İSTANBUL TİCARET ÜNİVERSİTESİ

SOCIAL SCIENCE INSTITUTE
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION MASTER PROGRAMME

EXAMINING THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS CHARACTERISTICS ON BRAND EQUITY AND PURCHASE INTENTION

Master's Thesis

KHAOULA ES-SAFI

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ISTANBUL, 2022

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ABSTRACT

Recent years have witnessed a remarkable development in the digital world, so that the rise of social media has changed the way humans communicate with each other and give interact with each other and because these platforms have become a major role in facilitating the greatest impact. Companies have exploited these platforms to create new ways to communicate with and influence the consumer. This is done by using the famous influencers on these platforms to advertise the products of the company or the brand. The current study aims to determine the predictive effects between influencer characteristics, brand equity, and purchase intention. A survey method was used to conduct this research and data were collected from 213 respondents. In the study convenience sampling method was used. The survey was conducted in both English and Arabic, and most respondents were from Morocco and Turkey. The proposed hypotheses were tested using a path analysis model to determine the effects between influencer characteristics, brand equity and purchase intention. Path analysis was performed using the AMOS 24.0. The findings indicate that expertise has significant impact on perceived quality. Authenticity has significant impact on perceived quality, brand associations, brand loyalty and purchase intention. Influence has significant impact on brand awareness and brand associations. Communication skills have significant impact on perceived quality, brand awareness, brand loyalty and purchase intention and finally as brand equity dimension only brand loyalty have significant effect on purchase intention.

Keywords: Social media marketing, Influencer, Influencer marketing, Brand equity, Purchase intention.

ÖZET

Son yıllarda dijital dünyada dikkate değer bir gelişmeye tanık olundu, böylece sosyal medyanın yükselişi insanların birbirleriyle iletişim kurma ve birbirleriyle etkileşim kurma şeklini değiştirdi ve bu platformlar en büyük etkiyi kolaylaştırmada önemli bir rol haline geldi.

Şirketler, tüketiciyle iletişim kurmak ve tüketiciyi etkilemek için yeni yollar yaratmak için bu platformlardan yararlandı. Bu, şirketin veya markanın ürünlerinin reklamını yapmak için bu platformlardaki ünlü etkileyiciler kullanılarak yapılır. Mevcut çalışma, etkileyici özellikleri, marka değeri ve satın alma niyeti arasındaki öngörücü etkileri belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Bu araştırmayı yürütmek için anket yöntemi kullanılmış ve 213 katılımcıdan veri toplanmıştır. Araştırmada kolayda örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Anket hem İngilizce hem de Arapça olarak yapıldı ve yanıt verenlerin çoğu Fas ve Türkiye'dendi. Önerilen hipotezler, etkileyici özellikleri, marka değeri ve satın alma niyeti arasındaki etkileri belirlemek için bir yol analizi modeli kullanılarak test edildi. Yol analizi, AMOS 24.0 kullanılarak yapıldı. Bulgular, uzmanlığın algılanan kalite üzerinde önemli bir etkisi olduğunu göstermektedir.

Özgünlüğün algılanan kalite, marka çağrışımları, marka sadakati ve satın alma niyeti üzerinde önemli bir etkisi vardır. Etki, marka bilinirliği ve marka çağrışımları üzerinde önemli bir etkiye sahiptir. İletişim becerilerinin algılanan kalite, marka farkındalığı, marka sadakati ve satın alma niyeti üzerinde önemli bir etkisi vardır ve son olarak marka değeri boyutu olarak sadece marka sadakatinin satın alma niyeti üzerinde anlamlı bir etkisi vardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal medya pazarlaması, Etkileyici, Etkileyici pazarlama, Marka değeri, Satın alma niyeti.

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1. INTRODUCTION

During the pandemic, the Covid-19 virus affected all businesses, profit or non-profit alike. This has created an opportunity for businesses to focus on social media as a marketing channel. As per Agnihotri et al. (2016), Wang & Zhang (2016:8), companies may use social media to make and maintain relationships with consumers, improve brand equity, and boost corporate performance. It is undeniable that digitization has had a significant impact on human society's social life since the advent of digital social networks, often known as social media. According to the World Wide Web Index analysis, 57.6 percent of the earth's population utilizes social media, with an average daily usage of 2 hours and 30 minutes (Web index, 2021). Social media has become indispensable worldwide. Social media was used to communicate with people from all over the world and post photos and comments among friends and acquaintances; However, as their user base grows, organizations have begun to view these mediums as a commercial possibility because images provide more engaging content than word content to capture the attention of viewers (Hanson, 2018; Alalwan, 2018). Social media has a significant influence on changes in social behaviors, notably among Generation Y and Z; these generations have relied significantly on social media, and they have developed into the digital age, which offers access to data and allows them to express their unique perspectives and the ease of contact. It is asserted that social media has evolved has become a medium to gather public opinion on an issue as well as influence consumer behaviors. Social media platforms have grown in importance in affecting several elements of customer behavior, such as awareness, information acquisition, attitudes, purchasing behavior, communication, and post-purchase assessment (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

A "social media influencer" is a new concept that has recently emerged, and they are ordinary internet users but they have more than 1000 to millions of follows on the social media platforms, and a social media influencer can be anyone (student, doctor, actor, housewife,..ect); Internet consumers follow them due to the useful and creative content they provide on social media platforms, so consumers are attracted to them to follow their lifestyle, behavior and personal traits (Forbes, 2016). Due to their capacity to impact a significant number of individuals we track; these influencers play an important part in the marketing process by sponsoring their distinctive visual and textual material to promote various products and services in collaboration with corporations or brands. Online influencers emerge as digital opinion leaders with the power to influence client decision-making operations by selling specific products and services

that are consistent with their basic principles. One of the features of using social media influencers as a promotional tool is that a company can communicate directly with its potential and existing consumers while also collecting their feedback on the product (Kolarova, 2018).

Organizations are increasingly turning to influencers to promote their products because influencers associate their intended target groups with brands while preserving direct communication with their fans, which leads to increased interaction with clients, adding worth to them, increasing the effect of marketing actions; and gaining the maximum of this promotional tool, it is necessary to understand the behavior and reactions of social media users (Sanny et al., 2020). In conclusion, when promotional methods are better understood, they may be more effective. An individual's buying habit is influenced by his or her life experience with products and services, and an online business's ability to reach these consumers ultimately determines its success or failure (He, Wang, Chen, & Zha, 2017).

Brand ownership is a crucial notion to grasp to comprehend the aims, procedures, and overall effectiveness of marketing operations (Reynold & Philips, 2005). Aaker (1991) explains brand equity is the collection of brand assets and liabilities associated with a brand, its name, and logo that contribute to or remove from the value that a product or service delivers to a firm and its clients. Yazdanparast et al. (2015) see that social media-based marketing activities are an efficient marketing technique for developing brand equity in the digital era. As a result, corporations have included social media marketing into their marketing plans to develop long-term interactions and relationships with customers. The partnership among influencers and companies is important for businesses since social media users believe the opinions of the influencers they follow, and this interaction stimulates consumer decision-making (Chan, 2019). The purpose of this research is to determine the impact of social media influencers on brand equity and purchase intent.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Social media marketing

2.1.1. Social media

2.1.1.1. Concepts of social media

In our time, after the internet became a fundamental part of an individual's life; has become a suitable tool for young people through which they can browse and search for a variety of interests such as social media, or other areas such as taking online lessons and entertainment (Budden et al., 2011). The most common activity of the Internet is browsing social media (Statista, 2019) wherein 2018 a study was conducted that proved that about 2.6 billion people around the world use social media, and then calculate the average daily use of social media around the world Estimated an average of 136 minutes per day (Statista, 2019). Social media has become a digital medium for socialization on the web, as it erases all international barriers and restrictions, (Kohli et al. (2014)).

Social media is a comprehensive platform for programs and services available on the web that allow users to meet, exchange ideas, discuss them, and participate in any form of social interaction. This interaction can include sharing of quotes, pictures, videos, or other media, individually or collectively.

Social media can be considered a new phenomenon. Somewhat in which the World Wide Web has seen the proliferation of user-driven web technologies such as social networking, blogging, and media sharing platforms, in general, these technological innovations have fueled the growth of the global community, user-generated content, and the dissemination of consumer opinions (Smith, 2009).

Gunelius (2011) simply defines social media as the platforms on which Web 2.0 technologies are used. Social media is an Internet-based network that technologically enables users to share information including video images and text comments (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Likewise, according to Abrahams et al. (2012) social media allows users to create their own content without any expenses. In addition, social media is a form of human communication with people from all over the world and sharing of texts, images or videos in which participation and discussion without the limitations of time and place. (Bergstrom and Backmann, 2013).

According to Evans (2008), social media creates a relation between like-minded people as people share their ideas and experiences for various reasons such as marketing, giving their opinion or suggestion, social media helps facilitate the formation of new relationships and friendships to share their hobbies and activities, (Johnson and Adams, 2011).

Generally, each site has its own advantages, when Flickr appeared it was offering the feature of uploading images and tagging them as well as the ease of social networking (Zarela, 2010) and YouTube also supports these features but in videos, more specific sites like "Twitter", which connects people with posts and messages called "tweets" and "LinkedIn" it aims to make useful contacts and business relationships. Most of these social media platforms have features found in other media, but there are social media that have bundled most of these features together. Facebook and Instagram are a platform where the user can communicate easily and quickly and through which they can upload videos as in YouTube, upload photos as in Flickr, write notes like in tweets, share links, and create relationships like LinkedIn. This was the most important reason why Facebook and Instagram are the most popular social media in the world.

Social media usually provides users with many opportunities such as finding social support, new social and business opportunities and changing financial resources, goods, or services that include social capital. Social networking sites connect and bring people together through data from stored user profiles. These user profiles constitute a description of other consumers. The most important distinguishing factor between different sites is the rate of information and its order in the profile information (Islek, 2012).

2.1.1.2. Social media's role in business marketing

According to (Kamiliagency.puzl, 2008), Web 2.0 is the latest development of social networks. The world has become connected out of the Internet, and social media are coming in the lives of people around the world. A study showed that in January 2021, there were 4.66 billion Internet users worldwide accounting for 59.5 percent of the world's population, 4.2 billion of them use social networks with an average of 2:30h time spent on these networks per person, this amplification of social networks has become a market that companies can no longer underestimate or ignore.

Social media has become not just a way to meet or share ideas, but more than that, it has become one of the most important parts of digital marketing, providing many advantages by reaching millions of clients around the world within seconds, reducing your costs, and making

advertisements reach the audience. Possibly and precisely through social media ads. More than this we can realize that social media has an important role in business marketing, such as:

- First, it’s free; because access to social media platforms is free, and even if we move to the stage of promoting through these means, the cost will still be very low compared to traditional promotion, and it will ensure that potential customers can be reached accurately; so, with a small budget, you can build an audience.
- In these days, the no use of social networks reduces the impact and visibility of the business.
- One of the most important benefits of social media is that it enables increased traffic on the company’s website, by sharing content on social media and providing users to click on the company’s website to visit it and get more information.
- Ease of hiring qualified employees through job networking sites such as LinkedIn.
- You can easily monitor your competitors; because you can see the content they post on their social media profiles, judge their posts, their customers' interaction, and compare them with your business.
- Social media can market your company and communicate with your consumers easily.
- Improves brand loyalty; being on social media makes it easier for your customers to find and connect with you.
- Ease of building relationships with target customers so that the business that connects more with its customers will be more successful because you will be aware of their requirements and what they want, and then you will use their ideas to build and implement a stronger marketing strategy that will enable you to convert them from potential buyers to sincere customers.
- Your social media accounts provide an increase in sales, as they are a tool and an important part of the sales funnel.
- Your social media accounts are a major source of related information, as you can see how many people are talking about you online, what they are saying and how they feel about your brand.
- Manage your brand reputation by taking photos and social posts about your brand to highlight the positive and address the negativity.

2.1.2. Influencer Marketing

2.1.2.1. Definition of influencers and digital media influencers

The ability to influence the development of events or opinions of people or things can be defined as influence. Influencing others has several ways as direct buying advice for a product or providing a viewpoint on a particular topic so that it can influence the perception of others, or it might be an endeavor to encourage people to reconsider something. (Brown, Haynes, 2008). Influencers are people who have a great ability to communicate and persuade other groups about any topic.

In our time, a person who has a big figure of followers on social media and can influence person's behaviors including their opinions, is called an influencer (Sevinç, 2018). When two-way communication began to be used in the digital world of Web 2.0, social influence was formed via the Internet, so that social media developed, and the term "online social influence" began to circulate, which is defined as ways to influence people in these platforms either intentionally or inadvertently so that the behavior occurs online and is supported using computers or smartphones (Kim & Hollingshead, 2016:39).

Influencers can be ordinary people with different talents, they can be politicians and market access consultants; academics to create an impact; journalists or blogger authors to increase the frequency of influence; purchasing powers to increase sales decision in society or even people with power to influence every day (brown & Haynes, 2008).

4.2 billion people are now using social media channels, following each other to get their opinions, learn about their way of life and connect with them. Therefore, some people find a relatively large number of followers on these channels of their communication. Usually celebrities have large numbers of followers because they are known in their community or in the world, but it was noticed in this decade that some ordinary people who carry their message and interesting content began to create their own community and reach a large number of followers, so people began to follow them for their differences and distinctions They present it in terms of fashion, travel, eating, technology, way of living, etc.; These influencers usually share contents about these concepts and in doing so they have created their influencer power virally through likes and shares among their followers. (Wilcox & Stephen 2013).

The strength to win people over and entice them to follow you is valuable. Individuals or groups of people generate followers, communities, notions, and views via the vigor of influence. As well It generates buzz and encourages others to speak about the thing or ideas that are influencing them. Based on what has been discussed thus far, we may define an influencer as someone who can influence their environment and people's behavior.

Before the emergence of influencers on social media, influence on the consumer was done through word of mouth (WOM) to inform people of a new product or service (Cambridge, 2011), and this process was done through suggestions made by friends or family members without the intervention of another foreign party. Because of the advent of modern means of communication, another party has appeared to persuade new users to try new goods and services by disseminating informally information over social media rather than traditional means (Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). Aytan (2014) conducted research on this topic and noticed that when the consumer wants to buy a product or use a service, he searches social media and asks others about their experience, in this way he gets information about others' experience in a quick way before making a purchase decision.

"An influencer is the person who has the capacity to significantly or persuasively affect in some way the buy decisions of others because of his or her knowledge, and relationship to his audience" (Werner,2019).

Influencers create their content on social media on many topics and in different ways and by doing this they gain followers and build a community by earning their trust and influence their way of thinking. Enterprises, particularly marketers, are concentrating on influencers who could really influence their followers in the process of purchasing products and services to use them to promote their brand and products to a larger group of people, build a relationship based on trust and value, and get people to talk about the brand on social media (Cole, 2019). It has been observed that consumers are avoiding traditional advertisements such as banners or ignoring direct targeted advertisements for the brand. And they can't do that with the influencer. (Koshkon, 2018). Therefore, companies have transferred their concentrate to Internet fames who have the power to influence their followers and their environment due to the Internet and the evolution of communication platforms that have made communication easier and speedy than we can visualize.

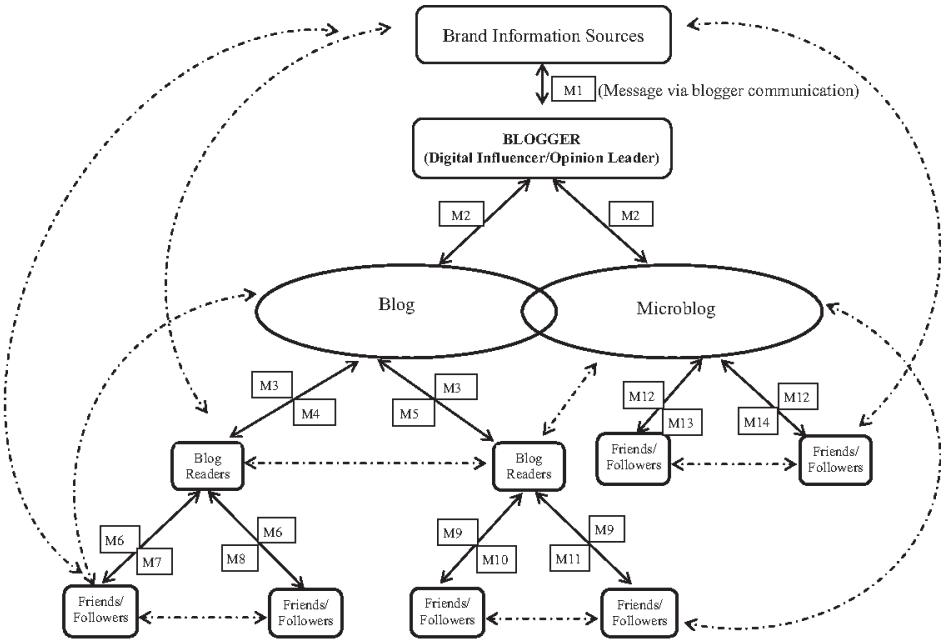
In social media, influencers or opinion leaders have become digital influencers as intermediaries between companies and target groups Companies and brands communicate with social media influencers, who make content to promote the brand services or products, upon agreement.

First of all, companies and brands decide which group they want to target, and on this basis they choose the influencer who will do the advertising campaign because on Shalev's view, the type of influencer plays a huge role in shaping the success of the brand's message, so that an influencer can create content for children where they can For the other to create adult content or otherwise, or for instance, a fitness influencer who promotes a fast food company will have an undesirable consequence on both the brand and the influencer because their values do not match the personality of the brand (Shalev, 2011).

After identifying the brands of the influencers with whom they want to work, they must explain their brand values in detail and clearly for the sponsored content that will be used for promotion to align with the influencers' interests, because if the influencers are not interested, neither will be their followers. (Cole, 2019).

Finally, the influencer creates content for the brand, which begins to spread by re-posting it by his followers on social media. Comments and likes on this content make it a way to communicate. With an increase in reposts, re-comments or clicking on the like button, it provides a multi-flow of communication (Uzunoğlu & Misci Kip, 2014). Figure 1 below provides a breakdown of how multi-step communication in social media provides a more rapid spread of content than any other medium.

Figure 1: Brand communication through digital influencers



Source: *Brand communication through digital influencers: Leveraging blogger engagement*

2.1.2.2. Influencer personality types

There are not many studies on influencer types to help brands choose the right influencer to represent their brand, according to the Poulopoulos (2018) DISC personality test, to determine influencer personality types, it was concluded that people who can be considered influencers have the capacity to influence their surroundings and have Ease of finding solutions to problems, influencers are often considered leaders in their communities.

Brown and Fiorella (2013) conducted a study that there are two types of stimuli. One is Macro-Influencer, and the other type is Micro-Influencer, plus mega influencers.

Macro and Micro Influencers are social media bloggers, YouTubers, and Instagram stars, who arrive a large set of followers such that Macro Influencer reaches from a hundred thousand to more than a million followers, and the number of micro influencers reaches between one thousand and one hundred thousand. Compared to macro and the micro influencers; Mega influencers have greater reach. Due to the big number of followers, division and targeting pursuits for a marketing campaign can be challenging as well as very costly. As an example, reality TV star Kylie Jenner charges over than $1 million per post in social media (Ismail, 2018). A macro influencer, on the other hand, has considerably less reach than a mega influencer since they have followers that have similar likes and follow because their lifestyles are similar. However, macro influencers may be utilized to target a specific set of followers. Because they have many followers, the goal of the campaign may be lost in a promotion, or the results may

not be what the brands desired because the community they are attempting to reach is very large, and there is a chance that many of the followers will not be interested in the sponsored content. Regardless, corporations continue to choose slick influencers in their marketing initiatives.

A survey was conducted by Jonah Berger and Keller Fay Group in 2016. It was found that 82% of person who was part in this study said that micro-influencers' references about product purchases were positively influenced (Langan, 2019).

Considering the pros and cons of macro and micro influencers; Micro digital influencers are more realistic because they are experts in their fields who create unique and niche content. Although they have less reach than Macro influencers, they have a strong bond with his community, know their followers and have a trustworthy relationship. Where consumers believe in micro-influencers more than celebrities or big influencers.

This is a good indication that it costs less to work with these influencers. Although they pay less fee, they have followers so their reach will not be as high as the overall influencers. Macro digital influencers support brands that give the result more reach but are not trustworthy and are expensive (Chue, 2018). It will be beneficial to use these types of influencers when launching a new product or product that will attract audiences.

2.1.2.3. Influencer's characteristics dimensions

Influencers tend to influence in many sides including the social, economic, and educational spheres. Particularly, as a marketing communications strategy, social media influencers are effective and attract millions of customers around the world (Harrison, K. 2017). Considering the various activities of the current influencer and their impact on society, evaluation limited to their image and attributes does not make much sense (Tanase, R.; Tessone, C.J 2018). So, components were developed to measure the social media influencer characteristics dimensions as a new source of information in the social networking environment. Therefore, over expert meeting and clients' surveys, four factors were derived to measure the social media influencers' characteristics dimensions: communication skills, influence, authenticity, and expertise.

Communication skills

Communication skills are a crucial and significant component that an influencer must acquire and grasp to communicate with customers on social media nowadays. This implies that the influencer not only communicates well, but also shares their ideas and sentiments to customers

based on the trust and communication they develop when providing expertise and information. Influencer communication abilities are becoming increasingly vital as real-time influencers explain and sell things through videos. This indicates that it is critical to learn what customers truly want through communication and to sympathize with them, and not by forcing consumers to listen to the information they don't want to hear. (Choi, J.Y.; Jung, Y.J. 2017).

Influence

Influencers' impact cannot be measured and assessed, because there is no criterion for this, neither by the number of fans nor by the activities they engage in. An influencer's suggestions and criticism of a certain product or brand, on the other hand, alter customers' opinions and modify their behavior. This is the reason why many businesses employ influencers in their marketing efforts, as they rely on greater empathy, familiarity, and trustworthiness unlike traditional media (Fertik, M. 2020). In particular, with the fast-changing marketing environment, the impact of influencers is expanding to the point that they threaten online shopping malls and TV buying at home, and the influence of influencers is likely to rise even more expertise (Dongho Kim 2020).

Originality

Authenticity has already demonstrated that he has a considerable impact on the reputation of a star. Influencers encourage direct customer participation by providing consumers with information they seek (Choi, J.Y.; Jung, Y.J. 2017). Consumers have no rejection or negative perceptions of the information and assessments provided by the network's influencers, and they embrace and trust its content. The knowledge is perceived as if it were transmitted directly by the information's owners, and experiences supplied by influencers are regarded as genuine content. After all, the authenticity of influencers is what drives customers to subscribe to influencer content.

Consequently, from a consumer standpoint, influencers use the items and brands before promoting and sharing their honest opinions and ratings with consumers; as a result, customers believe in the authenticity of influencers and believe that their remarks and actions are genuine. However, for the purpose of effectively reaching clients, the emotional traits of authenticity and true-blue must be supported by practical understanding. The following example highlights the importance of influencer authenticity. Famous TikTok influencers recently released an "anti-Trump" video that was devoid of paid advertisements. Following the BBC investigation,

TikTok withdrew the footage, but it prompted a reaction when it was revealed that the marketing business paid influencers to make the video (BBC NEWS 2020).

E*xpertise*

Experience is also thought to have a big influence on a celebrity's reputation. Because of the Internet and social networking sites, it is now easy for users to get and share information, allowing everyone to gain experience. Because the client has previously relied only on the media. As a result, inexperienced influencers cannot delight customers and may be ignored. According to this point of view, for the purpose of having a significant impact on client awareness and purchase, influencers must strengthen their credibility with knowledge and experience, relate emotive components to abilities, and have competence in the field in which they specialize. This is because authenticity can only be accomplished if the influencer possesses not just the emotional elements but also the experience (Kim So 2020). As a result, to truly engage clients, the emotional components of authenticity and reliability must be supported with practical knowledge (Kim, W.B.; Choo, H.J. 2017:13).

2.1.2.4. Do influencer effect consumer buying decision making?

Consumers' purchasing decisions are impacted by information accessible in population from a variety of sources, including advertising, publications, important personalities, the Internet, close people, and blogs, because consumers often buy when they receive recommendations from someone they trust. It can be said that 49% of clients research for instruction from social media influencers before making a purchase decision, so that they inspire them and influence their purchasing behavior, because consumers see influencers as a neutral authority that evaluates the product, and moreover, influencers are seen as friendlier and more worthy, trustworthy. Since majority of millennials and baby boomers prefer word of mouth over corporate advertisements. (Jacobs, 2013)

In our society today, the influencer is seen as the 'most powerful force'. It influences customers' purchasing decisions based on their personal opinions, ability, and location, and consumers often believe them skillets in their domain. Thus, social influencers have a big impact on consumers' purchasing decisions and may affect what becomes a "must-have" trend and style since people tend to mimic their style and believe they are the masters in a particular area. As a result, consumers in today's culture are more affected by social influencers than ever before (Bansal, 2019).

Figure 2: Influence of Influencers in marketing



Source: Data – mediakix

2.1.2.5. The role of trust of information in influencer marketing

Influencers receive offers from brands, so they create content sponsored by this brand on social media platforms to promote their product, so that the content can be an evaluation of the product after it has been used and tested by the influencer, so he gives tips and shares his experience, and in this way the follower is attracted because the influencer publishes his opinion about the product or service after using it, it increases the influencer's credibility because he has tried the product in real time and provided advice and recommendations accordingly., and thus the influence on the consumer is positive and affects his decision when buying the product (Uzunoglu and Kip, 2014).

In general, the consumer makes a purchase decision after gaining some information from people they trust them, so that these important people act as a link to others to convey the details and assist in the decision-making operation (Galeotti, 2010). Then another analytical study was conducted visually for the social network Twitter to measure the impact, by measuring content privacy and re-tweeting (Francalanci, 2014), and found that influencers are in two denominations (publisher and influencer) Publishers are authors sharing content that includes various topics and are considered as authors sharing their information; They take information from their trusted source “brand updates” and publish it in their own way to researchers (Francalanci, 2014).

Findings on this subject indicate that influencers are reached by persons primarily because of the details they supply. As followers demand information from influencers on social media because they trust influencers as a factor that increases consumer engagement in purchasing. Influencers with a large following are viewed favorably by their followers, in part due to their popularity (Marijke, 2017). On the other side, it is not important how many followers the influencer has, but the important thing is whether the followers trust his credibility or not.

It's hard to gain followers' trust, but it's not difficult to loss it easily. For instance, a popular influencer who has nearly two million followers on his Instagram account, was caught eating fish in a YouTube video. This situation resulted in the loss of more than 9000 subscribers in a short period of time no more than one month on his account as a way for his fans to express their frustration and anger at the fact that he was not honest with his followers (Mahdawi, 2019). This shows that influencers must be honest with their followers and avoid cheating as much as possible to be a real influencer, because in the end people will not pursue an influencer who is not honest in submitting their worth’s in the right way.

People often tend to compare themselves to others, essentially in this time to influencers, and as a result, they buy a product based on why they are associated with the influencer. Marijke stresses that the product's viewpoint is attached to self-consistency and that this impression is transmitted with social media influencers. Social contrast and influencer fit are related to product perception (Marijke, 2017).

2.1.2.6. The role of influencers promotional activities

The one of effective cases in recognizing and measuring the rendering of influencers is we have the example of Portugal captain "Ronaldo" who inadvertently caused a global uproar in front of the media, He sat at his press conference and noticed two bottles of Coca-Cola right in front of him. The young man (who is known for his concern for his health and avoids soft drinks and alcohol) immediately removed the soft drink on the side from the sight and replaced it with a water bottle. Ronaldo raised his water bottle before placing it on the floor and said "agua" - the Portuguese term for water - to what seems to get people to drink water instead of soft drinks like Coca-Cola. Because of that, Coca-Cola's market value plummeted by £2.8 billion, but the company has since issued a statement insisting that "everyone has a right to their favorite beverage", but the damage is significant as the star athlete has 550 million followers on social media. Social Media. (Mark,2021)

The most relevant platforms for influencer marketing are:

Instagram: Influencers are using this platform as a marketing channel and an effective way to market your product or service. Because person instinctively yearning public proof, and for this reason it is recommended by an influencer his confidence makes the consumer more likely to buy a product or service.

YouTube: Its users upload many videos about fashion, beauty tips and more, and they are posted among people from all over the world. These videos motivate viewers to try out these suggestions and practices.

Brands should carefully monitor on a daily basis the posts that speak on their brand's behalf to gain good visibility and maintain the brand's reputation so that if the posts are negative it is easy to control in the first because consumers express their opinion and experiences about the brand by means of Social Media (Schlich, 2011) ; so that you can create content that makes humans speak approximately it, it need to be thrilling and extremely good and this study shows a three step approach to gain this goal, the primary of that's to offer value, something exciting and link it with the brand message by create an passionate connection with their clients; The step two is viral stuff, which is presenting the information in a manner that attracts people's attention, and the most recent is the seeding strategy, which is how to successfully spread the message, and the successful way is to ensure that it is seeded to well-connected people such as influencers or celebrities in attempt to increase awareness far and wide. (Chatzigeorgiou, 2017).

As a result of these people giving their thoughts on the products and services they use, companies began to pay attention and listen to those suggestions to enhance their products; by constantly taking their feedback before launching a product.

2.2. Brand Equity

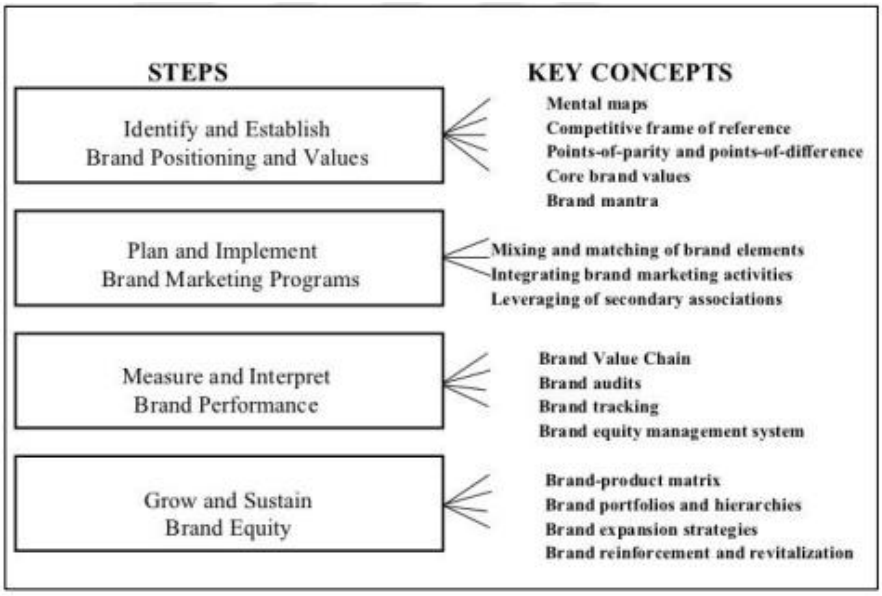
2.2.1. Branding

In marketing, branding is a term that concerns actions aimed at managing the commercial image of a company. Appeared in the 1950s, with the globalization of trade, then the development of the Internet and social networks, it has become an essential aspect of companies' trade policy. (Miletsky and Smith 2009).

Branding consists essentially in managing, in the most positive and subtle way possible, all the cultural characteristics associated with the image of the product or brand demonstrated, to maximize its influence on the target audience. Branding therefore refers to the complete cultural ecology built to impose a brand's identity in the collective unconscious.

Branding is the process of building a relationship between an emotion and a product (Hislop, 2001). Davies and Chun (2002), trademarks are divided into two dimensions; The first is the internal brand, so that the company builds its image in the minds of its employees, and the second is the external brand, so that the company builds the brand in the minds of consumers. The following figure (3) illustrates the branding strategy and management processes:

Figure 3: Strategic brand and management processes



Source: Keller (2008, P.31)

2.2.2. The Concept of Brand Equity

In marketing, brand equity represents the level of influence that a brand name has within the minds of customers, and the recognizable value of owning a brand. Organizations create brand equity by creating positive experiences that entice consumers to continue buying from them at the expense of competitors who make similar products, by raising consumer awareness through campaigns that speak to the target consumer's values, and by fulfilling promises and qualifications when Consumers use the product, loyalty, and retention efforts. The conception of name equity emerged within the Nineteen Eighties once astonishing brand purchases showed that the worth of a brand depends not solely on the number of sales it generates. Brand equity can be defined as the attitudes and behaviors of consumers associated with a brand, so the concept of brand equity can be realized through a financial evaluation based on previous communication and investment studies or based on the net present value of expected cash flows attributed to the characteristics of the brand. (Mohsin,2009).

Brand equity has become one of the most important aspects of business during the last few decades by interest for its major role as an important intangible asset to the company. There are many definitions in the literature review regarding trademark equity, the reason being that trademark ownership is a dynamic concept and research may tend to include the most important factor in trademark equity.

Table 1: Definitions of brand equity

Researcher	Definition
Farquhar (1989)	The brand's contribution to the product's added value.
Aaker (1991)	A set of brand assets and liabilities associated with a brand, its name, and logo that contribute to or detract from the value supplied by a product or service to a business and/or that firm's consumers.
Keller (1993)	The difference in the influence of brand understanding on customer response to brand marketing.
Simon and Sullivan (1993)	Differences in cash flow between a situation in which a corporate product is given a brand name and a scenario in which the same product is not given a brand name.
Rangaswamy et al., (1993)	Favorable first impressions, attitudes, and behavioral preferences.
Lassar, Mittal and Sharma (1995)	A brand name confers on a product an increase in perceived utility and desirability.
Yoo et al., (2000:28)	Given the same level of characteristics, the difference in customer preference between a branded and unbranded goods.
Baldauf et al., (2003)	Reflection of the firm's premium pricing for a strong brand, as well as the sales it may draw as compared to other average brands in the same product category.
Yasin et al., (2007)	Favoritism of customers toward the focus brand in terms of preference, purchase intention, and choice among brands in a product category that provide the same degree of product advantages as perceived by the consumers.

Some of these definitions can be briefly highlighted as follows:

The foremost accepted definition states that trademark possession is “the more value that the brand provides to the product” (Farquhar 1989).

The well-known author Keeler (1993) outlined brand ownership because of the impact that brand information could wear on customers upon brand recognition.

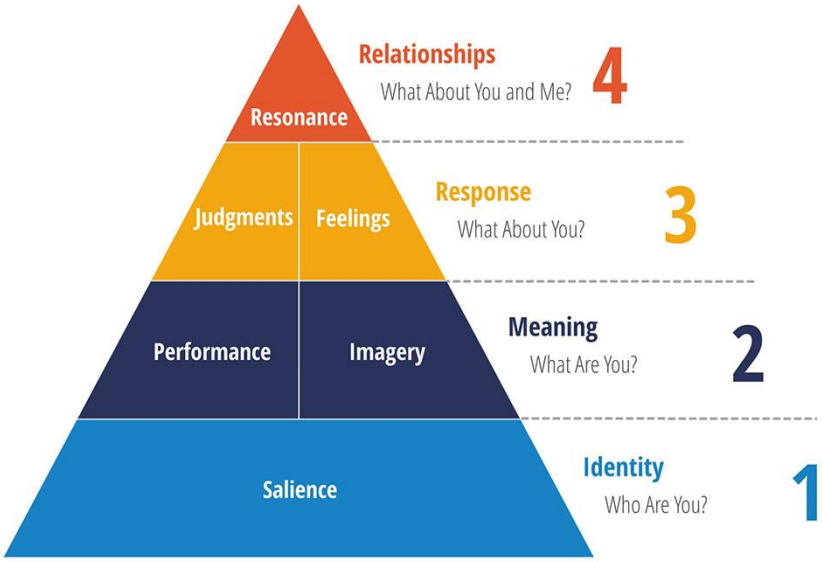
Aaker conceived of brand equity is “the set of brand assets and responsibilities related to a brand, its name, and image that adds or subtracts from the worth that a product or service provides to the purchasers of that company”. (Aaker, 1991)

Clow and Baack (2005) mention another definition; He thought brand ownership as a set of characteristics that build a brand distinctive within the market and permit an organization to change its value and retain additional more market share than would be possible with an unbranded product.

We can also determine brand ownership from a consumer and corporate perspective (Atilgan, Akinci, Aksoy & Kaynak, 2009). The consumer-based aspect is entirely related to the consumer mindset, which can be identified using combinations such as attitudes, awareness, and loyalty (Keller and Lehmann, 2001), and the firm-based element focuses on product market results such as price rises, market share, and relative pricing, as well as financial market outcomes such as price changes. Purchase of a brand and reduced cash flow for licensing costs (Ailawadi, Lyman, & Neslin, 2003).

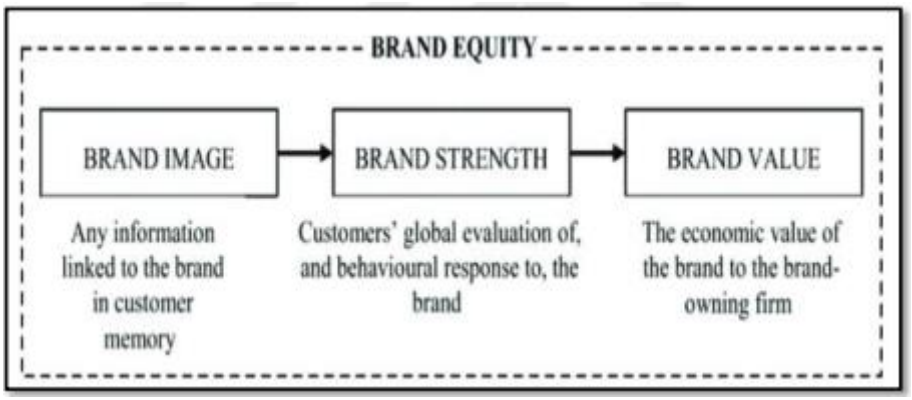
Some authors have suggested models that define brand value by adopting their own metrics. Among the most common models are the Aaker model, the Keller's model and the Feldwick model.

Figure 4: Keller's Brand Equity Model



Source: Keeler (1993)

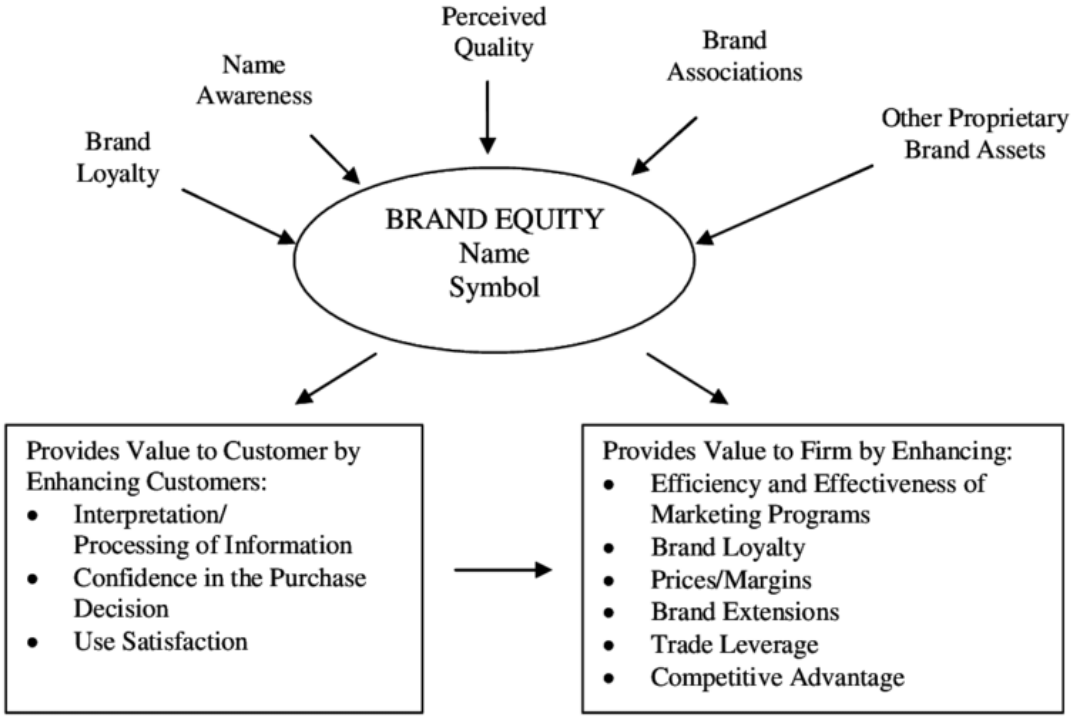
Figure 5: Feldwick's Brand Equity Chain



Source: (Feldwick, 2006)

Aaker's pattern of brand equity is one of the most popular and widely used. Aaker has broken down brand equity into five dimensions which are loyalty, goodwill, perceived quality, brand associations and other assets associated with the brand.

Figure 6: Aaker's Brand Equity Model



Source: Aaker's (1992, 1996))

2.2.2.1. Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is a fundamental element of brand ownership and is often overlooked (Aaker, 1996). Brand awareness refers to "the ability of a potential buyer to perceive or remember that a brand is in a particular category of product". Aaker (1991) also went on to discuss brand awareness as a tool that measures a consumer's ability to recognize or recall a brand when a consumer is faced with a difficult buying decision.

Awareness is the amount of power of presence in a customer's memory and their capacity to explain in varied situations (Aaker 1996, Rossiter, and Percy 1987). Increasing brand recognition is one of the initial needs for brand development, and it is connected to numerous value preferences such as quality, reliability, and dependability. confidence, feelings, symbol, and cost (Çizmeci and Ercan 2015, Kapferer 2008).

For most companies, brand awareness is so central that it is the foundation of strength for excellent brands (Aaker, 1992). Most conceptual models of brand value place a high priority on awareness. Brand awareness leads to a high degree of purchase because consumers are more inclined to acquire brands with which they are familiar to increase the company's profitability (Baldauf et al., 2003).

Brand awareness level generally defines the consumer-brand relation (Çizmeci and Ercan 2015). Aaker (2009) explained that brand awareness consists of stages, from the stage of not being aware of the brand to the stage of believing that the brand is the only one that produces the product. He has categorized these stages in the awareness pyramid, which can be seen in this figure.

Figure 7: Brand Awareness Pyramid



Source: (Aaker, 2009)

The potential customer at the bottom of the brand awareness hierarchy is those who have never known of the brand before and as a result are unaware of its existence. At this situation, major infrastructural operations are required to raise consumer awareness. (Nguetsop, Amoro, Wang, & GondjeDacka, 2016).

Brand recognition is the second level of the pyramid. It is not required for the consumer to be aware of where the brand will appear at this stage. In the recognition stage, it is critical to determine whether the customer has previously encountered the brand. For example, “Has he ever heard of Brand X before?”. The following level is brand recall. It is based on asking someone to discuss a specific product within a product range, so that you will know if they know about the brand or not. At the last level, the consumer is familiar with the brand so that when you ask him, he will answer immediately with your brand name. What is vital at this point is to satisfy all the customer's expectations and to make every effort to get additional potential customers up to this level. (Bertsch & Ostermann, 2011).

Keller (2003) defines brand awareness as having two dimensions: Brand recall and brand recognition; The first dimension is brand recognition and it means the customer’s ability to confirm the previous introduction of the brand before presentation, the second dimension is

brand recall as “the ability of customers to identify the brand when exposed to the product category and related to the needs met by the category or different stimuli as a signal.”

2.2.2.2. Brand loyalty

Ovidiu (2005), based on the Aaker model, argued that brand loyalty generates value by reducing marketing costs and leveraging commerce. Loyal customers expect the brand to be always available and continually encourage others to buy it. Retaining established clients is significantly more less expensive than attracting new customers. Even if there are costs, they will be below. It is also difficult for competitors to attract or communicate with satisfied customers of a particular brand. Brand loyalty is described as a commitment to the same purchasing behavior of a brand, product, or service that is unaffected by external market forces (Oliver 1997, Aaker 1991).

Aaker (1991) considers that brand loyalty is an essential dimension of brand value and defines brand loyalty as a criterion for measuring the extent to which the consumer relates to the brand. According to some authors, brand loyalty is defined as the customer's commitment to a particular product. According to Tong and Hawley (2009), he sees brand loyalty is the most valuable dimension of brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand association. In general, brand loyalty is the strong association a customer has with repeatedly buying a product of the same brand and giving up advantages that other brands might offer despite having several satisfactory alternative options. It is also closely related to the positive influences an individual has on a brand.

According to Ar (2007), the process of emerging brand loyalty consists of five stages. Consumers do not differentiate between brands at the initial stage, and therefore do not make purchasing decisions based on a specific brand. Consumers make their decisions in the second step through brand recall. As a result, competition is limited at this point, and profitability is the most important component. Consumers trust the brand in the third stage. Marketers cannot be expected to take measures to convince customers that their brand is an indication of a higher social standing or to enhance consumer loyalty by applying special discounts to them. In the fourth stage, an emotional relationship develops between the consumer and the brand. In the last stage, Brand loyalty is formed, and the customer is happy to be a customer of a specific brand.

Behavioral and cognitive loyalty are two features of brand loyalty that are evaluated (Aydin and Ozer 2005). Behavioral loyalty, measured through loyalty with a repeat purchase. On the other hand, cognitive loyalty is when there is a need to purchase a particular product, a particular brand comes first in the mind of the consumer. (Bandyopadhyay and Martell 2007).

As per to Aaker (1991), perceived quality, brand awareness, and strong brand identification all contribute to strong brand loyalty between both the customer and the specific brand. Brand loyalty is nicely summed up by Yassin, Nour, and Mohamed (2007), who state that a brand has significant value to customers if the target consumers appear loyal to that brand. Brand loyalty, according to Erenkol and Duygun (2010), is "a way of saving money while also lowering ambiguity as well as reducing uncertainty." Brand loyalty, according to Aaker (2001), also serves as a barrier to other competing enterprises, allowing the firm enough time to respond to customers' requirements.

2.2.2.3. Perceived Quality

The concept of quality is the most primary part in creating brand equity. When a customer compares a brand to rival brands, quality is defined as the overall quality or superiority of the brand in attaining the desired performance (Aaker, 2009). Customers' high expectations of a branded product require that the product must be of high quality, be the best than similar products in the store, (Severi & Ling, 2013).

Aaker (1996) described perceived quality as the basic construct in the study of any ownership of a brand, and also explained that perceived quality gives value by providing a reason to buy, brand differentiation, to put it another way, perceived quality is the consumer's assessment of superiority or non-preference of a product (Zeithaml, 1988). Perceived quality is shown as an unique element in the brand, and it has become a critical business driver for many organizations seeking to increase brand equity. Perceived quality is an important and sufficiently acceptable strategic consideration (Aaker, 1992); Although it is possible that the perceived quality does not reflect the actual price of the specific product. Instead, perceived quality represents the consumer's evaluation of the specific product (Erenkol and Duygun, 2010).

Sense of quality is one of the most important factors that characterize consumers' attraction to a brand (Karaçor 2000) whereby a high level of perceived quality as well as consistent satisfaction is a prerequisite for gaining long-term trust (Fill, 2002:3). When a customer has a positive perception of a particular product or service, they are more likely to prefer it among

the products or services offered by their competitors (Kayaman and Arasli 2007). Moreover, higher brand quality and preference increase brand equity (Atilgan et al. 2005, Yoo et al. 2000, Aaker 1996).

Perceived quality is not only made up of abstract and public sentiments about the brand but also of product qualities. As a result, in addition to the distinctive qualities of the items, other criteria such as dependability, performance, compliance, and durability must be considered when measuring perceived quality. The essential functional features of a product, as well as its completeness and the services that support its life cycle, are factors that influence perceived quality (Nath & Datta, 2011).

Bellow some factors that determine the perceived quality of goods; by Erenkol and Duygun (2010):

a. Easy to use: the simpler the product/service, the higher the perceived quality.

b. Durability: How long a product or service can last and how sturdy it is.

c. Performance: If the product/service are effective and how far?

d. Serviceability: The number of times the customer obtains services when needed.

Some studies have shown perceived quality affects a firm's return on investment (ROI) and earnings per share, hence influencing profits and market share. Perceived quality is used as a strategic metric for total quality management (TQM) programs and as a value in task data. (Yoo.et.al. 2000, Aaker 1994, Anderson.et.al. 1994)

In short, perceived quality was created primarily to assess the quality of the manufactured brands. As a result, it is clear how it has an impact on brand equity. There is little doubt that an increase in perceived quality will lead to a gain in brand equity.

2.2.2.4. Brand associations

Brand associations have an important role in the success of a brand, as they help in the formation of the reputation and image of the brand, which is important in the emergence of brand equity. Also, brand associations greatly influence a consumer's purchasing decision-making process.

Brand associations can be defined as the set of information and meaning inferred about a brand, usually including those features that form an image of the brand in consumers' memory (Aaker and Joachimthaler 2000, Aaker 1991). In the view of Aaker (1992), the brand association is the most accepted dimension of brand value. It can be defined as "anything so connected in a customer's memory regarding a brand that when the term brand association is mentioned, all perceptions, ideas, and images related to brand and other memory related items (Kotler and Keller 2006:12). Through brand awareness, brand associations can be identified. When there is awareness, albeit relative to the brand, the association with the brand is achieved. As stated by Aaker (1991), establishing positive brand association drives positive image ranking, which is a sensible precursor to improving brand relevance. The hypothesis that the brand association has a positive impact the brand equity in addition to having a varying relation with different variables, such as perceived quality, brand awareness and brand loyalty can be proposed. Keller (1998:62) has divided brand associations into various denominations:

a. Situations described by Keeler in the pooled brand evaluation (Keller, 2003)

b. Attributes that indicate customers' judgment of a product or service.

c. Keeler covered benefits in this category in three subcategories called functional, symbolic, and experiential benefits.

As per Aaker (2009), there is a substantial association between a business's communicative strategy and client brand loyalty. In general, brand equity may be produced through the meaning of a brand for consumers and the degree to wish this meaning is linked to customer attitudes. Brand associations can refer to product-related aspects such as brand performance as well as non-product-related dimensions such as customer characteristics (Netemeyer et al. 2004, Aaker 1991). The main element, however, is to establish an influence on buying decisions, where associations establish the framework for the brand and add value to it (Atilgan et al. 2005:23). Some researchers think that the strength of connections with the brand, which may include product attributes, promotion celebrities, successful logos, or symbols, increases brand equity. (Rajh and Dosen 2009, Atilgan et al. 2005, Yoo et al. 2000, Aaker 1991). In this case, Starbucks might be used to highlight the significance of brand connections in the establishment of brand equity. One of the elements driving Starbucks' quick expansion was potentially word-of-mouth communication, which resulted in an interest based on mystery and inquisitiveness across an unknown the coffee brand. Customers choose the Starbucks brand for its great quality and one-

of-a-kind coffee experience. In the beginning, Starbucks' main consumers were primarily youngsters living in metropolitan areas. Starbucks was able to capture customers using expansion techniques that did not involve pricing, marketing, or ads. That is, Starbucks consolidated its success by associating its brand name with good social relationships and a particular coffee experience. This achievement might be a vivid illustration of Robert Eckert, Kraft's chief executive officer, stating that "consumers are wanting to connect to people and things that will offer value to their lives" (Mohsin, Khan, & Rukunnuddin, 2013:6).

Associations can assist customers in processing or retrieving information, serve as the foundation for distinction and expansions, give a cause to buy, and give good emotions. Brand associations are used by consumers to process, organize, and retain information in their memory, which helps them make purchase decisions (Aaker, 1991. 1992). When there is a higher level of brand connection, brand extension has a greater chance of being relevant to customers.

2.2.3. Branding in social media

Branding is the process by which a company distinguishes itself from its rivals by creating a special show with tangible and intangible attributes targeted at certain markets, and then combining it with a distinguishing name and logo that may be linked with quality and happiness. (Building a Brand, ii, 2004).

Many companies throughout the world utilize social media to capture the attention of consumers (Graves 2016), and it is the most effective way for a brand to reach potential customers easily. With the support of advanced digital technology and communication infrastructure, social media is the ideal means to facilitate marketing activity, and since the number of active social media users is increasing, including social media in the brand strategy has become a necessity for the brand. From a branding and marketing standpoint, one of the most essential elements of social media is that users control the information they want to watch, share, or even produce and comment on, and that marketing efforts are affordable, quantifiable, and easily targeted in contrast.

Social media networks like Instagram and YouTube are widely used by all global business marketers to influence consumer decisions and try to get their loyalty. Brand management, with the crushing inclusion of social media, nowadays dictates social media management.

Good brand management in social media requires; Respond to messages and comments via social networks, creating, import and sharing lists of social influencers and important clients, getting to know your audience, listen closely to the opinions and ideas of people who are important and loyal to your business, and improve your campaigns with effective analytics (Hootsuite, 2016).

It is obvious that social media marketing surpasses traditional advertising in terms of customer response speed, volume, and penetration as well as cost, but the cost evaluation of these alternative communication platforms is incomparable in favor of social media, because the cost is not the main issue, but the effectiveness and efficiency is the main concern. There are characteristics that are required in a social media environment to influence potential customers to have a quick and positive impact on the brand. Close monitoring of users, knowledge, and daily monitoring of the evolution of social networks is of paramount importance as it helps in strengthening or changing the brand image, and to benefit from the power of these means of communication, brands need to constantly manage and activate their presence (Pozin 2014, 2-3).

2.2.3.1. Impact of social media on Brand Elements

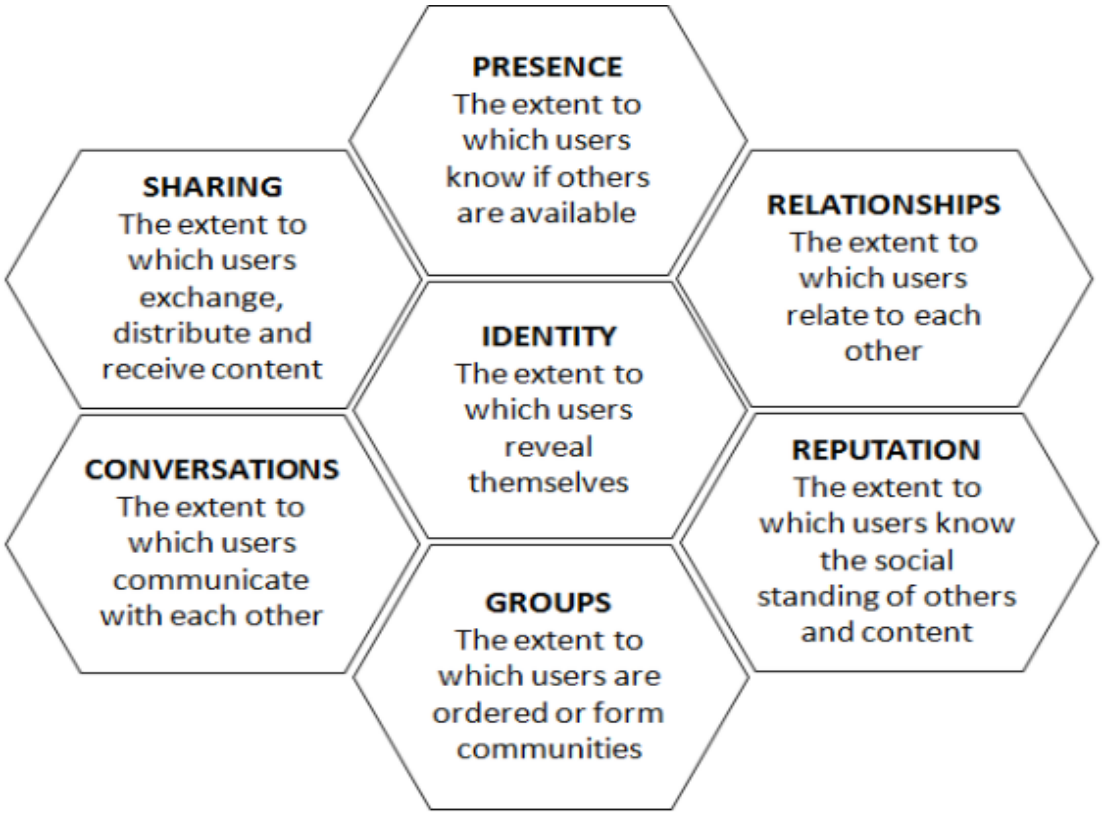
Shen & Bissell (2013:19) demonstrated that companies can improve brand awareness by enhancing customer engagement on social networking sites, which leads to enhanced brand loyalty. Social media has an important impact on consumers' lives daily. Therefore, the use of social media by businesses has become a must to reach their customers effectively and accurately. So that social media facilitates the establishment of communication channels between companies and customers, so that customers exchange experiences, wisdom, and knowledge to contribute to the promotion of the brand through consumer interaction with transactions and management of brand reputation. While a consumer can develop brand awareness on social media, different social media platforms produce diverse brand associations, resulting in varying effects on consumer brand equity. (Pham & Gammoh, 2015).

To examine the use and services of social media in relation to brand equity, a solid foundation based on past theories and research addressing the usage and functionality of social media as an independent variable and brand value as a dependent variable is required. Smith's 2007 honeycomb model has been utilized as a framework for examining the usage and functions of social media. Meanwhile, parts of brand ownership from Aaker's (1991) customer-based brand

ownership model are employed as dependent variables in this study. The honeycomb model also seeks to investigate how social programs function (Smith, 2007).

Identity, presence, discussion, sharing, relationship, groups, and reputation are the seven building components of the honeycomb paradigm. Not every social media platform requires all these building blocks. Details of the Honeycomb model and summary of definitions for each of these building blocks can be seen in Figure 8 (Smith, 2007); But this is a rarely used model in academic studies (Tresna & Wijaya, 2015).

Figure 8: Honeycomb model



Source:The honeycomb framework of social media (Kietzmann et al., 2011 p. 243)

Social media may serve to improve or transform a brand's image; but, to profit from the power of social media, companies must continually manage and implement their presence constantly (Pozin 2014). Brands may pursue customer acquisitions by engaging in social media activities; the key to new customer acquisitions is user-friendly, interesting content and participation in social media debates (Pozin 2014).

As per Pozin (2014), social media is particularly beneficial for developing and retaining brand loyalty through controlling interactions with consumers of the brand. In addition, social media

might be used for customer support (Pozin, 2014). Brands should be consistent in their communication style across all social media channels (Pozin, 2014).

The visual and textual styles of communication should be consistent. Perkins (2014) states that uniformity in the colors used on social media "can assist customers get comfortable with your brand and become familiar with." Visual consistency aids in brand awareness if the colors fit the overall brand graphics. Perkins (2014) suggests that visual material may be utilized to increase user engagement on social media. Companies that have a well-planned "visual branding strategy" profit from it on social media (Perkins 2014).

Furthermore, by tapping into or building their own online social networks, social media marketers may have an impact on a brand community and even influence customer behavior. (Constantinides, 2014)

(Balakrishnan, Dahnil, & Yi (2014)) It has been demonstrated that online marketing activities, namely EWOM, online communities, and online advertising, are effective in increasing brand loyalty and product purchase intent through the corporate website and social media platforms.

2.3. Consumer Behavior

The study of consumer behavior contains:

- What habits customers adopt while browsing for items and making purchases, and how much consumer behavior is impacted by their surroundings (environment, culture, media).
- How customers think about and choose amongst different possibilities.
- How customers perceive and react to various choices (products, brands, services, and resellers).
- How marketing strategies may be tweaked and modified to have a greater impact on consumers.

Three factors have an impact on these questions:

- Personal factors- Interests and views of the consumer Consumer preferences and viewpoints Age, gender, culture, occupation, and so forth. They will be influenced by demographic factors.

- Psychological factors- Consumers' receptivity to a marketing effort is largely determined by their state of mind and viewpoint. The ability of an individual to process information, their perception of their requirements, and their psyche all impact their conduct.
- Social considerations- The entourage (family, friends, or connections on social networks).

But there are other factors also, such as: class, income, and level of education. Online consumer reviews.

2.3.1. Definition of Consumer & Consumer Behavior

In the view of (Ossorio, 2016) that the consumer is a person who can purchase products or take advantage of some services to meet his required needs, various authors see that there are several different groups of consumers so that they can be classified into types according to many factors, including social status physical, demographic variables, and others.

There is no consensus on a particular concept of the meaning of behavior, although human behavior is an empirical phenomenon that does not conform to the conventions for understanding the concepts. However, sometimes "behavior" is defined as a set of actions and behaviors that an individual performs in conjunction with themselves or their climate. (Guez and Allen 2000).

Consumer behavior is a relatively "new" discipline that may be one of the highly interdisciplinary ones. One of the important areas of marketing is consumer behavior. Solomon, (1983:10) defines "consumers' behavior" as "the purchasing behavior of consumers, individuals, and families who purchase products or services for personal use." Bennett (1989) explains consumer behavior as “a dynamic mix that includes cognition, behavior, and environmental events that surround human beings through aspects of exchange in their lives” (p. 40) Solomon et al. The. (2010:4); "it is seeing that consumer behavior is the study of the processes humans make when they choose what to buy, things to use, ideas to share, or things to dispose of to satisfy their needs and desires” (p. 28).

According to Kardes (2008), consumer behavior involves decision-making actions like, looking, dispositing, acquiring, selecting, and utilizing. As a result, the costumer’s wants and desires for the product are addressed. Keeping all of this in mind, consumer behavior refers to

the mental, emotional, and behavioral actions of customers during the pre-buying, purchasing, and post-purchasing stages. Some research (Kotler 2010; Manali Khaniwale 2015; Al-Salamin et al., 2016) stress that internal and external variables impact a consumer's purchasing behavior. They also divided them into outside (cultural and societal) and inside (personal and psychological) elements.

Consumer behavior, deal to Sheth (2014), includes all intellectual and physical activities in the decision-making procedure of their respective acts by consumers for the payment, purchase, and usage of products and services. Furthermore, according to Sahney (2017), the interactions that the consumer has in the process of interacting with its surroundings have an essential impact on consumer behavior. Consumer behavior in this context attempts to explain resolution mechanisms in purchase processes. The consuming process involves the combination between purchase and observable behaviors in the human. Consumer behavior involves various duties and behaviors in an age where individuals are active as buyers.

Cultural, social, and environmental elements all have an impact on consumer decision-making; According to Zhou et al. (2010). Consumer procurement methods content a diversity of actions. As a result, to have a thorough understanding of customers, this research focuses on the purchase of a service or product by consumers to obtain a perfect notion about consumers.

Today, when consumption is an integral element of human existence, the options provided by rapid technical advancements aid in the quick dissemination of products or services everywhere. It greatly increases sharing between people during the purchase process. According to Solomon (1998), consumer behavior is studied through examining the processes by which people or organizations acquire, utilize, or dispose of goods to attain their goals.

The media that surrounds individuals in its new and old forms, in terms of information, amusement, and connection, is also a sign of the path of discoveries. Since the invention of printing, knowledge has played an important role in cultural, scientific, and even political advancements. While the media hastens the spread of knowledge, the shift continues.

Conducting a study on consumer behavior is an investigation and evaluation before and after the consumption process, and in an accurate and detailed manner, consumer behavior can be described as “the totality of consumers’ decisions about buying, consuming, and disposing of

products, services, activities, experiences, people and ideas by decision-making units) mankind) over time. (Hoyer and McInnes (2008), p. 3).

Models of consumer behavior within a product sector or a brand or even for each product must be investigated independently under various situations because most customers make judgments in a short period of time with a large expenditure of dibs and without much attention.

There is a lot of literature that acknowledges the importance of studying consumer behavior in human life. Belk (1975) investigated the situational influence on consumer behavior by combining five sets of factors characterizing a situation: the temporal perspective, the physical setting, the social setting, and prior states, task definition.

Vinson (1977) discovered that personal worths have a significant influence on consumer behavior. Bauer (1960) stressed the significance of risk-taking in decision-making (Baker, 2001). Levy (1981) investigated consumer narrative regarding the acquisition and usage of items. Bayton (1958) identified the fundamental components of consumer behavior, such as motivation, cognition, and learning. Henry (1976) presented empirical support for the widely accepted view that culture is a fundamental factor of consumer behavior. Manrai et al. (1996) created a conceptual model of cultural influences on consumer behavior. Havlena (1991) examined the role of risks perceived by a variety of product series in consumer behaviour. However, these findings were based on data from more than 35 years, so they are not clear about how modern consumer behaviors have been affected by contemporary Internet technologies (IT). Therefore, at the present time, there is not much research on the impact of information technology on contemporary consumer behaviors.

2.3.2. Factors determining consumer behavior

Consumer behavior is the satisfaction of his desire by choosing, buying, and consuming a product or service of a particular brand. Consumer behavior includes many different processes, so that in the beginning the consumer searches for the product he wants, which he will consume and fulfill his desire, then finds it and chooses only that product that will bring him the most benefit, after the final choice he calculates the money, he can spend and finally, it compares the existing prices and then decides about the product that will be consumed. In addition to this, there are various other factors that directly or indirectly affect consumer purchases, such as personal, psychological, social factors, and others (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015). We can classify and define these factors in:

Demographic Factor:

- **Age**: It is considered one of the important factors in determining the behavior of consumers, because it is obvious that each age group has different needs than the other group. Marketers have divided the age groups into four groups as follows: Traditionalists/Materialists (born 1929-1945); Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964); Generation X (born 1965-1976); Millennials (born 1977-1995); Generation Z/Generation 2020 (born 1996 and later) ; (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015). Therefore, marketing activities should be targeted according to the generation of the group.
- **Gender**: Consumer behavior in male and female groups should be assessed. Because of the socioeconomic changes in women's positions in society, women are often the focal focus of brand managers. Women are not just responsible for acquiring tools for house workers since they hold a position in the labor force and may consume a variety of things (Tekvar, 2016:5).
- **Marital status**: It is an important factor and Schiffmann and Wisenblit have expanded the social status, instead of dividing it into two parts, single and married, but rather more than that, there is a "single" group for unmarried men or women, and a "honeymoon" group for newlyweds or young couples , and "paternity" if the family consists of children, and "dissolution" means the family with one surviving spouse (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015). Consumers can have different motives for buying at each of these stages. Status.
- **Education**: This factor enables us to categorize consumers according to their level of education, such as high school, college, or higher education graduates. Because education level and income are often correlated with each other (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015).
- **Occupation**: A consumer's profession influences his purchasing behaviour. For exemple a doctor buys clothes that suit his career, but businesspeople have an entirely different buying habit, generally people like to buy products that suit their occupation. (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015).
- **Lifestyle**: Lifestyle can be considered as the attitude and way in which an individual appears in his society. The costumer's lifestyle has a significant impact on their purchasing habits. When a consumer leads a healthy lifestyle, for example, the items he purchases will relate to healthier alternatives to fast food (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015).

Geographic Factors:

- Most consumers are influenced by their surroundings because they share the same religion, social class and lifestyle and exhibit similar consumption behaviors (Tekvar, 2016, p. 1602) to the extent that they may consume similar clothing according to the climate in which they live. (Wells & Prensky, 1996, p. 153).

Psychographic Factors:

- Only the psychological component challenges the cognitive and rational perceptions of consumer behavior because all consumers experience various emotions in their everyday lives, which impact their consuming behavior. Consumer behavior is influenced by a variety of psychological concepts. Among them is ‘reciprocity,' which means that customers like to acquire things about which they can have a dialogue because they use it as a tool for social cognition, which is how individuals utilize social information (Aronson, et al., 2004, p. 21). One of the significant factors in internet advertising or social media sharing is customer agreement that they will buy a product recommended by other consumers, such as influencers, they don't even consider necessity and make their selection as swiftly as possible. Another criterion in which social conformity plays a role in this section is "the change in conduct as a result of the real or perceived influence of other individuals." (Aronson, et al., 2004, p. 253).

Ethnocentrism factors:

- Consumers' attitude to foreign products is referred to as ethnic intolerance. Because of the impact of the local economy, race-centric customers refuse to buy foreign items; they typically assess imported companies arbitrarily and are unmotivated by advertising (Supphellen & Gronhaug, 2003, p. 209). The ethnocentrism must be assessed in relation to various nations, brand class, levels of development, economic situations, brand requirements, and manufacturing location.

Economic factors:

Consumer buying habits and choices are directly affected by the economic condition of a country or market. When a country is rich, its economy is strong, which increases the money supply in the market and improves the purchasing power of consumers. When customers

feel a pleasant economic climate, they are more likely to spend money on purchasing merchandise. Economic variables have a significant impact on a consumer's buying decision. Here are some of the most important economic aspects, (Clootrack, 2019):

- **Personal Income**: It is considered as a measure of social status. Because it is considered as the consumer's ability to spend. In general, the classification of the population depends on the level of household income. One of the main classifications is socioeconomic status (SES), because income affects a person's purchasing behavior.

  The money left over after meeting a person's fundamental necessities is referred to as disposable income. Higher income gives higher purchasing power to consumers and more opportunity to spend on luxury products. In contrast to low- and middle-income consumers, they spend the majority of their income on necessities such as groceries and clothing.

  Savings: The quantity of money a client expects to save from his or her earnings has a big influence on his or her selection. When a client decides to save more money, his purchasing power drops. If the consumer wants to save more money, he will spend the majority of his money on acquiring merchandise.

2.3.3. Impact of internet in consumer decision process

Nowadays, the marketing mix that used to influence consumer buying behavior is no longer the same. Philip Kotler (Professor of Marketing) had separated the marketing concept of 4P (price, place (distribution), promotion (communication), product). So that for the company to influence it, it must first understand the buying behavior of the consumer. In the view of (Hua, 2015), consumer behavior is the way individuals and companies choose and use products and services. This mainly focuses on psychology, their motives, and their behavior (Lim, 2015).

The Internet has played a pivotal role in our lives because it has changed a lot, from the way we work to the way we shop; To the point that it became difficult to think of a life without it, and one of the most important things that changed the Internet is our view and our way of buying; So that you can visit several virtual stores, order to eat your blade home at the hour you specify, pay bills or buy cinema tickets or a flight, through the Internet while sitting in your home, all with just a few clicks. The indisputable fact is that life between the past and the present has fundamentally changed due to the sweeping of the Internet and mobile phone technologies in human life. There have been profound changes in terms of social and societal trends due to technological development such as the Internet and mobile phones, which played a major role

in influencing these trends (Pittayachawan, 2007). These changes that took place also affected the decisions and behavior of consumers. Despite big technological changes, there is a hypothesis, according to which, the core of consumer behavior does not modificated significantly, nevertheless, the resources that people use will change in a notable way. So that technological progress, social orientations and even diversification of choice and improvement of the economic situation of the population are all factors that play a role in changing the behavior of consumers in the market.

The Internet is used by consumers in different ways and makes different decisions. Consumers often search for other people's opinions about a particular product or service through product rating sites or through social media when making choices that have a great deal of personal impact (Morel, & Kwakye, 2012).

Marketing executives are being compelled to adapt to changes in lifestyle and customer behavior. Consumers are getting more familiar with technologies, particularly the internet, and access to conventional media is becoming increasingly difficult. In reacting to these developments, segmentation might be considered as a critical tool. Today's world is distinguished by the fact that consumers have access to a wide range of items designed to fulfill market demands. This fact contributes to the impression of consumption as an essential aspect of social life.

BJMédia (2014) believes that the perception of one’s need has not changed, but other new needs can appear due to the indirect influence of the consumer by browsing websites or seeing his friends’ posts on social media, so that it may be possible just by watching a post about a delicious food that makes you want in buying it.

Today's consumers are ready to learn more about brands. data that can originate from a variety of sources: Clients may get information and more details via the website, which is frequently accompanied by a very informative newsletter. Consumer evaluations are common on most merchant sites, such as Amazon, where users are compelled to provide feedback on a product after purchasing it. These perspectives provide a plethora of information that is critical for customers' purchasing decisions. Trade over the internet has simplified buying decision-making. Previously, though, purchases were frequently made in stores or by letters. But this traditional process is slow and often tedious; so, customers frequently have preferred e-commerce sites that make their information ease their purchases and make them a lot rapid, as

opposed to the internet, which allows for highly shorter procedures. Plus, it's simple to shop whenever you want, whether it's late at night or while you're waiting at the bus stop. This attachment removes several buying barriers, such as waiting time, distance, and so on. The joint evaluation occurs after the buying procedure has been facilitated. Ecommerce businesses pay purchasers to provide feedback, and everyone enjoys it! This allows future buyers to make their own decisions while also giving customers greater power.

Optimizing your buy is another significant benefit of internet marketing. Every effort is taken to guarantee that the client completes their purchase as soon as feasible. The positioning of the buy button has a significant impact on the purchasing process, because if it is easy to reach more purchases then it will be done.

The rise of social media has fundamentally transformed the way individuals connect, communicate, and attract with one another. Because customers are exposed to a plethora of options via social media networks, selecting might be more challenging for them. However, the variety of goods allows clients to have a wide range of good selections based on their preferences (Chang, Liu, & Shen, 2017:69).

2.4. Purchase intentions

2.4.1. Purchase intentions definition

The desire of consumers to purchase a particular product is described as an intent to purchase it (Haque et al., 2015). Purchase intent is the prior and conscious planning of the consumer to purchase a product (Spears & Singh, 2004).

"The most essential part of consumer behavior is their buy intention, which is described in literature as the scenario in which a client is willing to initiate a transaction with the store. Purchase intention is extremely important to marketers since their anticipated consumer behavior is heavily reliant on the purchase intentions of their clients. Predicting customer behavior is one of the most dangerous jobs for any organization since it constantly changes because of unknown and questionable elements, resulting in a purchase intention that is difficult to assess under varied situations."(Radwan et al., 2014, pp. 59-60).

Consumer behavior is manifested by several previous intentions, so while attitudes determine intentions, intentions produce several behaviors (Hsu et al., 2009).

Purchasing intent can be described as the combination of consumer interest in a product and its purchasing power, but it varies with situations. Contributions of potential customers to a brand can be measured" (Kim & Ko, 2019:99), as per (Kim and Ko, 2010:26). Purchasing intent is related to attitudes and ideas towards a particular brand product, so the behavior of purchase intent is based on estimating the behavior of future potential customers with emphasis on their attitudes.

Buying intent is the consumer's desire, inclination, and demand to purchase a product of a particular brand. (Arifani & Haryanto, 2018).

The index of purchase intention is reflection to purchase, having money to purchase, considering purchasing, and being inclined to purchase (Diallo, 2012).

Purchasing intent can be interpreted as the possibility of consumers buying a product, which is related to the consumer's thoughts, attitude, and preferences. Because behavioral intent is situation-dependent, and customer relationship and customer retention are situation-dependent, purchasing intent is predicted to have a significant link with the scenario, and intents impact a person's behavior (Alnsour et al., 2018).

In the view of Ajzen, the intention is a latent desire of the consumer that leads to making the right decision at the right time, so that this intention needs a catalyst to become an action. The consumer's intention to buy remains in his memory until the appropriate time and opportunity arrives to turn it into a behavior. Ajzen also pointed out that a fixed intent leads to an acute behavior and that this intent can be understood as an expression before a behavior is performed (Ajzen, 2005, p. 99).

Geurts and Swenson (1993) define "purchase intent as only a purchase possibility" (quoted in Halim & Hamed, 2005, p.107).

Dodds et al. agreed. (1991) and Grewal et al. (1998) that the intent to purchase is a desire or desire possessed by the consumer to purchase a product of a particular brand.

While Young et al. (1998) argue that intentions are the best predictor of individual behavior, because purchasing intent is one that reflects the consumer's expression and way of thinking, despite the existence of different elements that can influence consumer behavior and resolutions (cited in Torres and Gutierrez, 2007, p. 12).

In terms of analyzing and estimating customer behavior, purchase intent is considered one of the most successful criteria. When a consumer desires to satisfy his needs by acquiring certain products or services, the process of making a purchase decision begins. As a result, shopping behavior can be considered either a goal-directed activity or an exploratory activity (Janiszewski, 1998). The distinction between goal oriented and exploration-oriented behavior is that goal-oriented customers make a one-time purchase, while consumers oriented explore by making multiple, unplanned purchases.

From the point of view of Keller (2001), the consumer's purchase intention is to make the purchase of a product or service because he needs it, or in other words, the consumer will buy the product again after evaluating it and discovering whether the product is worth buying. The consumer chooses a particular product, but the final decision about whether to buy it or not depends on the intent of the consumer. Also, it has been emphasized that there are a lot of external factors, which can influence purchase intent (Kellet, 2001).

For Shah et al. The. (2012), they consider purchase intent to be making the purchase decision by examining why a consumer purchases a particular brand. Because there is usually a relationship between the intent to purchase and consumer behavior, perceptions, and attitudes.

Fishbein and Ajzen, (1975), state, “The purchase intention of a client, which is described in literature as the circumstance in which a customer is ready to strike a transaction with the seller, is a highly essential element of their behavior. A buyer's attitude, appraisal, and external components all contribute to a buyer's purchase intention, and it is an essential factor in predicting buyer attitude."

Purchase intention behavior toward a given product or brand, according to Teng et al. (2007), necessitates an examination of all goods, brands, or services supplied by rivals. As a result, buy intention behavior occurs when businesses provide features that meet customers' needs. The buy intention is ended in true purchasing behavior; so, the higher the amount of purchase intention, the greater the consumer's desire to obtain a commodity or service (Luo et al.,2011). Thus, purchasing intent is an important driver of consumers' buying behavior, in addition, grasp consumers' buying behavior is key to attracting and retaining consumers across brands, products, or services (Ko et al., 2008).

Schiffman and Kanuk conducted studies which showed that it is the consumer's buying intent that causes a strong desire to buy a particular brand. Purchase intent is a concept that explains why a consumer considers a brand purchasable (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2000:5).

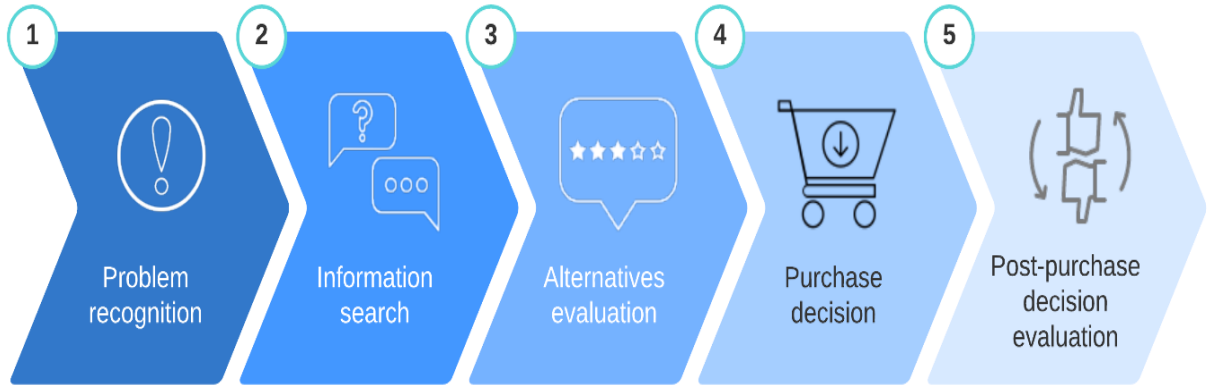
According to additional research, two factors impact a consumer's purchasing intention for a product or service. One of the very first effects is a favorable attitude toward the brand. Brand familiarity is the second factor influencing purchase intent. There are two levels to brand familiarity: experience and brand exposure. Prior experiences are derived from previous uses of the brand. The entire amount of time and money spent on the selection of goods, services, and the purchasing procedure is referred to as purchase intention. Recognizing the buyer's purpose is a tool for advertisers to predict what the consumer will buy. Furthermore, when examining the marketing process, the cost of keeping an acquired client is substantially lower than the cost of getting a customer for the first time and recognizing purchase intention in this context is critical (Kozak & Doan, 2014).

2.4.2. The process of making a purchase decision

In fact, the task of every marketer is to know what the consumer thinks, because knowing the needs of buyers allows for a customized and appropriate offer. The buying process begins with the consumer realizing the need. The consumer is aware of the disparity between his real and desired condition because internal and external factors can stimulate desire. Consumers often discuss decision-making in their daily life because they make several decisions in many important everyday matters. It is sometimes easy to make decisions, but at other times it is difficult, and the important aspect of deciding is that the result is unknown and sometimes unexpected.

For example, when making a purchase of food products, the decision-making process is simple and easy because these products we buy from time to time, but in the case of buying a plot of land or a company stock, the decision-making process goes through a more complex and multi-stage process. American researchers Engel, Blackwell, and Kollat (Engel et al, 1968) modeled a five-step model that illustrates a consumer's purchasing decision-making process.

Figure 9: Consumer/Buyer Decision-Making Process



Source: Kotler & Armstrong, (2018).

Problem recognition (Recognize the need for a service or product): Most of the stage of the decision-making process starts with the presence of a problem with the consumer, or a desire that he wants to satisfy. The consumer believes that something is missing or missing, and he needs to treat this feeling for it to return to normal. If it is possible to predict when the target demographic will develop these demands or desires, then this would be the most appropriate time to announce them. For example, the consumer has run out of washing powder, and he must go get it (Fill, 2005).

Information collecting: Naturally, we are not experts in all things in our surroundings. During the purchasing decision stage, we research the products and services that can meet our needs or desires. There are two types of research we can do, internal: refers to one's memory and past experiences. External: Thanks to exchanges with his immediate environment, his family, and friends, or indirectly, through various information provided by places of sale, or on websites and social networks, and others. No information provided by relatives is the most reassuring (Sirgy, 1987).

Evaluating alternatives (compares decisions with similar alternatives): Once the consumer determines his needs and what satisfies his desires, he will start searching for the most suitable deal for him. It can depend on quality, price, or other things he deems essential for him. So that the consumer reads many reviews and compares the costs before choosing the ones that satisfy and meet most of the characteristics of their decision-making process (Khan, 2007).

Purchase decision (carry out the actual purchase): All information is in the hands of the consumer to make the decision, but his final decision depends on the priorities of his criteria; plus, last minute items. The flash promotion may change its mind. There are other variables

that come into play if the purchase is of big value to the customer, such as the risks involved. The customer is often influenced by the suggestions and experiences of his surroundings (Fill, 2005).

Post-purchase evaluation (Reflects their purchase): Does the buying process satisfy the need or the desire once it is completed? Will the process be above or below consumer expectations? The goal of every marketer is to create a loyal customer for life rather than a one-time customer. Your brand image may be permanently destroyed if your brand has a bad buyer experience. On the flip side, a great experience may turn a consumer into a loyal customer, and he may even become a brand ambassador for you (Hoyer & Maccinis, 2008).

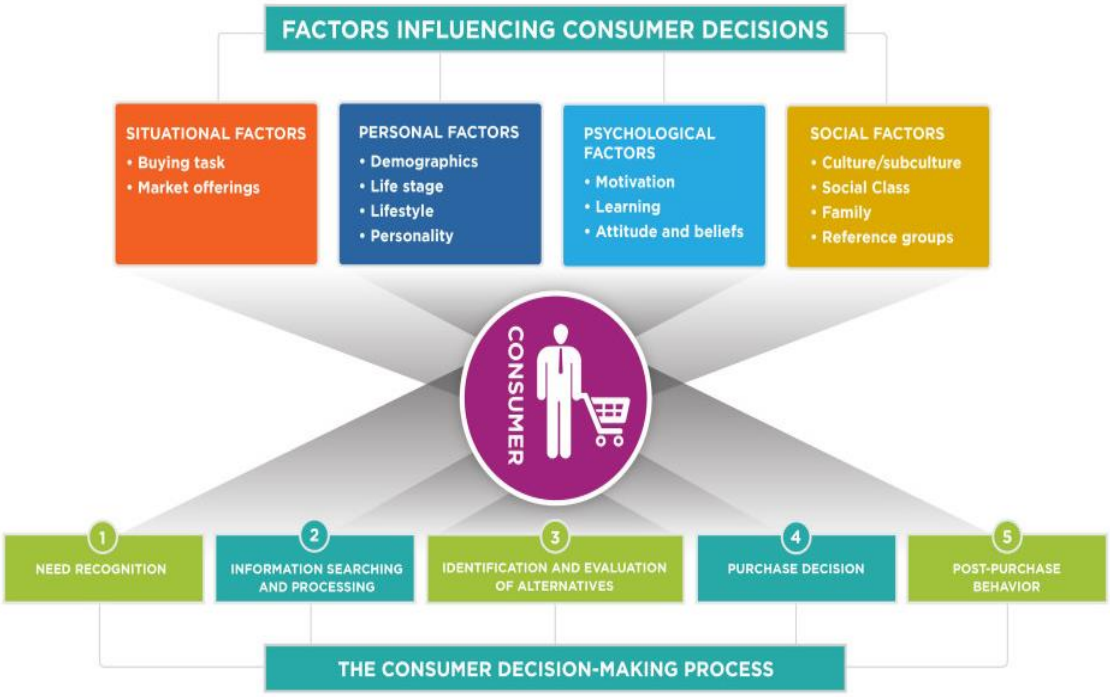
According to this model, with any transaction, the consumer goes through all these five stages, but when making daily purchases, he skips some steps or changes their sequence.

2.4.3. Factors affecting the purchase decision

The process of making a purchase decision by the consumer helps in understanding the stages that a person goes through when he decides to buy, there are many factors that influence the reasons for the results of the purchase decision (Haque et al., 2015). Among these factors, we identify factors related to the purchasing circumstance (what you are purchasing and for what reason) as well as aspects special to each human (the person's history, character, and hobbies and purchasing power). Of course, there are no two alike people who make decisions in the same way, because each of us is unique in his behavior and consumer choices, and we have many beliefs and behavioral tendencies, some of which are controllable, and others are out of control, so it is difficult to predict how the factors affecting the purchase decision will be determined (Chao-Chien & Chen, 2014).

Although marketers cannot interact with the complex profiles of each consumer, it is possible to identify some factors that tend to influence most consumers, so that they can be grouped into four groups, as shown in the figure below (Holland & Stephanie,2016):

Figure 10: Factors Influencing Consumer Decisions



Source : https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wmopen-principlesofmarketing/chapter/reading-situational-factors/

- Situational Factors are interested with the consumer's level of involvement in the purchase process as well as the market options available.
- Personal aspects: Age, life stage, economic position, and personality are all examples of individual characteristics and attributes.
- Consumer motivation: knowledge, education, socialization, emotions, and ideas are all influenced by psychological variables.
- A social component is the influence of culture, socioeconomic class, family, and reference groups.

2.5. The effect of influencers on brand equity and purchase intention

Social media platforms are means of sharing personal information such as photos, ideas, videos, or general news around the world. These platforms are an important means of communication that facilitates the interaction of users via the Internet, which can influence or be affected by the opinions of other people (Tuten, 2008).

In our current era, influencer marketing has been highly highlighted, through social media, and it is the role that influencers play so that they influence consumers by sharing their thoughts and opinions, so they greatly influence the demand trends for certain products and brands (Enge, 2012). The term influencer marketing can be defined as the marketing of a product or service

by those who take actions to influence people's purchasing behavior. Buying effect is often the result of influencers' popularity, reputation, and even their expertise (De Veirman et al., 2017). This type of marketing is not comparable to word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing. In marketing its social media, since it plays an important role in establishing the proper conditions for the use of this instrument (Goldsmith & Clark, 2008).

The goal of this scientific contribution is to understand the methodology for determining the rating, influence factors, and severity of influence on consumer decision-making of influencers as opinion leaders in the social media environment, based on a comparison of information from the results of overall research studies and quantitative online research studies that Marketers conduct. According to the survey results, advertising certain items through influencers is more beneficial than others. Influencers will have the biggest sway on purchases of apparel, shoes, cosmetics, and, unexpectedly, services (Cooley, 2019). Meanwhile, individuals rely heavily on other reasons to buy food, technology, and jewelry, but influencer marketing has the potential to affect them as well.

According to certain study and empirical data, online opinion leaders are key supporters of products and services in a variety of business and marketing strategies. Influencer marketing, which may be described as the process of investigating, finding, supporting, and engaging people active in high-impact dialogues, has become a significant strategy for influencing purchasing behavior in our day. With this technique, marketers may carefully target a subset of their brand's potential consumers rather than the entire pool of possible purchasers.

Consumer buying intent is the evaluation of customer experiences with specific products or services of a brand, and a necessary dimension is reaching and retaining potential customers in the marketing area (Kim and Ko, 2010:1). Consumer intent in marketing activities has become measured by social media (Chu et al., 2013; Kim and Ko, (2010:1); Martín-Consuegra et al., 2018). Therefore, companies use this social media to reach and retain these customers by informing them and directing their attitudes towards a product, service, or brand.

Worldwide (2008) conducted a study on the customer that 70% of social media consumers browse the pages and websites of brands on the Internet to collect evidence and information about a particular brand, and this study indicated that 49% of consumers tend to purchase a product or a brand or a particular service based on information they have accessed through brand pages or social media sites. So, we conclude that acquiring information about brands, products or services leads to changing customer attitudes towards them and this led to buying

intent behavior, so it turns out that social media marketing efforts have a significant impact on customers' intent and attitudes by obtaining information about the product or service of a brand commercialization in the market (Kim and Ko, 2012:65).

The study conducted by Kim, and Ko (2012:65) on social media marketing efforts in the context of purchase intent shows that purchase intent is significantly and positively affected. Therefore, this study suggested that most companies should invest their marketing efforts through social media. Social to promote brand and value shares.

Martin-Consuegra et al. (2018) investigated the relation between purchase intent, brand credibility, and brand image in the context of social media marketing and discovered that brand credibility had a favorable influence on brand image and buy intent. Furthermore, the results show that social media activities are favorably influenced by the direct association between brand image and buy intent, however the results show that the direct impact of brand credibility on purchase intent diminishes through social media activities. Furthermore, social media activity has a direct and favorable effect on purchasing intent (Chu et al., 2013). Gautam and Sharma (2017), in social media marketing, see that the activities such as "entertainment, personalization, engagement, word of mouth, direction, and customer relations" have a significant beneficial influence on customers' buy inclinations.

A few years ago, the brand was associated with celebrities, but today, the brand is also associated with everyday consumers who have a significant influence on others. Influencer marketing is currently one of the fastest growing strategies for reaching new customers through internet media (Coon, 2010). Influencer marketing is mostly dependent on customer trust. Many influencers are also bloggers with their own set of interests, i.e., people who share their experiences, stories, or hobbies with a large internet following. They, too, were not significant at first, but have since grown in stature. Most of them are sports, performers, explorers, physicians, or regular mothers on maternity leave. Each of them has the power to influence a certain set of individuals, and each of them may promote a distinct product in some way. Proper product promotion is the essence of influencer marketing. The key to the success of this form of marketing lies in identifying the right influencer who will promote a particular product, because a person in general will not recommend a product without any experience with it, or even the absence of any knowledge of it. (Perera & Perera, 2016)

Companies profit from engaging with influencers since it opens new doors for them. Influencers and agencies have more open and passionate ties with one another. However, when the prices

of global influencers began to skyrocket, businesses began cooperating with micro influencers. The amount of clicks, likes, or comments is sometimes a deceptive measure for businesses (Laroche, Habibi, & Richard, 2013).

Influencer marketing is widely used in business tactics, but little is known about the characteristics that determine the effectiveness of online brand interaction at various phases of the consumer purchasing process (Kavisekera & Abeysekera, 2016). This is how marketing practitioners might consider partnering with a different influencer based on the specific goals of influencer marketing campaigns and tapping into different influencers based on whether marketers want to generate more buzz around the company's initiatives or advertise newly launched products.

3. HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Consumers' purchasing decisions are impacted by available information from commercials, magazines, social media, close friends, and blogs, since consumers frequently purchase when they receive recommendations from someone they believe. Influencer marketing has received a lot of attention recently, thanks to social media, since it is the role that influencers play in influencing customers by sharing their feelings and views, and it has a big impact on demand patterns for specific products and companies (Sulianta, F. 2015). Consumers now seek advice from social media influencers before making a purchase, motivating, and influencing their purchasing behavior, since consumers regard influencers as an impartial authority that analyzes a product; yet the influencer is generally perceived as more pleasant and honest. As per various studies and empirical evidence, influencer marketing, which can be defined as the process of researching, locating, promoting, and involving engaged individuals in high-impact conversations (Berne-Manero, 2020), has emerged as a key technique for influencing purchase behavior nowadays.

Social media improves customer attitudes toward a brand (Cambria et al., 2012).

H1: Influencer's characteristics dimensions (communication skills, influence, authenticity, expertise) influence brand awareness.

H2: Influencer's characteristics dimensions (communication skills, influence, authenticity, expertise) influence brand associations.

According to Chi Yeh and Yang (2009), perceived brand quality modulates the link between perceived profitability and customer purchase intent. Products connected with a well-known trademark have an influence on customers who see the brand as high quality, attaching value, and so affecting purchasing intentions (Chi et al., 2009).

H3: Influencer's characteristics dimensions (communication skills, influence, authenticity, expertise) influence perceived of quality.

According to Halim and Hamid (2005), the customer's perception of value influences buying intent, with the greater the worth, the higher the purchase decision. Utilizing social media sites to build various websites, boost and manage postings, and connect clients results in increased product exposure and engagement, as well as a possible influence on buy intent (Batra & Keller, 2016). Social media advertising aids in knowing brand identification, particularly throughout the purchasing process (Raza, Bakar & Mohamad, 2017) Advertisement is claimed to build

brand equity in a variety of ways, including consumer happiness and satisfaction, perceived quality and brand image, brand awareness, practicability, and brand recognition (Kumar et al., 2016).

H4: Influencer's characteristics dimensions (communication skills, influence, authenticity, expertise) influence brand loyalty.

Martn-Consuegra et al. (2018) examined the link among purchase intent, brand reputation, and brand image in the framework of social media marketing and discovered that brand equity had a favorable influence on both brand image and buy intension. Furthermore, the findings suggest that social media activities are favorably influenced by the direct association among brand image and buy intent, and the results reveal that social media activities reduce the direct effect of brand credibility on purchase intent. Therefore, social media activity has a direct and positive influence on purchase intent and assists the customer in making a quick decision about a brand product (Chu et al., 2013).

H6: Brand equity dimensions (brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty) influence purchase intention.

So, we conclude that acquiring information about brands, products or services leads to changing customer attitudes towards them and this led to buying intent behavior, so it turns out that social media marketing efforts have a significant impact on customers' intent and attitudes by obtaining information about the product or service of a brand commercialization in the market (Kim and Ko, 2012:65).

So, we deduce that obtaining information about brands, goods, or services changes customer attitudes toward them, which leads to purchasing intent behavior, implying that social media activities get an impact on the customers' intension and behaviors by gathering information around a brand's good or service (Kim and Ko, 2012:65).

H5: Influencer's characteristics dimensions (communication skills, influence, authenticity, expertise) influence purchase intention.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

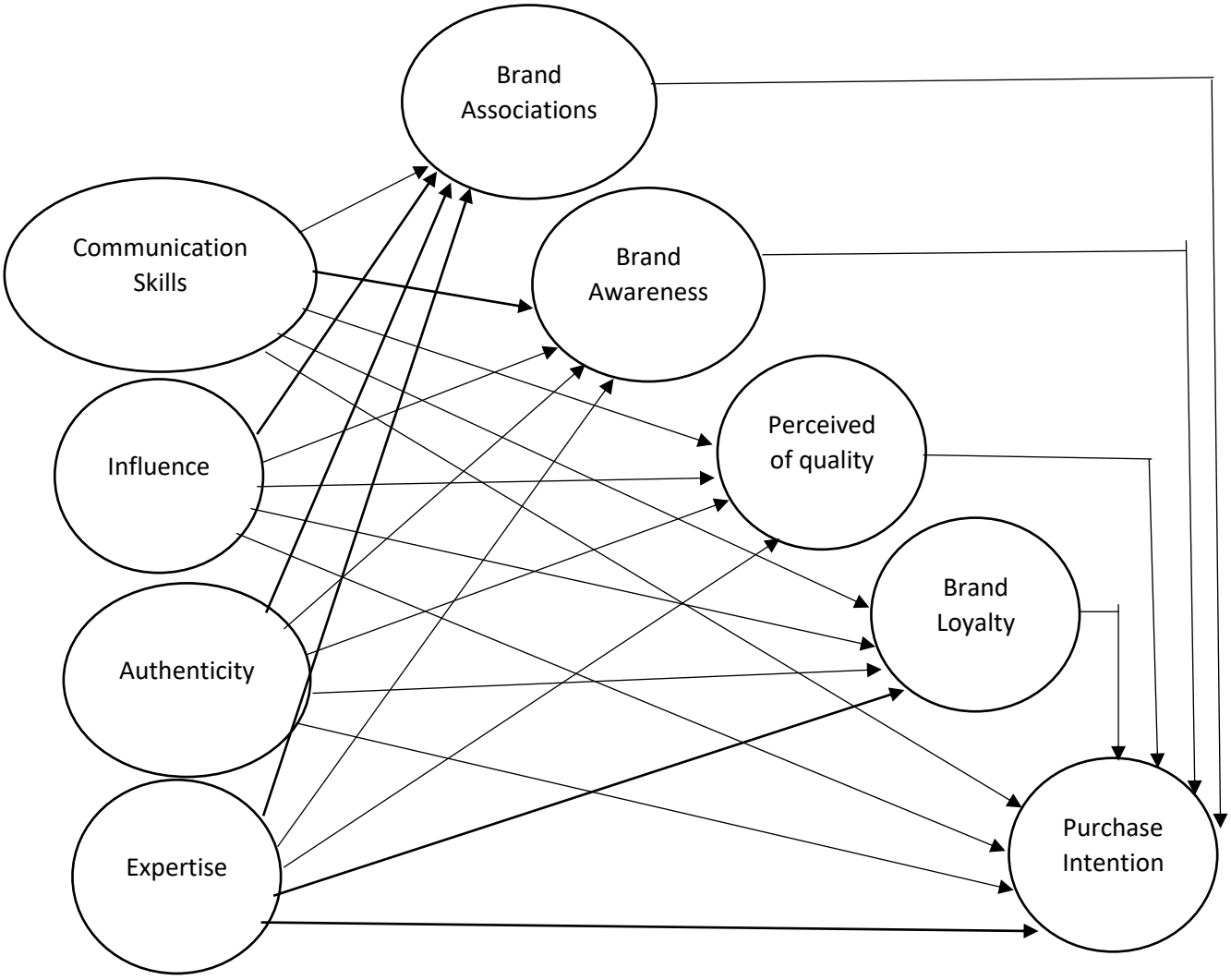
4.1. Purpose of study

The aim of this article is to determine the predictive effects between Influencer's characteristics dimensions, brand equity, and purchase intent, in addition to determine the impact of social media influencers on brand equity and purchase intent.

4.2. Importance of study

The importance of this article is evident in giving companies a clear picture of the role of social media influencers have become on consumer purchase decisions and brand equity.

4.4. Research model



4.5. Sample and data collection process

This research focused on the effect of the dimensions of influencer characteristics, brand value, and purchase intent.

Then a descriptive research design was used to conduct this study. Hence, create a structured online questionnaire (Google Forms), as it is a preferred way to find out different aspects of the participants' behavior, and then distribute it to the respondents using social media platforms like WhatsApp. The survey was conducted in both English and Arabic, and most respondents were from Morocco and Turkey.

The questionnaire was formulated based on literature from the past, all excerpted from previous studies, to determine responses. Many factors have been found to influence influencers on brand equity and purchase intent. The questionnaire consists of four sections. In the first section, basic details such as age, qualifications, gender, etc. were taken from the respondents. In the second part, questions related to social media marketing are asked that measure communication skills, influence, credibility, and expertise. In the third part, questions of brand ownership that measure brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand engagement, and perceived quality are asked. In the fourth part, then ask questions regarding the purchasing intent of consumers. The convenient sampling method was also used as the sampling method.

In this study convenience sampling method was used. In the questionnaire, the respondent was asked using a Likert scale. Likert scale is used to measure respondents' level of agreement with the statement. This study uses a 1-5 Likert scale, which is: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree or disagree), 4 (agree), 5 (strongly agree). The data was then processed using SEM analysis. 213 responses were obtained from females and males between the ages of 20 and 50 years with experiences in following influencers on social media, and then data analysis was performed using these responses.

4.6. Data analysis and findings

Participants

Table 2: Distribution of Participants by Demographic Characteristics

		f	%
Gender	Female	145	68.1
	Male	68	31.9

Age	20 - 29	173	81.2
	30 - 39	24	11.3
	40 - 49	6	2.8
	50 above	10	4.7
Educational Level	Undergraduate	85	39.9
	Master's Graduate	72	33.8
	PHD Graduate	56	26.3
Daily Social Media Usage	Up to one hour	15	7.0
	1 - 3 hours	81	38.0
	3 - 5 hours	68	31.9
	More than 5 hours	49	23.0

When the table is examined, it is understood that 68.1% of the participants are female and 31.9% are male. A large proportion of the participants (81.2%) are in the 20-29 age group. 39.9% of the participants are at Undergraduate, 33.8% are at master's Graduate, and 26.3% are at PhD Graduate education level. A large percentage of the participants (38%) stated that they use social media for 1-3 hours.

4.7 Validity and Reliability Analysis Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of the Influencer's Characteristics Scale

Confirmatory factor analysis was applied to determine the compatibility of the four-factor structure of the scale with the data. Analysis was carried out using the Maximum Likelihood Estimation method. The cut-off point for factor loads was set to 0.40 (Comrey and Lee, 1992). Items with low factor loading (Exp5, Exp6, Exp7, Cs1, Cs3, Aut6, Aut7, Inf1, Inf2, Inf4) were excluded from the scale. As a result of the final analysis, it was observed that 17 items remained in the scale. The fit indices calculated for the four-factor model are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Fit Indices of the Four-Factor Structure of the Influencer's Characteristics Scale

Fit Indices	Excellent	Acceptable	Obtained fit indices	Source
(χ^2/sd)	≤ 3	≤ 4-5	1.62	Byrne, 1989
RMSEA	≤ 0.05	0.06-0.08	0.05	Browne and Cudeck, 1993
SRMR	≤ 0.05	0.06-0.08	0.07	
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.85-0.90	0.91	Tanaka and Hub, 1985;

AGFI	≥ 0.90	0.80-0.90	0.88	Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1984
CFI	≥ 0.95	0.90-0.94	0.95	Bollen, 1989
TLI	≥ 0.95	0.90-0.94	0.94	

When Table 3 is examined, it is understood that the four-factor structure of the Influencer's Characteristics Scale fits perfectly with the data and the four-factor structure of the scale is confirmed. The tested four-factor model is shown in Figure 11. All path coefficients (factor loads) shown in the model are statistically significant at the p<0.001 level.

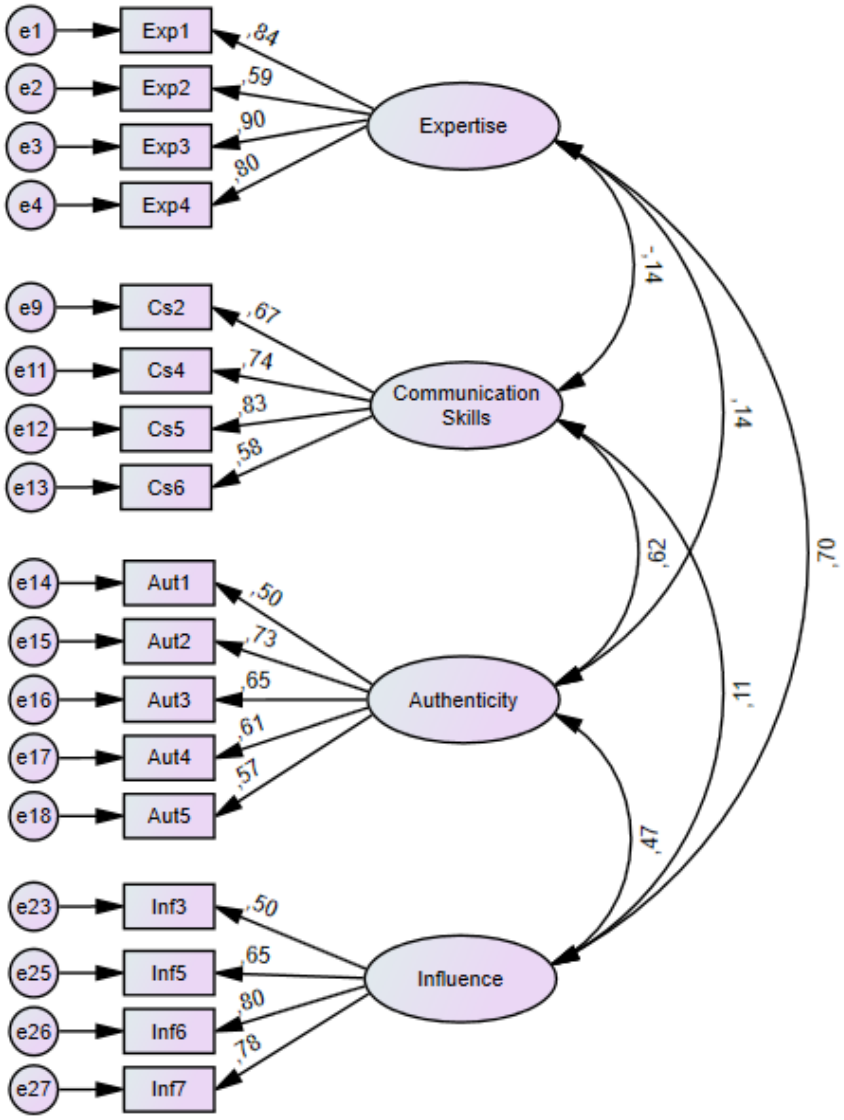


Figure 11: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Diagram of Influencer's Characteristics Scale

chi-square=182.97; Sd=113; p<0.001

Table 4: Factor Loads of Influencer's Characteristics Scale Items

			β	SE	t	CR	AVE	Cronbach alpha
Exp1	<---	Exp	0.84			0.87	0.63	0.79
Exp2	<---	Exp	0.59	0.10	9.09***			
Exp3	<---	Exp	0.90	0.07	15.69***			
Exp4	<---	Exp	0.80	0.08	13.47***			
Cs2	<---	Cs	0.67			0.80	0.50	0.77
Cs4	<---	Cs	0.74	0.13	8.87***			
Cs5	<---	Cs	0.83	0.14	9.38***			
Cs6	<---	Cs	0.58	0.14	7.22***			
Aut1	<---	Aut	0.50			0.75	0.38	0.74
Aut2	<---	Aut	0.73	0.24	6.38***			
Aut3	<---	Aut	0.65	0.25	6.06***			
Aut4	<---	Aut	0.61	0.22	5.90***			
Aut5	<---	Aut	0.57	0.20	5.66***			
Inf3	<---	Inf	0.50			0.78	0.48	0.74
Inf5	<---	Inf	0.65	0.22	6.34***			
Inf6	<---	Inf	0.80	0.20	6.94***			
Inf7	<---	Inf	0.78	0.23	6.87***			

***p<0,001

When Table 4 is examined, it is understood that the factor loads of the items in the scale take values between 0.50 and 0.90. Convergent validity means that statements about variables are related to each other and to the factor they create. In order to ensure convergent validity, the calculated CR (Composite Reliability) values are expected to be greater than the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) values and the AVE value to be greater than 0.5. It is also expected to be CR>0.70, to ensure reliability (Yaşlıoğlu, 2017). When the calculated values were examined, the condition CR>AVE, CR>0.70 was met. However, the condition for AVE>0.50 could not be met.

Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were calculated to determine the reliability of the Influencer's Characteristics Scale. Values between 0.60-0.80 indicate that the measurement tool is highly reliable, and values between 0.81-1.00 indicate that the measurement tool is highly reliable (Özdamar, 2004). Alpha coefficients calculated for Expertise, Communication Skills, Authenticity, Influence were 0.79; 0.77; 0.74 and 0.74 respectively. The coefficients obtained showed that the internal consistency reliability of the measurement tool was at a sufficient level.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of the Brand Equity Scale

Confirmatory factor analysis was applied to determine the compatibility of the four-factor structure of the scale with the data. Analysis was carried out using the Maximum Likelihood Estimation method. The cut-off point for factor loads was set to 0.40 (Comrey and Lee, 1992). An item (Bas3) with a low factor loading was excluded from the scale. As a result of the final analysis, it was observed that 11 items remained in the scale. The fit indices calculated for the four-factor model are given in Table 5.

Table 5: Fit Indices of the Four-Factor Structure of the Brand Equity Scale

Fit Indices	Excellent	Acceptable	Obtained fit indices	Source
(χ^2/sd)	≤ 3	≤ 4-5	1.79	Byrne, 1989
RMSEA	≤ 0.05	0.06-0.08	0.06	Browne and Cudeck, 1993
SRMR	≤ 0.05	0.06-0.08	0.04	
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.85-0.90	0.95	Tanaka and Huba, 1985; Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1984
AGFI	≥ 0.90	0.80-0.90	0.90	
CFI	≥ 0.95	0.90-0.94	0.97	Bollen, 1989
TLI	≥ 0.95	0.90-0.94	0.96	

When Table 5 is examined, it is understood that the four-factor structure of the Brand Equity Scale fits perfectly with the data and the four-factor structure of the scale is confirmed. The tested four-factor model is shown in Figure 12. All path coefficients (factor loads) shown in the model are statistically significant at the $p<0.001$ level.

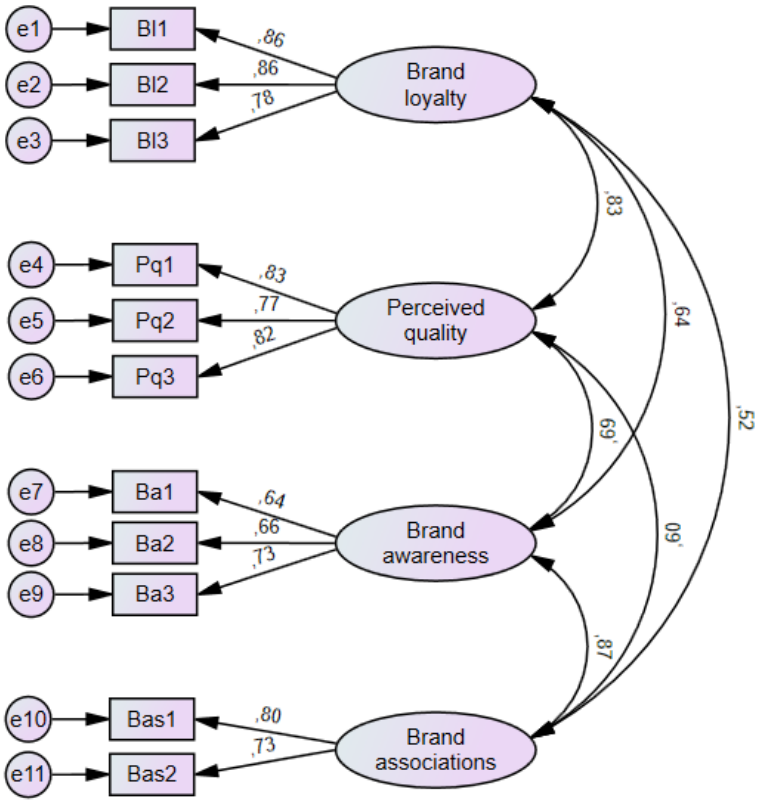


Figure 12: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Diagram of Brand Equity Scale

chi-square =67.97; Sd=38; p<0.001

Table 6: Factor Loads of Brand Equity Scale Items

			β	SE	t	CR	AVE	Cronbach alpha
Bl1	<---	Bl	0.86					
Bl2	<---	Bl	0.86	0.07	14.89***	0.87	0.69	0.87
Bl3	<---	Bl	0.78	0.07	13.04***			
Pq1	<---	Pq	0.83					
Pq2	<---	Pq	0.77	0.07	12.31***	0.85	0.66	0.85
Pq3	<---	Pq	0.82	0.06	13.35***			
Ba1	<---	Ba	0.64					
Ba2	<---	Ba	0.66	0.14	7.72***	0.72	0.46	0.72
Ba3	<---	Ba	0.73	0.14	8.29***			
Bas1	<---	Bas	0.80			0.74	0.59	0.74
Bas2	<---	Bas	0.73	0.11	9.30***			

***p<0,001

When **Table 6** is examined, it is understood that the factor loads of the items in the scale take values between 0.64 and 0.86. Convergent validity means that statements about variables are related to each other and to the factor they create. In order to ensure convergent validity, the

calculated CR (Composite Reliability) values are expected to be greater than the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) values and the AVE value to be greater than 0.5. It is also expected to be CR>0.70, to ensure reliability (Yaşlıoğlu, 2017). When the calculated values were examined, the condition CR>AVE, CR>0.70 was met. However, the AVE>0.50 condition was not fully met.

Cronbach Alpha coefficients were calculated to determine the reliability of the Brand Equity Scale. Values between 0.60-0.80 indicate that the measurement tool is highly reliable, and values between 0.81-1.00 indicate that the measurement tool is highly reliable (Özdamar, 2004). Alpha coefficients calculated for loyalty, quality, awareness, associations are 0.87; 0.85; 0.72 and 0.74 respectively. The coefficients obtained showed that the internal consistency reliability of the measurement tool was at a sufficient level.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of the Purchase Intention Scale

Confirmatory factor analysis was applied to determine how well the single-factor structure of the measurement tool was compatible with the data. Analysis was carried out using the Maximum Likelihood Estimation method. The cut-off point for factor loads was set to 0.40 (Comrey and Lee, 1992). No item with a factor loading value below 0.40 was observed. The fit values calculated for the single factor model are given in Table 6.

Table 7: Fit Indices of the Four-Factor Structure of the Purchase Intention Scale

Fit Indices	Excellent	Acceptable	Obtained fit indices	Source
(χ^2/sd)	≤ 3	≤ 4-5	1.43	Byrne, 1989
RMSEA	≤ 0.05	0.06-0.08	0.05	Browne and Cudeck, 1993
SRMR	≤ 0.05	0.06-0.08	0.02	
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.85-0.90	0.99	Tanaka and Huba, 1985; Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1984
AGFI	≥ 0.90	0.80-0.90	0.97	
CFI	≥ 0.95	0.90-0.94	1.00	Bollen, 1989
TLI	≥ 0.95	0.90-0.94	0.99	

When Table 7 is examined, it is understood that the single-factor structure of the Purchase Intention Scale fits perfect with the data and the single-factor structure of the scale is confirmed. The tested single factor model is shown in Figure 13. All path coefficients (factor loads) shown in the model are statistically significant at the p<0.001 level.

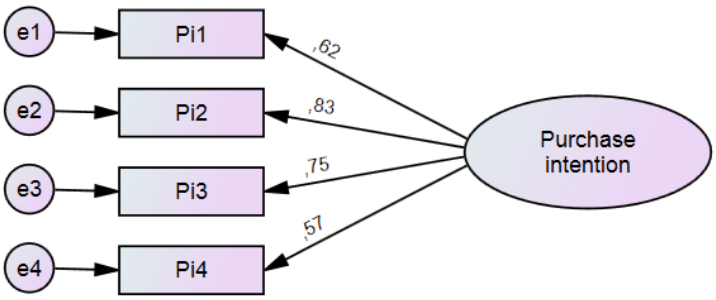


Figure 13: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Diagram of Purchase Intention Scale

chi-square =2.87; Sd=2; p=0.24

Table 8: Factor Loads of Purchase Intention Scale Items

			β	SE	t	CR	AVE	Cronbach alpha
Pi1	<---	Pi	0.62			0.79	0.49	0.78
Pi2	<---	Pi	0.83	0.14	8.25***			
Pi3	<---	Pi	0.75	0.13	8.07***			
Pi4	<---	Pi	0.57	0.13	6.68***			

***p<0,001

When Table 8 is examined, it is understood that the factor loads of the items in the scale take values between 0.57 and 0.83. Convergent validity means that statements about variables are related to each other and to the factor they create. In order to ensure convergent validity, the calculated CR (Composite Reliability) values are expected to be greater than the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) values and the AVE value to be greater than 0.5. It is also expected to be CR>0.70, to ensure reliability (Yaşlıoğlu, 2017). When the calculated values were examined, the condition CR>AVE, CR>0.70 was met. However, the AVE>0.50 condition was not fully met.

Cronbach Alpha coefficients were calculated to determine the reliability of the Purchase Intention Scale. Values between 0.60-0.80 indicate that the measurement tool is highly reliable, and values between 0.81-1.00 indicate that the measurement tool is highly reliable (Özdamar, 2004). The alpha coefficient calculated for the scale is 0.78. The coefficient obtained showed that the internal consistency reliability of the measurement tool was at a sufficient level.

Data Analysis

Distribution of influencer's characteristics, brand equity and purchase intention scores were analyzed based on skewness and kurtosis coefficients. In order to meet the normal distribution assumption, it is sufficient that the skewness and kurtosis coefficients are in the range of ±2 (George and Mallery, 2010). It was observed that the skewness and kurtosis coefficients calculated in this study were within the specified range (Table 9).

Table 9: Skewness and Kurtosis Coefficients

Variables	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	z	SE	z	SE
Communication skills	0.12	0.17	-0.51	0.33
Influence	-0.73	0.17	-0.03	0.33
Authenticity	-0.06	0.17	-0.40	0.33
Expertise	-1.54	0.17	1.77	0.33
Brand loyalty	0.07	0.17	-0.92	0.33
Perceived quality	-0.09	0.17	-0.46	0.33
Brand awareness	-0.39	0.17	0.26	0.33
Brand associations	-0.61	0.17	0.28	0.33
Purchase intention	0.05	0.17	-0.51	0.33

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the relationships between influencer's characteristics, brand equity and purchase intention scores. Correlation coefficients are coefficients that show the amount and direction of the relationship between two data sets. The correlation coefficient takes values in the range of ±1. Coefficients between 0 and ±0.30 indicate low, coefficients between ±0.30 and ±0.70 indicate moderate, and coefficients between ±0.70 and ±1 indicate high level relationships (Büyüköztürk, 2007). SPSS 25.0 statistical package program was used for the analysis.

Path analysis model was used to determine the predictive effects between influencer's characteristics, brand equity and purchase intention. In path analysis, one or more multiple regression analyzes are applied depending on the defined relationships of the variables in a particular path model. In this analysis, parameter estimation is made over a system of equations solution using multiple regression or linear algebra (Cokluk, Şekercioğlu and Büyüköztürk, 2010). Path analysis was performed using the AMOS 24.0 statistical package program. Before analysis, Cook distance values were calculated to determine multivariate outliers in the data set. The obtained values (Cook <1) showed that there were no multivariate outliers in the data set. VIF<10 values show that there is no multicollinearity (Albayrak, 2005). The calculated VIF

values were between 1.46 and 2.59. These obtained values showed that there was no multicollinearity among the independent variables. Confidence interval was chosen as 95% and $p<0.05$ values were considered statistically significant.

4.8 Correlation Analysis

Table 10: Pearson Correlation Coefficients of the Relationships Between Influencer's characteristics, brand equity, and purchase intention Scores

	Variables	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1.	Communication skills	1								
2.	Influence	.137*	1							
3.	Authenticity	.495**	.423**	1						
4.	Expertise	-.104	.565**	.169*	1					
5.	Brand loyalty	.266**	.185**	.301**	.078	1				
6.	Perceived quality	.287**	.224**	.320**	.109	.652**	1			
7.	Brand awareness	.241**	.312**	.311**	.201**	.521**	.699**	1		
8.	Brand associations	.130	.328**	.280**	.193**	.413**	.524**	.620**	1	
9.	Purchase intention	.391**	0.083	.368**	-.039	.509**	.472**	.365**	.301**	1

**p<0.01; *p<0.05; N=213

When the statistically significant relationships in the table are examined, Communication skills scores have low and moderate correlations with Influence ($r=0.137$; $p<0.05$), Authenticity ($r=0.495$; $p<0.01$), Brand loyalty ($r=0.266$; $p<0.01$), Perceived quality ($r=0.287$; $p<0.01$), Brand awareness ($r=0.241$; $p<0.01$), Purchase intention ($r=0.391$; $p<0.01$) scores.

Influence scores have low and moderate correlations with Authenticity ($r=0.423$; $p<0.01$), Expertise ($r=0.565$; $p<0.01$), Brand loyalty ($r=0.185$; $p<0.01$), Perceived quality ($r=0.224$; $p<0.01$), Brand awareness ($r=0.312$; $p<0.01$), Brand associations ($r=0.328$; $p<0.01$) scores.

Authenticity scores have low and moderate correlations with Expertise ($r=0.169$; $p<0.05$), Brand loyalty ($r=0.301$; $p<0.01$), Perceived quality ($r=0.320$; $p<0.01$), Brand awareness ($r=0.311$; $p<0.01$), Brand associations ($r=0.280$; $p<0.01$), Purchase intention ($r=0.368$; $p<0.01$) scores.

Expertise scores have low correlations with Brand awareness ($r=0.201$; $p<0.01$), Brand associations ($r=0.193$; $p<0.01$) scores.

Brand loyalty scores have moderate correlations with Perceived quality (r=0.652; p<0.01), Brand awareness (r=0.521; p<0.01), Brand associations (r=0.413; p<0.01), Purchase intention (r=0.509; p<0.01) scores.

Perceived quality scores have moderate correlations with Brand awareness (r=0.699; p<0.01), Brand associations (r=0.524; p<0.01), Purchase intention (r=0.472; p<0.01) scores.

Brand awareness scores have moderate correlations with Brand associations (r=0.620; p<0.01), Purchase intention (r=0.365; p<0.01) scores. Brand associations scores have moderate correlation with Purchase intention (r=0.301; p<0.01) scores.

4.9 Path Analysis Model Results

Path analysis model was developed and tested to determine the predictive effects between influencer's characteristics, brand equity and purchase intention. Communication skills, Influence, Authenticity, Expertise variables were included as exogenous variables in the model. Brand loyalty, Perceived quality, Brand awareness, Brand associations, Purchase intention variables were included as endogenous variables. The fit values of the tested model are shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Fit Indices Obtained by Testing the Path Analysis Model

Fit Indices	Excellent	Acceptable	Obtained fit indices	Source
(χ^2/sd)	≤ 3	≤ 4-5	2.32	Byrne, 1989
RMSEA	≤ 0.05	0.06-0.08	0.08	Browne and Cudeck, 1993
SRMR	≤ 0.05	0.06-0.08	0.02	
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.85-0.90	0.99	Tanaka and Huba, 1985. Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1984
AGFI	≥ 0.90	0.80-0.90	0.89	
CFI	≥ 0.95	0.90-0.94	1.00	Bollen, 1989
TLI	≥ 0.95	0.90-0.94	0.93	

When Table 11 is examined, it is understood that the tested path analysis model fits perfectly with the data and the model is confirmed. The tested model is shown in Figure14. Path coefficients, standard errors, critical values and p values in the model are shown in Table 12.

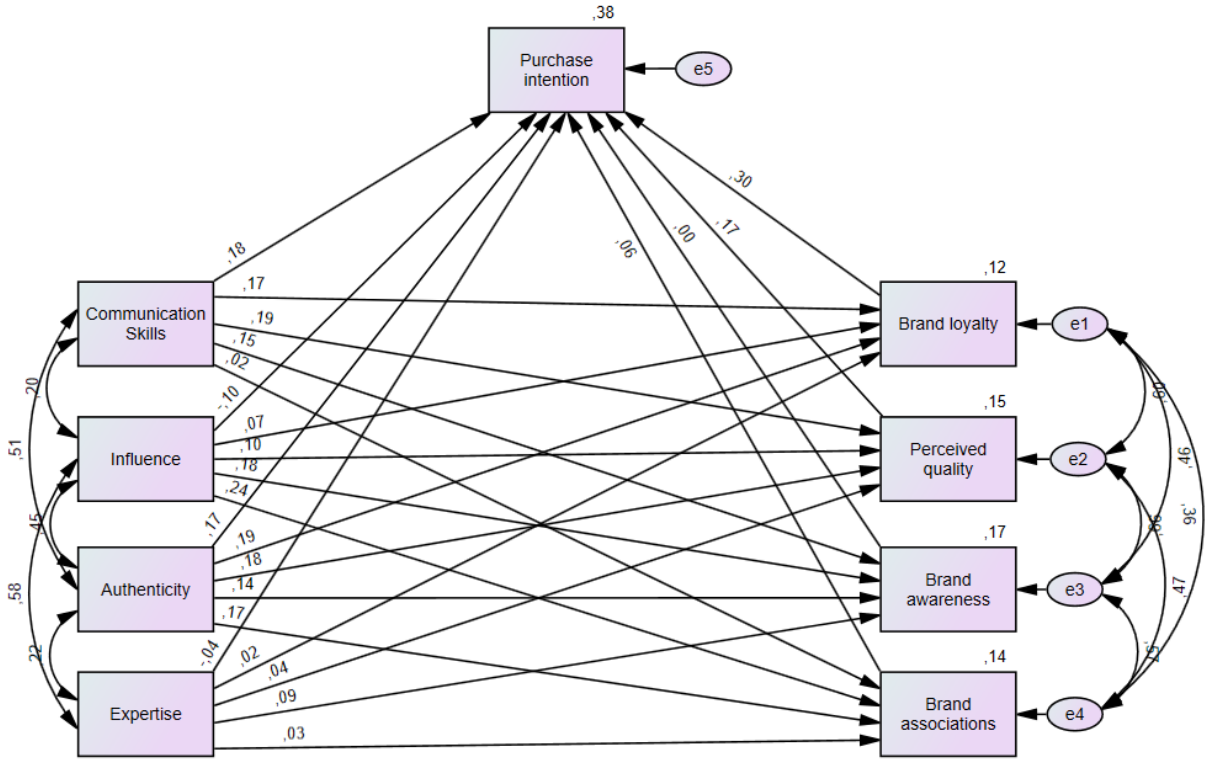


Figure 14: Path Analysis Model

Chi-square =2.32; Sd=1; p=0.13

Table 12: Values Obtained by Testing the Path Analysis Model

			B	β	SE	t	p	Hypothesis
Pq	<---	Exp	0.05	0.04	0.10	0.55	0.580	Reject
Bl	<---	Exp	0.04	0.03	0.13	0.31	0.756	Reject
Pq	<---	Aut	0.19	0.18	0.09	2.18	0.029*	Accept
Bl	<---	Aut	0.26	0.19	0.12	2.26	0.024*	Accept
Bl	<---	Inf	0.11	0.07	0.14	0.82	0.414	Reject
Pq	<---	Inf	0.12	0.10	0.10	1.17	0.241	Reject
Pq	<---	Cs	0.17	0.19	0.07	2.54	0.011*	Accept
Ba	<---	Exp	0.11	0.09	0.10	1.18	0.237	Reject
Ba	<---	Aut	0.16	0.14	0.09	1.80	0.072	Reject
Ba	<---	Inf	0.22	0.18	0.10	2.13	0.033*	Accept
Bas	<---	Cs	0.02	0.02	0.07	0.26	0.793	Reject
Ba	<---	Cs	0.14	0.15	0.07	2.09	0.036*	Accept
Bas	<---	Inf	0.28	0.24	0.10	2.81	0.005**	Accept
Bas	<---	Exp	0.04	0.03	0.09	0.41	0.680	Reject
Bas	<---	Aut	0.17	0.17	0.08	2.04	0.042*	Accept
Bl	<---	Cs	0.20	0.17	0.09	2.21	0.027*	Accept
Pi	<---	Cs	0.20	0.18	0.07	2.80	0.005**	Accept
Pi	<---	Bas	0.07	0.06	0.09	0.87	0.387	Reject
Pi	<---	Ba	0.00	0.00	0.10	-0.02	0.982	Reject
Pi	<---	Pq	0.20	0.17	0.10	1.92	0.055	Reject

Pi	<---	Bl	0.26	0.30	0.06	4.09	***	Accept
Pi	<---	Exp	-0.06	-0.05	0.10	-0.66	0.507	Reject
Pi	<---	Aut	0.21	0.17	0.09	2.40	0.017*	Accept
Pi	<---	Inf	-0.14	-0.10	0.10	-1.36	0.175	Reject

***p<0,001; **p<0,01; *p<0,05

In the tested model, it is understood that Authenticity has significant effect on perceived quality (β=0.18; p<0.05) and brand loyalty (β=0.19; p<0.05). Authenticity predicts perceived quality and brand loyalty positively.

Communication skills has significant effect on perceived quality (β=0.19; p<0.05) and brand awareness (β=0.15; p<0.05). Communication skills predicts perceived quality and brand awareness positively.

Influence has significant effect on brand awareness (β=0.18; p<0.05) and brand associations (β=0.24; p<0.01). Influence predicts brand awareness and brand associations positively.

Authenticity has significant effect on brand associations (β=0.17; p<0.01). Authenticity predicts brand associations positively.

Communication skills has significant effect on brand loyalty (β=0.17; p<0.05) and purchase intention (β=0.18; p<0.01). Communication skills predicts brand loyalty and purchase intention positively.

Brand loyalty (β=0.30; p<0.001) and Authenticity (β=0.17; p<0.001) have significant effect on purchase intention. Brand loyalty and Authenticity predict purchase intention positively.

Influencer's characteristics components explained 12% of the change in the brand loyalty, 15% of the change in the perceived quality, 17% of the change in the brand awareness, 14% of the change in the brand associations. Influencer's characteristics and brand equity components explained 38% of the change in the purchase intention.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the effects of the influence, the rights of ownership of the brand, and purchase. For this, a data collection questionnaire has been used and has been analyzed using confirmed factor analysis and path analysis models. According to the results, they indicate that:

The experience of the dimensions of the effects of influential has a significant effect on the perceived quality because the perceived quality is a consumer assessment of brand excellence; Thanks to the development of the Internet, it is now easy for users to get knowledge about a trademark, so in order to create a significant impact on customer awareness and purchase, the influences must strengthen their credibility with knowledge and experience.

For a great impact on the perceived quality, brand linkages, and brand purchase of consumers. In general, originality has already proved to have a significant impact. Because the influences affect consumers on a trademark by providing them with the information they want. After all, the strength of influences depends on their disabled, this is an important reason for the affected consumers of the content provided by the influence.

The influence has a significant impact on brand awareness and brand associations, indicates brand awareness to the extent of the brand among people and consumers uses brand associations to process, organize and call the information in their memory, which helps them to make purchase decisions, and are with evolution Social media and the emergence of influences that support a large number of people have become the recommendations made by an influential product or brand affect consumer attitudes and change in their behavior. For this, there are many brands of influencers as part of their marketing strategies rather than traditional media.

Communication skills have a significant effect on the perceived quality, brand awareness, loyalty to the brand, and purchase. Because it is important to know what consumers really want to communicate and sympathize with them and not by making usually listening to the information they do not want.

Finally, as to dimensions for the brand, the loyalty for the brand only has a significant impact on the intention of purchase. So, we conclude that the dimensions of influential properties have a significant effect on the perceived quality, brand linkages, launchers, trade associations, and purchase.

Convergence was verified as a high link between scales that measure components of influential properties on social media such as communication, impact, credibility, and experience skills. In other words, it turns out that the items that are measured for each component have a significant impact on the ownership of the consumer's consumer.

Using these results, the results can be interpreted as such

The dimensions of social media effects and measurement elements derived from this study are an effective tool for assessing a specific influence in a specific marketing campaign; marketing managers can identify the features to be highlighted and target influences who appear to have a combination of these properties that may highlight these features.

Suggestions

New platforms are continually being developed, and consumer media consumption patterns are shifting in lockstep. Existing social media sites are continually adding new features or services for users. For consumers, these developments simply represent a new method to interact with companies and brands, but for marketing professionals, it means that the number of options to consider when selecting media continues to expand. As a result, marketing practitioners must be aware of social media trends and keep up with the latest developments.

There is still a need for empirical research on the characteristics or motivations that lead people to trust particular social media influencers. Future study should concentrate on factors such as the number of followers, influencer recognition and visibility, and interaction patterns between influencers and followers, as well as discovering causes that increase consumer confidence in influencers. Another topic of research worth looking into is what motivates influencers and allows them to build their own brands on social media. Instagram is now one of the fastest growing markets - in a low-key fashion, because it is mostly recognized for personal/influencer brands.

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Questionnaire

This study is being conducted by Khaoula Es-Safi MBA student under the supervision of Asst. Prof. Dr. Mehmet Sağlam, at Istanbul Commerce University in Istanbul, Turkey, as part of a master's thesis. This questionnaire consists of four parts, with the first part about social media influencer marketing, the second part is related to brand equity, and the last part is Consumer's purchase intent; by answering this questionnaire, you will help me realize my final thesis. When you respond to this survey, we will NOT know your name or your personal details. Your responses will be kept completely confidential and anonymous. The results from the study will be used for a master's thesis.

Gender

- Male
- Female

Age

- 20 – 29
- 30 – 39
- 40 – 49
- 50 - 59

Educational Level

- Undergraduate
- Master's Graduate
- PHD Graduate

Daily Social Media Usage

- Up to one hour
- 1 - 3 hours
- 3 - 5 hours
- More than 5 hours

Part 1: Social media influencer marketing

Please state your level of agreement regarding the following statements by marking one of the circles.

1 =Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5= Strongly agree

Influencers do not hesitate to accept and experience something new.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers well explain the relationship between content, product, and brand.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers actively communicate with consumers.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers clearly communicate information about a product or brand.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers know and understand a product or brand well.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers have a confident attitude.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers can easily understand information about a product or brand.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers value the relationship with their followers.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencer has many followers or subscribers.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree

- Strongly agree

Influencer makes good use of social networking services (SNS).

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers have a ripple effect on public opinion.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers themselves have a marketing effect.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers have a great effect on the public.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers are now a man in the public eye.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral

- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers have excellent content management skills.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers are well-known people in their field.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers provide quick feedback on the reactions of followers and subscribers.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers leads the trend.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers must communicate objective information about a product or brand.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree

- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers should be honest without lying.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers must broadcast with sincerity.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers must have clear beliefs and own philosophy.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers must speak and act politely when communicating with consumers.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers must have consistent tone and manners suchas words, writing.

- Strongly Disagree

- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers strive for self-development.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers have excellent skills in their field.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Influencers have a passion for their work.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Part 2: Brand equity

I consider myself to be loyal to the advertised brand.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

The advertised brand would be my first.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

I will not buy other brands if the advertised brand is available to purchase.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

The likely quality of the advertised brand is extremely high.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

The likelihood that the advertised brand would be functional is very high.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

The advertised brand offers products/services of consistent quality.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree

- Strongly agree

I can recognize the advertised brand among other comepting brands.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

I am aware of the advertised brand.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

The advertised brand comes up first in my mind when i need to make a purchase decision on the product/service.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Some characteristics of the advertised brand come to my mind quickly.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of the advertised brand.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree

- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

I have difficulty in imagining the advertised brand in my mind.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Part 3: Consumer's purchase intent

Purchasing a brand name increases your societal standing.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

If I see the X brand when I go shopping, I will buy it.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

On special occasions, I will make an effort to buy X brand for special people.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

In the coming years, I hope to buy luxury fashion products.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree