the brand image is an extraordinary product awareness. It gives a specific level of satisfaction and assurance that increases purchase intention. It is considered an identification or a label that can detect a product and a service from competitors and their design, name, and color to present a company.

It was also established that brand image has two characteristics, holistic and attributes (Lahap et al., 2016):

- The holistic characteristic points out the individual's mental picturing of the experience as in one piece, instead of a simple number of independent stimulations. In other words, the holistic or imaginary element of the image embodies the actual feeling and impression of the experience in any sense.
- The attribute characteristics indicate the facilities and physical status that create and affect the experience.

Additionally, researches indicate that brand image is considered into three components (Chi et al., 2009):

- **Functional benefits:** Are deep-seated advantages and correspond to product-related essence that satisfies the consumers' basics.

- **Symbol benefits and supplementary:** Appear on non-product-related essence that satisfies the consumer's self-concept.
- **Experimental benefits:** Are how the consumer feels about using the service or product and correspond to product and non-product-related essence that brings subjective satisfaction to the consumer.

It is also known that three crucial components made the brand image formation:

- The corporate image assembles associations the consumer observes to the brands or organizations with the service or product.
- User image are an assembly of observed associations between the consumer and the product user.
- Product image is associated with benefits, guarantees, and attributes gained from the product.

2.4. Brand Trust

A study demonstrates that brand awareness has a crucial role in predicting brand trust and image. For example, in coffee shop management, the essential priority is raising brand recognition and the coffee shop. Furthermore, the brand image affects brand trust, which means brand trust increases with the brand image. Therefore, as in the coffee shop, management must have a secure promise to sustain a good brand image so it will have an excellent direct effect on brand trust. Brand values vary depending on the context and industry. However, some typical qualities linked with brand trust include dependability, trustworthiness, transparency, honesty, consistency, and a positive reputation. Brand trust is critical for establishing and retaining customer loyalty because consumers who trust a brand are likelier to make repeat purchases and suggest it to others. Trustworthy brands are also more likely to attract new customers and keep existing ones, potentially increasing profitability and market share.

Brand trust is recognized as a calculative phenomenon depending on the ability of the brand to meet its agreements constantly and on the belief in the rewards of remaining in the relationship (Chandra & Indrawati, 2023), as the trust has a crucial role in helping to have a customer for the long run (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Accordingly, the consumer will be depended on and relying on the brands' ability to reach its functions and capability consistently (Chandra & Indrawati, 2023). It was found that brand integrity is simply a symbolic brand characteristic that influences customers to sense safe and secure. However, it does not always end in trust (Chi et al., 2009), while another study shows the opposite, that to have trust, there must be integrity; when the consumer has the assurance that the brand will appear honestly and sincerely, they are more leaned to trust it, which lead to brand reliability, that relays a promise of performance, where it leads to product quality and consistency (Portal et al., 2019). It is still demonstrated that brand trust is a consequence of prior interactions and experiences that mirror the learning process for a long time (Kwan Soo Shin et al., 2019).

2.5. Research Hypotheses

2.5.1. Social Media Influencers and Brand Image

The brand image is a crucial construct in the consumer-based brand equity framework. They are described as a set of brand associations, usually in a consequential way (R. B. Kim & Chao, 2019). Furthermore, when assets are strongly interdependent, the brand image will become more powerful (Amron, 2018). When the brand associations are "anything linked to a brand in memory" as mirrored in the association, that happens in the consumers' awareness that the product's brand is recognized, known, and imagined; this is the brand image attitude and consumer assurance (R. B. Kim & Chao, 2019). As an example, it was declared that social media influencers affect consumer approach to the product and how they view it, affecting the consumer's awareness, and what they link with the brand image and how they mirror it in their awareness. It was also aligned with research that announced that the higher the approach, the higher product's brand image would be used by influencers (Chandra & Indrawati, 2023). It was declared that influencer marketing on social media would positively link the brand image (Lim et al., 2017), as it was argued that the brand image mostly comes into consumer awareness when the brand is located in front of the consumer. Therefore, consumers unconsciously think of the brand and its features when they impose anything related to it or to the influencer (Lahap et al., 2016). Thus, brand image can be determined as a type of association that occurs in the consumer consciousness as they recall a specific brand; this explains the influence of the associations between all the entities relating to one brand.

Moreover, the more the brand impression in the consumer's awareness is positive, the more the number of consumers who endure the brand (Amron, 2018); this lead to affecting the behaviors and purchase intentions of the consumers through the information that is shared by social media influencers (Chandra & Indrawati, 2023). Influencers can have an effect on social media for the targeted audience. For example, a post on Instagram as it would be visually appealing, shows expertise, conveys information, and interacts with the audience, this will choose and classify this influencer as more favorable than others, which will affect the brand image by representing satisfaction and attraction towards this brand (De Veirman et al., 2017).

In choosing the right influencer to affect the brand image the most, there are three essential characteristics of social media influencers:

- Consumers will listen to the opinions of the people they can trust.
- Consumers will listen to beliefs and ideas from dependable influencers.
- They will listen to the people who are always up to date with the consumers' needs for their favorite products.

It was also explained that the influencers who do not have experience the same field they are advocating would be able to damage the image of the brand and the organization (Lim et al., 2017) and even worse to attain this objective, social media influencers who have a positive connection to consumers can help the organization or brand's public image, create awareness in the consciousness of consumers through online activities, and be able to ask for comments and inputs from the consumers (Bijen, 2017).

H1: Social media influencers' attributes (e.g., attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness) will influence brand image.

2.5.2. Social Media Influencers and Brand Trust

Social media influencers affect the consumer's emotions, whether in trust, warmth, or other things that build brand trust. The effect of social media influencers on emotions leads to have an emotion-laden connection between a brand and a person, as it was described as a brand attachment (Lou & Yuan, 2019), that is characterized by a deep feeling of connection and trust that encourages the consumer to purchase and communicate with a particular brand (Kwan Soo Shin et al., 2019). Due to that, the brand should have qualities and values with good intentions to be relatable to the consumer (Chandra & Indrawati, 2023).

Furthermore, to make a closer relationship, social media influencers started to share honest, and personal information that can be a powerful tool to influence consumers (Portal et al., 2019). The argument behind this is that social media influencers have the power to resemble the realities of their consumers by sharing personal information. Brand trust is defined as a sensation of safeness and willingness to ensure that the brand will meet consumer expectations and ensure to fulfill their promises in needed situations (Singh et al., 2020), as it shows that brand trust is approximately associated with influencer coolness. Due to that, the brand betrayal was found to support the brand (Reinikainen et al., 2021); so, it will show and imply a negative image of the social media influencer who supported the brand through crises, which leads to losing trust in the social media influencer and the future brand the influencer will help. Consumers make expectations of their profitable brand and social media influencers. If these expectations are not met, or there is any abnormality, customers can experience feelings of betrayal (Singh et al., 2020). Also, social media influencer betrayal affects brand trust and the consumers' purchase intention. This shows that betrayal by a social media influencer affects more than the link between the social media influencer and their consumers but also the brand that the influencer supported and signed the social media influencer and the relationship the consumer has with that brand.

H2: Social media influencers' attributes (e.g., attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness) will influence brand trust.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains knowledge about the Case of Iraq, and research strategy. The sampling method, the analytical approach of the testing hypothesis, the questionnaire structure and measurement, and demographic data from the study.

3.1. Context

The key objective is to explore how Iraqi female consumers form brand Image and brand trust with the influencer of social media influencers. As Iraq was going through many political and different upheavals, people tried to find other ways to enjoy their life; one of the most potent ways that affected people in Iraq was the influencers. Whether they were travel, food, or even makeup social media influencers, many were striving to be like the influencers they admire; they also found it as a way to express their personality, lifestyle, or value. Therefore, this research will examine a famous brand with different types of makeup, skin, and products in Iraq.

3.2. Research Design, Data Collection, and Sampling

This study's design is based on actual influencer marketing efforts aimed at an Iraqi audience, which were then used as examples in the survey. It also implements the quantitative method, which is referred to research procedures that generate numerical data that can be transformed into statistics and then analyzed using statistical procedures. This method is distinguished by emphasizing objective measurements, statistical analysis, and using representative samples to extrapolate findings to a larger population (Cohen et al., 2018). That aids in generating statistics through surveys, interviews, or questionnaires. Quantitative data is any numerical data, such as statistics and percentages. The researcher uses statistics to analyze the data hoping that the numbers will produce a non-biased result which can be applied to a greater population.

The present study used Quota sampling is a probabilistic sampling technique utilized to divide the population into various subgroups, or quotas, based on relevant characteristics such as age, gender, education level, or income, and then select participants in a non-random manner until each subgroup's quota is filled. This method is frequently used when the target population is difficult to define or locate or when a probability sample is not feasible or cost-effective (Brier & lia dwi jayanti, 2020). As for the research below, the researcher excluded a sub-group qualified to be female, use social media, and use makeup. After that, the subgroup was shown in two generations; these were: Generation Y (Millennials) and Generation Z (digital natives) were born between 1980 and 1994, respectively, because they spend the most time on social media (average 7 hours daily) and also use makeup.

Data collection is gathering information on specific variables in an established system, which allows one to answer pertinent questions and evaluate outcomes, which is also considered the process of gathering information or data relevant to the research question or hypothesis. Surveys, interviews, observations, and secondary data analysis are some of the methods that can be used. Data collection aims to ensure that the information gathered is correct, reliable, and valid. Furthermore, it can be used to answer the research questions.

Finally, the collected data is analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques to reach meaningful conclusions (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Data collection in this research was done in closed-ended surveys and was published in multiple ways. After selecting the right audience (the targeted audience that are qualified) for this research, they were divided into three types to collect their opinion. One was an online form posted on the social media applications such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp by using this form (<https://freeonlinesurveys.com/s/2XVOXE0E/i/0>). The company Everbeauty brand handled the second and the third way as customer service agents were aiming to collect more than 300 votes, and the sales employees collected the other votes physically while doing a campaign and different events.

3.3. Research Instruments

Research instruments refers to any tool, strategy, or procedure a researcher can employ to collect and analyze data. The nature of the research questions, methodology, research design, and data type determine the instruments used in the research (Kumar, 2011). This paper employs survey research, a primary data collection method that entails asking a group of people for their thoughts on a given topic.

Nevertheless, surveys are frequently distributed on paper or online. A questionnaire is the most common form of survey. It is a set of questions designed to elicit feedback from a group. Closed-ended, open-ended, pre-selected answers or scale ratings can be used for these questions. Participants may be asked the same or different questions. In this research, all the variables that were mentioned here, it was measured using scales modified from previous research studies, with only minor wording modifications to make them more suitable for the study.

A three-section questionnaire was created to inspect the impact of social media influencers on the brand trust and image of a brand in Iraq's dining information-seeking and sharing behavior. The first section asked the participants to share their experiences and opinion of the influencer (Hind Nizar) sharing and advertising the company's brands (Everbeauty and Hair passion). The second section was a questionnaire containing four items from a previous study (Abubakar et al., 2016); brand image items were evaluated on a seven-point point scale from completely disagree (1) to completely agree (7). Items were developed specifically to assess the brand's quality, history, and reliability. The third section was a questionnaire containing eight items that were used from a previous study (Delgado-Ballester, 2004); brand trust items were evaluated on a seven-point point scale from completely disagree (1) to completely agree (7). Items were developed specifically to assess reliability and intentions. The intentions items, in particular, relates to the brand intentions as considered by the person when there is a concern with the product's consumption. This is because, unlike brand reliability objects, which are determined by the duration of knowledge and the degree of how this experience implies stability, brand intention objects are relevant and create meaning in assumed a critical cases involving product consumption (Delgado-Ballester, 2004).

3.4. Ethical Consideration

The researchers were well-versed in the numerous ethical implications that controlled the study and field data collection. In this regard, the research clarified the study's aims and objectives to the respondents to ensure that they understood the study was for academic and reference purposes. In addition, all informational sources used in the study, as well as the numerous literatures and works reviewed, were properly acknowledged and referenced.

3.5. Analytical Framework

Jamovi is a free, open-source statistical software program offering a user-friendly data analysis interface. It is a popular alternative to SPSS and R, providing various tools for data visualization, descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and regression analysis (Saunders et al., 2009). This study used Jamovi rather than SPSS or other types because it is user-friendly and gives available statistical and graphical statistics with a very sophisticated analysis.

One of the critical features of Jamovi is its ability to perform regression analysis, a statistical method for analyzing the connection among two or more variables. Regression analysis in this research investigated the relationship between social media influencer marketing and brand image and trust in Iraq.

Reliability is an essential aspect of statistical analysis that measures the consistency and stability of research results. Ensuring the study's data and measures are reliable, it is critical to produce accurate and valid results. Internal consistency reliability, which measures the extent to which different items in a survey or questionnaire measure the same construct, is one method of testing reliability. Another method is to test test-retest reliability, which assesses the consistency of measures over time.

Another statistical method for examining the relationship between two or more variables is a correlation. Correlation in this research was used to conclude the degree to which criteria are linked in the context of the influence of social media influencer marketing on brand trust and brand image in Iraq. The correlation coefficient, with values ranging from -1 to +1, measures the strength and direction of the connection between variables. A value of +1 denotes a complete positive correlation., while -1 represents a perfect negative correlation.

Finally, Jamovi and regression analysis are practical tools for investigating the connection between social media influencer marketing and brand image and trust in Iraq. Reliability and correlation are important factors in the analysis but since they guarantee both the precision and validity of the research findings. Using these analytical frameworks, researchers can gain valuable insights into the shape that social media influencer marketing make on brand trust and brand image in Iraq. It will show the details and the tables with the details in the next chapter.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1. Demographics

Since this research depends on quota sampling, the people who filled out the survey had to have specific criteria. So, all the 500 samples were based on data taken from a selected category of females between the age of (18-42), use this brand, and on social media platforms.

4.2. Correlation and Reliability Between Brand Image and Brand Trust.

Reliability is an important concept in research that assesses the consistency and stability of measurement. When there is a strong link among both brand image and brand trust, it is critical to investigate the reliability of the measures used to assess these concepts.

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of measurement. In other words, it measures the extent to which a measurement tool provides consistent results over time and across different observers. To ensure that the measures of brand image and brand trust are reliable, it is necessary to use standardized instruments Like Jamovi, as shown in table 4.1., and also with the survey used for this research to help with established reliability coefficients.

When there is a significant correlation between brand image and brand trust, it is essential to ensure that the measures used to assess these constructs are reliable. This will ensure that the research results are consistent and can be used to make meaningful inferences about the relationship between brand image and brand trust.

In conclusion, reliability is an important aspect to consider when examining the relationship between brand image and brand trust. By using reliable measures to assess these constructs, researchers can ensure that the results are trustworthy and can be used to make meaningful inferences about the relationship between brand image and brand trust.

Table 4. 1. Correlations, reliability, convergence, and discriminant validity

	α	Mean	SD	1	2
1. <i>Brand Image</i>	0.86	4.15	1.41	-	
2. <i>Brand Trust</i>	0.83	3.35	1.13	0.33**	-

Notes: Values below the diagonal are Pearson correlation coefficient obtained from JAMOVI; SD = standard deviation; α = Cronbach's α ; ** means significant at 0.01

Table 4.1. displays the concurrent correlation coefficients of the parameters used in the study. brand image correlated positively and significantly with Brand Trust ($r = 0.33$, $\rho < 0.01$). Pearson correlations, on the other hand, only show the presence or complete lack of associations and their directions, the positive and significant correlations partial evidence for the research hypotheses.

4.3. Regression Analysis with JAMOVI

Regression analysis is a statistical technique for studying the connection between one or more independent variables and one or more dependent variables. It is used to investigate and quantify the nature of the relationship between the variables, as well as to estimate the value of the dependent variable based on the independent variables' values. Regression analysis is a powerful hypothesis-testing tool that can test both linear and non-linear relationships between variables (Saunders et al., 2009). This method will be used in this research as it will examine the reshape that social media influencer marketing made on brand trust and brand image in Iraq; regression analysis can be used to determine the scope to which social media influencer marketing characteristics influence brand image and trust the most. Whether it was attractiveness, expertise, or trustworthiness.

Jamovi is free and open-source software that can be used to conduct regression analysis. Jamovi provides an intuitive interface for conducting regression analysis, and offers a range of features and tools for data analysis and visualization.

To conduct regression analysis with Jamovi for this research on the alternation of social media influencer marketing on brand trust and image in Iraq, the following steps can be followed:

1. Collect and organize the data relevant to the research question.
2. Input the data into Jamovi and specify the variables of interest (e.g., source attractiveness, source expertise, source trustworthiness, brand image, and brand trust).
3. Run the regression analysis by selecting the appropriate statistical model and specifying the variables to be included in the analysis.
4. Interpret the regression analysis results to determine the relationship between social media influencer marketing, brand image and trust in Iraq.
5. Conclude and make recommendations based on the findings of the regression analysis.

Using regression analysis with Jamovi to investigate the effects of social media influencer marketing on brand image and trust in Iraq might provide important insights into the relationship between these variables. By using regression analysis, researchers can determine the extent to which social media influencer marketing influences brand image and trust in Iraq and make informed recommendations for future research.

First: This study will examine the influencer's (attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness) impact on brand image by using Jamovi.

Table 4. 2. Model coefficient for Brand Image

<i>Indictor</i>	Estimate	SE	t	ρ	Stand. Estimate
<i>Intercept</i>	1.884	0.167	11.25	**	
<i>Attractiveness</i>	1.354	0.256	5.30	**	0.293
<i>Expertise</i>	1.204	0.323	3.72	**	0.218
<i>Trustworthiness</i>	0.649	0.288	2.25	*	0.122

Note: ** means significant at 0.01, * means significant at 0.05

The Intercept here will be considered as the constant (it is also considered as b_0) of the independent variables (Attractiveness Mean, Expertise Mean, and trustworthiness Mean) as it all attributes of the source influence, and brand image is the dependent value.

b_0 = the constant (intercept) = the estimate = 1.88

b_1 = Attractiveness Mean = stand. estimate = 0.29

b_2 = Expertise Mean = stand. estimate = 0.22

b_3 = Trustworthiness Mean = stand. estimate = 0.12

$$y = b_1 * x_1 + b_2 * x_2 + b_3 * x_3 + b_0 \quad (4.1)$$

$$y = 0.29x_1 + 0.22x_2 + 0.12x_3 + 1.88 \quad (4.2)$$

As shown in the figure 4.1.

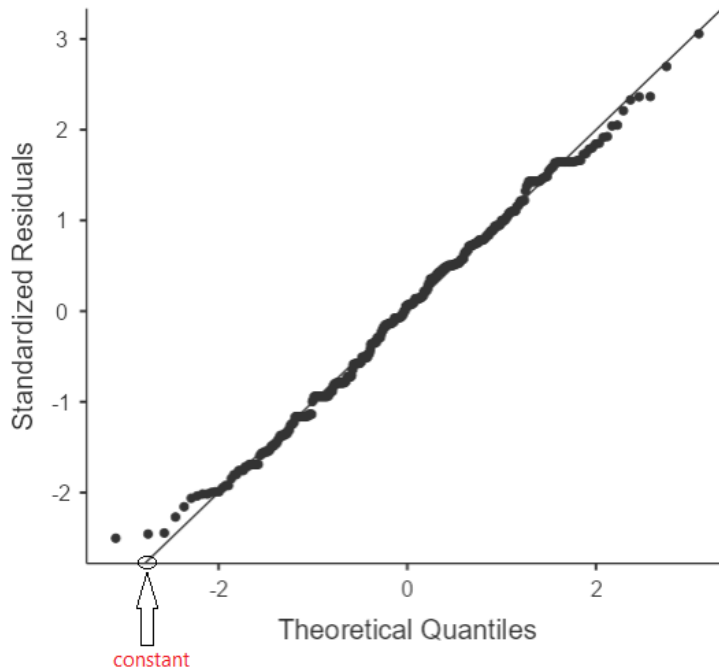


Figure 4. 1. Q-Q plot of residuals of brand image and social media attributes (showing the constant)

Table 4. 3. Model Fit Measures by using model builder three blocks.

MODEL	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Overall Model Test			
				F	df1	df2	ρ
1	0.527	0.278	0.276	191.3	1	497	**
2	0.561	0.315	0.312	114.1	2	496	**
3	0.568	0.322	0.318	78.4	3	495	**

Note: ** means significant at 0.01

This leads us to the results that in the dependent variable is brand image, and the independent value is the source (attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness) is a significant predictor. Table 4.3. presents the regression coefficient, the impact of the source attractiveness on brand image is significant and positive ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$) of resilience. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.28$) showed that variation in source attractiveness could explain a 27% variation in resilience. The model is adequately fit ($F = 191.3$, $\rho < 0.01$), the effect of the source expertise on brand image is significant and positive ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.01$) of resilience. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.32$) shows that variation of source expertise could explain 31% variation in resilience. The model is adequately fit ($F = 114.1$, $\rho < 0.01$), the effect of the source trustworthiness on brand image is significant and positive ($\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$) of resilience. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.32$) shows that

variation of source expertise could explain 31% variation in resilience. The model is adequately fit ($F = 78.4$, $\rho < 0.01$). This indicates that the grow in the source attributes (attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness) will result in (0.29, 0.22, 0.12) units increase in brand image.

As shown in figure 4.2. based on this outcome, hypothesis 1 receives empirical support.

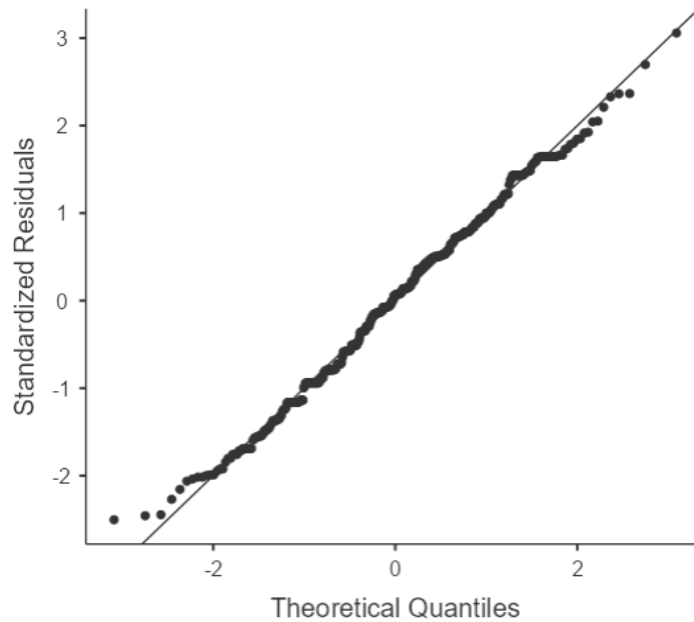


Figure 4. 2. Q-Q plot of residuals of brand image and social media attributes

Secondly: we will discuss the impact of influencer attributes (attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness) on brand trust by using Jamovi, as shown in table 4.5.

Table 4. 4. Model coefficient for Brand Trust

<i>Indicator</i>	Estimate	SE	t	ρ	Stand. Estimate
<i>Intercept</i>	2.908	0.160	18.135	**	
<i>Attractiveness</i>	0.714	0.245	2.914	*	0.193
<i>Expertise</i>	-0.016	0.310	-0.051	0.96	-0.003
<i>Trustworthiness</i>	-0.037	0.278	-0.134	0.89	-0.009

Note: ** means significant at 0.01, * means significant at 0.05

The Intercept here will be considered as the constant (it is also considered as b_0) of the independent variables (attractiveness Mean, expertise Mean, trustworthiness Mean) as all attributes of the influencer, and brand trust is the dependent value. Furthermore, as table 4.4. show, the t value and ρ value are insignificant, which means there is no relationship between expertise of the source and brand trust and the source's trustworthiness and brand trust. This means brand trust only effected by the source attractiveness.

b_0 = the constant (intercept) = the estimate = 2.91

b_1 = Attractiveness Mean = stand. estimate = 0.19

$$y = b_1 * x_1 + b_0 \quad (4.3)$$

$$y = 0.19x_1 + 2.91 \quad (4.4)$$

As shown in the figure 4.3.

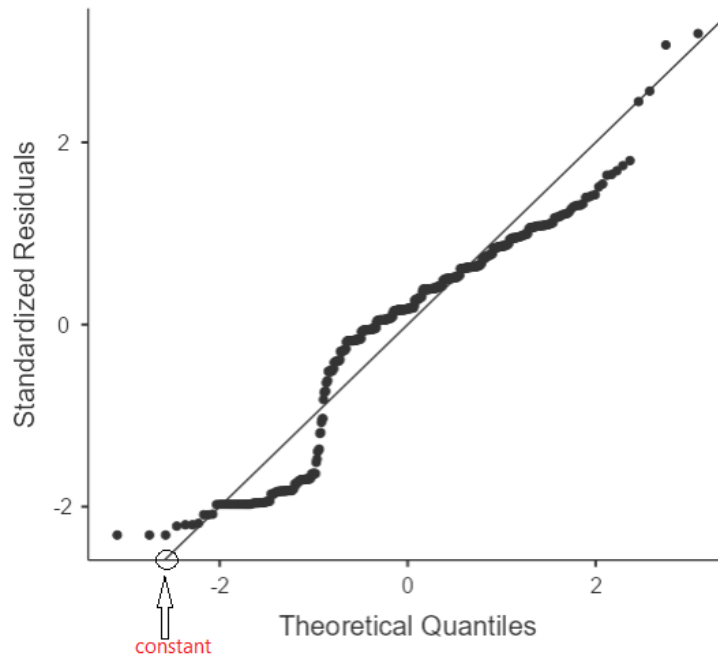


Figure 4. 3. Q-Q plot of residuals of brand trust and social media attribute (attractiveness) (showing the constant)

Table 4. 5. Model Fit Measures by using model builder three blocks.

<i>Model</i>	R	R²	Adjusted R²	Overall Model Test			
				F	df1	df2	ρ
1	0.184	0.034	0.032	17.51	1	497	**
2	0.185	0.031	0.030	8.75	2	496	**
3	0.185	0.034	0.028	5.83	3	495	**

Note: ** means significant at 0.01

This leads us to the results that in the dependent variable is brand image and the independent value is the source in (attractiveness) is a significant predictor. Table 4.5. presents the regression coefficient, the impact of the source attractiveness on brand trust is significant and positive ($\beta = 0.19$, $p < 0.05$) of resilience. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.032$) showed that variations of source attractiveness could explain 0.032 variation in resilience. The model is adequately fit ($F = 17.51$, $\rho < 0.01$), there is no impact of the source expertise and trustworthiness on brand trust, the model is adequately fit ($F = 8.75$, $\rho < 0.01$, $F = 5.83$, $\rho < 0.01$). This means that increasing the source (attractiveness) will lead to an increase in brand trust of (0.032) units with no effect on the source (expertise, trustworthiness).

As shown in figure 4.4. based on this outcome, hypothesis 2 receives empirical support only with one attribute (attractiveness).

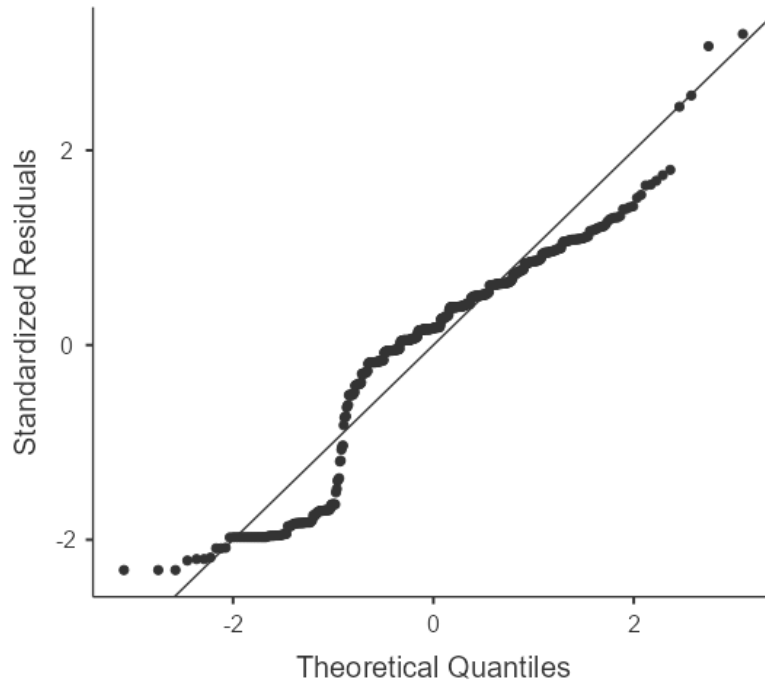


Figure 4. 4. Q-Q plot of residuals of brand trust and social media attribute (attractiveness).

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

During the last decade, several studies have been conducted to address whether the influencer affects a brand in marketing (Lim et al., 2017), as social media influencers have grown more critical in brand marketing. Consumers developed a psychological attachment to brands promoted by social media influencers they follow, resulting in increased brand loyalty and advocacy. As a result, psychological ownership is a critical success factor in social media influencer marketing campaigns (Pick, 2021). Influencers can help brands reach new audiences and drive engagement, and this guide offers advice on how to work effectively with influencers. Social media influencers impact on consumers' purchase intent, self-concept, and brand image. Condensing to the findings of the study, social media influencers have a positive impact on consumers' purchase intent, self-concept, and brand image (Nurhandayani et al., 2019). As a result, brand experience and brand image will have a positive impact on brand trust, which in turn will affect brand loyalty and purchase intention. It also suggests that creating positive brand experiences and images is essential for establishing and maintaining brand trust, loyalty, and purchase intent (R. B. Kim & Chao, 2019).

However, there still needs to be more literature regarding the impact of social media influencers on the brand, although several studies have examined the effects of social media influencers on brand recognition, image, and trust are investigated. Furthermore, It asserts with implications for marketers looking to promote their brands across social media influencers, emphasizing the importance of carefully selecting influencers based on their attributes and fit with the brand (Matin et al., 2022). As a result, the current study sought to fill the gaps left by previous research because few studies provided empirical evidence, particularly in Iraq, as this study contributed to diving into more details and exploring what attributes have affected more than others, as it addresses the main challenges to the brand whether it was a brand image or brand trust and their influence by the influencer attributes (attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness).

To guide the study, three main research objectives were developed. The first research goal is to identify the key factors that influence the efficacy of social media influencer marketing in building brand trust and brand image in Iraq, objective two sights to explain and investigate the influence of social media influencer marketing on brand image and brand trust, specifically in Everbeauty brand in Iraq. Simultaneously, three sought to provide insights and recommendations for brands seeking to effectively use social media influencer marketing to build brand image and trust.

This study targeted the consumers of Everbeauty in Iraq, and it found that businesses in Iraq can use social media influencer marketing to improve their brand image and build brand trust with their target audience. This supports that the study is most significant in its hypothesis that social media influencers influence brand image and trust.

However, it is essential to mention that not all social media influencer marketing campaigns are created equal. Several factors determine a campaign's success, including the type of influencer, content, and target audience. Therefore, businesses in Iraq should

carefully consider these factors when developing social media influencer marketing campaigns to maximize their return on investment.

The findings emphasize the significance of incorporating social media influencer marketing into a comprehensive brand-building strategy and the need for Iraqi businesses to carefully consider the various factors that influence campaign success.

5.1. Overview of the Research Results

In line with the hypothesis, the research findings provide a thorough understanding of the impact of social media influencer marketing and the attributes of the influencers (attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness) on brand image and trust in Iraq.

However, the investigation concluded in this research using regression analysis with Jamovi to discuss the alternation that social media influencer marketing make on brand image gave us the results having an important predictor for the social media influencers attributes, as the regression coefficient show a positive and significant resilience from social media influencers attributes (attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness) and resulted in (0.29, 0.22, 0.12) units increase in brand image in Iraq, as expected and showed in other studies, that the impact of social media influencers on consumers' brand image, self-concept, and purchase intention is investigated. A study found that social media influencers have a positive impact on consumers' purchase intention, self-concept, and brand image. Furthermore, self-concept step in the link between social media influencers and purchase intention, indicating that consumers' self-perception is essential in determining their purchasing decisions. Therefore, according to the study, social media influencers can be an effective marketing tool for brands to boost brand image and increase purchase intent among their target audience (Hermanda et al., 2019).

However, the study concluded that social media influencer marketing had become an increasingly popular strategy for brands to enhance their brand image with consumers in Iraq. Furthermore, it showed that the brands' intentions to use or partner with popular social media influencers, enhance their brand image, specifically the influencers with significant followers, as it helps the brand reach a wider audience through Iraq and potentially improve their brand image. The study included two groups of customers, one exposed to influencer marketing content and the other not. Customers who were exposed to influencer marketing content were more likely to visit restaurants, spend more money, and share their experiences on social media. In addition, customers who were exposed to influencer marketing content perceived the restaurants as more unique and trendier, according to the study. Overall, the study shows that influencer marketing positively impacts on sales and customer behavior in the restaurant industry (Lee et al., 2021).

However, the other variables which affect the social media influencer marketing on brand image vary depending on many of factors, including the attractiveness of the influencer, the product or service being promoted, the expertise of the influencer about the product or service, and their general expertise and the target audience, and their trust to the influencer. A study finds that the perceived credibility of Instagram influencers highly depends on their perceived authenticity, trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness.

Furthermore, the study suggests that perceived credibility positively impacts purchase intention and brand image and that perceived attractiveness has a significant positive effect on both credibility and brand image (Jin et al., 2019).

In Iraq, unique cultural and societal factors may influence the modification that social media influencer marketing makes on brand image. For example, certain types of content or messaging, may be more or less acceptable in Iraqi culture, and consumers' expectations and preferences regarding influencer marketing may differ. As a result, to fully comprehend the effect of social media influencer marketing on brand image in the Iraqi market, additional research would be required. Hence, it is critical to choose influencers whose values and personalities align with the brand image and target audience, selecting influencers who engage with their followers authentically and have a track record of promoting products that resonates with their audience. Furthermore, Today's consumers are savvy and can easily identify fake or inauthentic content. Therefore, brands should collaborate with influencers to create authentic, relevant, and valuable content for their target audience. Authentic content that speaks to the influencer's followers will aid in developing a positive brand image and establishing of consumer trust. Study results indicated that digital marketing significantly impacts on consumers' purchasing decisions, with social media and search engines being the most effective digital marketing channels. Additionally, the study found that trust and brand reputation are essential for the efficacy of digital marketing campaigns in Iraq. The article concludes with recommendations for businesses seeking to engage in digital marketing in Iraq, such as investing in search engine optimization, creating high-quality content, and building trust with consumers through a positive brand reputation (Sukaini, 2022).

A study sought to investigate the after effect of social media influencer attributes on consumers' purchase intentions. The findings revealed that social media influencers' physical attractiveness, likeability, and expertise positively impacted on consumers' purchase intentions. In particular, consumer perceptions of the influencer's expertise and trustworthiness, significantly mediate the link between influencer attributes and purchase intentions. The authors conclude that brand managers should consider the characteristics of social media influencers and the characterizations that consumers associate with them when planning influencer marketing campaigns. Furthermore, to boost the efficiency of their marketing efforts, they recommend that brands carefully select influencers with high levels of credibility, expertise, and trustworthiness (Masuda et al., 2022). This is followed by how well-interconnected consumer purchase intent and brand trust are. As a study investigates the impact of brand trust on the link between social media influencers and consumer purchase intentions. According to the findings, social media influencers positively influence on consumers' purchase intentions, and this relationship is enhanced when consumers have a solid foundation of brand trust. According to the study, businesses should prioritize brand trust by offering high-quality products and services, ensuring customer satisfaction, and utilizing reliable and credible social media influencers. The paper also emphasizes the usefulness of maintaining transparency in influencer marketing by disclosing paid endorsements, which can increase brand trust and credibility (Mammadli, 2021).

However, the investigation of this study concluded this research using regression analysis with Jamovi to investigate the effect of social media influencer marketing on brand trust gave us the results in having the social media influencer attribute (attractiveness) as a

significant predictor as regression coefficient showed that variations of source attractiveness could explain 0.032 variations in resilience. Where there is no impact of the source expertise and trustworthiness on brand trust, this implies that the increase in the source (attractiveness) will result in (0.032) units increase in brand trust with no impact of source (expertise and trustworthiness). It is also consistent with existing literature provided by a study conducted through a survey of 200 Malaysians, who were asked structured and open-ended questions. The authors discovered that the celebrity endorser's trustworthiness and expertise did not significantly impact brand trust. However, they discovered that the attractiveness of the endorser had a major beneficial impact on company trust. They speculate that attractive celebrities are frequently associated with positive personal attributes that can be converted to the brand by consumers. Furthermore, the authors discovered that brand attitude influenced the connection between celebrity endorsement and purchase intention, implying that positive brand attitudes may be crucial in converting consumers into buyers. The authors argue that when choosing a celebrity endorser to promote their brand, marketers should consider not only the celebrity endorser's expertise and trustworthiness but also their physical attractiveness (Vi Vien et al., 2017).

However, it was also mentioned in some studies; one study discovered that celebrity endorsers' trustworthiness substantially enhances brand credibility more than their attractiveness and expertise. According to the authors, a credible celebrity endorser can convey a sense of sincerity and dependability, positively influencing consumers' perceptions of the brand. On the other hand, the celebrity endorser's expertise and attractiveness may have a weaker impact. These findings contrast the widely held belief that celebrity endorsement is most effective when the celebrity is perceived as highly attractive or highly skilled in the area relevant to the brand. Instead, the authors argue that brands should prioritize choosing credible celebrities as endorsers, even if they are less well-known or physically attractive. Overall, this research brings to light the significance of trustworthiness in celebrity endorsement and emphasizes the importance of brands carefully considering the characteristics of their celebrity endorsers when designing marketing campaigns (Wang, 2017).

According to a study that examines the relationship between customer satisfaction dimensions, brand reputation, and customer loyalty in the private banking industry in Erbil, Iraq. The study finds that customer satisfaction aspects and brand reputation positively affect customer loyalty. The authors also discuss some reasons for having less brand trust in the Iraqi private banks industry, including lack of transparency, low quality of services, inadequate information security measures, and negative perception of the banking sector due to past economic and political instability. Despite these obstacles, the article emphasizes the importance of customers' satisfaction aspects and brand reputation in fostering customer loyalty (Riyadh, 2022).

Another study contends that the reasons for lower brand trust in Iraq are, Firstly, a lack of trust in ad campaigns as well as in the media, as Iraqi consumers have a history of being subjected to misleading advertising, which has led to a general lack of trust in advertising (For example, the promotion of weight loss products or services that make false promises of quick and effortless weight loss). Secondly, a lack of trust in the government, as there is political and economic instability, has led to a lack of trust in local brands and a

preference for foreign brands (For instance, many Iraqis trust international fast-food chains, such as McDonald's and KFC, more than local restaurants due to concerns about food safety and hygiene standards). Thirdly, cultural differences, such as the importance of family and social networks, may influence consumers' perceptions of brand trustworthiness between Iraq and other countries can also impact brand trust. Particular advertising messages may be effective in other countries but not with Iraqi consumers (For example, Iraqi culture tends to emphasize on collectivism and group-oriented values). Fourthly, Lack of information, as consumers in Iraq have limited access to brand information, making it difficult for them to make informed decisions and build trust in brands (for example, limited availability of product reviews, customer feedback, and other resources that consumers in other countries rely on to make informed purchasing decisions). Finally, the study emphasizes the importance of the quality of the products, the prevalence of counterfeit and low-quality goods in the Iraqi market has led to a lack of trust in local brands (For example, counterfeit mobile phones, electronics, and clothing are widespread in Iraq). These factors may contribute to lower levels of brand trust in Iraq, influencing consumers' purchase intentions and brand loyalty (Mosa, 2021).

Furthermore, several key factors influence the efficacy of social media influencer marketing in building brand trust in Iraq. Iraqi customers have a greater tendency to trust social media influencer perceived to be honest, transparent, and genuine, and have a solid connection to the culture and values. Influencers with a track record of promoting products or services that match up with their values and beliefs, and those perceived as more relatable and authentic; have a greater tendency to be trusted by Iraqi customers. As in a related study, findings suggest that message value, such as relevance and usefulness, positively influences brand trust. In contrast, source credibility, such as the influencer's expertise and trustworthiness, are critical to building content trust (Lou & Yuan, 2019). High-quality, consistent content that is visually appealing, informative, and transparent about the influencer's relationship with the brands can increase the perceived value of the product or service being promoted as well as the influencer's credibility. Similarly, study results show that quality of service and transparency significantly positively affect interaction quality and customer loyalty in the hotel industry. The findings have significant ramifications for hotel managers and marketers who seek to enhance customer relationships and loyalty by focusing on service quality and transparency (S.-B. Kim & Kim, 2016). Hence, the study concluded that social media influencer marketing has the potential to impact brand trust in Iraq significantly, but a several factors influence it. One of the essential factors is consumer trust in the influencers promoting the brand. Furthermore, the quality of the content produced by influencers, their level of transparency, and the authenticity of their endorsements can all impact brand trust. Finally, the credibility and authenticity of the brand itself play an essential role in establishing trust. Brands with a history of providing high-quality products and services and a high reputation are more likely to be trusted by Iraqi consumers.

However, the other variables which affect the social media influencer marketing on brand image vary depending on several factors, including the attractiveness of the influencer, the product or service being promoted, the expertise of the influencer about the product or service, and their general expertise and the target audience, and their trust to the influencer. A study finds that the perceived credibility of Instagram influencers highly depends on their perceived authenticity, trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness. Furthermore, the study

suggests that perceived credibility positively impacts purchase intention and brand image and that perceived attractiveness has a significant positive impact on both credibility and brand image (Jin et al., 2019).

In Iraq, unique cultural and societal factors may influence the efficiency of social media influencer marketing on brand image. For example, certain types of content or messaging may be more or less acceptable in Iraqi culture, and consumers' expectations and preferences regarding influencer marketing may differ. As a result, research specific to the Iraqi market would be required to fully understand the effect of social media influencer marketing on a brand image in that perspective. Hence, it is critical to choose influencers whose values and personalities align with the image and target audience of the brand. Having influencers who engage with their followers authentically and have a track record of promoting products that resonates with their audience. Furthermore, Today's consumers are savvy and can easily identify fake or inauthentic content. Therefore, brands should collaborate with influencers to create authentic, relevant, and valuable content for their target audience. Authentic content that speaks to the influencer's followers will aid in developing a positive brand image establishing consumer trust. Study results indicated that digital marketing significantly impacts on consumers' purchasing decisions, with social media and search engines being the most effective digital marketing channels. Additionally, the study found that trust and brand reputation play an essential part in digital marketing success campaigns in Iraq. The article concludes with recommendations for businesses seeking to engage in digital marketing in Iraq, such as investing in search engine optimization, creating high-quality content, and building trust with consumers through a positive brand reputation (Sukaini, 2022).

There are also some insights and recommendations for brands looking to build brand trust through social media influencer marketing. For example, the brand should ensure that influencers disclose sponsored content and brand relationships to their audience to build trust. Rather than one-time collaborations, establishing long-term relationships with influencers to build trust and credibility over time yields better results in increased brand trust. In order to continuously improve and optimize strategies, it is necessary to monitor the effectiveness of influencer campaigns and measure the impact on brand trust and credibility. By implementing these strategies, brands can effectively use social media influencer marketing to build brand trust and credibility can effectively use social media influencer marketing to build brand trust, and credibility by implementing these strategies. An article also discusses the benefits and drawbacks of influencer marketing and the importance of authenticity and transparency in influencer-brand collaborations. Because it emphasizes the significance of recognizing and cultivating the right brand influencers, when choosing influencers to work with, brands should consider factors such as audience demographics, content relevance, and influencer reputation, according to the researcher. Finally, the article emphasizes the importance of brands staying current on the latest trends and developments in influencer marketing to compete in the digital marketplace (Leung et al., 2022).

This research's findings are beneficial to both businesses and academics. It provides practical recommendations for businesses on effectively leveraging social media influencer marketing to enhance brand image and build brand trust. It adds to the existing work on social

media influencer marketing for academics and emphasizes the importance of additional research, particularly in emerging markets such as Iraq.

5.2. Implications for Theory

This study contributes significantly to prior studies by building on the findings of numerous other studies and articles. Firstly, the influencer has a great influence on the brand and consumer view of the company, and how they purchase and use the service/product is usually affected by the influencer, as social media is a big part of our daily routine. According to a study, social media marketing significantly impacts on female customers' impulse purchasing behavior in Jordan. Furthermore, the study discovered that social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter effectively win over female customers to purchase products impulsively. Furthermore, the study discovered that trust in social media influencers positively affects female customers' impulse purchasing behavior (Al-zyoud, 2018).

Secondly, the data results in an improved comprehension of the influencers' attributes (attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness), especially on the generations that have significant independence on the internet in Iraq (millennials and generation z). These results should be taken into consideration when considering how the influencers shape and change the consumers' habit of using, buying or having an excellent brand image that helps them to invite their acquaintance to the brand by using word of mouth (considered as one of the most remarkable ways to market a brand or their products). Investigates millennials' and generation Z's attitudes and behaviors toward digital marketing communications and advertising. According to a study, millennials and generation Z prefer digital marketing communication, such as email marketing, social media, and digital video advertising. They are, however, skeptical of traditional advertising methods such as television and print advertisements. According to the study's participants, they are more likely to be involved with authentic branded content, personalized, and relevant to their interests and values. The study emphasizes the importance of understanding millennials and generation Z's values and preferences when developing effective digital marketing communication and advertising strategies. Marketers should focus on developing personalized and credible content that is relevant to their target audience, and using influencer marketing to build trust and authenticity (Munsch, 2021).

Thirdly, the influence's attributes (attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness) significantly influenced and affected brand image. It effected brand trust, as it was discovered that only trustworthiness affected brand trust, while attractiveness and expertise had a negligible relationship and no effect on brand trust. According to study findings, social media influencers significantly impact generation Z and Y's purchase intention of tech gadgets. Furthermore, the study finds that influencers' credibility and expertise, as well as their alignment with the brand image, are critical factors influencing the efficacy of influencer marketing. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the importance of product quality and brand reputation in generation Z and Y purchasing decisions (Meglaj, V., & Zafar, 2022).

The experiment provides an awareness of the relationship between consumers and the influencers and how it is a better way than having other celebrities or general influencers that are not specified or have the same value as the brand, as they have a greater and more

powerful influence on the consumer and toward the brand, as they consider these influencers as opinion leaders and have a more close and relative life to the consumer.

5.3. Implications for Management

This study's findings have important implications for Iraqi managers and organizations, particularly those considering using social media influencer marketing to improve brand image and build brand trust. As was shown in the example, the researcher took (the company Everbeauty and the influencer Hind Nizar). While the brand chose this influencer due to her influence on many consumers around Iraq, they also chose the influencer for having the qualified attributes.

The influencer has 5.8M followers, which is only on Instagram, as shown in figure 5.1. As where the influencer usually shows her daily life and advertises the products.

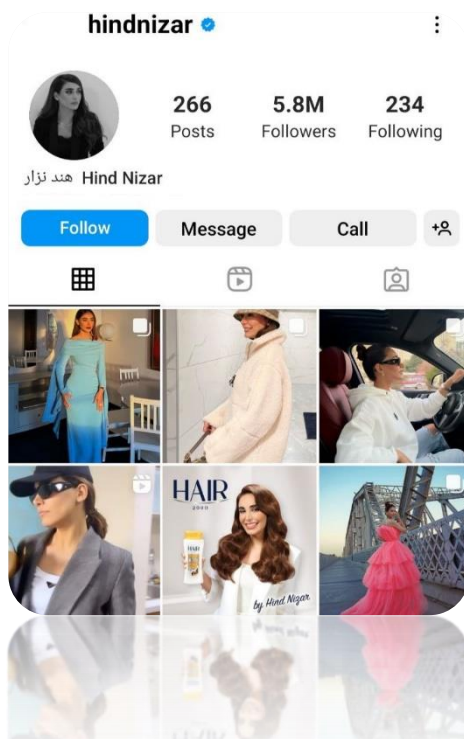


Figure 5. 1. Hind Nizar Instagram account

Source: (Nizar, 2023)

As the brand was going through the decline stage in their sales, they were able to go back and strong with the influencer help; the influencer's helped them to advertise the brand products while doing her makeup routine, that it shows she is more relatable to a consumer as the influencer touch a regular daily routine for every female, this made them increase sales and get more than 30% than before as some examples shown in figure 5.2.

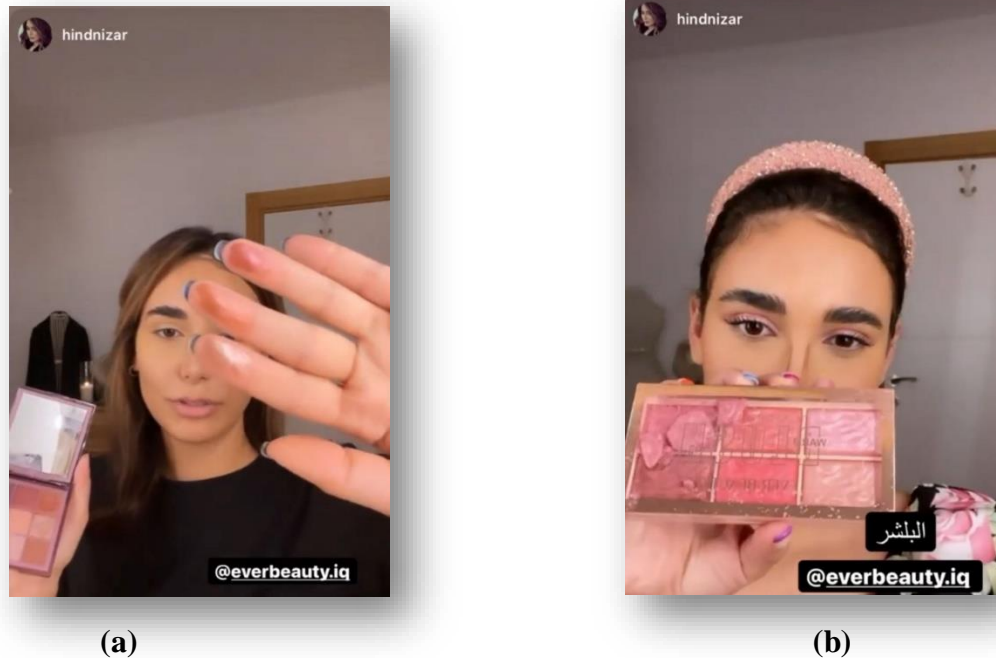


Figure 5. 2. a) advertisement for highlighters b) advertisement for blusher
Source: (Everbeauty, 2021)

According to the findings, social media influencer marketing may represent a useful tool for businesses looking to improve brand image and build brand trust with their target audience. As a result, managers should consider incorporating social media influencer marketing into their entire marketing plans. However, managers must carefully consider the type of influencer with whom they work and the type of content that the influencer shares on their platforms.

Managers should choose influencers who are compatible with their brand and have a large and engaged audience relevant to their target audience. They should also ensure that the influencer's content is coherent with the image and values of their brand, as shown in chapter 2.

Furthermore, managers should regularly monitor and evaluate their social media influencer marketing efforts' effect on brand image and trust. This will allow them to adjust as needed and ensure they get the most out of their marketing investment.

Overall, the study's findings emphasize the importance of social media influencer marketing for businesses in Iraq and the need for managers to carefully consider and plan their use of this tool to maximize its impact on brand image and trust.

5.4. Research Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

There are several limitations to this study that should be recognized when evaluating the results.

Firstly, the research was limited to a sample of consumers in Iraq, and the findings may need to be generalizable to other nations or geographical areas.

Secondly, the study relied heavily on the Everbeauty company, which can change with different influencers or indicators at the time of brand advertisement.

Thirdly, it was helpful for this research to use quota sampling as it needed specific characteristics that are more beneficial to the brand and the influencer. However, considering the research topic, it also has limitations as it can introduce a bias. In addition, it would not accurately represent the population, as it is impossible to generalize the result to a larger population fully.

Fourthly, one potential limitation of studying the impact of social media influencer marketing on brand image and trust is the inherent differences between the millennial and Gen Z generations. These two groups have grown up in vastly different technological landscapes and have different attitudes and behaviors when it comes to social media and digital marketing. Therefore, it may be difficult to generalize findings across these two generations and future research may need to explore these groups separately in order to gain a more accurate understanding of the impact of social media influencer marketing on brand image and trust.

Finally, the possibility of low participation rates due to participant availability or willingness to participate is one limitation of this study. This may result in a smaller sample size than anticipated, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, self-selection bias may be an issue if only specific types of people choose to participate, potentially biasing the results in favor of those with certain characteristics or motivations.

Suggestions for Future Research:

The findings of this study suggest several avenues for future research.

Firstly, expanding the study to other countries or regions would be beneficial in determining the generalizability of the results.

Secondly, more brands/companies and different influencers would be beneficial.

Thirdly, it might also be interesting to inquire social media influencer marketing impact on brand trust and image. Studies could, for example, look into the impact of micro-influencers, macro-influencers, or brand ambassadors on these two constructs.

Finally, it would be intriguing to look into the comment moderation effects of other variables, such as consumer demographics or brand characteristics, on the association between social media influencer marketing and brand trust and brand image.

Overall, this study's findings lay the groundwork for future work into the effects of social media influencer marketing on brand trust and image in Iraq and elsewhere.

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