

## A Study of the Relationship between Social Media Marketing through Influencer Marketing and SMEs: Applied on the Egyptian Small and Medium Enterprises

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### Abstract

This paper explores the multidimensional influence of social media marketing on Egypt's Small and Medium Enterprises. This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating surveys, interviews, and case studies to give a thorough analysis. The study begins by assessing the amount of social media marketing adoption among Egyptian SMEs and identifying the most regularly used platforms. It evaluates the frequency and characteristics of social media interactions among SMEs, including consumer engagement and collaborations. Furthermore, the study assesses the problems associated with resource limits, digital literacy, and cultural issues in incorporating social media into SME operations. In addition, the study explores the impact of content created by users and online reviews on brand impression and consumer loyalty. The study also examines whether having an active social media presence corresponds with increasing revenue, market share expansion, and globalization activities. It investigates the role of social media marketing in promoting SMEs' access to finance and collaborations. In conclusion, this thesis contributes to the existing literature by conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of social media marketing on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Egypt. It highlights the immense potential of social media and identifies various challenges SMEs face. The research recommends how policymakers, business support organizations, and SME owners can leverage social media marketing to enhance competitiveness and sustainability in the Egyptian business environment.

**Keywords:** Social Media Marketing - Marketing – SMEs – Egypt.

## 1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the study investigating the impact of social media marketing through influencer marketing on (SMEs) Applied to Egyptian small and medium enterprises. It is divided into four sections. Section 1.1 discusses the Importance of the research and Justification of the study. Following by section 1.2 Research Aims and Objectives. Finally, section 1.3 elaborates on the research gap.

### 1.1 Importance of the research and Justification of the study

The corporate environment has undergone significant changes in the last two decades, especially with increased social media usage and innovation. Innovation is vital for business enterprises, influencing marketing and business performance and driving company growth. There are four basic types of innovation - product result (service or commodities), process, marketing, and organizational innovation. Combining these four components can help firms achieve uniqueness, minimize price sensitivity, and increase profitability. The study of how Instagram affects consumers is still in its early stages, and more research is needed to fully understand the app's influence on consumers. Conversely, studies on TikTok have confirmed its significant impact on consumer behavior.

It is essential to research the factors that influence the use of social media technologies by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as they provide more employment opportunities and help boost the economy. The primary focus of this study is on the most critical factors that researchers argue about - organizational managers, environmental characteristics, and innovation characteristics - underlying social media adoption in SMEs. Social media has become crucial for businesses to understand as a communication and marketing tool to develop their enterprises.

This research aims to look at social media use by SMEs from a business standpoint, with three primary aims. The first goal is to establish the present characteristics and state of social media tool adoption in Egyptian SMEs for commercial reasons. The second purpose is to better understand the factors that influence or limit Egyptian SMEs' implementation and utilization of social media technologies. The third objective is to assess the impact of current adoption and future plans based on the choice to use social media tools on the business development efforts of Egyptian SMEs.

Based on innovation transmission theory, ten hypotheses were proposed to examine whether features promote or impede social media tool use and quantify social media usage's impact on company development at the SME level. The study used quantitative methods and was carried out by distributing paper-based questionnaires to 150 Egyptian SMEs' current and potential social media adopters. The proposed ten hypotheses were validated using deductive logic. SPSS software used multiple regression (the stepwise technique) to analyze the data.

The findings revealed a general profile of Egyptian SMEs embracing the concept of social media usage in Cairo City. The hypothesis testing revealed that the implementation of social media tools at the SME level is primarily supported by the innovative features of business usage of social media by SME owners at both the maturity and intention levels.

Social media adoption, at both the maturity and intention levels, significantly impacts company growth initiatives. In brief, the study adds knowledge to the identified information gap in academic literature addressing the use of social media for company growth from the SMEs perspective.

Social media can facilitate the flow of knowledge via user-created content, allowing customers to engage in the process of firms' innovation by using social media. This is because social media incorporates web 2.0 application technology and philosophy.

In 2019, Mention et al. suggested that social media (SM) can support creativity and facilitate the rapid exchange of information between enterprises and their clients. This is achieved through various means, such as free voices and immediate communication with customers, strengthening coordination between firms and their clients, and leading to fresh ideas. Therefore, marketing managers of companies must seek and use standard information on SM to take specific actions and successfully compete with other companies, as stated by Alrowwad et al. in 2020.

The study highlighted the key factors that define the adoption of social media at both levels of social media maturity and social media intention, as well as the extent to which these levels influence company growth activities. Some keywords associated with the study include social media, Web 2.0, SMEs, Business Development, Social Media Maturity, and Social Media Intention.

## 1.2 Research Aims and Objectives

- (1) The aim of this research was to investigate the utilization of social media marketing tools by small and medium enterprises in Egypt (Cairo City in particular) for business development objectives in order to expand knowledge about the factors that would increase the adoption and use level of social media marketing tools in the context of Egyptian small and medium enterprises.
- (2) To investigate the relationship between the utilization of social media marketing tools (Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram), specially among the influencers and Ambassadors, based on its three dimensions (Quality, Credibility, and Expertise) and the effectiveness of Egyptian SMEs.
  - a. To investigate the relationship between social media marketing through influencer marketing **quality** and the effectiveness of Egyptian SMEs.
  - b. To investigate the relationship between social media marketing through influencer marketing **credibility** and the effectiveness of Egyptian SMEs.
  - c. To investigate the relationship between social media marketing through influencer marketing **expertise** and the effectiveness of Egyptian SMEs.

This research was motivated to seek more information in this area generally by taking into account the justification as mentioned earlier and determining that there is little awareness of the current status of social media adoption and usage growth in Egypt, more specifically in addition to the emerging need to academically document the role that social media tools play in Egyptian SMEs.

### Three objectives were developed to meet the previously mentioned research goal:

1. Identifying the present features and state of social media tool adoption in Egyptian small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) for business objectives.
2. Gaining a better knowledge of the factors that influence or limit the adoption and use of social media technologies by Egyptian small and medium-sized organizations (SMEs).
3. Measuring the impact of present adoption and future intentions based on Egyptian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) choice to use social media technologies in their company development efforts.

### 1.3 Research gap

After reviewing the literature on social media marketing tools, it appears that many researchers have focused on this topic. SMEs' use of social media is essential but requires more research, resulting in a research gap. With the availability of Web 2.0 tools, SMEs can experience significant growth opportunities. Social media tools incorporating Web 2.0 technologies can increase social contacts, speed up business operations, improve customer relations, facilitate innovation and favorable pricing, and recruit highly qualified employees (Juusola, 2010).

As mentioned before, social media has a significant impact on both individuals and businesses. Although the online content related to brands is meant to help and inform customers in the commercial sector, it has become overwhelming for people to make purchase decisions. As a result, consumers are relying more on word-of-mouth communication, where they connect and exchange information, opinions, and experiences as a way to inform their decisions (Arndt, 1967).

Word-of-mouth is a valuable tool for businesses as it can help customers make informed purchase decisions. It has a greater influence on consumers than traditional forms of advertising (Engel et al., 1969; Trusov et al., 2009). Therefore, this contrasts the study's goal of understanding the impact of social media on the development of SMEs in Egypt. From an academic standpoint, there is a need for more studies on the usage and effect of social media technologies in the context of small and medium enterprises.

The lack of academic literature presents itself on several levels. Meske and Stieglitz (2013, 62) state that there is a growing amount of academic research on social media use in the workplace. However, most studies focus on more significant firms, and there needs to be more specific studies on social media in the context of SMEs. Furthermore, the available literature on social media tool usage by SMEs are restricted worldwide, and no Egyptian study of this research issue has been seen.

Therefore, the research gap is the influence of social media on the development of SMEs in Egypt, as it has yet to be investigated. This study aims to bridge the gap by investigating and providing an in-depth understanding of the influence of social media on the development and innovation of small and medium enterprises. This study contributes to knowledge by adding insights from the Egyptian SMEs.

## 2. Literature Review

### Introduction

The literature review will be divided into five sections. Firstly, Social Media, its definition and conceptualization, history and foundation, importance, and negativity, in addition to its three dimensions (attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness), and finally, the three-dimension contradiction. The second section explains the small and medium enterprises, their importance, roots and foundations, definitions, stages, touchpoints, and dimensions, and finally, the three-multidimensionality contradictory. Thirdly, the paper examines the relationship between the two variables, social media marketing, and SMEs, based on their dimensions. Lastly, this section covers research questions, research hypotheses, and theoretical framework.

### 2.1 Social Media Marketing

#### 2.1.1 The importance of social media marketing

Every small and medium must have a social media presence. Furthermore, more than simply being present is required. The marketing and sales departments require much effort to ensure that the entire activity is clear, accurate, and focused on attaining specific goals. Furthermore, numerous marketing techniques should be developed and applied to achieve this. The amount of "follows," "likes," and "shares" remains crucial, but brand reputation is more than just those characteristics. Micro, small, and medium-sized firms (SMEs) account for 99 percent of all businesses in the European Union (EU) and play an essential role in today's society and economy (Kuller et al., 2012).

"With these factors in mind, social media offers marketers and businesses the opportunity to connect directly with customers, improve customer retention, and increase business profits regardless of location" (Mayank and Zillur, 2018). Marketers now enhance the implementation of their marketing plans by receiving the real-time input they require to establish their future direction, resulting in advantageous synergies that reward their efforts in this area (Dobrescu et al., 2018).

These recent academic contributions in the field of Social Media have rekindled organizations' interest in using Social Media tools in business, which is why the researcher cited Social Media's many meanings as previously indicated.

(Klososky, 2011) also comes to the same conclusion, claiming that social technologies are more than just Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. These apps are a little component of the overall picture from an organizational viewpoint. As a result, there is a corporate requirement for its leaders to build management abilities to use social technologies rather than be frustrated by them.

The first is social relevance. (Klososky, 2011) defined it as the notion of an online reputation or credentials and all of the instruments accessible in this domain. These include a company's and an individual's internet reputations. When a potential customer, partner,

vendor, or investor searches online for information about your company, the collection of links, user opinions, and available content adds up to your online relevance.

The second is social media, a significant global information transmission source. According to (Klososky, 2011), social media is "any Web site or service that facilitates the use of an element of media to communicate an idea, advertise, promote, or deliver content." Documents (scribd.com), presentations (slideshare.com), images (flickr.com), or videos (youtube.com) might all be considered media in this context."

Social networking is the third component. According to Klososky, this term refers to any website or service that allows users to communicate one-on-one or one-to-many in a dialogue.

This encompasses TikTok, Facebook, Ning, LinkedIn, Plaxo, Twitter, Foursquare, blogging, and other social media platforms.

Social networking encompasses anything from e-communities to live broadcasting of conversations via text, audio, or video. Social networking is about connecting people through autonomous discourse or through organizations communicating with an organizational voice.

Aside from advertising, social media provides several advantages to organizations. Interactions with your target market are encouraged by social media. Companies can effectively observe their customers' posts, likes, shares, and comments on a product and utilize the data to fine-tune or produce another product. Consumers may communicate with businesses through social media because they regard them as people. Companies may use social media to reply to queries about their products or services and obtain feedback.

### 2.1.2 Social Media marketing Negativity

According to (Haataja, 2005); (Nekatibeb, 2012), social media is a novel marketing channel that is difficult to evaluate and comprehend since the matrices for assessing returns are still relatively immature, albeit they are expanding fast. Furthermore, due to the dynamic nature of Social Media platforms and technology in general, there needs to be more consensus on using Social Media in various activities, such as initiating a Social Media campaign without a defined strategic aim (setting a target). Misuse of social media in marketing may drastically shift consumer behavior and expectations. According to (Haataja, 2005); (King'ori, 2013), unrealistic client expectations can be attributed to untrustworthy user-created material. According to (Haataja, 2005); (Stankovic-Rice, 2011), employees who engage in social networking and blogging can impact the organization's reputation.

Employees may produce unfavorable publicity by neglecting or failing to respond to client demands and complaints using Social Media technologies. On social media, negative publicity is frequent. Users can discuss their thoughts and experiences with one another without restriction or control. Businesses are frequently bombarded with negative feedback and evaluations, which can harm a company's or product's reputation. Unfortunately, companies cannot control these evaluations; once placed online, they become public information for all users. In this day and age of internet shopping, buyers must determine which products to buy and which to avoid by reading reviews posted online by other users.

According to Fullerton (2017), around 93% of online customers acknowledged that online reviews affect their purchasing decisions while shopping online.

According to (Stankovic-Rice, 2011), the organization's workforce may feel anxiety and unfamiliarity with Social Media technologies or an inability to accept the usage of Social Media tools due to workers' unwillingness to share information and manage more openly. On the contrary, (Stankovic-Rice, 2011); (King'ori, 2013) stated that organization workers might be less productive due to spending too much time networking and writing posts on blogs and wikis or utilizing it for social reasons rather than work-related postings.

Utilizing social media within an organization may result in knowledge management and sharing issues. (Munro, 2014) listed a few of these issues, including the potential for bias by a group working on a particular piece of content (Group Think), the dubious veracity of the information in shared content, the abuse of open information by ignoring the conversation so that organizational knowledge is lost, and finally the potential for sensitive information loss.

Copyright has been a significant concern with social media networking sites. Copyright and modification apply to content uploaded to social media networks. The campaign's transmitting message may be misconstrued by users, resulting in a contradicting message. Business trademarks can also be stolen from social media sites and utilized freely to create a fraudulent campaign, eventually leading to reputational damage.

In the same context, (Drobnjak, 2011); (King'ori, 2013) discussed various issues, such as viruses and malware, as well as data leaking. Social networks have been a primary target for many hackers because of the volume of user data that may be obtained following a successful breach of the security system. Data leakage is the publication of dates that are part of a confidential route map or the distribution of information about the company's present financial status.

### **2.1.3 Social media marketing definitions**

According to (Safko & Brake, 2009); (Lincoln, 2009); Wikstrom and Ellonen (2012); Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), Ahlqvist, Back, Halonen, and Heinonen (2008), Hansen, Shneiderman, and Smith (2011), the idea of social media has been characterized from several angles. Each term arose from the standpoint from which the investigation was organized. The following part will go through many definitions of social media and the core viewpoint from when each term was developed.

The growth of a subset of Web 2.0 applications known as social media has been cited as a factor driving several Web 2.0 consumer behaviors, such as consumer empowerment, greater WOM, and consumer skepticism of traditional mass marketing (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). The concept must first be defined to better understand social media and its influence on consumer purchase behavior.

To gain the greatest knowledge about the influence of social media on customer purchasing behavior, the word should be carefully defined. Given the variety of terminologies used to describe social media, it is reasonable to presume that there is a comparable lack of a universally agreed definition of social media (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010); (Mangold & Faulds,

2009) used Blackshaw and Nazzaro's (2004) definition of consumer-generated media to define social media: "a variety of new online information sources developed, launched, disseminated, and used by consumers to educate one another about goods, services, and brands, characters, and issues."

In a behavioral framework, (Safko & Brake, 2009) described social media as "activities, practices, and behaviors among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversational media." Furthermore, according to (Lincoln, 2009), social media is more of a behavior than a collection of tools. In other words, she stated that social media is more about the ideas people share, cooperate on, develop, and engage in than what they watch.

Furthermore, Kapoor et al. (2018) gave a complete concept of social media by addressing the matter: "Social media is made up of various user-driven platforms that facilitate the diffusion of compelling content, dialogue creation, and communication to a broader audience." It is a digital place made by and for people, and it creates an atmosphere favorable to contacts and networking at many levels (for example, personal, professional, business, marketing, political, and social). In particular, this perspective on social media gives a thorough picture of the foundation of social media, as it promotes the concept of user-generated content and the possibility of sharing various types of online material across social media apps.

#### 2.1.4 Defining Social Media Marketing

According to eMarketer (2013), businesses have embraced social media more and more for a range of marketing tasks like branding, market research, customer relationship management, service provision, and sales promotion. This is in addition to numerous studies that are demonstrating the benefits of integrating social media into marketing strategies. However, despite the existence of numerous studies showing empirical evidence of the advantages to businesses (see, for example, Alhabash, McAlister, Quilliam, Richards, and Lou, 2015; Kozinets, Valck, Wojnicki, and Wilner, 2010; Kumar & Mirchandani, 2012; Kumar et al., 2013; Luo & Zhang, 2013; Yu, Duan, and Cao, 2013) and outlining the ways in which social media marketing strategies 2015; Liu & Park, 2015; Lorenzo-Romero, (Alarcón-del-Amo, Rialp, & Rialp, 2016); Qazi, Raj, Tahir, Cambria, & Syed, 2014; Tang et al., 2015).

Chan and Guillet (2011) established a definition of social media marketing in 2006, based on the AMA (American Marketing Association) definition of marketing, which was reviewed and modified by the AMA in 2013. As a result, in terms of systemization, we can only say that virtually all of these studies treat the notion of social media marketing as a translation of the marketing concept applied to social media, with no author emphasizing any particularities to applying the marketing concept in this domain.

Also, The term is commonly used in commercial practices. Its reach may be expanded to include social networks, online forums, and blogs as tools for establishing interactions with clients. Nonetheless, the marketing phrase encompasses a considerably broader, deeper, and more sophisticated range of concepts. It is far more comprehensive than learning to



communicate or build connections (Klepek & Starzyczna, 2018). Similarly, Ebrahim (2019) draws attention to different research that has been undertaken in order to define social media marketing. However, no agreement could be achieved.

## 2.2 Social Media Evolution

It is becoming increasingly more work to overlook the significance of Web 2.0 and its essential characteristics that define social media. Our understanding of Web 2.0 comes from research that explores the evolution of the concept of how it is turning the internet into a collaborative platform (known as Social Media) where individuals can both consume content (by downloading) and create new content (by uploading). We also examine the differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 and how businesses utilize Web 2.0 applications.

### 2.2.1 The historical evolution of Web 2.0 concept

In 1999, Dinucci coined the term "Web 2.0", which was later used by Dale Dougherty of O'Reilly Media in 2004 at the first Web 2.0 conference.

Dougherty used this term to describe the "business revolution in the computer industry." 2007 O'Reilly defined Web 2.0 as a second generation of technology development and web design. After the dotcom crash in 2001, people were curious to know where the web would go.

As per (Klososky, 2011), the emergence of Web 2.0 began when people started communicating with each other rather than just with companies. This led to forming communities of interest, where people with common interests could share information, ideas, opinions, and files.

Mark Zuckerberg and Jack Dorsey then created tools that enabled us to share content and opinions in various formats for free. (Klososky, 2011) distinguishes that while Web 1.0 was predominantly about e-commerce, Web 2.0 is more about connection and social commerce. According to Mata and Quesada (2014, 57), the term Web 2.0 was initially coined in 1999 by Dinucci. In 2004, Dale Dougherty of O'Reilly Media used it at the first Web 2.0 conference to describe "the business revolution in the computer industry."

O'Reilly (2007) defined it as a second generation of technology development and web design. After the dotcom crash 2001, people searched for answers about where the web would go. (Klososky, 2011) explained that Web 2.0 emerged when people began communicating with each other rather than just companies. Communities of interest formed, enabling people with common interests to share information, ideas, opinions, and files.

Mark Zuckerberg and Jack Dorsey then created tools that let us share content and opinions in various formats for free. (Klososky, 2011) distinguishes that while Web 1.0 is about e-commerce, Web 2.0 is about connection and social commerce.

### 2.2.2 Web 2.0 definition

To define Web 2.0, several studies, including those by (Creese, 2007); (Darwish & Lakhtaria, 2011); Mata and Quesada (2014), have attempted to state what it is precise. However, there are divergent descriptions of Web 2.0, ranging from it being a social and

technological process for interaction, participation, and collaboration to a commercial and business process such as marketing. (Creese, 2007); (Darwish & Lakhtaria, 2011) describe Web 2.0 as a collective name given to the new generation of web technologies that share some aspects in common, forming the core Web 2.0 elements. (Creese, 2007) provides a more detailed definition, stating that Web 2.0 is a second generation of the World Wide Web that facilitates effortless collaboration and the free flow of information among individuals via online platforms, creating a more dynamic and organized web with an emphasis on web-based communities of users.

(Darwish & Lakhtaria, 2011) add that there are four general types of processes within Web 2.0 applications that reflect ways of interacting in the virtual world, categorized by Howe (2009) as sharing user-contributed content, developing content collections by user communities, finding not only objects but trends and overviews of contributions, and creating worlds and artifacts within virtual worlds and then interacting within them. Additionally, Mata and Quesada (2014) mention two definitions to point out some properties of Web 2.0 related to social and commercial processes such as marketing. As cited in Turban, King, Lee, and Viehland (2004), the first definition refers to Web 2.0 as "A common term for advanced internet technology and applications, including blogs, wikis, RSS feeds, and social media." The second definition, introduced by Mata and Quesada (as cited in Constantinides and Fountain, 2008), refers to Web 2.0, which refers to a group of online applications that are open-source, interactive, and user-controlled. These applications allow users and participants to expand their experiences, knowledge, and market power in business and social contexts. Additionally, Web 2.0 applications enable the creation of informal networks among users, facilitating the flow of ideas and knowledge. This is achieved through efficient generation, dissemination, sharing, and editing/refining of informational content.

Web 2.0 technology is a cornerstone that led to the phenomenon known as social media. In 1999, DiNucci invented the phrase Web 2.0 and used it to change the perception of the web from "screen fuls of text and graphics" to a "transport mechanism through which interactivity happens" (DiNucci, 1999, p. 32). DiNucci was the leading scientist who envisioned the internet as it is now. He created the term the "Internet of Things": the web beyond the boundaries of the personal computer. O'Reilly and Dougherty (2007) disseminated the term to introduce the newly transformed appearance of the web, while Musser and O'Reilly (2006, p. 4) define Web 2.0 as a term used to describe the current generation of the internet, which is marked by user involvement, openness, and network effects.

Constantinides and Fountain (2008) define Web 2.0 as "Web 2.0 applications are a set of online tools that are open-source, interactive and user-controlled. They aim to enhance users' experiences, knowledge, and market power as they participate in business and social processes. These applications enable the creation of informal user networks, which help to facilitate the flow of ideas and knowledge. They do this by allowing efficient generation, dissemination, sharing, and editing/refining of content." Nonetheless, they clearly state that they apply "Web 2.0" and "social media" as interchangeable, adding blogs, social networks, content communities, content aggregators, and forums/bulletin boards as "categories of Web

2.0" (Constantinides and Fountain, 2008). The term "Web 2.0" is developing and controversial; consequently, there is no widespread agreement on what the term truly means (Madden and Fox, 2006; Constantinides and Fountain, 2008). Nonetheless, this study applies Constantinides and Fountain's (2008) view, identifying social media as a subset of Web 2.0 applications.

In conclusion, understanding Web 2.0 technology is crucial to comprehend the foundation that led to social media innovation. The definitions of Web 2.0 vary, but it is a collective name given to a new generation of web technologies that share some aspects in common, forming the core Web 2.0 elements. Web 2.0 technology is characterized by user participation, openness, and network effects, and it supports the creation of informal user networks, facilitating the flow of ideas and knowledge.

### **2.2.3 Web 2.0 applications in Business**

The widespread use of information and communication technologies such as Web 2.0 has brought about various changes in today's world. People now require more knowledge, connections, and higher standards to carry out their work effectively. One of the ways to achieve this is by exploring different methods of incorporating Web 2.0 into business environments.

#### **Trials to integrate Web 2.0 in business:**

- 1- Management disciplines.
- 2- Organization elements "Stakeholders"
- 3- Web 2.0 applications.

The management industry has seen the benefits of integrating Web 2.0. Studies have shown its importance in Information and Supply Chain Management.

1-According to (Creese, 2007), current theories on Information Management draw a clear line between what constitutes 'information' and what qualifies as 'intelligence.' For information to be considered intelligence, it must be actively used and updated (Delio, 2005). Put, static web information is not considered intelligence and does not meet the information requirements of modern enterprises. The social connectivity, flexibility, and instant communication capabilities of Web 2.0 technologies are desirable to today's web users and reflect the intelligent side of their social interactions.

2- A study conducted by Im and Kurnia in 2013 examined the potential application of Web 2.0 technology in supporting various supply chain management practices. They analyzed and synthesized literature on critical SCM practices such as supplier relationship management, integrated behavior, information sharing, and collaboration, and how Web 2.0 can aid in each of these practices.

According to (Creese, 2007), consumers and employees expect a human connection when dealing with businesses that use Web 2.0.

Web 2.0 benefits

- 1- Customer Perceptions: Using Web 2.0 technologies such as tags, categories, linking, and active bookmarking improves searchability and reduces customer service inquiries. (Creese, 2007)
- 2- The changing workplace demographic is a major driving force behind employee support for Web 2.0 technologies. With Generation Y employees entering the labor force, there is a growing comfort with web technologies as they have grown up with them. These employees are passionate about workplace democracy, input, and innovation and embrace new ideas and applications. Changes in workplaces and work patterns have also increased telecommuting and part-time work. According to (Creese, 2007), Web 2.0 technologies enable remote workers to collaborate, contribute, network, and maintain a sense of corporate culture and community.
- 3- Management Perceptions: From a management perspective, Web 2.0 benefits corporate culture and offers cost and status advantages. Compared to traditional PR and advertising, Web 2.0 technologies are cheaper, more targeted, and enable businesses to communicate with their desired audience at a higher level than mainstream media. According to Charman (2006), Web 2.0 allows businesses to converse with the people they want. Additionally, functionalities like RSS feeds enable content distribution to stakeholders faster and cheaper than most alternative delivery modes, including email. (Creese, 2007)

### 2.3 Social media marketing benefits for small enterprises

Companies extensively utilize social media marketing for small and medium enterprises, as it represents an efficient advertising and marketing tool.

Social media marketing tools are easily accessible and mostly free compared to other promotional tools. The primary purpose of SMM is to enhance word-of-mouth marketing, conduct market research, popularize products, generate new ideas and develop new products, encourage co-innovation, provide customer service, manage public relations, communicate with employees, and maintain a good reputation. Social networks can help boost brand and product awareness, increase website traffic, enhance customer loyalty, improve SEO, and even increase the success rate of new product launches.

Social media marketing can use unconventional means to achieve traditional goals.

Rather than relying on expensive advertising campaigns, businesses can now leverage creativity, community, and relationships through social media marketing. This approach gives all marketers the same influence as large corporations, using highly effective online communication tools. Social media marketing represents a significant shift in the marketing landscape. Small businesses, in particular, can benefit from this approach, as they typically have limited budgets and resources. Here are just a few of the many benefits that social media marketing has to offer:

- **Brand awareness augmentation**

Over half of the world's population uses social media, making platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn effective for targeting leads.

- **Humanize the brand**

The main advantage of social media for businesses is the ability to establish strong relationships. Through social media, followers can connect with the people behind the company and see how existing customers benefit from the company's products and services.

- **Establish the brand as a leader**

The "2021 Edelman Trust Barometer" reveals that trust in government, NGOs, and media has declined, but businesses continue to enjoy a 61 percent level of trust (Hootsuite, 2022). Consumers now turn to brands for reliable information, which can be shared through social media. By doing so, a brand can establish itself as a thought leader and become the go-to source for information on topics related to its industry.

- **Remain in the minds of the consumers**

According to a 2021 study by the Pew Research Center, 70% of social media users login to their accounts daily, with 49% checking their social media accounts multiple times throughout the day. Therefore, having a strong and active social media presence can increase the likelihood of positive engagement between a business's audience and its generated content.

- **Increase website traffic**

Social media posts and ads can drive traffic to a company website. Sharing quality content from the website to social media channels is an effective way to boost visitor numbers.

- **Generate leads**

Social media offers potential customers a simple, obligation-free method of showing interest in a company and its products. For businesses, lead generation is a valuable advantage of social media, and several social networks provide ad formats aimed explicitly at attracting leads.

- **Boost sales**

Social media accounts play a crucial role in a company's sales funnel. This is the process through which new leads are converted into customers. With the increasing number of people using social media and the advancements in social selling tools, social networks have become even more vital for product discovery and e-commerce.

- **Partnerships with influencers**

Recommendations from loved ones and online reviews hold significant weight when purchasing decisions. Additionally, when individuals discuss a product or company on social media, it can help increase brand awareness, credibility, and even sales, according to A. Popescu et al.'s study "The Importance of Social Media Marketing Strategies" highlights social media's crucial role in marketing efforts.

- **Organic content**

Social media offers the great advantage of producing organic content without any expenses. As more users and companies join, valuable options become easier to access.

All resources like photos, videos, and updates are free, allowing unlimited posting. Sharing these resources can increase engagement without any limitations.

Nowadays, it has become an expectation rather than an exception for a brand to have a social media presence. However, it is essential to allocate resources and budgets while considering all marketing options, online and offline, and keeping in mind the established business objectives. Companies need to evaluate the potential benefits of social media, considering specific and actionable goals. Although the impact of social media benefits may vary for different brands, the undeniable fact is that social presence has a significant business impact.

The past few years have seen a surge in social media usage, making it crucial to have guidance in social media marketing. This is necessary to develop client relationships, foster customer engagement, and enhance overall marketing performance. While social media marketing is a relatively new tool, it offers numerous possibilities and benefits to small businesses in the Romanian market. However, issues remain to be addressed, such as choosing the proper channels, balancing paid and free tools, building content plans, and integrating social media into sales funnels. Additional research and development of theoretical guides, frameworks, and concepts are essential to transform social media marketing into an actionable and strategic marketing tool.

### 2.3.1 Image-Sharing Social Networking Sites

Many social media apps are constantly evolving. Nowadays, it has become a daily routine for people to browse social media platforms to share and exchange content. Visual content has become particularly valuable as users predominantly share content visually.

Moreover, This has led to the rise of applications focusing on visual content exchange, which has become very popular. In recent years, social media has transformed, with image-sharing social networking sites experiencing significant growth. This has attracted the attention of academics and marketers, but due to their recent creation, these apps lack a universally agreed definition.

However, Mull and Lee (2014) differentiate between image-sharing social networking sites and other SNSs. They explain that image-sharing SNSs allow users to share pictures instead of textual information with their social network. Duggan (2013) and Kim et al. (2016) acknowledge the importance of image-sharing SNSs and highlight users' interactions as one of the most common online activities. This trend has become essential to people's daily routines (Hall and Pennington, 2012; (Lee, Lee, Moon, & Sung, 2015). Given that "pictures speak louder than words" (Lee, Lee, Moon, & Sung, 2015), the growing usage of photo-sharing social media applications is not surprising.

Social media has become a crucial component of our daily lives in this digital era. Instagram and TikTok become popular social media platforms with unique features. Instagram focuses on visual content, while TikTok is known for short, entertaining videos. Both platforms offer a diverse user base and networking opportunities. These platforms allow users to share their pictures and videos and provide a means of communication between users

and brands. With their user-friendly interface and diverse features, Instagram and TikTok have become a platform for people to showcase their creativity and engage with a broader audience. Businesses rely heavily on them To engage with their target market and advertise their offerings. Instagram and TikTok have recently emerged as popular social media platforms for sharing photos and communicating with users and brands.

### 2.3.2 Social media use in Egypt from July 2022

Within this section of the paper, we will delve into an analysis of secondary data previously collected from reports and official social media accounts belonging to users of both Instagram and TikTok. This analysis aims to gain a deeper understanding of these platforms' users and how they can be targeted more effectively to enhance the efficiency of social media marketing campaigns. Research has shown that social media is the primary mode of online communication for young individuals, especially those up to 35 years old. As such, companies should consider the profile characteristics of social media users when designing their online marketing strategies.

As relayed by David Curry in 2022, more than 4.8 billion people worldwide have social media accounts, representing over 55% of the global population. The average smartphone user spends approximately two hours and twenty minutes daily on social media, totaling around 70 hours monthly. Social media is responsible for billions of daily interactions and has transformed the social structure of society.

Curry further notes that Facebook and Instagram generate over half of the revenue in the social networking business, with Facebook boasting over 2.9 billion users, followed by YouTube and WhatsApp. Instagram has 2.3 billion users, and TikTok is among the top five most commonly used social media accounts, representing a newer generation of platforms that combine short video sharing and rapid interaction.

In an article published in August 2022, Dave Chaffey refers to the general overview of social media use as of July 2022, published by reportal.org. This overview provides essential statistics relating to how these communications are used.

Facebook users in Egypt in 2022

Data published in Meta's advertising resources indicates that **Facebook** had **44.70 million** users in Egypt in early 2022.

However, Meta made important changes to the way its advertising resources report audience reach data at the end of 2021 – including making significant revisions to its base audience data for Facebook – so the figures shown here are not directly comparable with figures published in our previous reports.

The company's revised audience figures mean that Facebook's ad reach in Egypt was equivalent to **42.5 percent** of the total population at the start of 2022.

However, Facebook restricts the use of its platform to people aged 13 and above, so it's also worth highlighting that **60.8 percent** of the "eligible" audience in Egypt will use Facebook in 2022.

For additional context, Facebook's ad reach in Egypt was equivalent to **59.1 percent** of the local internet user base (regardless of age) in January 2022.

At the start of 2022, **36.5 percent** of Facebook's ad audience in Egypt was **female**, while **63.5 percent** was **male**.

*Note: Meta's advertising resources only publish audience gender data for "female" and "male" users.*

### **YouTube users in Egypt in 2022**

Updates to Google's advertising resources indicate that **YouTube** had **46.30 million** users in Egypt in early 2022.

This figure means that YouTube's 2022 ad reach was equivalent to **44.0 percent** of Egypt's total population at the start of the year.

To put those figures in perspective, YouTube ads reached **61.2 percent** of Egypt's total internet user base (regardless of age) in January 2022.

At that time, **36.0 percent** of YouTube's ad audience in Egypt was **female**, while **64.0 percent** was **male**.

### **Instagram users in Egypt in 2022**

Numbers published in Meta's advertising tools indicate that **Instagram** had **16.00 million** users in Egypt in early 2022.

This figure suggests that Instagram's ad reach in Egypt was equivalent to **15.2 percent** of the total population at the start of the year.

However, Instagram restricts the use of its platform to people aged 13 and above, so it's helpful to know that **21.8 percent** of the "eligible" audience in Egypt will use Instagram in 2022.

It's also worth noting that Instagram's ad reach in Egypt at the start of 2022 was equivalent to **21.1 percent** of the local internet user base (regardless of age).

In early 2022, **46.3 percent** of Instagram's ad audience in Egypt was **female**, while **53.7 percent** was **male**.

### **Snapchat users in Egypt in 2022**

Data published in Snap's advertising resources indicate that **Snapchat** had **13.60 million** users in Egypt in early 2022.

This figure means that Snapchat's ad reach in Egypt was equivalent to **12.9 percent** of the total population at the start of the year.

However, Snapchat restricts the use of its platform to people aged 13 and above, so it's also worth noting that **18.5 percent** of the "eligible" audience in Egypt will use Snapchat in 2022.

For additional context, Snapchat's ad reach in Egypt was equivalent to **18.0 percent** of the local internet user base (regardless of age) at the start of the year.

In early 2022, **62.4 percent** of Snapchat's ad audience in Egypt was **female**, while **36.3 percent** was **male**.



Snap's advertising resources only publish audience gender data for "female" and "male" users, but the figures published for these demographics don't always add up to the total user figure, so percentages shown here may not sum to 100 percent.

### Twitter users in Egypt in 2022

Numbers published in Twitter's advertising resources indicate that **Twitter** had **5.15 million** users in Egypt in early 2022.

This figure means that Twitter's ad reach in Egypt was equivalent to **4.9 percent** of the total population at the time.

However, Twitter restricts the use of its platform to people aged 13 and above, so it may be helpful to know that **7.0 percent** of the "eligible" audience in Egypt will use Twitter in 2022.

For additional context, Twitter's ad reach in Egypt was equivalent to **6.8 percent** of the local internet user base (regardless of age) at the start of the year.

### TikTok users in Egypt in 2022

Figures published in ByteDance's advertising resources indicate that TikTok had 20.28 million users aged 18 and above in Egypt in early 2022.

Note that ByteDance allows marketers to target TikTok ads to users aged *13 and above* via its advertising tools, but these tools only show audience data for users aged *18 and above*.

For context, ByteDance's figures indicate that TikTok ads reached 31.6 percent of all adults aged 18 and above in Egypt at the start of 2022.

Meanwhile, TikTok's ad reach in Egypt was equivalent to 26.8 percent of the local internet user base at the beginning of the year, regardless of age.

In early 2022, 38.3 percent of TikTok's ad audience in Egypt was female, while 61.7 percent was male.

### Mobile connections in Egypt in 2022

Data from GSMA Intelligence shows that there were **98.29 million** cellular mobile connections in Egypt at the start of 2022.

However, note that many people around the world make use of more than one mobile connection – for example, they might have one connection for personal use, and another one for work – so it's not unusual for mobile connection figures to significantly exceed figures for total population.

GSMA Intelligence's numbers indicate that mobile connections in Egypt were equivalent to **93.4 percent** of the total population in January 2022.

The number of mobile connections in Egypt **increased** by **1.9 million** (+1.9 percent) between 2021 and 2022. (Source: <https://www.datareportal.com> )

The analysis presented in this report highlights the importance of utilizing a customized profile to devise a successful marketing strategy on various social media platforms. It is about focusing on brand identity, awareness, and image and creating targeted video and audio content to help companies connect with their intended audience quickly and cost-effectively.

However, it is essential to note that not all social media platforms are created equal, and what works for one company may not necessarily work for another. For instance, some platforms may have too general content, which can dilute the impact of ads and result in ineffective profiling. On the other hand, some platforms may need to be more specialized, limiting ads' reach and causing them to miss the intended target audience.

To avoid such outcomes, it is critical to thoroughly assess each platform's advantages and disadvantages and determine how they align with the company's image objectives, reputation, and desired perception. Carefully evaluating each platform's features, such as audience demographics, user behavior, and content type, can help companies identify the best platform(s) to invest their time and resources.

In summary, companies need to be strategic in their approach to social media marketing by creating a customized profile that aligns with their objectives and selecting the right platform(s) to reach their intended target audience. By doing so, they can avoid embarrassing missteps and achieve their marketing goals cost-effectively and efficiently.

#### A- Overview of Instagram

Instagram, the visual communication platform, has been in operation since 2010. Over the years, it has become one of the most popular sources of visual content on social media. According to Kerwood's research in 2015, people have an insatiable desire for visual sharing, and Instagram offers an ideal platform for this. Instagram's in-built social discovery feature has contributed to its high engagement rates. As a result, Instagram has become popular among individuals and businesses seeking to increase brand awareness. Kerwood's research further highlights that Instagram has an engagement rate of 2.261%, the highest among major social networks. This contrasts Facebook's 0.216%, LinkedIn's 0.055%, and Twitter's 0.035%. Instagram delivers 65 times more engagement than Twitter and ten times more than Facebook. It is no wonder that Instagram is recognized as the best platform for businesses looking to boost their brand awareness.

Visual content has become an indispensable social media aspect for restaurants and the hospitality industry. A study by Hollander (2015) revealed that many people base their dining choices on what they see on Instagram, making it an essential factor for the industry to pay attention to. In an interview conducted by (Bowling, 2015), restaurant owners expressed their love for Instagram as an excellent way to connect with potential guests, locals, and regulars. This platform enables people to tag, comment, provide feedback, ask questions, and more. Furthermore, Instagram's visually attractive photos are more easily comprehended than text. Buscall (2015) reported that visual content attracts 94% more views and has a 40% higher chance of being shared on social media.

(Wang, 2011) suggested that Instagram accounts considerably impact consumers aged 25 to 34. Kerwood (2015) supported this idea by stating that Instagram generates the most brand engagement compared to other social media platforms. Brandau (2013) also emphasized that fostering Instagram engagement is beneficial for restaurants as it can increase foot traffic and lead to numerous social media impressions through shared photos.

Researchers have taken notice of the impressive growth of Instagram in both personal and business settings. Jurgenson (2011) highlights the shift towards visual features in social media interaction, contributing to the platform's success. Despite its popularity, however, studies on the use and impact of Instagram constitute less than 1% of all studies on social networking sites (Stoycheff et al., 2017). Some research has shed light on various aspects of Instagram, including user profiles and the type of content being shared (Hu et al., 2014), user motivation (Eunji et al., 2015; McCune 2011; Sheldon and Bryant 2016), social network construction (Ferrara et al., 2014), cultural significance of photo filters (Hochman and Manovich 2013; Silva et al., 2013), and the emotional aspects of selfies (Lup et al., 2015; (Retallack, Ringrose, & Lawrence, 2016); Ridgway and Clayton 2016). Other academics have explored how theories of society on Instagram might apply to a broader social media environment (Trayor et al., 2016; Wilkes et al., 2014). Despite these efforts, research on Instagram is still in its early stages (Polanski, 2017). The growth of Instagram in both personal and business areas has caught the attention of researchers. Jurgenson (2011) highlights the shift towards visual features in social media interaction. However, despite its popularity, studies on the use and impact of Instagram constitute less than 1% of all studies on social networking sites (Stoycheff et al., 2017). Some research has shed light on issues such as Instagram content and user profiles (Hu et al., 2014), user motivation (Eunji et al., 2015; McCune, 2011; Sheldon and Bryant, 2016), social network construction (Ferrara et al., 2014), the cultural significance of photo filters (Hochman and Manovich 2013; Silva et al., 2013), and the emotional aspects of selfies (Lup et al., 2015; (Retallack, Ringrose, & Lawrence, 2016); Ridgway and Clayton 2016). Other academics have explored how theories of society on Instagram might apply to a broader social media environment (Trayor et al., 2016; Wilkes et al., 2014). However, research on Instagram is still in its early stages (Polanski, 2017).

## B- Overview of TikTok

The evolution of social networks has brought about a significant transformation in communication for individuals and businesses alike. These platforms are highly effective in facilitating interactions and building connections with the public. As a result, more and more brands are using them for advertising. Instagram has emerged as a brand's favorite choice among social media platforms. However, the advertising landscape constantly evolves, and businesses must keep up with the latest trends.

Recently, TikTok has emerged as a popular trend since its launch in 2016. TikTok has quickly gained immense popularity, surpassing Instagram in downloads and becoming one of the most downloaded apps of the decade. With its focus on short videos, TikTok has emerged as the fastest-growing social network, boasting around 500 million daily active users, which is only eclipsed by more established platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

In light of the tremendous success of TikTok, other social networks have felt the pressure to upgrade their platforms to offer similar functionalities. This research aims to analyze the success and impact of digital marketing on Instagram, and TikTok by identifying contributing factors. As social media users increase, the interaction among companies,

consumers, and followers is significantly transforming. In this context, it is becoming increasingly crucial for businesses to develop robust brand positioning and consumer relationships as more and more companies adopt digital marketing strategies.

After years of development, watching short videos has become a popular activity for the general public. This study aims to analyze TikTok's business model, its internationalization and valuation, and the potential risks it may face. Compared to One Smile, TikTok has more market share in China and overseas, making it a strong competitor with broader market prospects. The research focuses on TikTok's success, core competitiveness, and potential risks it may encounter. Despite executive orders that could lead to "decoupling" from Egypt, TikTok has taken steps to present itself as an Egyptian brand. The success of short video platforms demonstrates their vast market potential while highlighting the uniqueness and effectiveness of TikTok's business model.

Currently, the internet has become a viable means of creating economic growth. The internet celebrity economy has emerged as a new form of internet-based economy and has rapidly developed over the years. This economy involves leveraging the internet to garner social attention, build a substantial fan base, and engage in targeted marketing. The primary ways of achieving this economy include e-commerce, IP sales, contract rewards, advertising, and entertainment. E-commerce has been the most important way of realizing this economy and has experienced significant growth since its inception in 2013.

A report by the China Web Celebrity Economic Development Insights 2018 showed that as of May of that year, the total number of web celebrity fans in China had hit 588 million. More than half of these fans (53.9%) were under 25, indicating that the internet has revolutionized communication, user realization, content distribution, and commercial mode. This report aimed to research the business model of TikTok, and it concluded that the platform's decentralized UGC short video operating mode has long-term development advantages. The optimization of the industrial chain, improvement in content quality, and facilitation of better quality realization have all been aided by this.

Researchers Ma and Hu investigated the reasons behind TikTok's commercial model's success. They compared TikTok's business model with that of other internet companies and analyzed the position of TikTok's products. They also examined how TikTok satisfies the needs of its consumers and analyzed the platform's external environment and human resources structure. The research concluded that TikTok's success shows that firms from transforming economies can launch successful global products through business model innovation.

In this chapter, we delve into the intriguing world of social media, exploring how it has fundamentally transformed the way we interact with one another. To fully understand this phenomenon, we begin with a detailed overview of the Internet and its evolution into Web 2.0 technology. From there, we explore social media's dynamic and ever-evolving landscape, which has become an integral part of our personal and professional lives.

Despite some critics dismissing Web 2.0 as just another fleeting tech fad, the widespread success and adoption of social media platforms prove otherwise, as noted by

Constantinides and Fountain (2008). Social media has permeated nearly every facet of our daily lives, as (Boyd, 2008) highlights.

In the upcoming chapter, we will delve into the impact of social media on consumer purchasing behavior, examining how social media content and creators influence our buying decisions. As we will see, social media has become a powerful tool for businesses to connect with their target audience and drive sales.

### 3. Social Media Content and Content Creators (Influencers)

#### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced an overview of social media, matters of definitions, terminology, different types of social media, and finally, the two main applications for this study, Instagram and Tiktok. Therefore, this chapter follows this up by providing a much deeper understanding of the topic of study of social media visual content and its impact on consumers' purchase intentions. Thus, in order to establish a link between social media and purchase intention, it is logical to start by investigating the content itself on social media and more precisely, the type of content on social media as well as the creators of such content.

This chapter is divided into two main aspects: social media content, including definitions and types, and their impact on purchase intention. The second aspect focuses on content creators, in this case, social media influencers, which includes various definitions and types, as well as the advantages of using this marketing strategy and its link to purchase intention.

#### 3.2 From WOM to Visual eWOM

Social media was previously introduced in a general sense to identify the most relevant applications. This section will cover the following topics., we will delve deeper into the content found on social media and focus on the evolution of word-of-mouth communication. Specifically, we will explore how this communication has shifted from verbal to textual to visual interaction between consumers. The goal is to establish what social media content can influence consumers' purchasing intentions.

Word-of-mouth (WOM) communication has been a valuable marketing tool, leading to numerous studies. According to widely recognized understanding, Word-of-Mouth marketing (WOM) is characterized as informal, personal interactions involving discussing and sharing their experiences with a particular brand, product, service, or provider. This form of communication is driven by individuals' experiences and opinions and is considered a highly influential factor in shaping consumer behavior and purchase decisions. However, a more specific definition provided by Stokes et al. covers various forms of interpersonal communication about products or services as long as the receiver views the communicator as impartial. Both definitions suggest that the information is received verbally without any marketing intentions, and no electronic tools are involved, as it must be conveyed directly between two or more people.

This leads to the following type of WOM: electronic word of mouth (eWOM). The evolution of technology and the internet has introduced new features to WOM communication, leading to a groundbreaking version of WOM known as eWOM. eWOM

stands for Electronic Word of Mouth, which refers to sharing product or company feedback, opinions, and recommendations online. This feedback can come from current, potential, or former customers and can be positive or negative. The power of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) lies in its ability to reach a broad audience, including individuals and organizations, ultimately shaping public opinion and influencing consumer behavior.

Moreover, eWOM is synonymous with online word of mouth, word of mouth, internet WOM, buzz marketing, and electronic word-of-mouth communication. With the internet constantly evolving, visual forms of eWOM have emerged, which are relevant to this research. This online content is linked to Web 2.0 and social media as they have a large user base and advanced features. Using visual aids in word-of-mouth communication is crucial to capturing people's attention. Messaris highlights the importance of visual content, stating that scientists and marketers apply different techniques to improve images and elicit increased involvement and feelings from viewers.

### **3.2.1 Benefits of Using eWOM**

This section will explore the different kinds of word-of-mouth (WOM) communication and their benefits. We will mainly focus on traditional WOM and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), particularly visual eWOM. The internet and mobile phones have considerably boosted eWOM, providing an easy and accessible way of communication that is available anytime, anywhere. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that eWOM communication has advantages and disadvantages for both consumers and marketers.

A major benefit of eWOM communication is the ample information accessible to consumers. Thanks to many online platforms, individuals can easily find information regarding products and services they are interested in purchasing. Moreover, users can explore both marketer-created and user-created content, allowing them to make better-informed decisions. Additionally, eWOM empowers consumers to share their firsthand experiences with products and services, which can sway the purchasing choices of others.

As a marketer, you can take advantage of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication to reach a large audience. By spreading messages to hundreds, thousands, or even millions of online users, eWOM can help you reach both current and potential consumers. Additionally, eWOM information spreads quickly, allowing you to increase brand recognition and engagement.

The development of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is directly related to the advancements of the internet, particularly the shift from text-based to visual-based communication. Social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram emphasize the importance of incorporating visual elements in online communication. To create more captivating and convincing content that boosts customer engagement and brand acknowledgment, marketers must combine both textual and visual elements. Therefore, it is crucial for marketers to understand the importance of visual eWOM and include it in their marketing strategies to stay competitive.

### 3.2.2 eWOM Content on Social Media and Purchase Intention

This section of the study will concentrate on the effect of visual electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on consumers' purchasing intentions. Before we delve into the level of impact, it is vital to define what we mean by purchase intentions. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) have defined it as a distinct concept from purchase behavior, as behavior merely describes a consumer's action. More recent studies, such as Cong and Zheng's (2017), suggest that purchase intention clearly indicates the consumer's willingness to make a purchase. Having a grasp of purchase intentions helps to identify purchase decisions and the factors influencing them. In this study, purchase intention is regarded as the dependent variable.

Research has indicated that eWOM has a significant influence on consumers' purchase intentions (Bickart & Schindler, 2001); Chan and Ngai, 2011; Huang, 2010; Kumar and Benbasat, 2006; (Park & T. Lee, 2009); See-To and Ho, 2014; (Zhang & Watts, 2008). Visual appeal has also been given much attention in advertising, as it can take many forms and present information in various sizes, angles, and perspectives using movement and animation (Kisielius and Sternthal, 1984; Mitchell, 1986). Visual appeals are essential tools for attracting customers' attention and influencing their decision-making in marketing (Lee and Shin, 2014; Teng et al., 2014). Prior studies have shown that the visual aspects of eWOM information can play a significant role in consumer perception and purchase decisions (Griffith, 2005; (Mandel & Johnson, 2002); (Malthouse & Shankar, 2009).

Recent studies have confirmed the importance of visual content on Instagram in positively influencing consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions (Colliander and Marder, 2018). Online product pictures are also valuable for creating a virtual product experience, enhancing brand images, and ultimately leading to purchase intentions (Yoo and Kim, 2014). However, prior research on tourism has favored textual review content and overlooked the importance of visual content (Balomenou and Garrod, 2019). With the rise of visual content-based social media applications like Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, and YouTube, it is crucial to investigate visual content empirically (Farace et al., 2017). Future research should also focus on how visual eWOM impacts consumers' actions (Hussain et al., 2020).

Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap in the existing literature on visual eWOM by bringing its visual character to the forefront and examining its influence on consumer purchase intentions.

### 3.3 Influencer Marketing and its three dimensions

This chapter will delve into the complex realm of social media content creation, mainly focusing on social media influencers. Influencer marketing employs popular personalities to disseminate brand messages to their intended audiences. Social media influencers have recently become a highly coveted marketing tool, using catchphrases that differentiate them from conventional marketing strategies, like celebrity endorsements. They represent the most budget-friendly and effective marketing trend, potentially generating substantial traffic to a brand's website and boosting sales.

Many companies use influencer marketing to collaborate with social media influencers with a large following, making them brand ambassadors. These influential individuals significantly impact their followers' decisions, making them an attractive target for advertisers looking to promote their products, brands, organizations, or ideas on their social media profiles.

There has been a growing trend in using terms like "influencers," "micro-influencers," and "micro-celebrities" to describe individuals who create social media content. Different names have been suggested, including social influencer, opinion leader, digital influencer, and celebrity endorser.

These labels typically take into account the following factors:

- the number of followers an individual has
- the type of content they produce
- the level of engagement their followers have with their content

In conclusion, Influencers on social media can greatly affect how businesses advertise what they offer. By naturally interacting with and reaching their intended audience, they can help to boost sales and revenue.

Numerous sources have presented varying classifications and definitions of social media influencers. (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017) defines an influencer as a content creator who has amassed a considerable following through blogging, vlogging, or crafting short-form content on platforms such as Instagram and Tiktok. Influencers offer their followers glimpses into their daily lives, experiences, and opinions. Uzunoglu and Misci Kip (2014, p. 592) articulate digital influencers as influential members of the online community, predominantly bloggers, who impact specific interest groups. Sudha and Sheena (2017, pp. 16-17) describe influencers as entities, including individuals, brands, places, and traditional PR agencies, who can influence others. They distinguish between traditional influencers, such as celebrity figures in a specific field, and emerging digital influencers, like tech bloggers, who have a substantial following and influence within their niche.

Additionally, they delineate influencers by connection as individuals with a large social media following and by topic/opinion leaders as individuals who are recognized as experts in certain subject areas. Langner, Hennigs, and Wiedmann (2013, pp. 31-35) define social influencers as role models and leaders within social groups whose behavior can influence purchasing decisions. Finally, (Chae, 2018) refers to micro-celebrities as individuals who have developed a following through self-presentation on social media. These micro-celebrities, also known as social media influencers, can range from unknown actresses and models to fitness trainers, friends of celebrities, affluent individuals, and high school students with a substantial social media presence.

According to Araujo, Neijens, and Vliegenhart (2017, p. 498), Influencers or Opinion Leaders are individuals who are central in communication networks and can influence others. (Carr & Hayes, 2014) define Opinion Leaders as credible and knowledgeable individuals who wield influence within their social groups. Djafarova and Rushworth (2017, p. 2) describe Celebrity Endorsers and Digital Celebrities as individuals who endorse products on online



platforms, including bloggers, vloggers, and "Instafamous" personalities. Jain and Roy (2016, p. 267) and Jin and Phua (2014, p. 187) define Celebrity Endorsers as individuals who leverage public recognition to endorse consumer goods. (Xu, Li, Peng, Hsia, Huang, & Wu, 2017) refer to Endorsers and Celebrity Endorsers as notable successful individuals who enhance the perceived quality of a product. Ge and Gretzel (2018) define Social Media Influencers as individuals who directly impact a consumer's behavior. Kirwan (2018) describes Social Media Influencers as individuals with substantial social media followings who influence their audience's purchasing decisions.

Meanwhile, Influencer Marketing Hub (2019) defines Influencers as individuals with the authority, knowledge, position, or relationship to affect others' purchase decisions. Regardless of the terminology employed, (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017) note that influencers frequently utilize blogs or content creation platforms like Instagram to share insights into their daily lives with their followers. (Chae, 2018) explains that social media provides a venue for influencers and micro-celebrities to showcase themselves to the world. According to (Chae, 2018), anyone, whether a renowned celebrity, model, affluent person, or high school student, has the potential to become an influencer as long as they can impact others. This viewpoint aligns with Sudha and Sheena's (2017) perspective. Araujo, Neijens, and Vliegenhart (2017) define influencers as individuals who have the potential to sway the opinions and behaviors of others on social media platforms due to their status and reputation.

In order to ensure a clear understanding of the terms and concepts used to describe social media influencers., it is imperative to thoroughly examine the various definitions currently in use. While the term "social influencer" is commonly used, it can be vague and ambiguous. We will adopt the definition established by (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017) to ensure precision in our investigation. According to this definition, influencers are individuals who utilize platforms such as Instagram and TikTok to disseminate visual word-of-mouth. Our research will thus be focused on influencers who generate content about small and medium-sized businesses in Egypt. We aim to understand better how influencers promote local businesses in this region by focusing our investigation.

In conclusion, there are both similarities and differences in the various definitions and terms used to describe social media influencers. Some terms, like "social influencer," can be confusing. For the purposes of this study, we will use the definition provided by (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017), which describes influencers as individuals on Instagram and TikTok who share visual electronic word-of-mouth. This study will specifically focus on influencers who post about small and medium-sized enterprises in Egypt.

### 3.3.1 The quality of visual eWOM and purchase intention:

The quality of information is a crucial aspect of the meaning of a message (Yeap, Ignatius, & Ramayah, 2014). With the advent of Web 2.0 features, anyone can create online content, making the quality of such content even more important to consumers (Reichelt et al., 2014; Yoo et al., 2015). This is because the quality of online content plays a critical role in shaping consumers' evaluations of brands (Filiari and McLeay, 2014). Previous research has

explored the concept of information quality in the context of eWOM (Cheung and Thadani, 2012; Cheung et al., 2008) and found it to be highly influential to consumers (Lee and Shin, 2014).

For example, in a study by (Park & T. Lee, 2009), the quality of reviews on shopping websites influenced consumers' purchase intentions. Considering the power of visual content, the quality of such content is particularly relevant to eWOM messages, given the focus on visual communication on platforms like Instagram and TikTok. Lin et al. (2012) found that providing visual information can increase consumer attitudes toward eWOM information quality and reliability, resulting in a higher purchase intention.

In Egypt, where there are approximately 27 million social media users (Datareportal, 2021), consumers are exposed to vast amounts of social media visual content. High-quality content significantly shapes behavior. The present study posits that the caliber of visual electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) content shared by social media influencers on Instagram and TikTok represents a pivotal determinant of visual eWOM on social media, thereby significantly influencing consumers' purchase intentions.

Based on the above discussion, this study draws the following hypothesis:

**H1: The quality of visual content shared by influencers on TikTok and Instagram positively influences consumers' purchase intentions.**

### 3.3.2 Source credibility and purchase intention

According to (Ohanian, 1990), a communicator's credibility significantly impacts the receiver's acceptance of a message. In today's world, consumers have access to product-related information from various sources, but the source's credibility determines their level of trust. Heriyati and Siek (2011) also agree that the credibility of a source is crucial in shaping a consumer's attitude towards it, and sources with high credibility have a more significant influence on the receiver's actions than those with low credibility. Advertising literature, including works by Friedman and Friedman (1979), (Atkin & Block, 1983), (Ohanian, 1990), and Goldsmith et al. (2000) has extensively studied the relationship between source credibility and purchase intention. Furthermore, previous studies, including those

by (Wathen & Burkell, 2002), have confirmed the impact of source credibility on purchase intention.

Regarding the earlier discussion, this study introduces the following hypothesis:

**H2: The influencer's credibility in TikTok and Instagram positively influences consumers' purchase intentions.**

### 3.3.3 Source (Influencers) experience and purchase intention

Discussing and sharing views and opinions is a natural and fundamental behavior when socializing. With the advent of modern technology, this behavior has evolved into social media applications that allow users to communicate and share content directly with others. This form of communication is known as electronic word of mouth, and it has become a cost-effective way for brands to promote themselves to current and potential consumers (Chi, 2011). According to Blackwell Miniard and Engel (2006), when consumers make purchase

decisions, their deliberations are influenced by different factors, such as the environment in the form of websites or circumstances in the form of discussions and how other people may react to the decision.

Consumers often spend significant time reading and reviewing other consumers' experiences before making a purchase decision. These opinions significantly influence their purchase intentions (Lerrthairaku and Panjakajornsak, 2014). Several scholars have emphasized the relationship between source expertise and purchase intention (Maddux & Rogers, 1980); (Ohanian, 1990); Wilson and Sherrell, 1993). From an Egyptian cultural perspective, social media content is viral, and the number of users matches this trend (Datareportal, 2021). Therefore, it is easy to identify social media influencers who offer visual content and recommendations based on their experiences. As a result, social media influencers with expertise in a particular field can be easily found. Consumers often spend significant time reading and reviewing other consumers' experiences before making a purchase decision. These opinions significantly influence their purchase intentions (Lerrthairaku and Panjakajornsak, 2014). Several scholars have emphasized the relationship between source expertise and purchase intention (Maddux & Rogers, 1980); (Ohanian, 1990); Wilson and Sherrell, 1993). From an Egyptian cultural perspective, social media content is viral, and the number of users matches this trend (Datareportal, 2021). Therefore, it is easy to identify social media influencers who offer visual content and recommendations based on their experiences. As a result, social media influencers with expertise in a particular field can be easily found.

Based on this idea that source experience and purchase intention have an impact, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

**H3: An influencer's expertise has a positive influence on consumers' purchase intentions.**

### **3.4 The relationship between influencer marketing and consumer decision making.**

The previous sections have provided a thorough overview of influencer marketing and its relevance to social media influencers. This section will explore the reasons and advantages of utilizing social media influencers as a marketing tactic. Although there is no standard definition for influencers on online platforms, it is clear that they are gaining significance and have a considerable impact on people's behavior.

One may wonder why influencers are beneficial. According to a study by marketing agency TapInfluence and Nielsen in 2016, employing influencers resulted in an ROI " Eleven " times higher than other online methods. Furthermore, consumers influenced by influencers tend to switch from competitors' products and have a higher purchase rate than those exposed to traditional online methods. The study proposes two factors that make influencers effective: consumer engagement and the halo effect. Influencer marketing creates consumer engagement, where consumers seek social media content and regularly follow their preferred influencers. Moreover, influencers create content for the brand, resulting in the halo effect.

These findings demonstrate the benefits of influencer marketing in terms of ROI and building a competitive advantage.

According to Nielsen and TapInfluence (2016), another advantage of influencer marketing is the secondary impact of the influencer's content. Consumers can reuse and share the content, which makes the brand ever-present on social media platforms.

This benefit is more cost-effective than using a team to design and distribute online content to the target audience. Furthermore, consumers can access influencers' content even after the marketing campaign, creating an ongoing brand effect. A study by The Keller Fay Group and Berger (2016) indicates that influencers have a high number of product suggestions per week, which translates to 22.2 times more buying conversations than the average consumer. Compared to the average person, influencers have a higher success rate (74%) in persuading consumers to purchase or try a product. Consumers perceive influencers as credible, reliable experts on the suggested products and trust them to provide information on how to use them (Berger and The Keller Fay Group, 2016).

Recent studies, such as those by Isyanto (2020) and Lea Müller et al. (2018), further support the positive impact of employing influencers as a marketing strategy on consumers' purchase interests.

Although influencer marketing offers benefits to brands, it also faces criticisms from academics, including Colliander and Erlandsson (2015), Karouw et al. (2019), Rossiter and Smidts (2012); (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016). These studies focus on how consumers react when they learn that bloggers are paid to endorse a brand. The findings indicate that paid content creates negative feelings towards the bloggers, with most of the blame falling on them rather than the brand. This highlights the importance of selecting influencers genuinely interested in the brand and avoiding appearing fake, regardless of whether they are social media users or celebrities. (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017) recommend that brands establish a strong relationship with influencers by choosing those who align with the brand's features and the influencer's personality. However, Lim et al. (2017) found a negative correlation between influencers' attractiveness and consumers' purchase intention, while Lindh and Lisichkova (2017) cautioned that having too many influencers may lead to decreased engagement and brand exposure due to a broad target audience.

Numerous studies have suggested that integrating influencers into a brand's marketing strategy can yield many benefits. In 2016, TapInfluence and Nielsen conducted a study that revealed that using influencers can result in a higher return on investment, increased consumer engagement, a halo effect, cost-effectiveness, and the ability to reuse and share content. Furthermore, the study found that incorporating influencers led to a higher purchase rate, demonstrating the efficacy of this marketing approach.

Similarly, The Keller Fay Group and Berger (2016) determined that influencers can significantly impact the level of trust between them and their followers. Influencers can encourage followers to try products, leading to increased sales and higher brand recognition. Lea Müller et al. (2018) found that micro-influencer marketing has a strong causal relationship with buying interest and a positive correlation between micro-influencers and

buying interests. According to Isyanto's (2020) study, micro-influencer marketing significantly boosts buying interest, proving its effectiveness.

However, influencer marketing may only sometimes be successful. Potential negative effects of using influencers as a marketing strategy have been identified in various studies. For instance, when consumers become aware of paid recommendations or advertisements from influencers, they may develop a negative attitude towards the brand (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017) have noted that it can be challenging to ensure that both the influencer and their followers are a good fit for the brand and to establish a connection between the brand's characteristics and the influencer's personality. Meanwhile, Lim et al. (2017) found that influencers' attractiveness can negatively impact consumers' purchase decisions. Furthermore, Lindh and Lisichkova (2017) reported that a high number of followers can negatively impact consumer engagement.

To maximize the benefits of influencer marketing, it is crucial to select the right influencers for a brand's products carefully. Choosing influencers with many followers may not necessarily lead to the desired outcomes. Instead, hiring influencers with a decent number of potential target consumers as followers may be more beneficial and cost-efficient. Incorporating influencers into a brand's marketing strategy can be a powerful tool if utilized effectively. Various studies have suggested that incorporating influencers into a brand's marketing strategy can yield many benefits.

In the meantime, Lim and colleagues (2017) discovered that influencers' attractiveness can negatively impact consumers' purchase decisions. Furthermore, Lindh and Lisichkova (2017) reported that a high number of followers can negatively impact consumer engagement. To maximize the benefits of influencer marketing, it is crucial to select the right influencers for a brand's products carefully. Choosing influencers with many followers may not necessarily lead to the desired outcomes. Instead, hiring influencers with a decent number of potential target consumers as followers may be more beneficial and cost-efficient. Incorporating influencers into a brand's marketing strategy can be a powerful tool if utilized effectively. It has been suggested by various studies that utilizing influencers as a marketing strategy can have numerous benefits. TapInfluence and Nielsen conducted a study in 2016. They found that using influencers can lead to a higher return on investment, a higher purchase rate, increased consumer engagement, a halo effect, the ability to reuse and share content, and cost-effectiveness. Similarly, The Keller Fay Group and Berger (2016) found that influencers can increase trust between them and their followers and encourage followers to try products.

Lea Müller et al. conducted a study in 2018 that found a significant and favorable association between micro-influencer marketing and purchase intent. They also found that influencers have a strong causal relationship with buying interest. Isyanto (2020) found that micro-influencer marketing positively and significantly influences buying interest. However, other studies have identified potential negative effects of using influencers as a marketing strategy. For example, consumers may have a negative attitude towards brands when they become aware of influencers' paid recommendations (advertisements).

(De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017) indicated that it could be challenging to ensure that both the influencer and their followers are suitable for the brand and to establish a compatible connection between the brand's features and the influencer's personality. Lim et al. (2017) found that influencers' attractiveness can negatively influence consumers' purchases. Lindh and Lisichkova (2017) cited a report by Markerly that showed a negative link between the high number of followers and consumer engagement.

Therefore, it is essential to carefully select the right influencers for the right products to maximize the benefits of influencer marketing. Choosing influencers with many followers may not necessarily lead to the desired outcomes. Instead, hiring influencers with a decent number of potential target consumers as followers may be more beneficial and cost-efficient.

This research looks into the connection between social media influencers and how likely consumers are to purchase. Changes in how messages are delivered and presented have significantly impacted consumer behavior when it comes to ads. Social media influencers have become key players in this evolution, and this study specifically examines how different aspects of social media influencers affect consumer decision-making.

Social media influencers are having a significant impact on marketing. Businesses are collaborating with them to promote products and services. Influencers will continue shaping trends and driving sales in the future. This recognition is reflected in numerous online articles, including those by Hill (2019) and Petrofes (2018). Although the literature is abundant on the topic, there remains a lack of research that combines "social media influencers" and "influencer marketing." Rosario et al. (2020) have observed that a significant portion of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) research has focused solely on textual formats, overlooking the increasing popularity of visual platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Tiktok. Therefore, analyzing visual data in depth is crucial, given the global phenomenon of sharing visual content (Farace et al., 2017).

This chapter explores the importance of social media content, specifically electronic word-of-mouth communication and social media influencers as content creators and its impact on the customer purchase intention. It is well-known that social media content has undergone a significant transformation, evolving from person-to-person communication to electronic word-of-mouth and, most recently, visual electronic word-of-mouth communication. It also offers an extensive analysis of the different types of communication, their advantages, and how they influence customers' buying decisions.

Furthermore, The chapter goes into the function of social media influencers as content providers, addressing the term's definition and categorization, pertinent terminology, advantages, criticism, and relationship to consumer buy intents. The study aims to better understand the influence of visual social media content on customers' purchase intentions by looking at social media content and content providers and fully comprehending how influencers' visual social media material influences customers' purchasing decisions.

In Conclusion, The use of social media has become an important way for SMEs to connect with their target customers. The emergence of social media influencers has made it possible for individuals to seek out product and service recommendations and reviews.

Consequently, businesses are turning to influencers to promote their products and services. This chapter explores the effect of social media content and influencers on consumer purchasing choices, to foster a deeper understanding of how visual content created by social media influencers impacts consumers' decision-making by examining various forms of communication and the role of content creators.

### 3.5 Research Question

- (1) What is the relationship between influencer marketing and purchasing intentions among Egyptians?
- (2) What is the relationship between influencer and ambassador dimensions and among Egyptian youth?
  - (a) What is the relationship between The quality of visual content shared by influencers on Snapchat and Instagram positively influencing the effectiveness of Egyptian SMEs?
  - (b) What is the relationship between The influencer's credibility on Snapchat and Instagram positively influencing the effectiveness of Egyptian SMEs?
  - (c) What is the relationship between An influencer's expertise on the effectiveness of Egyptian SMEs?

### 3.6 Research Hypothesis

The figure displays the key variables and their relationships in the model. Based on this, the model presents its central argument, which is further developed into the main hypothesis:

**The current research is based on the following hypothesis:**

**H1: There is a significant relationship between social media marketing through influencers and ambassadors and the effectiveness of Egyptian SMEs.**

**H1. a:** The quality of visual content shared by influencers on TikTok and Instagram positively influences consumers' purchase intentions.

**H1. b:** : The influencer's credibility on TikTok and Instagram positively influences consumers' purchase intentions.

**H1. c:** An influencer's expertise has a positive influence on consumers' purchase intentions.

## 4. Research Context (Egypt)

### 4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters have provided an in-depth discussion of social media, social media influencers, and the theoretical framework of this study. Therefore, this chapter will adopt a different perspective and concentrate on the context of this research, the Arab Republic of Egypt. This country is characterized by several unique attributes, which will be highlighted in this section. The chapter starts with a general introduction to Egypt's essential knowledge, then an overview of Egyptian culture and examining factors contributing to Egypt's distinct cultural perspectives. Subsequently, this chapter focuses on matters related more closely to the research inquiry, the SME sector in Egypt. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of the primary focus of this research, which is social media and social media

influencers in Egypt. The preceding chapters have provided a comprehensive analysis of social media, social media influencers, and the theoretical framework of this study.

The chapter will then focus on the SME sector related to the research topic in Egypt. The final section of this study will examine social media influencers' impact in Egypt. We will explore how they shape public opinion and consumer behavior and discuss the importance of social media and influencer marketing in the Egyptian marketplace.

#### 4.2 SME Sector in Egypt

Based on CIB's (2020) definition, SMEs are businesses that fall within a specific size range, determined by factors such as the number of employees or business volume. However, the definition of an SME can vary depending on the country or organization. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are defined differently in various regions. For instance, in Europe, small enterprises have up to 50 employees, while medium-sized enterprises have up to 250 employees. In the United States, SMEs typically have fewer than 500 employees. Meanwhile, in Egypt, the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) categorizes enterprises with a business volume ranging from EGP 1 million to 50 million as small and those with a volume from EGP 50 million to 200 million as medium-sized.

SMEs hold a critical position in the economy, as they are more in number than large corporations and provide employment to many people. Therefore, it is crucial to understand their economic impact and business needs. Governments are aware of the value of SMEs to the economy and employment and, hence, offer them specific support programs. In the U.S., nearly two-thirds of new private-sector jobs are accounted for by SMEs, and approximately 25 million SMEs exist in the E.U. It is essential for companies that offer business services to identify SMEs as potential customers and customize their products and services accordingly. In Egypt, 97% of all enterprises are micro-sized, employing fewer than ten people on average. Only 2.7% of all businesses have between 10 and 50 employees, while 70% of the 2.4 million enterprises in Egypt employ just one or two people.

#### 4.3 Social Media Marketing in Egypt

Egypt's e-commerce state is briefly discussed in the 2015 statistical profile "Measuring the Digital Society in Egypt: Internet at a Glance," released by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. The report provides a comprehensive view of the country's e-commerce state. Social commerce is a considerable part of e-commerce development, making it essential to understand the state of e-commerce in Egypt.

The fifth topic of the report discusses the adoption of e-solutions through the Internet, including e-commerce and e-government. In 2012, 13% of private enterprises in Egypt used e-commerce, which is a 3% increase from 2011. Among the various e-commerce activities, receiving financial and technical offers was the most dominant activity, with 49.1% of businesses engaging in it. Publishing bids and tenders followed at 25.6%, a decrease from 28.2% in 2011. Private enterprises also engage in other e-commerce activities such as advertising goods and services, offering and getting services and buying and selling products.



In 2012, 53% of businesses that did not use e-commerce preferred direct transactions, while 40.3% believed that e-purchase and e-sales transactions were unnecessary. The report highlights the importance of adopting e-commerce solutions in business, as direct transactions may not always be feasible, especially for companies operating on a global scale.

In Egypt, social media influencers are not as dissimilar as one might assume compared to their counterparts in other countries. While the Egyptian people have their own traditional and cultural heritage, influencers in Egypt are comparable to those worldwide in terms of the products and services they promote. However, they consider religious and cultural boundaries when selecting what to endorse.

Recognizing that cultural and religious considerations are significant in selecting products and services promoted by influencers in Egypt is essential. As such, it is crucial for businesses seeking to collaborate with these influencers to be mindful of these factors and to ensure that their offerings align with the cultural and religious values of the country. It is noteworthy that female influencers have the right to choose their attire, if they respect the culture and religion of the country.

## 5. Research Methodology

### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we will extensively examine the research methodology and design. We will cover all the essential aspects and explain them clearly and concisely. First, we will present the research methodology in section 3.1 and then explain the justification for using mixed methods in section 3.2. After that, we will identify the research design in section 3.3, followed by section 3.4, which will determine the time horizon. Additionally, we will mention the research approach in section 3.5 and discuss the sampling design in section 3.6, which includes the target population, sampling unit, sample size, and sample technique. Furthermore, we will identify the data collection methods in section 3.7 and present the conceptual model and empirical methodology in section 3.8. Finally, we will describe the exploratory methodology in section 3.9.

This research explores how visual content on social media affects consumers' purchasing decisions in Egypt, specifically regarding visual eWOM from social media influencers. The previous chapters provided the theoretical framework for this study. Therefore, to achieve the research objective, this chapter presents a thorough explanation and rationalization of the methodology used in the research.

### 5.2 Research Methodology

The research methodology refers to the various methods researchers use to perform research operations (Kothari, 2004). In this study, the primary research method will be secondary research, which involves collecting existing data from sources such as books, articles, and academic journals (such as Emerald Journal and EBSCO host). Valuable data can be used to explore the relationship between social media marketing through influencer marketing and the effectiveness of Egyptian SMEs.

Qualitative and quantitative research will comprehensively investigate research questions and hypotheses. The qualitative approach will collect data through interviews, focus groups, and observation. This approach will aid researchers in understanding customer purchase intentions and the effectiveness of Egyptian SMEs. On the other hand, the quantitative approach will involve collecting data through surveys and questionnaires. This approach will enable the researcher to collect numerical data that can be analyzed statistically.

The methods used in this study were selected based on their ability to provide reliable and valid data that can be used to answer the research questions and hypotheses. Choosing secondary research as the primary method provides access to existing data that is challenging to collect through primary methods. The qualitative and quantitative approaches were selected because they complement each other and provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Combining these methods enables accurate conclusions and informed recommendations.

### **5.3 Justification of Mixed Methods Approach**

Research can be conducted using different methods, such as quantitative research, which uses questionnaires (Rahman, 2017), or qualitative research, which examines behavior, attitude, and experience through focus groups, interviews, or projective techniques (Kumar, Ramayah, & Talib, 2017). However, no single research methodology is inherently better than another. Many researchers recommend using a combination of research methods to improve the quality of research (Shrestha & Giri, 2021). This study will use both qualitative and quantitative techniques to examine the impact of influencer marketing on customer purchase intention for small and medium-sized enterprises in Egypt. This approach combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to test theories and obtain more accurate findings. A mixed-method approach can achieve a more complete and comprehensive understanding of the research, which is not possible by using either quantitative or qualitative approaches alone.

### **5.4 Research Design**

Research design refers to the systematic arrangement of conditions for collecting and analyzing data to balance relevance to the research objective with efficiency and accuracy (Akhtar, 2016, p. 68). There are three types of research designs: exploratory, descriptive, and causal (Kumar, Ramayah, & Talib, 2017). In this study, exploratory and descriptive research methods have been adopted to clarify and describe the connection between social media marketing through influencer marketing and customer purchase intention and investigate the effectiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

### **5.5 Time Horizon**

The research will be conducted using a serial cross-sectional study, which is beneficial as it saves time, money, and effort since the data is collected at a single point in time (Setia, 2016). Data will also be collected using quantitative and qualitative techniques simultaneously. Any spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors have been corrected, making it

a serial study. This approach enables the researcher to arrive at findings on an individual level. Furthermore, it is easy to conduct, cost-effective, and time efficient.

### 5.6 Research approach

A research approach is a systematic and efficient plan of action that guides the research process, as Rahman (2017, p.102) defines. There are two main types of research approaches: inductive and deductive, according to Soiferman (2010). The main objective of this paper is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between social media marketing via influencer marketing and customer purchase intention, as well as the effectiveness of SMEs. This research will adopt a deductive approach.

### 5.7 Deductive approach

Quantitative research is often guided by a research theory, as stated by Collis and Hussey (2009). This research method involves investigating the relationship between variables to examine theories, as Creswell (2009) explained. It follows a deductive approach by testing hypotheses empirically to either approve or reject them, which aligns with the positivist paradigm (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Quantitative studies use either experiments or surveys to collect data, as mentioned by Saunders et al. (2012).

### 5.8 Sampling Design

Sampling design encompasses target population, sample size and sample technique (Trotter, 2012).

#### 5.8.1 Population and Sample Size

This research focuses on the young population of Egypt, specifically males and females between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine, as defined by CAPMAS. Since the target population of "Egyptian youth" exceeds millions, the sample size needs to be a minimum of 384 respondents based on Uma Sekaran's table (Sekaran, 2003).

#### 5.8.2 Sample Technique

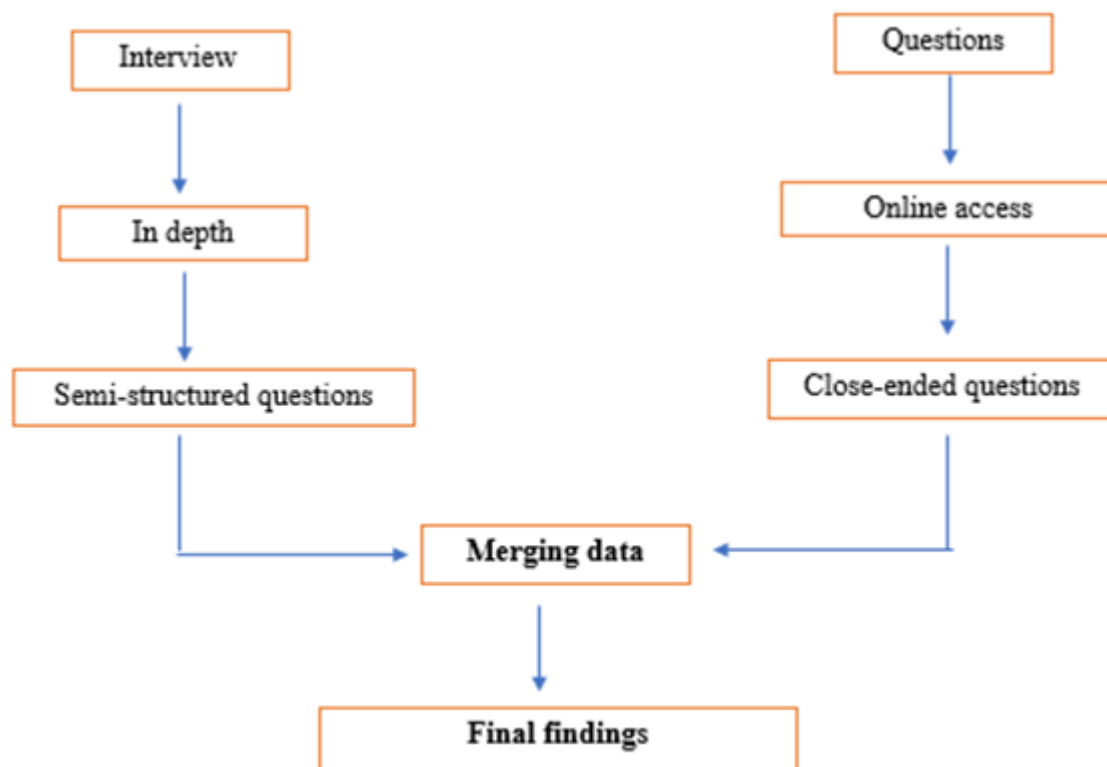
To ensure that the study results are reliable and can be generalized to the entire population, the targeted respondents for this study were selected randomly. This means every unit in the population had an independent and equal chance of selection. Simple random sampling was used for this study as it is a highly effective technique that reduces sampling error and increases the generalizability of the findings to the entire population (Pace, 2021).

To increase the response rate, the researcher will use various sampling methods, including sending email invitations containing the survey's URL and sharing the URL on social networks like Facebook. One of snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique used to reach hard-to-reach populations by identifying a small group of individuals who meet specific criteria and asking them to refer others who also meet them. The crucial sampling technique that the researcher will use is snowball sampling. In the email invitation, the researcher will ask recipients to forward it to others. Snowball sampling is a way to choose people for a study. It is useful when finding people to participate in the study is hard. It is not a way to choose people that is based on chance. It is also simple and cost-efficient

(Malhotra, Birks, & Wills, 2012); Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011). However, it does not guarantee the representativeness of the sample. Therefore, the researcher intends to distribute the survey's URL to different people and several Facebook groups to ensure a diverse sample representing the entire population.

### 5.9 Data Collection Methods

In summary, the data collection process will follow a sequential approach, as depicted in this Figure. The researcher will begin by collecting qualitative data through one-on-one in-depth interviews, providing a deeper understanding and broader interpretation of the subject. Next, the researcher will collect quantitative data by giving the respondents access to an online questionnaire to reveal comprehensive insights from the targeted sample. Finally, by merging and analyzing both types of data, the researcher will gain a better understanding of the subject matter and achieve a high level of depth and breadth while interpreting and analyzing the collected data.



#### 5.9.1 Quantitative Method

The conceptual model investigates the relationship mechanism between social media marketing through influencer marketing and its three dimensions: quality, credibility, and expertise. It also aims to explore how this relationship affects customer purchase intention and influences the effectiveness of Egyptian SMEs. The proposed conceptual model is based on five essential pillars:

1. Highlighting the rationale of the model
2. Stating the objectives of the model
3. Explaining the expected contribution of the model
4. Identifying the limitations of the model
5. Presenting the model arguments

### 5.9.2 Underlying rationale of the model

(why there is a need for another model)

Social media marketing through influencer marketing is crucial for effective advertising and promotion. However, there is a need for research to examine the relationship between influencer marketing and its impact on marketing objectives. Since there are few previous models, a new model is required to answer why it is needed. Influencer marketing is one of the five critical promotional tools for getting advertising and other promotional campaigns accepted, understood, and believed by customers. These tools include humor, gender, appeal music, and colors.

The growing use of influencer marketing has made it important to associate this costly tool with other critical promotional tools and liking drives. With the increasing budget spent on influencer marketing, a sense of urgency exists to measure its impact on various marketing objectives. At the top of the agenda, influencer marketing can achieve a favorable customer experience.

The researcher needed help finding previous research that directly reveals the impact or relationship between influencer marketing and customer purchase intentions for Egyptian SMEs. However, influencer marketing can reflect its impact first in advertising effectiveness, which can then influence other essential marketing objectives. This argument can be contradicted because many direct influences of different promotional effectiveness drivers like humor, music, and colors have proved to have a direct relationship to significant marketing objectives.

Therefore, this research aims to propose a new model that argues for the direct influences of influencer marketing on customer purchase intention for Egyptian SMEs. The underlying rationale of the model is further elaborated by looking at specific underlying dimensions of influencer marketing, which also received a great deal of their determinations and relative importance. Due to the increasing significance of customer purchase intention in the overall marketing philosophy, it has become a crucial marketing objective for Egyptian SMEs. This objective reflects the impact of influencer marketing, which is one of the key drivers of marketing performance management.

### 5.9.3 Objectives of the Model

The proposed model has three main objectives. Firstly, it aims to understand how social media marketing through influencer marketing impacts customer purchase intention across various industries of Egyptian SMEs, with a particular focus on younger market segments. Research has shown that influencer marketing has a more significant impact on younger customers, who place a high value on the role of influencers in their buying behavior.

Secondly, the model seeks to determine the assets and relative importance of the different dimensions of influencer marketing as essential sources of its ability as a marketing tool and policy to achieve its objectives.

Finally, the model aims to describe the essential aspects of customer purchase intention that can be used to create an overall index of this phenomenon. The growing importance of this index places particular emphasis on those aspects that reflect the impact of influencer marketing.

#### 5.9.4 Contributions of the model

The proposed model aims to enhance academic understanding and managerial practice in managing critical marketing phenomena and variables. Specifically, it seeks to determine the underlying dimensions of influencer marketing, such as quality, credibility, and expertise, for each influencer profile. This in-depth understanding of influencer marketing will help promote products and achieve essential marketing objectives.

Moreover, the proposed model will provide clear guidelines for the best concepts for each dimension of influencer marketing, including content and agenda and its appropriate place within the more extensive portfolio of integrated marketing communication.

Lastly, customer experience is a new area gaining attention due to its multiple effects on important marketing objectives such as customer satisfaction, value, and relationship quality. The proposed model aims to create a better and more insightful understanding of customer purchase intention, reflecting the marketing efforts exerted in important integrated marketing communication, events, and influencer marketing campaigns.

#### 5.9.5 Limitations of the Model

The proposed model focuses on the Egyptian market, specifically the young market segments aged between 18 to 29 years old. The research investigates the relationship between influencer marketing and customer purchase intention among Egyptian youth. However, it is important to note that influencer marketing is just one of the many determinants of customer experience, and it can be used to achieve other marketing objectives such as customer satisfaction, value, and relationship quality.

The proposed model is not limited to a particular industry or demographic except for the above age group. Since the research focuses on using influencers for promotional purposes, it significantly impacts industries and different marketing segments.

#### 5.9.6 Arguments of the Model

The following figure depicts the main arguments of the model (relationships between different variables) which has resulted in the following hypothesis as the main argument exists by the model:

**The current research is based on the following hypothesis:**

**H1: There is a significant relationship between social media marketing through influencers and ambassadors and the effectiveness of Egyptian SMEs.**

**H1. a:** The quality of visual content shared by influencers on TikTok and Instagram positively influences consumers' purchase intentions.

**H1. b:** The influencer's credibility on TikTok and Instagram positively influences consumers' purchase intentions.

**H1. c:** An influencer's expertise has a positive influence on consumers' purchase intentions.

## 5.10 Questionnaire

### 5.10.1 Design of Survey Instrument; Measurements and scale

Developing accurate instrument measurements is a critical aspect of collecting data, as it directly impacts the reliability and validity of the results. This point has been emphasized by (Bryman & Bell, 2011), who suggest using measurements tested in previous studies. In our research, we utilized measurements from existing literature and modified them to align with the objectives and goals of our study. You can find detailed information on all the measures used in Table 6.9.

For this study, we adopted a multi-item approach to create the questionnaire. This approach allowed us to measure each construct using different items, enhancing reliability and validity. We utilized a Likert scale to assess each variable (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This scale rated responses on a five-point scale: 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neutral, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree.

To ensure that participants read and answered all questions carefully, we included positive and negative questions, as Saunders et al. (2012) recommended.

### 5.10.2 Pilot Testing

As a crucial step before data collection, a pilot test was conducted on the research questionnaire to ensure its accuracy. A small group of participants, reflecting the target sample, was selected to provide feedback on the questions. This process allowed for a complete overview of the questionnaire and highlighted any confusing or misleading questions that could make the participants uncomfortable (Bryman & Bell, 2011); Cooper and Schindler, 2014).

Ten participants were invited to fill out the survey and provide comments. Additional feedback regarding the language used in the questionnaire was obtained informally from members of the linguistic department. Based on the comments received from both parties, necessary improvements were made to the questionnaire. Although the primary objective was to present flawless survey questions, a few criticisms were received.

The first comment was regarding the length of the survey, as some participants felt that there were too many questions to answer, leading to boredom by the end of the survey. To address this, the survey was reformulated, and the demographic questions were moved to the end of the survey so that participants could spend less time answering them.

The second comment was about the clarity of some questions, which was expected as the questions were initially written in English and had to be clear to Egyptian people whose

first language is Arabic. Questions were rewritten more clearly and directly after considering feedback from colleagues in the linguistics department to address this issue.

### 5.10.3 Electronic Survey

The research will use online questionnaire surveys to gather data for the study. This method was chosen because it is cost-effective, results in a higher response rate, allows for faster data collection and makes it easy to analyze and edit the data (Kumar, Ramayah, & Talib, 2017). The online survey is also a structured and standardized method of questioning that will mainly yield quantitative results, as no intermediary is involved in presenting the questions or recording the answers (Deacon et al., 1999; 64). To ensure anonymity, the survey does not ask for personal information such as name, address, or religious affiliation, as this information is irrelevant to the research.

The researcher will use the online service provided by GoogleForms.com to conduct the online survey. This will allow for faster data collection from respondents (Evans & Mathur, 2005), reduced paper usage, and compliance with environmental standards. The survey data will also be recorded in a central database, making it easier and quicker to analyze (Evans & Mathur, 2005).

## 6. Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed in this research using various statistical techniques and procedures carried out through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. The aim was to investigate the relationship between social media mechanisms, influencer marketing, customer purchase intention, and the effectiveness of Egyptian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Data from 505 respondents was subjected to various tests to examine the research hypotheses. These tests included descriptive statistics, Cronbach's Alpha Test for internal consistency, joint factor analysis for construct validity of scale, multiple regression analysis for hypothesis testing, and t-test for dependent and independent variables. This research analyzed quantitative data using a series of statistical techniques and procedures conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Program. It helped investigate the relationship between the mechanism of social media through influencer marketing and customer purchase intention and the effectiveness of Egyptian SMEs. Several tests analyzed the data extracted from the 505 respondents to test the research hypotheses. These tests included Descriptive statistics, Cronbach Alpha Test for Internal Consistency, Common Factor Analysis for the scale's construct validity, Multiple Regression analysis for hypothesis testing, and T-Test for dependent and independent variables.

The research indicates that the data was produced by using the network feature of ATLAS.ti Version 23, which was the case in this particular instance.

Figure 1: Word cloud information on Influencer Marketing and Purchase intention





available provide relatively little aid when comparing the words and word frequencies included in different text publications (Friese et al. 2018). In order to circumvent this limitation, we made use of ATLAS.ti Version 23, which is an expanded word cloud visualisation that systematically combines and displays the words from a number of different text sources. In addition to providing a summary of the papers, it enables readily evident variances and similarities in the use of words. Figure 1 illustrates the information that is necessary for the word cloud to be created.

In its most basic form, the ATLAS.ti Version 23 is made up of a number of smaller word clouds that specify a variety of document combinations. Those word clouds that mirror the individual documents of the outer circle and those that represent the combined documents of the inner circles are arranged in a centred sequence throughout the word clouds. There are words that are included inside the innermost circle of the cloud idea, and these words are present in every paper. This composition concept is further strengthened by the fact that the saturation of the background colour gradually rises as the degree of aggregation increases. Figure 1 is a word cloud, and this page provides a detailed explanation of what it is. We begin by providing a summary of the relevant work, and then proceed to present the visualisation theory and its application.

Coding that is open: Using the open coding feature of the ATLAS.ti Version 23 package, the researcher will be able to recognize a number of words, phrases, and other terms of interest that are associated with this article or subject of interest after doing an initial analysis of the text findings. A "quotation" is a method of producing a message from the same section that is characterised by the usage of the same terminology and is tagged with Open Coding. While we are in the process of producing new codes with new concepts, it is not unusual for us to reach a point where we have more than a couple of pages of codes (Friese et al. 2018). At that point, we may do research on the codes in order to discover the relationships and organise them into categories according to the characteristics they have in common. In addition to this, we may take into account the dimensions of the codes that are a reflection of the property's location within a continuum or set. It is possible to differentiate the name of the category from the codes in order to better convey the breadth of the category. Furthermore, if it is deemed acceptable, we may even build sub-categories based on the codes and then apply them to the categories (Soratto et al. 2020).

In qualitative data analysis, open coding is often the first step that must be completed. After we have completed open coding, we could next proceed to gravitational coding and selective coding, respectively, depending on the method that we choose. During the later stages of the research project, this kind of coding makes it possible to develop models via an inductive process. The necessary information for mathematics is shown in Figures 1 and 2, respectively.

Data Analysis: The principal investigator had a clear overview of the data after designing the coding frame. It optimized the codes used to interpret and re-read the data several times. Concerning the research issue, the next step was to group codes into a coherent pattern. It is like creating a plotline where a portion of the plot is made up of the theme.

Thirty-five code groups were formed to review the Interview questions and further summarize. (See Figure 2). The network feature ATLAS.ti Version 23 was used for this.

## 7. Synthesis, Conclusion and Recommendations

### 7.1 Theory implications

As there is a gap in research that investigates the relationship between social media marketing through influencer marketing and customer purchase intention among the effectiveness of Egyptian SMEs. This research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the relationship between influencer marketing and customer purchase intention. By doing so, it will facilitate the process of selecting appropriate influencers. Additionally, this research highlights that the most effective influencer marketing dimensions are the quality of visual content, influencer credibility, and the influencer's expertise. Therefore, marketers and managers should focus on enhancing these dimensions to leverage the customer purchase intention.

Influencer marketing is currently one of the main drivers of successful campaigns and is expected to continue its role in the future. As a result, it must always be considered when examining the effectiveness of different promotional tools and campaigns. This research also highlights that influencer marketing cannot be treated as a single entity. Instead, it should be viewed as a multidimensional marketing phenomenon with different implications under different marketing contexts and agendas.

This study aimed to investigate the impact of social media on the business development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Egypt. The research was conducted to fill a gap in knowledge that was identified based on empirical evidence and academic literature. The literature review demonstrated the need for more quantitative research on this topic, as large corporations have been observed to use social media campaigns to grow their businesses. Still, the same cannot be said for SMEs. To fill this gap, a research question, and objectives were formulated and addressed through the establishment and testing of a research model.

The main focus of this comprehensive study was to delve deeper into the intricate relationship between the utilization of social media tools and the business development efforts of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The primary objective of the research was to meticulously examine the profound impact of social media tools on the sales, marketing, customer engagement, and brand awareness of SMEs. The study model was carefully crafted based on the Technology Acceptance Theory, which helped to analyze the behavioral patterns and attitudes of SMEs towards the adoption of social media tools. The focus of this study was to determine how the use of social media tools affects the business development efforts of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The research aimed to analyze the impact of social media tools on SMEs' sales, marketing, customer engagement, and brand awareness. The research model was developed based on the Technology Acceptance theory.

According to the research results, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) can benefit greatly from social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. These platforms

offer SMEs a cost-effective way to improve their sales, marketing, customer engagement, and brand awareness. By promoting themselves on social media through influencers and ambassadors, SMEs can reach a larger audience and gather feedback from customers. This study provides valuable insights for SMEs on how to use social media marketing tools for business development effectively.

According to the research, Instagram and TikTok are two of Egyptian consumers' most commonly used social media apps. These platforms are also where users find the majority of visual brand content. These apps are likely popular because they were designed specifically for sharing visual content on social media.

Regarding influencers, a study has revealed that Egyptian consumers visit influencers' social media pages at an extremely high rate. However, consumers rely more on other sources such as family, friends, and official brand social media accounts than on influencers when purchasing decisions. The study found that visual content shared by social media influencers is viewed frequently by consumers, but there are other sources they turn to for making purchasing decisions.

According to the research, many Egyptians frequently view visual content about brands that influencers share on social media platforms. However, the study found that consumers in Egypt could be more motivated to consider the brand despite the high viewership. This raises questions about the effectiveness of influencer marketing for SMEs in Egypt. It is necessary to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the content created by influencers, the source of the content, and the attitudes of consumers toward visual content shared by influencers on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, particularly for restaurants.

The research findings indicate that the visual content shared by influencers on Instagram and TikTok has a significant impact on consumers' purchase intentions for brands SMEs in Egypt. The study reveals that the quality, quantity, and implementation of visual content play a significant role in influencing consumers' purchasing decisions. Our research focused on social media influencers as the main source of visual content, and the findings suggest that the credibility and expertise of the source significantly influence consumers' purchase intentions. Furthermore, the research indicates that consumers' attitudes and subjective norms also have a considerable impact on their purchase intentions.

This study makes a contribution to the field of visual eWOM, an area of research that is relatively new and continuously evolving. Additionally, this study delves into the world of social media influencers and adds an exploratory aspect to the existing literature, a modern field requiring further examination. Furthermore, this research expands the current knowledge of Instagram and TikTok. These two social media platforms are rapidly expanding and improving while being widely used for sharing visual content, not only in Egypt but all over the world. This study presents fresh and intriguing discoveries on the social media habits of Egyptian consumers. Additionally, the research encompasses a broad spectrum of subjects associated with Egyptian consumers, including their utilization of Instagram and TikTok, social media influencers in Egypt, restaurant SMEs in Egypt, and cultural viewpoints. Such a breadth of information is highly beneficial for future researchers exploring Egyptian

consumers. Finally, this study explores the influence of social media content confusion on consumer behavior, contributing to the literature on social media research. This area of interest could be relevant for researchers studying social media content and its impact on consumer behavior.

## 7.2 Practical Implication

This research is a valuable resource for marketers seeking to understand the behavior of Egyptian consumers. It provides practical insights into their characteristics and introduces fresh data on Egyptian social media usage and preferred applications. The research examines the impact of influencers as a marketing strategy in changing consumer purchasing behavior and presents recent data on SMEs in Egypt. This information can help marketers and new business owners more effectively target their current and potential consumers.

To use influencer marketing effectively, companies should establish clear marketing agendas. This includes deciding on the most appropriate influencer for each case based on their category, personality, and identity and allocating a budget across the three important dimensions of influencer marketing: the quality of influencer visual content, influencer credibility, and influencer expertise.

The customer's intention to purchase products or services is a key indicator of the effectiveness of influencer marketing. This intention is interconnected with several important aspects of customer behavior that can significantly impact the efficiency, strategic outlook, and profitability of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Thus, customer purchase intention should be considered a significant performance indicator while assessing the feasibility, profitability, and sustainability of influencer marketing for attaining specific marketing goals. These goals can result from relationship marketing and CRM, leading to more favorable customer experiences or a result of customer experience, such as brand equity and loyalty.

## 7.3 Recommendation for further research

The study conducted has brought about significant theoretical and practical contributions. However, a few limitations should be considered for future research. The primary focus of the study was on two of the most popular social media applications in Egypt, Instagram and TikTok, which are used for exchanging visual content. Although these applications were the most widely used at the time of the study, they continuously improve their features, so future studies should confirm that the data is current. Additionally, other applications for exchanging visual content, such as Snapchat, might be worth considering in future research.

Although Instagram and TikTok are similar in their primary purpose of visual content sharing, there are a few variations between them. For instance, TikTok is known for its short-form, user-generated videos, while Instagram is more commonly used for sharing photos. Therefore, future research may consider focusing on only one application or making a comparison between them to provide a complete and comparative view of visual content on social media applications.

The data on Egyptian consumers who use social media applications was gathered through convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique. This sampling method was chosen due to its feasibility and capacity to collect data quickly and efficiently. However, it is important to note that the sample's age group may only represent part of the population despite being most social media users. It's important to note that when the sample size is small, the results may not be applicable to a larger population. This is because convenience sampling may have its own limitations.

In summary, the study has significantly contributed to understanding visual content on social media applications, but there are some limitations that future research should take into account. These limitations include the need to verify the current validity of the data, the possible incorporation of other social media applications for visual content exchange, and the limits of convenience sampling.

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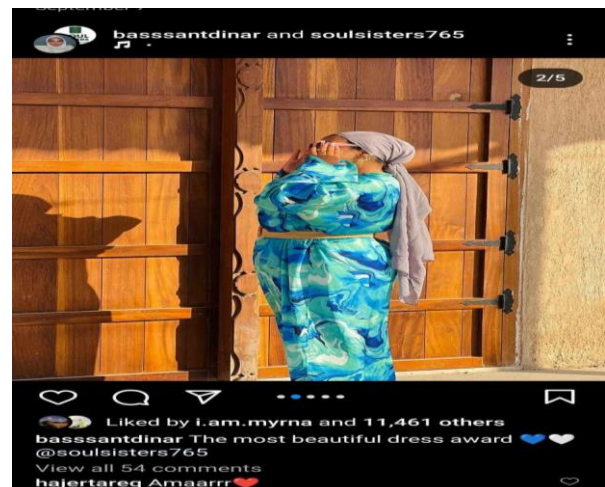
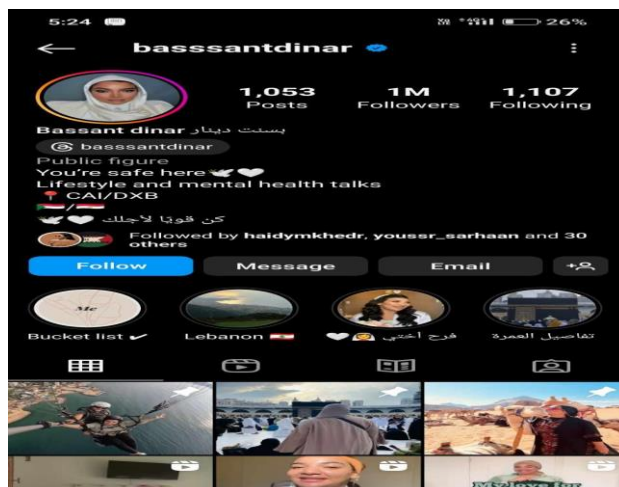
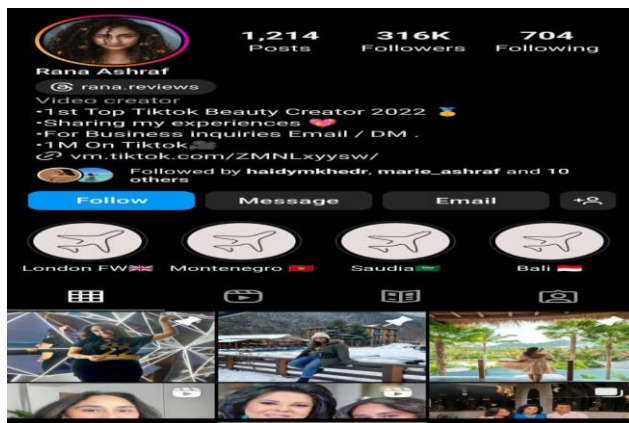
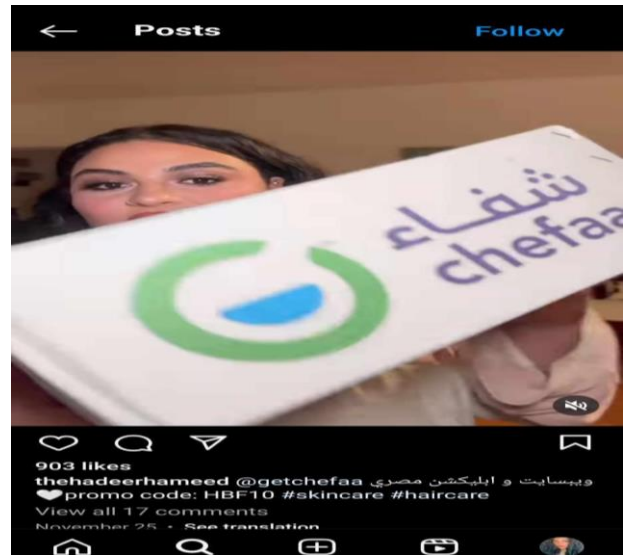
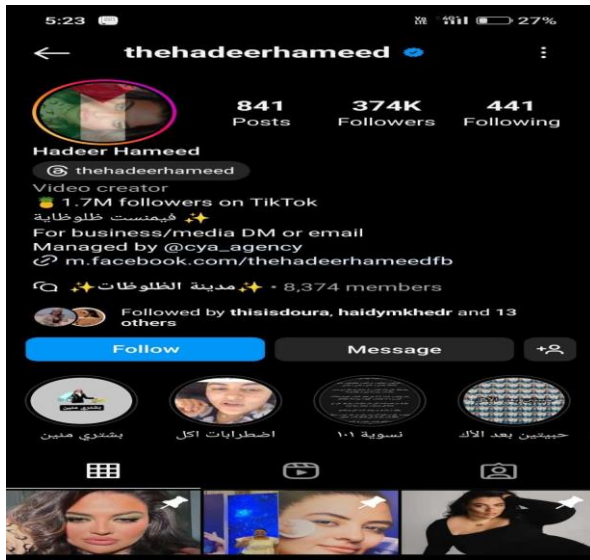


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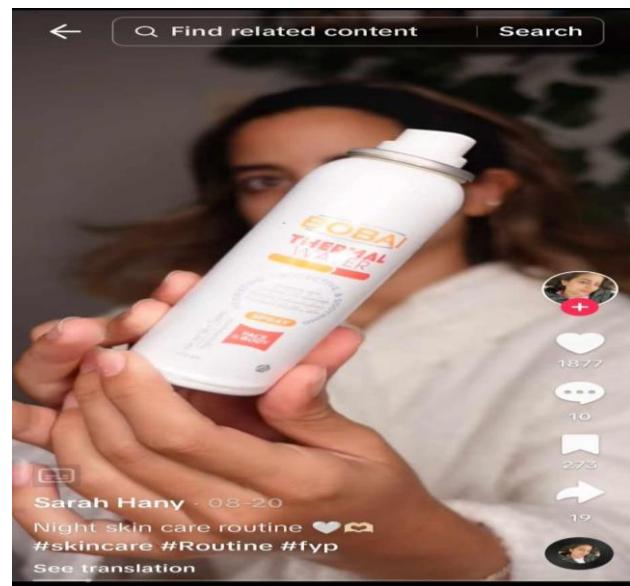
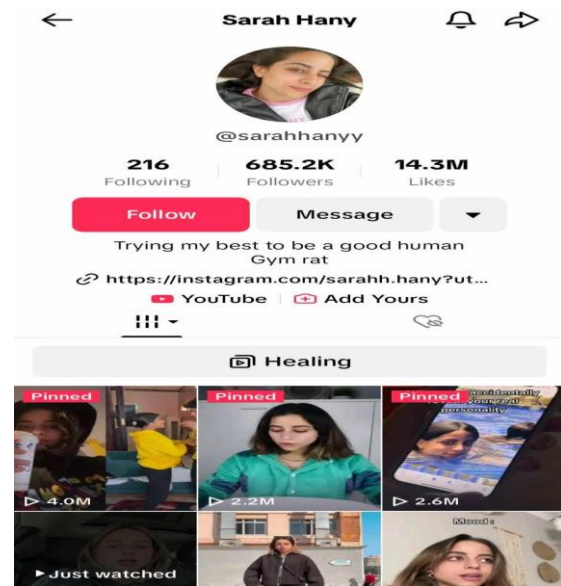
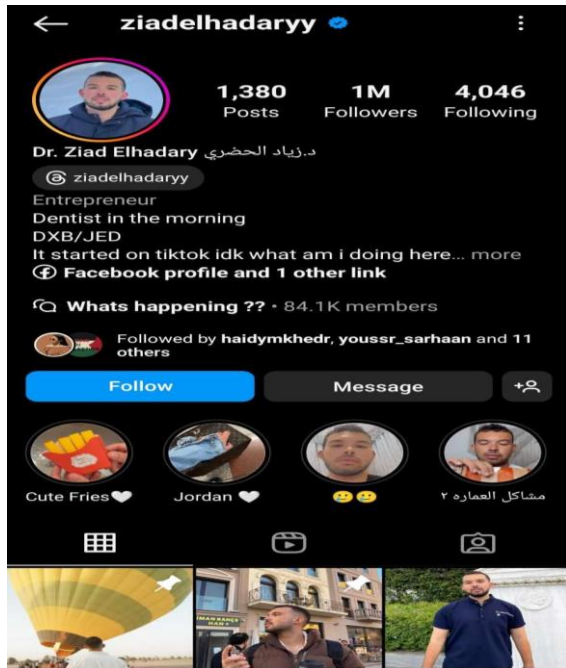
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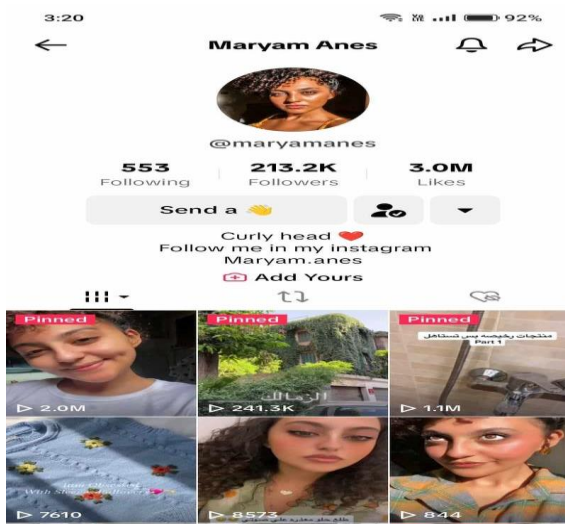
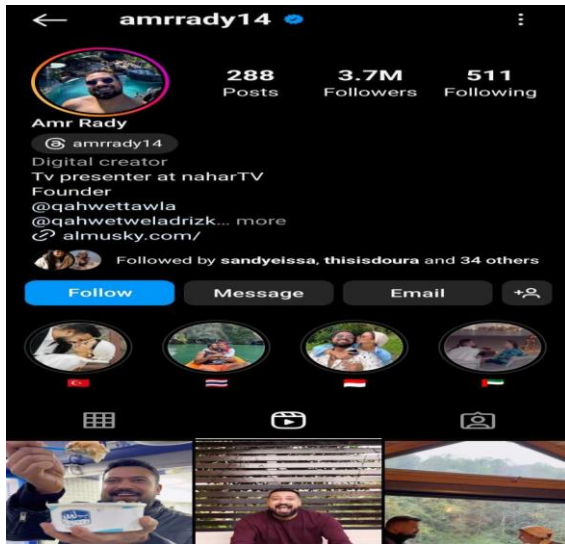
The exhibits below exemplify Egyptian influencers who adhere to these guidelines through Instagram and TikTok platforms:



Example of Instagram account of Egyptian female influencers and Ambassadors:



Example of Instagram account of Egyptian male influencers and Ambassadors:



Example of TikTok accounts of Egyptian influencers and Ambassadors: