



Assessing Consumer Behaviour within the Context of Social Media Marketing

A Case of Saudi Small and Medium Enterprises

By

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“It’s because of this fundamental shift towards user-generated information that people will listen more to other people than to traditional resources.”, **Eric Schmidt, Executive Chairman & former CEO, Google**

“We don’t have a choice on whether we do social media, the question is how well we do it.”, **Eric Qualman, Marketing Professor and Motivational Speaker**

“The advance of technology is based on making it fit in so that you don't really even notice it, so it's part of everyday life.” **Bill Gates, Founder of Microsoft**

“Nowadays, social media is the easiest place to go to find something.” **David Nail, American Musician**

“Our head of social media is the customer.” **McDonald’s**

“Social media has shaken up the world of sales, with Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter offering new ways to hound leads and unprecedented insights into clients.” **Ryan Holmes, Canadian Businessman**

“Technology and social media have brought power back to the people.” **Mark McKinnon, American Businessman**

ABSTRACT

Data and information about products and services are now easily accessed via all types of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, Blogs, Twitter and others. There is a mass of evidence that, in many countries including Saudi Arabia, SNSs are now important tools for making and managing key relationships among individuals and diverse societies. As the core of marketing theory is about making trusted and robust connections with customers for use in product and service development, SNSs in marketing have been seen to give a strategic and competitive edge, creating a new domain or industry known as Social Media Marketing (SMM). However, marketing managers still face the challenge of how to use such platforms in SMM campaigns to secure more profitable outcomes by influencing customers' behaviour and purchase intentions, and this is very much the case for Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs). Saudi marketers in particular have not yet mastered the efficient use of these sites for marketing purposes. This study aims to develop an Integrated Social Media Marketing Model (ISMMM) to assess the impact of SMM practices on consumer behaviours and purchase intention within the context of Saudi Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). This development is to enable those types of businesses within the Saudi marketplace to obtain improved outcomes from their marketing initiatives using the SNSs.

The study adopts an exploratory research design, quantitative data collection and analysis, and literature analysis research methodologies and deductive approach with a survey tool as the research strategy for data collection; thus, a data collection instrument was developed. The ISMMM Model was developed based on integration of different theories, of which the most significant were: Social Impact Theory (SIT); Consumer Culture Theory (CCT); and Social Capital Theory (SCT). Key constructs involved: Social Capital (Bonding and Bridging); Electronic Word-of-Mouth (EWOM); Friend-of-a-Friend (FOAF); Online Advertisement; Brand Knowledge (Image, Trust, Loyalty and Awareness); Purchase Intension; Customer Behaviour; and Actual Purchase.

The study revealed a high Goodness-of-Fit for the ISMMM Model and that ISMMM can identify the key factors to be considered by Saudi marketers for use of SNSs for

marketing purposes. The findings showed Saudi users to have a positive perception of SNSs with regard to Social Capital Bonding and Bridging, EWOM and the FOAF, while perceptions of Online Advertisement were slightly positive. Saudis were also shown to have positive perceptions of Brand Image, Loyalty, Trust and Awareness, as well as Brand Knowledge, and Purchase Intention, Customer Behaviour and Actual Purchase. Other key conclusions were: that Social Capital Bonding and Bridging can explain the Social Capital construct; that Social Capital explained the EWOM and FOAF constructs; and that SMM practices explained Brand Knowledge. In addition, the SMM practices and Brand Knowledge can jointly explain the Purchase Intention; the Brand Knowledge and Purchase Intention can explain the Customer Behaviour; and Customer Behaviour can explain the Actual Purchase.

The study's findings provided a number of key recommendations for marketers and marketing managers as well as for Saudi users of SNSs. The study recommends that marketing managers should treat marketing initiatives by SNSs as a real and strategic opportunity and as a transition paradigm for providing quality marketing services and reaching goals successfully. The study also recommends that they should identify the best and most appropriate SNSs for their businesses to use, that they should invest in SMM campaigns to enable highly effective and low-cost channels for quality customer service, and that they should focus on creating a Social Capital environment through bonding and connecting with Saudi users using SNSs. The study also recommended that marketers conduct frequent and quality reviews of the marketing channels, that they continue to use traditional marketing channels in parallel to the SMM, that they enhance their online advertisement channels, and that they strengthen relationships and ties with Saudi users of SNSs to understand their behaviours and intentions about making purchasing decisions, but with very high care as this may create vulnerabilities. The study recommends that Saudi users treat the SNS platforms in a friendly manner, showing respect for content posted by Saudi SMEs and other users on SNSs, that they use only the appropriate channels to purchase products online, and that they improve their awareness and knowledge about SNSs and SMM. The study also recommends that Saudi users communicate with SMEs for more feedback on SMM practices over SNSs, that they are aware of cyber risks and dangers threatening users, and that they inform the responsible parties about any risks.

Many of the available marketing theories were developed and applied prior to the era of SNSs and SMM. Therefore, this work contributes by transforming the use of those older theories into the recent circumstances of technology adoption. The integration performed using different theories with validation in this work brings important theoretical and technological innovation and insights into the modern online marketing domain. This innovation can deal in a suitable way with the needs of the web 2.0 and cyberspace. The ISMMM Model developed and validated in this work extends the use of theories from different domains into technology oriented marketing domain to identify new factors with impact in the context of SMM and SNSs. Despite all theories used in this work for the development of ISMMM Model has been used individually in other studies, this work combines the factors defined by all theories to explain the extent to which those variables are significant in the area of SMM over SNSs, and to show the dynamic relationship among those variables to achieve marketing goals for the SMEs.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I, the author of this thesis, Emad Abdulwhab Salem, confirm that the contents in this dissertation titled “**Assessing Consumer Behaviour within the Context of Social Media Marketing – A Case of Saudi Small and Medium Enterprises**” has not previously been submitted for another degree at any other educational institution or university. I also wish to confirm that this thesis contains no contents previously published or written by other Authors except where due reference is cited. Brunel University is now authorised to make this thesis electronically available to the public.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the soul of my Father and to my beloved Mother. I would like to tell both of you on this occasion that I am proud of loving you and being your son at all times, and I wish you accept this exceptional gift. Very great appreciation to my best friend, my wife Dr. Wala Akeel, and my lovely daughter Joud :), and my two brothers Ibrahim and Abdullah, may ALLAH bless all of you.

With all my special respect and warm love, thanks for all of your extreme care and forgive me for troubling you at any time, and I am so sorry for facing the challenges during this PhD trip, the illness of my beloved Father from 2013 till 2016, my illness with Hepatitis B in 2015, and the death of my beloved Father in 2016.

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

- Emad Salem, Chris Evans & and Ray Hackney, 2013, The Impact of Social Networking Websites in Developing Consumer Trust for Small and Medium Businesses, Poster at the Doctoral Symposium at Brunel Business School (BBS), London, UK, March 2013.
- Emad Salem, Chris Evans & and Ray Hackney, 2014, The Impact of Social Networking Websites in Developing Consumer Trust for Small and Medium Businesses in Saudi Arabia, presented at the Seventh Saudi Students Conference (SSC2014), Edinburgh, UK, February, 2014.
- The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth and Friend-of-a-Friend on Brand Knowledge – An Empirical Investigation in the SMEs, *submitted* to the 7th Academic International Conference on Business, Marketing and Management (AICBMM), Oxford, United Kingdom. November, 2018.
- An Integrated Social Media Marketing Model to Assess Consumer Behaviours and Purchase Intention in SMEs, *submitted* to the *Journal of Digital & Social Media Marketing*, 2018.
- The Influence of Social Media Marketing Practices on the Purchase Intention – An Empirical Investigation in the SMEs, *submitted* to the International Conference Social Media Marketing (ICSMM'18), New Jearsy, USA, 29-30 November, 2018.

LIST OF ATTENDED EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

- Doctoral Symposium at Brunel Business School (BBS), London, UK, Mar. 2013
- Doctoral Symposium at Brunel Business School (BBS), London, UK, Mar. 2014
- The Seventh Saudi Students Conference (SSC2014), Edinburgh, UK, Feb., 2014.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the research project to assess consumer behaviours within the context of Social Media Marketing (SMM). The chapter first presents a brief background on the importance of marketing strategies and practices in the new era of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The chapter then discusses the issues of legacy marketing practices in the marketplace and the SMM as a new trend in the Digital Age (DA) or Information Age (IA), and then highlights the importance of customer behaviour and the importance for businesses of understanding such behaviour. The problem statement, research aim and objectives and research questions are provided in this chapter. The chapter also provides details on the proposed research methodology and the research theoretical framework, and finally, the chapter provides an outline of the remaining parts of this dissertation. The contribution to knowledge, theory and practice made by this work will be provided in the last chapter.

1.1 Background

Advancements in technology have changed the way humans live, the way businesses operate and how customers shop. Worldwide, the number of Internet users was approximately 2.1 billion users in 2011, and is now around 3.1 billion users (i.e., an increase of around 25% in four years) (World Internet Usage Statistics, 2012). The UK government forecast in 2010 that by the end of 2015 there would be more interconnected electronic devices worldwide than people (UK Government, 2010). The US Joint Forces Command also estimated in 2010 that the average level of computing power and capacity used in the home will by 2030 be one million times greater than humans had possessed in 2010 (US Joint Forces Command, 2010). Advances in Internet technologies and web services have brought radical changes in product designs and services offered by businesses and businesses must respond by customising their products and services according to the expectations of their customers. The Internet has become a new channel of interaction between customers and businesses, driven by

many factors related to the online marketplace; this also contributes to identifying online users' characteristics and cultures (Almaghrabi and Dennis, 2010).

Online customer attitudes, behaviours and use patterns are affected by the Internet and how customers communicate online (Levine et al., 2007). Many online customers have found there not only convenience but also enjoyment often missing when shopping shoulder to shoulder with others in bricks and mortar stores (Almaghrabi and Dennis, 2010). Like other forms of communication technology, social media is a new earth-shrinking cyber-platform or electronic environment that brings people, ideas, businesses and thoughts closer together. Businesses need to recognise the value of these public conversations. Online data is proliferating, social media is developing new capabilities and significant investment may be needed from businesses if they are to leverage the potential these developments create to promote daily business operations and future planning. As businesses should be where their core customers most often are, they need to go beyond posting or having a presence on social media to respond to their customers' needs (Bandwatch, 2015).

Social Media are now important in the lives of people around the world as well as being a robust platform for online communication. In this online environment, people can share images and texts to create their own profile (Lin and Lu, 2011). Social Networking Sites (SNS) (known also as Social media networks), provide tools with which people can communicate and interact online; they share knowledge, experiences, opinions and decision making both with family, colleagues and friends and –if that is their wish – with people new to them (Reynolds, 2012). People can use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and other networks to build and maintain connections with friends and strangers alike (Ellison et al., 2007). Recent years have seen a huge rise in SNS deployment with almost 25% of all online time being spent on SNSs and some 80% of users reporting at least some use of a social network (Panek et al., 2013).

The business implications of social networking begin with the fact that millions of Internet users belong to at least one SNS and many belong to more (Chen, 2013). Facebook users in 2012 totalled some 975 million worldwide, with 24 million in the Middle East as a whole and 6 million in Saudi Arabia. By 2015, those numbers had increased to 1,500 million, 111 million and 13 million respectively (Taylor Nelson Sofres, 2015). Sellers and buyers can communicate directly on SNS platforms to agree

on products and services they want to sell and want to buy (Parson, 2013). Technology and particularly SNSs become an effective tool in consumers' online shopping (Hegarty, 2013). Several SNSs created revolutionary processes that let consumers deal directly with businesses to fill their purchasing needs, at the same time enabling businesses to satisfy customers by delivering high quality services and products. The SNS networks have been important in enabling a faster rollout of this revolutionary way of doing business; by enabling easy interaction with consumers, they have increased potential consumer numbers and helped transform buyers from potential to actual (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010).

1.2 The Issue of Social Media Marketing

Social media platforms and networks have been a “game-changer” for communication by transforming the communication landscape. Social media and networks actually embrace a wide range of online communication channels with an equally wide range of services and utilities (Mir And Zaheer, 2012) that enable worldwide interaction and information sharing on products and brands. Social media platforms come in a variety of forms. There are online networks such as Facebook, MySpace and LinkedIn, wikis (Wikipedia, wikidictionary), networks for sharing multimedia (YouTube, Flickr), bookmarking sites for sharing links (Del.icio.us, Digg), virtual worlds (e.g., Second Life), and sites for sharing reviews and ratings (Yelp, TripAdvisor) (Edwards, 2011). Social media's importance for marketing communication has reached the level where there are business pundits who say that firms that fail to use social media cease to be part of cyberspace. It is through social media that businesses find and communicate instantly with end users or target audiences more cheaply than through traditional media (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

Social Media Marketing (SMM) has recently evolved as a result of the SNS networks phenomenon; SMM has been defined as direct or indirect marketing designed to increase brand awareness and knowledge using social networking or some other form of social web tool (Mohammadian and Mohammadreza, 2012). Using SNS networks works well for small and medium sized businesses as well as large enterprises. SNS networks have given consumers and end users many opportunities in a variety of aspects of life. At the same time, they have given opportunities to business, and this includes enabling Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) with limited financial

and marketing resources to compete in the marketplace. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram have all been instrumental in expanding consumers' online purchases and improving financial revenues for businesses of all sizes, including SMEs (Hegarty, 2013).

The later years of the twentieth century saw changes in consumption patterns and customer behaviour. One example is the move in product and service consumption away from the mainly utilitarian to a symbolic and experiential function. The individual has become more clearly defined and established social norms and networks have been replaced by new socio-cultural structures – tribes – often centred around shared consumption. These changes have been accelerated by internet technology advances and social media so that members of the tribe can communicate, interact and share knowledge, opinions and experiences almost without regard to where in the world they live or their ethnic background. Because tribe membership is fluid, tribal consumption patterns constitute a challenge to marketing and require new ways of thinking to reflect the fact that tribal membership is often recognised by consumption of specific brands, products and services which can constitute strong social links (Dahl, 2014).

Earlier marketing practices in business focused traditionally and narrowly on the concept of exchange (Bagozzi, 1975). Contemporary marketing is more concerned with such pre-purchase activities on the consumer's part as identifying needs, finding information, and evaluating alternative offerings. The exchange process comes after these steps and is then followed by such post-purchase activities as evaluating how well the product met the consumer's wishes. Consumption may be seen as utilitarian in that it enables both buyer and seller to achieve their aims by means of exchange: the seller receives money and the buyer receives satisfaction and both of these processes consist of the identification of something the seller wants to sell as something the buyer wants to buy. Therefore, scientific researchers on behaviour have broadened their research focus to include such customer attributes as experiences, understandings and meanings in the process of consumption or even in purchasing. That is, current research goes well beyond the earlier simple focus on purchase (Dahl, 2014).

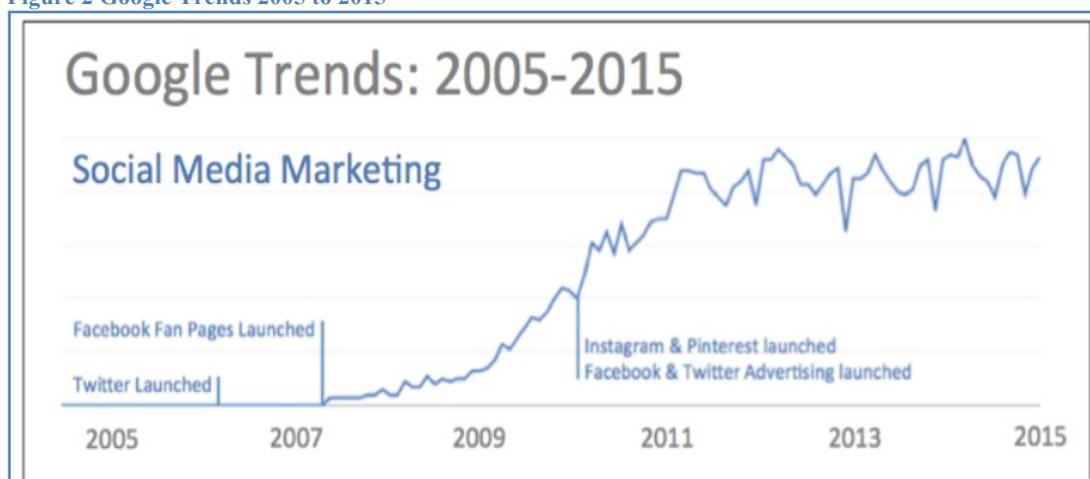
With more than a billion active Facebook users and 560 million daily Twitter users, it is SNSs who have the freshest and most relevant data about customers' behavioural patterns and attitudes. It follows that business marketing should consider the use of such

resources to gain insights about customers; about 74% of businesses used data from social media for this purpose. Every time users or customers communicate, comment or interact online, they supply data about their preferences, demographics, behaviours, emails, relationships and more. This data is not simply a snapshot for that period of time; it is constantly being refreshed and can give insights to deliver relevant campaigns at a time when consumers actually want them. In reality, no other channels can provide such data in such depth with full scope of information (Offerpop, 2015). It has also been reported that SNSs are to be integrated more closely into other marketing activities so that the share they receive of attention, budget, and recruitment will continue to increase. Social Media Marketing's share of total spend is shown in Figure 1, with Google trends over the past decade in Figure 2 (Simply Measured, 2015).

Figure 1 Marketing Budget



Figure 2 Google Trends 2005 to 2015



1.3 The Issue of Customer Behaviour

CCT (Consumer Culture Theory) emerged in the mid 1980s, before the development of SNS networks. It describes a “family of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings” (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). CCT looks at consumption in its context by examining such aspects as consumed products and services as cultural symbols, and how consumption activity is experienced. CCT is made easier by data collected via SNSs, and data about online behaviour of the marketplace during all stages of a purchase. In this way, understanding the attitudes, behaviours and experiences of today’s consumers during the whole process from pre-purchase activities through purchase to post-purchase activities is now essential to marketing success (Arnould, 2004).

Understanding consumer behaviour allows businesses to satisfy consumer needs. Customer needs can be satisfied only to the extent that the marketer understands the individuals using their products and services (Solomon et al. 2010). Positive reviews by satisfied customers, for example through EWOM on SNS networks, can encourage others to buy the product. A business’s primary reason for seeking to understand consumer behaviour is to identify why and how consumers’ purchase decisions are made so that more effective marketing strategies can be designed around the information (Hansen et al., 2008). SNS networks have changed how consumers and marketers communicate and interact with each other, and exchange feedback (Wang et al, 2012). The Internet and web technologies are a vital influence on consumers looking for new products and services to buy.

At least half of Facebook and Twitter users have said that engaging with a business through SNS makes them more likely to communicate, interact and provide feedback as well as to buy a product (Nielsen, 2013). For example, direct interaction with marketers and brands on SNSs can supply customers with all the information they need on products or services. 42% of SNS users expect a question they ask online to be answered within sixty minutes (Jaffe, 2010). This poses new challenges for the marketing industry, especially in their customer interactions and communications. Customer behaviour is driven by behavioural intentions. TRA (the Theory of Reasoned

Action) holds that the behaviour of online customers or SNS members can be driven by their purchasing intention which can be determined by their estimates of social pressures, beliefs and norms about brands as well as by their friends' expectations and how they think others would like them to behave (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1975).

1.4 Statement of Problem

As SNS networking can create online communities of people who share interests or want to explore similar activities or the interests of others, SMEs and even start-up businesses may use SNSs to target markets to maximise profits (Hegarty, 2013). A big prediction for 2014 was that businesses would use social media to collect data and information about their customers to tailor future branded experiences to a customer's specific preferences; this is a critical mission for brands to develop insights from social data (Offerpop, 2015). However, many SMEs' marketing managers are still not sure of the importance of this mission and how to achieve it, largely because consumer behaviour and workplace expectations continue to change (Cheek, et al., 2013).

Marketers also need to understand consumer behaviour on SNSs as a central component in development of online marketing strategies and policies. This is a priority issue and remains problematic for businesses competing in the virtual marketplace with millions of posts on different SNS networks related to a wide range of customer segments (Constantinides, 2004).

SMEs not engaging in social networking can be outpaced and may see business go elsewhere if they lack capability to compete with others who are engaged with customers through such sites. When considering the differences between larger businesses and SMEs, it can be seen that marketing through SNSs might be more beneficial for SMEs as they do not have utilities and capabilities similar to those available for large businesses (Garnett, 2010). In the SMEs domain, SNSs can be a platform for providing an electronic means for Word-of-Mouth (EWOM) through existing customers' recommendations leading to acquisition of new customers.

For example, a Facebook fan page can be effective in increasing sales, EWOM marketing, brand knowledge and customer loyalty. SNSs can also be effective in boosting interaction and relationship forming on the basis of the Six Degrees of

Separation (SDS) theory originally defined by Frigyes Karinthy in 1929 and recently re-written by John Guare. The SDS theory says that there are six or fewer steps between any two people or any two things in the world. This is actually visible in the environment of an SNS where a connected “Friend of a Friend” (FOAF) chain can be formed that will connect any two people or things in six steps at most (Barabási, 2003; Newman et. al, 2006). The value of these connections is in forming exploitable (by marketers) links that exceed two parties or friends to become “Friend-of-a-Friend-of-a-Friend” etc. (Ektron, 2015). This matters to marketers because:

“...Online social network users are three times more likely to trust their peers’ opinions over advertising when making purchase decisions and less than 20% trust advertising when it comes to making decisions. Influencers, including friends, friends-of-friends, colleagues and recognized experts, exist everywhere on the social Web. They are the people within peer groups that others go to for recommendations, advice and trusted opinions. By engaging them, you harness the power of word-of-mouth marketing, with the resulting effect of expanding your audience from them to their friends to their friend-of-a-friend-of-a-friend...” (Ektron, 2015).

It is not as yet clear how EWOM and FOAF can change customer intentions and profoundly affect decision making through online social media (Lee et al., 2009; Balakrishnan, Dahnil and Yi, 2014). There is therefore a need for SMEs to monitor activities about their products or services over the Internet in order to develop a strategy to maintain and develop their online reputation and an image of their company and products, and to understand their customers’ behaviours and patterns of use (Hamsa, 2013). Some 57% of small businesses support their marketing and increase brand and product awareness by using social media (Sage, 2013).

Marketing research offers a clear opportunity for SMEs to use social networking to develop successful brands by responding to customers’ comments and feedback which are valuable assets and remain available on the SNSs. The SNSs create a platform for creating long lasting content through two-way conversations and communication in a way that traditional media, where users do not participate in content creation, cannot match (Kirtis and Karahan, 2011).

As already stated, people using SNSs expect a question asked online to be answered within the very short time of about one hour (Jaffe, 2010). Meeting this requires that marketers change how they provide feedback and interact with consumers. They must learn how to encourage closeness and build relationships with potential buyers. There is also insufficient understanding of how SMEs can better understand customer needs through SMM and build effective, timely and transparent relationships with them (Wang et al. 2012).

What consumers say on SNSs cannot be controlled and so SMEs must develop the ability to influence conversations customers may have by monitoring and understanding customers' behaviours and attitudes. Maximising sales and profitability requires that SMEs strengthen the brand name. For example, out of date Twitter feeds or Facebook pages can damage a small business's brand. Implementing business SNS networks with marketing and content strategies designed to build on the brand as it stands is an important current research topic (Geho and Dangelo, 2012).

The work to be carried out for this project is driven by the need to efficiently use the opportunities in developing countries already outlined, particularly by SME businesses. There is still insufficient development in this area. For example, more than 66% of marketers say they intend to make more use of the Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn social networks; although some 93% of them use Facebook, 68% want to learn more about it and 62% intend to increase their Facebook activities. What is more, only 45% of marketers believe their Facebook presence to be effective. Some 91% of marketers feel the need to learn how to use social media to maximum effect and how to achieve maximum engagement through SNS networks (Stelzner, 2015). Wise aspirations in light of the fact that consumers are reported spending nearly a third of their time consuming online social media or via SNS networks (Laroche et al, 2013). Social Media Marketing (SMM) has become more popular as it has become more important; the number of SMM practitioners in the workforce in 2015 was estimated at 76,000 (Simply Measured, 2015). For all the attention, it is still unknown what impact SMM media, online communities and EWOM have on online customers' purchasing intentions or on branding a product, and this is especially so in Saudi Arabia and other developing countries (Balakrishnan, Dahnil and Yi, 2014)

Businesses, mainly SME, cannot ignore the social networks phenomenon, or its new trends; as long ago as 2008, for example, 250,000 was the average number of people registering on Facebook each day (Waters et al., 2008). Social networks are changing consumer behaviour and marketplace expectations; they can help in the early discovery of trends, extract structured marketplace insights and quantify customers' perceptions of businesses, products and services. Data and information about products and services are easily accessed via all types of SNS networks including Facebook, Blogs, Tweets, YouTube Videos, Instagram Pictures, LinkedIn and other online tools (Cheek, et al., 2013). It remains true; however, that Saudi Arabia and other Arabian countries are not using these sites efficiently for marketing purposes (Hegarty, 2013).

1.5 Research Context

The focus of this work will be on SMEs operating in the Saudi marketplace. According to the Small Medium Enterprises in Saudi Arabia Report by Jeddah Economic Gateway (JEG) (2016), SMEs businesses count of 1.97 million and constitute to almost 90% of all the business enterprises in Saudi Arabia. Although the contribution of those SMEs to the Saudi Gross Domestic Product (GDP) stands at 33% and SMEs comprise about 25% of the Saudi workforce, those figures remain lower compared to many other developing economies. Therefore, the Saudi government 2030 vision placed several plans and initiatives to develop and promote SMEs as this type of organizations can play a big role in the employment growth and can facilitate accelerated economic growth rate. However, marketing remains one of the most occurring obstacles for the development of SMEs in Saudi Arabia as mentioned in the JER 2016 report; about 53% of the Saudi SMEs remain to struggle with marketing issues. Therefore, this study will consider the Saudi SMEs as a target research domain to investigate the marketing challenges from a new perspective, i.e., the SMM over SNSs.

Over the last two decades, many scholars like Berthon et al. (2012), Aral, Dellarocas and Godes (2013), Dilhan and Karakadilar (2014), Omer (2015), Musa et al. (2016), Silvius and Schipper (2016), Samuel and Sarprasatha (2016), Marchand and Hennig-Thurau (2018), Eltayib et al. (2018), Dumitriu et al. (2019) have reported the use of contemporary SNSs to redefine the traditional marketing strategies in all types of organizations. Nevertheless, in the context of SMEs, the SNSs can be employed directly for selling the products online by initiating marketing campaigns tailored for specific

social groupings. Although this practice creates great opportunities for SMEs compared with the large organizations, only a small number of SMEs is succeeding in such practice to improve performance and profit (Zarella, 2010; Parveen, Jaafar and Ainin, 2015; Musa, 2016 Dumitriu et al., 2019). Therefore, the work in this research will focus on the use of SNSs for marketing purposes with application to the Saudi SMEs.

SMEs differ from large organizations in terms of marketing budgets, expertise and practices, as well as, marketing strategy (Musa et al., 2016; Eltayib et al., 2018). Thus, while most of the available marketing models over the SNSs concern with large organizations (Reijonen, 2010; Garnett, 2010; Dumitriu et al., 2019), a specific marketing model with focus on certain success factors for SMEs to conduct marketing via SNSs is important (Pentina and Koh, 2012; Cheek, Ferguson and Tanner, 2013; Dumitriu et al., 2019). Therefore, the focus on the development of marketing model for SMEs over the SNSs will be of particular importance in this work. More details on the context of this study will be discussed later in Chapter 4 (Section 4.4).

1.6 Aim and Objectives of the Research

The primary purpose of this research is to assess the impact of SMM on consumer behaviours as experienced by Saudi SMEs. The main aim behind this research is to develop an Integrated Social Media Marketing Model (ISMMM) that fits the Saudi SME context. This model is expected to enable SMEs in the Saudi market and businesses in other culturally and socially similar marketplaces to enhance the outcomes of their marketing initiatives using social networking sites (SNS). As already mentioned, there has been little research in this area and customer responses to marketing practices in Saudi Arabia have not received academic or corporate assessment because the online marketing phenomenon is new in Saudi Arabia. Thus, the objectives of the research are:

1. To develop a Taxonomy of Social Media Marketing practices implemented by SMEs in Saudi Arabia in the form of Bonding or Bridging Social Capital, Electronic Word-of-Mouth, A Friend of a Friend and Online Advertisement.
2. To identify the levels of customer purchase intention and brand knowledge related to SMEs' products and services available online.

3. To identify the impact of Social Media Marketing practices on the development of Brand Knowledge and customers' Purchase Intention, as well as the impact of their Brand Knowledge and Purchase Intention related to SMEs' products and services available online on behaviour and actual purchase actions.
4. To identify the problems faced by online customers of SMEs' products and services in Saudi Arabia and the level of customer satisfaction with the Social Media Marketing practices implemented by SMEs in Saudi Arabia.

1.7 Research Questions

This research will seek the answers to following questions:

1. What constitutes best practice in Social Media Marketing for SMEs operating in the online Saudi marketplace?
2. What are the levels of customer purchase intention and brand knowledge related to SMEs' products and services available online?
3. To what extent can Social Media Marketing practices influence the development of customers' brand knowledge and purchase intention? (And, to what extent can Social Capital dimensions of Social Media Sites frequented by Saudi users influence the development of Electronic Word-of-Mouth related to SMEs' products and services available online?)
4. To what extent can Saudi online customers' brand knowledge and purchase intention influence their behaviour and actual purchase actions related to SMEs' products and services available online? (And, to what extent can brand knowledge influence Saudi online customers' purchase intention related to SMEs' products and services available online?)
5. What problems are faced by online customers for SMEs' products and services in Saudi Arabia?
6. What constitutes customer satisfaction with Social Media Marketing practices implemented by SMEs in Saudi Arabia?

1.8 Dissertation Structure

This dissertation comprises eight chapters. This introductory Chapter provides a brief background on the research topic under investigation as well as details of the research

problem, questions and hypotheses. The Chapter also introduces the proposed research model, titled Integrated Social Media Marketing Model (ISMMM). Chapter two provides a review of literature with focus on the social media platforms and sites, challenges and opportunity, and the impact of those platforms on societies, individuals and organisations. The chapter then provides a review of marketing paradigms in Small and Medium Enterprises (SME), and the Social Media Marketing as a new approach.

Chapter three describes the development of the theoretical research conceptual model, i.e., the ISMMM, to assess the behaviour and purchase intention of customers. The chapter focuses on theories and practices relevant to the SMM, and on the potential dynamics and key factors affecting customers using SNSs. Chapter four describes the research methodology in terms of philosophy, strategy, and design and paradigms; and then revisits the research questions and identifies the research variables. The chapter then presents details of the data collection approach and methods, the study population and sampling selection, and the development, validation and reliability of the data collection instrument and questionnaire design. The chapter then describes the data analysis techniques including Descriptive and Inferential Statistics, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), and Comparative Fit Index Analysis with the SPSS and AMOS Software Applications. The chapter finally provides details on the Research's Normality and Trustworthiness with results on Reliability and Validity Measurement, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Pilot Survey and Research Ethics.

Chapter five presents the analysis of data and the research results, focussing on the attributes of the participants, their use and knowledge of technologies and their engagement and use of SNSs in Saudi Arabia. The chapter then provides descriptive statistics results of the main constructs of the ISMMM and their items. Chapter six presents the results and assessment of the ISMMM Model for testing hypotheses and investigating the impact of the moderating variables. Results given by the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) are provided in this chapter to evaluate the research hypotheses and goodness-of-fit of the ISMMM Model.

Chapter seven discusses the findings with focus on the patterns of use and engagement with SNSs, and on the ISMMM Model variables within the context of SMM. The Chapter also discusses assessment of the ISMMM Model and the relationships between

the model variables, and then provides important and key recommendations for SME marketing managers and Saudi users. Chapter eight summarises the main data analysis findings and explains the practical, theoretical and methodological contributions of this study. The Chapter then concludes this project and identifies potential future research.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will review the literature on the evolution of Social Media as a concept, its challenges, the opportunities it presents and where it sits in the Saudi context. Social Media Platforms and Networking Sites are reviewed in this chapter with a focus on the impact of such platforms and sites on societies and individuals. The chapter then reviews marketing paradigms in Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs), with a focus on Social Media Marketing as a new marketing channel for, and then highlights social media considerations and strategies for SMEs.

2.1 Introduction

Social Media is among marketing's best opportunities and hottest trends for connecting with prospective consumers (Buettner, 2016). As a medium to socialise, social media is the new means to build knowledge, brands and consumers' trust by engineering deep level connections with customers; social media "has the potential to increase our awareness of others and to augment our spheres of knowledge" (Murthy, 2013). Marketers are making use of many different social media channels to implement new marketing paradigms and develop high levels of reputation at unparalleled speed on the basis of social initiatives.

Social Media Marketing (SMM) is becoming more sophisticated and businesses cannot afford not to be on social channels to compete in the market and offer their products and services (Tang and Andrew, 2012; Tang, Gu and Whinston, 2012; Neti, 2011). Social media is exploding at enormous speed with huge numbers of online users. Businesses have recognized SMM's potential as a marketing platform on which they can exploit innovations to drive advertising campaigns and gain a competitive edge (Kietzmann et al., 2011). There remains a need for more research into how such goals are to be achieved, how businesses should develop marketing strategies that embrace social media tools, and what strategies are needed to monitor, understand, and respond to the

customers' various activities on social media platforms (Murthy, 2013; Tang and Andrew, 2012; Tang, Gu and Whinston, 2012; Kietzmann et al., 2011).

This chapter will discuss the concept and evolution of social media, explore the social media platforms and Social Networking Sites (SNSs), and investigate social media's impact on society, businesses and customers. The chapter then reviews marketing models in Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs) as the context for this research, and contextualises the use of SMM for SMEs focussing on SMM's importance, challenges and benefits.

2.2 Social Media

2.2.1 The Concept of Social Media

“Usenet” and “WELL” were the first two online communities launched respectively in 1979 and 1985 using static websites, called Virtual Communities (Ridings & Gefen, 2004). “Usenet” was used for distributing topics-oriented news among groups (known as Newsgroups), which were mainly university computing centres that used the UNIX operating system, and as a global system that allowed Internet users to post public messages and carry on discussions (Donath, 1999; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). WELL was used to enable users to form discussions and conferences on different areas of interest such as health, art and business (Ridings & Gefen, 2004). By the mid 1990s when interactive web technologies began to be more common, several categories of website had appeared to increase communications between organizations, users, groups and individuals. Community-oriented websites were one of the fastest growing (Petersen, 1999; Wingfield & Hanrahan, 1999). By the beginning of the new millennium, a number of web-based communities were flourishing with key capabilities that allowed users to create personal, professional, and dating profiles. These were known as social platforms or communities (Boyd and Ellison, 2007).

The era of Social Media as understood today has been influenced by the “Open Diary” founded in 1997 by Bruce and Susan Abelson as an early form of social networking site that brought together online diary writers into one community. That same year saw the first use of the term “Weblog,” which was rapidly truncated to “Blog”. High-speed networks made possible the creation of social networking sites such as MySpace and

Facebook in 2003 and 2004 respectively. Sites like that gave us the term “Social Media” and laid the foundations for today’s prominence of such networks (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). In 2007, social media was defined as “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.” (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). A later definition was, “widely available internet-based applications with low barriers of entry that allow individuals or organizations to publish material on public websites or social networking sites available to a select group of people” (Colliander, 2012).

For all the definitions, there is still confusion among both business managers and academic researchers as to what is and is not Social Media, and how this term differs from such related concepts as Web 2.0 and User Generated Content (UGC). Web 2.0 gives developers and end-users a new way to use the web in which the creation and publication of web content and applications ceases to be by individuals and becomes collaborative, with all users able to make modifications at any time (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Web 2.0 may be considered as facilitating evolution of Social Media. It provided users with the cultural, ideological and technological foundation; UGC describes the contributions made by those users on the Internet and is the sum of all the ways people use Social Media. UGC may concurrently involve several content types (text, audio, photo and video) and be within the realm of social media provided that the content satisfies three conditions: it must be publicly accessible via a Social Networking Site (SNS) accessible to a specific group of individuals; it must exhibit a reasonable amount of creative work and effort; and it must have been created other than by professional and standard routines, procedures and practices (OECD, 2007).

Social media is fairly new as a concept and researchers and experts are still debating its correct definition. It may even be that no universally acceptable definition emerges (Scott, 2009; Perdue, 2010). One proffered definition is: “activities, practices and behaviours among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversational media” (Safko and Brake, 2009, p. 6). An alternative is: “the sharing of information, experiences, and perspectives through community-oriented websites” (Weinberg, 2009, p. 1). Then again, we have: “content

that has been created by its audience” (Comm, 2009, p. 3), and: “the many relatively inexpensive and widely accessible electronic tools that enable anyone to publish and access information, collaborate on a common effort, or build relationships” (Murthy, 2013). Alternatively, it is: “online applications, platforms and media which aim to facilitate interaction, collaboration, and the sharing of content” (The Universal McCann, 2008, p. 10). A more basic definition says that social media comprises online technologies that facilitate the creation and distribution of content (Zarella, 2010). The role of Web 2.0 and UCG are referred to in the definition of social media as: “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (Andreas and Michael, 2010, p. 61). Despite the plethora of definitions in the literature, there appears to be nothing that sums up the essence of social media, no comprehensive basis from which to understand social media’s additional facets, and no contextualisation of this phenomenon according to such different perspectives as marketing, branding products and services, social trust, etc.

2.2.2 The Evolution of Social Media

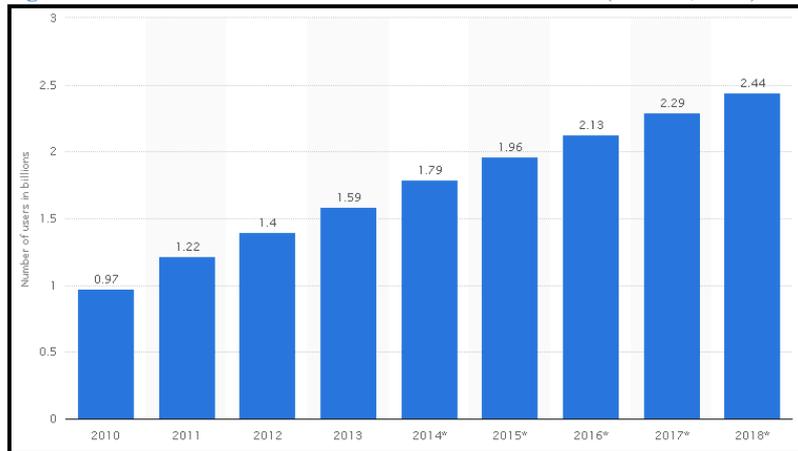
Technological advance has changed how businesses operate, humans live and customers shop. The number of users online is reaching about 3.1 billion users (i.e., more than 45% of the total world population) (World Internet Stats, 2014). The British government forecast at the beginning of this decade that there would, by 2015, be more interconnected electronic devices than living humans (UK Government, 2010). The US Joint Forces Command estimated in 2010 that average computing capacity and power in the home would by 2030 be one million times greater than people possessed in 2010 (US Joint Forces Command, 2010). Businesses offering financial and other services have radically changed the way they operate in response to advances in Internet technologies and web services and other businesses must customise their products and services to meet customer expectations. The Internet has become a new financial interaction channel between customer and business (Al-maghrabi & Dennis, 2010). Customer satisfaction and retention continue, however, to be a problem for banks and are the subject of research worldwide. Take-up of online commerce and e-banking is still slow relative to the adoption of the Internet for other online activities including communication and exchange of knowledge. Among the variables affecting adoption of

e-banking are customer satisfaction and perceived risk (Farzianpour et al., 2014; Lee, 2009).

Social media mainly depends on highly interactive platforms created using mobile and web-based technologies to allow content to be co-created, shared, discussed and adjusted by individuals and communities. Technology continues to evolve daily, while needs change and new concerns emerge. The result is a social media in a state of rapid evolution. As an example, it has changed the way governments, business partners, communities, organisations and individuals communicate (Kietzmann et al., 2011). TSS (Technoself Studies) is an emerging field of research in which the changes just described are the main focus, introducing differences between social media and traditional or industrial media in a variety of perspectives including quality (Agichtein et al., 2008), reach, outreach, frequency, engagement, usability, immediacy, interactivity, permanence, etc. Social media also works as a dialogue tool providing many resources to many receivers, whereas traditional media operated as a monologue transmitting the same message from one source to many receivers. The result is that it is much easier for social media trends and new business management paradigms to evolve rapidly as all participants simultaneously receive more inputs from different and heterogeneous resources with high dimensional diversity. Therefore, as the evolution of social media may take place according to different perspectives, further research is needed and will continue to be important in understanding the impact of this evolution on societies, businesses and individual customers, as well as understanding the potential parallel evolution of all involved parties.

Online SNS usage has grown dramatically, reaching more than 1.9 billion users (around 30% of the world's population) by the end of 2015. That was an increase from 1.4 billion in 2012 and the 2016 figure was estimated at 2.13 billion users on the social network around the world, see Figure 3 (Statista, 2016). In 2011, more than 48 hours of video footage was uploaded to YouTube every minute, more than 200 million tweets were posted on Twitter every day, more than 9,000 bloggers were contributing to the Huffington Post every day on a wide range of topics and issues, and more than 6 billion photos were shared on Flickr (Hollebeek, 2012).

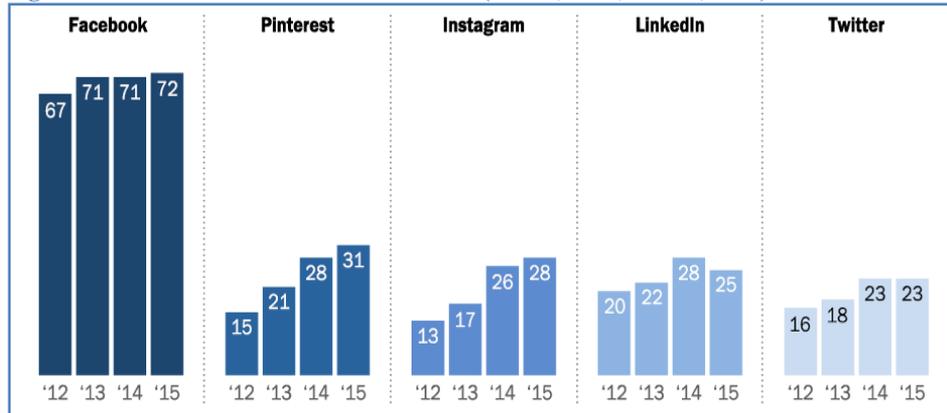
Figure 3 Number of World Users on SNSs in 2010 to 2018 (Statista, 2016)



This evidence of growing SNS usage indicates the importance of these networks in relationship management and engagement, with a large and often diverse collection of individuals providing social support. Those individuals serve as conduits for useful and valuable data, information, knowledge and other resources that contribute to drive societies in many directions (Boyd and Ellison, 2007; Ellison et al., 2007). The advantages of having such SNSs derive from evolving aspects such as social relationships, interactions and emerging societies and may be considered social capital outcomes of SNS use (Ellison et al., 2007). Many researchers have gone beyond identifying the benefits of SNSs and researched the factors that lead to improved outcomes for the parties to SNSs; these include governments, businesses and users (Burke et al., 2010; Ellison et al., 2010). There remains, however, a need to assess how users use these tools and integrate them into their businesses and lives.

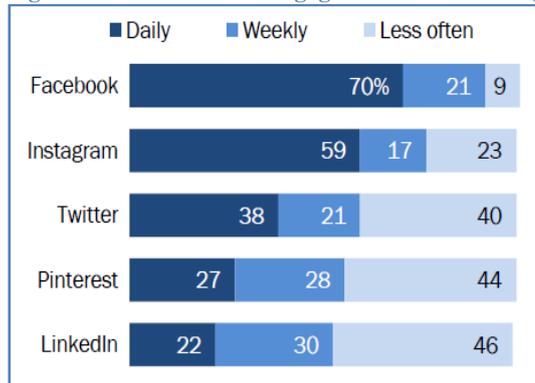
The percentage of adults in the USA in 2005 who used one or more SNSs was 7%. By the end of October 2015, it had grown to nearly 65% of adults. Facebook was still the best known and most popular SNS among America's Internet users, but it was also the only one that had seen no significant user growth since 2012. The increase from 67% of adults in 2012 to 72% in 2015 is not statistically significant. Other platforms, including Instagram and Pinterest (both of which Facebook owns) showed significant growth between 2012 and 2015, with adult online Pinterest users up from 15% in 2012 to 31% in 2015 and Instagram users up from 13% to 28%. SNS use in America is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4 the Use of SNSs in USA 2012 to 2015 (Perrin, 2015; Maeve, 2015).



LinkedIn and Twitter are among other SNSs that experienced significant growth. Online adults using LinkedIn were up from 20% in 2012 to 25% in 2015 and Twitter’s 23% of adult online users was an increase from 16% in 2012. Daily engagement for US adult Facebook and Instagram users was high, as Figure 5 shows (Perrin, 2015; Maeve, 2015).

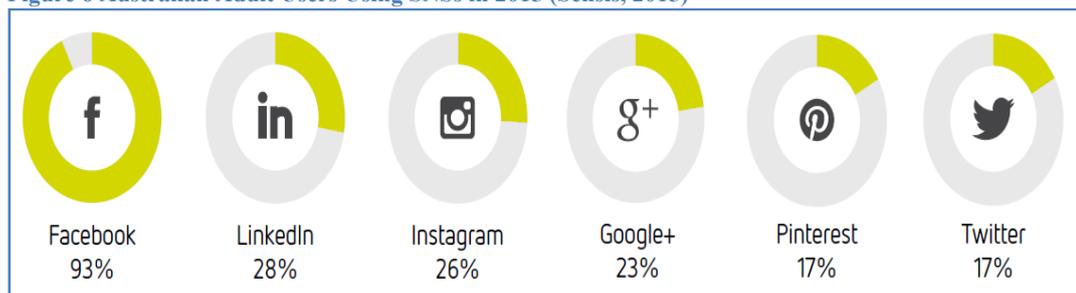
Figure 5 US Adult Users Engagement in SNSs Use (Perrin, 2015; Maeve, 2015)



Facebook is dominant in Australian social media, with 93% of Australian users averaging 8.5 hours a week on the site. LinkedIn (28%), Instagram (26%) and Google+ (23%) are all growing. 32% of Australians who use SNSs and social media platforms are followers of brands and businesses while 20% take up promotions and offers and 19% research products and services they might buy, indicating a willingness to engage; some 50% of those who research products and services via social media have gone on to buy and 66% of them bought online. This breakdown is shown in Figure 6. Australians would appear to have a mixed attitude towards firms advertising on social media but a substantial number (about 32%) either like advertisements and sponsored posts from firms they may be following or (about 38%) don’t mind seeing advertisements of which

about 42% will often click on to learn more. These numbers make paid advertising reasonably effective as a way of targeting interested consumers, even though a considerable number ignore such advertisements. Almost every Australian business that uses social media has a Facebook profile and some use Twitter and LinkedIn, though these are more often used by medium and large businesses. Use of other platforms is less common, though Instagram has begun to attract SMEs with the number using it rising from 6% in 2014 to 10% in 2015 (Sensis, 2015).

Figure 6 Australian Adult Users Using SNSs in 2015 (Sensis, 2015)



This evolution seems to be inviting businesses and marketers to create novel prosperity niches by connecting and engaging, and finding more meaningful ways to develop social capital. Examples can include telling the story of the brand or its products and services using a compelling video or picture format. This helps build a positive connection which is a major advantage of social media. These opportunities, however, need to be capitalised on by establishing trusted connections and motivating long-lasting engagements with other businesses and customers in meaningful relationships and partnerships. Further research is needed to fill this gap.

2.2.3 Social Media in Saudi Arabia

Some 13 million Saudi citizens in KSA, or about 46% of the population, were using the Internet by the end of 2012. By the end of 2015, the number exceeded 25.3 million. Saudi youth are the most active with around 60% of total SNS users. Saudi women are well represented, with about 40% using social networks. Table 1 shows penetration rates for the leading SNSs in Saudi Arabia, and Table 2 shows the most preferred SNSs and those used daily (CITC, 2015)

Table 1 Penetration of Leading SNSs in Saudi Arabia

<i>Social Network</i>	<i>Percentage of Population</i>	<i>Percentage of Social Media Users</i>
WhatsApp	22%	91%
Facebook	21%	80%
Twitter	19%	53%
Google+	15%	49%
Facebook Messenger	13%	43%
Skype	13%	43%
Instagram	13%	43%
YouTube	12%	40%
Pinterest	10%	33%
LinkedIn	10%	33%

Table 2 Top Preferred and Used Daily of SNS in KSA

<i>Social Network</i>	<i>Top Preferred</i>	<i>Used on Daily Basis</i>
Facebook	24%	81%
WhatsApp	42%	97%
Twitter	12%	24%
Instagram	8%	81%
YouTube	6%	70%
Google+	1%	56%

The use of Smartphones in KSA has also increased dramatically during the last few years, to around 29 million devices in use by the end of 2015; WhatsApp ranked fourteenth among other social media platforms reaching more than 55% of mobile phone users, while Twitter was the fifth most often visited website in Saudi with an average of 5 tweets per day per Saudi user (CITC, 2015)

The Saudi government believes in the potential of using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to simplify work and make it easier to offer services in all sectors, while also enabling communications and interactions between businesses, citizens, and government agencies (Basamh et al., 2014). The evolution of a Saudi cyber-environment was driven by the evolving Saudi digital society in which the number of users continues to rise rapidly; there are 18.3 million Internet users (Figure

7), 3.18 million Fixed Broadband subscribers (Figure 8) and about 20.7 million subscriptions for Mobile Broadband and smart devices (Figure 9), as reported late 2014 (MCIT, 2014).

Saudi social media initiatives are considered a main Saudi Internet Ecosystem (see Figure 10) and, based on the framework of these systems, social media and other entertainment ecosystems are key components (MCIT, 2010). Saudi society is generally religious, with Islam playing an essential role in defining the culture and determining social norms, traditions, values, attitudes, and practices (Al-Munajjed, 1997). The Saudi government therefore filters the Internet, and censors what is believed to be immoral or illegal (KACST, 2006).

Figure 7 Saudi digital society evolution (MCIT, 2014)

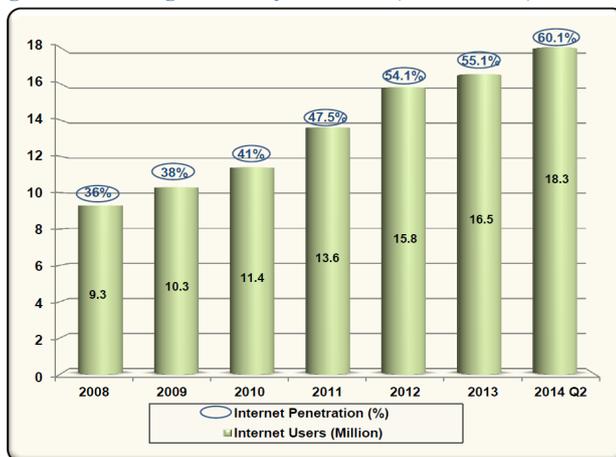


Figure 8 Saudi digital society evolution (MCIT, 2014)

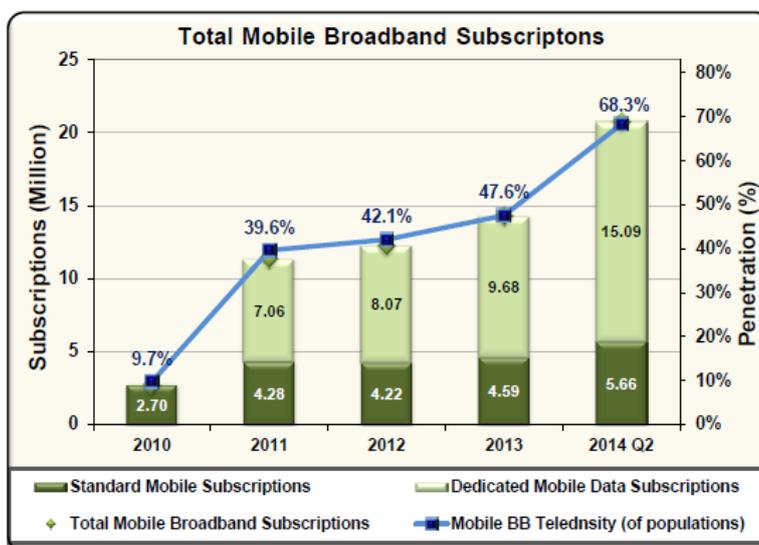
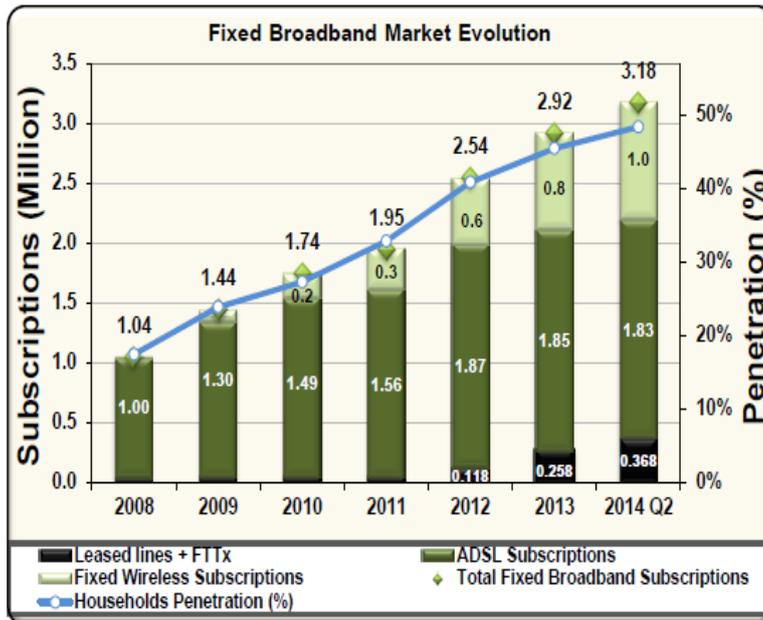
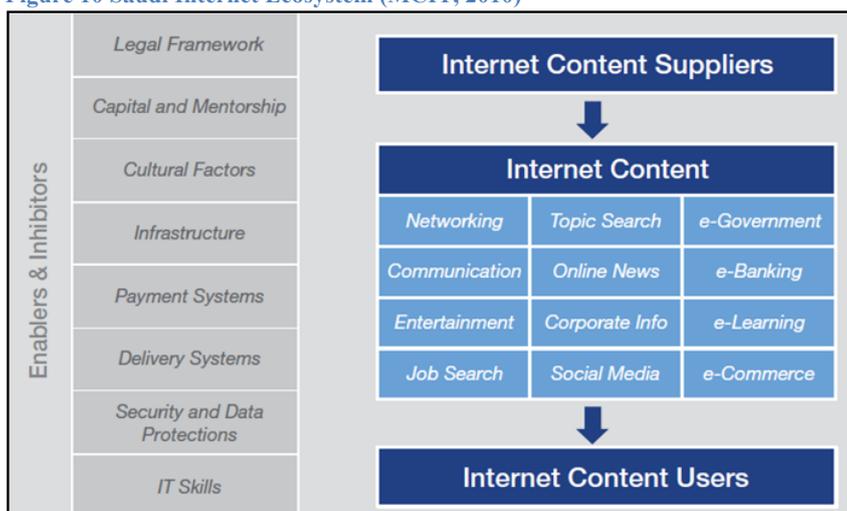


Figure 9 Saudi digital society evolution (MCIT, 2014)



However, there has been limited research and there is little literature on what role social networks play in respect of political, social, cultural, commercial and other aspects despite the large number of social media users, and particularly female social media users. The opportunity therefore exists to increase the body of knowledge. A particular area for potential research would be the challenges divorced Saudi women may face because there has been, so far as we are aware, no research into the role of social networks in supporting divorced Saudi women.

Figure 10 Saudi Internet Ecosystem (MCIT, 2010)



2.2.4 Social Media Platforms

Among the plethora of social media tools are an extensive range allowing individuals to interact with one another (Fernando, 2007). These tools have been categorised on the basis of their functionality and include blogs, microblogs, social networking platforms, and Internet discussion boards (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). The evolution of SNSs and the evolving needs of worldwide Internet users have created different social media channels or platforms. Some of those platforms concentrate on one or more aspects of social, business and cultural needs. The main SND platforms involve networking, music sharing, video sharing, content sharing, bookmarking, and news and media platforms; researchers have identified seven main types of social media platforms and presented their different features and attributes from different perspectives (Scott, 2011).

2.2.4.1 Networking Platforms

The social media networking platform is a broad category of sites that connect users, who may be individuals or groups, with related backgrounds, intentions and interests (Weinberg, 2009). Most social networks share basic features, including the ability to: create personal profiles; add friends; and create photo albums in addition to which there are various ways to interact, share content and communicate with friends. Most social networks are either popular or niche. The broad appeal of popular social networks can be seen from their millions of users; current examples include Facebook for general purpose social networking with mass appeal connecting individuals from around the world (<http://www.facebook.com>) and LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com>), a social network for interaction between professionals of all types (Perdue, 2010).

Online media has replaced traditional media and social media has become a bigger opportunity for business organisations and online retailers. Social networking websites have been used in recent times by various companies as marketing media to market their products (Lievens and Mahr, 2010). An SNS (social networking site) is defined as:

“...web-based service that allows individuals (1) to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) to compile a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) to view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (Boyd and Ellison, 2007, p. 211).

According to Topper, social networking sites are “sites where users can create a profile and connect that profile to other profiles for the purpose of making explicit personal networks.” These social networks provide a virtual environment for worldwide communication and interaction. However, we see the use of social networking sites expanding to include marketing, business communication and entertainment.

According to Boyd (2011, p. 42-43):

“Social network sites are similar to many other genres of social media and online communities that support computer-mediated communication, but what defines this particular category of website is the combination of features that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.”

Available features and functionality vary from social network to social network and there is a range of different private and public communication channels. Four kinds of feature play an important role in the construction of social network sites as public networks; they are: profiles; friends lists; public commenting tools; and stream-based updates (Boyd, 2011). These features are important to social networking sites, which are set up to allow users to create and share content with other people, as well as creating a conduit for communication and allowing individuals to search for friends and associates (Barsky and Purdon, 2006). An important trend in social networking is towards influencing others using “collaborative, real-time dialogue between informed people holding individual conversations – between the [library] and [user] and vice versa” (Angel and Sexsmith, 2009). The purpose is to establish “more points of conversation to create many more opportunities to foster exchanges of knowledge and to get people engaged” (Angel and Sexsmith, 2009). Major examples of SNSs are Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter, although Facebook is by far the most popular SNS in the world today (Barsky and Purdon, 2006).

Social networking sites fall into two groups. The first contains people-focused sites which include those that are primarily about facilitating interaction of users and their socialisation. This interaction is mainly driven by the personal content provided by users in their profiles or expressed by users in their views regarding various topics (Pan et al., 2007). Each user of the social website has a personal page dedicated to that user's information provided by them online for other users to see. The most well-known example is Facebook. The second group comprises activity-focused social networking sites; they include websites that encourage interaction between users based on content given on the website.

These social websites encourage users to contribute to discussion of a specific theme (Hafner, 2009). Online communities of this sort facilitate user interaction; some of them are more user-centred, incorporating into activity-focussed websites some elements of people-focused websites. Examples include Flickr (for photos), YouTube (for video), Soundclick (for music), Lavalife (for dating) and Del.icio.us (for bookmarking content).

2.2.4.2 Music, Video and Content Sharing Platforms

Social media music and video sharing sites enable users to upload multimedia content including videos, images, podcasts, and other forms of media. This type of platform has become particularly influential through sharing video and music on sites such as YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com>) and photo-sharing sites like Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com>) to which users can upload images and where they can browse millions of images uploaded by others. SlideShare is a presentation sharing platform (<http://www.slideshare.net>). A feature common to media-sharing sites of this sort is the facility to associate content and materials with a tag that enables other users to find the content easily (Zarrella, 2010). In particular, music and video sharing platforms are becoming important and are frequently used. Even though 57% of marketers already use video in their marketing, 72% want to learn more about video marketing and plan to increase video use (Pew Research Centre, 2015).

2.2.4.3 Bookmarking Platforms

Bookmarking platforms in social media resemble social news sites where the value for the audience is that they can collect and store interesting links to be re-visited when

needed (Zarella, 2010, p. 103). Users share web addresses in URL form (known on these platforms as bookmarks) and users vote for bookmarks to decide which will be displayed most prominently. There can be confusion between social news sites and social bookmarking sites because they are both concerned with helping users find interesting or useful content. The bookmarking platforms with most followers include Delicious (<http://delicious.com>), StumbleUpon (<http://www.stumbleupon.com>) and Diigo (<http://www.diigo.com>); the latter focusses specifically on conducting research and collaboration among network members (Perdue, 2010).

2.2.4.4 Blogging Platforms

Social media blogging platforms are content management systems (CMS) designed to provide an easy, flexible way to publish “posts” which are, in effect, short articles the blogger hopes will be of interest (Zarella, 2010, p. 9). Blogging has become increasingly popular as well as easy; anyone with Internet access can use one of a number of free tools to set up a blog without difficulty (Safko and Brake, 2009). Best known worldwide blogging platforms include WordPress (<http://wordpress.org>), Blogger (owned by Google) (<http://www.blogger.com>) and Movable Type (<http://www.movabletype.com>). A feature common to blogs is allowing users and readers to leave comments on posts. Another is to use the Blogroll feature to link to other recommended blogs. RSS (Really Simple Syndication) is a common blogging attribute that allows readers to view summaries of posts easily.

2.2.4.5 News and Media Platforms

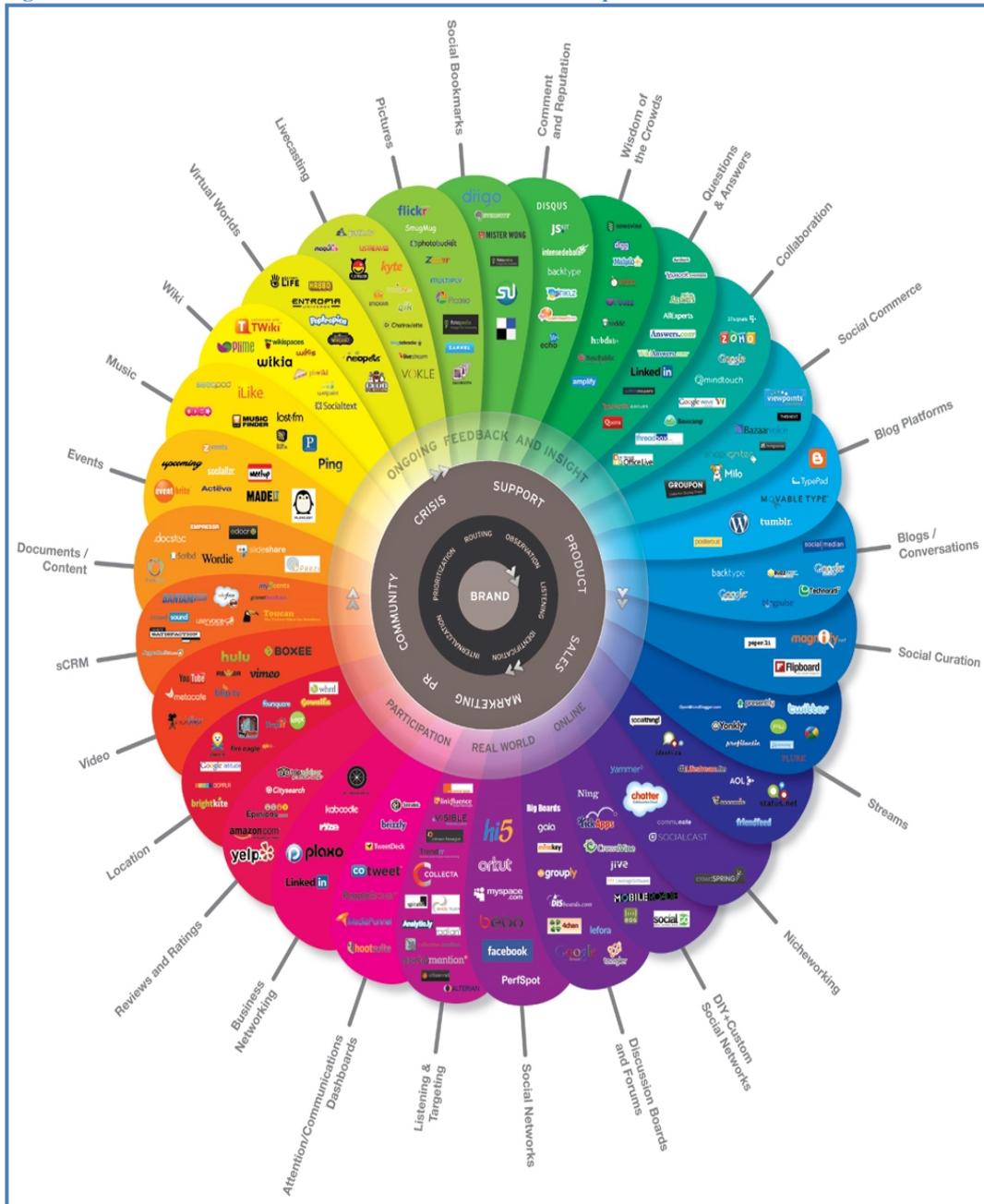
Social media News and Media Platforms are sites where visitors can submit content and vote on content provided by others. They can filter compelling content from mundane content. A user who finds content that interests them (such as a scientific or media article, a video, image or audio file, etc.), can submit it to a social news platform. Other users vote and content that users find interesting will find a prominent place on the platform. The most popular of these sites at this time is Digg (<http://digg.com>), but others include Reddit (<http://www.reddit.com>) and Mixx (<http://www.mixx.com>). Audiences for these platforms are broad because they cover a wide range of topics. Niche social news platforms also exist; they include Tip'd (<http://tipd.com>), which

focuses on investing, finance and business, and Slashdot (<http://slashdot.org>) for science and technology (Perdue, 2010).

2.2.4.6 Other Social Media Platforms

Other social media platforms deal with other areas of interest and may serve more than one at the same time. For example platforms that concentrate on scientific, political or social events and conferences related to a certain society include EventJuice in the UK (<http://www.eventjuice.co.uk>), and EventBrite (<https://www.eventbrite.com>). Others may deal with intersecting sectors, interests or societies. For instance, social media platforms may also appeal to smaller audiences of specific topics such as: Sharecipe (<http://sharecipe.com>) which features recipes and hints about cooking; Love of Film (<http://www.tcm.com/fan>) connecting classic film buffs; and ActiveRain (<http://activerain.com>), real estate professionals' own social network (Perdue, 2010). Figure 11 provides an illustration of social media platforms with examples of SNSs acting within each platform.

Figure 11 An Illustration of Social Media Platforms with Examples of SNSs



(Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Conversationprism.jpeg>, March 05, 2016)

2.2.5 Social Media and Networking Sites

“Social media” and “networking site” (i.e., SNSs) are generic terms for networking websites on which users interact and connect with others whose backgrounds and interests are most likely similar (Weinberg, 2009, p. 149). With mostly the same basic features, SNSs enable members to create their own personal profile, add friends and photo albums, and choose from a variety of ways to interact with others and post content. SNSs enable users to connect by creating personal information profiles that others can reach, inviting others to access those profiles, and sending each other instant

messages and e-mails. A personal profile can include any type of information and may include images, video, audio files, and blogs. They can involve directly or indirectly the user's interests and opinions about life, products, food or indeed any issue (Hollebeek, 2012). Many platforms will have features enabling users to create profiles or create and post material and comments on content provided by other users – but such attributes alone do not make a site a social network site. The concept “social network site” is widely used to describe Web sites where users can create a network of connections and interactions with other individuals with similar interests or who wish to share access to profiles, comments, status updates, news, images, or other forms of multimedia content. SNSs are described as having three main components: 1) a public or semi-public profile constructed by the user containing details about the user or the group; 2) connections or networks to other users and groups within the system; and 3) the ability to view and explore one's own list of connections or friends, as well as connections made by other friends or individuals in the same system (Boyd and Ellison, 2007).

It is those public displays of connections and interactions that researchers generally consider a crucial feature of SNSs that separates them from most other forms of social media such as standard newspapers (Boyd and Ellison, 2007; Donath and Boyd, 2004). Those are the essential capabilities that make a site an SNS; beyond that they can differ in a wide variety of ways and still be SNSs. Differences may include: how users construct profiles and what fields are provided to describe themselves; whether connections and interactions between individuals and groups are reciprocal or asymmetric; the range of communication features including whether there is support for private messaging, public messaging or both; and to what degree the user can alter the look and feel of a page (Body and Ellison, 2007).

There are many hundreds of SNSs, but Facebook is easily the largest in number of users and number of posts (Arrington, 2008) which has led to it being the subject of most research into the impact of SNSs in recent years. A review of research into use of SNSs identified several platforms and outlined broad areas of work and research, mainly on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube (Boyd and Ellison, 2007):

2.2.5.1 Facebook

Although originally developed for use by students, by 2009 Facebook had more than 350 million users and was the world's largest social networking site (Compesato and Nilson, 2011). Facebook is still the world's most widely used social media platform with more than 955 million users active each month as at June 2012 (<http://newsroom.fb.com>). Facebook's main mission is to make the world more open and connected and they have connected vast numbers of friends, families, and businesses worldwide despite differences in background, language, religion etc. Connectivity on this scale generates opportunities and advantages for businesses seeking new customers and also gives them the tools to stay connected to existing customers. Facebook's News Feed is probably the main part of the experience for most users (Compesato and Nilson, 2011), but users can also create, post, upload and share photos, use tags to identify themselves and friends, and use third party applications to share thoughts and opinions in search of a complete social experience.

In Saudi Arabia, Facebook users passed 13 million in December 2015, compared with around 5 million users in December 2012. In the Middle East there were 24 million Facebook users at the end of 2012 but more than 110 million by 2015 (Taylor Nelson Sofres, 2015).

2.2.5.2 Twitter

Twitter is the most popular micro-blogging network. Individuals can post messages, or "tweets," of up to 140 characters in length in a feed accessible by millions of people worldwide. Twitter is not unlike the Short Message Service (SMS) text messaging service on cell phones (Compesato and Nilson, 2011). Twitter opens up for business new opportunities including the ability to influence and take part in conversations to trigger consumer actions and purchase decisions as part of the marketing funnel. Twitter also allows businesses to hear what others are saying and to collect feedback and market intelligence and insights (<https://business.twitter.com>).

Businesses seeking contact with the millions of people around the world who "tweet" in more than twenty different languages (<https://business.twitter.com>) are constantly on the lookout for new ways to use the micro phenomenon to inform, communicate, interact and connect with consumers, as well as reaching more customers. Twitter conversations

and content can be a powerful tool to align a business message with what users are talking about at the time (<https://business.twitter.com>). It is worth noting the advice of the Twitter business website: “If you are running a business, it is likely that people are already having conversations about your business somewhere on Twitter.”

2.2.6 The Impacts of Social Media on Societies and Customers

Marketing and advertising are shifting focus to engagement and conversation through social media, and this gives consumers more power and choice. Brand Communities have been conceptualised to investigate why individuals participate in them (Muniz and O’Guinn, 2001). A great deal of research has examined what motivates people to spread positive Word-Of-Mouth (WOM) via social media, (Electronic-WOM, or EWOM). Researchers have investigated what consumers gain from contributing to online communities (Muniz Jr. and Schau, 2005; Schau et al., 2009). Several research projects have advanced our understanding of consumer motivation for social media participation and spreading EWOM online (Wang and Fesenmaier, 2003; Lin and Lu, 2011; Muntinga et al., 2011; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).

Kozinets et al. (2010) investigated adaptation of marketing messages into different narratives or stories on blogs and how online communities react to such narratives. Algesheimer et al. (2010) examined how belonging to the eBay customer community affected customers’ behaviour and intentions on the website. Sonnier et al. (2011) researched how positive, neutral and negative online communications affected sales. The argument has been advanced that communities may operate as “gift economies” in which it is expected that a contribution (which will usually entail sharing information) will be repaid at some as yet unknown future time (Wang and Fesenmaier, 2003). The reciprocity involved is not user-to-user but within the group as a single entity, with the entire community ensuring that all users are rewarded, symbolically or materially, for contributions.

Previous research also showed the effect on customers of online comments by the use of models designed to predict how online comments would be reflected in a company’s sales. Results showed that the impact on consumers’ purchase decisions of online Word of Mouth is much greater than had previously been assumed (Sonnier et al., 2011). It has also been reported that the strength of a link or connection (“tie strength”) can have

a powerful influence and that the closer to others in a group or SNS users perceive themselves to be, the more likely they are to seek those connections' advice on products, services or brands and, most probably, to then be influenced and encouraged by them (Chu and Kim, 2011).

A study found that sales are not necessarily driven by participation in an online community and that, after joining a brand's online community, consumers may spend less on it (Algesheimer et al., 2010). This explains some level of inconsistency in research results in the area of SMM on SNSs, and more research is needed to verify such issues in different countries and different social and cultural backgrounds. The need for more research highlighted by the vague and uncertain understanding of social media marketing's impact on consumers has also been pointed out by other researchers, mainly when dealing with issues of consumption patterns and levels identified by behaviours (Colliander, 2012). Subject to those limitations, Table 3 illustrates the pros and cons social medial and SNSs have brought to individuals and businesses in Arab societies, and those related to the economy (Taylor Nelson Sofres, 2015).

Table 3 Social Media and SNSs Pros and Cons: Businesses, Societies and Economy

Impact	Pros	Cons
On Arab Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting people and shortening distances between them • Instant platform to get news and information • Aid in learning new things • Offers entertainment features • Allows for “cheap” means of communication • Offers opportunities for job hunting and career growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-conductive of personal interaction between people • Family fragmentation • Addictive • Conducive of an inactive and lethargic life • Risk of being exposed to improper material • Weakened communication skills • Inaccurate and misleading information • Incompatible with the Arabic culture
On Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables faster business growth and expansion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate reputation • Social media poses a threat to

<p>and Economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct revenue generation through social media • Improving corporate image • Marketing platform • Talent hunt • Encourage consumer-centric and transparent approaches 	<p>traditional media by taking market share from them</p>
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2.3 Marketing Models and Small and Medium Enterprises

2.3.1 Marketing in Small and Medium Enterprises

Research in the last ten years has focussed on indices underpinning the success of SMEs within society. For example, many researchers recognise that one of the key attributes of SMEs that differentiate them from other types of organisations is their size and turnover (Brassington and Pettitt, 2003). SMEs are also particularly noted for their high level of proximity to customers that facilitates a high response rate both to customers' requests and to changing market conditions within their micro and macro-environment. Like all companies, SMEs need to sell their products and hence use various marketing media to market their products or services (Taylor and Murphy, 2004). The present study focuses on how consumer trust and behaviour towards unfamiliar SMEs is influenced and how SMEs use social networking websites for marketing purposes.

Marketing is one of the most important functions in an organization, and has been defined in several ways. According to the Chartered Institute of Marketing in the UK, "Marketing is the management process for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably" (Brassington and Pettitt, 2003, p. 4). Another definition given by McDaniel et al. (2006, p.6) says that "Marketing is an organisational function and set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing relationships in ways that benefit the organisation and its stakeholders." Similarly, the American Association of Marketing gives the definition, "the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organisational objectives" (Brassington and Pettitt, 2003, p. 4).

All three of these definitions suggest tactical, operational and strategic activities that larger organisations carry out in the marketing function. However, definitions for marketing in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are not readily found (Carson et al., 1995) and those definitions that are found relating to marketing by SMEs are more concerned with discussing their entrepreneurial behaviour (Reynolds, 2002).

The SME is now a widespread concept and increasingly publicised (Brodie et al. 1997; Cromie, 1990). Marketing by SMEs has been debated by practitioners and academics for more than twenty years (Gilmore et al., 2001). Many SMEs use customised versions of the classical marketing models which had mainly been used for larger or much smaller organizations (Chaston and Mangles, 2002). However, most theories explaining SMEs' marketing process and behaviour are qualitative or descriptive in nature and many have not been tested empirically (Carson, 1990).

The basic marketing principles are generally accepted to be the same whatever the organisation's size or structure (Siu and Kirby, 1998), and so can be said to be applicable for small, medium or large sized organisations (Reynolds, 2002). On the other hand, Gilmore et al. (2001) contend that most marketing by small and medium sized enterprises involves networking between individuals or concerned parties. Brodie et al. (1997) also explains that marketing in SMEs is a combination of the transaction between the involved parties, their relationship, interaction and networking. Advances in technology have led to the internet being used for the function of marketing or e-commerce and spread of word-of-mouth through online marketing has also become popular in organisations of all types and sizes including small and medium sized enterprises. While all of these theories are in the literature, academic researchers have not been able to answer a number of questions relating to SME marketing (Siu and Kirby, 1998). There is a need for empirical evidence relating to theory resulting from a systematic approach to SME marketing.

2.3.2 Marketing Models for SMEs

2.3.2.1 Relationship Marketing

Before 1990, the primary concern for many businesses was to undertake as many individual transactions with customers as possible and many businesses developed strategies to achieve this. This kind of transactional marketing is a business practice that

sees every sale as a discrete event. From this perspective, the business is most interested in getting as much from each sale as possible, customer contact is seen as episodic, the emphasis is on product features, the outlook is short term and little importance is given to customer service. There is little or no commitment to meeting customer needs and expectations, and product quality is the sole concern (Kotler, Bowen and Makens, 2010). In the last three decades, businesses and researchers alike have turned their attention to good customer relationships and customer loyalty because “in the present competitive environment, organisations must retain high value customers to remain competitive” (Ahn, Kim and Han, 2003, p. 7).

At the beginning of the 1990s, research undertaken by Webster (1992) transformed the way many businesses dealt with their customers. Rather than seeing each individual transaction as unique, Webster (1992) argued that firms should develop relationships with their customers, emphasising cooperation, compromise, benefit sharing, and anticipation of future interaction, with the principal objective of building consumer trust and loyalty.

Marketing scholars supported this idea, particularly since it has been shown that acquiring a new customer costs a lot more than keeping an existing customer. Customer acquisition is often lengthy and may require direct sales efforts, advertising, demonstrations, promotions and discounts, all of which reduce the bottom line profit (Kotler et al., 2010). What is more, significant effort must be invested at the beginning of a new customer relationship, because unsatisfied customers will not stay (Bolton, 1998). Financial wisdom therefore requires an attempt to hold on to customers once won (Reichheld, 2001).

Gummesson (2002, p. 3) defines relationship marketing as “marketing based on interaction within networks of relationships” and Harker (1999, p. 16) argues that “[a]n organisation engaged in proactively creating, developing, and maintaining committed interactive profitable exchanges with selected customers (partners) over time is engaged in relationship marketing.” Seen from a relationship marketing perspective, each transaction with a customer is seen as one more step in building and continuing the link between business and customer. This shift has changed management focus from market share to “customer share.”

A business that has adopted relationship marketing is oriented towards customer retention. This demands regular customer contact, a focus on customer value, a long-term outlook, emphasis on providing good customer service and a commitment to meeting customer needs and expectations. Product and service quality are both seen as important (Kotler et al., 2010). The literature contains many expressions that effectively mean relationship marketing; they include:

“...direct marketing, database marketing, customer relationship management, data-driven marketing, micromarketing, one-to-one marketing, loyalty (or loyalty-based) marketing, ‘segment-of-one’ marketing... Many of these relational variations describe a particularly or closely associated aspect of RM philosophy rather than necessarily and holistic concept and can (arguably) rarely be said to ‘stand alone’ in any true sense” (Egan, 2008, p. 32).

For example, Brodie, Corviello, Brookes, and Little (1997) argue that relationship marketing can be seen from a general perspective as consumer partnering, a term covering a wide range of programmes from database marketing to internal marketing, customised service, loyalty programmes, and developing personal or social relationships with customers, and creating strategic alliances. From the business’s perspective, there are many reasons to practice effective relationship marketing, such as greater sales, reduced costs, sustained competitive advantage, more positive referrals, greater employee satisfaction, and increased customer retention (Christopher, Payne, and Ballantyne, 2002; Moriarty, Kimball, and Gay, 1983; Perrien and Ricard, 1995; Proença and Silva, 2007).

While there are benefits for the business, are there also benefits for customers in this business-customer relationship? Some researchers argue that these are really pseudo-relationships, are generally one-sided and start when the business decides unilaterally to build a relationship with its customers (Barnes, 1994). Rather than seeing these relationships as beneficial for customers, Ford (1990) and Bagozzi (1995) argue that they in fact involve costs for customers which may include the opportunity cost of restricted choice and fears about loss of privacy. Bagozzi (1995) is thus critical of the relationship marketing approach and questions whether reduced choice is really in itself a motivation for customers or in fact a consequence of entering a relationship.

Be that as it may, other researchers have suggested reasons for customers to start and/or continue a relationship with a business. Hogg and Vaughan (2010) argue that customers choose to enter relationships with business for five reasons: proximity, complementary needs, similarity, reciprocity, and availability. Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995) note that customers may enter relationships with companies for personal, social, and institutional reasons and Carlell and Magi (1999) note social, psychological, economic, and customisation benefits. These benefits include risk reduction, choice simplification, high service quality, reduced misunderstanding, more customised service, reduced switching costs, and satisfying social desires (Jobber and Fahy, 2006). This is supported by Rhee and Bell (2002), who reported that most customers choose one primary supermarket not because of location but because of such benefits as knowing the layout, knowing the product range, and price.

Taking the psychological viewpoint, Lockwood (2002) finds that interactions increase and participants become closer as relationships develop, leading to stronger attachments and emotional ties, and that both sides of the relationship can exhibit these. As a social benefit, a long-term service relationship can enhance customer wellbeing and improve quality of life by giving them the social support that comes from belonging to a network (Bitner, 1995).

2.3.2.2 Viral Marketing

Businesses may seek to apply social media marketing through “Viral Marketing”. Powell (2009) asks one key question to decide whether content will go viral: “Does the content resonate with people enough that they want to share it with their friends?” (p. 93). When the answer is “No,” the company should consider whether its content is such as will capture users’ and individuals’ attention. A viral marketing campaign should begin by identifying what aspect of a product or service will resonate with online users. For example, Chazin, author of *Marketing Apple*, wrote, “If you can boil your message down to just its syrupy goodness, you can achieve lift—the irresistible force of millions of customers selling your product for you” (Scott, 2009, p. 43). What companies are attempting to do is to spread the word about their brands, products or services through their own customers to other customers.

In the view of Scott, “potential customers are eager to hear from people like them, and they pay close attention to how others have been helped by a product or service” (p. 149). Once the company’s core concept and the product or service’s attributes and key features have been defined, creativity must be harnessed to present those values online in a way that will captivate readers. Videos can be a great help in delivering this kind of message, and there is probably no company that cannot turn some aspect of its operations into an absorbing video (Scott, 2009).

2.3.2.3 Influencer Marketing

Influencers matter a great deal to any company because they exercise both direct and indirect control over consumers’ buying decisions (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, and Hogg, 2010). Companies must identify and engage with these influencers as a conduit to get their marketing message to the target audience. Marketers must identify who and what influences their target market and where their target customers turn most often, because it has been shown that credible, trustworthy sources are the ones customers find most persuasive (O’Keefe, 2002). The credibility of the source has been shown to be the best predictor of whether consumers will use it for information (De Maeyer and Estelami, 2011). The definition of influence given by Brown and Hayes (2008, p. 49) is:

“... the power to affect a person, thing or course of events; it manifests itself in many ways, from direct purchase advice to subtle shift in perception of a vendor’s credibility. It can also be the action of creating an environment conducive to affecting another person’s opinion on a particular issue.”

The primary influencers in traditional marketing were opinion leaders and gatekeepers. Their social and professional status was invaluable endorsements of a brand (Solomon et al., 2010). Now, however, research shows the traditional ways for companies to communicate with their target audience no longer work, because consumers are discussing a broader range of issues and exchanging personal experiences (Balasubramaniam, 2009; Mangold and Faulds, 2009). In social networks, customers’ relationships with companies manifest as multimodal networks (Kozinets, 1999) as word-of-mouth from other customers has become more persuasive and more available to customers, and these are now important influencers in consumer decision-making

(Brown and Hayes, 2008). The combination of social media and ICT advances makes it easy for customers to build their preferences and decisions on the basis of inputs from parties outside the direct control of marketers including customer reviews, referrals, blogs, and other forms of user-generated content (Constantinides et al., 2008). Persuasive effectiveness is moving from traditional opinion leaders to peer influencers (Gillin, 2009; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2011):

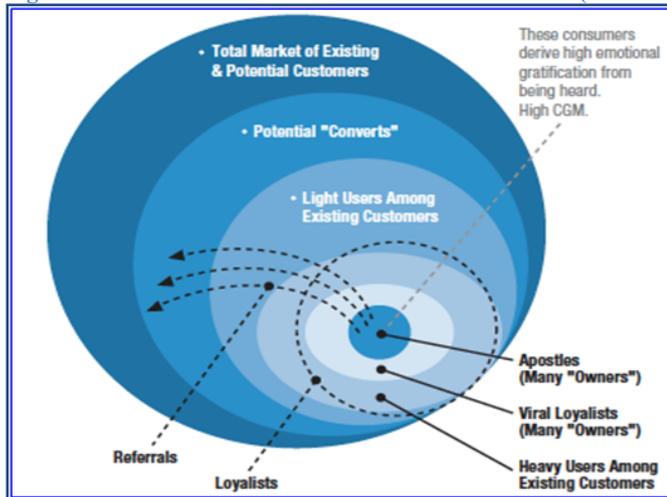
“...while meaning-making remains the central purpose of marketing communication, the shift from broadcasting to interaction within digital communities is moving the locus of control over meanings from marketer to consumer and rewarding more participatory, more sincere, and less directive marketing styles” (Deighton and Kornfeld, 2007, p. 2).

Researchers divide social community members into different types. Kozinets (1999), for example, identified four groups, clearly explained by their names: (1) tourists (weak community ties with low self-centrality of consumption activity), (2) minglers (strong community ties with low self-centrality of consumption activity), (3) devotees (weak community ties with high self-centrality of consumption activity), and (4) insiders (strong community ties with high self-centrality of consumption activity). Blackshaw and Nazzaro (2004) found the five user types shown in Figure 12: (1) potential ‘converts,’ (2) light users, (3) heavy users, (4) viral loyalists, and (5) apostles.

Blackshaw and Nazzaro (2004, p. 3) noted that “[t]he Internet is significantly amplifying the power of brand apostles and owners, affording them many more venues and ‘megaphones’ for sharing their views with others.” This power is amplified because “Web-enabled word of mouth behaviour...now includes the ability to post and send photos, video clips, audio clips, and instant text messages” (Blackshaw and Nazzaro, 2004, p. 3). Today, “within the mass of customers lie the new opinion formers and opinion leaders: bloggers and twitterers” and thus “[m]arketers have a choice: join the conversation or fail to communicate” (Smith and Zook, 2011, p. 9). This can be seen as providing an opportunity for marketers, as from a marketing strategy perspective it is from these devotees, insiders, and apostles that many of the referrals originate (Blackshaw and Nazzaro, 2004) and thus they tend to represent the most important target market for companies (Kozinets, 1999). The tourists, minglers and light users can

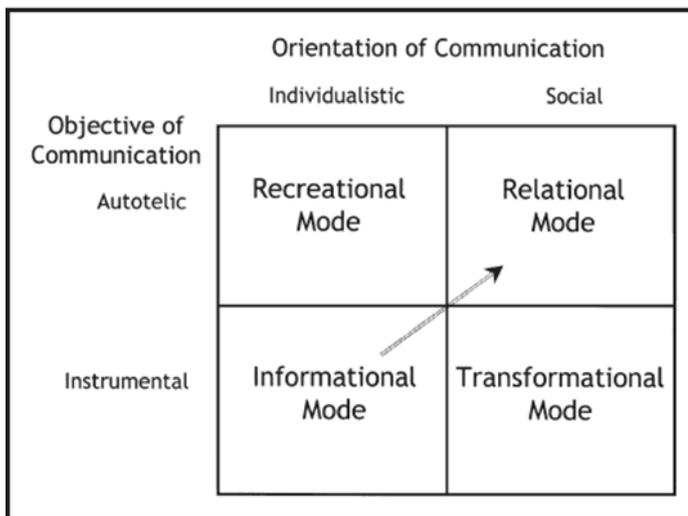
also be socialised and upgraded when involved in virtual communities and can develop loyalty and heavy usage (Kozinets, 1999).

Figure 12 Consumer-Generated Media and Influencers (Blackshaw and Nazzaro, 2004)



Marketers need to understand the main modes of interaction in online communities such as social media. Kozinets (1999) outlines the four modes of communication shown in Figure 13: (1) informational, (2) transformational, (3) recreational, and (4) relational. Combining this knowledge with knowledge of the different types of social media users will provide valuable information for marketers. For example, tourists and devotees are generally not interested in building social ties online and so are more likely to interact in informational mode because they are predominantly using social media as a means to an end and their communications focus on short-term individual gain (Kozinets, 1999).

Figure 13 Online Community Interaction Modes (Kozinets, 1999, p. 255)



In contrast, minglers and insiders are generally more social and more likely to use a relational communication mode since social contact is an end in itself (Kozinets, 1999). The focus is on relationship building and long-term gains (Kozinets, 1999). Social networking sites allow individuals and companies to develop conversations; they create many more opportunities for exchange of knowledge and customer/business engagement (Angel and Sexsmith, 2009). Thus, the movement towards influence using “collaborative, real-time dialogue between informed people holding individual conversations – between the company and customers and vice versa” (Angel and Sexsmith, 2009, p. 25) is particularly important in using social media.

The importance of influence via social media is even further amplified by the presence of network effects, as discussed above. Furthermore, social media harnesses the power of the crowd. Marketers understand people’s instinctive need to follow the crowd and because humans are social animals, a large proportion of a person’s brain power is spent on interacting with others, watching their behaviour, and wondering what they think (Smith and Zook, 2011). In the context of social media, Balasubramaniam (2009, p. 28) argues that “people contributing to user-generated contents on the web are usually on the lookout for three main returns: connecting with people, a form of self-expression, and as well as to receive recognition or prestige for their work”.

2.3.2.4 New Marketing Paradigm - Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing has now been many brands’ and products’ mantra for several years. marketers are thinking of wide social media opportunities and beginning to implement new social initiatives and campaigns at a higher rate than ever before. Marketing through social media and the businesses that utilise this paradigm have become more sophisticated and competitive in the market. Companies and even individuals cannot afford to have no presence or existence on social channels if the competitor is making waves with its products and services. The recent explosion of social media platforms is that demanding and it is growing at a rapid rate. Global companies have recognised social media marketing as a potential marketing platform with innovations to power their advertising campaign with a range of tools (Neti, 2011).

Once social media is defined, it become possible to define social media marketing. One basic definition is “using social media channels to promote your company and its

products” (Barefoot and Szabo, 2010, p. 13). An expanded definition is, “a process that empowers individuals to promote their websites, products, or services through online social channels and to communicate with and tap into a much larger community that may not have been available via traditional advertising channels” (Weinberg, 2009, p. 3). The emphasis here is on communicating with a community, which is central to the discussion. Social media marketing has been treated as synonymous with community marketing (Hunt, 2009; Neti, 2011). Social media marketing has the potential to be fairly inexpensive and long-lasting, and the growing number of users makes it seem likely to succeed (Al-Sadani, 2015).

Earlier research findings also suggest that with the right method, approach and tools when using social media marketing as the main marketing tool it can be extremely successful and cost efficient for any SME. A main point that social media marketing offers to any SME in any industry is the ability to use it as a highly effective and low-cost customer service channel. Word-of-mouth marketing has been shown to be important and would work for any SME in any industry (Al-Sadani, 2015). As an SME is a small company, the budget for marketing is generally limited, and this is an additional argument in favour of social media marketing as a marketing tool. Its effectiveness for an SME requires research and unambiguous results.

The founder of Edgee, Markus Maier, describes the new social media as a platform that changes how people share and consume content online. Edgee allows users to post with more context and in-depth exploration (Ross, 2014). This could be useful for small businesses when trying to reach out to potential audiences by stressing substance as opposed to show: (Ross, 2014), “In this way, it will be easy for small businesses to demonstrate their expertise and gain attention through their unique insights. We believe this to be a rather genuine and organic way for small businesses to develop trust and understanding with potential clients” (Maier in Ross, 2014). Another example of something useful in the future for SME’s could be “YourInterest”, a website created by Ekaterina Lengefeld that connects people on the basis of their interests (Ross, 2014). Lengefeld describes “YourInterest” and its potential for small businesses: “I think people are getting fatigued with social media. You have to create a profile and build up this online persona. The YourInterest SNS is great for small businesses because they can put on events through the application and invite other members with similar interests to events, thus getting more notice (Al-Sadani, 2015; Lengefeld in Ross, 2014).

2.4 Social Media Marketing

2.4.1 The Concept of Marketing

Marketing is a key business function, since it is tasked with attracting and retaining customers (Jobber, 2009). This is done in a range of ways, primarily by creating value for customers, which is achieved by understanding customer needs. Marketing is also outward-facing in the sense that it has to be cognizant of what is happening in the market and with competitors. A company that has a market orientation is one in which inter-functional and coordinated activities have become embedded in the organisational culture. These market-oriented organisations are likely to be doing one or all of the following (Han, Kim, and Srivastava, 1998):

1. They gather market information about customers and competitors;
2. They promote a culture highly responsive to market information which drives the constant creation of added customer value; and
3. They coordinate the organization's responses to market information across functions.

This view is in line with Webster's (1997) argument that marketing is simultaneously culture, strategy, and tactics. According to Belch and Belch (2003, p. 7), "effective marketing requires that managers recognise the interdependence of such activities as sales and promotion and how they can be combined to develop a marketing programme." The company's marketing programme and the elements of its promotions mix were things that it used to have full control over, apart from word-of-mouth communications, as noted by Mangold and Fauld (2009, p. 359):

"In the traditional communications paradigm, the elements of the promotional mix are coordinated to develop an IMC [integrated marketing communications] strategy, and the content, frequency, timing, and medium of communications are dictated by the organisation in collaboration with its paid agents (advertising agencies, marketing research firms, and public relations consultants)."

However, this is changing as noted by Hackley (2005, p. 139):

“The rapid changes in the media infrastructure have resulted in changes in the marketing power of the differing media. TV remains highly important, but other media channels can perform similar communication functions as well as or better than TV, and often more cheaply. Creative uses and combinations of media channel have assumed more importance as technological developments and audience fragmentation drive marketing communications strategies in media-saturated, advanced economies.”

Additionally, he notes that the current emphasis on ‘media-neutral planning’ highlights the new order of media relations, since advertising in traditional mass media channels is no longer necessarily the senior partner (Hackley, 2005). Overall, the emergence of new media that have made traditional media less relevant – or relevant in a different way – has affected marketing in the new millennium. This is discussed in detail in the next section.

2.4.2 The Concept of Marketing on Social Media

Understanding social media marketing involve understanding the rapid growth in use of SNSs, and the worldwide adoption of social media by active Internet users. Understanding this trend’s full meaning and significance requires a precise definition of social media and an understanding of the categories and classes of social media platforms. It also requires investigation and identification of what motivates consumers to adopt social media for personal use, which includes understanding why organisations engage in social media marketing (Perdue, 2010).

Social media’s influence on marketing and the advantages SNSs can provide are of particular interest and have led to social media marketing being developed and adopted as an increasingly popular and commonest form of online marketing. Forrester Research predicted an annual growth rate for social media marketing of some 34% through 2014, a rate higher than for any other form of online marketing (VanBoskirk, 2009). One reason for the trend is the huge number of SNS users, since marketers will have an exponentially larger audience for their brands. Another reason is that marketers can

communicate and interact instantly with consumers, thanks to the Internet and smart technologies. Facebook, for example, had more than 400 million users after six years (Zuckerberg, 2010), and doubled the number inside twelve months. In population terms, this would make Facebook the third largest country in the world based on statistics from The World Factbook (CIA, 2010).

Many firms have an inadequate understanding of social media and are unsure of how to benefit from social media marketing. According to principal analysts at Forrester Research, this is a key problem for businesses, many of which would like to solve the challenge. Businesses therefore need an IT strategist and online marketing specialist with the skills to make the company “part of the social networking space” (Li and Bernoff, 2008, p. 66).

Despite there are many adoption barriers in the area of SMM by SMEs, the implementation of SMM for those enterprises may create a lot of opportunities and can change the shape, structure and nature of the overall business (Dumitriu et al., 2019). Therefore, it is crucial to understand the factors that contribute to the success of the adoption of SMM among SMEs for conducting marketing activities (Marzuki et al., 2014). Social media or SNSs enable unique marketing communication methods, and marketing over those SNSs makes the use of these SNS applications as a extension to fulfil the traditional marketing (Eagleman, 2013). Marketing activities via SNS applications that disseminate the production information and collaboration among users work as interactive medium where users and groups can share, co-create, discuss and modify user-generated contents (Kietzmann et al., 2011). By manipulating the contents generated by the user, businesses can forecast the future purchasing behaviour of their customers more accurately and enhance brand post popularity (Vries et al., 2012). Businesses can also attract new customers and build awareness, consequently, increasing sales and building loyalties (Michaelidou et al., 2011).

Via SMM, SMEs can understand the potential customers and identify the needs of their interest by implementing strategies for creating friendly environment for engagement and interaction; those are important to gain more customers and then improve performance (Eltayib et al., 2018). As recommended by Cheek, Ferguson and Tanner (2013) and Dumitriu et al. (2019), the development of a user-centric strategic plan for SMM, businesses become more capable to compete in the market and reach more of

their target audience. The SMM also enables organization to own their SNSs platform where they can offer their products and services directly to the remote customers; this enhances the achievement of marketing goals as overall in the organization (Eagleman, 2013). Therefore, it is crucial to develop and implement SMM plans with strategic vision and effective marketing decisions (Pentina and Koh, 2012).

2.4.3 Social Media Importance and Benefits

The Internet enabled the creation of online communities and branding concepts which can be a beneficial part of marketing practice. The online community is seen as the level of interaction and communication unfolding between users and branding is seen as critical in building long-term relationships with Internet communities (Mohammed, et al., 2004). SNSs have a role to play in enabling businesses to achieve these objectives. As an example, giving a uniform “look and feel” to all online marketing materials and components including websites, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter can help businesses create stronger brand awareness with the target audience. Where a business website and social media presence are not providing a service or product directly, users may still perceive that this business provides information about brands and thus be engaged to the extent that they wish. The Internet is a unique way for consumers to interact and communicate with businesses either as much or as little as they need, do it when they need it and do it in the privacy of their own homes (Hooper, 2013).

Websites and social media can influence user feelings of self-service, even when those users don't receive the service or product directly but are developing an idea about the service or product. Facebook and Twitter, for example, are unique in enabling users to interact and communicate, share and exchange, and be engaged even though these activities are typically asynchronous. Past studies have shown that perceived ease of use and “fun” can influence usage intentions and that customers who regard technology-based service as easy to use, reliable, and enjoyable may see quality of service as higher when delivery is so simple (Barnes, Dunne, & Glynn, 2000). It follows that customers can have the best of both worlds when technology is not a means to provide a primary service or product but for a way of providing information with supplementary communication and interaction.

Although the idea of building links with customers is not new, the advent of SNSs has added new means for building reliable, solid and trusted ongoing relationships with customers. A study reported by Experian Marketing Services (2011) said that more than 129 million users in the United States access SNSs in a typical month, and that those SNSs involved professional networking sites, online forums or message boards or social tagging sites, and photo or video sharing sites. The study also reported that around 98% of online adults aged between 18 and 24 accessed SNSs at least monthly. SNSs are doing much more than just connecting users and are also providing users with proper and preferred ways to connect to companies, brands, media and vice versa, making those SNS an undeniable marketing tool (Experian, 2011).

The main idea behind the creation of content communities is to share multimedia content among users. Content communities can exist for a wide variety of multimedia types and content including text, photos, and videos. For example, BookCrossing is for sharing text and digital books among more than 750,000 users in more than 130 countries. Flickr is for sharing photos, YouTube for videos, and Slideshare for PowerPoint presentations. Individual users are not required to create a detailed personal profile and can show only basic information such as their names, the date they joined the community and how many videos they have shared (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). How the world operates is decided by the community's cultural belief system and is capable of being socially influenced (Douglas and Wildavsky 1982; Rayner, 1992). This creates a social system in which facts and events are shared about what is dangerous or safe, and about how to handle risks. The social system and online cultural context in which a user lives greatly influences how they perceive risks or safe activities within such environment (WBGU, 1998).

In other words, the most influential reasons driving users to use SNSs stem from an innate will to connect and interact with other individuals from their social and cultural systems. This principle holds for all forms of online communities "From [bulletin board systems] to chat rooms, forums, and blogs, human nature is at the heart of creating and building online communities" (Barefoot and Szabo, 2010, p. 3). People naturally need and aspire to connect and interact with other people, and want to be part of a community, and the explosion of online communities reflects this aspiration. Also, the experience of online users tells them that SNSs can empower them to communicate, share, interact and collaborate efficiently. Dependence on SNSs to connect and interact

with others lets users develop an emotional and personal attachment to those SNSs. An earlier study reported that “If your experience with a social catalyst, be it either a brand or a website, is something that enhances your life or deepens your bonds with friends and associates, you will also become bonded with that social catalyst” (Hunt, 2009, p. 285).

2.4.4 Social Media Considerations in SME Marketing

The increased interest of users in using SNSs has drawn the attention of businesses worldwide and marketers have sought reasons to engage in social media marketing. The large numbers using social media and the ability to communicate and interact instantly with consumers are the most important factors. More people use the Internet today than ever before; according to Internet World Stats, more than 1.7 billion people used online services and the Internet in 2009, a growth of more than 380% since 2000, and the time users spend on the Internet has also increased. People were reported to be “now spending an average of thirteen hours a week online” (Harris Interactive, 2009, para. 1), nearly double the average time spent by adults in 2002. This flooding of Internet users has been followed by exponential growth in social media users. In addition, Universal McCann’s global statistics on SNSs released in July 2009 indicated that there were more than 625 million active Internet users (p. 5); about 83% of whom have watched online videos (p. 18), about 71% have visited a friend’s social network page, and about 63% have created their own profile on a social network (p. 21). In the United States alone, there were reported to be more than 96 million active users more than 66% of whom read blogs, and 33% of those users also write blogs (p. 28). Forrester Press reported that in 2009 “marketing budgets are following the innovation trail—social media spending in the US will grow from \$716 million this year to more than \$3.1 billion in 2014” (Perdue, 2010).

The huge number of online users has created marketing opportunities for SMEs as well as for larger enterprises. Nevertheless, all businesses need to consider the following issues before initiating marketing initiatives on the SNSs:

- Meeting the needs and problems of individuals or potential customers. Some 58% of individuals are reported to be using the Internet to solve or understand problems and issues (cited in Weinberg, 2009). For example, Home Depot has

used YouTube to share demonstrations of do-it-yourself home projects with such topics as home improvement and energy efficiency, and has done the same on Twitter (Weinberg, 2009).

- Consumers would like to engage in conversations and discussions online about products, services, and brands. Companies can obtain advantage from participating in these conversations (Zarella, 2010). For example, active participation in conversations on products via online communities generates interest in the company and brand and generates a flow of useful information among potential customers (Hunt, 2009). It was reported that “Where organizations get into trouble is in failing to participate at all” (Scott, 2009, p. 121).
- Maintaining and building trust and encouraging conversations via those SNSs; this practice was clearly considered by HP via blogging where the company allowed customers to voice their concerns (Li and Bernoff, 2008).
- Although the cost of marketing via SNSs is low compared with traditional marketing, it is still necessary to budget even a minimal amount. Thus SMEs can conduct highly successful social media marketing campaigns on a limited budget; a video with millions of hits today may start up with a marketing budget of around \$50 (Weinberg, 2009). Businesses “do not have anything to lose by getting involved in social media. The amount of time and money it takes to create your profiles and start posting is usually minimal, compared to other marketing channels. Just six hours a week or a few hundred dollars is all it takes to establish your presence” (DeMers 2014).
- Providing enough and valuable information about products, services, brands, the company, or other customers’ experiences. It has been said that “the marketing firm can provide unlimited information to customers without human intervention, a social media marketing firm can create interactions by customising information for individual customers that allows customers to design products and services to meet their specific requirements, and social media platforms can allow transactions between customers and firms that would typically require human contact” (Watson et al. 2002; Sheth and Sharma 2005). Thus, marketers need to consider that “social media networks are just new channels for your brand’s voice and content” (DeMers 2014).

2.4.5 Social Media Marketing Strategies

There are many forms of SNS and several marketing strategies to exploit those platforms, but some principles govern this practice and companies need to consider those principles. A key principle is related to the potential communities, contents and materials, conversations and interactions, and accuracy and transparency of data and information. Other strategic pillars of marketing practices on SNSs to engage online communities include: communication, education, collaboration and entertainment (Perdue, 2010). Thus, firms can use content to communicate and interact with their target audience, to facilitate collaboration with or among audiences, to educate or to entertain this audience (Safko and Brake, 2009). Firms should have in place a clear strategy to make sure of coherence among all the methods they implement to create and capture value.

2.5 Chapter 2: Summary

How businesses operate, humans live and customers shop have been changed by ICT advances. The number of users online is reaching about 3.1 billion users (more than 45% of the total world population) (World Internet Stats, 2014). As reported by the British government in 2010, there were more interconnected electronic devices than living humans by the end of 2015 (UK Government, 2010). The US Joint Forces Command estimated in the same year that the total computing capacity and power used in the home by 2030 would be one million times greater than humans had in 2010 (US Joint Forces Command, 2010). Advances in Internet technologies and web services have brought radical changes in how firms should offer social communications and services, and businesses need to customise their products and services to comply with customer expectations. The Internet is as a new channel of social interaction between customers, businesses and governments (Al-maghrabi & Dennis, 2010), but the marketing methods to achieve customer satisfaction remain problematic for SMEs, and are still receiving attention from researchers worldwide. The successful adoption by SMEs of social media channels for marketing is still slow relative to the adoption of the Internet for communication and knowledge exchange. Several influential variables are affecting social media based marketing and require investigation (Farzianpour et al., 2014; Lee, 2009).

Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that the social media definitions mentioned in the literature are inconsistent and lack comprehensive understanding of the different perspectives of the phenomenon. There is also no explanation of the wide range of social media aspects and limited foundation for a proper understanding of those aspects such as their impact, advantages and challenges within the business, social and cultural contexts. The use of social media platforms and SNSs evolve rapidly, and this creates new business trends, new paradigms in managing businesses and new ways of interacting. This evolution requires all participants to make and get more inputs from different and diverse resources with high dynamic and dimensional diversity. Social media evolves according to different perspectives. Further research is needed to understand how this evolution impacts on societies, businesses and individual customers, and how all involved parties may evolve with advantage (Burke et al., 2010; Ellison et al, 2010).

There also remains a need to assess the ways in which SNS participants incorporate social media tools into their daily lives and businesses, and to frame how those parties obtain benefits from SNS use. More research is needed on how businesses and marketers can create novel strategies for enabling beneficial connections and engagements, developing social capital with more meaningful outcomes. While some studies have brought greater understanding of the effect of various social media issues on users, they still give only a partial picture of how consumers respond to common SNS marketing practices. Results regarding the general effect of SNS marketing on consumers are contradictory and many questions are as yet unanswered. What factors, for example, cause publicity on SNSs to succeed or fail? What happens when publicity takes the form of sponsorship or originates from the company and not the users? How do users interpret that kind of communication and interaction? Are reactions to negative publicity stronger or otherwise different from those to positive publicity? All those questions are important and all remain unanswered.

There are at present many online social networks and they are used for various reasons including information sharing, videos, images, chat, tagging, likes, and gaming. Examples of SNSs include Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace, where users can share content as well as liking or disliking it and can express their opinion as well as sharing information about their own profiles. Sharing information has many benefits for users including personal, social and hedonic benefits. Companies market their image on these

sites, and little-known companies in particular could gain a lot of benefit by sharing their profiles on social networking websites (Lievens and Mahr, 2010). Consumers use these websites to learn about different products and services, which has been known to increase their awareness of companies and might influence consumer trust, purchase intentions, satisfaction and loyalty. Reviewing the literature also showed that businesses and marketers should capitalise on the new opportunities carefully and avoid critical risks on SNSs via new SMM methods. Research on how to establish trusted connections and motivate long-lasting engagements with other businesses and customers in meaningful relationships and partnerships remains important to fill this scientific space.

Social websites or SNSs like Facebook, Twitter and MySpace provide a wide range of features that facilitate online socialisation and interaction between users who not only share public messages but can also upload and exchange their photos, songs, music preferences, and videos, their views regarding various brands and companies, and other material. According to Preece (2006) these have been the most visited websites for the last few years and their rate of use increases exponentially. Other platforms for sharing views have also increased tremendously and offer their users different views, focuses, features and designs. These websites provide a new vision regarding social interaction and communication and users tend to experience these offerings after joining the communities. Despite many researchers attempting to identify the benefits of SNSs and investigate the factors that lead to improved outcomes, further research remains important to understand these factors according to different social, cultural and marketplace contexts (Burke et al., 2010; Ellison et al, 2010).

Social networking sites focus on the ability to interact with other users, communicate and socialise with others (Preece, 2006). These websites contain a number of features that encourage users to communicate and socialise with each other via various designs and technological standards provided by the website maintainers (Kraut et al., 1998). This brings us to the social network theory that refers to the relationships between the users of the network. It is of critical importance to understand the working of the network rather than understanding the individual users as explained by Scott (1991). This theory is also called social networking analysis or SNA and examines how the structure or design of the network influences the users within the networks.

Social networking websites are another concept in the same context. These are websites that encourage social interaction based on the profile for user accounts (Utz and Kramer, 2009). The settings in these websites impersonate desktop applications, which is why they are called Web 2.0. The main purpose of social websites is that these web technologies promote online socialisation between networking websites. The web technologies also include bulletin boards, message boards and online chat rooms, which facilitate online discussions and provide a platform for users to express their views (O'Reilly, 2005).

Network theory offers explanations of the rationale behind the customer relationship. According to Wasko, Faraj, and Teigland (2004, p. 495), “[the] [s]ocial network perspectives focus on the patterns and implications of the relations within a collective, suggesting that individuals and their actions are interdependent, rather than autonomous occurrences.” According to network theory “embeddedness shifts actors’ motivations away from the narrow pursuit of immediate economic gains toward the enrichment of relationships through trust and reciprocity” (Uzzi, 1996, p. 677). In other words “embedding economic exchange in social attachments can both create unique value and motivate exchange partners to share the value for their mutual benefit” (Montazemi, Siam, and Esfahanipour, 2008, p. 233). For both consumer and company, trust reduces transactional insecurity and gives to future exchanges the expectation of trust and reciprocity that encourages value creation in the relationship. These expectations are engendered by embedding commercial transactions within social attachments so that commercial transactions having expectations about exchange are directed where possible to others the potential buyer has come to know well where a dependable pattern for managing transactions exists based on previous experience (Montazemi et al., 2008). This fits well with Barnes’ (1994) argument that maintaining trust and assurance of commitment are vital for long-term success of a real relationship between customers and a company. Both of these are in keeping with rules of friendship: honesty, respect for privacy, keeping confidences (a feature of trust), and making criticisms in private (Argyle and Henderson, 1984).

Yet, research remains important to investigate which factors lead to improved outcomes for SNSs, and to understand these factors according to different social, cultural and marketplace contexts (Burke et al., 2010; Ellison et al, 2010). As well as benefiting from embedded ties, Montazemi et al. (2008) argue (in contrast to other researchers)

believe that arm's-length ties can be useful to businesses. They define arm's-length ties as being characterised by lean and sporadic transactions and argue that these ties determine the extent to which individuals in the social network can get heterogeneous information in a market, regardless of whether that information is publicly available, because individuals use their network ties to seek updated information.

Additionally, since arm's-length ties do not need significant investment in either time or mutual obligation, they allow businesses and individuals to preserve ties to other businesses and individuals (Montazemi et al., 2008). Even at arm's length they argue that these ties determine the extent to which individual information will circulate within the social network before getting to people outside the network, meaning that network members will be more up-to-date (Montazemi et al., 2008).

Chapter Three

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This Chapter will develop a theoretical conceptual model to assess consumer behaviours within the context of Saudi SMEs using SNSs for SMM. By developing an analysis of the theoretical perspectives on customer behaviour and marketing, both in theory and in practices, the chapter will illustrate and justify the development of a novel Integrated Social Media Marketing Model (ISMMM) specifically for this research project. Based on those theories, the chapter will identify the potential dynamics and key factors affecting responses made by customers using SNSs to the SMM practices of SMEs. The chapter finally describes the development of research hypotheses.

3.1 Factors and Responses to Social Media Marketing

Businesses and business managers have been advised that their interactions with customers should be conversational (Van Belleghem, 2010). The same idea has been explained in the book, “The end of business as usual” which suggested seeking a new reality for businesses and new factors for their success (Solis, 2012). An important call to researchers is to conduct further research in that direction. The use of social media platforms and SNSs in the area of marketing, known as Social Media Marketing (SMM) has been an important area of marketing research and a new opportunity and trend for marketers (Murthy, 2013; Neti, 2011; Buettner, 2016; Tang and Andrew, 2012; Kietzmann et al., 2011; Tang, Gu and Whinston, 2012). These studies and other several researchers focussed on social media adoption as a marketing means and for the integration of SNSs into the marketing domain.

However, the literature on this new domain and on the basis of reviewing the theories relevant to this trend showed that such factors may apply to one sector and not others; it may be suitable for one type of organisation but not for others. This project will therefore investigate and assess consumer behaviours in the context of SMM by developing a novel Integrated Social Media Marketing Model (ISMMM). The inspiration for an integrated model in such a scenario is based on the use of several

theories reviewed earlier which can identify the dynamics and factors in association with customers' responses to the SMS paradigm, in addition to what has been reported by the literature in this domain.

3.1.1 Social Capital

The incentive to contribute in social media by spreading brand-related content highlights the importance of group inclusion and especially social interaction. Being a member of a social group with social interaction is a stimulus to participation in social media (Lin and Lu, 2011; Koenig, 2002). Personal identity is a key motivator for brand-related loyalty. Content and knowledge need social interaction, grouping and entertainment (Muntinga et al., 2011). Individuals frequently seek the opinions of those who differ from them (De Bruyn and Lilien, 2008).

Based on the core concepts of Customer Culture Theory (CCT) and Social Capital Theory (SCT), this project perceives that social capital and the customer's cultural context on SNSs may work as those resources are inherent in social and cultural interactions and relationships and are consequently expected to facilitate or hinder collective action by a group or an action of an individual belonging to that group (e.g., purchase intention). The resources accessed by members of social groups on SNSs may also enhance or impair feelings of trust, loyalty, networks of knowledge sharing, and beyond. Applying SCT theory to marketing can increase sharing of knowledge, create an information channel and facilitate cooperative behaviour concerning a product or a service (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). Research has also reported using SCT theory as the significant antecedent of customer service orientation and store creativity (Merlo et al., 2006). Further, social capital as a driver resides in websites and can influence the development of customer knowledge and other intentional flows within the context of Internet stores (Tsai, 2006).

CCT considers the contextual and experiential aspects of consumption and consumption activity (Arnould, 2004). It explores the diversity of overlapping cultural groupings within the broader and wider socio-historic frame of globalisation and market capitalism (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). Based on the meaning of the theory, it can be considered that the culture of online customers seems to create social capital in which the relationships between social resources and ways of living are driven by online

markets and users. In other words, the consumption of market-made commodities and desires and developing online brands are negotiated by customers in particular situations and via massive connections on online platforms and over the SNSs. This also meets the meaning of the Theory of Social Impact (TSI) (also known as the Social Impact Theory (SIT)) which implies that a social impact is the result of social forces, such as those that appear on SNSs, including the strength of the source of impact, the immediacy of the event and the number of sources making the impact. The SIT theory also implies that the amount of impact tends to increase as the number of sources increases (Latan, 1981). Therefore, creating social capital via SNSs is expected to develop branding when deployed within the SMEs context.

Social capital via SNSs may involve Bonding and Bridging Social Capital driven by cultural meanings, social influences and social dynamics; these can be shaped by the experiences and identities of customers in the many untidy online contexts of day to day life, and can identify marketing tools. When a customer sees information as positive, new and repeat sales can result. Bonding and Bridging Social Capitals may provide such positive information and image (Cheek, et al., 2013). Consequently, as SNSs can enable people to rapidly share consumption experiences with friends, creating EWOM and developing a brand may become a result of this sharing (Dahl, 2014). This intention is usually influenced by buying perception shared by online customers on SNSs, and by socialising with peers and people they like as well as building self-esteem and fun and receiving respectful treatment (Stanforth, 2009). Customers' purchase intentions are influenced by psychodynamics and social factors – that is, by social capital. As discussed, TSI theory says that a person will respond to social influence as a function of: strength, immediacy and number; the strength is a direct or close consequence of EWOM or FOAF, a Fan on SNSs (Kwahk and Ge, 2012; Latane, 1981; Ektron, 2015).

Further, as social capital deals not with a single entity but with a variety of different entities having characteristics in common, members may constitute some aspect of a social structure and may facilitate certain actions of individuals within that structure (Coleman, 1990, p. 302). Therefore, there will be social interactions in social structures on SNSs that can be regarded as social interaction ties where social interaction describes a link reciprocally established between two actors or social units, possibly facilitated by being on social media or SNSs (Fischer and Reuber, 2010). In the context of social media, all activities are based on social media interaction ties and have an impact on

knowledge transfer as a result of the information exchange channels facilitated and maintained by social media interaction ties, producing intention to behave in a certain way. Knowledge transfer may develop brand image or be part of developing awareness about brand (Wasko and Faraj, 2005; Kwahk and Ge, 2012)

Despite ambiguity around the term social capital, it is commonly understood as group rather than individual property. It is in most cases measured through participation, bridging and bonding – for example, membership of voluntary organisations, social groups or political parties (Schuller, 2001). Other research suggests that social capital measurement should be as comprehensive as possible in covering such key dimensions as the social group's networks, values and norms and should be balanced between the group's attitudinal, subjective and behavioural attributes (Cote and Healy, 2001). Such understanding can also be referred directly to the cultural context and specificity in which a group's (or group member's) behaviour and attitudes are being constructed. The concept, then, is measured according to CCT theory (Robinson, 1997; National Statistics, 2001). Therefore, and based on the above review and understanding, it can be hypothesised of the application to the marketing domain for SMEs in Saudi Arabia that:

- **H1:** Saudi SMEs narrowly use SMM practices to operate online with focus on four main elements or practices: Social Capital, EWOM, FOAF and Online Advertisement.
 - **H1a:** *The Bonding and Bridging Social Capital deployed by Saudi SMEs online have a positive association with the EWOM behaviours of Saudi customers on SNSs.*

- **H2:** The SMM practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the level of Brand Knowledge of Saudi online customers.
 - **H2a:** *The Social Capital practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the level of Brand Knowledge of Saudi online customers.*
 - **H2b:** *The EWOM practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the level of Brand Knowledge of Saudi online customers.*

- *H2c: The FOAF practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the level of Brand Knowledge of Saudi online customers.*
- *H2d: The Online Advertisement practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the level of Brand Knowledge of Saudi online customers.*
- **H3:** The Social Media Marketing practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the Purchase Intention of Saudi online customers.
 - *H3a: The Social Capital practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the Purchase Intention of Saudi online customers.*
 - *H3b: The EWOM practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the Purchase Intention of Saudi online customers.*
 - *H3c: The FOAF practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the Purchase Intention of Saudi online customers.*
 - *H3d: The Online Advertisement practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the Purchase Intention of Saudi online customers.*

3.1.2 Bonding and Bridging Social Capital

As previously explained, social capital benefits associated with using SNSs come in distinct forms. Bonding social capital encompasses various forms of social support from strong ties such as close friends and family. Bridging social capital encompasses exposure to information and resources from weak ties such as co-workers, classmates, and acquaintances (Ellison, Lampe, and Vitak, 2012; Ellison et al., 2009; Steinfield et al., 2009). Participation in a brand community sometimes fulfils the same need as religious affiliation. A study found supernatural, religious, and magical motifs to be frequent in the online community's narratives, and community members demonstrated an almost cult-like devotion to a discontinued product, creating a sense of shared consciousness and belonging to the group (Muniz and Jensen Schau, 2005).

Indeed, the strong ties of a member of a group or an individual on SNSs are likely to interconnect, suggesting that a lot of the information flows through networking. There

are therefore two distinct forms of conceptualised social capital: weak ties and strong ties. Bridging social capital consists of weak ties, while such strong or intimate ties as family relations are called bonding social capital. Bridging social capital is most suited to diffusion of information and is created through exposure to a diversified network of largely weak ties. Bonding social capital represents the kinds of benefits given by close relationships in exclusive groups of family and close friends and is linked more to social and emotional support as well as to tangible support such as the loan of money (Hollebeek, 2012; Putnam, 2000). In either case, social capital may impact on word of mouth, or EWOM in the case of SNSs.

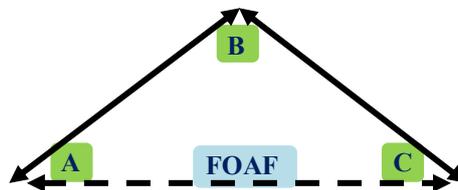
A study of value creation by online brand communities and why people participate revealed more than ten categories of social capital on the SNSs including: welcoming new arrivals and showing them how the community works; empathising (supporting other members) and governing (announcing what behaviour is expected); evangelising for the brand and rationalising its use. Other categories include: marking internal distinctions and creating a hierarchy; mile-stoning (marking important steps in brand ownership); badge-creating (recognising important steps in the community); and documenting, or describing the brand relationship journey. These practices highlight and reinforce the relationship emerging with the brand and signify a member's brand journeys to others.

The other categories relate to brand use and include caring for the brand, sharing tips for modifying the brand and influencing the approach to the marketplace. The purpose of these practices is to improve use of the brand for community members and to increase members' status in the community (Jensen Schau, 2009). A study on defections from service providers reported that, the stronger a member's tie with a defecting fellow customer, the more likely the member was to leave themselves – that is, the impact on purchasing intention would be stronger. In online social media, a message's origin is therefore likely to profoundly influence attitudes and intentions of those attending to it. The stronger the tie (that is, the closer the influencer is to the consumer), the more likely the consumer will be to act on the recommendation. Theoretically, this clarification of the message's effect is significant; as well as shedding more light on tie strength's role in social media, it helps to establish the central division between social media marketing and traditional advertising (Nitzan and Libai, 2011).

3.1.3 Friend of a Friend (FOAF)

“Friend-Of-A-Friend” (FOAF) describes an individual who has a friendly relationship with a person’s friend, but no direct relationship with the person. TSI theory says that a person’s response to social influence will be a function of variables that include how strong the relationship is, and when to be a direct or close friend with EWOM or a FOAF or Fan on SNSs (Kwahk and Ge, 2012; Latane, 1981; Ektron, 2015). On SNSs, if A is a friend of B and B is a friend of C, then A is a friend of C. Figure 14 illustrates the FOAF relationship between nodes A and C in the social network, where C is a friend of A’s friend B, and vice versa. The friends A and C are not directly connected, but a path exists between them through B.

Figure 14 The FOAF Relationship between nodes A, B and C



Although no direct connection exists between the person and the friend’s friend, this relationship still matters. Everyone can exert influence on another person by using a common friend as intermediary. Ideas, information, behaviour and feelings can be spread by this link. If the information and ideas flow is strong enough, the three people form a triad. Social theory argues that people have a strong propensity to form these triads. When a connection has been formed between two people not previously connected then ideas, information, and behaviour can flow back and forth. The triad formed by A, B, and C has been studied as an exact social phenomenon that terrorists seek to exploit when building networks on SNSs (Waskiewicz, 2012).

FOAF includes someone not known well and is useful for word of mouth marketing: a person may recommend a product in the general company of many, even if he directs the comment only to a friend. Social reach has become more important in marketing with the advent of social networking. On the SNSs, anything that induces users to share a marketing message with other sites or users is viral marketing and creates potentially exponential growth in the visibility and effect of the message. If a member has 100 friends across all online social networks (“social reach”), and if they share ten posts a month (“the social activity level”), 1,000 potential friend contacts are generated (100

friends X 10 posts). If 10% of those generate a reply, “like” or re-tweet (“the response rate to the activity”), those responses in turn are published to a network of the main member’s friends. If each friend has 100 friends, the member would have generated 10,000 potential friend-of-friend contacts. The formula relating these figures to the prospect pipeline is (Investmentpal, 2015; Ektron, 2015):

$$\text{Number of Potential FOAF A Month} = \text{NF} * \text{NP} * \text{RR} * \text{FN}$$

Where

NF: Number of Friends,

NP: Number of Posts Shared per Month

RR: Response Rate

FN: Size of each Friend’s Network

Internet viral marketing is any technique that causes Web sites or users to share a marketing message with other sites or users, resulting in potentially exponential growth in the visibility and effect of the message. Advertisers tap viral efforts in the hope that sharing may also increase knowledge and awareness of products and services. Encouraging communication between consumers can cause important product perceptions and purchase triggers to spread rapidly and widely, reaching a huge audience a few people at a time. Marketers are striving to achieve the "tipping point" (Gladwell, 2000) which occurs when a social phenomenon reaches critical mass as a result of three things: a small number of exceptional influencers; stickiness (specific factors making a message memorable); and environmental circumstances that encourage the spread of a virus (Phelps, et al., 2004).

The emergence and growth of SNSs have significantly encouraged and contributed to the effectiveness of Viral Marketing (Patrizia, G, Fernando, F and Alessia, D, 2013). Since 2009, two thirds of Internet users worldwide visit one or more SNSs weekly for services or information, and Facebook alone had an average of over 1.58 billion monthly active users by the end of 2015, more than 83% of whom are outside US and Canada (i.e., around 863 million of 1.1 billion daily active users) (Facebook, 2015). Earlier studies also found that more than 51% of people who view news online forward the resources and contents through one of certain channels, mainly SNSs and email (Morrissey, 2009). This explains how the contents may pass from a friend to a friend and then to another friend, and so on. This also explains the amazing power of SMM as it can produce customers who not only choose the product, but value the relationship

with the brand (Perdue, 2010). Resources embedded in social relationships on SNSs augment outcomes by enabling the flow of information (e.g. about opportunities, brands and behaviours), by exerting influence (e.g. hiring a friend of a friend), by confirming social credentials (e.g. confirming a person's access to resources of a group standing behind them), and reinforcing the individual's sense that a social group exists to provide emotional support (Hollebeek, 2012).

3.1.4 Electronic Word-of-Mouth

Marketers have used viral marketing for a long time and previously called it Word-of-Mouth (WOM) or "Buzz Marketing". It is essentially a process for interested people to market to each other (Subramahi and Rajagopalan, 2003, p.1). In this digital age, social media facilitates WOM in electronic form (EWOM). SNSs offer marketers communications and sales opportunities but with a worrying potential lack of control of the message. Some marketers use "Relationship Marketing" instead of transactional marketing, building longer term customer relationships and generating trust between buyer and seller to build loyalty (Harridge-March & Quinton 2009). EWOM success in SNSs comes from understanding how knowledge is shared and the nature of persuasion by influencers and responses from recipients in the rapidly growing online environment (Subramani & Rajagopalan 2003; Miller and Lammas, 2010).

Understanding how WOM works online as opposed to offline is vital for current marketing communications. Online "Brand Communities" can generate a group mind-set and sense of shared interests which should be connected unobtrusively with the brand (Brown, Broderick and Lee 2007). Viral marketing is becoming more common, and marketers try to ensure that brand activity relevant to its core audience is shown to any social network (Phelps, et al., 2004; Rodić, 2012). Each day, billions of emails are sent, billions of SNS messages are posted, and millions of people exchange information, thoughts and insights.

SNS interaction has been shown to fit the classic WOM description. EWOM is so much faster than the offline WOM of the past that moving it to this new arena is bound to transform consumer behaviour (Kozinets et al., 2010). The shift may lead to a new marketing situation for both researchers and practitioners; this is still unknown within the KSA marketplace. Yet, the effects of EWOM in social media on the receiver are not

well investigated, particularly in developing countries. Few researchers have investigated deeply what may affect consumers' responses to social media marketing (Colliander, 2012). Demographic dissimilarity of EWOM message sources has been reported as increasing awareness and interest and also the likelihood that the customer will take action (Chu and Kim, 2011). This result was supported by earlier research showing emotional closeness (that is, tie strength), to be more powerful than demographic similarities in influencing customer responses to social media marketing (De Bruyn and Lilien, 2008). The relationship between homophile and opinion seeking can therefore be negative as long as individuals tend to seek the opinions of those who are different from them.

Earlier attempts to conceptualise the SNSs made several calls for urgent research into factors and variables motivating people to participate in Social Media (Saleh, 2014; Lekhanya, 2014). The context involves issues that need further investigation due to social and cultural constraints. For example, how FOAF works when driving a certain decision and how the EWOM is used for recommendations in regard to a specific product, service or even business. Several studies showed the perception of individuals toward new technologies or any existing phenomenon; the view is most likely to differ when crossing cultures; pairs of countries like America and Japan, China and Monaco, Germany and Australia are culturally different due to their different backgrounds, religions, social norms and other factors (Rohrmann, 1995; Neto and Mullet, 2001).

3.1.5 Online and Social Media Advertisement

Advertising has become to the way for companies to promote their services and/or products. Curran defined it as follows: "Advertising is a paid, mediated form of communication from an identifiable source, designed to persuade the receiver to take some action now or in the future" (Richards Curran, 2002). This means that "all paid space on a Web site or in an email is considered advertising. Internet advertising parallels traditional media advertising, in which companies create content and then sell space to outside advertisers" (Strauss, 2006). Under online advertising in its original sense the placement of advertising material, primarily banner, on web pages in order to support marketing and communication objectives is understood (Lammenett, 2006). Some earlier studies showed that attitudes toward social media had a positive and significant relationship with purchase intention (Okazaki, 2011). Several studies have

been used to analyse and proof the outcomes, and differentiated two kinds of agreement or disagreement in morals: one in belief, the other in attitude and found that there is a positive relationship between the attitude toward advertising on the Web and purchase intention (Stevenson et al., 2000).

As analysed earlier, belief and intention are closely linked, where belief is a descriptive thought that a person holds about something. An intention is a person's enduring favourable or unfavourable evaluation, emotional feeling, and action tendencies toward some objects or ideas; these can be developed in SNSs as reported by many studies (Kotler and Keller, 2006).

In Australia as an example, businesses (25%) try to engage the public through paid advertising. The larger the business, the more likely they are to have advertised. Nearly all businesses who advertise on social media have placed an ad on Facebook. Despite the finding that many consumers will have ignored such advertising, 69% of businesses believe it has been effective (Sensis, 2015). However, this trend remains cloudy in terms of effectiveness and developing knowledge related to the brands, and in terms of developing purchasing intention. Businesses and business managers have been advised to become conversational managers when interacting with customers (Van Belleghem, 2010). The same idea has been explained in the book titled "The end of business as usual" which suggested seeking a new reality for businesses as well as factors for their success (Solis, 2012). Consequently, an important call to researchers is to conduct further research in that direction.

3.1.6 Online Brand Knowledge

The Theory of Social Impact (TSI) implies that being a member of SNSs will have potential for developing purchase intentions, knowledge related to the brand, and customer loyalty towards services and products (Latane, 1981). Being a member of SNSs with high interaction rates and more attendance has been considered as a strong engagement factor that influences how members form impressions and process information, which affects their perception, knowledge, trust, awareness and attitude. Several studies reported this kind of relationship between inputs and outputs using SCT theory. The theory implies that contributions by a group member may reinforce the availability of a specific set of resources about products, service providers and brands,

possibly creating positive impacts on brand knowledge in terms of brand awareness, trust and brand image (Li, 2013; Hollebeek, 2012). This has still to be investigated within the SME environment.

Information about a brand gains credibility when many social media network users say the same things about it. Based on the social empowered theories reviewed earlier, when other people are the source of information and the individual is the target, impact should be a multiplicative function of variables including the number of people within an SNS group. It is therefore assumed that as the number of members of an SNS increase, the impact on the target individual will also increase (Latane, 1981). Social media users often share product or brand-related experiences and information as a post, a comment, or a rating. Individuals' actions influence others, who may be entertained by their performance and are sometimes persuaded by their arguments (Mir And Zaheer, 2012; Latane, 1981).

Social media for marketing purposes, i.e., SMM, was reported as an opportunity for "Brand Building" by connecting enthusiastic online brand advocates with the company's product development cycle (Ferguson, 2008). Research becomes marketing; product developers now use social forums to identify reactions to a modified offer, a price, or a feature. Such communities can have real success. One well known and documented example is the case of Dell IdeaStorm for discussions and brain storming for communities. Dell's sales increased measurably after its launch provided a forum for meaningful dialogue (Miller and Lammas, 2010). Earlier research reported that, as with general interaction, brand-related interaction in social media mostly takes place between consumers (Kozinets et al, 2010). As a medium for socialising, social media provides a way to build knowledge, brands and consumers' trust through a deeper level of connection; social media "has the potential to increase our awareness of others and to augment our spheres of knowledge" (Murthy, 2013). @As a media business, marketers need to create awareness and relevance about your brand and in some respects that's marketing" (Long, 2011).

Trust was reported to be a determinant of consumer engagement on SNSs, and the more an individual trusts his contacts, the more likely s/he will seek their opinions (Chu and Kim, 2011; Kozinets et al., 2010). Another study showed trustworthiness to rank with credibility and quality as crucial for WOM acceptance in social media (Huang et al.,

2011). These and other studies have explained and shown how fragile and sensitive the relationship can be between the source and the receiver in social media, yet there is no clear model of factors and variables affecting trust towards a brand. Further research is therefore needed to investigate the factors that drive customers to higher levels of trust. Some studies acknowledge the lack of detail on how these factors affect social media in a way that differs from other media. This is in addition to the fact that way online customers perceive those factors may distort customer behaviour and intention to purchase a product, and research is needed to examine this (Colliander, 2012).

Some consider trust to be an outcome of social capital (Woolcock, 2001; National Statistics, 2001); some see it as one of the shared values constituting social capital, and some think it is both (Cote and Healy, 2001). Trust in a brand can be reinforced by penalties for those flouting social norms or failing in their social responsibilities (Pretty and Ward, 2001). Trust is often divided into two types. First is trust in known individuals and second is trust in individuals we do not know. Putnam describes these types of trust as thick and thin trust. Trust has been shown to be more dynamic than this implies and Putnam's idea of trust has been challenged as research has shown it to be multi-dimensional (Sixsmith et al., 2001). Trust becomes more important in relationships perceived as close.

Developing brand awareness is regarded as an important and useful application of SMM. An online service provided to the customer with some awareness can help prevent identity theft where someone claims a username that should belong to a company. A creative way to increase brand awareness is to identify influencers in online communities related to a company. By making brand ambassadors of these people, the company can reach out to relevant online communities (Safko and Brake, 2009). A different approach to increase brand awareness was taken by Burger King who launched Whopper Sacrifice in 2009, promising a free Whopper burger for every ten friends removed from their account by Facebook users. Some 234,000 friends were removed and Burger King had been mentioned by more than 13,000 blogs (Weinberg, 2009; Perdue, 2010).

Businesses increasingly seek consumer participation and engagement with their brands and the literature reports that social network groups with high social interaction can have strong engagement that influences formation of impressions and processing of

information by members. This in turn has an effect on their perception, knowledge, trust, awareness and attitude (McKnight and Chervany, 2001). These inputs and contributions work to reinforce the SCT concept in explaining the way individuals receive resources about products, service providers and brands from group membership and social relationships. The marketing potential of SCT can positively impact on brand awareness, knowledge and image (Li, 2013). How far innovation is seen as enhancing image or status in one's social system varies (Moore and Benbasat, 1991). Based on SCT, when a customer sees information as positive, new and repeat sales may result; Bonding and Bridging Social Capital can provide such positive information and image (Cheek, et al., 2013). It is therefore important to consider an innovation's attributes such as the effect of trust in and image of a brand, and treat those attributes as essential elements in any social system and business relationship including those on SNSs.

Commitment has been seen as social capital's relational dimension, with commitment to a website being key in impacting on purchase attitude. Virtual community commitment was also regarded as important for brand loyalty and consumer behaviour (Kwahk and Ge, 2012; Jang et al. 2008; Stewart, 2003). When customer relationships are built slowly, what is also built is a reputation for caring about people as individuals. This becomes associated with the brand, increasing brand loyalty and improving pricing flexibility. Products that solve customer problems or fulfil customer desires have an emotional impact and customers will return again and again. Businesses should therefore offer the best products available to achieve this kind of loyalty (Kwahk and Ge, 2012). SCT sees bonding and bridging social capital as positive factors in information and image, and consequently as improving loyalty (Cheek, et al., 2013). It can therefore be hypothesised in the SMM domain for SMEs in Saudi Arabia that:

- **H4:** The Brand Knowledge (Brand Image, Trust, Loyalty and Awareness) of Saudi SMEs online has a positive association with the Purchase Intention of Saudi customers on SNSs.
- **H5:** The Brand Knowledge (Brand Image, Trust, Loyalty and Awareness) of Saudi SMEs online has a positive association with the Saudi customers' behaviour on SNSs.

3.1.7 Online Customer Purchase Intention and Behaviour

Using TSI theory, it is possible to understand the impact of using social media and being engaged in one or more SNSs on consumer attitude, loyalty and purchase intention (Mir And Zaheer, 2012). The information on SNSs, awareness of a brand and knowledge about a brand may affect consumers' purchasing intention as they use the information as evidence for a purchasing decision (Kwahk and Ge, 2012; Ye et al., 2010). Before buying, consumers consult different sources of information and this is especially so for high involvement products (Mir And Zaheer, 2012; Cheong and Morrison, 2008). Given the sources of product related information and knowledge on SNSs, individuals can interact with each other and benefit from their experience of the target product. It is essential to understand purchase intentions, and various consumer buying behaviour theories say that doing so can assist in predicting purchase behaviour (Bagozzi, 1983; Warshaw, 1980).

Informational social influence is the term describing what happens when an individual makes decisions in order to reach the best decision possible. This positively influences buyer behaviour (Kwahk and Ge, 2012). When people are seeking the best choice, they will begin by looking for additional information or evidence. A great deal of information about products, including reviews and other content generated by consumers, is available on social media. Such information has been shown to affect purchasing behaviour. Consumers accept the information as evidence for a purchase decision, meaning that purchase intention can be affected by informational social influence (Ye et al., 2010).

Before SNS networks came into increased use, Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) looked for intimate perspectives that influenced dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). CCT focuses on consumption's contextual aspects, including symbolic nature that products and services consumed may have as well as the experiential aspects of the activity of consuming. This boils down to the data that can be collected through SNSs and data about the behaviour of the online marketplace during the whole process of purchasing. Therefore, to deal with contemporary online consumers, an understanding of consumer experiences including attitudes and behaviours at every stage of consumption before, during and after purchase has become an important factor in marketing success

(Arnould, 2004). On the basis of the above theories and the earlier review of literature, it can be hypothesised in the SMM domain for SMEs in Saudi Arabia that:

- **H6:** The Purchase Intention of Saudi customers on SNSs has a positive association with Saudi customers' behaviour on SNSs.
- **H7:** Saudi customers' behaviour on SNSs has a positive association with the Actual Purchasing of SMEs products and services online.

3.2 Theoretical Perspectives on Customer Behaviours

The literature on theoretical foundations to understand customer behaviour in marketing industry has introduced many theories. This research will address the different, yet potentially complementary, theories and marketing models with perspectives in which social media and interaction concepts have been embedded, and that may consider the context of marketing domain. The development of research model to be investigated in this research project integrates the use of the following theories: Social Exchange Theory (SET); Social Impact Theory (SIT) (also known as the Theory of Social Impact (STI)); Consumer Culture Theory (CCT); Social Capital Theory (SCT); Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), and Relationship Marketing Theory (RMT).

3.2.1 Social Exchange Theory

According to the SET theory, social exchange behaviour occurs when two or more individuals exchange tangible or intangible activity(s) for varying rewards or at varying cost (Blau, 1964). From social psychological and sociological perspectives, the SET theory focuses on the individual behaviour of actors in an interaction with one another and explains social change and stability as a process in which social parties negotiate exchange (Ekeh, 1974; Cook and Emerson, 1978). SET theory has been used in different disciplines including sociology, economics, psychology and marketing. In marketing, the SET theory has been identified as an additional theoretical perspective from which engagement of an individual customer in marketing paradigms can be explained (Hollebeek, 2011). Based on this theory, customers are predicted to reciprocate and develop positive thoughts, feelings and behaviours towards (for example) a brand in return for benefits from the relationship with the brand (Pervan, Bove and Johnson, 2009). Therefore, within the context of the SET theory, a social

exchange implies unspecified or unnamed obligations, whereby one party such as a marketer or a brand representative or service personnel member does another (i.e., the consumer) a favour. For example, a marketer may be motivated to provide exceptional services and expertise needed by the potential consumers by the possibility of brand loyalty or some future return (Rousseau, 1989; Hollebeek, 2011).

According to SET theory, consumers may decide to undertake specific acts and/or develop sentiments and positive attitude of brand related reciprocity such as by distributing positive information as a Word-of-Mouth (WOM), which in the case of an SNS will be in an electronic format (EWOM) (Hollebeek, 2012). This informational social influence is formed by the decision to reach the best possible option or decision. The immense amount of information about products and services on SNSs includes reviews and other consumer-generated contents, and such information has been shown to affect consumers' purchasing intention as they use the information to support a purchasing decision (Kwahk and Ge, 2012; Ye et al., 2010). Therefore, when a product sells well, satisfied customers may become tools encouraging others through positive reviews to purchase this product. However, the dynamics of the impact of on developing purchase intentions of EWOM, knowledge related to the brand, and loyalty of the customer toward the services and products remains a hot topic for investigation. Mainly, when dealing with SNSs exchanges, it continues to be important to understand what impact the informational exchange has when it takes place directly among the members of a group or indirectly, with friends beyond the group members, or with another group of members.

3.2.2 Social Impact Theory

The essence of SIT (also known as the Theory of Social Impact (TSI), to be used as TSI theory) is to understand the influence of others on social behaviour. According to TSI, social impact is a function linking certain variables related to the social interaction; the theory states that "When other people are the source of impact and the individual is the target, impact should be a multiplicative function of the strength, immediacy, and number of other people". The theory assumes that the impact on the target individual's attitude and behaviour will be augmented and increased as the number of people in the interactive scenario increases (Latane, 1981). In the case of using SNSs such as

Facebook or Twitter, users or members of a group regularly and often share information about certain products, brands, and events.

TSI theory implies that the impact on the target user seeking product information and recommendations on social media may increase as the number of users sharing their experiences and information on the same product, increases. This assumption justifies application of TSI theory to understand the impact on consumer attitude, loyalty and purchase intention of using social media and being engaged in one or more SNSs (Mir And Zaheer, 2012).

At the heart of TSI theory is the idea that other people's presence can produce a social impact that affects an individual's feelings and behaviours. Social impact includes any change in the individual's emotional or physiological state, subjective feelings, motives and emotions, cognitions and beliefs, values and behaviour resulting from the presence or actions of others whether real, imagined or implied (Latane, 1981). TSI theory provides guidelines to categorise and understand what effect variables or interactions have on the direction and extent of the social influence on the individual. Although the ways one person may influence another are many and various, TSI theory assumes that a small number of general principles and variables influence the majority of these impacts (Kwahk and Ge, 2012). TSI theory therefore applies equations to predict how much social impact any specific social situation may have as part of an individual's daily life. An individual can may experience daily a wide variety of social situations – humour, sadness, embarrassment, praise, others – that are governed by the presence and actions of others, and this is true in the virtual, online world (as in SNSs) as much as in the “real” or physical world.

According to TSI theory, three laws govern social impact and all can be expressed as mathematical equations: social forces, psychosocial law; and multiplication or division of impact. Also according to the theory, the likelihood that someone will respond to social influence varies with on three variables: strength, immediacy and number. Strength is a measure of the influencing group's importance to the individual (i.e., a direct or close friend with EWOM or Friend-of-a-Friend (FOAF)) (known on SNSs also as “Fan”) (Ektron, 2015). It has been suggested that:

“...For most small business owners, one glowing recommendation from a patient can loom larger than an entire billboard. Therefore, the power of social media marketing is that it taps into these organic communities to sell and recommend your business. Offers and endorsements spread instantly through groups of friends. News stories and opinions rocket through communities in a flash. These “friend of friend” networks are deep, fast, and free... “ (Richey, 2011)

Immediacy describes the group’s proximity in space and time to the individual at the time of the influence attempt, while number is decided by how many people are in the group (Kwahk and Ge, 2012; Latane, 1981). It follows that, under TSI theory, the impact of an interaction (Int) among a group can be expressed as follows:

Interaction = F(SIN), Where S= strength, I=immediacy and N = number of people

This equation describes the social impact as dependent on how many people are acting on the target and likely to be greater when: sources include higher status individuals; action is more immediate; and the number of sources is large. An SNS can fill all of these criteria; immediacy is available in, for example, Facebook applications, and the number can be huge when both local and cross-border members are involved. In other words, social structure on an SNS can group individuals who differ in their ability to influence each other and in where they are but still can affect each other in a mutual and repetitive process that is dynamic, interactive and iterative. While there has been research into the benefits and power of social media means as a new form of EWOM for marketing products and services or providers, there continues to be a need to investigate purchase intention (how purchasing decisions are made) and the impact this tool has on developing knowledge about products, services or providers (i.e., brands) (Latané, 1996). This also needs further understanding when dealing with SNSs where bridging or bonding can yield social capital.

3.2.3 Consumer Culture Theory

CCT theory was developed to understand the theoretical perspectives that identify the dynamics governing the relationships between three main variables: consumer actions,

the marketplace, and cultural meanings (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). The CCT is concerned with aspects related to consumption context such as the symbolic nature of the consumed products and services (cultural meanings could also be a social context), and the experiential aspects of consumption such as data related to the customer that can be collected via SNSs (customer actions parameter), and data collected about the marketplace behaviour during the purchasing process (marketplace parameter). Therefore, businesses and marketers on SNSs need to understand such concepts including consumer reactions, attitudes and behaviours before and during the purchasing process (Arnould, 2004).

Businesses that understand consumer behaviour can satisfy consumer needs. Marketers can only satisfy consumer needs if they understand the likely users of their products and services and if they do so before use begins (Solomon et al., 2010). It has been reported that the main reason a business needs to understand consumer behaviour is to identify why and how purchase decisions are made so that they can design effective marketing strategies (Hansen et al., 2008). have changed how consumers and marketers communicate and interact, and a new culture (online or SNS culture) has emerged and continues to evolve (Wang et al., 2012). Customers expect to learn everything they need to know about a product by interacting directly with brands on SNSs as part of the online culture; some 42% of individuals using SNSs expect any question they ask online to be answered in an hour or less (Jaffe, 2010). This creates new challenges as marketers must change how they interact and communicate with consumers in the context of the new technologies and available tools; those tools bring new cultural issues to the industry and societies where customer behaviours are driven by this culture's new rules and principles including grouping, information release and an open environment.

3.2.4 Social Capital Theory

Social capital has been the subject of so many definitions that there is confusion as to what it really means. It has been described as social bonds, social energy, civic virtue, community spirit, community networks, social resources, community life, social ozone, extended friendships, social glue, informal and formal networks, good neighbourliness, and social networks (Baum, 2000; National Statistics, 2001). The concept has been defined as function rather than as a single entity, but a variety of different entities

having characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of a social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals within the structure (Coleman, 1990, p. 302).

As a terminology, social capital is both new and old. The terminology is new when applied to new technologies or social networks and SNSs. For the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), social capital focusses on values and norms; the OECD defined it as a set of networks of individuals facilitating co-operation within and among groups through shared norms, values and understandings. This is similar to but more expansive than the World Bank definition, which assigns social capital to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of social interactions among a society. Social capital is therefore more than the sum of the institutions underpinning a society; it is the glue that to a considerable extent holds them together with shared beliefs and philosophies (Cote and Healy, 2001:41).

For all that, SCT theory is deeply rooted in the eighteenth century perspectives of those theorists who emphasised the relationship between pluralistic associational life and American democracy (National Statistics, 2001). The spread of ICT tools, including SNSs, creates a networking infrastructure that works as a platform for the formation of social capital (Calabrese and Borchert, 1996). SCT therefore plays an important role in understanding online social communities and their relationships, such as those on SNSs, and how multi-dimensional influences work among the group members; SCT theory is of great benefit in understanding groups on SNSs.

It has also been reported that the main goals of SMM include increasing social capital based on treating the SNSs as an individual's network of relationships and access to resources. Social capital stems from the customer relationships developed and maintained by a company. Some may ask why companies would concern themselves with social rather than financial capital; it is because social capital is a step, indirect but vital, on the way to achieving financial capital (Powell, 2009). Four reasons for working to increase social capital have been identified. The first is that customer relationships develop to become customer loyalty. The second concerns the word of mouth approbation that follows when customers speak with approval about a company they have a relationship with. The third is that it doesn't cost much to build relationships

with customers online, and this is particularly true when the alternative is television advertisements. The fourth and most important reason is that the competition is also seeking to build social capital and it would be unwise to be left behind (Hunt, 2009). It thus seems possible to build social capital in this evolving online world, implying that the search for ways to interact genuinely with online communities and provide compelling content may be key to success. A number of studies have reported the use of different dimensions of SCT theory in marketing contexts, as shown in Table 4 (Li, 2013).

Table 4 The Dimensions of SCT Theory Used in Marketing Contexts

Study Context	Dimensions of SCT Theory	Dimension Type	Reference(s)
Retailing Business	Open Communication	Structural	(Merlo et al., 2006)
	Shared Vision	Cognitive	
	Trust	Relational	
Internet Marketing in e-Stores	Centrality, Equivalence between Members, Network Density	Structural	(Tsai, 2006)
	Website-Customer Relationship, Customer-Customer Relationship	Relational	
Supply Chain Management: Buyer-supplier Relationships	Managerial Communication	Structural	(Lawson, Tyler, and Cousins, 2008)
	Supplier Integration	Relational	
	Supplier Closeness		
Exploratory and Exploitative Learning in new Product Development	Customer Power	Structural	(Atuachene-Gima and Murray, 2007)
	Intra and Extra-Industry Managerial Ties		
	Trust	Relational	
Solidarity and Strategic Consensus		Cognitive	
Launch Strategies for Innovative Products	Embedded Ties with Partners	Structural	(Hsieh and Tsai, 2007)
Relationship	Network Ties and Contacts	Structural	(Westerlund

Value	Perceived Trust Sense of Proximity	Relational	and Svahn, 2008)
	Person-related Intangible Skills Embedded Organizational Competences	Cognitive	

For example, a study reported that social interaction in an SNS group can cause perceptions and awareness based on the degree to which a collection of individual members is seen as bonded into a coherent group (Lickel et al., 2000). Another study within the online retailing industry reported the importance of SCT theory in developing structural open communication between the business and customers, enabling cognitive shared vision among parties, and developing relational trust between them within the virtual environment (Merlo et al., 2006).

3.2.5 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

The TRA theory implies that the behaviour of online customers or SNSs members can be driven by their purchasing intention or by the social pressures and their beliefs and knowledge toward brands; it is expected to understand how the SNSs and SMMs may drive the actual purchasing of customers (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1975).

The TRA is a well established model from social and Behavioural psychology research, which is concerned with the determinants of consciously intended Behaviors (Fishein and Ajzen, 1975). It is concerned with rational and systematic Behaviour; for example, Behavior over which the individual has control (Fishein and Ajzen, 1975). The TRA consists of several variables, mainly: Attitudes toward Behavior, social influence (known also as Subjective Norms) and Intention variables to predict the Actual Behaviour of users.

3.2.6 Relationship Marketing Theory (RMT)

In recent decades, both businesses and management researchers have turned the focus onto maintaining good customer relationships rather than the products or services themselves, and even focusing on increasing customer loyalty; the present competitive environment aggressively drives organisations to retain high value customers in order to

remain successful and competitive (Ahn, Kim, and Han, 2003). It has been argued that firms should develop relationships with their customers, putting emphasis on cooperation, compromise, benefit sharing, and anticipation of future interaction, with the principal objective being to build consumer trust and loyalty (Webster, 1992). The concept of Business-to-Customer (B2C) relationships, termed as relationship marketing, was introduced in early eighties (Berry, 1983). With the focus on several perspectives including the stages of the marketing process, the target audience and benefits, researchers produced many definitions of relationship marketing as the foundation of RMT; more than twenty-seven definitions were synthesised to identify the core of this theory (Harker, 1999). In 2004, the American Marketing Association revised the definition of relationship marketing to say that “marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders” (Palmat, 2007). Thus, relationship marketing overlaps with branding strategies that focus on building brands which then can leverage into superior financial performance; consequently it is difficult to distinguish between the effect of brands, trust and relationships on a customer’s attitude toward the firm (Srivastava, Shervani and Fahey, 1998).

The most widely accepted definitions suggest that relationship marketing comprises three key aspects: process, target and benefit (all of which have been discussed in detail elsewhere (e.g., (Palmat, 2007))). Therefore, from a relationship marketing perspective, each customer transaction is viewed as an additional way to build and continue the relationship with the customer and it is this this paradigm shift that has changed the focus of managers from market share to ‘customer share.’ Relationship marketing orientates the business towards customer retention. Customer contact is regular, the focus is on customer value, the outlook is long-term and good customer service with high commitment to meeting customer needs and expectations is prioritised, with both product and service quality regarded as important (Kotler et al., 2010). From a psychological perspective, it has been reported that, as relationships develop, interaction increases and participants become progressively closer leading to greater attachments and positive emotional ties on each side of the relationship (Lockwood, 2002). As a social benefit, a long-term service relationship can give the customer a sense of wellbeing and better quality of life by providing social support as part of a network (Bitner, 1995). A relationship marketing strategy thus involves the formation of bonds

with customers and rewarding their commitment by meeting their needs. Instead of the hunt for short-term profit, a relationship marketing business can build long-lasting bonds with customers, leading to the customers developing trust in the business. This mutual loyalty helps both parties fulfill their needs.

3.3 Proposed Theoretical Research Model

ISMMM (the Integrated Social Media Marketing Model) is an integrated theoretical research framework based on the above literature. This framework engages a number of aspects of approved scientific theories (including CCT and TRA) and integrates their different variables to explain the influences that SMM practices on SNSs may have on the actual purchasing of products and services offered by SMEs.

The CCT theory considers the contextual and experiential aspects of consumption and consumption activity (Arnould, 2004). It explores the diversity among cultural groupings that exist and overlap within the broader socio-historic frame of globalisation and capitalism (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). Based on the meaning of the theory, the culture of online customers may be seen as creating social capital in which online markets and users drive relationships between social resources and ways of living. In other words, the consumption of commodities in response to market desires, and the development of online brands, are negotiated by customers in particular situations and via massive connections on online platforms and over SNSs. This also complies with the Social Impact Theory (SIT) which implies that social forces produce a social impact. The forces in question include those that appear on SNSs and include the strength of the impact source, the number of sources contributing to the impact and the immediacy of the event. The SIT theory implies that the amount of impact tends to increase in line with the number of sources (Latan, 1981). It follows that the creation of social capital through SNSs, when deployed by SMEs, is expected to develop brand power.

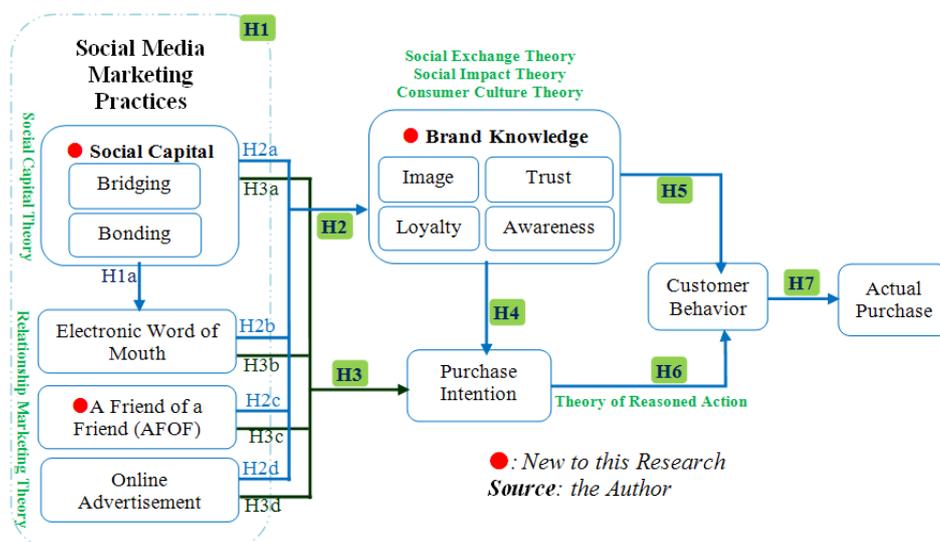
Social capital created on SNSs may involve Bonding and Bridging Social Capital driven by cultural meanings, social influences and social dynamics; these can be shaped by customers' identities and experiences in the almost infinite unruly scenarios of online everyday life, and can be identified as marketing tools. When a customer perceives information as positive, new and repeat sales can result. Such positive information and images can be provided by Bonding and Bridging Social Capital (Cheek, et al., 2013).

The process can be straightforward: SNSs enable people to share consumption experiences rapidly with friends, this creates EWOM and a brand may develop as a result (Dahl, 2014). Customers' purchase intentions can be influenced by psychodynamics and social factors, by which is meant social capital. Purchase intention is usually influenced by buying perception where online customers can share over the SNSs, as well as by socialising with peers and people they like, enjoyment, self-confidence, and being treated with respect (Stanforth, 2009).

Based on the TRA theory, the behaviour of an online customer is usually developed when beliefs and social pressures drive behavioural or purchasing intention. Young people may use SNSs because of their beliefs and attitudes toward social networks and pressure from friends, but not because of any third party ability to control their behaviours (Pelling and White, 2009).

In line with these hypotheses, the research framework was designed as in Figure 15. The integrated research theoretical framework has been developed based on the above literature and is titled Integrated Social Media Marketing Model (ISMMM). This framework engages and borrows aspects of approved scientific theories and integrates their different variables to understand the influences that SMM practices on SNSs may have on customers. The dynamics of such influences and their impact on the actual purchasing of products and services offered by SMEs will be tested within Saudi SME businesses.

Figure 15 Theoretical Framework: Integrated Social Media Marketing Model – The ISMMM Model



The reasons for proposing these factors were explained earlier. To clarify, the reasons are:

- The emergence of SMM and SNSs in SMEs is still evolving and growing
- The emergence of SMM in SMEs is new and makes novel opportunities at lower cost
- The emergence of SNSs in digital societies is still evolving and growing
- There is a lack of sophisticated models for SMM in SMEs in the context of social and cultural issues in Saudi Arabia
- The normative literature indicates a lack of theoretical marketing models using social media platforms and SNSs
- Uncertainty about the impact of using SMM by SMEs via SNSs in Saudi Arabia
- Unavailability of definite conclusions about the factors influencing the adoption of SNSs as a trend in marketing practice based on using a new model known as SMM with particular focus on SMEs in Saudi Arabia

3.4 Summary

Social media has changed the landscape of communication, and the change continues. Social media is a broad term describing new online communication channels. It enables people all over the world to interact and share product and brand-related information. Social media includes online networks (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn), wikis (e.g., Wikipedia), multimedia sharing sites (e.g., YouTube and Flickr), bookmarking sites (e.g., Del.icio.us and Digg), virtual worlds (e.g., Second Life), and rating sites (e.g. Yelp and TripAdvisor) (Edwards, 2011). Social media has become the core of marketing communication as some business gurus say that if business firms do not participate in social media they are not part of cyberspace. Social media enables businesses to contact end users directly and in a timely manner at lower cost than traditional media (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

This chapter focused on the development of a research theoretical conceptual model for the SMM using SNSs within Saudi SMEs. It contained a comprehensive analysis of relevant theories, with discussions and justifications on the variables selected for the proposed model. Several theories may help in understanding the dynamics of SMM via SNSs, but more research is needed, especially into the application of this new marketing

model within the SME environment in Saudi Arabia. Although many businesses use social media, there remains a lack of knowledge and direction about how to use it and its effectiveness for business.

Chapter Four

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will describe in detail the research approaches and methodology used in this project. The chapter presents the research philosophy, strategy, and design and paradigms approach; and then revisits the research questions, identifies the research variables and develops the research hypotheses. Next come details on the data collection approach and methods, study population and sampling selection and interaction. After that, the chapter then presents the development, validation and reliability of the data collection instrument and design of the questionnaire together with data collection procedures. Data analysis techniques including Descriptive and Inferential Statistic, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), Comparative Fit Index Analysis; and Statistical Software Applications including SPSS and AMOS Applications (for latent variables analysis) are discussed in this chapter. Finally, the chapter provides data on the Trustworthiness and Normality of the research with results on Reliability and Validity Measurement, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Normality of Distribution and Pilot Survey. Research Ethics are also discussed and reported in this chapter.

4.1 Introduction to Research Methodologies

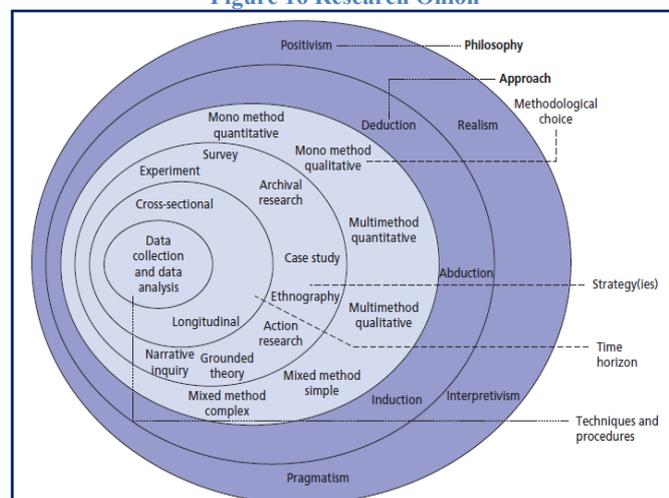
Research may be quantitative, qualitative or both. Which approach is chosen will depend on a number of issues affecting how the nature and objectives of the research are best suited to available designs, paradigms, methodologies and strategies. Also to be taken into account are the nature of and beliefs towards the topic being researched (Mason, 2002; Antwi and Hamza, 2015; Goldkhul, 2004; Goldkhul, 2005). Nor are the researcher's own influences overlooked. First selection of research paradigms relates to ontology and epistemology (Bajpai, 2011). In essence, a research paradigm is scientists' shared set of common beliefs about how to understand and address a problem (Kuhn, 1962).

A research paradigm cannot be chosen until the ontological (What is reality? What is available knowledge?) and epistemological (how can/does the researcher know reality?)

perspectives of the studied phenomenon is identified., have been identified. It is also true that choice of research paradigm can be driven by the nature of the topic under investigation (i.e., Social Media Marketing), and research methodology (how should the researcher go about finding the new knowledge?) (Guba, 1990). It has been argued that questions about research methods are less important than questions about the research paradigm best fitted to the research, which means that the research paradigm must be known before the research methods and tools are designed. Questions of method come after questions of paradigm, which is the ontologically and epistemologically fundamental belief system or world view guiding the investigation (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

Therefore, the research philosophy a researcher adopts embodies important assumptions about how the world is viewed. Yet, the researcher should demonstrate his or her way of thinking about the research philosophy before it is chosen; this is to be one of the three major ways of thinking about research philosophy: epistemology, ontology and axiology (Bajpai, 2011). These assumptions will underpin the research strategy and the methods selection that forms part of that strategy. The philosophy the researcher adopts will in part be influenced by practical considerations (Walsham, 1993; Grover and Davenport Thomas, 2001; Schultze and Leidner, 2002), but the main influence will be the specific view of the relationship between knowledge and the process by which it is developed. Figure 16 illustrates the “Research Onion” layers involving research philosophies, approaches, strategies, techniques and methods, and methodologies; the Research Onion also identifies the potential options for those key components (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012).

Figure 16 Research Onion



Source: (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012)

Researchers then develop the research on the basis of underlying philosophical assumptions about what constitutes or makes valid research after which they can identify the research method(s) most appropriate for developing target knowledge in any given topic or phenomenon of study. Therefore, to conduct and evaluate any research, research philosophical assumptions are to be clear and connected with the research design and strategies underpinning the research activities to reach the ultimate research goal. Researchers from different scientific domains use different terms and concepts to identify their way(s) of comprehending and conducting research; all are embedded within the umbrella of research approaches, strategies, design, paradigms, methodologies, etc. (Kuhn, 1962). Most research is driven by at least three key issues: (i) the nature of reality and the beliefs or philosophical assumptions about the topic under investigation, (ii) the relationship or interaction between the researcher and the individuals within the research environment, sample or population, and (iii) the way people can know the world or gain knowledge about phenomena within this world (TerreBlanche and Durrheim, 1999).

This project will adopt a mixed approach for the research design and methodology, which is to say that literature analysis and quantitative data collection and analysis research methods will both be used in this work. This is the mixed research strategy which has been reported in the literature as an appropriate strategy for different types of research (Creswell, 2010). Qualitative and quantitative methods may both be used appropriately with any research paradigm (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Selection of the research approach may be based on the researcher's ontological and epistemological position towards the topic under investigation; it may also be based on the features of the social environment studied and on the research questions to be answered. Initially, the quantitative strategy is suitable for this project as it depends on empirical testing of hypotheses to develop knowledge – that is, by collecting numerical data on observable behaviours of samples and then subjecting these data to numerical analysis so as to discover regularities in the constituent elements of the natural and social world and in the relationship between them (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991; Gall et al., 2003). A quantitative strategy also depends on planned collection of statistical data in order to describe or predict a social phenomenon before acting, or to analyse the relationship between the variables (Oppenheim, 1992).

The literature analysis strategy also fits this project as it focuses on text rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. In this work, the literature will be analysed to develop a research framework and theoretical model. Some results from earlier studies will be used in comparison with the results of this study. Research philosophies indicate that the qualitative strategy is concerned with views and analysis of events, results, reports and conclusions from earlier research, enabling the researcher to more understand the situation being studied (Bryman, 1992); this philosophy is a part of this study.

Chapter 3 provided a full description of the developed research model, which graphically illustrates the variables relating to consumer behaviours in the Social Media Marketing (SMM) context. In this chapter, the constructs of such variables will be followed by in-depth discussion of each construct, ultimately assisting design of the research instrument for data collection. In regard to the pilot study, the full description, analysis, results and value of this practice with reference to the questionnaire design will be provided in this chapter. The research philosophies, approaches, strategies, methodologies, design, and techniques and methods are identified and then justified in more details.

4.2 Research Philosophies and Paradigms

4.2.1 Research Philosophies

The most common and known research philosophies are: pragmatism; positivism; post-positivism; realism; and interpretivism. The philosophy used in this project will be mixed positivism and interpretivism (also known as constructivism). This philosophy implies that data will be interpreted objectively using a structured methodology so that data can be easily quantified, analysed and interpreted statistically (Gill and Johnson, 1997). The methodology that commonly accompanies positivist research philosophy is based on developing and verifying hypotheses which, for the most part, is done using quantitative methods involving collecting data from the real world with no external effects introduced by the researcher (Christie et al, 2000). Data collection is therefore totally independent neither from the researcher nor the participant.

In brief, the position or philosophy of this research is positivist because the social world will be treated as having a fixed nature, characterized by patterns of *cause* and *effect* which are capable of being described and predicted. Thus, the researcher neither influences nor is influenced by the participants in the research. This paradigm fits with the quantitative approach to be used in this project that depends on developing knowledge through empirical testing of hypotheses based on numerical data and statistical results (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991; Gall et al., 2003). Using a structured data collection methodology – that is, a survey or surveys – will also help to avoid research or results bias. The positivist philosophy has been a dominant epistemology in research related to Information Systems (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Yin, 1994).

Research related to Information Systems may be classified as positivist if evidence exists of formal propositions, quantifiable measures of variables, hypothesis testing, and drawing of inferences about a phenomenon from a perspective sample to a stated population (Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991). Positivist studies therefore assume that observations of phenomena under investigation can be made both objectively and rigorously (Galliers, 1992). As a constructivist philosophy, it is assumed in this research that knowledge of reality is gained only through social constructions such as consciousness, shared meanings, language, documents, tools and other artefacts, as in the case of the social networks world. In this paradigm, the focus will be on the complexity of human sense as the situation emerges in the social world and in networks. Thus, the researcher here is often an important factor in any study process in being able to define the research's perspective and scope. It follows that the researcher here can develop concepts and models in order to understand the reality.

In contrast, the critical theory paradigm assumes that social reality is historically constituted, and that it is produced and reproduced by people, which is not the case for social networks and media. Further, post-positivism is between positivism and constructivism, assuming that all observations are imperfect and subject to error and all theory is revisable. The critical realist is therefore critical of our ability to know reality with absolute certainty. This paradigm also claims that there is no one correct scientific method (Galliers, 1992).

4.2.2 Exploratory Research Design

Research design is the general plan of what the researcher will do to find answers to the research question. Research design may be exploratory or conclusive. Exploratory research explores specific aspects of the research area and does not aim to provide final and conclusive answers to the research questions. In this type of design, the researcher may even to some extent change the study's direction, though not fundamentally, if new evidence gained during the research process requires it (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). This research examining consumer behaviours within the context of Social Media Marketing will adopt an exploratory design.

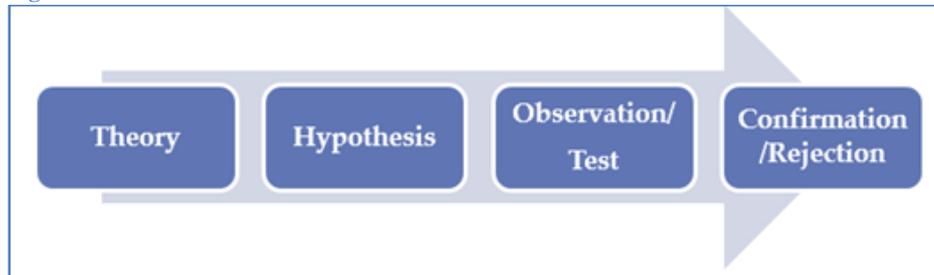
4.2.3 Research Strategy

The data collection strategy adopted by this project will be the survey method. Survey method is a tool for questioning individuals on a topic or topics and then describing their responses (Jackson, 2011, p.17). In business studies, the survey method is used to collect primary data to test concepts, reflect people's attitudes, establish the level of customer satisfaction, and then conduct segmentation research and research for other purposes. A survey method may seek to describe certain aspects or characteristics of the population and/or test hypotheses about the nature of relationships within a population. Survey method can be broadly divided into three categories: mail survey, telephone survey and personal interview. Survey research and interviews should be subject to a pilot study before starting the main research action (Litwin, 1995).

4.2.4 Deductive Research Approach

Research is deductive when the research activities begin with a theory, express the theory as hypotheses, carry out observations, and revise the theory in line with the findings from the observation. Inductive research is the opposite in that it begins with observations and uses the findings from those observations to establish a theory. There is also a mixed design approach known as the abductive approach (Churchill, 1999). This project will use the deductive approach because the researcher will begin by understanding theories related to the topic, develop hypotheses to be tested, design data collection tools appropriate to the needed observations, analyse data for findings, and will then test hypotheses and, if necessary, revise the theories. A set of hypotheses will be formulated and those hypotheses will be confirmed or rejected during the research processes (see Figure 17).

Figure 17 Deductive Research Process



4.2.5 Quantitative Research Methodology

This describes the decisions the researcher makes when selecting research design based on the researcher's ontological and epistemological position towards the topic under investigation. The features of the social environment studied and the research questions to be answered will also have a bearing (Gall et al., 2003). Research methodologies may be qualitative, quantitative or mixed methodology, and each conducts social research in a different way so that each strategy may be most appropriate for different types of research question (Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991). This research uses a quantitative research methodology to collect and analyse data for the following reasons:

- Quantitative methodology depends on developing knowledge through testing hypotheses empirically by collecting numerical data on samples' observable behaviours and subjecting these data to numerical analysis to discover regularities in the elements making up the natural and social world and in their interrelationship (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991; Gall et al., 2003).
- Quantitative methodology depends on planned collection of statistical data to describe or predict a social phenomenon as a guide to action or to analyse the relationship between the variables (Oppenheim, 1992).
- Quantitative methodology explains social phenomena in terms of a cause and effect interaction or relationship and measures events by objective or statistical criteria.

- The quantitative methodologies fit with the study's research philosophies and other research paradigms (Reason and Rowan, 1981; Neuman, 2005).
- The current project focuses on testing hypotheses related to customer behaviours in the domain of SMM. Those hypotheses have been developed based on looking at the factors and variables that work to form relations of cause and effect in the research model. This will make it possible to achieve definite outcomes related to the customer intention, behaviour and actual purchasing of products and services marketed via SNS.
- Quantitative methodology makes it possible to generalise research results through statistical evidence extracted from the data collected representing the research population, and perhaps also to other similar populations (Neuman, 2005; Lichtman, 2006).
- The results given through quantitative methodology are more rigid, objective, conclusive and definite due to the mathematical and statistical analysis used on the data (Saunders et al., 2003; Neuman, 2005; Johnson & Christensen, 2008).
- Quantitative methodology is more suitable when the research project is very focused and narrow with specific objectives to be achieved, certain questions to be answered and more concise hypotheses to be tested in relation to SMM issue in Saudi Arabia.

4.2.6 Research Methods and Tools

Research techniques, tools and methods are here related to the systematic, focused and orderly collection of data and analysis to obtain information to solve the research problems and answer the research questions. Therefore, the research methodology should follow only defined and logical rules and procedures (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). In this research, these include a wide range of tools and techniques.

Survey Tool

- Survey Questionnaire: this is the most widely used research instrument for data collection in social sciences (Bennett, 1983).
- Survey Questionnaire: this is used with the objective of measuring knowledge, opinions, awareness and behaviour (Zikmund, 2003).

- Survey Questionnaire: this is more appropriate for research questions about self-reported beliefs or behaviour (Neuman, 2003). The Survey Questionnaire Translation will involve, two steps:
 - English to Arabic (Appendix B), and,
 - Reverse Translation, i.e., English to Arabic.

Statistical Assessments

- Trustworthiness and Normality Analysis, which will involve:
 - Pilot Study, Expert Questionnaire Assessment,
 - Initial Reliability and Validity Analysis using Cronbach Test
 - Normality of Distribution using
 - Kolmogorov-Smirnov Tests
 - Shapiro-Wilk Test.
- Research Ethics Approval will be obtained before data collection
- Data Collection (Paper-based and Online), Data Tabulation – Computerised
- Results Reliability and Validity Analysis, including:
 - Data Analysis involving Demographic Characteristics Analysis, Descriptive Statistical Analysis
 - Factor Analysis for Correlations Validity between Variables
 - Model Evaluation (Structural Equation Modelling), and Hypotheses Testing (t-test in particular)
 - Multi-Group Analysis (for moderating variables among groups) using Software Packages, including:
 - SPSS Application
 - AMOS Application (latent variables analysis).

Research Ethics

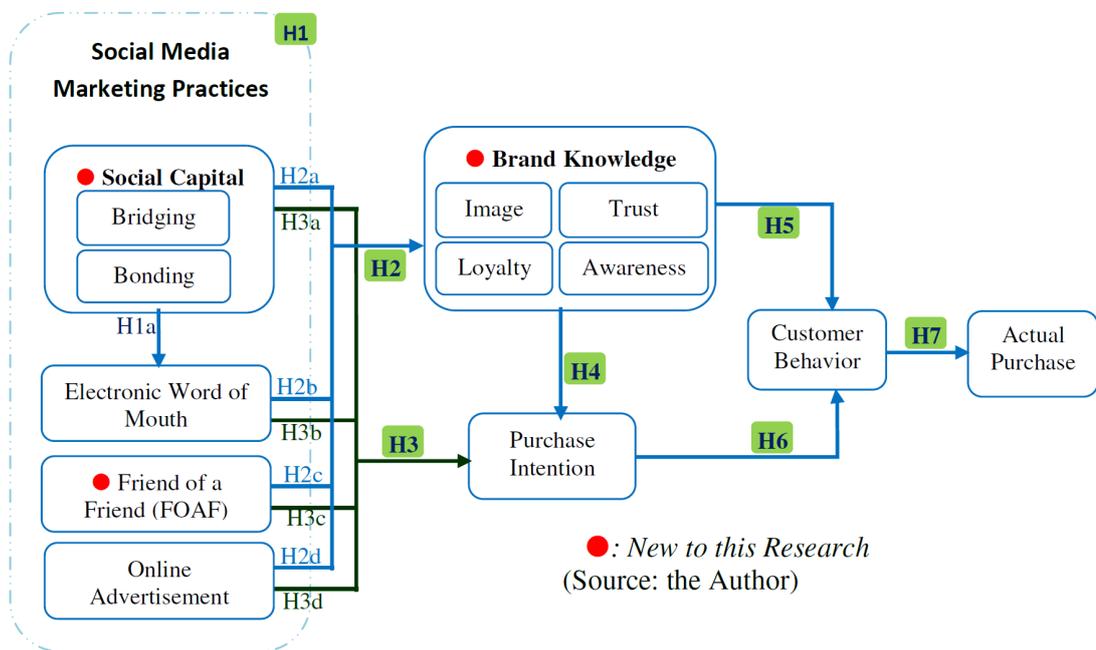
This project was granted permission for data collection and official approval was given before the actual data collection from the College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, Brunel University London, and from the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia (see Appendix C).

4.3 Revisiting Research Theoretical Framework

4.3.1 Research Conceptual Framework

The research theoretical framework integrates several aspects of approved scientific theories and integrates their different variables to understand the influences that SMM practices on SNSs may have on customers in the domain of marketing. The framework is entitled Integrated Social Media Marketing Model (ISMMM), Figure 18.

Figure 18 An Integrated Social Media Marketing Model – ISMMM Model



4.3.2 Dependent and Independent Variables

4.3.2.1 Independent Variables

As mentioned earlier, this project’s positivist philosophy treats the social world as having a fixed nature characterised by patterns of cause on one side (i.e., independent variable in this case) and effect on the other side (i.e., dependent or outcome variable) which are capable of being described and predicted. The independent variables in a study are manipulated through some form of investigation in order to measure their effects on the dependent variable. As such, a “predictor variable” is a name also given to this variable.

The independent variable can influence the dependent variable in a variety of ways. For example, there can be positive, negative, mediating and moderating effects between the two variables (Cavana, Delahaye, and Sekaran, 2001). The independent variables in this research involve social media practices employed by SME businesses in Saudi Arabia, brand knowledge, purchase intention and consumers' experiences of such practices.

4.3.2.2 Dependent Variables

The dependent variables involve consumers' behaviour and their actual purchase; these variables are the primary interest of this research. This research proposes to measure consumers' behaviour and their actual purchasing using the independent variables mentioned earlier.

4.3.3 Revisiting Research Hypotheses

As illustrated in the Integrated Social Media Marketing Model (ISMMM), the key issue here involves the factors that influence and may affect the development of brand knowledge and purchase intention, and that further lead to impact on customer behaviour and consequently affect the actual purchase actions. Throughout this process, the project will try to investigate the validity of the following hypotheses:

- **H1:** Saudi SMEs narrowly use Online Advertisement, EWOM, Friend of a Friend (FOAF) and Social Capital as Social Media Marketing practices to operate online.
 - **H1a:** *The Bonding and Bridging Social Capital deployed by Saudi SMEs online are positively associated with the EWOM behaviours of Saudi customers on SNSs.*
- **H2:** The Social Media Marketing practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the level of Brand Knowledge of the Saudi online customers.
 - **H2a:** *The Social Capital practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the level of Brand Knowledge of Saudi online customers.*
 - **H2b:** *The EWOM practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the level of Brand Knowledge of Saudi online customers.*

- **H2c:** *The FOAF practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the level of Brand Knowledge of Saudi online customers.*
- **H2d:** *The Online Advertisement practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the level of Brand Knowledge of Saudi online customers.*
- **H3:** The Social Media Marketing practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the Purchase Intention of Saudi online customers.
 - **H3a:** *The Social Capital practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the Purchase Intention of Saudi online customers.*
 - **H3b:** *The EWOM practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the Purchase Intention of Saudi online customers.*
 - **H3c:** *The FOAF practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the Purchase Intention of Saudi online customers.*
 - **H3d:** *The Online Advertisement practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the Purchase Intention of Saudi online customers.*
- **H4:** The Brand Knowledge (Brand Image, Trust, Loyalty and Awareness) of Saudi SMEs online have a positive association with the Purchase Intention of Saudi customers on SNSs.
- **H5:** The Brand Knowledge (Brand Image, Trust, Loyalty and Awareness) of Saudi SMEs online have a positive association with Saudi customers' behaviour on SNSs.
- **H6:** The Purchase Intention of Saudi customers on SNSs have a positive association with Saudi customers' behaviour on SNSs.
- **H7:** Saudi customers' behaviour on SNSs has a positive association with the Actual Purchasing of SMEs products and services online.

4.3.4 Model Constructs for Data Analysis

The variables are categorised into groups according to the framework of this research. Variables are measured in ways that enable hypothesis testing. However, in an attempt to reduce the scale bias, Likert scales are used to measure the dependent and independent variables (Sekaran, 2006). The questionnaire that uses closed questions that are mutually exclusive, quick, easy to interpret and easy to answer. The questions were constructed with each dimension of the variables in mind based on a comprehensive review of the literature in the domain.

The research here focusses on assessing the impact of SMM on consumer behaviours within the context of Saudi SMEs. Therefore, the unit of analysis for this study is individual people who use social networking sites (SNS) in Saudi Arabia; the sample will comprise around 1000 respondents. The appropriate sample size recommended by Sakaran (2003) for this kind of study is 1000 respondents. These respondents will be chosen for their use of SNS which will provide a more reliable answer to our research question about customer behaviours toward marketing practices in Saudi Arabia using SNS. Customer purchase intention and the development of brand knowledge related to SMEs products and services available online in the Saudi electronic marketplace will be assessed.

4.4 Research Context and Boundaries

4.4.1 Saudi Arabia Context

Saudi Arabia is a Muslim Arab country. As in all Muslim countries, the Islamic jurisprudence “Sharia” is regarded as the source of laws in Islam. “Sharia” means “path” in Arabic and it guides all aspects of Muslim life including daily routines, family and religious obligations, and financial dealings. It derives primarily from the Quran and the Sunna (the sayings, practices, and teachings of the Prophet Mohammed). In Muslim countries, Islam is the official religion listed in the constitution. While Saudi Arabia employs a very strict interpretation of "Sharia," of new online technologies for many purposes do not conflict with the Saudi Islamic context and Saudi individuals are expected to be using SNS and Saudi businesses to be targeting those means for competitive advantages in, for example, marketing.

4.4.2 Study Organisations and Boundaries

This study focuses on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Saudi Arabia. SMEs are a diverse group, and vary in size and nature, and usually operate in a range of markets within limited geographical boundaries. Yet, Parveen, Jaafar and Ainin (2015) and Parveen, Jaafar and Ainin (2015), as well as Dumitriu et al. (2019) reported that SMEs still have the opportunities to reach the international and out-of-reach customers with the use of new ICT means similar to the SMM over the SNSs. SMEs can achieve a

better understanding of potential customers and their needs as well as their behaviour through building effective relationships, engagements and interactions; consequently improving the performance of their business and brands. This remains crucial to understand; to know how such relationships can be easily built via the use of SNSs and SMM practices, and the factors with roles in developing a SMM strategy remain problematic to identify (Musa et al., 2016; Eltayib et al., 2018).

In addition, differ from large organization spending a large amount of money for marketing and brand building as well as overall reputation, SMEs marketers have and deal with limits of budget and lack of expertise where this may make their traditional marketing strategy significantly insufficient (Abimbola and Vallaster, 2007). Therefore, the adoption and building successful brands over the freely available SNSs can be a significant solution for marketing purposes. In such context, Dumitriu et al., (2019) mentioned that “an integrated framework for managing the continuous enhancement of their brand equity level by adopting digital marketing tools and techniques (DMTTs), has increasingly become a necessity for most of the modern SMEs”. It is expected that the ISMMM may help in resolving this issue.

SMEs must be able to compete in the marketplace to reach those target customers available for large organizations. According to Cheek, Ferguson and Tanner (2013), Eltayib, et al. (2018) and Dumitriu et al. (2019), SMEs must develop a customer centric strategic social media plan to be able competing in the market and improve their performance. Indeed, this practice needs to be based on a scientifically approved model(s) similar to the Integrated Social Media Marketing Model to be investigated in this study. As highlighted by Dumitriu et al. (2019), “It is highly important for each SME to find out the best way to reach their target audience and to understand what makes their customers inclined to buy products or services. Therefore, having an adequate online presence is essential for the success of most businesses, as there are many modalities to create a proper digital marketing strategy, but for some SMEs, it can seem hard to implement an effective one”. This difficulty is most likely due to the fact that what works for large organizations may not work for SMEs.

The majority of scientific literature discussing SMM and strategies focus on large organizations, and research outcomes of such studies are not necessarily work for SMEs (Reijonen, 2010; Garnett, 2010). This weakness makes it clearly imperative to focus on

SMEs in further research, and SMEs need to understand how to apply the use of SMM in their business (Adegbuyi, Akinyele and Samuel, 2015; Eltayib et al., 2018). Dumitriu et al. (2019) also reported that “SMEs are also considered to be a central key factor for growth, innovation, employment, social inclusion and ultimately, for providing sustainability for the society as a whole. The flexibility and adaptability of the SME sector are key features to overcome economic crises and are extremely relevant to the current moment”. Therefore, the focus of this study on the context of SMEs is of particular importance and may bring novel insights for this group of businesses to play a role in economic growth and sustainability.

As reported by Farzianpour et al. (2014), the successful adoption of social media channels for marketing purposes in most of organizations including SMEs is still slow relative to the adoption of the Internet for communication and knowledge exchange. Therefore, further studies with focus on specific groups of organizations such as SMEs may successfully accelerate the use of SMM over SNSs by such organizations. As mentioned by Cheek, et al. (2013), “of the SMEs that have a social media presence, most do not have a plan for using social media”, and they mostly fall into the “build it and they will come” trap thinking that if they have an online presence, customers will find them.”.

Furthermore, Silvius and Schipper (2016) explained that sustainability has become one of the most important challenges and difficulties of the recent time, and therefore, many modern SMEs from the European Union are already integrating sustainability in their digital marketing strategies, communications. However, the question remains to answer, how this can be done and based on what factors (Dumitriu et al., 2019). It has also been acknowledged by Pentina and Koh (2012) that it is important to have a guide for marketers in SMEs to build their marketing decisions and mentioned that “In light of rapidly growing adoption of SMM by SMEs, it is important to uncover trends and patterns in SMM strategic decisions, and provide guidance to marketing managers regarding their effectiveness”. Cheek, et al. (2013) also mentioned that “SMEs often will set up a Facebook page with no understanding of what they are trying to accomplish”, and “They also often do not differentiate their personal pages from that of their company, blurring the lines between their private lives and brand”. Therefore, this study considers the importance of SMM over the SNS for SMEs.

In Saudi Arabia, SMEs operate across a whole range of business activities within a specific cultural context. As explained by Marchand et al. (2018) explained that the resources of social media that bring effectiveness should take into account and consideration the cultural resources as well. According to a review of literature conducted by Shabbir, Ghazi and Mehmood (2016), SNSs has been used in Saudi Arabia as a means of e-commerce as part of operations conducted by SMEs; there is a remarkable increase in the use of SMM for sales and marketing as well as for building customer relations. Statistically, SMEs vary among countries and the criteria to identify them are founded on employee numbers and asset value or sales turnover, but the identifier most commonly used is the number of employees. Saudi enterprises have been classified in various ways some of which have included micro enterprises; in this study, the classification made by the JCCI will be used as shown in Table 5 (JCCI, 2016):

Table 5 Saudi SMEs Classification (JCCI, 2016)

Current Definition of SMEs in Saudi Arabia		
Enterprise Category	No. of Employees	Annual Revenue
Micro Enterprises	1-2	Less than USD 27,000
Small Enterprises	3-49	USD 27,000-1.3 Million
Medium Enterprises	50-200	USD 1.3 -13.3 Million

4.4.3 Research Population and Selection of Participants

Respondents in this study will be selected through purposive sampling based on making judgments as to which subjects are best positioned to provide the information required. They are typically chosen using non-probability methods; i.e., the selection of the SMEs and informants can depend on the discretion of the researcher (Sakaran, 2006). Therefore, the purposive sampling technique was used as the intention was to conduct this study with focus on the Saudis using the SNSs of the SMEs performing in specific cities in the Saudi Arabia marketplace.

The researcher first contacted the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) to identify those SMEs in the main cities. Geographically, the market research and sample selection was decided to be in the cities of Al-Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam in Saudi Arabia, as main cities in Saudi Arabia. Those cities also provide reliable Internet infrastructure that can be used by the SNSs users, i.e., consumers and SMEs can access

such facilities and utilise them for different purposes. The researcher then identified the top 100 listed SMEs in the list as provided by the JCCI; those SMEs are expected to adopt the use of SNSs with their own accounts and groups; they are consequently expected to practice some of the SMM activities. Therefore, the researcher needed to visit their websites and identified their SNSs, mainly Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, otherwise, the SME is dropped from the list.

The selected Saudi SMEs to be considered for this study can be considered as a heterogeneous purposive sample in terms that they operate in a range of markets including international, national, local, urban and rural markets within also heterogeneous fields including electronics, software, construction, cosmetics, jewellery, engineering and education. They also sell different types of products through a wide range of marketing channels and their growth orientation will vary according to their size and the market they serve. As long as an SME conducts marketing activities via online channels, there will be no geographical boundaries for choosing the actual enterprises, and all SMEs providing services whether international, throughout KSA or locally will be accepted for this study. Therefore, those SMEs can also be considered as homogeneous purposive sample in terms that they may have a shared characteristic or set of characteristics in marketing domain, i.e., shared SMM marketing practices. This combination of attributes will give wider data collection opportunities to assemble the sample for this study and to make the statistical analysis reliable. Accordingly, the SMEs to be included should be:

- listed as SME according to the JCCI 2017 listing
- operating in any of the professional industries, as mentioned earlier,
- with no the geographical boundary of their service availability,
- located physically in one of the main cities: Al-Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam
- established a presence with SNS accounts (i., social groups, SNSs page, etc.).

By visiting the websites of the target SMEs, the researcher identified their SNSs accounts and that they have social groups, pages, and etc. The members and followers of those groups and pages were considered as a target population of the informants in this study. The researcher selected different communication channels to interact with those target audiences including: SNSs of the target SMEs and the available emails and WhatsApp accounts of the members and followers of those SMEs on SNSs. Those

communication channels are efficient and cost-free utilities, can easily reach remote target audiences, enable electronic and easy collection, entry and management of data and responses, and make it easy to have error-free datasets (Goeritz, 2006). Distributing the survey took two months at the end of which more than 500 surveys suitable for analysis were received. While those target informants can be considered homogeneous purposive sample as they may have a shared characteristic or set of characteristics such as using specific SNSs, they may also be considered heterogeneous purposive sample as they may experience different SMM practices. Accordingly, those target informants included in this study include:

- individuals with an account or activity such as following up a page or making feedback on SNSs of any SMEs, regardless of the purposes for that use.
- individuals with no specific background at university or high school level
- individuals are expected to be mature with acceptable level of education and to be using some of the SNSs services and technologies, regardless of their nationality or how much time they spend on such technologies.

4.5 Data Collection Methods

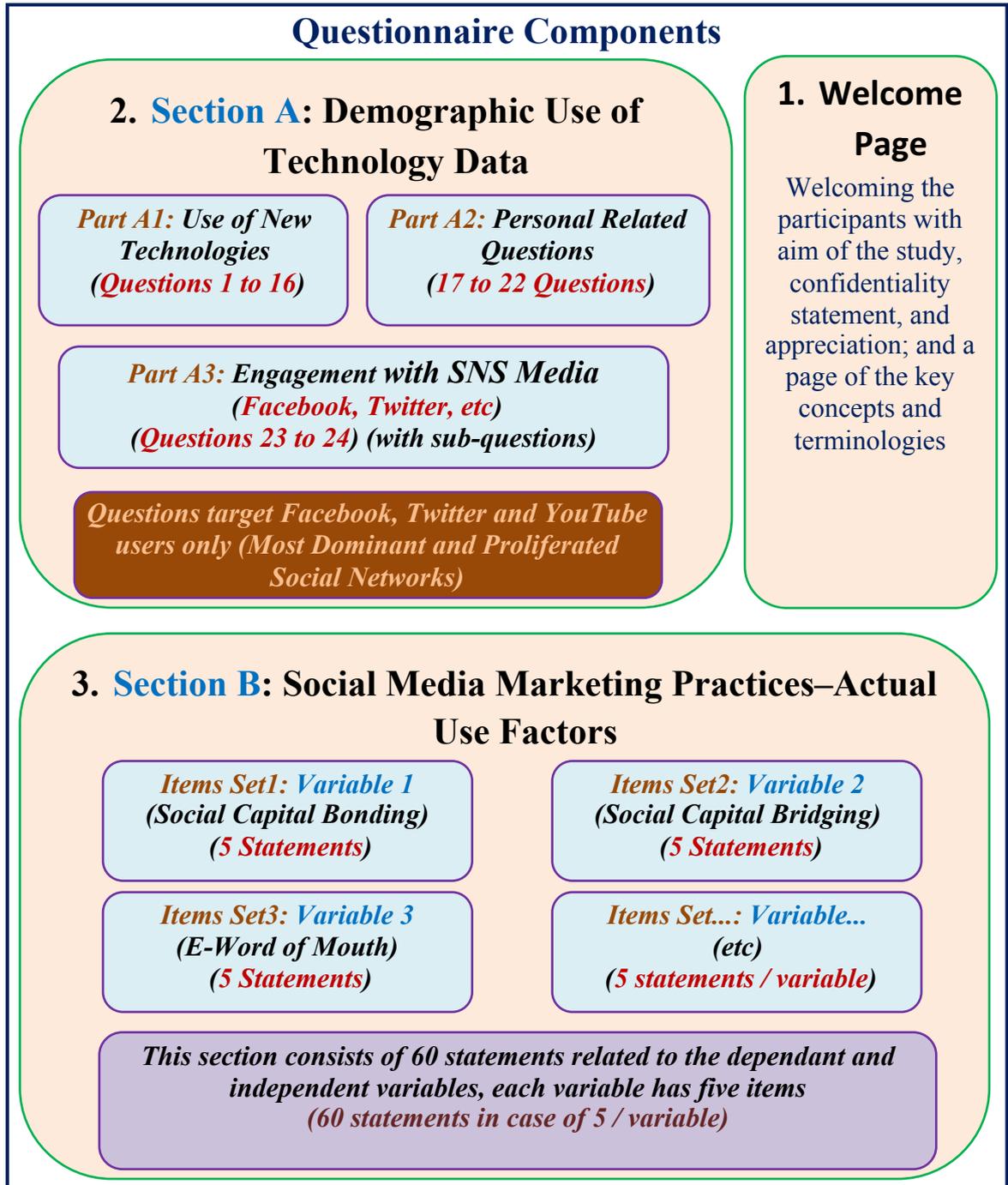
4.5.1 Research Instrument and Questionnaire Design

A questionnaire is “any written instrument that presents respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers” (Brown, 2001). In this project, the process for developing the research instrument was based on guidelines found in the literature (Churchill 1979; Davis 1989; Moore and Benbasat 1991; Hinkin, 1998). The instrument developed for this research will be titled “A Survey on the Assessment of Consumer Behaviours within the Context of Social Media Marketing - A Case of Saudi Small and Medium Enterprises” (see Appendix A). Statistically, SMEs vary from country to country and the criteria to identify them are based on the number of employees, revenues and/or value of sales or assets; the identifier most commonly used is the number of employees, as discussed earlier.

After an opening paragraph, i.e., a “Welcome Page”, to tell participants the aim of the study, make a confidentiality statement and discuss ethical considerations, the

questionnaire will introduce the key concepts of the study such as: social media marketing, social networking sites, and small and medium enterprises; some participants may not know some or all of those terms. The questionnaire will then involve two main sections: Section A (comprises A1, A2 and A3) and Section B (see Figure 19: The Instrument Design for the ISMMM). The measurement used is a nominal scale which will help to split data into mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive categories (Sekaran, 2006).

Figure 19 The Instrument Design for the ISMMM – Survey Questionnaire



In figure 19, Section A involves three parts: the use of new technologies such as the Internet, Smartphones, etc. (A1: questions 1–16), demographic questions including age, gender, level of education, etc. (A2: questions 17–22), and the engagement levels with new media including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube as the main focus of this project (A3: questions 23–24). Section B contains twelve sets of questions or statements related to the twelve variables or constructs of the SMM as described in the ISMMM model; respondents will be asked in this section to indicate their degree of agreement or

disagreement on each item on a five-point Likert – type scale will range from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”. A very common issue to consider in scale construction is the number of items for each construct. It has been reported that there are no hard-and-fast rules on this issue, but keeping the measurement process short is an effective way to minimise response bias caused by boredom or fatigue in addition to saving time for development, data collection and data analysis (Hinkin, 1998). Further, it has been recommended that at least four items per construct or scale are needed to test the homogeneity of items within each construct (Harvey, Billings and Nilan, 1985; Hinkin, 1998). This work will develop five items for each construct.

In particular, for the Social Capital measurement, the Internet Social Capital Scale (ISCS) was adopted to measure participants’ perceptions of bonding and bridging capital on the social media and networking websites (i.e., Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) (Williams, 2006); the scale was designed as an “apples-to-apples” comparative measure of social capital in offline and online contexts, and thus can be used in this work. The items for the measurement scales of other constructs such as online advertisement, EWOM, FOAF, brand knowledge, etc. were taken from earlier studies taking into account related theories explained in Chapter 3. Table 6 lists the statements or items used to obtain data about the twelve major constructs; some of the statements will be modified slightly for clarity and language consistency with SMM constructs, while some others will be self-developed by the researcher where no statements have been cited by the literature.

Table 6 List of Constructs and Items to be used in the ISMMM Survey

Constructs	Codes	Items	Sources
Social Capital Bonding	SBCN11	There are several people on the social media and networking websites I trust and some of them can help me to make important decisions and to solve problems.	(Williams, 2006; Stefanon et. Al, 2012; Appel et. Al, 2014)
	SCBN12	When I feel lonely, there are several people on the social media and networking websites I can talk to and I feel comfortable with them about some personal problems.	(Williams, 2006; Stefanon et. Al, 2012; Appel et. Al, 2014)
	SCBN13	If I need an emergency financial support or some money, I know someone on the social media and networking websites who can help me and I feel he would share money with me.	(Williams, 2006; Stefanon et. Al, 2012; Appel et. Al, 2014)
	SCBN14	The people I interact with on social media and networking websites would put their reputation on the line for me and will be a good job reference for me.	(Williams, 2006; Stefanon et. Al, 2012; Appel et. Al, 2014)
	SCBN15	The people I interact with on social media and networking websites would do any important thing for me and even help me to fight injustice or unfairness.	(Williams, 2006; Stefanon et. Al, 2012; Appel et. Al, 2014)

Social Capital Bridging	SCBR21	Interacting with people on social media and networking websites makes me interested in things that happen outside of my city and in new things I did not know before.	(Williams, 2006; Stefanon et al., 2012; Appel et al., 2014)
	SCBR22	Interacting with people on social media and networking websites makes me want to try new things or buy new things.	(Williams, 2006; Stefanon et al., 2012; Appel et al., 2014)
	SCBR23	Talking with people on social media and networking websites makes me curious about other places in the world and about other new ideas for me	(Williams, 2006; Stefanon et al., 2012; Appel et al., 2014)
	SCBR24	Interacting with people on social media and networking websites makes me feel connected to the bigger picture of what is going on and makes me feel that everyone in the world is connected with others.	(Williams, 2006; Stefanon et al., 2012; Appel et al., 2014)
	SCBR25	Interacting with people on social media and networking websites introduces me to new people to talk to, and I come into contact with new people all the time to form a community where I feel willing to spend time to support this community and their activities occurring on social media and networking websites.	(Williams, 2006; Stefanon et al., 2012; Appel et al., 2014)
Mouth of E-Word	EWOM31	The information given by my friends about brands on social media and networking websites is very positive, valued and tells	(Swan, et al., 1988; Goyette et al., 2010;

		me about products and services of brands.	Ektron, 2015)
	EWOM32	I know someone on social media and networking websites who had experiences with the brands of products and services.	(Swan, et al., 1988; Goyette et al., 2010)
	EWOM33	Many of my friends and relatives recommended to me and talked to me about purchasing some brand products they see on social media and networking websites.	(Swan, et al., 1988; Goyette et al., 2010)
	EWOM34	I inspire and share with my friends and relatives when we give each other tips and advices about brand products or services on social media and networking websites.	(Swan, et al., 1988; Goyette et al., 2010)
	EWOM35	When I receive related information or opinion from a friend about a brand on social media and networking websites, I take it into account when I make my decisions to purchase a product or services of those brands.	(Goyette et al., 2010)
Friend of a Friend	FOAF41	When I receive related information or opinion from a friend about a brand on social media and networking websites, I pass it to my other contacts on those sites	(Somayeh and Azreen, 2013)
	FOAF42	I do believe that my friends on the social media and networking websites will trust and pay attention to the opinions of my other friends on those websites	(Somayeh and Azreen, 2013)
	FOAF43	I usually give advice, information or my experiences about brands to people who are friends of my friends on social media and networking websites.	(Somayeh and Azreen, 2013)
	FOAF44	I usually accept and pay attention to advice, information or experiences about brands sent by friends of my friends on social media and networking websites.	(Somayeh and Azreen, 2013)

	FOAF45	My decisions and opinions about services and products usually may change and be affected by advice, information or experience about brands sent by friends of my friends on social media and networking websites.	(Somayeh and Azreen, 2013)
Online Advertisement	OLA51	The advertisements on social media and networking websites for brands and products I know are frequently and repeatedly seen.	(Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2014; Hanaysha, 2016)
	OLA52	The advertisements on social media and networking websites for brands and products I know meet my expectations.	(Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2014; Hanaysha, 2016)
	OLA53	The advertisements on social media and networking websites for brands and products I know are very attractive and encouraging.	(Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2014; Hanaysha, 2016)
	OLA54	The advertisements on social media and networking websites for brands and products I know perform well in comparison to products or services not on such websites.	(Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2014; Hanaysha, 2016)
	OLA55	The advertisements on social media and networking websites for brands and products I know are extensive and wide; I therefore, can easily remember them.	(Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2014; Hanaysha,

			2016)
Brand Image	BIM61	The brands and products on social media and networking websites make me quickly remember the logo image of the company and products.	(Aaker, 1996; Park, 2009; Jin, Lee and Huffman, 2012; Hanaysha, 2016)
	BIM62	The brands and products on social media and networking websites encourage me to share information about them with my friends and family for more publicity.	(Aaker, 1996; Park, 2009; Jin, Lee and Huffman, 2012; Hanaysha, 2016)
	BIM63	The brands and products on social media and networking websites are aligned with my values and beliefs and make me feel I have a better lifestyle and more self-esteem with more respect for myself on those websites.	(Aaker, 1996; Park, 2009; Jin, Lee and Huffman, 2012; Hanaysha, 2016)
	BIM64	The brand and products on social media and networking websites improve the reputation and image about the quality of those brands and products with a very fashionable and nice look.	(Aaker, 1996; Park, 2009; Jin, Lee and Huffman, 2012; Hanaysha, 2016)
	BIM65	The brand and products on social media and networking websites provide good values to customers and make them favour those brands and products.	(Aaker, 1996; Park, 2009; Jin, Lee and Huffman, 2012;

			Hanaysha, 2016)
Brand Loyalty	BLO71	I selected brands and products from social media and networking websites because I feel that they are the best choice for me among other brands and products.	(Gil, Andrés and Salinas, 2007; Hameed, 2013; Hutter, et al., 2013)
	BLO72	I would not switch to a competitor on social media and networking websites or in the marketplace; even if I had a problem with the brand I am buying presently.	(Gil, Andrés and Salinas, 2007; Hameed, 2013; Hutter, et al., 2013)
	BLO73	I am committed to the brands and products on social media and networking websites and I consider myself to be a loyal supporter of those brands and products.	(Gil, Andrés and Salinas, 2007; Hameed, 2013; Hutter, et al., 2013)
	BLO74	If I had to buy over again a similar brand or product then I would choose the brands and products I already know on social media and networking websites.	(Gil, Andrés and Salinas, 2007; Hameed, 2013; Hutter, et al., 2013)
	BLO75	I intend to continue buying the same brands and products appearing on social media and networking websites with the same services and products.	(Gil, Andrés and Salinas, 2007; Hameed, 2013; Hutter, et al., 2013)
Brand Trust	BTR81	I usually trust the products I buy and I feel confident in the brands I see on social media and networking websites.	(Hutter, et al., 2013)

	BTR82	I usually trust the manufacturers of the products I buy and the brands on social media and networking websites because they are always honest and sincere in addressing my concerns	(Hutter, et al., 2013)
	BTR83	I usually trust the individuals selling brands and products as they provide reliable information about products and brands on social media and networking websites.	(Goyette et al., 2010; Hutter, et al., 2013)
	BTR84	The brands on social media and networking websites usually deliver what I expect and what I was promised.	(Koschate-Fischer, and Gärtner, 2015)
	BTR85	The brands and products on social media and networking websites will never disappoint me and will make me more satisfied all times.	(Koschate-Fischer, and Gärtner, 2015)
Brand Awareness	BAW91	I am aware of one or more of the brands on social media and networking websites among other brands.	(Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2013)
	BAW92	Recognition of the brands on social media and networking websites is important for me when choosing a new brand at the first time.	(Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2013)
	BAW93	Social media and networking websites enable me to be aware of available brands.	(Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2013)
	BAW94	Some characteristics of one or more of the brands on social media and networking websites come to my mind quickly and I can remember them quickly.	(Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2013)
	BAW95	I can differentiate between brands on social media and networking websites and this has helped me to be aware of my favourite brands.	(Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2013)

Purchase Intention	PIN101	I intend to buy some of their brands because I am a member of those brands on social media and networking websites.	(Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Cheung and Vogel, 2013; Hutter, et al., 2013)
	PIN102	I have arranged via SNSs communication with the vendor to inspect and perform a trail test run of the product in person at the site of the vendor.	(Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Cheung and Vogel, 2013; Hutter, et al., 2013)
	PIN103	I have bought the products or services of this brand because I am a member of the brand on social media and networking websites.	(Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Cheung and Vogel, 2013; Hutter, et al., 2013)
	PIN104	I will frequently use social media and networking sites in the future to find the brands I plan to buy.	(Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Cheung and Vogel, 2013; Hutter, et al., 2013)
	PIN105	I feel it is worth using social media and networking websites in future to purchase some of the brands' products.	(Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Hutter, et al., 2013)
Customer Behaviour	CBH111	It is likely that I will read and consider the marketing advertisements by brands again on social media and networking websites.	(Mahadeo, 2009)
	CBH112	I expect that marketing on social media and networking websites will make it easier to reach me as a potential consumer in the future.	(Mahadeo, 2009)

	CBH113	I expect to use marketing advertisements on social media and networking websites while I am engaging in other online entertainments and enjoyments.	(Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw, 1992)
	CBH114	I expect marketing on social media and networking websites should not be taken lightly, and brands should consider this trend as a major and strategic investment.	(Oliver, 1997).
	CBH115	I feel my loyalty is strong towards a brand on social media and networking websites with a commitment to re-purchase products or services continuously in future.	(Oliver, 1997).
Actual Purchase	APR121	My purchases of products from organisations on social media and networking websites is clear and can be considered high or very high.	(Davis, 1989; Cheung and Vogel, 2013)
	APR122	Some of my friends have purchased products and brands on social media and networking websites from the organizations several times.	(Davis, 1989; Cheung and Vogel, 2013)
	APR123	Some of friends of my friends on social networks have purchased products from the organisations several times.	(Davis, 1989; Cheung and Vogel, 2013)
	APR124	Some members of my family have purchased products on social media and networking websites from the organisations several times.	(Davis, 1989; Cheung and Vogel, 2013)
	APR125	The general estimate of purchasing products on social media and networking websites from the organisations is high or very high.	(Davis, 1989; Cheung and Vogel, 2013)

4.5.2 Translation of the Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire was translated by an accredited translation service provider. First, the survey was translated from English into Arabic due to the fact that the participants are non-English speakers, see Appendix B. Both the Arabic and the English editions were then sent to academics for reverse translation where the new English edition was compared with the original edition. Recommendations for changes were considered before the survey's actual distribution; some of those recommendations were to use simpler wording and shorter sentences.

4.5.3 Data Collection Administration

The survey, entitled "A Survey on Assessing Consumer Behaviour within the Context of Social Media Marketing" was used for data collection on the model and demographic variables. The survey was distributed via Email and SNSs including Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp. Those channels are efficient and cost-free utilities, can easily reach remote target audiences, enable electronic and easy collection, entry and management of data and responses, and make it easy to have error-free datasets (Goeritz, 2006). Distributing the survey took two months at the end of which more than 500 surveys suitable for analysis were received. The data were then extracted and stored on a secure computer for data privacy.

4.5.4 Instrument Validity and Reliability

Developing a reliable and validated data collection instrument is a critical step in any research project (Churchill 1979; Straub 1989; Moore and Benbasat 1991; Hinkin 1998). Evaluation criteria essential to this development include: Content Validity, Construct Validity, and Reliability Assessment. Content Validity qualitatively evaluates the extent to which a construct's measures actually capture its real nature and can be established through pre-testing before collecting data to eliminate measurement errors caused by questions or instructions that are poorly worded and/or ambiguous, thereby ensuring that all questions are appropriate and will be understood by the research participants (Gefen et al., 2000).

Construct Validity assesses whether the measures chosen for each variable truly measure the construct describing the event or are simply methodological artefacts

(Cronbach 1971; Gefen et al., 2000). Construct validity should be demonstrated by high correlations when the same construct is measured by use of different measurement items, and low correlations when constructs that are expected to differ are measured (Campbell and Fiske 1959; Hair, Anderson et al. 1995). In this project, Convergent and Discriminant Validity of the construct will be tested (Campbell and Fiske 1959; Straub 1989).

Convergent Validity measures the degree of congruence between two or more measures of the same concept by different means. It is evaluated through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Bagozi 1993). Discriminant Validity is the degree of congruence between items it is believed should reflect the construct and those it is believed should not (Straub 1989). The Discriminant Validity, too, is usually evaluated by means of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Adams, Nelson et al. 1992; Bagozi 1993). Reliability Analysis is concerned with how far measurements reused with the same settings give the same results (repeatability) (Straub 1989; Straub, Boudreau et al. 2004). Cronbach's alpha (α) test is used to measure reliability (Cronbach 1971; Fornell and Bookstein 1982; Field 2009).

4.6 Data Analysis Techniques

4.6.1 Descriptive Analysis

This project applies Descriptive Analysis using different statistical techniques to calculate the frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations for the demographic data and data about the factors constructing the ISMMM model; this is done using statistical software SPSS 21. The purpose of descriptive analysis in this project is to transform raw data into a form easily understood and interpreted. The data were tabulated and used to generate graphs for further discussions. The items in all sections of the survey (sections A1, A2, A3 and B) were measured based on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 represents 'Strongly Disagree' and 5 represents 'Strongly Agree' as in Table 7. The average scores of the model dependent and independent variables are calculated one by one as will be illustrated in the fifth and sixth chapters of this work.

Table 7 Likert Scale Category

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
SD	D	N	A	SA

1	2	3	4	5
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(Source: (Sugiono, 2005))

4.6.2 Inferential Analysis

Inferential Statistics involve two forms of analysis: Multiple Regression and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) (Hair, Anderson et al. 1995; Gefen et al., 2000; Gefen et al., 2005). Multiple Regression analysis is a powerful test to explore relationships between different constructs and is used in this project by means of a set of statistical techniques allowing the researcher to investigate relationships between one dependent variable and several independent variables (Gefen, Straub et al. 2000). This type of regression analysis can also be used with datasets where independent variables are correlated with each other and/or with the dependent variable (Hair, Anderson et al. 1995).

The central issue in this project is investigation of two relationship types among the model variables: Directional and Non-Directional. While Directional relationships are one variable's hypothesized linear directional influences on another, while non-directional relationships are hypothesised co-relational associations between variables (MacCallum, 1995).

Each hypothetical directional or non-directional relationship can be thought of as being associated with a numerical value. Numerical values associated with directional effects are regression coefficients, while those associated with non-directional relationships are covariance or correlation values. These regression coefficients and covariance are called model parameters and a major objective for the researcher in Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) should be to estimate or calculate the values of these parameters.

4.6.3 Structural Equation Modelling Analysis

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is used in this project to assess the ISMMM Model's overall fit and test the structural model (Gefen et al. 2000). Using SEM in this project will help to evaluate the whole hypothesised multivariate model, including hypothetical structural linkages between variables and between each variable and its respective measures (Bagozzi and Baumgartner, 1994). SEM is a set of multivariate statistical techniques for examining indirect and direct relationships between one or more independent variables and one or more dependent latent variables (Gefen et al.

2000). Its ability to conduct many multivariate statistical analyses makes it a flexible modelling tool; techniques in the set include: regression analysis, path analysis, factor analysis, canonical correlation analysis, and growth curve modelling (Cheung and Chan, 2004).

4.6.4 Comparative Fit Index Analysis

As a first procedure, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) will be used to validate and assess the model's fitness. CFI compares the hypothesised model's fit against a null or independent model, producing values in the range zero to one, where a good fit is demonstrated by values over 90% (Hu and Bentler, 1999). The last step is to modify the model (if necessary) so, if the hypothesised model's fit is not good, the model can be modified to improve it. Fit can be improved by deleting non-significant parameters but, if they are important in the theory, they will still be in the model (Schumacker and Lomax, 2010). Another modification is to add impactful parameters.

Model modification will be carried out using the AMOS program which will apply one of three techniques: the Modification Index (MI), the Expected Parameter Change statistic (EPC), and the Standardised Residuals (SR) (Byrne, 2001). MI indicates the likely drop in overall χ^2 values if in a subsequent run each fixed parameter is freely estimated. If this a larger MI for a particular fixed parameter, a better model fit can probably be obtained by freeing this parameter. EPC indicates the likely change in magnitude and direction of each fixed parameter if freed. SR is known in AMOS analysis as the Z score; larger Z scores (those over 2.58) indicate that the model is not effective in explaining a particular relationship (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1988).

After CFI, the entire ISMMM model's fit can be assessed by fit indices provided by the AMOS program, but for this study the indices used were those recommended by Byrne (1998): Chi-square (χ^2) test, Normed chi-square (χ^2/df), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). These indices are explained below:

- The chi-square χ^2 test is the traditional fit index and is the only SEM test of significance. A non-significant chi-square value indicates a good fit between sample data and hypothesised model. The Normed chi-square is calculated by

dividing χ^2 by the degree of freedom; values below 3.0 indicate an acceptable fit (Hu and Bentler, 1999). It must be remembered, though, that sample size and data normality both affect χ^2 (Kline, 1998; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001; Schumacker and Lomax, 2010) and so the χ^2 test should be used together with other indices.

- GFI and AGFI are akin to squared multiple correlations and indicate the relative sample variance and covariance explained by the model being investigated. The difference between the two is that AGFI adjusts the number of degrees of freedom in the specified model. Both indices produce values between zero and one and in each case a value over 0.90 indicates a good fit (Byrne, 2001).
- CFI compares the hypothesized model's fit to a null or independent model. Value range and fit indication are as for GFI and AGFI (Hu and Bentler, 1999).
- RMSEA shows the discrepancy for each degree of freedom between the population data and the hypothesised model. Values less than or equal to 0.05 are a good fit, between 0.05 and 0.08 are an adequate fit, between 0.08 and 0.10 are a mediocre fit, and values above 0.10 indicate an unfit model (Browne and Cudeck, 1993).

4.6.5 Software Statistical Applications

4.6.5.1 SPSS Application

The statistical package SPSS will be used to analyse data collected in this study. Four statistical techniques are used. SPSS is useful and important because of its ability to test the validity of the results' statistical significance. Non-parametric tests are suitable for this study's data because numerical data involving specific rates or equations has not been used. Correlation b statistical significance ween two variables will be assessed using Pearson's chi-square. This is the most valid test for analysing categorical data because it compares assumed frequencies with expected frequencies after which data are converted to tabular format and exported into MS-Excel and SPSS software applications so that the graphs can be interpreted. Each graph represents data fed into

the table including frequency, descriptive statistics, validity and reliability tests, correlation analysis, regression analysis and other findings.

4.6.5.2 AMOS Application

Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) software is a module added to SPSS and is mainly used for Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). It helps to generate graphical models using computationally simple and quick tools.

4.7 Testing the Data Trustworthiness and Normality

4.7.1 Normality Assessment

Normality is symmetry analysis of the data to ensure that the data is fit to be used for many statistical tests (Field, 2009). For this project, normality assumption has been tested using Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. As normality assumption is also very robust and important, normality is also checked by calculating skewness and kurtosis ratings (Hair et al., 2012; Field, 2009). Skewness measures the degree of asymmetry of the data distribution while Kurtosis measures the number of scores in the two tails of a distribution (Hair et al., 2012; Field, 2009). As most statistical techniques are robust to normality some authors consider the data is symmetric if the skewness and kurtosis values ranges between +2 and -2; while others accepted a range of +3 to -3 (Hair, Anderson et al. 1995; Tabachnick and Fidell 2007; Field, 2009). The above ranges were also flexible and relaxed for interpretation of the results when the sample has more than 200 data points (in our case as we have 553) (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Normality testing showed that our data are symmetric (Normal) using both tests, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk. In addition, the ranges of skewness and kurtosis were within the accepted ranges, indicating that the data distribution is reasonably close to normal with skewness and kurtosis ratings within the -3 to +3 range (-1.75, 2.82). We therefore proceeded with data analysis. For whether the normality assumption holds, see Appendix F, Normality Assumptions of the Datasets.

4.7.2 Missing Data Assessment

Questionnaire responses were filtered and complete questionnaires with completed data were stored after exclusion of surveys with missing data values, of which there were very few. Only 12 responses were excluded from our dataset, with 553 responses ready for data analysis.

4.7.3 Outliers Assessment

Existence of outliers can be problematic and lead to non-normality of data and distorted statistical results (Kline, 2005; Hair et al., 2012; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Outliers can be defined as a distinct case (i.e., data point) Hair et al., (2012). Many researchers have suggested that scores within ± 3.0 standard deviation from the average can be regarded as outliers, but other researchers accepted up to ± 4.0 standard deviations above the mean (Hair et al., 2012). For our data, items were grouped together to represent a single variable which was then checked for outliers using the SPSS function of descriptive statistics. The data values of each observation were then converted to standardised scores (Hair et al., 2012). Our data showed few outlier scores which we believe have no significant effect on our results. Another way to detect outliers is by using Box plot, when outliers are scores below or above ± 1.5 IQR of the first and the third quartiles. Most of our data were within these boundaries and only 2% of observations were found as mild outliers (i.e. within 1.5 Inter Quartile Range (IQR) range); the SEM technique identifies outliers if they exist in the data set.

4.7.4 Reliability Assessment

4.7.4.1 Data Characteristics Verification

For details of Normality testing with skewness and kurtosis, see 4.7.1 above. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests indicated that the data was not normally distributed but the skewness and kurtosis ratings were within the +2 to -2 range (-0.893, 1.941), so it is acceptable to proceed with data analysis assuming normality condition holds. The following results (Table 8) illustrate the normality of the data distribution using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test, as well as the Skewness test as part of the descriptive statistics analysis.

Table 8 Descriptive Statistics - Normality Data Distribution

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
SCD1A	553	1.60	5.00	3.91	0.85	-0.68	.104	-.014	.207
SCR2A	553	1.00	5.00	3.81	0.89	-1.32	.104	1.556	.207
SC_A	553	1.90	5.00	3.86	0.75	-0.94	.104	.598	.207
EWM3A	553	1.40	5.00	4.01	0.72	-1.75	.104	2.825	.207
FOF5A	553	1.60	5.00	3.84	0.86	-1.23	.104	.900	.207
ADV5A	553	1.60	5.00	3.79	0.77	-0.98	.104	.570	.207
SMMP_A	553	1.88	4.85	3.88	0.54	-1.39	.104	2.134	.207
BRI6A	553	1.80	4.80	3.76	0.77	-0.78	.104	-.378	.207
BRL7A	553	1.40	5.00	3.76	0.89	-1.13	.104	.188	.207
BRT8A	553	1.40	4.80	3.67	0.86	-1.11	.104	.480	.207
BRA9A	553	1.60	4.80	3.85	0.74	-0.91	.104	.009	.207
BRK_A	553	1.80	4.60	3.76	0.61	-1.73	.104	2.779	.207
PIN1A	553	2.00	4.80	3.92	0.67	-1.38	.104	1.559	.207
CBV2A	553	1.60	4.80	3.97	0.65	-1.57	.104	2.336	.207
APR3A	553	1.80	4.60	3.83	0.56	-1.14	.104	.956	.207
Valid N (listwise)	553								

4.7.4.2 First Reliability Assessment

Another important aspect of data analysis is to analyse questionnaire items and questions. Whether items and questions accurately reflect respondents’ descriptions and behaviour should be investigated (Kumar &Beyerlein, 1991). The final items (statements) should discriminate between respondents with positive attitudes and respondents with negative attitudes towards each component in the survey (Cooper & Schindler, 2001; Zikmund, 1997). The discriminating test is based on evaluating each corrected-item-total correlation index and using item-remainder-score correlation (Roderick, 1999). The corrected-item-total correlation is preferable to the item-total-score correlation because it does not increase total score variance when item scores are added (Roderick, 1999). Items (statements) with a negative impact on reliability and correlation were removed to ensure high accuracy in dividing responses into those with positive and those with negative attitude (Nunnally, 1994).

The degree of consistency and accuracy between items in an individual construct is measured by reliability (Straub et al., 2004) which, as indicated by Straub, is how far a response can be replicated each time the same question is asked. There are several ways to calculate reliability, but the most popular way is by testing internal consistency using Cronbach's α (Cronbach 1971; Hinkin, 1998). SPSS 21 was used to calculate Cronbach's α using a threshold of $0.7 < \alpha < 0.95$ cutoff points. Table 9 summarises the initial reliability test. All values of Cronbach's α were within the target range of 0.7 to 0.95 (Moore and Benbasat, 1991). Table 9 also list values of correlation scores which were above the 0.50 thresholds for all factors.

Table 9 Reliability Assessment for all Variables and Factors

Factor	Item correlation	total Cronbach's α if Item Deleted	Factor	Item correlation	total Cronbach's α if Item Deleted
SCD - 5 variables Cronbach's $\alpha= 0.949$			BRL-5 variables Cronbach's $\alpha= 0.877$		
SCD11	0.82**	0.943	BRL71	0.76**	0.841
SCD12	0.80**	0.946	BRL72	0.77**	0.843
SCD13	0.87**	0.936	BRL73	0.75**	0.841
SCD14	0.90**	0.930	BRL74	0.64**	0.871
SCD15	0.91**	0.928	BRL75	0.68**	0.86
SCR -5 variables Cronbach's $\alpha= 0.946$			BRT-5 variables Cronbach's $\alpha= 0.857$		
SCR21	0.81**	0.945	BRT81	0.75**	0.808
SCR22	0.89**	0.936	BRT82	0.74**	0.815
SCR23	0.89**	0.946	BRT83	0.60**	0.844
SCR24	0.91**	0.943	BRT84	0.65**	0.833
SCR25	0.92**	0.940	BRT85	0.67**	0.834
EWM - 5 variables Cronbach's $\alpha=$			BRA-5 variables Cronbach's $\alpha= 0.774$		
EWM31	0.784	0.927	BRA91	0.58**	0.729
EWM32	0.891	0.909	BRA92	0.66**	0.70
EWM33	0.842	0.916	BRA93	0.61**	0.707
EWM34	0.781	0.926	BRA94	0.53**	0.766
EWM35	0.863	0.911	BRA95	0.54**	0.76
FOF -5 variables Cronbach's $\alpha= 0.936$			PIN - 5 variables Cronbach's $\alpha= 0.799$		
FOF1	0.89**	0.914	PIN101	0.65**	0.744
FOF2	0.77**	0.935	PIN102	0.66**	0.741
FOF3	0.82*	0.934	PIN103	0.67**	0.732
FOF4	0.91*	0.906	PIN104	0.49**	0.788
FOF5	0.89**	0.912	PIN105	0.52**	0.797
ADV - 5 variables Cronbach's $\alpha=$			CBV -5 variables Cronbach's $\alpha= 0.883$		
ADV51	0.83**	0.895	CBV201	0.74**	0.854
ADV52	0.76**	0.911	CBV202	0.75**	0.851
ADV53	0.84**	0.891	CBV203	0.72**	0.859
ADV54	0.79**	0.903	CBV204	0.66**	0.872
ADV55	0.76**	0.909	CBV205	0.75**	0.851
BRI - 5variables Cronbach's $\alpha= 0.818$			APR - 5variables Cronbach's $\alpha= 0.839$		
BRI61	0.56**	0.800	APR301	0.69**	0.804

BRI62	0.69**	0.759	APR302	0.73**	0.787
BRI63	0.54**	0.803	APR303	0.64**	0.812
BRI64	0.62**	0.781	APR304	0.56**	0.829
BRI65	0.67**	0.764	APR305	0.67**	0.801

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results show that Cronbach's alpha values range between 0.77 and 0.949 and correlations are between 0.53 and 0.92 (significant at the 0.01 level). Deleting items did not increase any Cronbach alpha values within the same construct, so we did not exclude any item from the data.

4.7.4.3 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

The main purpose of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is to test whether data fit the proposed (theoretical) Model. Factors playing an important role in EFA analysis include the factor extraction method, the number of factors in the model and the rotating factor method. The suitability of the data for factor analysis can be measured by analysing the number of factors against the sample size, examining correlations among variables using a correlation matrix. We used the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy test with principal component analysis Varimax rotation (Field, 2009). For factor analysis to be valid, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity should be significant and the test measure should be greater than 0.5 (Field, 2009) or more than 0.6 according to Pallant (2013).

Our sample value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was 0.673 and therefore exceeded both of those recommended minimum values. As the significance level of the Bartlett's Test was less than 0.001, we consider the overall inter-correlations assumptions to have been met and it can be concluded that the data are adequate and appropriate for conducting EFA -- see Table 10.

**Table 10 Bartlett's test of Sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin – KMO
KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.673
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	63098.712
	Df	1770
	Sig.	.000

The total variance explained by 12 components was 84% using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation (see **Appendix D, Factor Loading Matrix and Community, and Appendix E, Total Variate Explained**), which is higher than the required 60%. This study implemented factor extraction rules accepted by many researchers (Field, 2009; Pallant, 2013):

- Factor extraction method: Principal Component Analysis
- Number of factors to retain: Eigen value > 1 and 4 hypothesized factors
- Rotation method: Varimax
- Factor loading threshold: 0.6
- Cross loading Threshold: 0.4.

Eigen values greater than 1 are considered to be significant, while a solution with explained variation of more than 60% of cumulative total variation is satisfactory (Hair et al. 2012; Kaiser 1960).

4.7.4.4 Pilot Study

The pilot survey in this project was conducted to purify the scales that measured factors relating to the variables and the ISMMM model constructs. After taking into account all the findings of the data analysis conducted prior to the actual data collection, the suggested questionnaire was adequate for the study. The pilot survey showed the suitability of all variables and factors under investigation as shown earlier in the hypothesised model, with all correlations having the expected sign.

4.7.5 Validity Assessment

Validity refers to the extent to which a measure actually measures what it purports to measure. A pilot study was undertaken in this research as a step to examine the validity of the questionnaire used. Item, criterion, and content validity are three different validity tests. Item validity explores the quality of an item and how closely it addresses the topic it is aligned with. The formulation coefficient that was used in this study is product moment (Sutrisno Hadi, 1991). The r-value in the correlation table can be used to identify the level of item validity. Measuring criterion validity requires that newly

developed instruments be compared with existing, validated instruments. Both sets of instruments must measure the same construct or phenomenon (DeVaus, 2002). This research uses previous literature to carry out these checks, and 60 statements have been extracted from related literature. Table 6 shows these statements and the sources that were used to construct them.

Content validity refers to the ability of the items within the instrument to represent the content of any given construct (DeVaus, 2002). Expert validation was employed to ensure content validity; the instrument was introduced to experts in the field prior to the final approval stage and before the formal data collection process with the request that they examine the questionnaire's content. The draft questionnaire was emailed to five marketing experts from the industry; they were asked to focus mainly on the fundamentals and essentials of SNS services. SNS experts living in Saudi Arabia were asked to review and examine the questionnaire for items and content of the survey. The experts were e-mailed back copies of the survey and information sheets which explained the background and purpose of the research. The feedback through those validity tools has been incorporated into the instrument involving some statement changes, rewording and statement cancellation and creation in case some of the study population did not fully understand some concepts or statements.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

This research follows the ethical guidelines of Brunel University, London, and the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2004) and has the approval of the Research Ethics Committee. Participants are recruited voluntarily with informed consent. Participants have the right to withdraw from participation at any stage. The research does not use any form of deception to recruit participants. The questionnaire includes a cover page explaining the aim of the survey, the nature of participation and the way findings will be reported. All participants are assured that they can withdraw from the research at any point for any or no reason. The research does not include vulnerable groups such as children or patients. No incentives are offered to recruit participants. Finally, participants' anonymity will be protected. For this reason, aliases are used where appropriate to ensure that no participants can be identified.

Chapter Five

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH RESULTS

This Chapter presents the analysed data, highlighting the study's main research results. The first section presents the characteristics of 553 respondents including their use and experience of buying online, their knowledge of using different technologies, and their access to different technologies for online purchasing such as a computer, Internet (Home, Work) and smart devices and the amount of time they spend on different devices and technologies. The results also show respondents' level of SNSs engagement and experience with the main social media networks (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Others) as well as demographic characteristics of our sample including age, gender, education level, income, nationality, and number of online friends. The chapter then provides descriptive statistics of our main 12 components (i.e., ISMMM Model main factors) along with their items.

5.1 Characteristics of the Use of Technologies

An on-line questionnaire was developed to collect information to assess consumer behaviours within the context of social media marketing by Saudi Arabian Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs). The questionnaire collected information on all factors potentially affecting consumer behaviours and intentions towards social media marketing in Saudi Arabia, and identifying important areas of online marketing media, branding, awareness, image, trust and loyalty. Respondents were also asked about their level of engagement with the main social media networks (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Others). The questionnaire addressed respondents' experience and their time using social media networks. This included experience, knowledge, frequency of online purchasing, knowing how to use the Internet, computers, and smart devices. Respondents were also asked about ownership and access (from home or Work) to such technologies as computers, smart devices, and the Internet.

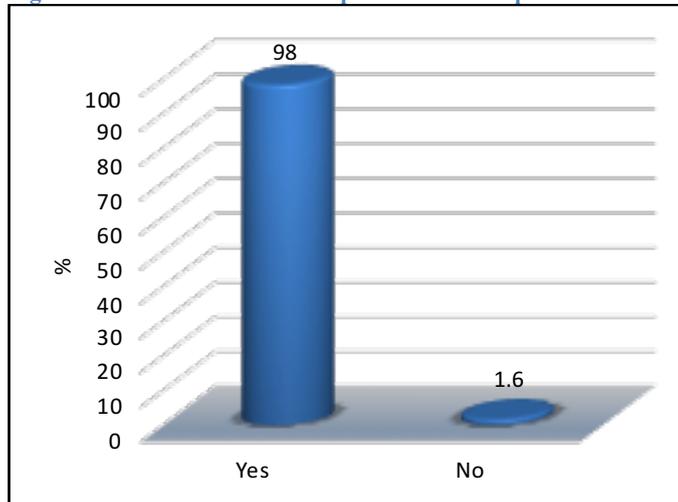
5.1.1 Online Purchasing Experience

This part of the questionnaire asked whether participants had any experience of online purchasing. The vast majority of respondents 98.4% (544) have experienced online purchasing, with only 1.6% (9) having no online experience, (Table 11, Figure 20).

Table 11 Distribution of Participants' Online Experience

Frequency	Count	Percentage (%)
Yes	544	98.4
No	9	1.6
Total	553	100

Figure 20 Distribution of Participants' Online Experience



5.1.2 Frequency of Participants' Online Purchasing

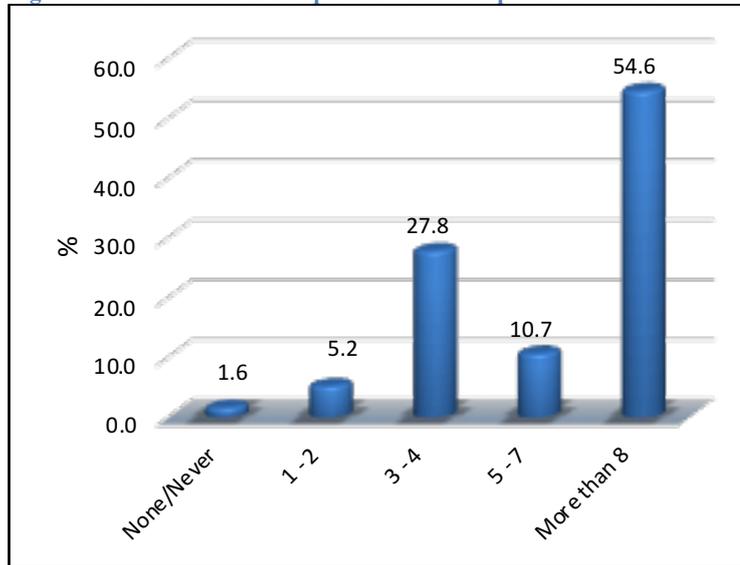
Respondents were asked about the frequency of their online purchasing in the last two years. As illustrated in Table 12 and Figure 21, most participants (54.8%) had used online purchasing more than 8 times in the last two years, followed by “3-4” times with 27.8%, so that more than 80% of participants have used an online purchasing service and more than 93% of participants have used online purchasing more than 3 times in the last two years. Only 1.6% of participants have never used online purchasing.

Table 12 Distribution of Frequencies of Participants' Online Purchasing

Frequency	Count	Percentage (%)
None/Never	9	1.6
1 – 2 times	29	5.2

3 – 4	154	27.8
5 – 7	59	10.7
More than 8	302	54.6
Total	553	100

Figure 21 Distribution of Frequencies of Participants' Online Purchasing



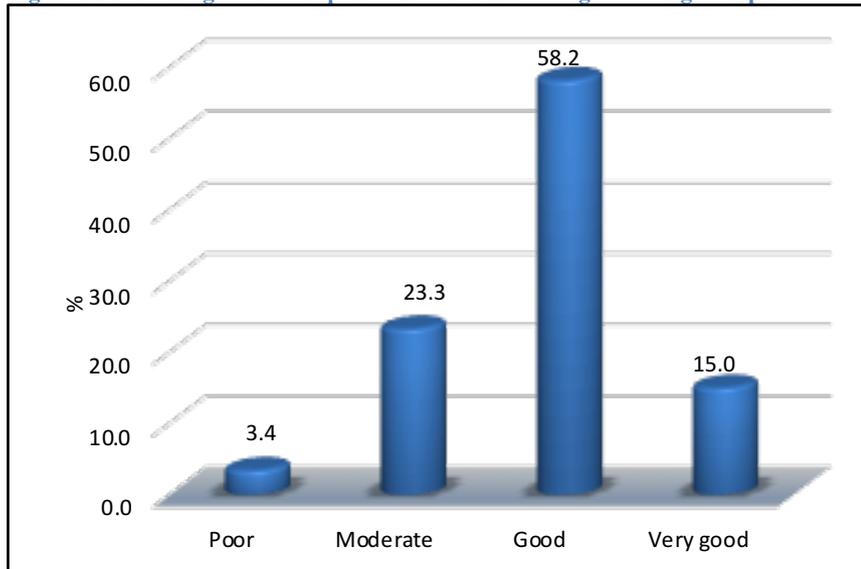
5.1.3 Knowledge Level of Using a Computer

On a scale from very poor (1) to very good (5), participants were asked about their level of knowledge of computer use. Table 13 and Figure 22 show the knowledge range along with distribution of participants. Almost 73.2% of participants considered their knowledge of computer use as good or very good; 23.3% of participants said moderate, and only 3.4% considered their computer knowledge to be poor.

Table 13 Distribution of Participants' Level of Knowledge in Using Computer

Level of knowledge	Count	Percentage (%)
Very Poor	0	0
Poor	19	3.4
Moderate	129	23.3
Good	322	58.2
Very good	83	15.0
Total	553	100

Figure 22 Percentage of Participants' Level of Knowledge of Using Computer



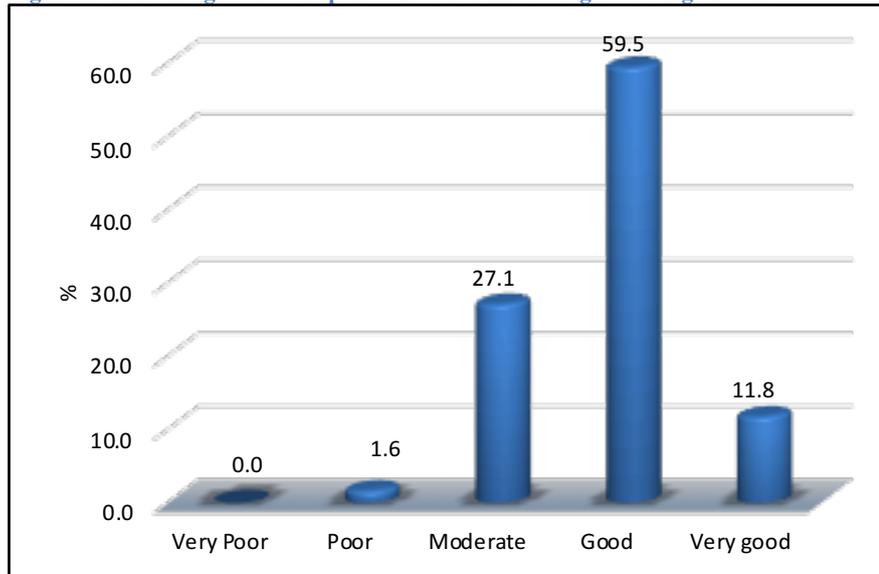
5.1.4 Knowledge Level of Using Internet

In the same way, participants were asked about their level of knowledge of using the Internet on the same scale from very poor to very good. Results are illustrated in Table 14 and Figure 23 and show that 71.3% of participants consider their knowledge of using the Internet as good or very good, 27.1% regard it as moderate and only 2.2% considered themselves poor at using the Internet.

Table 14 Distribution of Participants' Level of Knowledge of Using Internet

Level of knowledge	Count	Percentage (%)
Very Poor	0	0
Poor	9	1.6
Moderate	150	27.1
Good	329	59.5
Very good	65	11.8
Total	553	100

Figure 23 Percentage of Participants' Level of Knowledge of Using Internet



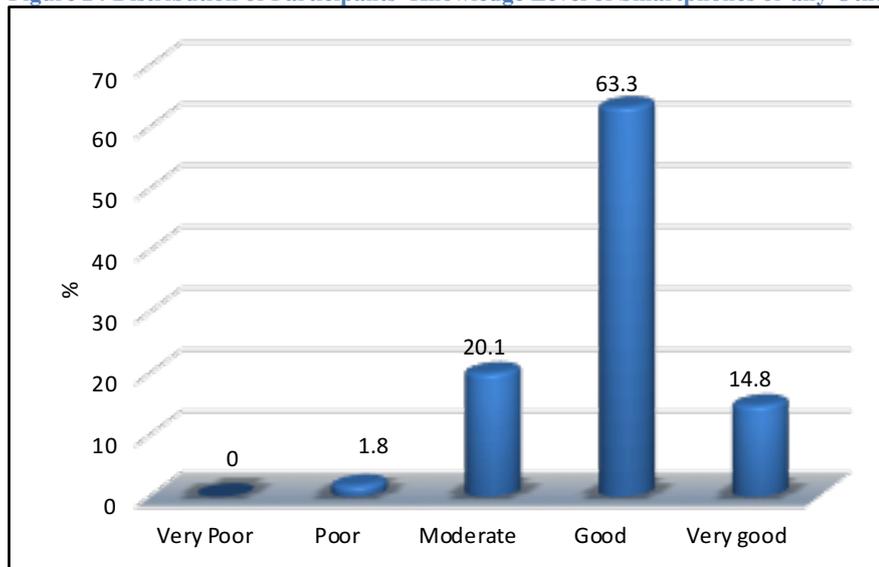
5.1.5 Knowledge Level for Smartphone, Tablets or Other Devices

Results illustrated in Table 15 and Figure 24 show that participants have a good knowledge of using smart devices, as more than 78% of them consider themselves to have a good or very good knowledge of smart devices; 20.1% moderate and only 1.8% consider themselves to have poor knowledge of smart devices.

Table 15 Distribution of Participants' Knowledge Level of Smartphones or any Other Similar Devices

Level of knowledge	Count	Percentage (%)
Very Poor	0	0
Poor	10	1.8
Moderate	111	20.1
Good	350	63.3
Very good	82	14.8
Total	553	100

Figure 24 Distribution of Participants' Knowledge Level of Smartphones or any Other Similar Devices



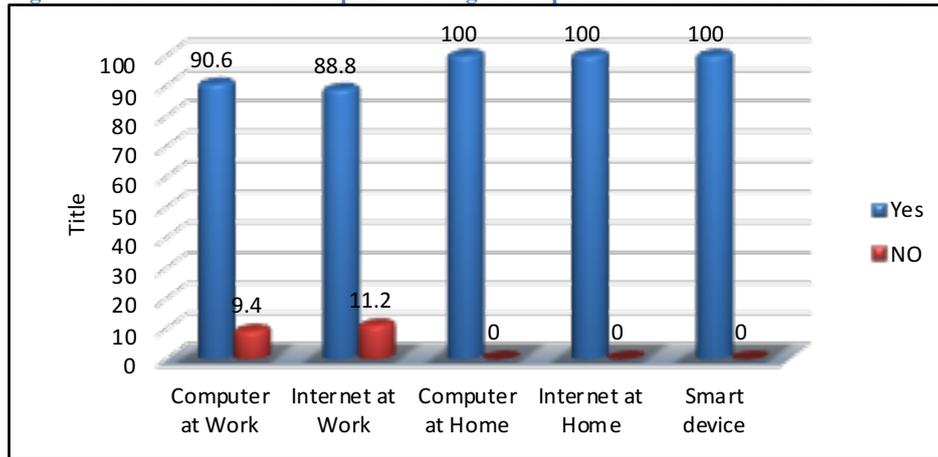
5.1.6 Having a Computer Internet or Smart Devices at Home or Work

Participants responded to whether or not they have a computer, Internet and smart device at home or at work. All participants have all three of those things at home. As illustrated in Table 16 and Figure 25, approximately 90% of respondents have a computer and Internet at work.

Table 16 Distribution of Participants Having a Computer, Smart Devices and Internet at Work or Home

	Response	Count	Percentage (%)
Computer at Work	Yes	501	90.6
	No	52	9.4
Internet at Work	Yes	491	88.8
	No	62	11.2
Computer at Home	Yes	553	100
	No	0	0
Internet at Home	Yes	553	100
	No	0	0
Smart device	Yes	553	100
	No	0	0.0

Figure 25 Distribution of Participants Having a Computer and Internet at Home or Smart Devices



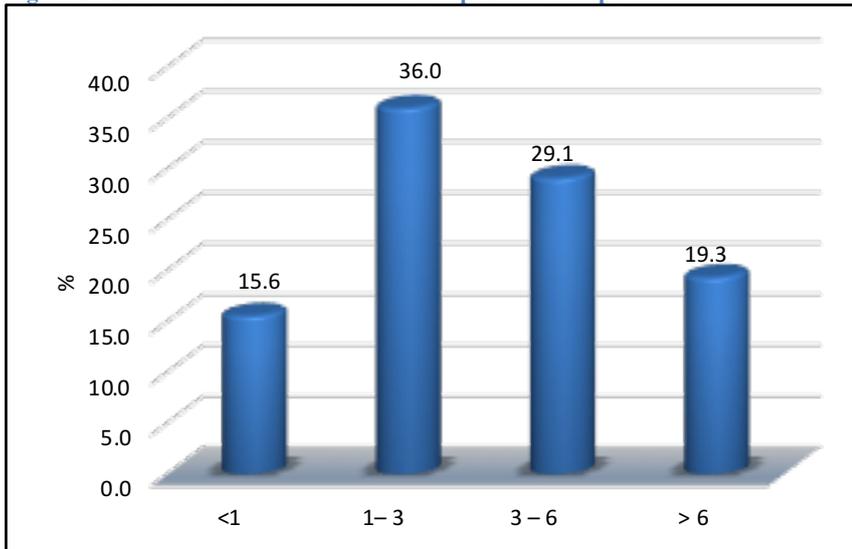
5.1.7 Number of hours Spent by Participants on Computers, Internet and Smart Devices at Work and Home

Participants were asked how many hours they spent on using computers, Internet and smart devices at work and at home. Results of time spent on computers at work are summarised in Table 17 and Figure 26. Results show that 65% of participants spend between one and six hours daily on computers at work, while only 15.6% spend less than one hour and 19.3% spend more than 6 hours.

Table 17 Distribution of Number of hours spend on Computers at Work

NO of Hours	Count	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 hour	86	15.6
1– 3 Hours	199	36.0
3 – 6 Hours	161	29.1
More than 6 hours	107	19.3
Total	553	100

Figure 26 Distribution of Number of hours spend on Computers at Work

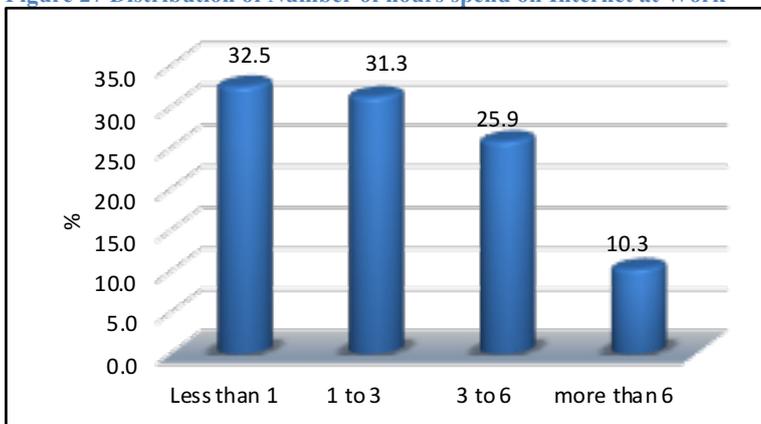


Results of time spent on the Internet at work are summarised in Table 18 and Figure 27. Results show that 32.5% of participants spend less than one hour on Internet at work while 67.5% of participants spend more than one hour daily on the Internet at work, of whom only 10.3% spend more than 6 hours on the Internet at work.

Table 18 Distribution of Number of hours spend on Internet at Work

NO Hours	Count	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 hour	180	32.5
1- 3 Hours	173	31.3
3 - 6 Hours	143	25.9
More than 6 hours	57	10.3
Total	553	100

Figure 27 Distribution of Number of hours spend on Internet at Work

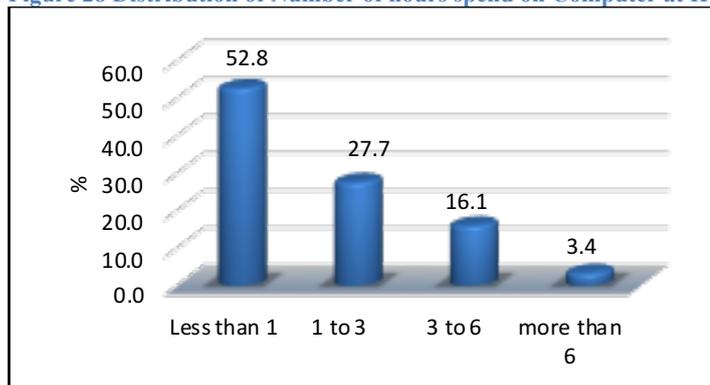


Results of time spent on a computer at home are summarised in Table 19 and Figure 28. Results show that most participants (52.8%) spend less than one hour on computers at home followed by "1-3" hours with 27.7%, which means that 80.5% of participants spend less than three hours on computers at home, 16.1% spend between "3-6" hours and only 3.4% of participants spend more than 6 hours on computers at home.

Table 19 Distribution of Number of hours spend on Computer at Home

NO Hours	Count	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 hour	292	52.8
1– 3 Hours	153	27.7
3 – 6 Hours	89	16.1
More than 6 hours	19	3.4
Total	553	100

Figure 28 Distribution of Number of hours spend on Computer at Home

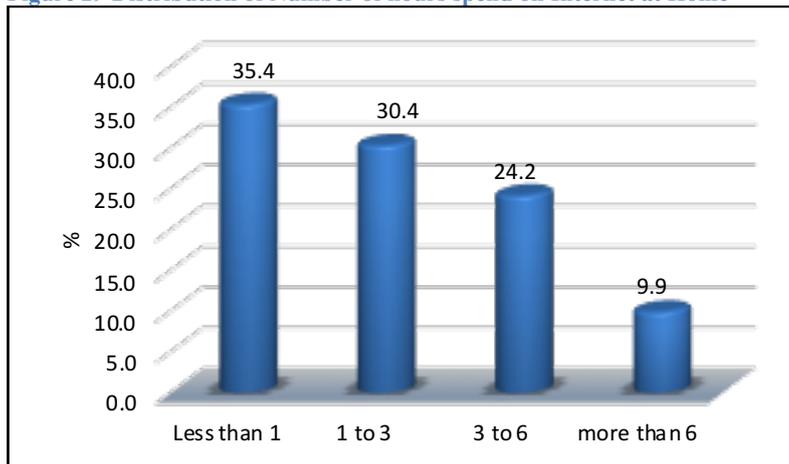


For the time spent on the Internet at home, results are summarised in Table 20 and Figure 29. 35.4% of participants spent less than one hour on the Internet at home while 64.5% of participants spent more than one hour daily on the Internet at home, of whom only 9.9% spend more than 6 hours on the Internet at home.

Table 20 Distribution of Number of hours spend on Internet at Home

NO Hours	Count	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 hour	196	35.4
1– 3 Hours	168	30.4
3 – 6 Hours	134	24.2
More than 6 hours	55	9.9
Total	553	100

Figure 29 Distribution of Number of hours spend on Internet at Home

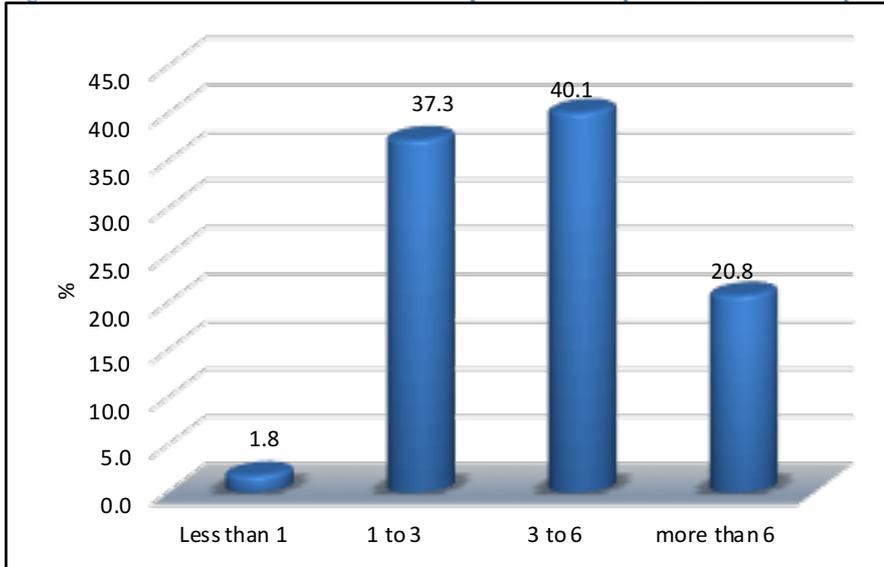


Results of time spent by participants on smartphones, tablets or any other devices are summarised in Table 21 and Figure 30. Only 1.8% of participants spent less than one hour on their smartphones, tablets or other similar smart devices. (40.1% of participants spent between "3-6" hours, followed by 37.3% of participants spending "1-3" hours on their smartphones, tablets or other similar smart devices, while 20.8% spent more than 6 hours. More than 60% of participants spend more than 3 hours on their smartphones, tablets or other similar smart devices.

Table 21 Distribution of Number of hours spent on Smartphones, Tablets or any Other Devices

NO Hours	Count	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 hour	10	1.8
1– 3 Hours	206	37.3
3 – 6 Hours	222	40.1
More than 6 hours	115	20.8
Total	553	100

Figure 30 Distribution of Number of Hours Spend on Smartphones, Tablets or any Other Devices



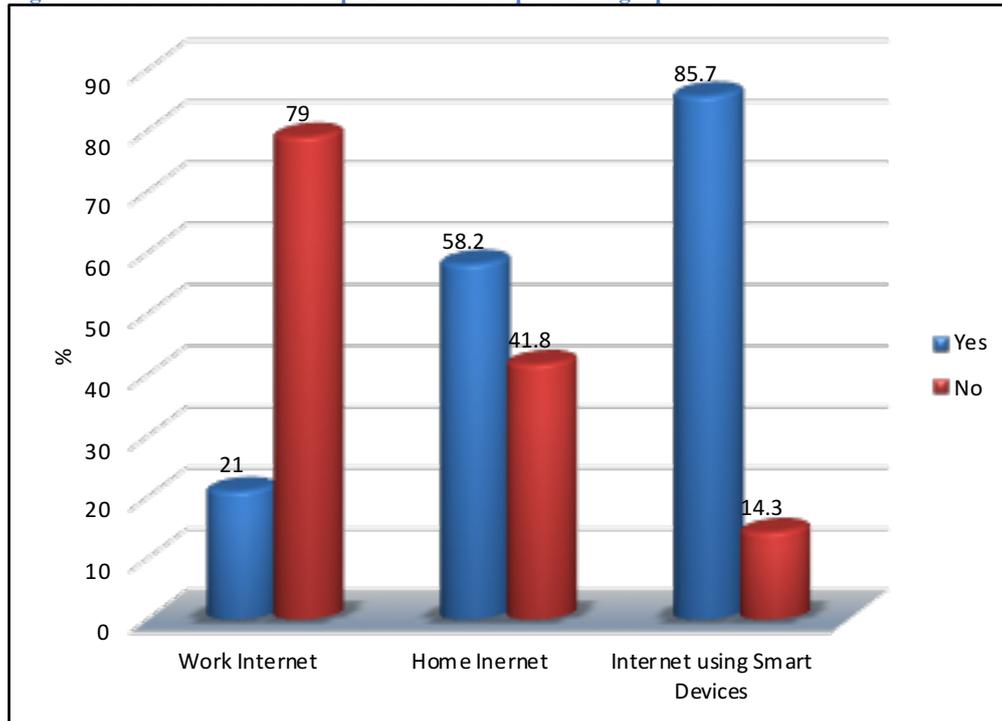
5.1.8 Method of Purchasing a Product Online

Participants responded to a question about purchasing method to buy a product on line using the Internet at work or at home, or using smartphone, tablets and any other similar device. Results are illustrated in Table 22 and Figure 31. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. The most frequent method for purchasing products online was with a mobile phone or any other smart device (85.7%) followed by using the Internet at home (59.2%). The least used method was using the Internet at work (21%).

Table 22 Distribution of Participants Method 'for purchasing a product Online

	Response	Count	Percentage (%)
Internet at Work	Yes	116	21
	No	437	79
Internet at Home	Yes	322	58.2
	No	231	41.8
Internet using Devices	Yes	474	85.7
	No	79	14.3

Figure 31 Distribution of Participants Method in purchasing a product Online



5.1.9 Summary on the Use of Technologies

Based on our participants' responses on their experience with technology and online purchasing, most participants' time is spent on smartphones, tablets or other similar smart devices and the least time is spent on the Internet at home. Participants spend more time at work than at home on computers and the Internet. Participants preferred using mobile phone, tablets or any other similar device to buy a product online. These results indicate that our participants are familiar with technologies and have access to the Internet by several methods. Furthermore, our participants have quite good experience with online purchasing. Further discussions and recommendation will be provided in Chapter 5 elaborating on all factors that may have an impact on online purchasing.

5.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

The questionnaire asked about four demographic variables: age, gender, education level and income. Table 23 summarises the distribution and details of the four demographic variables among the participants. Almost three quarters of our participants are males (74.5%), as illustrated in Figure 32. 73.6% of our participants are under 35 years old;

22.4% are under 25 years old and more than half of our respondents are in the age group "25 – 34" years old. 16.1% are in the age group "35 – 44" and only 10.3% are older than 45 years as illustrated in Figure 33. Regarding education, the vast majority of participants had gained an education; 86.6% of them with Bachelor or Master degree and only 5.2% with a Diploma, see Figure 34. The majority (61.3%) of the participants had an annual income of less than 400,000 Saudi Riyals, 21.7% had an income between 400,000 and 600,000 and only 17% received more than 600,000 Saudi Riyals, as illustrated in Figure 35. The vast majority (75%) of our participants are Saudis, as illustrated in Figure 36.

Table 23 Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (n=553)

Characteristic	Group	No. (%)
Gender	Male	412 (74.5%)
	Female	141 (25.5%)
Age	Less than 25	124 (22.4%)
	25 – 34	283 (51.2%)
	35 – 45	89 (16.1)
	45 – 54	28 (5.1%)
	55 – 65	29(5.2%)
Academic degree	High School or Less	45 (8.1%)
	Diploma	29 (5.2%)
	Bachelor	290 (52.4%)
	Masters	189 (34.2%)
Income	Less than 200,000 SR*	170 (30.7%)
	200K – 400K SR	169 (30.6%)
	400K – 600K SR	120 (21.7%)
	More than 600K SR	94 (17.0%)
Nationality	Saudi	369 (75%)
	Non-Saudi	138 (25%)

***SR: Saudi Riyals**

Figure 32 Participants Distribution by Gender

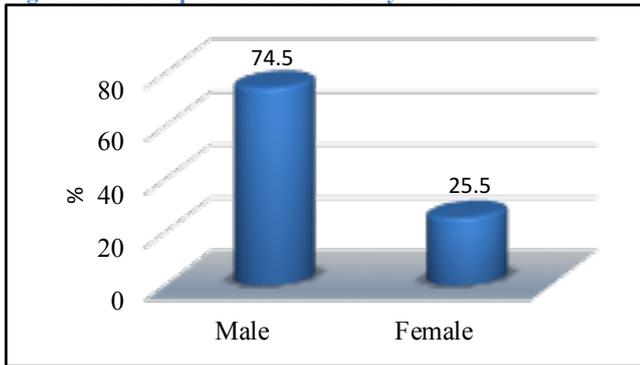


Figure 33 Participants Age Distribution

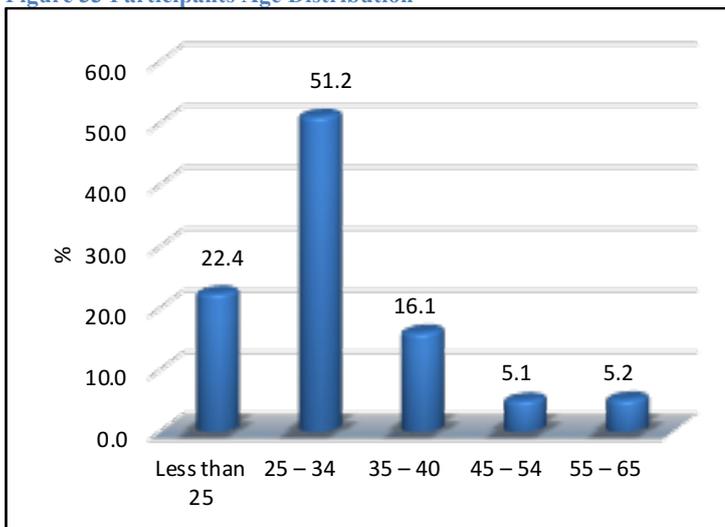


Figure 34 Participants Education Level Distribution

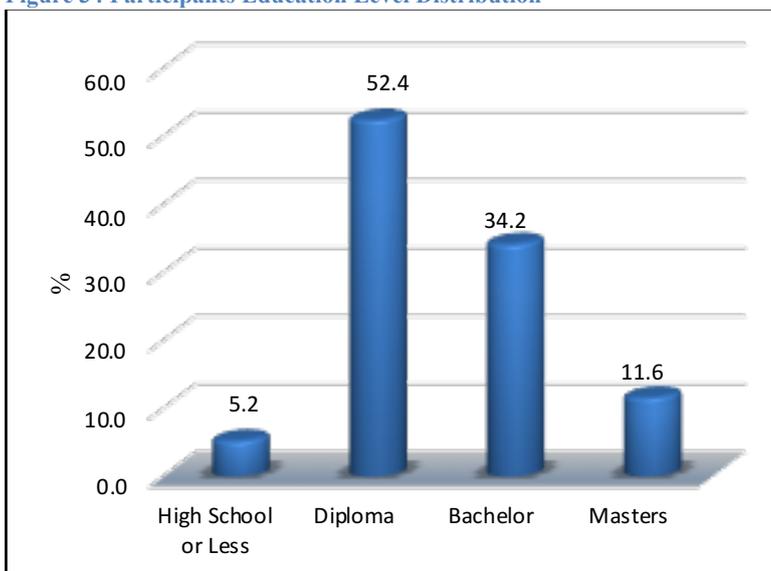


Figure 35 Participants Distribution by Income

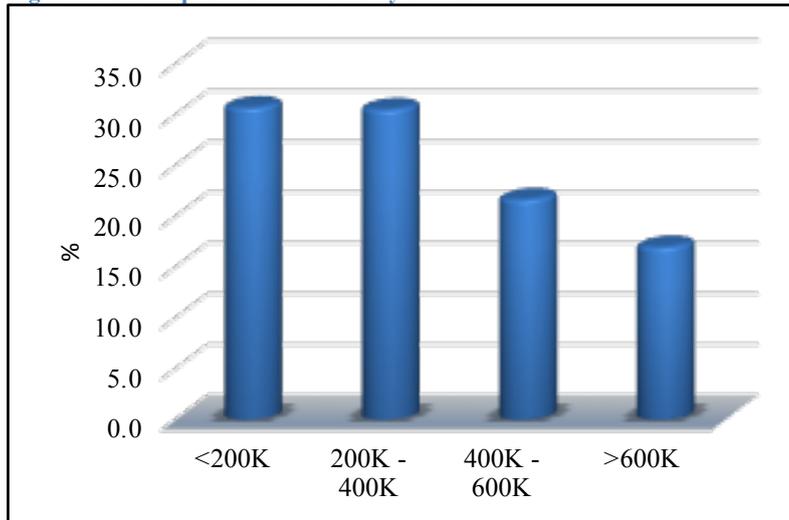
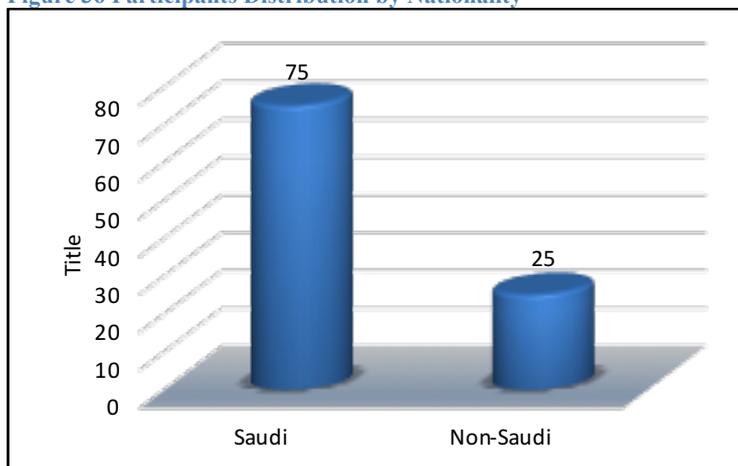


Figure 36 Participants Distribution by Nationality



5.3 Social Media Engagement and Behavioural Patterns

As this study is concerned with Consumer Behaviours within the Context of Social Media Marketing by Saudi Arabia Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, respondents were also asked about their level of engagement with social media. More specifically, respondents were asked about the number of their online friends and their engagement in the main social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or other social media networks. Respondents were asked whether they used social media networks, how long they have been doing so, whether or not they have an account and for how long. They were also asked whether or not they were members of social network groups, the number of groups, how long they have engaged in such groups and the time spent daily in using social media networks.

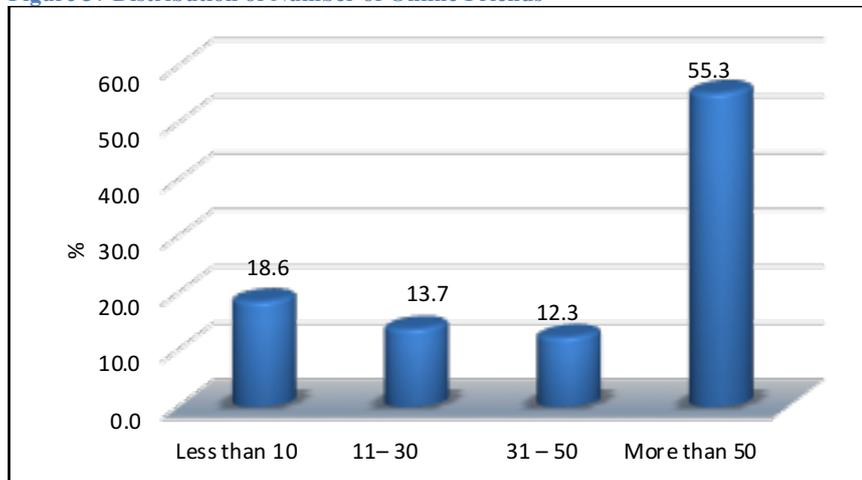
5.3.1 Number of Online Friends

Participants were asked about the number of their online friends, divided into four categories; fewer than 10 friends, between 11 and 30, 31 and 50 and more than 50 friends. Distribution of participants among those categories is illustrated in Table 24 and Figure 37. Most participants have more than 50 online friends while 18.6% have fewer than 10 online friends. Approximately the same percentage of participants have "11–30" friends and "31–50" friends with 13.7% and 12.3%, respectively.

Table 24 Distribution of Number of Online Friends

NO Hours	Count	Percentage (%)
Fewer than 10	103	18.6
11– 30	76	13.7
31 – 50 Hours	68	12.3
More than 50	306	55.3
Total	553	100

Figure 37 Distribution of Number of Online Friends



5.3.2 Engagement with Social Networking Sites

Participants were asked whether they used Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or any other social media networks. They were also asked about the time they used each network, whether they had an account and how long they had been using their account.

5.3.2.1 Facebook Engagement

More than 75% of participants are using and have an account with Facebook and have been using it for more than 2 years. 86.8% of participants have a Facebook account and 80.4% have had it for more than 2 years, as illustrated in Table 25 and Figures 38 and Figure 39. The length of time our participants have been using and have had an account is almost the same with small percentage differences.

Table 25 Respondents' Engagement in Facebook

Description	Group	Count	Percentage (%)
Use	No	142	25.7
	Yes	411	74.3
Length	Less than 2 years	123	22.2
	2 – 4	189	34.2
	More than 4 years	241	43.6
Account	No	73	13.2
	Yes	480	86.8
Account Length	Less than 2 years	103	18.6
	2 – 4	163	29.5
	More than 4 years	287	51.9

Figure 38 Graph of Respondents on Using Facebook or having an account

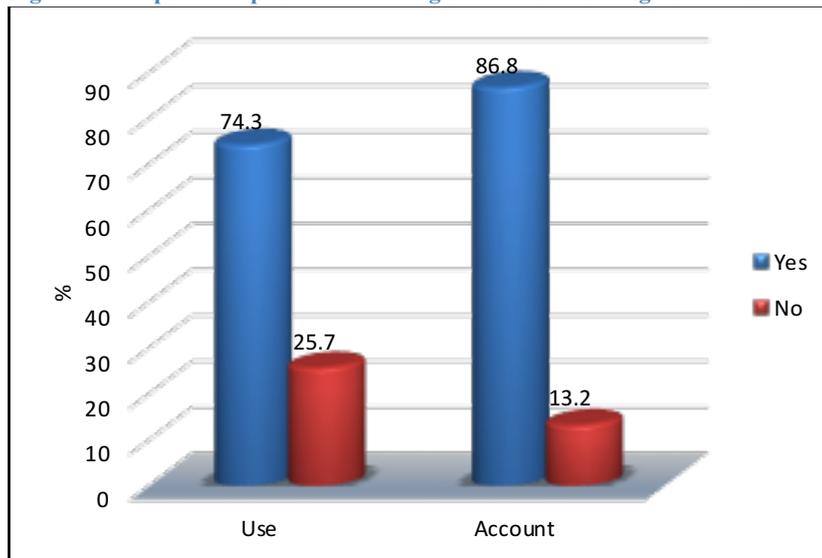
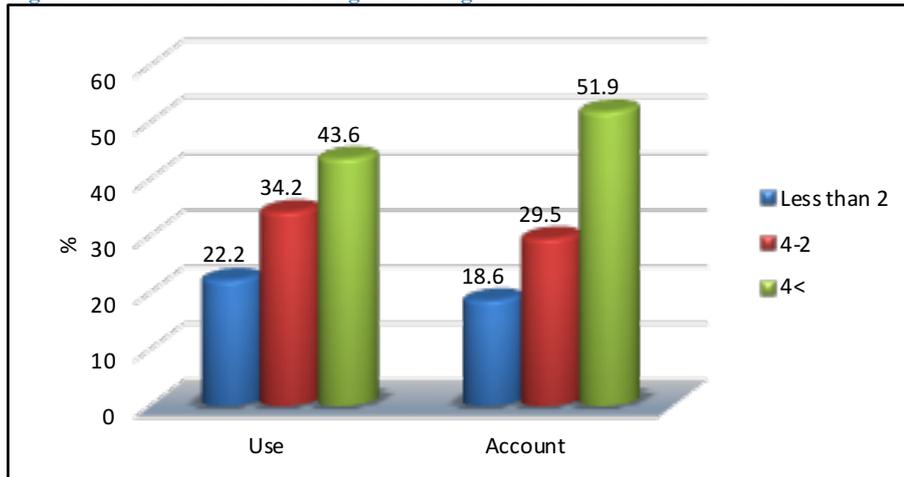


Figure 39 Distribution of the Length in Using Facebook or Have an Account



5.3.2.2 Twitter Engagement

Participants' distribution of engagement and experience with Twitter is summarised in Table 26 and Figures 40 and 41. Twitter popularity was slightly higher than Facebook; 80.5% of our participants used Twitter and 90.4% of our participants have an account. 83.2% of participants have had a Twitter account for more than 2 years and 78.5% have used it for more than 2 years. On other hand, Facebook was used for longer than Twitter, and this may be due to the fact that Facebook was established as a social Media network before Twitter.

Table 26 Respondents Engagement in Twitter

Description	Group	Count	Percentage (%)
Use	No	108	19.5
	Yes	445	80.5
Length	Less than 2 years	119	21.5
	2 – 4	253	45.8
	More than 4 years	181	32.7
Account	No	53	9.6
	Yes	500	90.4
Account Length	Less than 2 years	93	16.8
	2 – 4	270	48.8
	More than 4 years	190	34.4

Figure 40 Graph of Respondents on Using Twitter or Have an Account

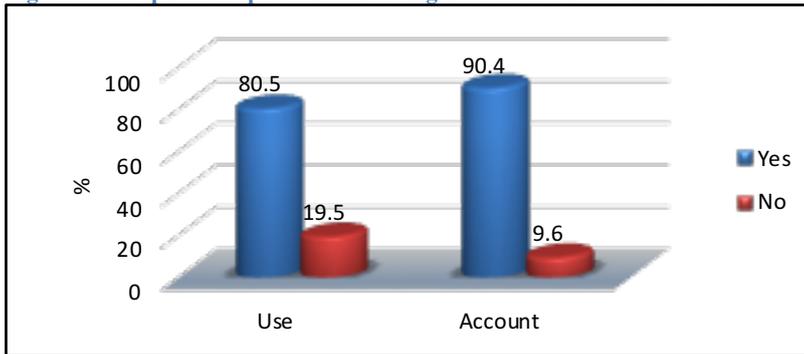
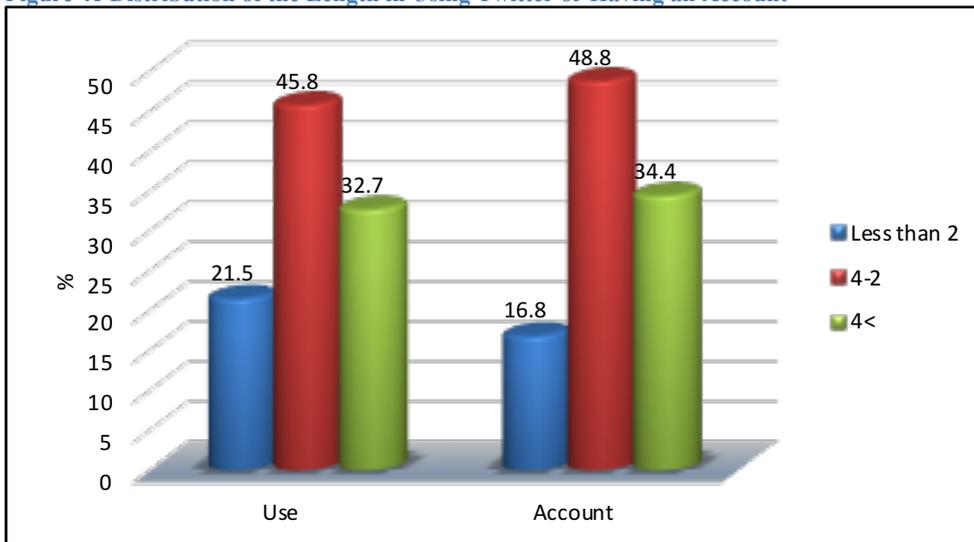


Figure 41 Distribution of the Length in Using Twitter or Having an Account



5.3.2.3 YouTube Engagement

All respondents have used YouTube and 74.7% of them have an account with YouTube, as illustrated in Table 27 and Figures 42 and 43. More than 90% of respondents have been using YouTube for more than 2 years, while 79% of respondents have a YouTube account and have been using it for more than 2 years. The high percentage using YouTube may be due to the fact that you don't need an account to use it.

Table 27 Respondents' Engagement in YouTube

Description	Group	Count	Percentage (%)
Use	No	0	0
	Yes	553	100
Length	Less than 2 years	47	8.5
	2 – 4	170	30.7
	More than 4 years	336	60.8

Account	No	140	25.3
	Yes	413	74.7
Account Length	Less than 2 years	116	21.0
	2 – 4	202	36.5
	More than 4 years	235	42.5

Figure 42 Graph of Respondents on Using YouTube or Have an Account

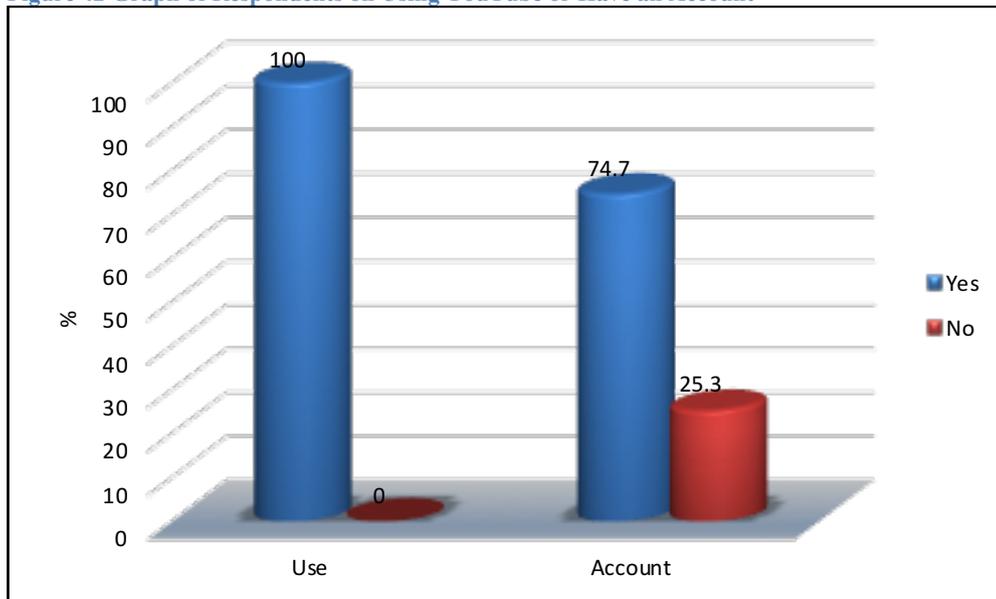
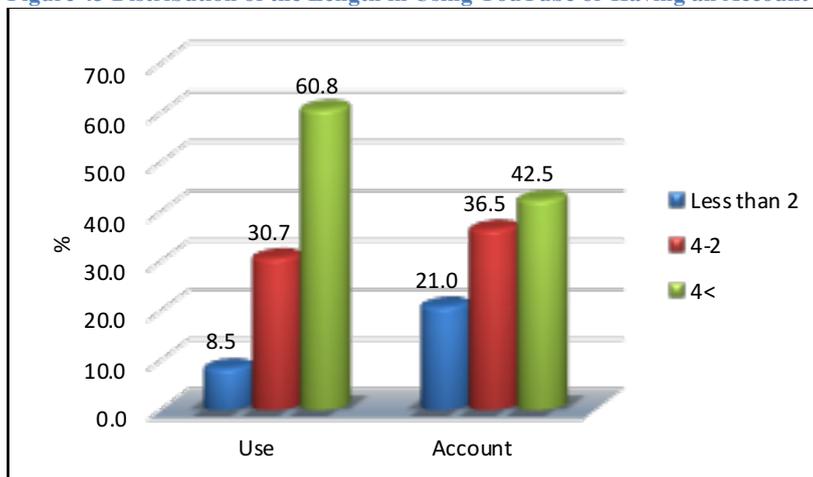


Figure 43 Distribution of the Length in Using YouTube or Having an Account



5.3.2.4 Other Social Networking Sites Engagement

All respondents have used "Other" social media networks and 98.4% have an account with another social media Network, as illustrated in Table 28 and Figures 44 and 45. 12.3% of them have used another network for less than 2 years and 87.7% for more than 2 years. 89.5% have an account with these other social media networks.

Table 28 Respondents' Engagement in Other Social Media Networks

Description	Group	Count	Percentage (%)
Use	No	0	0
	Yes	553	100
Length	Less than 2 years	68	12.3
	2 – 4	234	42.3
	More than 4 years	251	45.4
Account	No	9	1.6
	Yes	544	98.4
Account Length	Less than 2 years	58	10.5
	2 – 4	319	57.7
	More than 4 years	176	31.8

Figure 44 Graph of Respondents on Using Other Social Media Networks and having an Account

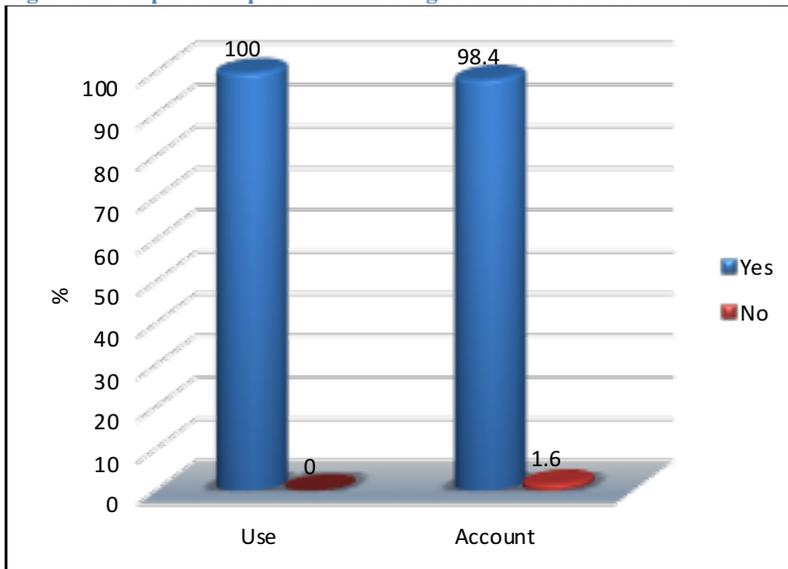
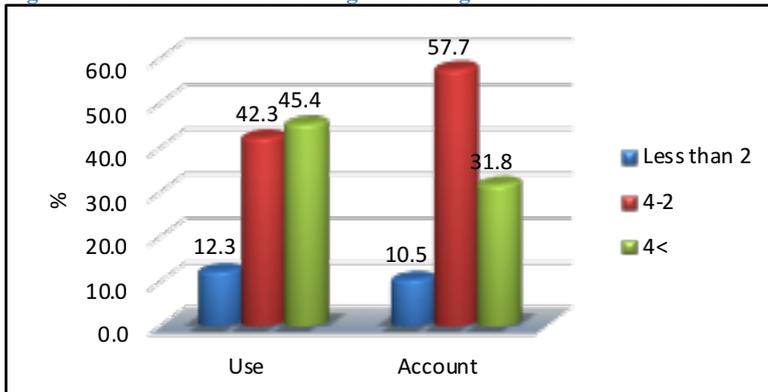


Figure 45 Distribution of the Length in Using Other Social Media Networks and Having an Account



5.3.2.5 Summary

- More than 75% of our participants have used and have an account with Facebook and more than 80% of our participants have used Facebook for more than 2 years.
- More than 80% of our participants have used Twitter and 90% of our participants have an account and more than 80% of our participants have used Twitter for more than 2 years.
- All participants have used YouTube and 74.7% of them have an account. 90% of participants have been using YouTube for more than 2 years.
- All participants have used "Other" social media networks and 98.4 % have an account. 87.7% have used it for more than 2 years.
- The most popular social media network (in using and having an account) was "Other" social media networks, followed by YouTube, then Twitter and last is Facebook.

5.3.3 Engagement with Groups in Social Media

Respondents were asked whether they are members of social network groups, how many groups they are in, how long they have engaged in such groups and the time spent daily in groups with the same social media networks (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Others).

5.3.3.1 Distribution of Membership in Groups in the Main Social Media Networks

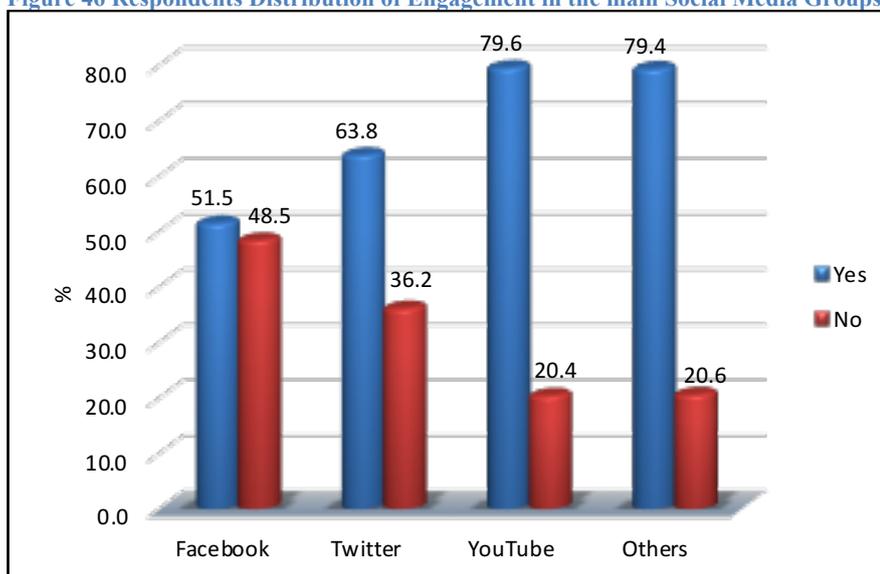
The highest percentage (almost 80%) of our participants engaged with social media groups in YouTube and "Other" social media, as illustrated by Table 29 and Figure 46. 51.5% of our participants have group membership with Facebook and 63.8% with Twitter.

Table 29 Respondents' Distribution of Engagement in the main Social Media Groups

Description	Group	Count	Percentage (%)
Facebook	No	268	48.5
	Yes	285	51.5
Twitter	No	200	36.2
	Yes	353	63.8

YouTube	No	113	20.4
	Yes	440	79.6
Others	No	114	20.6
	Yes	439	79.4

Figure 46 Respondents Distribution of Engagement in the main Social Media Groups



5.3.3.2 Distribution of Number of groups

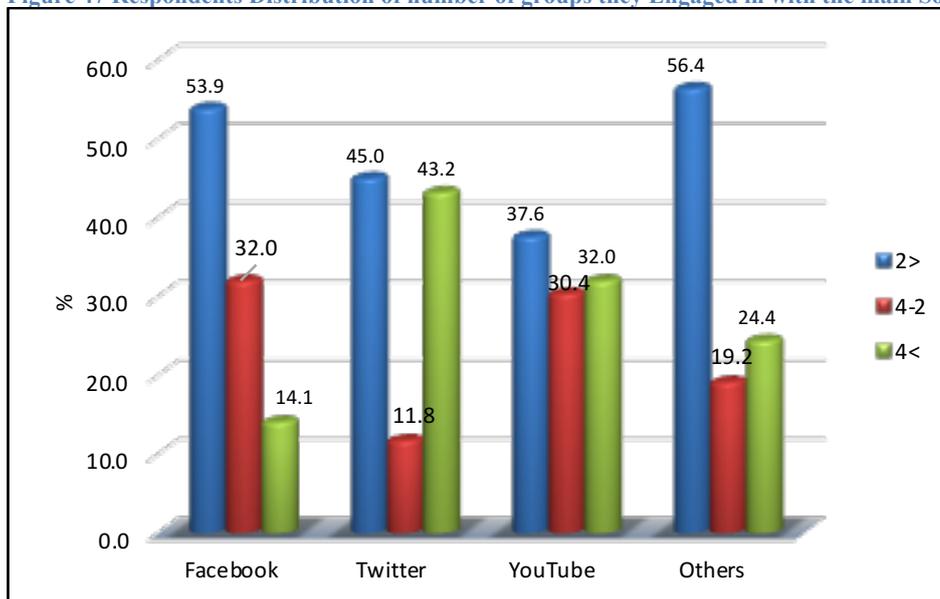
As illustrated by our results in Table 30 and Figure 47, the highest percentage of our participants (about 50%) belong to fewer than 2 groups in all social media networks. Among the participants with less than 2 groups, the highest percentage is with "Other" social media with 56.4%, followed by Facebook 53.9%, then Twitter with 45.0% and the lowest percentage (37.6%) was with YouTube. Twitter has the highest percentage with more than 4 groups with 43.2% followed by YouTube with 32%, and the lowest percentage of participants with more than 4 groups was with Facebook (14.1%).

Table 30 Respondents Distribution of number of groups they Engaged in with the main Social Media Groups

Description	Group	Count	Percentage (%)
Facebook	Fewer than 2 groups	298	53.9
	2 – 4	177	32.0
	More than 4 groups	78	14.1

Twitter	Fewer than 2 groups	249	45.0
	2 – 4	65	11.8
	More than 4 groups	239	43.2
YouTube	Fewer than 2 groups	208	37.6
	2 – 4	168	30.4
	More than 4 groups	177	32.0
Others	Fewer than 2 groups	312	56.4
	2 – 4	106	19.2
	More than 4 groups	135	24.4

Figure 47 Respondents Distribution of number of groups they Engaged in with the main Social Media Groups



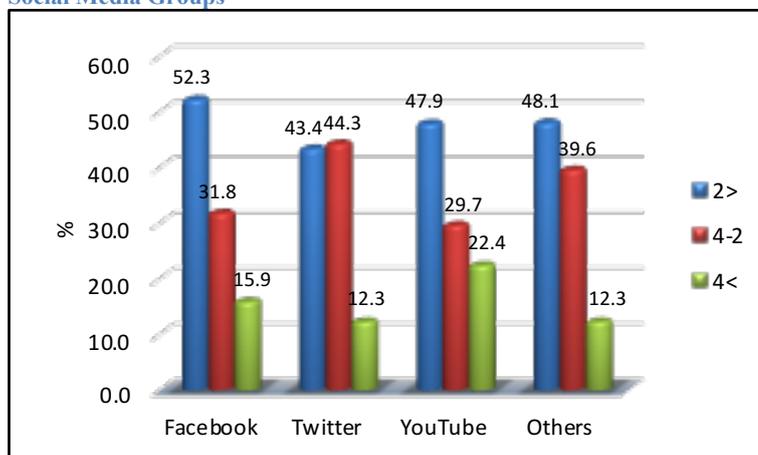
5.3.3.3 Distribution of Number of Years in Groups Engagement

Most participants started using any social media in less than 2 years except for Twitter, with almost the same percentage (44%) for the two categories of "less than 2 years" and "between 2 and 4 years". The over 4 years category had almost the same percentage among all social media networks, with the highest percentage for YouTube (22.4%), as illustrated in Table 31 and Figure 48.

Table 31 Respondents' Distribution of number of years they have been Engaged with groups in the main Social Media Groups

Description	Group	Count	Percentage (%)
Facebook	Fewer than 2 Years	289	52.3
	2 – 4 Years	176	31.8
	More than 4 Years	88	15.9
Twitter	Fewer than 2 Years	240	43.4
	2 – 4 Years	245	44.3
	More than 4 Years	68	12.3
YouTube	Fewer than 2 Years	265	47.9
	2 – 4 Years	164	29.7
	More than 4 Years	124	22.4
Others	Fewer than 2 Years	266	48.1
	2 – 4 Years	219	39.6
	More than 4 Years	68	12.3

Figure 48 Respondents Distribution of number of years they have been Engaged with groups in the main Social Media Groups



5.3.3.4 Distribution of Time Engagement with Social Media Groups

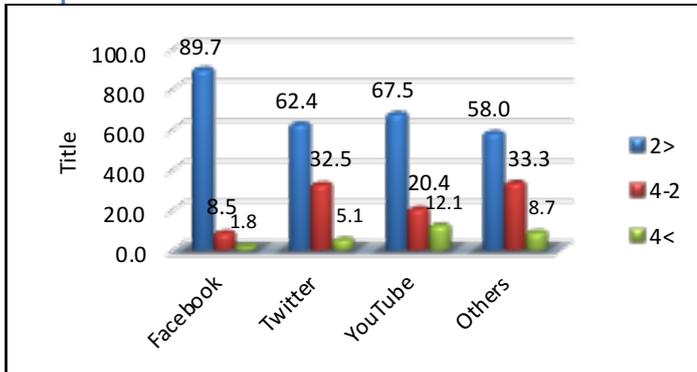
The great majority of our participants spend fewer than 2 hours on Social media networks engaging with groups. The second highest category on time spent on social media was with Twitter and "Others", which have about 33% of participants who spend between 2 and 4 hours. 12.7% of participants spend more than 4 hours on YouTube and

fewer than 10% for "Others" and Twitter with a minimum of 1.8% for Facebook, as illustrated in Table 32 and Figure 49.

Table 32 Respondents' Distribution of Time they Spend Engaged with groups in the main Social Media Groups

Description	Group	Count	Percentage (%)
Facebook	Fewer than 2 Hours	496	89.7
	2 – 4 Hours	47	8.5
	More than 4 Hours	10	1.8
Twitter	Fewer than 2 Hours	345	62.4
	2 – 4 Hours	180	32.5
	More than 4 Hours	28	5.1
YouTube	Fewer than 2 Hours	373	67.5
	2 – 4 Hours	113	20.4
	More than 4 Hours	67	12.1
Others	Fewer than 2 Hours	321	58.0
	2 – 4 Hours	184	33.3
	More than 4 Hours	48	8.7

Figure 49 Respondents Distribution of Time they Spend Engaged with groups in the main Social Media Groups



5.3.3.5 Summary

- The highest percentage (almost 80%) of participants have group membership in YouTube and "Other" Social media networks, while Twitter scored 63.8% and Facebook 51.5%.

- The highest percentage of participants belong to fewer than 2 groups in all social media networks. The highest percentage of participants with more than 4 groups was in Twitter 43.2%.
- The highest percentage of our participants have fewer than 2 years of experience with social media groups, except Twitter which has the same percentage of participants with 2 to 4 years of experience.
- The great majority of our participants spend fewer than 2 hours on social media networks engaging with groups.

5.4 Descriptive Statistics of the ISMMM Model Variables

All related factors and variables to Social Media Practices and Actual Use are described using descriptive statistics. Descriptive Statistics include Means, Standard Deviations, Frequency and Relative Frequency and are reported for each variable (constructs or collection of statements, i.e., items) used in the research model. All collected information or items are rated on a five-point Likert Scale, starting from a score of 1, indicating strong disagreement, and finishing with score of 5, indicating strong agreement with the statement. The scores for the statements within each variable or factor were then averaged to provide one numerical score (average). The Average of Likert Scale (1-5) is 3. A higher average (more than 3) indicates greater agreement with the statements relating to that variable or factor. A low average (below 3) indicates that respondents disagree with the statements about the related variable. The descriptive statistics of items for each variable (construct) and its items are discussed next.

5.4.1 Social Media Marketing Practices

Social Media Marketing (SMM) Practices were measured using five variables; Bonding Social Capital, Bridging Social Capital, Electronic Word-of-Mouth, A Friend of a Friend and Online Advertisement. Each variable has been measured using five direct statements (items or questions). Each question (statement) measures a certain aspect concerning that variable. Respondents reflect their level of agreement on each statement by using a Likert Scale (1-5), as mentioned above.

5.4.1.1 Social Capital – SC

Social Capital (SC) was measured by two variables (constructs): Social Capital Bonding (SCBN) and Social Capital Bridging (SCBR). Each variable (SCBN and SCBR) has five direct statements (items or questions).

5.4.1.2 Social Capital Bonding – SCBN

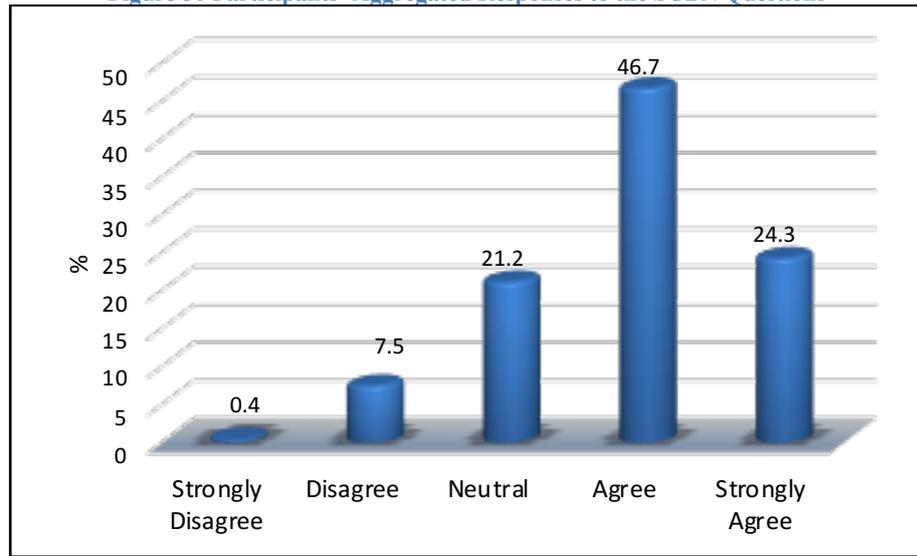
Social Capital Bonding (SCBN) consisted of 5 statements measuring five different aspects of social capital bonding. Items with their descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) are illustrated in Table 33 and figure 50. In general, results show that respondents were positive about SCBN with an aggregate percentage of 71% for “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” compared to only 7.9% for “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree”. The overall average for social capital was 3.87 (more than 3) with standard deviation of 0.8. Item averages are almost the same as they vary between 3.8 and 3.92. This means that participants were positive about Social Capital Bonding. Social Capital statements can be divided into two groups according to their averages. Two statements have means of 3.8 and the other three statements averages were 3.9 or more. This means that participants are less positive towards finding people they may trust or feel comfortable with than the other three statements.

Table 33 Descriptive Statistics for SCBN and its Statements

Item		Average	St dev
SCBN11	There are several people on the social media and networking websites I trust and some of them can help me to make important decisions and to solve problems.	3.80	0.92
SCBN12	When I feel lonely, there are several people on the social media and networking websites I can talk to and I feel comfortable with them about some personal problems.	3.80	0.92
SCBN13	When I needed emergency financial support or some money, I know someone on the social media and networking websites who can help me and I feel he would share money with me.	3.93	0.84
SCBN14	The people I interact with on social media and	3.92	0.85

	networking websites would put their reputation on the line for me and will be a good job reference for me.		
SCBN15	The people I interact with on social media and networking websites would do any important thing for me and even help me to fight injustice or unfairness.	3.90	0.86
Aggregated Average		3.87	0.80

Figure 50 Participants' Aggregated Responses to the SCBN Questions



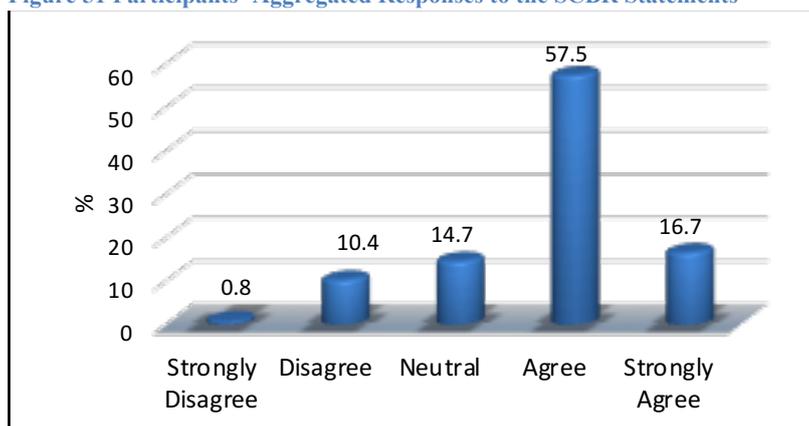
5.4.1.3 Social Capital Bridging – SCBR

Social Capital Bridging (SCBR) consisted of 5 statements measuring five different aspects of social capital bridging. Items with their descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) are illustrated in Table 34 and Figure 51. In general, results show that respondents were positive about SCBR with an aggregate percentage of 74% for “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” compared to only 11.2% for “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree”. The overall average for social capital was 3.79 (more than 3) with standard deviation of 0.71. Item averages are almost the same as they vary between 3.72 (statement 3) and 3.84 (statement 1).

Table 34 Descriptive Statistics for SCBR and its Statements

Item		Average	St dev
SCBR21	Interacting with people on social media and networking websites makes me interested in things that happen outside my city and about new things I did not know before.	3.84	0.90
SCBR22	Interacting with people on social media and networking websites makes me want to try new things or buy new things.	3.83	0.88
SCBR23	Talking with people on social media and networking websites makes me curious about new places in the world and ideas for me	3.72	0.90
SCBR24	Interacting with people on social media and networking websites makes me feel connected to the bigger picture of what is going on and makes me feel that everyone in the world is connected with others.	3.81	0.82
SCBR25	Interacting with people on social media and networking websites introduces me to new people to talk to, and I come into contact with new people all the time to form a community where I feel willing to spend time to support this community and their activities occurring on social media and networking websites.	3.75	0.85
Aggregated Average		3.79	0.71

Figure 51 Participants' Aggregated Responses to the SCBR Statements



Social Capital Bonding and Bridging have almost the same attitude from participants with overall averages of 3.87 and 3.79 (respectively). So, the total Social Capital construct has an aggregated average of 3.83, which is the average of social capital bonding and bridging.

5.4.2 Electronic Word-Of-Mouth – EWOM

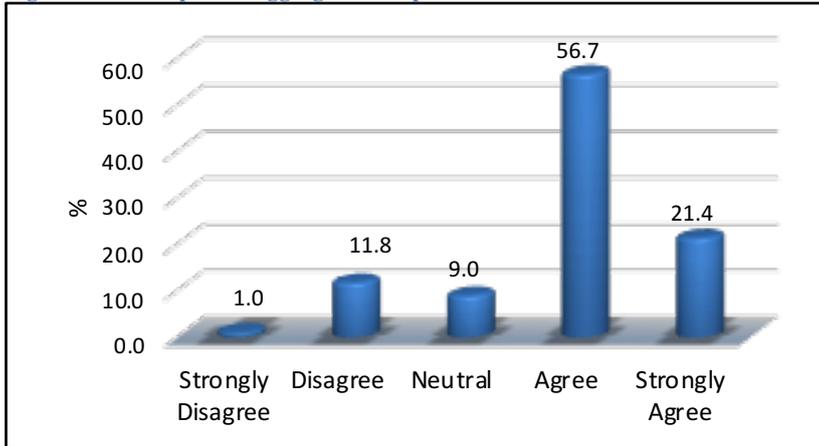
Descriptive statistics for EWOM statements are summarised in Table 35 and Figure 52. Results indicate that respondents were positive about EWOM with an aggregate percentage of 78.1 for “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” compared to only 12.8% for “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree.” The overall average was 3.86 with standard deviation of 0.86. Averages ranged from 3.75 to 3.95. The minimum average was for statement 4 and the maximum was for statement 1.

Table 35 Descriptive Statistics for EWOM and its Statements

Item		Average	St dev
EWM31	The information given by my friends about brands on social media and networking websites is very positive, valued and tells me about products and services of brands.	3.95	0.94
EWM32	I know someone on social media and networking websites who has had experiences with the brands of products and services.	3.88	0.87
EWM33	Many of my friends and relatives recommended me and talked to me about purchasing some brand products they see on the social media and networking websites.	3.84	0.88
EWM34	I inspire and share with my friends and relatives when we give each other tips and advice about brand products or services on social media and networking websites.	3.75	0.93
EWM35	When I receive key information or opinion from a friend about a brand on social media and networking websites, I take it into account when I decide to purchase a product or services of the brand.	3.86	0.97

Aggregated Average	3.86	0.86
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Figure 52 Participants' Aggregated Responses to the EWOMStatements



5.4.3 Friend-Of-a Friend – FOAF

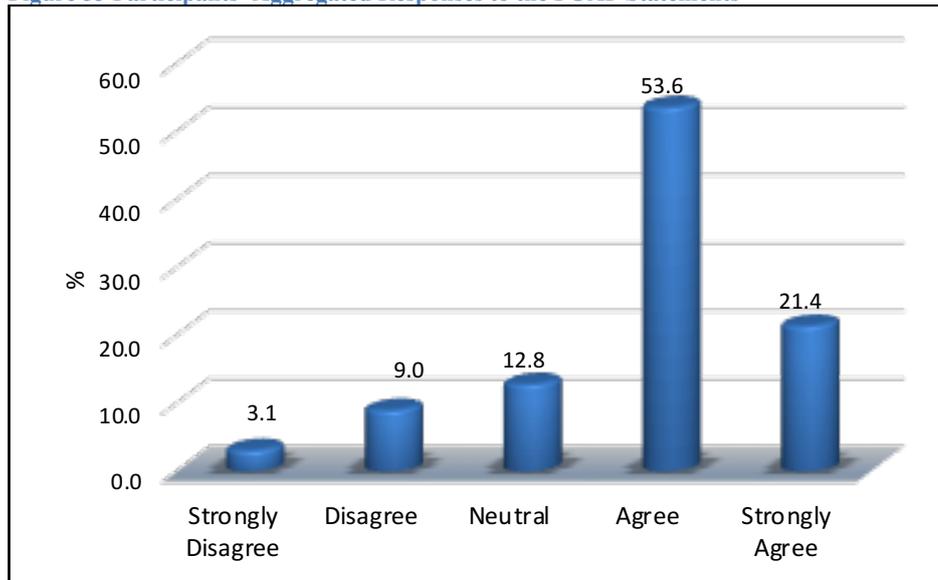
Descriptive statistics for FOAF statements are summarised in Table 36 and Figure 53. Results indicate that respondents were positive about FOAF with an aggregate percentage of 75% for “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”, compared to only 12.1% for “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree.” The overall average was 3.81 and average ranges from 3.66 to 3.91. The minimum average was for statement 5 and the maximum average was for statement 3.

Table 36 Descriptive Statistics for FOAF and its Statements

Item		Average	St dev
FOF1	When I receive related information or opinion from a friend about a brand on social media and networking websites, I pass it to my other contacts on those sites	3.81	1.05
FOF2	I do believe that my friends on social media and networking websites will trust and pay attention to the opinions of my other friends on those websites	3.85	0.94
FOF3	I usually give advice, information or my experiences about brands to people who are friends of my friends on social media and networking websites.	3.91	0.85
FOF4	I usually accept and pay attention to advice, information or experiences about brands sent by some friends of my	3.84	1.01

	friends on social media and networking websites.		
FOF5	My decisions and opinions about services and products usually may change and be affected by advice, information or experiences about brands sent by some friends of my friends on social media and networking websites.	3.66	0.98
Aggregated Average		3.81	0.88

Figure 53 Participants' Aggregated Responses to the FOAF Statements



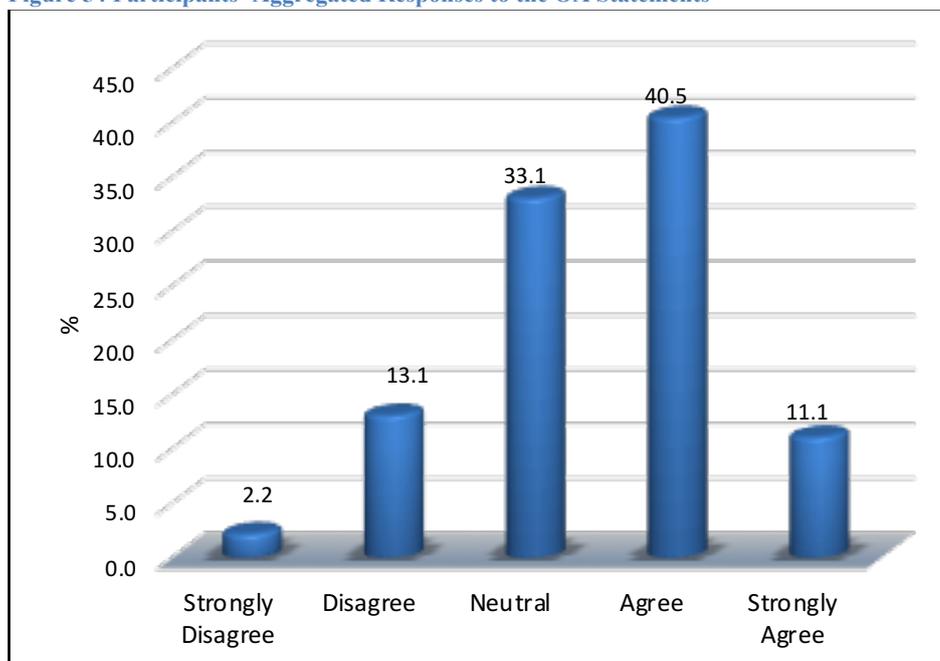
5.4.4 Online Advertisement – OA

Descriptive statistics for OA statements are summarised in Table 37 and Figure 54. Results indicate that respondents were slightly positive about OA with an aggregate percentage of 51.1% for “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”, compared to only 15.3% for “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree” with a high percentage (33.1%) of “Neutral”. Overall average was 3.45 Averages ranges from 3.29 to 3.66. The minimum average was for statement 5 and the maximum average was for statement 2.

Table 37 Descriptive Statistics for OA and its Statements

Item		Average	St dev
ADV51	The advertisements on social media and networking websites for brands and products I know are frequently and repeatedly seen.	3.49	0.94
ADV52	The advertisements on social media and networking websites for brands and products I know meet my expectations.	3.66	0.97
ADV53	The advertisements on social media and networking websites for brands and products I know are very attractive and encouraging.	3.36	0.92
ADV54	The advertisements on social media and networking websites for brands and products I know perform well in comparison to products or services not on such websites.	3.46	0.88
ADV55	The advertisements on social media and networking websites for brands and products I know are extensive and wide; I therefore, can easily remember them.	3.29	0.89
Aggregated Average		3.45	0.84

Figure 54 Participants' Aggregated Responses to the OA Statements



The aggregated average for all Social Media Marketing variables (SCBN, SCBR, EWOM, FOAF and OA) is 3.75 with standard deviation of 0.56, which indicates that our participants have a positive attitude towards SMM. SMM variables' averages range between 3.54 (OA) and 3.86 for SC and EWM, while FOAF average was 3.81. This means that most variables had a positive attitude from respondents although OA has the least positive attitude (least mean).

5.4.5 Brand Knowledge – BK

Brand Knowledge (BK) is measured by four variables (constructs): Brand Image, Trust, Loyalty and Awareness. Each construct consisted of 5 items (questions).

5.4.5.1 Brand Image – BI

Brand Image is measured with 5 statements related to different aspects of brand image questions (items). Items with their averages and standard deviations are illustrated in Table 38. Aggregated participant responses are also summarized in Figure 55.

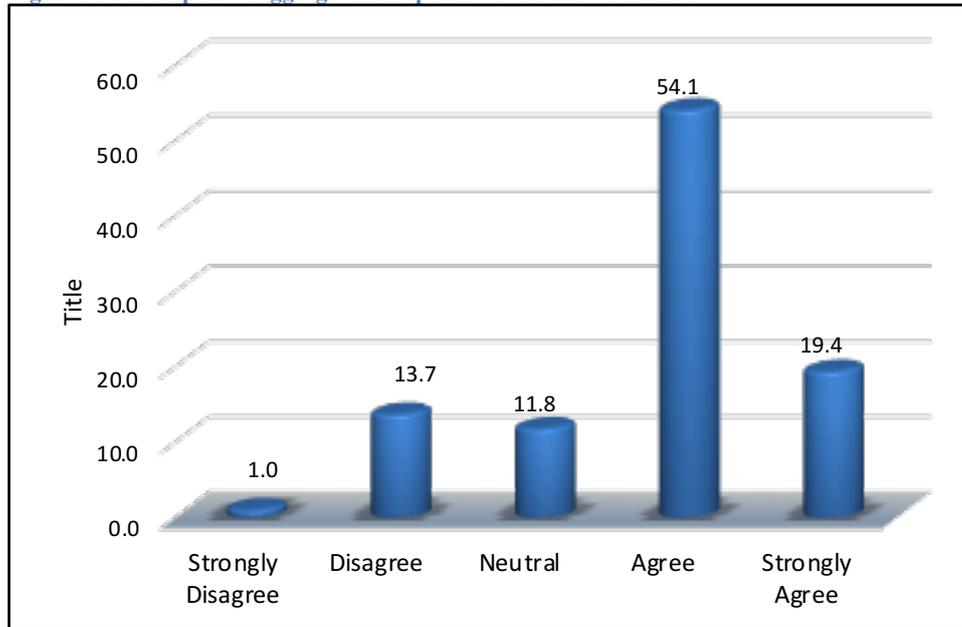
Results show that respondents' attitude was positive towards BI statements with an aggregated percentage of 73.5 for "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" compared to only 14.7% for "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree", as shown in Figure 55. The high percentage of participants who "Strongly Agree, 5" and "Agree, 4" resulted in a high aggregated average of these statements with an average of 3.77 (more than 3) and standard deviation of 0.77. Averages vary within a very small range, between 3.71 (statement 4) and 3.88 (statement 1).

Table 38 Descriptive Statistics for BI and its Items

Item		Average	St dev
SCD11	The brands and products on social media and networking websites make me quickly remember the logo image of the company and products.	3.88	0.85
SCD12	The brands and products on social media and networking websites encourage me to share any information about them with my friends and family for more publicity.	3.73	0.90
SCD13	The brands and products on social media and networking	3.80	0.91

	websites are aligned with my values and beliefs, and make me feel I have a better lifestyle and greater self-esteem with more respect for myself on those websites.		
SCD14	The brand and products on social media and networking websites improve the reputation and image of the quality of those brands and products with a very fashionable and nice look.	3.71	1.02
SCD15	The brand and products on social media and networking websites provide good value to customers and make them favour those brands and products.	3.74	1.04
Aggregated Average		3.77	0.77

Figure 55 Participants' Aggregated Responses to the BI Statements



5.4.5.2 Brand Loyalty – BL

Brand loyalty (BL) is measured with 5 statements relating to different aspects of brand loyalty. Items with their averages and standard deviations are illustrated in Table 39. Aggregated participant responses are also summarised in Figure 56.

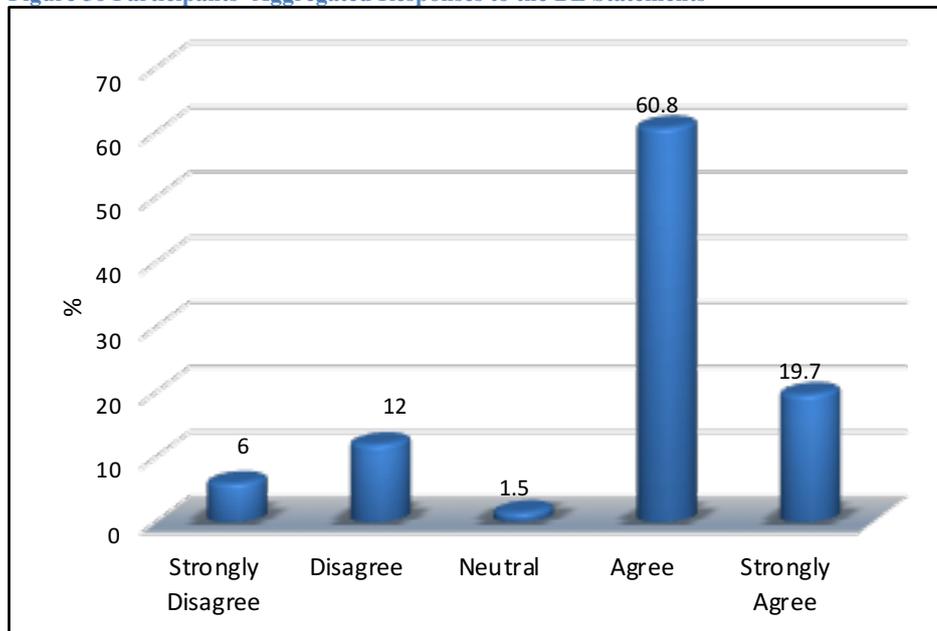
Results show that respondents' attitude was positive towards BL statements with an aggregated percentage of 80.5% for "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" compared to only 18% for "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree", as shown in Figure 56. The high percentage of participants who "Strongly Agree, 5" and "Agree, 4" resulted in a high aggregated average of these statements with an average of 3.76 (more than 3) and standard deviation of 0.89. Averages vary within a very small range, between 3.71 (statement 4) and 3.88 (statement 1).

Table 39 Descriptive Statistics for BL and its Items

Item		Average	St dev
BRL71	I select the brands and products on social media and networking websites because I feel that they are the best choice for me among other brands and products.	3.88	0.98
BRL72	I would not switch to a competitor on social media and networking websites or in the marketplace, even if I had a	3.77	0.89

	problem with the brand I am buying presently.		
BRL73	I am committed to the brands and products on social media and networking websites and I consider myself to be a loyal supporter of those brands and products.	3.67	1.15
BRL74	If I had to buy over again a similar brand or product then I would choose the same brands and products I know on social media and networking websites.	3.71	1.22
BRL75	I intend to continue buying from the same brands and products appearing on social media and networking websites with the same services and products.	3.76	1.15
Aggregated Average		3.76	0.89

Figure 56 Participants' Aggregated Responses to the BL Statements



5.4.5.3 Brand Trust – BT

Brand Trust (BT) is measured with 5 statements related to different aspects of brand trust. Items with their averages and standard deviations are illustrated in Table 40. Aggregated participant responses are also summarised in Figure 57.

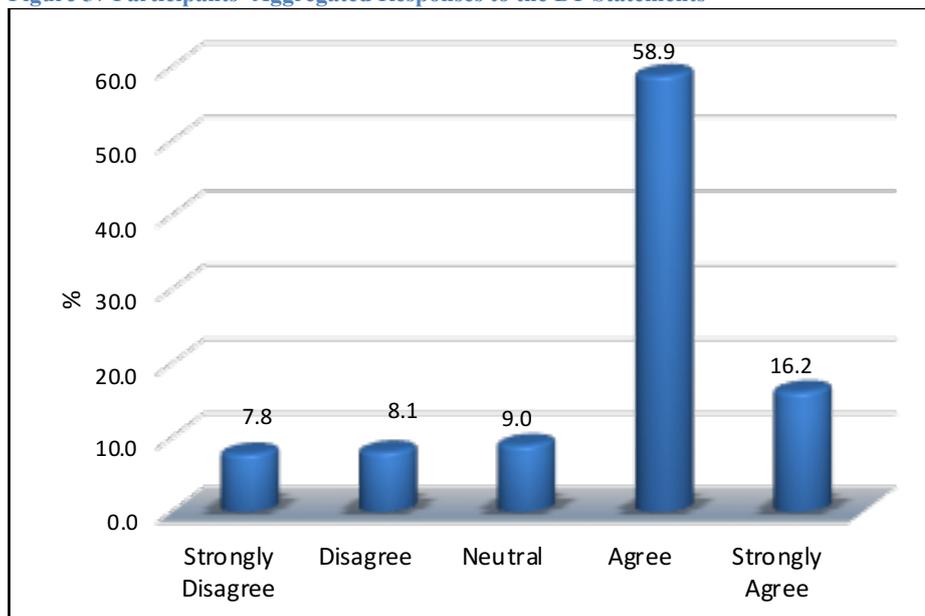
Results show that respondents' attitude was positive towards BT statements with an aggregated percentage of 75.1% for "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" compared to only 15.9% for "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree", as shown in Figure 57. The high percentage of participants who "Strongly Agree, 5" and "Agree, 4" resulted in a high aggregated average of these statements with an average of 3.67 (more than 3) and

standard deviation of 0.86. Averages vary within a very small range, between 3.62 (statement 3) and 3.74 (statement 1).

Table 40 Descriptive Statistics for BT and its Items

Item		Average	St dev
BRT81	I usually trust the products I buy and I feel confident in the brands I see on social media and networking websites.	3.74	1.05
BRT82	I usually trust the manufacturers of the products I buy and the brands on social media and networking websites because they are always honest and sincere in addressing my concerns	3.67	0.90
BRT83	I usually trust the individuals selling brands and products as they provide reliable information about the products and brands on social media and networking websites.	3.62	0.95
BRT84	The brands on social media and networking websites usually deliver what I expect and what I was promised.	3.71	1.18
BRT85	The brands and products on social media and networking websites will never disappoint me and will make me more satisfied at all times.	3.63	1.28
Aggregated Average		3.67	0.86

Figure 57 Participants' Aggregated Responses to the BT Statements



5.4.5.4 Brand Awareness – BA

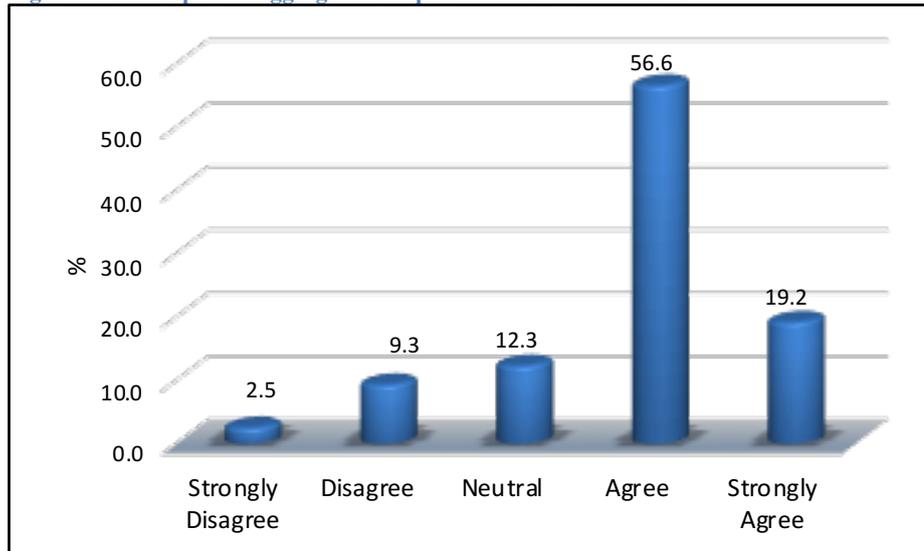
Brand Awareness (BA) is measured with 5 statements related to different aspects of brand awareness. Items with their averages and standard deviations, are illustrated in Table 41. Aggregated participant responses are also summarised in Figure 58.

Results show that respondents' attitude was positive towards BA statements with an aggregated percentage of 75.8% for "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" compared to only 11.8% for "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree", as shown in Figure 58. The high percentage of participants who "Strongly Agree, 5" and "Agree, 4" resulted in a high aggregated average of these statements with an average of 3.81 (more than 3) and standard deviation of 0.73. Averages vary between 3.68 (statement 3) and 4.00 (statement 1).

Table 41 Descriptive Statistics for BA and its Items

Item		Average	St dev
BRA91	I am aware of one or more of the brands on social media and networking websites among other brands.	4.00	0.85
BRA92	Recognition of the brands on social media and networking websites is important for me when choosing a new brand for the first time.	3.77	0.85
BRA93	The social media and networking websites enable me to be aware of available brands.	3.68	1.00
BRA94	Some characteristics of one or more of the brands on social media and networking websites come to my mind quickly and I can remember them quickly.	3.82	0.91
BRA95	I can differentiate between brands on social media and networking websites and this helps me to be aware of my favourite brands.	3.76	1.04
Aggregated Average		3.81	0.73

Figure 58 Participants' Aggregated Responses to the BA Statements



Results showed that participants have a positive attitude towards Brand Knowledge with an overall average of 3.75 and standard deviation of 0.62. The four variables of BK vary within a very small range with a minimum average of 3.67 for BT, followed by BL and BI with almost the same average (3.76 and 3.77, respectively), and a maximum average of 3.81 for BA.

5.4.6 Purchase Intention – PI

Purchase Intension (PI) was measured using five items (questions) as listed in Table 42. Results show that participants were positive about the PI factor with an aggregate percentage of 78.1% with “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” compared to only 7.9% for “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree”, as shown in Figure 59.

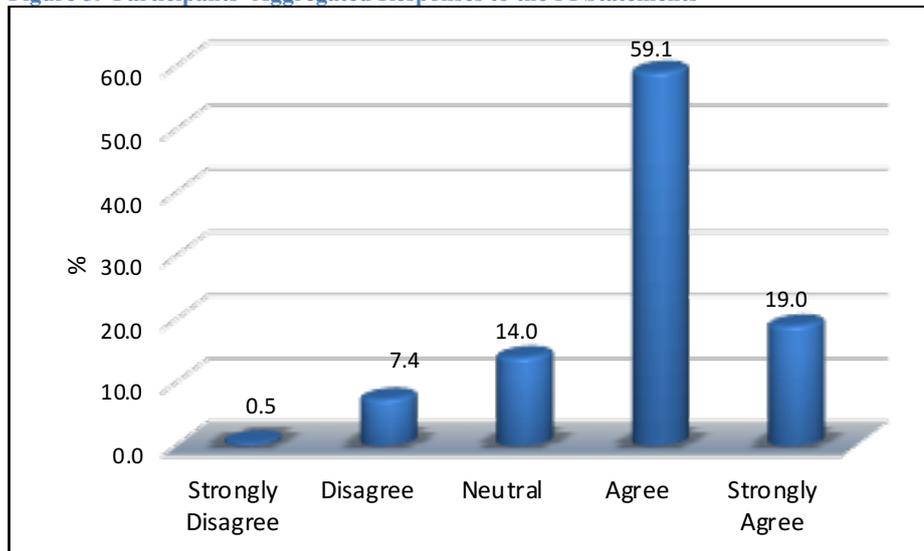
The high percentage of “Agree, 4” and “Strongly Agree, 5” (78.1%) is reflected in an aggregated average of 3.89 (more than 3) and a standard deviation of 0.86. The highest PI statement average was 3.95 (statement 5) and the lowest average was 3.80 (statement 4).

Table 42 Descriptive Statistics for PI and its items

Item		Average	St Dev
PIN101	I intend to buy some of their brands because I am a member of those brands on social media and networking websites.	3.94	0.74

PIN102	I have arranged via SNSs communication with the vendor to inspect and perform a trail test run of the product in person at the site of the vendor.	3.83	0.75
PIN103	I have already bought the products or services of the brands online because I am a member of the brand on social media and networking websites.	3.91	0.86
PIN104	I will frequently use social media and networking sites in the future to find the brands I plan to buy.	3.80	0.84
PIN105	I feel it is worthwhile for me to use social media and networking websites in the future for purchasing some of the products or services of the brands.	3.95	0.86
Aggregated Average		3.89	0.86

Figure 59 Participants' Aggregated Responses to the PI Statements



5.4.7 Customer Behaviour – CB

Customer Behaviour (CB) is measured with 5 statements related to different aspects of customer behaviour. Items with their averages and standard deviations, are illustrated in Table 43. Aggregated participant responses are also summarised in Figure 60.

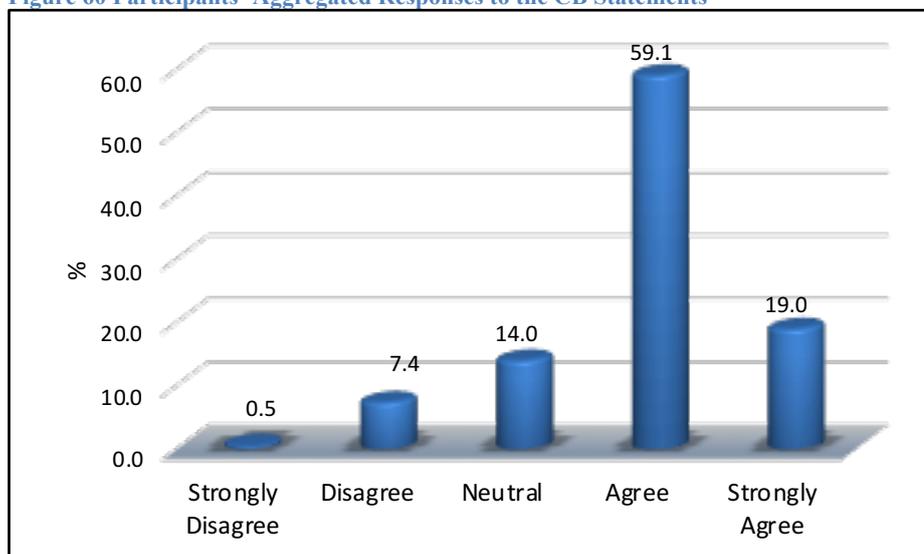
Results show that respondents' attitude was positive towards CB statements with an aggregated percentage of 78.1% for "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" compared to only 7.9% for "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree", as shown in Figure 60. The high percentage of participants who "Strongly Agree, 5" and "Agree, 4" resulted in a high aggregated average of these statements with an average of 3.95 (more than 3) and

standard deviation of 0.65. Averages varies between 3.78 (statement 3) and 4.07 (statement 5).

Table 43 Descriptive Statistics for CB and its Items

Item		Average	St Dev
BRA91	It is likely that I will read and consider the marketing advertisements by the brands again on social media and networking websites.	3.95	0.80
BRA92	I expect that the marketing on social media and networking websites will make it easier to reach me as a potential consumer in the future.	4.05	0.79
BRA93	I expect to see marketing advertisements on social media and networking websites while I am engaging in other online entertainments and enjoyments.	3.78	0.69
BRA94	I expect marketing on social media and networking websites should not be taken lightly, and brands should consider this trend as a major and strategic investment.	3.89	0.81
BRA95	I feel my loyalty is strong towards a brand on social media and networking websites with a commitment to re-purchase products or services continuously in future.	4.07	0.84
Aggregated Average		3.95	0.65

Figure 60 Participants' Aggregated Responses to the CB Statements



5.4.8 Actual Purchase – AP

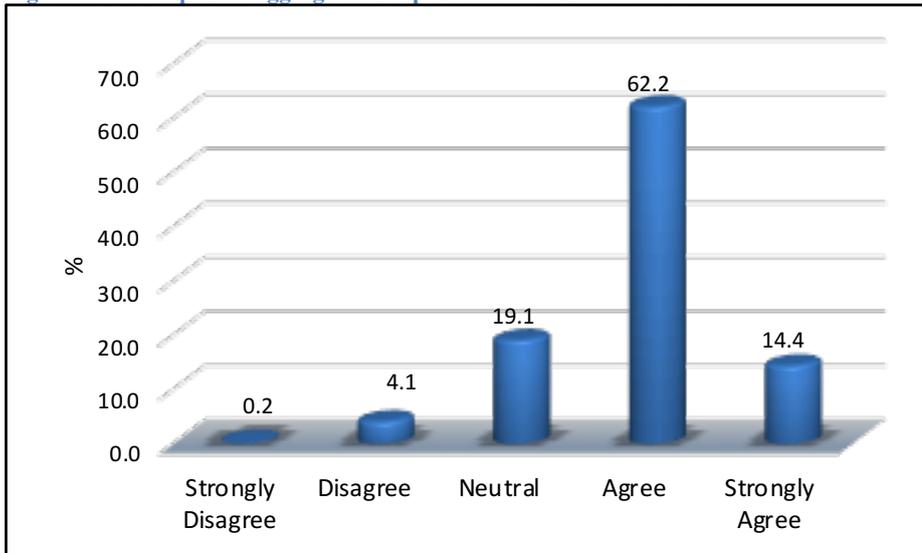
Customer Behaviour (AP) is measured with 5 statements related to different aspects of customer behaviour. Items with their averages and standard deviations are illustrated in Table 44. Aggregated participant responses are also summarised in Figure 61.

Results show that respondents' attitude was positive towards AP statements with an aggregated percentage of 76.6% for "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" compared to only 4.3% for "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree", as shown in Figure 61. The high percentage of "Strongly Agree, 5" and "Agree, 4" resulted in a high aggregated average of these statements with an average of 3.86 (more than 3) and standard deviation of 0.55. Averages vary between 3.76 (statements 1&2) and 4.02 (statement 3).

Table 44 Descriptive Statistics for AP and its Items

Item		Average	St Dev
BRA91	It is likely that I will read and consider the marketing advertisements by the brands again on social media and networking websites.	3.76	0.68
BRA92	I expect that the marketing on social media and networking websites will make it easier to reach me as a potential consumer in the future.	3.76	0.65
BRA93	I expect to see marketing advertisements on social media and networking websites while I am engaging in other online entertainments and enjoyments.	4.02	0.66
BRA94	I expect marketing on social media and networking websites should not be taken lightly, and brands should consider this trend as a major and strategic investment.	3.90	0.73
BRA95	I feel my loyalty is strong towards a brand on social media and networking websites with a commitment to re-purchase products or services continuously in future.	3.87	0.78
Aggregated Average		3.86	0.55

Figure 61 Participants' Aggregated Responses to the AP Statements



Chapter Six

INTEGRATED SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING MODEL ASSESSMENT

This Chapter presents the research results on the development of Integrated Social Media Marketing Model (ISMMM), and on the testing of the research hypotheses. The chapter then analyses the impact of moderating variables and multi-group investigations and assesses the relationships and interactions among the factors comprising the ISMMM Model. The results of statistical techniques including Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and the results of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) are provided in this chapter to evaluate the research hypotheses. The chapter concludes with an investigation of the effect of demographic variables as moderating variables using multi-group analysis.

6.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Evaluation of the Measurement Model

As recommended by many researchers (Jöreskog, 1993; Anderson and Gerbing, 1988), structural equation modelling was employed to evaluate two models: a measurement model (Confirmatory Factor Analysis, CFA) and a structural model. The measurement model investigates relationships between observed variables and latent variables and tests how reliable and how valid our variables are. According to Holmes-Smith (2001), loading of variables with construct should be at least 0.2 (more than 0.5 signifies high reliability, between 0.3 and 0.5 is moderate and less than 0.3 is poor). No variable was observed with loading less than 0.2.

The structural model investigates and tests both direct and indirect relationships (Schumacker and Lomax, 2010). In the context of the current study, it evaluates and tests our research hypotheses. The AMOS extension to SPSS was used to evaluate and test our main hypotheses between our twelve main latent variables (SCD, SCR, EWM, FOF, OA, BRT, BRL, BRT, BRA, PIN, CBV, APR) and 60 observed variables. Both

the measurement model and the structural model used the Maximum Likelihood Method (MLE) estimation method to estimate model parameters.

Model fitting and estimating parameters was done in two steps. The first was to fit and estimate the parameters of the measurement model, at the same time testing whether the estimated parameters were within the admissible range. These tests include the search for any violation of an assumption as illustrated by, for example, a negative variance, a correlation greater than one, or a non-positive definite correlation matrix (Byrne, 2001). Our results when performing CFA for all variables showed that no assumptions had been violated.

The second phase consisted of testing our main research hypotheses while at the same time testing our model's overall goodness of fit. Relationships and associations have statistical significance if the test statistics (t-values) are greater than the critical values (1.96, at $\alpha = 0.05$ level). Significance can also be decided on p-values ($p < 0.05$ is considered to be significant), after which the significant relationship is retained and all non-significant relationships can be removed from the model (Holmes-Smith, 2001).

To check the goodness of fit of our models, we employ goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit (AGFI), comparative fit index (CFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and normed fit index (NFI) which are among the tests most frequently used to assess a structural model's quality. A good-fitting model requires that the chi-square test result be non-significant and the model-implied covariance matrix not significantly different from the observed data matrix (Hair et al., 2012). The cut-off values of 0.9 for GFI, AGFI, CFI, NFI and RFI. RMSEA values should be less than 0.08, and χ^2 / df values less than 3 (or 5 sometimes) suggest acceptable fit of a model (Hair et al., 2012).

6.2 Model Assessment

Mathematical models are based on a proposed research model which in this case is illustrated in the formulas 1.1 to 1.7 in Figure 62. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) simultaneously solves the following regression equations, which represent our main research hypotheses:

$$SOC = \beta_{12}Brid + \beta_{13}Bond + \varepsilon_1 \quad (1.1)$$

$$SMMP = \beta_{21}SOC + \beta_{22}EWOM + \beta_{23}FOAF + \beta_{24}OA + \varepsilon_2 \quad (1.2)$$

$$BK = \beta_{31}Image + \beta_{32}Trust + \beta_{33}LOY + \beta_{34}AWA + \varepsilon_3 \quad (1.3)$$

$$BK = \beta_{41}SMMP + \varepsilon_4 \quad (1.4)$$

$$PI = \beta_{51}SMMP + \beta_{52}BK + \varepsilon_5 \quad (1.5)$$

$$CB = \beta_{61}PI + \beta_{61}BK + \varepsilon_6 \quad (1.6)$$

$$AP = \beta_{81}CB + \varepsilon_7 \quad (1.7)$$

Error terms $\boldsymbol{\varepsilon} = \varepsilon_1, \varepsilon_2, \dots, \varepsilon_7$ are independent and normally distributed random variables with zero mean. $\theta_\varepsilon = E(\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}')$ is the covariance matrix of structural disturbances. The coefficients β_{ij} are the regression coefficients among latent variables.

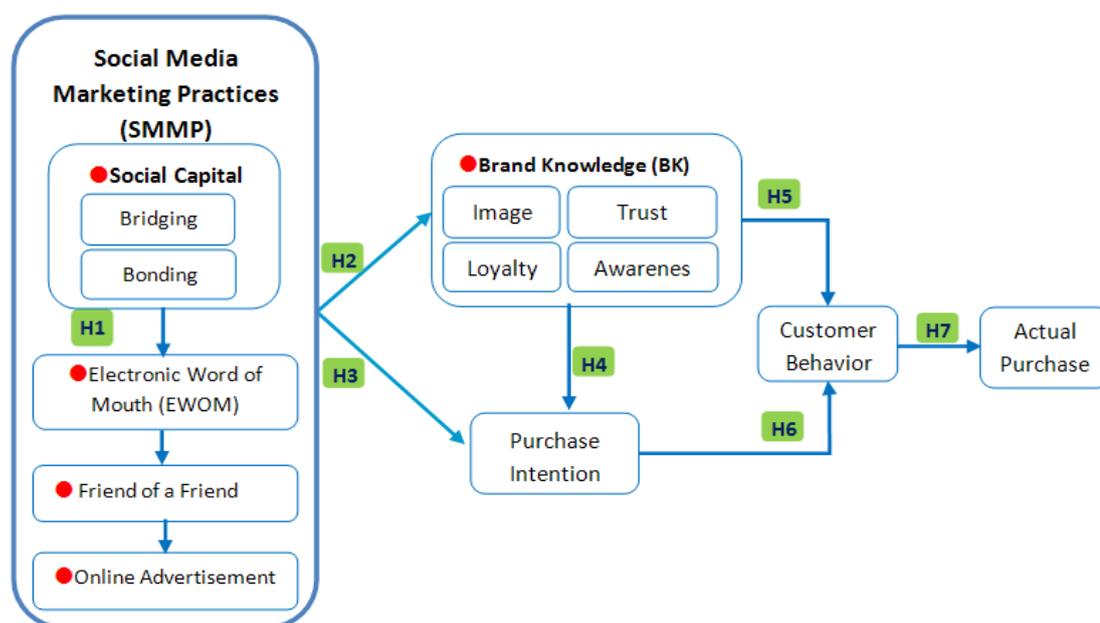
Regression model hypotheses (Null and Alternative Hypothesis) with respect to our equations are:

- **Equation 1.1:** $H_0: \beta_{12} = \beta_{13} = 0$ vs $H_1: \beta_{1i} \neq 0$, for at least one i . The hypothesis describes the regression relationship between Social Capital (CT) and both Bridging and Bonding. If the null hypothesis cannot be rejected then Bonding and Bridging don't construct social capital. However, if it is rejected Bridging or/and Bonding construct social capital. This equation represents our test H1 (see Table 48).
- **Equation 1.2:** $H_0: \beta_{2j} = 0$ vs $H_1: \beta_{2j} \neq 0$, for at least one j . The hypothesis describes the regression relationship between Social Media Marketing (SMM) Practices and the 5 variables (Bridging, Bonding, EWOM, FOAF and OA). The equation tests whether the 5 variables construct the SMM component. Similarly, if we cannot reject the Null Hypothesis H_0 , then we cannot construct SMMP. This equation tests H1a.

- **Equation 1.3:** $H_0: \beta_{2k} = 0$ vs $H_1: \beta_{2k} \neq 0$, for at least one k . The hypothesis describes the regression relationship between Brand Knowledge (BK) and the 4 variables (Image, Trust, Loyalty and Awareness). The equation tests whether the 4 variables construct the BK component. Similarly, if we cannot reject the Null Hypothesis H_0 , then we cannot construct BK.
- **Equation 1.4:** $H_0: \beta_{41} = 0$ vs $H_1: \beta_{41} \neq 0$. The hypothesis tests whether there is a relationship between Brand Knowledge (BK) and SMMP. This equation tests H3 (H3a – H3d).
- **Equation 1.5:** $H_0: \beta_{51} = \beta_{52} = 0$ vs $H_1: \text{at least one } \beta_{5l} \neq 0$. It tests whether there is a relationship between Purchase Intension (PI) and SMMP and BK. This equation tests H3 (H3a – H3d) and H4.
- **Equation 1.6:** $H_0: \beta_{61} = \beta_{62} = 0$ vs $H_1: \text{at least one } \beta_{6m} \neq 0$. It tests whether there is a relationship between Customer Behaviour (CB) and BK and PI. This equation tests H5 and H6.
- **Equation 1.7:** $H_0: \beta_{71} = \beta_{72} = 0$ vs $H_1: \text{at least one } \beta_{7m} \neq 0$. It tests whether there is a relationship between Actual Purchasing (AP) and CB. This equation tests H7.

Figure 62 summarises all relationships between our main constructs represented by the equations 1.1 – 1.7. The initial results of model fitting showed a good fit for the data (Model 1) (See Figure 62 and 63). The goodness of fit indicators were good for the initial model with chi-square of 171.18 with 31 degrees of freedom indicating a good fit. A significant chi-square at $p=0.000 < 0.05$, which suggest that the model fitting is only acceptable. The $\chi^2/df = 5.522$ and RMSEA= 0.091 indicated acceptable fit along with other goodness of fit statistics indicators except for AGFI which was slightly less than 0.9 (GFI=0.948; AGFI= 0.890; CFI= 0.966).

Figure 62 Proposed Research Theoretical Framework – Integrated Social Media Marketing Model – ISMMM



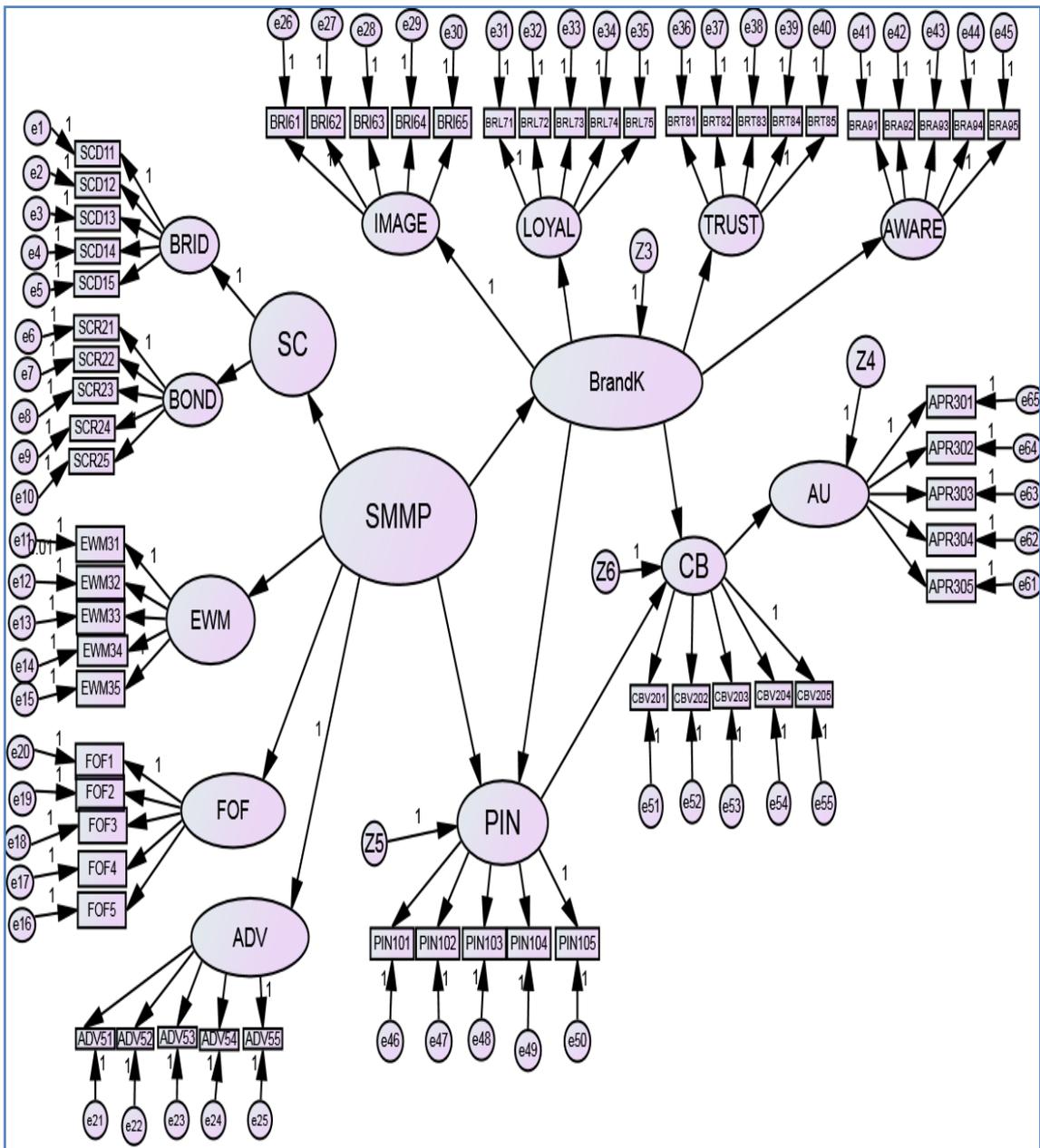
Based on the structural equation modelling results and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) which showed that all variables are significant, no major modification was needed except with modification indices options. Modification indices allow correlation of errors between some error terms, Byrne (2001). In other words, we allow correlation of error terms with a high degree of overlapping contents. The highest correlation was between (EWM, FOF), (FOF, ADV), and (BRI, BRL), etc. The results of a refitted model (Model 2) yielded an excellent fit for the model as illustrated in Table 45.

Table 45 Goodness-of-Fit Indices for Structural Model

Fit Indices	Benchmark	Value
CMIN (χ^2)/DF	< 3	0.987
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)	> 0.9	0.992
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of	<0.08	0.001

Approximation)		
<i>Incremental fit measures</i>		
AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.979
NFI (Normed Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.999
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.999
IFI (Incremental Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.999
RFI (Relative Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.987

Figure 63 Structural Equation Model for Integrated Social Media Marketing Model – ISMMM (Default Model)



6.3 Structural Model and testing Main hypotheses

6.3.1 Structural Equation Modelling and Hypotheses Testing

Based on Goodness of fit indices, the fitted model showed excellent data fitting. The next step was to evaluate the model and test research hypotheses using results obtained from the structural equation model. The structural model evaluates and tests relationships between the latent variables and the constructs. It also identifies direct and indirect relationships between variables which influence changes in the values of other latent variables in the model (Byrne, 2001). The analysis of the hypothesised structural model was conducted by testing the hypothesised model, which specified the main fourteen causal relationships in Table 46 and in the path diagram presented in Figure 63. The standardised path coefficients for the theoretical structural model are presented in Figure 64; all hypothesised paths were significant at $\alpha = 0.01$ as shown in Figure 64.

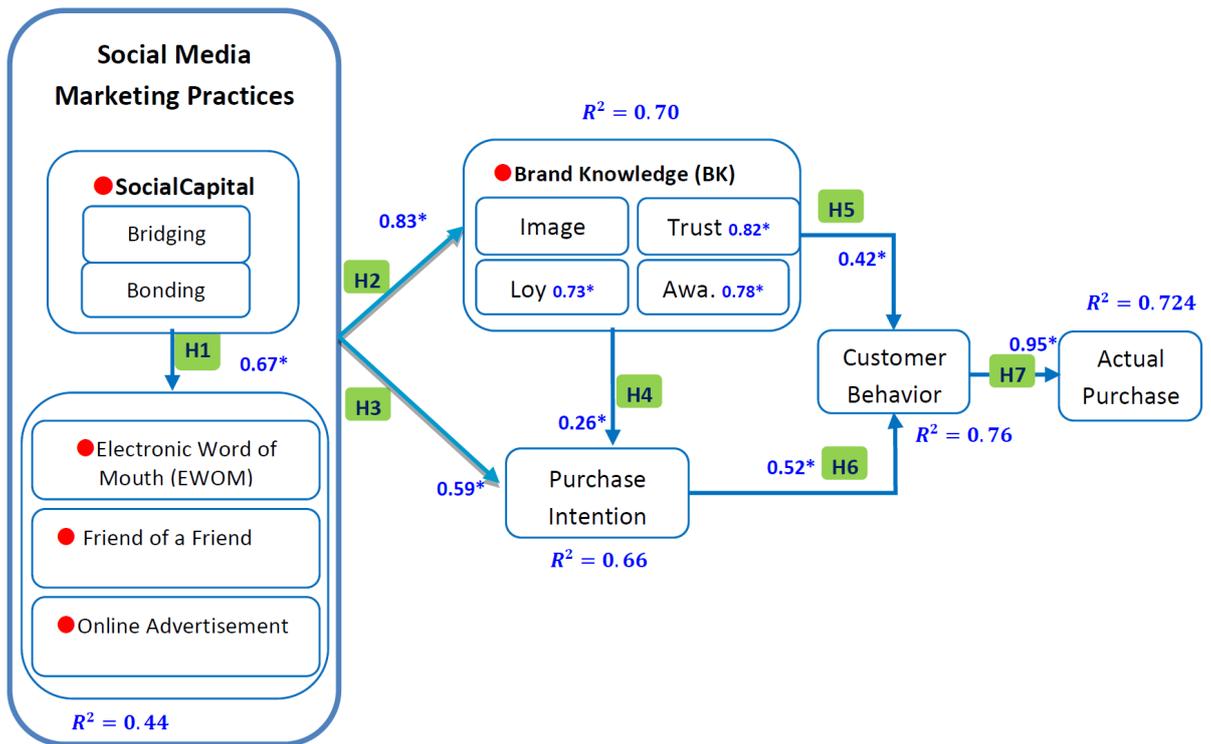
Results show that Bridging and Bonding are both significant with standardised coefficients of 0.92 and 0.22, respectively. Bridging has a standardised coefficient (weight) of 0.92, which is higher than the Bonding weight (0.22) with Social Capital (SC). Social Capital, Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM), Friend of a Friend (FOAF) are significant and positively associated (paths) with Social Media Marketing (SMM). Only Online Advertisement (OA) was not significantly associated with SMM. Paths with weights vary from 0.59 for EWOM to 0.79 for FOAF. The three variables SC, EWOM and FOAF are responsible for 46% of the variation in SMM ($R^2 = 0.44$).

Social Media Marketing (SMM) has a strong and positive association with Brand Knowledge with a standardised coefficient of 0.83 and $R^2 = 0.70$, meaning that Image, Trust, Loyalty, Awareness and SMM explain 72% of the variation in BK. Among the four variables of BK, Trust was the most important variable for BK with the highest standardised coefficient of (0.85) followed by Awareness (0.81), then Loyalty (0.74). The least standardised coefficient (weight) was for Image (0.55).

Sixty six percent (R-squared) of the Purchase Intention (PI) variation has been explained by BK and SMM. Both have significant and positive association with PI with more weight for SMM (0.59) than for BK (0.26).

Purchase Intention and Brand Knowledge explained 76% (R-squared) of Customer Behaviour with more weight for PI (0.55) than BK (0.42). Finally, our model constructs (CB, PI, BK, SMM) explained (directly and indirectly) 72.4% of the Actual Purchase variation with a significant and positive association with Customer Behaviour (standardised coefficient 0.95).

Figure 64 Structural Equation Modelling Results and Hypothesized Path



Notes: * p-value < 0.01

Figure 64 also tests our seven main hypotheses which investigate relationships between factors in the theoretical model. The main hypotheses were also demonstrated using mathematical equations (1.1 -1.7) which were solved simultaneously and tested using SEM. As illustrated above, all coefficients were found to be significant except the path (association) between OA and SMM and the result of our main hypotheses testing is summarised in Table 46.

Table 46 Hypothesis Testing for our Main Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Path	Result
<p>H1: The Saudi SMEs narrowly use Online Advertisement (OA), EWOM, Friend of a Friend (FOAF) and Social Capital as Social Media Marketing (SMM) practices to operate online.</p> <p>H1a: The Bonding and Bridging Social Capital (SC) deployed by Saudi SMEs online have a positive association with the EWOM behaviours of Saudi customers on SNSs</p>	<p>OA→SMM</p> <p>EWOM→SMM</p> <p>FOAF→SMM</p> <p>SC→SMM</p> <p>Bond→SC</p> <p>Brid→SC</p>	<p>Accepted</p> <p>except for OA with SMM</p>
<p>H2: The Social Media Marketing (SMM) practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the level of Brand Knowledge (BK) of Saudi online customers</p> <p>H2a: The Social Capital practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the level of Brand Knowledge of Saudi online customers.</p> <p>H2b: The EWOM practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the level of Brand Knowledge of Saudi online customers.</p> <p>H2c: The FOAF practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the level of Brand Knowledge of Saudi online customers.</p> <p>H2d: The Online Advertisement practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the level of Brand Knowledge of Saudi online customers.</p>	<p>SMM→BK</p> <p>SC→ SMM→BK</p> <p>EWOM→SMM→BK</p> <p>FOAF→SMM→BK</p> <p>OA→SMM→BK</p>	<p>Accepted</p> <p>Accepted</p> <p>Accepted</p> <p>Accepted</p> <p>Rejected</p>
<p>H3: The Social Media Marketing practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the Purchase Intention (PI) of</p>	<p>SMM→PI</p>	<p>Accepted</p>

Saudi online customers.		
H3a: <i>The Social Capital practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the Purchase Intention of Saudi online customers.</i>	SC→SMM→PI	Accepted
H3b: <i>The EWOM practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the Purchase Intention of Saudi online customers.</i>	EWOM→SMM→PI	Accepted
H3c: <i>The FOAF practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the Purchase Intention of Saudi online customers.</i>	FOAF→SMM→PI	Accepted
H3d: <i>The Online Advertisement practices deployed by Saudi SMEs will have a positive association with the Purchase Intention of Saudi online customers.</i>	OA→SMM→PI	Rejected
H4: The Brand Knowledge (BK) (Brand Image, Trust, Loyalty and Awareness) of Saudi SMEs online has a positive association with the Purchase Intention of Saudi customers on SNSs.	BK→PI	Accepted
H5: <i>The Brand Knowledge (Brand Image, Trust, Loyalty and Awareness) of Saudi SMEs online has a positive association with Saudi customers' behaviour on SNSs.</i>	BK→CB	Accepted
H6: <i>The Purchase Intention (PI) of Saudi customers on SNSs has a positive association with Saudi customers' behaviour on SNSs.</i>	PI→CB	Accepted
H7: <i>Saudi customers' behaviour on SNSs has a positive association with the Actual Purchasing (AP) of SMEs' products and services online.</i>	CB→AP	Accepted

6.3.2 Testing Moderating Variable Effects on The Structural Model – Multi-group Analysis

There is a plethora of social media tools including an extensive range of online media that allows individuals to interact with one another (Fernando, 2007). Multi-group analysis using structural equation within AMOS is used to test for differences in

strength of the structural equations modelling the relationship (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999; Byrne, 2001) or, in other words, to assess whether demographic variables moderate the main effects (paths) on the structural model (Byrne, 2001). Four demographic variables; Gender, Age, Education and Nationality are considered as possible moderating variables to test their impact on our structural model and on our six main variables (SMM, BK, PI, CB and AP). Demographic variables are mutually exclusive in nature so that no case can be a member of both groups. The groups were identified in the data set using nominal variable (1, 2) as per Table 47.

Table 47 Demographic variables distribution (Revisited)

Characteristic	Group	No. (%)
Gender	1: Male	412 (74.5%)
	2: Female	141 (25.5%)
Age	1: Less than 25	124 (22.4%)
	1: 25 – 34	283 (51.2%)
	2: 35 – 45	89 (16.1)
	2: 45 – 54	28 (5.1%)
	2: 55 – 65	29(5.2%)
Academic degree	1: High School or Less	45 (8.1%)
	1: Diploma	29 (5.2%)
	2: Bachelor	290 (52.4%)
	2: Masters	189 (34.2%)
Income	1: Less than 200,000 SR*	170 (30.7%)
	1: 200K – 400K SR	169 (30.6%)
	2: 400K – 600K SR	120 (21.7%)
	2: More than 600K SR	94 (17.0%)
Nationality	1: Saudi	369 (75%)
	2: Non-Saudi	138 (25%)

*SR: Saudi Riyals

Multi-group analysis using structural equation modelling requires a large sample size to obtain a reasonable goodness of fit. We therefore need to make sure that there are enough cases in each group, or merge groups with small frequency. For example, the age variable has been classified into 2 groups: less than 35 years old and more than 35 years old. The same merging process has been done for income, classifying the income

variable into two categories: less than 400,000 and more than 400,000. No further group merging was done for Nationality or Gender.

Each demographic variable of interest is tested to see whether it moderates the strength of the relationships or changes the relationships in the model. The null hypothesis (for demographics variables) is that there is no difference between groups with respect to our hypothetical main hypothesis, while the alternative is that there is a statistical difference among the group of respondents according to our measurement weights and structural weights with more interest in focussing on our main hypotheses. The hypotheses are tested using cross-group equality constraints, detecting any significant difference between groups on some model parameters (Hair et al., 2012).

6.3.3 Multi-Group Analysis of Structural Evaluation Model and Path Testing Subject to Gender

The results show the theoretical model to be an adequate fit for our data by gender based on the goodness of fit criteria. Some of these indicators were on the border of the accepted threshold as illustrated in Table 48 highlights similarities and differences between the male and female groups subject to our main hypothesis (paths).

Table 48 Goodness-of-fit Indices for Structural Model – By Gender

Fit Indices	Benchmark	Value
CMIN (χ^2)/DF	< 3 or 5	4.17
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)	> 0.9	0.975
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	<0.08	0.084
<i>Incremental fit measures</i>		
AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.862
NFI (Normed Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.961
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.970
IFI (Incremental Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.970
RFI (Relative Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.838

Multi-group analysis results indicate that two measurements are significantly different from the model. In other words, some of the paths (associations) are significantly different in the strength of the relationships among our main variables. Significant paths

are in **bold font**. In the first set of paths (associations) where Z-scores are positive, Females are significantly higher than Males. This means that Females are significantly higher than Males in all of these associations (paths). With positively significant paths numbered according to path number, the right hand column of Table 49 is as follows:

- (Social Capital → Social Media Marketing Practice); significant for both genders.
- (Social Media Marketing Practice → Brand Knowledge); significant for both genders
- (Brand Knowledge → Purchase Intention); significant for females only
- (Brand Knowledge → Customer Behaviour); significant for both genders
- (Brand Knowledge → Brand Loyalty); significant for both genders

The second group of paths (with negative Z-scores), shows Males to be statistically and significantly higher than Females in terms of association between variables. The negative paths are as follows:

- (Social Media Marketing Practice → Purchase Intention), significant for both genders;
- (Purchase Intention → Customer Behaviour), significant for both genders;
- (Customer Behaviour → Actual Purchase), significant for both genders.

Table 49 Testing Measurement Weights between Male and Female Respondents

			Male		Female		z-score	Path Number
			Estimate	P	Estimate	P		
SMMP	<---	SC	0.681	0.000	0.973	0.000	2.034**	1
BK	<---	SMMP	0.313	0.000	0.645	0.000	4.285***	2
PI	<---	SMMP	0.467	0.000	-0.258	0.024	-5.514***	3
PI	<---	BK	-0.121	0.374	1.655	0.000	9.086***	4
CB	<---	PI	0.388	0.000	-1.577	0.091	-2.105**	5
CB	<---	BK	0.293	0.000	3.125	0.009	2.357**	6
AP	<---	CB	1.003	0.000	0.679	0.000	-5.362***	7
BRI	<---	BK	0.466	0.000	0.477	0.000	0.080	8
BRL	<---	BK	0.648	0.000	0.982	0.000	2.455**	9
BRT	<---	BK	1.074	0.000	1.221	0.000	0.929	10
EWM	<---	SMMP	0.386	0.000	0.718	0.000	2.872***	11

FOF	<----	SMMP	0.671	0.000	0.796	0.000	1.330	12
OA	<----	SMMP	-0.028	0.755	-0.053	0.565	-0.193	13

Notes: *** p-value < 0.01; ** p-value < 0.05; * p-value < 0.10

6.3.4 Multi-Group Analysis of Structural Evaluation Model and Path Testing Subject to Age Group

The results show that the theoretical model was adequate for our data both for age group less than 34 and age group more than 34 according to the goodness of fit criteria. They were within the acceptable values of 0.9 except for AGFI and RFI which were very close to the commonly acceptable values of 0.90 as shown in Table 50.

Table 50 Goodness-of-fit Indices for Structural Model – By Age Group

Fit Indices	Benchmark	Value
CMIN (χ^2)/DF	< 3 or 5	3.67
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)	> 0.9	0.982
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	<0.08	0.077
<i>Incremental fit measures</i>		
AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.876
NFI (Normed Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.972
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.979
IFI (Incremental Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.970
RFI (Relative Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.838

Multi-group analysis results indicate that there are some differences in the strength of model paths between the participants from two age groups. In the first set of paths (associations), the older age group (≥ 35) is significantly higher than the younger age group (< 35). Z-scores for the difference between the two age groups are positive meaning that the older age group is significantly higher than the younger age group in these associations (paths). Positive difference in paths numbered in the first column from the right in the Table 51 are as follows:

- (Purchase Intension \rightarrow Customer Behaviour), significant for both age groups;
- (Brand Knowledge \rightarrow Brand Loyalty): significant for both age groups;
- (Social Media Marketing Practice \rightarrow Friend of a Friend): significant for both groups.

The second group of paths (with negative Z-score) means that participants in the younger age group are statistically and significantly higher than participants in the older age group in terms of association between variables. The negative paths are as follows:

- (Social Capital → Social Media Marketing Practice); significant for both age groups;
- (Social Media Marketing Practice → Brand Knowledge); significant for both age groups;
- (Social Media Marketing Practice → Purchase Intention), significant for both groups;
- (Brand Knowledge → Purchase Intention); significant only for young group;
- (Brand Knowledge → Customer Behaviour); significant for both age groups;
- (Customer Behaviour → Actual Purchase), significant for both age groups;
- (Brand Knowledge → Brand Image), significant for both age groups.

Table 51 Testing measurement weights between Less than 35 years old group and >=35 years

			Young "<35"		Old ">=35"		z-score	Path Number
			Estimate	P	Estimate	P		
SMMP	<---	SC	0.864	0.000	0.240	0.000	-6.889***	1
BK	<---	SMMP	0.565	0.000	0.091	0.001	-9.889***	2
PI	<---	SMMP	0.392	0.000	0.092	0.003	-3.342***	3
PI	<---	BK	0.429	0.001	0.003	0.969	-2.72***	4
CB	<---	PI	0.450	0.000	0.610	0.000	2.852***	5
CB	<---	BK	0.516	0.000	0.340	0.000	-2.171**	6
AP	<---	CB	0.834	0.000	0.622	0.000	-3.517***	7
BRI	<---	BK	0.846	0.000	-0.998	0.000	-6.294***	8
BRL	<---	BK	1.072	0.000	2.434	0.000	5.11***	9
BRT	<---	BK	1.274	0.000	0.946	0.000	-1.919*	10
EWM	<---	SMMP	0.544	0.000	0.920	0.002	1.239	11
FOF	<---	SMMP	0.750	0.000	1.706	0.000	2.762***	12
OA	<---	SMMP	-0.025	0.667	0.327	0.189	1.377	13

Notes: *** p-value < 0.01; ** p-value < 0.05; * p-value < 0.10

6.3.5 Multi-Group Analysis of Structural Evaluation Model and Path Testing Subject to Education Level

The results show that the theoretical model was adequate for our data subject to education levels (Diploma or Less and Bachelor degree or more) according to the goodness of fit criteria. They were within the acceptable values of 0.9 except for AGFI and RFI which were very close to the commonly acceptable values of 0.90 as shown in Table 52.

Table 52 Goodness-of-fit Indices for Structural Model – By Education Level

Fit Indices	Benchmark	Value
CMIN (χ^2)/DF	< 3 or 5	4.98
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)	> 0.9	0.944
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	<0.08	0.085
<i>Incremental fit measures</i>		
AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.831
NFI (Normed Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.949
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.959
IFI (Incremental Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.959
RFI (Relative Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.874

Multi-group analysis results indicate that there are some differences in the strength of model paths between the participants from two age groups. In the first set of paths (associations), the "diploma or less" group is significantly higher than "Bachelor or more"; their Z –scores of the difference between two education groups are positive. This means that the “Bachelor or more" group is significantly higher than the "Diploma or less" group in these associations (paths). Positive difference in paths numbered in the first column from the right in the Table 53 are as follows:

(Social Media Marketing Practice → Brand Knowledge); significant for both education groups;

(Customer Behaviour → Actual Purchase), significant for both education groups.

The second set of paths (with negative Z-score), shows that participants in the "Diploma or less" group are statistically and significantly higher than participants of "Bachelor or

more" group in terms of association between variables. The negative paths are as follows:

- (Social Capital → Social Media Marketing Practice); significant for both education levels;
- (Purchase Intention → Customer Behaviour), significant for both education levels;
- (Brand Knowledge → Brand Image), not significant for "bachelor or more" group;
- (Brand Knowledge → Brand Loyalty): significant for both education levels;
- (Brand Knowledge → Brand Trust): significant for both education levels;

Table 53 Testing measurement weights between "Diploma or Less" and "Bachelor Degrees or more" holders

			Diploma Or Less		Bachelor or Higher		z-score	Path Number
			Estimate	P	Estimate	P		
SMMP	<---	SC	1.047	0.000	0.528	0.000	-4.146***	1
BK	<---	SMMP	0.447	0.000	0.596	0.000	2.237**	2
PI	<---	SMMP	0.311	0.000	0.118	0.315	-1.458	3
PI	<---	BK	0.493	0.000	0.619	0.000	0.594	4
CB	<---	PI	0.535	0.000	0.177	0.092	-3.143***	5
CB	<---	BK	0.496	0.000	0.550	0.000	0.456	6
AP	<---	CB	0.768	0.000	0.920	0.000	3.00***	7
BRI	<---	BK	1.007	0.000	0.070	0.459	-7.759***	8
BRL	<---	BK	1.263	0.000	0.794	0.000	-3.707***	9
BRT	<---	BK	1.369	0.000	0.767	0.000	-4.508***	10
EWM	<---	SMMP	0.572	0.000	0.431	0.004	-0.890	11
FOF	<---	SMMP	0.737	0.000	0.751	0.000	0.189	12
OA	<---	SMMP	-0.069	0.200	-0.086	0.572	-0.110	13

Notes: *** p-value < 0.01; ** p-value < 0.05; * p-value < 0.10

The results of multi-group analysis for Nationality model showed a not adequate model fit according to goodness of fit criteria illustrated in Table 54 as most of our participants were Saudis (389) and only (138) non-Saudi. SEM requires a large sample size to establish a valid comparison. This comparison is therefore skipped.

Table 54 Goodness-of-fit Indices for Structural Model – By Nationality

Fit Indices	Benchmark	Value
CMIN (χ^2)/DF	< 3 or 5	5.367
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)	> 0.9	0.939
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	<0.08	0.089
<i>Incremental fit measures</i>		
AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.824
NFI (Normed Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.943
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.952
IFI (Incremental Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.953
RFI (Relative Fit Index)	> 0.90	0.864

Chapter Seven

DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This Chapter discusses the results and findings from this research project. The chapter discusses the participants' demographics and the characteristics of their use of relevant technologies to access SNSs (Social Networking Sites) in Saudi Arabia. After that comes discussion of patterns of engagement with the SNSs, and the ISMMM Model (Integrated Social Media Marketing Model) variables within the context of SMM (Social Media Marketing). The Chapter also discusses assessment of the ISMMM Model and relationships among model variables. Based on findings in Chapters 5 and 6, this Chapter ends with detailed recommendations for marketing managers of SMEs (Small and Medium Sized Enterprises) and Saudi users of SNSs.

7.1 Introduction

This study investigated marketing initiatives adopted by SMEs in Saudi Arabia using SNS sites in order to identify and assess the impact of SMM on consumer behaviours. The main aim behind this research was to develop and validate a marketing model in the context of the digital era and the Saudi marketplace, abbreviated to ISMMM within the context of SME. The development and validation of such a model is expected to enable Saudi SMEs to enhance the outcomes of their marketing initiatives, reach more customers and meet customer SNS requirements and needs. This chapter therefore discusses the results given in this thesis and makes recommendations for marketers and users in Saudi Arabia.

7.2 Users of SNS in Saudi Arabia

Five demographic items were used in the data collection survey asking about the profiles and characteristics of the 553 research participants. These were: age, gender, educational level, yearly income and nationality or citizenship. With regard to the participants' ages, the findings indicated that more than 73% of our participants are young (less than 35 years old); this is characteristic of Saudi society. Yet, around half of the participants are mature enough to report realistic and concrete opinions (more than

half of the participants were between 25 and 35 years of age). This implies that both old and young participants were likely to be exposed to the use of SNSs in Saudi Arabia, and this is in parallel with the reported literature in this regard (CITC, 2015). The findings indicated that there was a very clear difference in the ratio of responses received from men and women where almost three quarters of our participants were males (around 75%); this suggests the need for further investigations with focus on the use of SNSs by Saudi women. With reference to the academic and educational status of the research participants, the findings showed that the vast majority of participants have gained an education, in particular to Bachelor or Master Degree level. This also implies that the participants are mature enough to report reliable opinions about the use of SNSs and SMM practices and can also be an advantage for marketing organisations, marketers, the Saudi marketplace and marketing initiatives through SNSs.

The estimated annual income data showed that the vast majority of participants (around 61%) earn less than 400,000 Saudi Riyal a year. Earlier reports and studies have indicated that using SNSs in Saudi Arabia and the Middle East is not expensive, with high Internet availability. Facebook, for example, reached more than 13 million users in December 2015. Income, therefore, may not affect SMM initiatives in this region (Taylor Nelson Sofres, 2015). With regard to nationality, the findings showed that the vast majority of participants are Saudis (around 75%); this implies that SMM initiatives need also to consider Saudi residents.

7.3 The Use of Relevant Technologies

Sixteen items were the subject of data collected about the use of technologies relevant to SNSs in Saudi Arabia. They included: the experience of buying any product online; how many times respondents had bought a product online in the last two years; levels of knowledge of how to use computers, the Internet, and Smartphone, Tablets or any other similar device; ownership of and access to computers, the Internet (both at work and home) and Smartphones; and the daily time in hours spent on those technologies. The findings showed a very active and strong trend towards use of those technologies such that more than 98% of participants have bought online and more than 93% have done so more than 3 times in the last two years; and that more than 70% consider their knowledge of using computers, the Internet and smartphones to be good or very good. In addition, approximately 90% have access to computers, the Internet and smartphones

at home or work, and more than 70% of participants spend more than 5 hours a day using those technologies. The findings here indicate a great opportunity for adoption of SMM as a new paradigm in the Saudi marketing industry. The results also indicate that participants are familiar with technologies and have access to the Internet and SNSs by several methods. Such good levels of experience with online purchasing and relevant technologies make it possible for SMEs to run SMM initiatives for marketing purposes and other advantages, to be focussed as recommended later in this chapter. Those results confirm findings reported by earlier studies in this domain (e.g., (Basamh et al., 2014; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Maier in Ross, 2014)).

7.4 The Use of, and Engagement Patterns with, SNS

To identify the patterns of using SNSs in Saudi Arabia, participants were asked two key questions about the level of their engagement with SNSs and the levels of their interactions with other individuals or groups on those platforms. The focus was on the main SNSs such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube; those were reported to be the highest in use both in Saudi Arabia and worldwide (Murthy, 2013; Taylor Nelson Sofres, 2015). Participants were asked whether they owned an account, how long they had been an SNS member, which groups on SNSs they were members of and for how long, and about the time they spent on SNSs and their levels of interaction with those platforms.

The results indicate a very high Saudi engagement with SNSs (particularly Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) with a high level of interactions with their friends and groups of interest on those platforms. The findings indicated that more than 75% of participants have used and have an account with Facebook and more than 80% of those participants have used Facebook for more than 2 years. In regard to using Twitter, the findings indicated that more than 80% of participants have used this SNS and about 90% of them have an account with more than 80% having used the SNS for more than 2 years. The findings also indicated that all participants have used YouTube and 74.7% have a YouTube account, with around 90% having used the platform for more than 2 years.

Those findings explain the new trend and available opportunities for using SNSs and relevant technologies in the Saudi marketplace. The findings are similar to results given by other studies (e.g., (Burke et al., 2010; Ellison et al, 2010); Buettner, 2016;

Kietzmann et al., 2011; Statista, 2016)). In regard to the use of “Other” SNSs, most participants (around 98%) have an account and around 87% have used those SNSs for more than 2 years. Such findings explain the importance of considering SNSs other than Facebook, Twitter and YouTube for SMM initiatives. This implies that there should be a wide opportunity for SMEs in the Saudi marketplace to compete with other businesses; this is also due to the fact that the most popular and most widely used SNSs in Saudi Arabia with an account also covered the category of “Other” SNSs.

Concerning interaction and involvement over the SNSs, the findings reported that the highest percentage of participants have membership with groups on the YouTube and “Other” SNSs (around 80%, while Twitter scored 63.8% and Facebook 51.5%). The results also indicated that the highest percentage of participants is for those with fewer than 2 groups in all SNSs, yet, the highest percentage of participants with more than 4 groups was in Twitter (around 43%), and the highest percentage with fewer than 2 groups was in Facebook (around 53%). The results also indicated that the highest percentage of participants have less than 2 years of experience with groups on SNSs in general and on Facebook in particular (around 52%), the exception being Twitter which has the same percentage of participants with 2 to 4 years of experience (around 44%); the vast majority of participants spend less than 2 hours on SNSs engaging with groups.

The results suggest that all SNSs are in use, adaptable and acceptable platforms to form and create an environment for interactions with others, yet Facebook and Twitter are found as the best. This should also encourage Saudi SMEs to focus on deploying SNSs for marketing purposes, concentrating on those with high volume of use and engagement such as Facebook and Twitter. Those results are consistent with the findings of earlier studies which highlight the fact that SMM creates new opportunities and trends for marketers (e.g. Murthy, 2013; Neti, 2011; Buettner, 2016; Tang and Andrew, 2012; Kietzmann et al., 2011; Tang, Gu and Whinston, 2012). A study for example reported that the Internet introduces “community” and “branding” concepts to marketing practices; it is possible to see this as interaction unfolding between users, and current wisdom says that branding is critical in building long-term online relationships (Mohammed, et al., 2004). Another study indicated that businesses agree that their Facebook marketing efforts were effective in reaching more customers and increasing their market share (Stelzner, 2015).

7.5 The Variables of the ISMMM Model and SMM Practices

As this study is concerned with understanding and assessing the behaviours and intentions of Saudi users of SNSs with reference to the SMM initiatives implemented by the SMEs, the study developed an integrated model, abbreviated to ISMMM, to involve twelve constructs including SMM Practices (Social Capital (comprises Bonding and Bridging, E-Word of Mouth, Friend of a Friend, Online Advertisement), Brand Knowledge (comprises Brand Image, Loyalty, Trust and Awareness), Purchase Intention, Customer Behaviour and Actual Purchase. The research participants using the SNSs in Saudi Arabia were asked about those variables, with five key questions or statements being used for each variable. In brief, based on the Goodness of Fit indices described in Chapter 6, the fitted model showed an excellent data fitting; the model was evaluated and the research hypotheses were tested using results obtained from SEM and CFA analysis. The SEM analysis evaluated and tested the relationships between the constructs of the ISMMM model and identified the direct and/or indirect relationships between those constructs (Byrne, 2001). The findings given by the SEM and CFA analysis indicated that all constructs of the ISMMM Model are significant, and this implies that no major or significant modifications were needed. The next sections will discuss the implications of the findings given in Chapters 5 and 6.

7.5.1 Social Capital Bonding–Bridging and SMM Practices

Several scholars have investigated social capital as a driver towards the development of customer knowledge and other intentional flows within the context of Internet stores (Tsai, 2006). It has also been explained that individuals most probably tend to seek the opinions of those who differ from them and may trust others with direct relations or with indirect relations through others (De Bruyn and Lilien, 2008). In this study, Social Capital Bonding and Social Capital Bridging, Electronic Word of Mouth, Friend of a Friend and Online Advertisement were investigated as SMM practices within the context of SME in Saudi Arabia. The impact of Social Capital Bonding and Social Capital Bridging on Electronic Word of Mouth, and the impact of Social Capital Bonding and Social Capital Bridging, Electronic Word of Mouth, Friend of a Friend and Online Advertisement on Purchase Intention and Brand Knowledge were also investigated. After the data collection and analysis, the findings indicated that the respondents were positive about Social Capital Bonding as a marketing practice on

SNSs with an aggregate percentage of 71% for “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” and were also positive about Social Capital Bridging with an aggregate percentage of 74% for “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”. Earlier studies reported that when a customer perceives that the information is positive, the organisation can benefit with new and repeat sales; Bonding and Bridging Social Capital may provide such positive information and image (Cheek, et al., 2013). Consequently, as SNSs can enable people to rapidly share consumption experiences with friends, the development of EWOM, brand knowledge and trust may become a result of this sharing (Dahl, 2014).

The findings imply that SMEs in Saudi Arabia need to address the development of marketing programmes and strategies that can support Social Capital concepts where Saudi users can be a part of social communities on the SNSs. Such a finding confirms findings of other studies; e.g., a study reported that online brand communities can create value and influence individuals to participate in those communities (Jensen Schau, 2009). Other studies also reported that users on SNSs perceive that the information they receive is positive, and therefore, organisations can benefit from this for new and repeat sales; i.e., Social Capital Bonding and Bridging may provide such positive information and image (Cheek, et al., 2013). Therefore, as individuals can share consumption experiences with friends via SNSs, a good level of EWOM and brand development may become a result of this sharing (Dahl, 2014). The social interaction in this context can work as a link established via reciprocal behaviour between two actors or social units, and this can then be facilitated by being on social media platforms or on SNSs (Fischer and Reuber, 2010).

The results also support the idea that when an SNS user feels that there are other trusted, helpful and caring individuals on those SNSs, they will be more comfortable with those individuals about personal problems, and about discussing financial or personal problems. Consequently, the SNS users will be more connected socially and will be more interested in developing strong ties and intentions for purchasing products online. Indeed, stronger ties of a member of a group or an individual on SNSs are likely to make for more connections among each other, and this will mean more information about products flowing through such networking (Ellison et al., 2007). In addition, not only the connections through other individuals and groups with the same interest in a social bonding link, but also the connections with groups or individuals within the same region, family or places, i.e., social bridging link, can be beneficial for marketing

purposes. It has been reported that bridging can influence emotional and social support as well as substantive tangible support, and consequently this may impact on the development of trust and good level of EWOM (Putnam, 2000).

7.5.2 Electronic Word-Of-Mouth and Friend-Of-a-Friend

Several earlier studies investigated the importance of developing trust among customers through Word of Mouth (WOM); i.e., an Electronic WOM (EWOM). In the digital age of user-generated media such as that found on SNSs, it has been reported that social media is not only a marketing channel but also a facilitator for the development of WOM in an electronic form (i.e., EWOM). In other words, as SNSs enable communications and sales opportunities for marketers, knowledge-sharing and persuasion can be influenced by influencers and responses by recipients in a rapidly growing online environment (Subramani and Rajagopalan 2003; Miller and Lammas, 2010). As an individual on SNSs will also respond to social influences, a function of communication and interaction variables including the strength of direct relations with friends and indirect relations with non-close friends may take place; those cases create what is known as EWOM and FOAF (i.e., a Fan on SNSs) (Latane, 1981; Ektron, 2015). In this study, the impact of EWOM on FOAF, Brand Knowledge (Image, Trust, Loyalty and Awareness) and Purchase Intention, and the impact of FOAF on Online Advertisement, Brand Knowledge and Purchase Intention were investigated.

The findings indicated that the respondents were positive about EWOM with an aggregate percentage of 78.1 and about the FOAF with an aggregate percentage of 75% for both “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”. This implies that the information given by friends about brands on SNSs were very positive with added value by telling about brands’ products and services, and that individuals on SNSs are not just friends but work as recommenders of purchasing some brand products they see on those SNSs, and they may inspire and share what they have with other friends and relatives. Such results have also been reported by earlier studies; it was reported for example that the emotional closeness (i.e., tie strength), rather than demographics similarities (i.e., Homophily, “Loving of the Same”), influences consumer responses to marketing over SNSs (De Bruyn and Lilien, 2008). In addition, it was reported in the literature that SNS users usually pass on marketing messages to other sites or users, creating potentially exponential growth in the visibility and effect of such messages. This pattern of

behaviour created the new phenomenon of FOAF, i.e., FOAF evolved with the emergence and growth of SNSs and has significantly encouraged and contributed to the effectiveness of what is known as Viral Marketing (Patrizia, G, Fernando, F and Alessia, D, 2013). Indeed, in this study, the findings also showed a positive impact of EWOM on FOAF as reported by Saudi SNS users, and this creates great and new opportunities for SMEs in the Saudi workplace to compete.

In this project, the findings indicated that FOAF is in positive association with the Online Advertisement despite the fact that Saudi SMEs' online advertisement practices were not at the expected and needed levels. Earlier studies in this regard also found that more than 51% of people who view news online forward the resources and contents through at least one of the popular SNSs (Morrissey, 2009). This explains how the contents used in marketing and contents of an online advertisement may pass from a friend to a friend and then to another friend, and so on. This also explains the amazing power of SMM as it can produce customers who not only choose the product, but value the relationship with the brand (Perdue, 2010). Some earlier studies in this area showed advertisers tapping viral efforts and hoping to boost Brand Knowledge – that is, awareness and knowledge of the product – when one consumer communicates with another. By encouraging communication among consumers, important perceptions about products—as well as being compelling triggers for purchase—may spread quickly and widely, thereby achieving mass reach a few people at a time. In other words, advertisers strive to reach what has been labelled the “tipping point” (Gladwell, 2000).

7.5.3 Online Advertisement and SMM over SNSs

Several scholars have investigated the importance and effectiveness, costs and challenges, and other concerns about Online Advertisements in general, and in SNSs in particular. For example, a study found attitudes of Australians towards businesses advertising on social media remain mixed but there are still quite a few who like sponsored posts from businesses they follow or don't mind seeing ads which they occasionally click on (Sensis, 2015). This explains that paid advertising or sponsorship can be reasonably effective as a way of targeting consumers of interest on the SNSs even though many will ignore such ads; the study also reported that nearly all Australian businesses using social media have a Facebook profile and some are using Twitter and LinkedIn, with more prevalence in medium and large businesses (Sensis,

2015). This study focused in particular on Online Advertisement as adopted by SMEs for SNSs within the Saudi workplace. The findings showed different perceptions of Saudi users on SNSs concerning this trend where the research participants were slightly positive with an aggregate percentage of around 51% for “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”.

The slightly low level of agreement as found in this study about the Online Advertisement could be due to or affected by the quality of information used about those marketed products and services, or due to the unfulfilled high expectations of Saudi SNS users. Another reason could be the nature of the Saudi marketplace where competition is very high, and thus SNS users may be comparing competitors’ products. Although some studies reported the effectiveness and visibility of the Online Advertisement (e.g., (Sensis, 2015)), some other studies mirrored the findings in this project and reported that this trend remains cloudy in terms of its effectiveness in general in developing knowledge related to the brands, and in terms of developing purchasing intention (Van Belleghem, 2010). More research is therefore needed to understand how marketing goals can be achieved, how target customers can be reached, and how businesses should develop marketing strategies to use SNSs effectively (Murthy, 2013; Tang, Gu and Whinston, 2012).

7.5.4 Brand Knowledge and SMM

Brand Knowledge or the acquisition of knowledge about a brand is a key success factor in marketing and has been a hot research topic in both electronic and traditional marketplaces. Earlier studies reported that SNS users often share product or brand related experiences and information in the form of posts, comments, and ratings. Individuals are influenced by the actions of others, entertained by their performance and sometimes persuaded by their arguments (Mir And Zaheer, 2012). This implies that SMM practices are expected to pass on knowledge in regard to a brand that advertised online. In this project, Brand Knowledge was investigated and measured by four variables (constructs) (Brand Image, Trust, Loyalty and Awareness), where each of those constructs comprised five statements or questions to collect data about this key variable. The finding of this project was that Saudi SNS users have a positive attitude and perception towards Brand Knowledge with an overall aggregate percentage of around 78% for “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”.

The findings given in this project also imply that Saudi SMEs have a real opportunity for “Brand Building” by connecting enthusiastic online brand advocates and communities over the SNSs. The findings here are also supported by similar studies and research; for example, some earlier work indicated that, as with general interactions on the SNSs, brand related interaction can also take place on those SNSs, mainly among users who know each other directly or indirectly, among relatives and family members, or among those who share a demographic factor such as a place, a city, the school they once attended, etc. (Kozinets et al, 2010). As a medium for societies, communication, collaborations and interactions, SNSs are a new and reliable means to build knowledge, brands and the trust of consumers by connecting with them at a deeper level; the SNS “has the potential to increase our awareness of others and to augment our spheres of knowledge” (Murthy, 2013). As a media business, “marketers need to create awareness and relevance about your brand and in some respects that's marketing” (Long, 2011).

In this work, findings also indicated that the four constructs of Brand Knowledge (Brand Image, Trust, Loyalty and Awareness) of Saudi SMEs online can influence the Purchase Intention of Saudi customers, and those constructs are in a clear and positive association with Purchase Intention and the Behaviour of the Saudi SNS user. Those results mirror findings reported by earlier studies that indicate that developing brand awareness is considered as an important and useful application of SMM strategy; brand awareness is important not necessarily for immediate sales but because consumers may recall a product or service in the future and come back to buy (Weinberg, 2009). Another study reported that active participation across SNSs can positively impact on the level of awareness about a brand offered by the company, and consequently on users’ intention to purchase a product or on their behaviours (Perdue, 2010).

The findings also reported that marketers and organisations should increasingly seek consumer participation and engagement with their brands and share their stories on using those products. Those findings reflect other findings from similar studies; for example, a study found that, by building relationships with customers slowly, an organization can build reputation with users, and individuals may become as a part of the brand, and consequently brand loyalty, awareness and trust increase (Jang et al. 2008; Stewart, 2003). In addition, the findings agree with those of a study that reported that information on SNSs, awareness of a brand and knowledge about a brand may

affect the Purchasing Intention of consumers as they take the information as evidence to support a purchasing decision (Kwahk and Ge, 2012; Ye et al., 2010).

7.5.5 Purchase Intention, Behaviour and Actual Purchase

Several studies have investigated the intention of individuals towards the use of new or online technologies and the impact of such intentions on the actual use and purchase of such technologies (e.g., (Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw, 1992; Oliver, 1997)). Studies also showed that attitudes toward SNSs had a positive and significant relationship with intention to purchase products marketed on those SNSs (Okazaki, 2011). This study in particular investigated the influence of Purchase Intention and Brand Knowledge on the behaviours of Saudi SNS users and the impact of Behaviour of the customers on the actual use. The study found that Saudi SNS users were positive and developed a positive attitude about Purchase Intention, Customer Behaviour and Actual Purchasing factors with, respectively, aggregated percentages of 79%, 78% and 76 with “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”. The results given in this study are similar to another study that explained that, before buying a product, consumers usually consult different sources of information and that this is particularly true in the case of high involvement products (Mir And Zaheer, 2012; Cheong and Morrison, 2008). With emerging sources of product related information and knowledge on SNSs such as Facebook, Twitter and others, individuals can interact and benefit from their experiences with and knowledge of the target product.

As with those studies, knowing the product, being loyal, developing awareness and acquiring trust about potential products can positively influence the customer’s intention and behaviour; this was also supported by earlier work (Kwahk and Ge, 2012). In other words, when people try to find the best choice, they will also try to get more information or evidence. In addition, results of this project indicate that a lot of information about products is available in the form of reviews and other consumer-generated content online and through SNSs. This study found that Saudi SNS users can be affected by information they see and this may affect their purchasing intention and consequently their behaviour. Those findings are consistent with the results of other studies that showed consumers accept information to bolster a purchase decision, and this means that informational social influence or motive most likely affect first the intention of an individual to purchase, and then the individual’s behaviours and actual

use or actual purchase (Ye et al., 2010). In summary, this study reached the following key findings:

- Saudi SMEs consider Social Capital and use of Online Advertisement (OA), EWOM and Friend of a Friend (FOAF) as SMM (Social Media Marketing) practices to operate online.
- The Social Capital Bonding and Bridging deployed by Saudi SMEs online have a positive association with the EWOM and FOAF behaviours of Saudi SNS users, i.e., accepting hypothesis (H1a), but excluding the OA (Online Advertisement).
- The SMM practices deployed by those Saudi SMEs were found in an overall positive association with the level of Brand Knowledge (BK) developed by Saudi SNS users and with their Purchase Intention (PI).
- The Social Capital Bonding and Bridging, EWOM and FOAF practices deployed by Saudi SMEs exhibited a positive association with the Brand Knowledge of the Saudi online customers, excluding the Online Advertisement.
- The Social Capital Bonding and Bridging, EWOM and FOAF practices deployed by Saudi SMEs exhibited a positive association with the Purchase Intention of Saudi online customers, excluding the Online Advertisement.
- The overall Brand Knowledge (including Brand Image, Trust, Loyalty and Awareness) of Saudi SMEs online exhibited a positive association with the Purchase Intention and Behaviours of Saudi customers on SNSs.
- While the Purchase Intention of Saudi SNS users exhibited a positive association with the behaviours of Saudi SNS users, such behaviours on the SNSs exhibited a positive association with Actual Purchasing

7.6 The ISMMM Model Goodness-of-Fit and Relationships

This study developed an integrated ISMMM Model to identify the factors that influence customer behaviour in the context of SMM for SMEs in Saudi Arabia. Based on the findings in this study, the ISMMM Model identified direct and indirect relationships between the eight model constructs or variables, i.e., the influence of each construct on other constructs and the impact of any changes in any of those constructs. The analysis provided details of influence pathways for testing the hypotheses developed by this study at an earlier stage; this process enabled the development of a mathematical model

explaining the factors to be considered by SMEs when initiating marketing campaigns over the SNSs in the Saudi marketplace.

The overall fitting results of the ISMMM Model analysis and assessment model showed a well-fitting model for the data with very good Goodness-of-fit indicators. For example, the results showed that Social Capital Bridging and Bonding are both significant and important constructs of the model. While Social Capital Bridging has a standardised coefficient (weight) of 0.92, Social Capital Bonding displayed a lower standardised coefficient (weight) of (0.22). The fitting results also indicated that constructs including Social Capital (Bonding and Bridging), Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) and Friend of a Friend (FOAF) are significant and positively associated (paths) with Social Media Marketing (SMM), i.e., those constructs are crucial for the ISMMM Model and for marketing strategies; only Online Advertisement (OA) was not significant with SMM. Paths with weights for those constructs vary from 0.59 for EWOM to 0.79 for FOAF.

In the ISMMM Model, the fitting results also showed that SMM practices have a strong and positive association with Brand Knowledge and Purchase Intention. The impact flows positively with a standardised coefficient of 0.83 so that Brand Image, Trust, Loyalty, Awareness and SMM practices explain 72% of the variation in Brand Knowledge. Both Brand Knowledge and SMM practices have also shown significant and positive association with Purchase Intention with a variation of about 66%. Moreover, the fitting analysis of the ISMMM Model indicated the positive flow of impact on the Customer Behaviour, where the Purchase Intention and Brand Knowledge explained about 76% of such behaviour with more weight for the intention. Such flows over all the relations among the constructs of the ISMMM Model explain the direct and indirect impacts and ultimate effects of those constructs and their relationships on the Actual Purchase, i.e., those constructs explain about 72% of the variation with a significant and positive association.

7.7 Recommendations

According to the findings generated by this work, key recommendations and a roadmap can be provided for Saudi SNS users and for SMEs marketing personnel; those recommendations relate to the marketing strategies and the practical approaches to be

implemented within the Saudi marketplace to achieve marketing and business goals. When those recommendations are taken into account within the Saudi and similar marketplaces, the use of SNSs for marketing purposes will be expected to succeed, mainly within the SME context. Those recommendations are for marketing managers and SME businesses, and for Saudi SNS users.

7.7.1 Recommendations for Marketing Managers

For those who work for SMEs as marketing managers or as marketers within the digital space, it is recommended to consider the following:

- Treat SNS marketing initiatives as a real and strategic opportunity and as a transition paradigm for providing quality marketing services and reaching goals successfully; those SMM practices over SNSs are effective marketing tools for SMEs in Saudi Arabia.
- Identify the best fit SNSs to be used by your business so that optimal selection can benefit SMEs in particular.
- Invest in SMM campaigns to present a clear picture of the future of your business, and to enable highly effective and low-cost channels for quality customer service.
- Focus on creating a Social Capital environment through bonding and bridging the Saudi users over the SNSs for your SME to enhance and reach good levels of EWOM and FOAF.
- Conduct frequent and quality reviews of the marketing channels, tools and methods emerging on SNS platforms to be ready to adopt new SMM paradigms rather than using outdated approaches and falling behind.
- Keep using the traditional marketing channels in parallel to the SMM as the target audiences will also keep using the traditional media options in addition to the new channels; i.e., integrate traditional and SNS-based channels and promotional tools.
- Enhance your online advertisement channels and contents, and then connect those channels with the SNSs platforms and the other traditional channels.
- Initiate campaigns with primary purpose and goal of increasing the credibility of your business and enhance your customers' level of knowledge and awareness about your products and services; this will improve the

purchase intention, behaviours and engagement of your customers and community, potentially increasing actual purchases.

- Strengthen the relationships and ties with Saudi SNS users to understand their behaviours and intentions to make purchasing decisions, but with care as this may create vulnerabilities.
- Remember that marketing messages over SNSs channels and platforms are part of the social and cultural systems, and thus should be governed by and according to the laws of social interactions in Saudi Arabia.
- Generate value for Saudi SNS customers without appearing to have hidden motives. Produce marketing content, or use it to tap into others as bridges; exploit the power of storytelling.
- Balance your business and marketing needs with the needs and preferences of Saudi SNS users.
- Create reward programmes with reasonable budgets for those who make exceptional progress towards your SMM contents and generate further opportunities.
- Focus on making brands for your business and educate your customers about those brands by enhancing their knowledge, engaging them in dialogue with employees or with their direct or indirect friends.
- Conduct real-time monitoring and measure SNS use for marketing purposes through manual and systematic content analysis and mining techniques, and through trend classification and timely reactions and conversations by the users; this helps to identify potential problems, understand competitors and assess brand success.
- Perform analytical comparisons between traditional marketing channels and SMM channels over SNSs for specific brands and products, and make adjustments accordingly.

7.7.2 Recommendations for Saudi SNS Users

Responsibility for success of SNSs as marketing channels does not belong to marketing managers and marketers alone. Saudi SNS users also have a role to play and Saudi SNS users are recommended to consider the following:

- Treat the SNSs platforms in a friendly way, show respect to content posted by Saudi SMEs, and react positively to content referred by SMEs and Saudi users.
- Use only appropriate channels to purchase products online and engage only with SNSs that interest and serve you properly.
- Educate yourself and improve the level of your awareness and knowledge about SNSs and SMM practices in Saud Arabia.
- Request feedback from SMEs on their SMM practices regarding SNSs when needed, and provide them with your feedback and concerns; i.e., cooperate and communicate with other users and SME personnel.
- Be aware of cyber risks and dangers threatening SNS users and inform the responsible parties of any risks you become aware of.

Chapter Eight

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORKS

This Chapter summarises the main data analysis findings and research results, and explains the contributions of this study to theory development, practical knowledge and research methodology. The Chapter then provides a detailed description of the conclusions and future works recommended according to this research.

8.1 Summary of the Study

The research project provides details of a study to assess the impact of SMM practices adopted by Saudi SMEs using SNSs on consumer behaviours and purchase intention. The main aim behind this work is to develop an Integrated Social Media Marketing Model (ISMMM) for SMM on the SNSs within the context of Saudi Arabia. The model is expected to enable those types of businesses within the Saudi marketplace to enhance the outcomes of their marketing initiatives using SNSs. The dissertation comprises eight chapters. The first Chapter provided an introduction with brief background on the importance of marketing strategies and practices in the new era of ICT, and discussed the issues of legacy marketing practices in the marketplace and the SMM as a new trend in the Digital Age (DA) or Information Age (IA). The chapter then highlighted the importance of customer behaviour and the importance for businesses of understanding such behaviour and purchase intention. The statement of problem, research aim and objectives, research questions and hypotheses were provided in this chapter. The chapter finally provided details on the proposed research methodology and the research theoretical framework, with concluding remarks on the topic under investigation.

The second Chapter provided a review of literature on the SMM and Social Media trends, challenges and opportunities. Social Media Platforms and Networking Sites were reviewed in this chapter with the main focus on the impact of such platforms and sites on societies and individuals. The chapter then provided a review of marketing paradigms in SMEs, focusing on SMM as a new channel for marketing. Chapter three developed the research theoretical conceptual model for the assessment of consumer

behaviours and purchase intention within the context of Saudi SMEs using SMM on SNSs. An analysis of theoretical perspectives on customer behaviour and marketing theories and practices was provided in this chapter. The chapter then illustrated and justified the development of a novel Integrated Social Media Marketing Model (ISMMM), particularly for this research project, and then explained the development of hypotheses.

Chapter four of this dissertation described the research approaches and methodology used in this project in terms of research philosophy, strategy, and design and paradigms. The chapter then presented the data collection approach and methods, study population and sampling selection and interaction, and the development, validation and reliability of the data collection instrument and questionnaire design. The Descriptive and Inferential Statistic, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), Comparative Fit Index Analysis; and SPSS and AMOS Statistical Software Applications (for latent variables analysis) were discussed in this chapter. The chapter discussed Trustworthiness and Normality and presented the findings on Reliability and Validity Measurement, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Normality of Distribution and Pilot Survey. Chapter five presented the results of data analysis including the demographic characteristics of respondents, their use of technologies in Saudi Arabia and their engagement with SNSs. The chapter then provided descriptive statistics for the main components of the ISMMM Model, amounting to eight constructs.

Chapter six presented the research results on the development of Integrated Social Media Marketing Model (ISMMM), and on the research hypotheses testing. The chapter then provided analysis on investigating the moderating variable impact and multi-group analysis and assessed the relationship and interactions among the factors comprising the ISMMM Model. The results of different statistical techniques including Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and the results of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) were provided in this chapter. Chapter seven discussed the research findings from this study and discussed the demographics of the participants and the characteristics of their use of relevant technologies for SNSs (Social Networking Sites) in Saudi Arabia. The Chapter then discussed the patterns of engagement with SNSs, and the ISMMM Model (Integrated Social Media Marketing Model) variables within the context of SMM (Social Media Marketing). The Chapter also provided discussions on assessment of the ISMMM Model and the relationships

among the model variables. Based on the findings given in Chapters 5 and 6, this Chapter finally provided detailed recommendations for marketing managers at SMEs (Small and Medium Sized Enterprises) and Saudi SNS users.

Chapter eight of this dissertation provided summaries of the main data analysis findings and research results, and explained the contributions of this study to theory development, practical knowledge and research methodology. The Chapter then described the limitations of the study and provided a detailed description of the conclusions and future works.

8.2 Summary of Findings and Results

This study has produced important results through the use of different statistical techniques with particular focus on the use of SMM practices on SNSs by SMEs in Saudi Arabia. The data analysis conducted in this study was to support the development and validation of an Integrated Social Media Marketing Model (ISMMM) in the area of SMM on SNSs. The key findings produced by this research are as follows:

- Most Saudi users have at least one SNS account and frequently use SNSs (mainly Facebook, Twitter and YouTube); around 90% have an account and around 82% have used such platforms over the last two years.
- Roughly half of Saudi users are engaged in more than two SNS groups and spend reasonable amounts of time interacting on those platforms; around 50% have 2 or more groups, and around 52% spend around two hours a day on those platforms.
- Most users in Saudi Arabia have bought online using their computers at home or work, as well as smartphone applications; more than 98% have experienced online purchasing and more than 93% have done so more than 3 times in the last two years.
- Most users in Saudi Arabia have their own computers, Internet connection and smartphones at home (around 99%), and at work (around 92%).
- Most SNS users in Saudi Arabia hold a high education degree (around 86% of them have Bachelors or Masters).

- The majority of Saudi users earn less than 600,000 Saudi Riyal annually (around 61% of them earn between 400,000 and 600,000).
- More than 75% of Saudi users have used and have an account with Facebook and more than 80% of them have used Facebook for more than 2 years.
- More than 80% of Saudi users have used Twitter and 90% of our participants have an account and more than 80% of them used Twitter for more than 2 years.
- All the Saudi users have used YouTube and 74.7% of them have an account. 90% of them have been using YouTube for more than 2 years.
- All the Saudi users have used "Other" social media with 98.4 % of them having an account; 87.7% of them have used it for more than 2 years.
- The most popular social media network (in using and having an account) was "Other" social media networks, followed by YouTube, then Twitter and last is Facebook.
- The perception of Saudi users over the SNSs:
 - Were positive about the Social Capital Bonding with an aggregate percentage of 71% for “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”.
 - Were positive about Social Capital Bonding with an aggregate percentage of 74% for “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”.
 - Were positive about EWOM with an aggregate percentage of 78.1 for “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”.
 - Were positive about FOAF with an aggregate percentage of 75% for “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”.
 - Were slightly positive about OA with an aggregate percentage of 51.1% for “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”.
 - The aggregated average for all Social Media Marketing practices (SCBN, SCBR, EWOM, FOAF and OA) is 3.75 with standard deviation of 0.56.
 - Were positive towards the Brand Image statements with an aggregate percentage of 73.5 for “Agree" and “Strongly Agree”.
 - Were positive towards the Brand Loyalty statements with an aggregate percentage of 80.5% for “Agree" and “Strongly Agree”.
 - Were positive towards the Brand Trust statements with an aggregate percentage of 75.1% for “Agree" and “Strongly Agree”.
 - Were positive towards the Brand Awareness statements with an aggregate percentage of 75.8% for “Agree" and “Strongly Agree”.

- Had a positive attitude towards Brand Knowledge with an overall average of 3.75 and standard deviation of 0.62.
- Were positive about the Purchase Intention factor with an aggregate percentage of 78.1% with “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”.
- Had a positive attitude towards the Customer Behaviour statements with an aggregate percentage of 78.1% for “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”.
- Had a positive attitude towards the Actual Purchase statements with an aggregate percentage of 76.6% for “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”.
- In the context of using SNSs for SMM adopted by SMEs in Saudi Arabia:
 - The Social Capital Bonding and the Social Capital Bridging explained the Social Capital construct, where $SC = 0.22 SCBN + 0.92 SCBR$ with the R-squared around 0.29.
 - The Social Capital explained the Electronic Word-of-Mouth and Friend of a Friend constructs, where $0.61 EWOM + 0.82 FOAF = 0.67 SC$ with the R-squared around 0.44.
 - The Social Media Marketing practices explained the Brand Knowledge, where $BK = 0.83 SMM$ practices with the R-squared around 0.7.
 - The Social Media Marketing practices and Brand Knowledge explained the Purchase Intention, where $PI = 0.59 SMM$ practices + 0.26 BK with the R-squared around 0.66.
 - The Brand Knowledge and Purchase Intention explained the Customer Behaviour, where $CB = 0.42 BK + 0.52 PI$ with the R-squared around 0.76.
 - The Customer Behaviour explained the Actual Purchase, where $AP = 0.95 CB$ with the R-squared around 0.72.

8.3 Research Contribution Remarks

The next sections discuss the research contributions made by this study towards theory development, practical knowledge and research methodology.

8.3.1 Contribution to Knowledge

Although previous research has been done to assess consumer satisfaction and behaviours within the context of SMM, it has not been done in the cultural and

electronic marketplace context of Saudi Arabia. Not only large businesses need to use SMM, but SMEs in developing countries such as Saudi Arabia like any other businesses need also to use this movement and trend (JEG, 2016); this should be according to worldwide standards and benchmarks as there are no physical borders online (Berthon, et al., 2012; Hsu and Tran, 2013; Hegarty, 2013; Balakrishnan, Dahnil and Yi, 2014). Therefore, assessing the factors influencing or impacting consumer behaviours within the context of SMEs in Saudi Arabia will provide practical implications for Saudi industry. This investigation is crucial at academic and SMEs corporate levels as it attempts to contribute to knowledge in the area of interest and to provide key practical recommendations targeting SMEs in Saudi Arabia; both can have inputs to enable the development of best practice in the area of SNS utilization for marketing purposes.

As this research focuses on the key factors affecting the behaviour of SNS customers and on the important areas of service quality of SMEs marketing tools, the findings are expected to provide solutions for dissatisfaction of online customers in Saudi Arabia, and then identify improvement areas. Different concerns are considered by this research such as the cultural, social, security, technological issues, etc. However, these may differ from one country to another and this research will be of most practical benefit to managers and marketers of SMEs in Saudi Arabia by enabling them to assess the effectiveness of their current e-marketing tools and services in terms of developing trust, brands, loyalty and awareness.

In the context of SMEs, the levels of customer satisfaction, trust and quality of services are increasingly important and can be seen as critical success factors of an organisation. In this work, the attempt was to bring new research-based knowledge in the area of consumer behaviour and satisfaction through inspired thoughtful interpretations of the causes and effects of the relationship between a customer and an organisation. In particular, those relationships are considered success factors for SMEs because a trusted relationship between a consumer and employee, as well as among consumers, may influence the purchasing and purchasing intentions. Reviews in this regard suggest that trust, awareness and quality of information, social motivation and media may play a major role in achieving positive intention and behaviour of customers and even in purchasing satisfaction and decisions. Therefore, this researcher hopes that those and other issues in developing more knowledge and understanding toward the behaviours and intentions of Saudi online customers may bring higher quality of service to the

Saudi marketplace, mainly for the SMEs. Such findings will not only be of interest to the businesses and their management, but also to Saudi customers and researchers, and consequently to the Saudi nation. The results of the research are also expected to contribute to the design and development of proper policies and practical procedures in the area of providing online services in general and SMM on SNSs in particular as needed by the Saudi marketplace. The outcomes of this project may also be applicable and beneficial when extended into other regional or worldwide marketplaces with features similar to the Saudi marketplace.

8.3.2 Contributions to Theory

This research has major reflections on theories with focus on customer behaviour and intention with a cultural context. First, the CCT, Consumer Culture Theory, implies that to deal with customers such as online customers, it is important for successful marketers to understand the consumer experiences including intentions and behaviours during all stages of consumption (i.e., preceding, during and after the purchase) (Arnould, 2004). In other words, CCT theory considers the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings. This theory is extended to understand the factors that drive customer intention to purchase a product or to develop knowledge about a brand. Yet, this model does not investigate the behaviour and actual use of a technology. Therefore, another related theory, the TRA (Theory of Reasoned Action), is used in this research to develop a novel marketing model particularly for SNSs environments, named Integrated Social Media Marketing Model (ISMMM).

As the TRA theory implies that the behaviour of online customers or SNS members can be driven by their purchasing intention or by social pressures and their beliefs and knowledge about brands, it is expected to understand how the SNSs and SMMs may drive actual purchasing by customers (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1975). Yet, the original theory does not consider the social capital, marketing tools and knowledge about brands to assess the behaviour and purchase intention of customers toward products and services offered by a business. This research integrates theories to develop an extended model to incorporate social and cultural contexts of customers, knowledge and trust about brands, the intention toward purchasing, behaviour and actual purchasing of products and services. This integration explains the extension of the theories and shows how the some variables of a theory may impact on factors from other theory to

ultimately build a comprehensive model. For example, the variables from social capital theory can contribute to improve the EWOM and FOAF, variables from social exchange theory. With the application of Social Exchange Theory and Social Impact Theory, the social capital, EWOM and FOAF factors can be seen as drivers for developing knowledge and purchasing intention of customers towards SMEs' products which may then drive their behaviour. This behaviour then is an indicator of accepting the technology as an initial step, i.e., ensuring the actual purchasing of a product or service; this is an indicator that the customer will feel satisfied. This dynamic relationship also supports the links between the variable of the Theory of Reasoned Action. A detailed theoretical foundation on the development of the integrated model was provided in this study, and then the data collection and analysis were provided as evidence for evaluation of this integrated or extended ISMMM model.

A key theoretical contribution of this work is to renovate the old marketing theories, and even theories from other disciplines. This effort is to enable the use of those old or traditional marketing and social theories according to the modern marketing paradigms, i.e., digital marketing and customer-oriented marketing. For example, the Social Capital Theory deals traditionally with the issues of making interaction and relationships among people living in the same village, community or even neighborhood. In this work, the application of Social Capital Theory was extended into the SNSs environment, i.e., an entirely new environment. This extension serves the digital marketing industry to achieve a business purpose (i.e., SMM) using cost-effective means for specific organizations (i.e., SMEs).

In addition, the theoretical integration conducted in this work goes and can be applied beyond the physical boundaries of societies, communities and alike. Therefore, this study makes a novel theoretical contribution in terms of transforming the application of some older theories to deal with the issues related the cyberspace and technology adoption, i.e. SNSs for SMM. So, the ISMMM Model makes theoretical foundation and extends the use of different theories by identifying those key factors making influence consumer behaviour, and to show the interrelated relationships among those variables.

As a result, the study bridges a gap in theory as it argues that developing a social context of customer toward a technology or products is a pre-requisite to the development of purchasing intention and behaviour of that customer and other

customers within that context. Further, with the application to this project, when customers develop a positive purchasing intention and behaviour over a social foundation, their actual purchasing may also evolve positively and be more motivated to purchase a product.

8.3.3 Contributions to Practice

This research generates a number of practical contributions and implications for the use of SNSs by Saudi SMEs in the marketplace as a marketing channel or platform using the SMM approach. The study first provided an integrated model for marketing campaigns to enhance the concept of SMM and practices; this ISMMM may be adopted by marketing managers to improve several and crucial variables including Social Capital, EWOM, FOAF, Brand Knowledge and other concepts. Thus, SMEs marketers need to understand that SMM over the SNSs is not traditional marketing, but a social phenomenon influenced by social interactions where the information, contents and promotions can be disseminated to create social communities with good levels of social bonding and bridging. The interactions and engagements of the social communities by SMEs through SNSs are key factors to attract Saudi customers to join those communities, and to enhance their purchase intention and behaviour, and consequently increase actual purchases.

Secondly, the SMM practices investigated in this work include Social Capital (Bonding and Bridging), EWOM, FOAF and Online Advertisement; the study showed that those factors can act to improve Brand Knowledge in terms of brand image, trust, loyalty and awareness. The study then showed that those factors in total can then influence the intention and behaviour of the Saudi customers, and their attitudes towards the actual purchases and towards the pages on SNSs of Saudi SMEs. First, the Social Capital (Bonding and Bridging) influences development of a good level of EWOM and this influences the FOAF phenomenon. Those variables in particular were found to influence the development of a good level of brand knowledge. Those inputs are crucial for improving the intention and behaviour of the users or customers. Therefore, marketers should consider those factors when adopting SMM to achieve their marketing goals and improve their organisational sales and financial performance.

The ISMMM Model developed in this research project highlighted the importance of SMM for SMEs, and that the SNSs users should in practice be treated kindly by the marketing managers. The study showed those marketing managers that the interactions between the SNSs users and SMEs can be strengthened through making real interaction and connections among the online social groups or social communities. This practice makes sense of belonging to the group or community where the users become more proud of being part of such a social domain, and where brand building becomes easy to achieve. Therefore, the ISMMM Model supports the SME marketing managers to be aware of promoting the value of their products through messages posted on their SNS accounts, through hearing the voices of their customers, and through the reward system; those consequently can develop a strong and respected social identity.

The ISMMM Model developed in this project contributes to the digital marketing field by focusing on the social networking utility created between Saudi users and SMEs, and this makes a real input into understanding usage patterns and nature of social interactions and the factors influencing and motivating users for further action. Understanding those factors of the ISMMM Model and the usage patterns helps to analyse users and their engagement, and to segment the market according to different attributes of usage and users. The nature of social interaction contributes to understanding SNS structure and the quality of content posted on SNSs which is related to knowledge about brands and products. Finally, the ISMMM Model identifies the factors influencing and motivating users such as Social Capital, EWOM, FOAF and Brand Knowledge to enable marketers of the SMEs to be more focused on their marketing campaigns and practices, and consequently they will be able to get the most appropriate results and outcomes for their efforts with enhanced performance of their organizations.

8.4 Conclusions

The primary purpose of this research was to assess the impact of SMM practices on consumer purchase intentions and behaviours in the context of Saudi SMEs. The main aim behind this research was to develop an Integrated Social Media Marketing Model (ISMMM) within the context of SMEs in Saudi Arabia; this model is expected to enable those types of businesses in the Saudi marketplace and other businesses in other culturally and socially similar marketplaces to enhance the outcomes of their marketing

initiatives on SNSs. The study developed the novel ISMMM Model through the integration of different theories and key variables related to SNS users. The overall factors comprising the ISMMM Model involved Social Capital (Bonding and Bridging), Electronic Word-of-Mouth, Friend of a Friend, Online Advertisement, Brand Knowledge (Image, Trust, Loyalty and Awareness), Purchase Intention, Customer Behaviour and Actual Purchase. Those factors were reported in many earlier studies investigating the factors that may affect or influence the intention and behaviour of users in digital environments similar to SNSs.

The ISMMM Model is novel in terms of the integration of key variables and can be considered unique; this model contributes to the knowledge, theories and practical implications related to SMM practices by SNSs adopted by SMEs in a developing country. Through the design of a new data collection instrument for empirical data collection and analysis, several hypotheses were developed and the ISMMM Model was validated. In addition to the adequacy of the ISMMM Model for the cultural context of Saudi Arabia, this model is expected to serve as a general model that fits similar developing countries by identifying the factors associated with the successful design and implementation of SMM practices and marketing programs. Thus, the study provided crucial recommendations and practical strategies for the marketing managers at the SMEs and users on the SNSs.

8.5 Future Work

The primary purpose of this research was to assess the impact of SMM practices on SNSs on consumer purchasing intention and behaviours within the context of Saudi SMEs. The idea behind this was to develop an Integrated Social Media Marketing Model (ISMMM) within the context of Saudi SME adopting SMM over the SNSs. The following studies are recommended to be conducted as research opportunities:

- A study to conduct this research within the context of different types of organisations or a specific industry to enable comparisons and identify effective marketing practices; e.g., what effective SMM practices cross different industry domains?

- A study to develop models for addressing the process of user decision-making on SNSs about purchasing products and services online; how do SNS users make a purchasing decision and what factors impact on this process?
- A study to investigate the legal and ethical issues concerning SNS and SMM practices, particularly in the Saudi marketplace. What are the key ethical and legal considerations for SMEs in Saudi Arabia in adopting SMM practices over SNSs?
- A study to investigate novel methods and techniques for behaviour monitoring, content analysis and engagement trends over the SNSs. How can user behaviour on SNSs be monitored, content they post be analysed and their engagements be classified without breaching their privacy?
- A study to investigate and identify additional factors that might influence the level of engagement and that can create stronger ties among the users such as attributes related to the posts; i.e., what other factors might strengthen the ties among SNS users?

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APPENDICES

- **Appendix A: A Survey on Assessing Consumer Behaviour within the Context of Social Media Marketing – English Edition**
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- **Appendix C: Ethical Approval Letter**
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Appendix A: A Copy of the Survey – English Edition

A Survey on Assessing Consumer Behaviour within the Context of Social Media Marketing

Dear Valued Participants,

This survey is a part of PhD research study that seeks to assess consumer behaviors within the context of Social Media Marketing adopted by Small and Medium Enterprises in Saudi Arabia.

The research aims to gain further understanding of the factors affecting consumer behaviors and intentions toward social media marketing in Saudi Arabia, and identifying the important areas of online branding, awareness, etc. and challenges facing social media marketing in Saudi Arabia.

I draw your attention that the valued information you provide will be treated as completely and very confidential with the only use for scientific research. I would like to take this opportunity to give my appreciation for your effort in participating in this study.

If you have any queries please feel free to contact me at this email address:
emad.salem@brunel.ac.uk

**Sincerely Yours,
Emad Salem**

Key Concepts and Terminologies

- **Social Media Marketing (SMM):** is the use of any type of social networking website such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, etc. by any organisation for marketing their products and services and to reach customers online.
- **Social Networking Site (SNS):** a web-based service that allows individuals to create accounts for users or a public or semi-public profile, connect with a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view their list of connections and display any written comments made by others within the system
- **Small and Medium Sized Enterprise (SME):** any organization or company that works in the physical marketplace or online to provide services and products in any market (such as: urban, rural, local, national or international markets) and has fewer than 200 employees.

Section A: Demographic and Use of Technologies Data

Please tick in the appropriate box to register your response to the following questions 1 – 24 :

Section A1: Questions about the Use of New Technologies

1. Have you ever experienced buying any product online?

- a. Yes b. No

2. How many times have you purchased a product online in the last two years?

- a. none/never b. 1 to 2 times c. 3 to 4 times
d. 5 to 7 times d. more than 8 times

3. How would you describe your knowledge of using a computer?

- a. very poor b. poor c. Moderate
d. good e. very good

4. How would you describe your knowledge of using the Internet?

- a. very poor b. poor c. Moderate
d. good e. very good

5. Do you have your own computer at work?

- a. Yes b. No

6. Do you have an access to the Internet at work?

- a. Yes b. No

7. How many hours do you usually spend on using the computer at work?

- a. less than 1 hour b. 1 to 3 hours
c. 3 to 6 hours d. More than 6 hours

8. How many hours do you usually spend on using the Internet at work?

- a. less than 1 hour b. 1 to 3 hours
c. 3 to 6 hours d. More than 6 hours

9. Do you have your own computer at home?

- a. Yes b. No

10. Do you have an access to the Internet at home?

- a. Yes b. No

11. How many hours do you usually spend on using the computer at home?

- a. less than 1 hour b. 1 to 3 hours
c. 3 to 6 hours d. More than 6 hours

12. How many hours do you usually spend on using the Internet at home?

- a. less than 1 hour b. 1 to 3 hours
c. 3 to 6 hours d. More than 6 hours

13. Do you have your own Smartphone, Tablets or any other similar device?

- a. Yes b. No

14. How many hours do you usually spend on using the Smartphone or Tablet?

- a. less than 1 hour b. 1 to 3 hours
c. 3 to 6 hours d. More than 6 hours

15. How would you describe your knowledge of using Smartphone, Tablets or any other similar device?

- a. very poor b. poor c. Moderate
d. good e. very good

16. Which of the following you use to buy a product online? (you may select more than one at the same time)

- a. The Internet at work
b. The Internet at home
c. The Internet using Smartphone, Tablets and similar devices
d. Other ways, specify:.....

Section A2: Demographic Related Questions

17. Age group:

- a. Less than 25 b. 25- 34 c. 35- 44
d. 45- 54 e. 55- 65

18. Gender group:

- a. Male
b. Female

19. Educational Level:

- a. High School or Less b. Diploma
c. Bachelor Degree d. Master Degree or above

20. Estimated Yearly Income:

- a. Less than SR200,000
b. Between 200,000 to 400,000
c. Between 400,000 to 600,000
d. More than 600,000

21. What is your Nationality or Cetizinship?

- a. Saudi b. Non- Saudi

22. How many friends you have online?

- a. Less than 10 friends b. Between 11 and 30 friends
c. Between 31 and 50 friends d. More than 50 friends

Section A3: Questions about Engagement with Social Media Related

23. Which of the following applies to you, fill “☑” for Yes, and “☐” for No in the table where it describes your case?

Social Media Websites	Do you use it?	How long have you been using it?	Do you have an Account?	How long you have been with account?
Facebook	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Years <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 Years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 Years	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Years <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 Years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 Years
Twitter	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Years <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 Years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 Years	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Years <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 Years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 Years
Youtube	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Years <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 Years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 Years	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Years <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 Years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 Years
Others	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Years <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 Years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 Years	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Years <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 Years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 Years

24. Which of the following applies to you, fill “☑” for Yes, and “☒” for No in the table where it describes your case?

Social Media Websites	Are you a member of group(s)?	How many groups you are a member of?	How long you have been in groups?	How many hours a day you use it?
Facebook	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Groups <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Groups <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Groups <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Years <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 Years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Years <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Hour <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 Hours <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Hours <input type="checkbox"/>
Twitter	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Groups <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Groups <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Groups <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Years <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 Years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Years <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Hour <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 Hours <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Hours <input type="checkbox"/>
Youtube	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Groups <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Groups <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Groups <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Years <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 Years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Years <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Hour <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 Hours <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Hours <input type="checkbox"/>
Others	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Groups <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Groups <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Groups <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Years <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 Years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Years <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Years <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 Years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Years <input type="checkbox"/>

Section B: Social Media Marketing Practices–Actual Use Factors

For this section as a use of social media websites, could you please response to the following statements to which you agree or disagree by ticking the appropriate number, where:

1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3 = neither disagree nor agree, 4= agree and 5 = strongly agree

	No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
Social Capital Bonding	•	There are several people on the social media and networking websites I trust and some of them can help me to make important decisions and to solve problems.					
	•	When I feel lonely, there are several people on the social media and networking websites I can talk to and I feel comfortable with them about some personal problems.					
	•	When I needed an emergency financial support or some money, I know someone on the social media and networking websites who can help me and I feel he would share money with me.					
	•	The people I interact with on the social media and networking websites would put their reputation on the line for me and will be a good job reference for me.					
	•	The people I interact with on the social media and networking websites would do any important thing for me and even help me to fight injustice or unfairness.					
Social Capital Bridging	•	Interacting with people on the social media and networking websites makes me interested about things that happen outside of my city and about new things I did not know before.					
	•	Interacting with people on the social media and networking websites makes me want to try new things					

		or buy new things.					
	•	Talking with people on the social media and networking websites makes me curious about new places in the world and ideas for me					
	•	Interacting with people on the social media and networking websites makes me feel connected to the bigger picture of what is going on and makes me feel that everyone in the world is connected with others.					
	•	Interacting with people on the social media and networking websites introduces me to new people to talk to, and I come in contact with new people all the times to form a community where I feel willing to spend time to support this community and their activities occurring on the social media and networking websites.					
E-Word of Mouth	•	The information given by my friends about brands on the social media and networking websites are very positive, valued and tells me about products and services of brands.					
	•	I know someone on the social media and networking websites who had experiences with the brands of products and services.					
	•	Many of my friends and relatives recommended me and talked to me about purchasing some brand products they see on the social media and networking websites.					
	•	I inspire and share with my friends and relatives when we give each other tips and advices about brand products or services on the social media and networking websites.					
	•	When I receive key information or opinion from a friend about a brand on the social media and networking websites, I take it into account when I					

		decide to purchase a product or services of the brand.					
Friend of a Friend	•	When I receive related information or opinion from a friend about a brand on the social media and networking websites, I pass it to my other contacts on those sites					
	•	I do believe that my friends on the social media and networking websites will trust and pay attention to the opinions of my other friend on those websites					
	•	I usually give advices, information or my experiences about brands to people who are friends of my friends on the on the social media and networking websites.					
	•	I usually accept and pay attention to advices, information or experiences about brands sent by some friends of my friends on the social media and networking websites.					
	•	My decisions and opinions about services and products usually may change and affected by advices, information or experiences about brands sent by some friends of my friends on the social media and networking websites.					
Online Advertisement	•	The advertisements on the social media and networking websites for brands and products I know are frequently and repeatedly seen.					
	•	The advertisements on the social media and networking websites for brands and products I know meet my expectations.					
	•	The advertisements on the social media and networking websites for brands and products I know are very attractive and encouraging.					
	•	The advertisements on the social media and networking websites for brands and products I know perform well in comparison to products or services not					

		on such websites.					
	•	The advertisements on the social media and networking websites for brands and products I know are extensive and wide; I therefore, can easily remember them.					
Brand Image	•	The brands and products on the social media and networking websites make me quickly to remember the logo image of the company and products.					
	•	The brands and products on the social media and networking websites encourage me to share any information about them with my friends and family for more publicity.					
	•	The brands and products on the social media and networking websites are aligned with my values and beliefs, and make me feel a better lifestyle and self-steamed with more respect to myself on those websites.					
	•	The brand and products on the social media and networking websites improve the reputation and image about the quality of those brands and products with very fashionable and nice look.					
	•	The brand and products on the social media and networking websites provide good values to customers and make them to favorite those brands and products.					
Brand Loyalty	•	I selected the brands and products on the social media and networking websites because I feel that they are the best choice for me among other brands and products.					
	•	I would not switch to a competitor on the social media and networking websites or in the marketplace; even if I had a problem with the brand I am buying presently.					
	•	I am committed to the brands and products on the social media and networking websites and I consider					

		myself to be a loyal supporter of those brands and products.					
	•	If I had to buy over again a similar brand or product then I will choose the same brands and products I know on the social media and networking websites.					
	•	I intend to keep and continue buying from the same brands and products appearing on the social media and networking websites with the same services and products.					
Brand Trust	•	I usually trust the products I buy and I feel confident in the brands I see on the social media and networking websites.					
	•	I usually trust the manufacturers of the products I buy and the brands on the social media and networking websites because they always honest and sincere in addressing my concerns					
	•	I usually trust the individuals selling brand and products as they provide reliable information about the products and brands on the social media and networking websites.					
	•	The brands on the social media and networking websites usually deliver what I expect and what I was promised.					
	•	The brands and products on the social media and networking websites will never disappoint me and will make more satisfied all times.					
Brand Awareness	•	I am aware of one or more of the brands on the social media and networking websites among other brands.					
	•	Recognition of the brands on the social media and networking websites is important for me when choosing a new brand at the first time.					

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The social media and networking websites enable me to be aware of available brands. 					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some characteristics of one or more of the brands on the social media and networking websites come to my mind quickly and I can remember them quickly. 					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can differentiate between brands on the social media and networking websites and this helped me to be aware of my favorite brands. 					
Purchase Intention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I intend to buy some of their brands because I am a member of those brands on the social media and networking websites. 					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have arranged via SNSs communication with the vendor to inspect and perform a trail test run of the product in person at the site of the vendor. 					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have already bought the products or services of the brands online because I am a member of the brand on the social media and networking websites. 					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will frequently use the social media and networking sites in the future. To find the brands I plan to buy. 					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel it is worthy for me to use the social media and networking websites in the future for purchasing some of the products or services of the brands. 					
Customer Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is likely that I will read and consider the marketing advertisements by the brands again on the social media and networking websites. 					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I expect that the marketing on the social media and networking websites will make it easier to reach me as a potential consumer in the future. 					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I expect using marketing advertisements on the social media and networking websites while I am engaging in other online entertainments and enjoyments. 					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I expect marketing on the social media and networking 					

		websites should not be taken lightly, and brands should consider this trend as a major and strategic investment.					
	•	I feel my loyalty is strong towards a brand on the social media and networking websites with a commitment to re-purchase products or services continuously in future.					
Actual Purchase	•	My purchases of products from the organizations on the social media and networking websites is clear and can be considered high or very high.					
	•	Some of my friends have purchased products and brands on the social media and networking websites from the organizations several times.					
	•	Some of friends of my friends on social networks have purchased products from the organizations several times.					
	•	Some members of my family have purchased products on the social media and networking websites from the organizations several times.					
	•	The general estimates of purchasing products on the social media and networking websites from the organizations is high or very high.					

Appendix B – A Copy of the Survey – Arabic Edition

Arabic Translation of the A Survey on Assessing Consumer Behaviour within the Context of Social Media Marketing

++++ إستبيان +++++

أخي المشارك / أختي المشاركة المحترم / المحترمة

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

يعتبر هذا الإستبيان جزءاً من نشاطات بحث علمي بهدف الحصول على شهادة الدكتوراة لدى جامعة برونييل البريطانية في مجال إستخدام الشبكات ووسائل التواصل الإجتماعية في عمليات التسويق في المملكة العربية السعودية. لذا، يسرني دعوتكم للمشاركة معنا في هذا الاستبيان لتحري وفهم أهم العوامل التي تؤثر على سلوك المستخدم إتجاه عمليات التسويق من خلال لشبكات ووسائل التواصل الإجتماعية.

سأكون شاكراً ومقدراً لكم وقتكم الثمين في اكمال هذا الاستبيان، حيث تستغرق الاجابة على جميع الاسئلة تقريباً من 10 إلى 12 دقيقة. مع العلم انه لا توجد إجابته (صحيحه أو خاطئه)، وان إجاباتكم ستعامل بسرية تامة ودون تسبب أي ضرر بكم، وستستخدم لغرض البحث العلمي فقط.

إن مدى دقة وواقعية إجاباتكم ستنعكس إيجاباً على صحة النتائج وتحقيق أهداف الدراسه وفهم أفضل للاستخدام الفعلي للشبكات ووسائل التواصل الإجتماعية في عمليات التسويق وخاصة لدى الشركات متوسطة وصغيرة الحجم في السعودية. وإذا كان لديكم أي استفسار فلا تترددوا في التواصل على ايميلي الخاص.

شاكرين لكم حسن تعاونكم معنا، وتقبلوا خالص التحية والتقدير،،،

عماد سالم

emad.salem@brunel.ac.uk

+++++

مصطلحات هامة تخص الدراسة

التسويق عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية : هي عملية إستخدام وسائل وشبكات التواصل الإجتماعي مثل التويتر والفيسبوك وغيرها في تسويق المنتجات والخدمات التي تقدمها المنظمات والوصول إلى العملاء.

الشبكات الإجتماعية : هي عبارة عن مواقع إلكترونية تسمح للمستخدم إنشاء حساب خاص به من أجل التواصل مع الأفراد والمجموعات مثل الفيسبوك، التويتر واليوتيوب وغيرها.

الشركات صغيرة ومتوسطة الحجم : هي أي منظمة تعمل في السوق السعودي لتقديم أي خدمات ومنتجات سواء كان إلكترونيا أو غير ذلك ولا يزيد عدد موظفيها عن 200 موظف.

الجزء الأول : البيانات الديموغرافية

الرجاء وضع علامة (√) في المربع المناسب لإجابتك على ورقة الاستبيان للأسئلة 1 – 24

الجزء الأول / الفقرة أ : الأسئلة المتعلقة باستخدام التقنيات الحديثة

1. هل سبق لك وأن قمت بعملية شراء لأي منتج أو خدمة إلكترونية أو عبر الإنترنت ؟
 نعم لا

2. كم من المرات قمت بعملية شراء لأي منتج أو خدمة إلكترونية أو عبر الإنترنت في السنتين الماضيتين؟

أبدا
من 1 – 2 مرة
من 3 – 4 مرات
من 5 – 7 مرات
أكثر من 7 مرات

3. كيف تصف معرفتك في استخدام الحاسب الآلي وأنظمة؟

ضعيفة جدا
ضعيفة
متوسطة
متقدمة
متقدمة جدا

4. كيف تصف معرفتك في استخدام الإنترنت ومصادرها؟

ضعيفة جدا
ضعيفة
متوسطة
متقدمة
متقدمة جدا

5. هل تمتلك أو لديك جهاز حاسب آلي في العمل؟

نعم لا

6. هل تمتلك أو لديك خدمات الإنترنت في العمل؟

نعم لا

7. في المعتاد ، كم من الوقت تقريبا تقضي يوميا في استخدام الحاسب الآلي في العمل ؟

أقل من 1 ساعة
من 1 – 3 ساعة
من 3 – 6 ساعة
أكثر من 6 ساعة

8. في المعتاد ، كم من الوقت تقريبا تقضي يوميا في استخدام الإنترنت في العمل ؟

أقل من 1 ساعة
من 1 – 3 ساعة
من 3 – 6 ساعة
أكثر من 6 ساعة

9. هل تمتلك أو لديك جهاز حاسب آلي في البيت؟

نعم لا

10. هل تمتلك أو لديك خدمات الإنترنت في البيت؟

نعم لا

11. في المعتاد ، كم من الوقت تقريبا تقضي يوميا في استخدام الحاسب الآلي في البيت ؟

أقل من 1 ساعة من 1 - 3 ساعة
من 3 - 6 ساعة أكثر من 6 ساعة

12. في المعتاد ، كم من الوقت تقريبا تقضي يوميا في استخدام الإنترنت في البيت ؟

أقل من 1 ساعة من 1 - 3 ساعة
من 3 - 6 ساعة أكثر من 6 ساعة

13. هل تمتلك أو لديك جهاز تلفون أو جوال ذكي أو تابلت في البيت؟

نعم لا

14. في المعتاد ، كم من الوقت تقريبا تقضي يوميا في استخدام جوالك الذكي أو تابلت ؟

أقل من 1 ساعة من 1 - 3 ساعة
من 3 - 6 ساعة أكثر من 6 ساعة

15. كيف تصف معرفتك في استخدام الأجهزة أو الجوال الذكي وبرامجها أو تطبيقاتها؟

ضعيفة جدا ضعيفة متوسطة
متقدمة متقدمة جدا

16. أي من التالية تستخدم للقيام بشراء منتجات أو خدمات ؟

الإنترنت في العمل الإنترنت على الأجهزة الذكية من المواقع الإلكترونية
الإنترنت في البيت برامج وتطبيقات الأجهزة الذكية للحكومة العمانية

الجزء الأول / الفقرة ب : الأسئلة المتعلقة بشخصية المشارك / المشاركة

17. أي مجموعة من المجموعات العمرية التالية تناسب عمرك؟

من أقل من 25 سنة من 25 - 34 سنة من 35 - 44 سنة
من 45 - 54 سنة من 55 - 65 سنة

18. إلى أي فئة تنتمي من حيث الجنس؟

ذكر أنثى

19. أي مستوى من المستويات التعليمية التالية يتناسب مع مستوى تعليمك؟

الثانوية أو أقل دبلوم أو ما يعادله
البكالوريوس دراسات عليا

20. تقريباً ، ما هو معدل الدخل السنوي الخاص بك؟

- أقل من 2000,000 ألف ريال سعودي من 20 ألف إلى 30 ألف ريال سعودي
 من 30 ألف إلى 40 ألف ريال سعودي أكثر من 40 ألف ريال سعودي

21. ما هي جنسيتك أو إقامتك؟

- سعودي مقيم وليست سعودي

22. تقريباً ، كم صديقاً لديك عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية؟

- أقل من 10 أصدقاء من 11 إلى 30 أصدقاء
 من 31 إلى 50 صديق أكثر من 50 صديق

الجزء الأول / الفقرة ج : الأسئلة المتعلقة باستخدام الشبكات الإجتماعية

23. بخصوص إستخدام الحسابات عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية ، الرجاء وضع علامة (√) في المربع المناسب لإجابتك على ورقة الاستبيان للأسئلة التالية كما في الجدول.

مواقع التواصل والشبكات الإجتماعية	هل تستخدمها	منذ متى تستخدم هذه الشبكات	هل لديك حساب على هذه الشبكات	منذ متى لديك هذا الحساب
فيسبوك Facebook	نعم	أقل من 2 سنة	<input type="checkbox"/>	أقل من 2 سنة
		من 2 إلى 4 سنة	<input type="checkbox"/>	من 2 إلى 4 سنة
	لا	أكثر من 4 سنة	<input type="checkbox"/>	أكثر من 4 سنة
تويتر Twitter	نعم	أقل من 2 سنة	<input type="checkbox"/>	أقل من 2 سنة
		من 2 إلى 4 سنة	<input type="checkbox"/>	من 2 إلى 4 سنة
	لا	أكثر من 4 سنة	<input type="checkbox"/>	أكثر من 4 سنة
يوتيوب YouTube	نعم	أقل من 2 سنة	<input type="checkbox"/>	أقل من 2 سنة
		من 2 إلى 4 سنة	<input type="checkbox"/>	من 2 إلى 4 سنة
	لا	أكثر من 4 سنة	<input type="checkbox"/>	أكثر من 4 سنة
غير ذلك Others	نعم	أقل من 2 سنة	<input type="checkbox"/>	أقل من 2 سنة
		من 2 إلى 4 سنة	<input type="checkbox"/>	من 2 إلى 4 سنة
	لا	أكثر من 4 سنة	<input type="checkbox"/>	أكثر من 4 سنة

24. بخصوص التواصل عبر الشبكات الاجتماعية ، الرجاء وضع علامة (√) في المربع المناسب لإجابتك على ورقة الاستبيان للأسئلة التالية كما في الجدول.

الإجماعية مواقع التواصل والشبكات	هل أنت مشترك في مجموعات	كم عطفية لديك في مجموعات	منذ متى أنت مشترك في المجموعات	كم من الوقت تقريبا تقضي يوميا التواصل للمجموعة
فيسبوك Facebook	نعم <input type="checkbox"/>	أقل من 2 مجموعة <input type="checkbox"/>	أقل من 2 سنة <input type="checkbox"/>	أقل من 2 ساعة <input type="checkbox"/>
	لا <input type="checkbox"/>	من 2 إلى 4 مجموعة <input type="checkbox"/> أكثر من 4 مجموعة <input type="checkbox"/>	من 2 إلى 4 سنة <input type="checkbox"/> أكثر من 4 سنة <input type="checkbox"/>	من 2 إلى 4 ساعة <input type="checkbox"/> أكثر من 4 ساعة <input type="checkbox"/>
تويتر Twitter	نعم <input type="checkbox"/>	أقل من 2 مجموعة <input type="checkbox"/>	أقل من 2 سنة <input type="checkbox"/>	أقل من 2 ساعة <input type="checkbox"/>
	لا <input type="checkbox"/>	من 2 إلى 4 مجموعة <input type="checkbox"/> أكثر من 4 مجموعة <input type="checkbox"/>	من 2 إلى 4 سنة <input type="checkbox"/> أكثر من 4 سنة <input type="checkbox"/>	من 2 إلى 4 ساعة <input type="checkbox"/> أكثر من 4 ساعة <input type="checkbox"/>
يوتيوب YouTube	نعم <input type="checkbox"/>	أقل من 2 مجموعة <input type="checkbox"/>	أقل من 2 سنة <input type="checkbox"/>	أقل من 2 ساعة <input type="checkbox"/>
	لا <input type="checkbox"/>	من 2 إلى 4 مجموعة <input type="checkbox"/> أكثر من 4 مجموعة <input type="checkbox"/>	من 2 إلى 4 سنة <input type="checkbox"/> أكثر من 4 سنة <input type="checkbox"/>	من 2 إلى 4 ساعة <input type="checkbox"/> أكثر من 4 ساعة <input type="checkbox"/>
غير ذلك Others	نعم <input type="checkbox"/>	أقل من 2 مجموعة <input type="checkbox"/>	أقل من 2 سنة <input type="checkbox"/>	أقل من 2 ساعة <input type="checkbox"/>
	لا <input type="checkbox"/>	من 2 إلى 4 مجموعة <input type="checkbox"/> أكثر من 4 مجموعة <input type="checkbox"/>	من 2 إلى 4 سنة <input type="checkbox"/> أكثر من 4 سنة <input type="checkbox"/>	من 2 إلى 4 ساعة <input type="checkbox"/> أكثر من 4 ساعة <input type="checkbox"/>

الجزء الثاني : بيانات عوامل استخدام تطبيقات الأجهزة الذكية للخدمات الحكومية
الرجاء وضع علامة (√) في المربع المناسب لإجابتك على ورقة الاستبيان لل فقرات التالية كما في الجدول

ملاحظة : 1 = أوافق بشدة ، 2 = أوافق ، 3 = محايد ، 4 = أعارض ، 5 = أعارض بشدة

المحور	رمز	الفقرات / العبارات
	SCD11	يوجد لدي العديد من الأصدقاء على الشبكات الإجتماعية الذين أثق بهم وبعضهم يستطيع مساعدتي في إتخاذ القرارات الهامة وفي حل المشاكل.
	SCD12	يوجد لدي العديد من الأصدقاء على الشبكات الإجتماعية الذين أستطيع التحدث لهم عندما أكون وحيدا أو عند الحاجة للتحدث عن مشاكل شخصية.
	SCD13	يوجد لدي إحدى الأصدقاء على الشبكات الإجتماعية يتطوع أن يقدم لي مساعدة مالية عند الحاجة والذي قد يشاركني في مشاكي المالية.
	SCD14	يوجد لدي العديد من الأصدقاء على الشبكات الإجتماعية الذين يشاركونني سمعهم الخاصة بهم ويمكن أن أطلب منهم ترقية للحصول على وظيفة.
	SCD15	الأشخاص الذين أتواصل معهم على الشبكات الإجتماعية يمكن أن يفعلوا أي شيء يهمني ويساعدونني على تحقيق العدالة إن تطلب الأمر.
	SCR21	التواصل مع الآخرين عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية يجعلني أهتم ببعض الأشياء الجديدة وأتابع الأحداث التي لا أعلم عن حدوثها في أي مكان.
	SCR22	التواصل مع الآخرين عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية يجعلني أحاول تجربة أشياء جديدة ويشجعني على شراء أشياء

ملاحظة : 1 = أوافق بشدة ، 2 = أوافق ، 3 = محايد ، 4 = أعارض ، 5 = أعارض بشدة

المحور	رمز	الفقرات / العبارات	1	2	3	4	5
الترويج	FOF41	أقوم بإرسال أي معلومات أو آراء يرسلها لي أصدقائي عن المنتجات والخدمات على الشبكات الإجتماعية إلى أصدقاء آخرين عبر شبكات.					
	FOF42	يهتم بعض أصدقائي عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية بأي معلومات أو آراء والتي قام بنشرها أصدقائي الآخريين الذين قد لا يعرفونهم أصلا.					
	FOF43	أقوم بتقديم النصيحة والمعلومات وتفاصيل تجاري لأصدقاء أصدقائي عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية عن منتجات وخدمات العلامات التجارية.					
	FOF44	أقبل النصيحة وأهتم بالمعلومات التي تأتي من أصدقاء أصدقائي عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية عن منتجات وخدمات العلامات التجارية.					
	FOF45	تتغير وتتأثر أحيانا قراراتي وآرائي حول المنتجات والخدمات للعلامات التجارية بآراء وخبرات أصدقاء أصدقائي عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية.					
الترويج	ADV51	تعتبر نشاطات الدعاية والإعلانات حول العلامات التجارية التي عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية من النشاطات المتكررة والمرئية بسهولة.					
	ADV52	تتوافق وتتفق توقعاتي مع نشاطات الدعاية والإعلانات حول العلامات التجارية التي عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية عن هذه العلامات التجارية.					
	ADV53	تعتبر نشاطات الدعاية والإعلانات حول العلامات التجارية التي عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية ممتعة وجذابة بالشكل الكافي.					
	ADV54	أرى بان نشاطات الدعاية والإعلانات حول العلامات التجارية التي عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية فعالة وناجحة					

5	4	3	2	1	الفقرات / العبارات	رمز	المحور
					أقوم بإختيار العلامات التجارية عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية لأنها تقدم أفضل الإختيارات لي مقارنة مع العلامات التجارية الأخرى.	BRL71	تعزيز المبيعات
					لا أراغب في تغيير إختيارى للعلامات التجارية عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية إلى منافسين آخرين حتى ولو كان هناك مشكلة في العلامات التجارية.	BRL72	
					ألتزم وأحمل الولاء المطلق للعلامات التجارية عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية وأحاول تدعيم ذلك من خلال التأييد المستمر إتجاهها.	BRL73	
					عند الحاجة لشراء ماركة منتج معينة فأبني أقوم بشراء منتج بحمل نفس الماركة والعلامات التجارية التي عرفتها عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية.	BRL74	
					أعتزم الإستمرار وأنوي أن أكرر مستقبلا شراء نفس المنتج الذي بحمل نفس الماركة والعلامات التجارية التي عرفتها عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية.	BRL75	
					أشعر بالثقة والراحة النفسية إتجاه شراء المنتجات والعلامات التجارية التي عرفتها عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية.	BRT81	تعزيز المبيعات
					أشعر بالثقة والراحة النفسية والصدق إتجاه الشركات المصنعة للمنتجات والعلامات التجارية التي عرفتها عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية.	BRT82	
					أشعر بالثقة والراحة النفسية إتجاه الشركات البائعة للمنتجات والعلامات التجارية التي عرفتها عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية وإتجاه معوماتهم.	BRT83	
					أقوم العلامات التجارية التي عرفتها عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية بتقديم المتوقع مع الإلتزام بالوعد والمواعيد	BRT84	

ملاحظة : 1 = أوافق بشدة ، 2 = أوافق ، 3 = محايد ، 4 = أعارض ، 5 = أعارض بشدة

المنتجات والخدمات		المنتجات والخدمات	
PIN101	اعترف وأنوي على شراء بعض المنتجات والعلامات التجارية عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية لأنها تساعد على عدم نسيان هذه المنتجات والعلامات.		
PIN102	أقوم بترتيب فحص المنتجات والخدمات للعلامات التجارية عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية والتأكد من صلاحيتها دون عناء.		
PIN103	أقوم بشراء المنتجات لأنني مشارك بعضوية رسمية في المجموعات الخاصة بالمنتجات والعلامات التجارية عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية.		
PIN104	اعترف وأنوي على استخدام وشراء منتجات وخدمات للعلامات التجارية عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية وأخطط لشراؤها في المستقبل.		
PIN105	أرى أنه من المجدي استخدام منتجات وخدمات للعلامات التجارية عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية وشراؤها في المستقبل.		

المنتجات والخدمات		المنتجات والخدمات	
CBV201	أرى أنني سأهتم في المستقبل بنشاطات الدعاية والإعلانات حول العلامات التجارية التي عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية.		
CBV202	أتوقع أن نشاطات الدعاية والإعلانات حول العلامات التجارية التي عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية من الطرق السهلة والمضمونة للوصول للعملاء.		
CBV203	أتوقع بأن نشاطات الدعاية والإعلانات حول العلامات التجارية التي عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية تؤدي إلى الشعور بنوع جديد من المتعة والرفاهية.		
CBV204	أرى بأن نشاطات الدعاية والإعلانات حول العلامات التجارية التي عبر الشبكات الإجتماعية خطوة إسترراتيجية وإستثمار حقيقي مستقبلي.		
CBV205	أشعر بأنه سيكون لدي رغبة وإلتزام أكثر في المستقبل إ تجاه نشاطات الدعاية والإعلانات حول العلامات التجارية		

Appendix C: Ethical Approval Letter

Ethical Approval Letter from the College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, Brunel University London



College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Brunel University London
Kingston Lane
Uxbridge
UB8 3PH
United Kingdom
www.brunel.ac.uk

3 November 2017

LETTER OF APPROVAL

Applicant: MR EMAD SALEM

Project Title: Assessing Consumer Behaviours within the Context of Social Media Marketing A Case of Saudi Small and Medium Enterprises

Reference: 7713-LR-Nov/2017- 8636-2

Dear MR EMAD SALEM

The Research Ethics Committee has considered the above application recently submitted by you.

The Chair, acting under delegated authority has agreed that there is no objection on ethical grounds to the proposed study. Approval is given on the understanding that the conditions of approval set out below are followed:

- The agreed protocol must be followed. Any changes to the protocol will require prior approval from the Committee by way of an application for an amendment.
- On the Participant Information Sheet, please confirm that the data will be stored on a Brunel server, password protected, and will be destroyed when no longer required. Please also add your supervisor's name and Brunel email address at the end. For question "What if something goes wrong?" please state that the participant should contact the Chair of the CBASS Research Ethics Committee, email cbass-ethics@brunel.ac.uk.
- Please ensure the Participant Information Sheet is uploaded with the survey.

Please note that:

- Research Participant Information Sheets and (where relevant) flyers, posters, and consent forms should include a clear statement that research ethics approval has been obtained from the relevant Research Ethics Committee.
- The Research Participant Information Sheets should include a clear statement that queries should be directed, in the first instance, to the Supervisor (where relevant), or the researcher. Complaints, on the other hand, should be directed, in the first instance, to the Chair of the relevant Research Ethics Committee.
- Approval to proceed with the study is granted subject to receipt by the Committee of satisfactory responses to any conditions that may appear above, in addition to any subsequent changes to the protocol.
- The Research Ethics Committee reserves the right to sample and review documentation, including raw data, relevant to the study.
- You may not undertake any research activity if you are not a registered student of Brunel University or if you cease to become registered, including abeyance or temporary withdrawal. As a deregistered student you would not be insured to undertake research activity. Research activity includes the recruitment of participants, undertaking consent procedures and collection of data. Breach of this requirement constitutes research misconduct and is a disciplinary offence.

Professor David Galliar

Chair

College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Brunel University London

Appendix D: Factor Loading Matrix and Communalities

Rotated Component Matrix ^a												
	Component											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
SCD11					.859							
SCD12					.889							
SCD13					.870							
SCD14					.874							
SCD15					.839							
SCR21			.822									
SCR22			.951									
SCR23			.951									
SCR24			.892									
SCR25			.904									
EWM31				.850								
EWM32				.873								
EWM33				.848								
EWM34				.853								
EWM35				.881								
FOF1							.909					
FOF2							.813					
FOF3							.829					
FOF4							.928					
FOF5							.918					
ADV51								.597				
ADV52								.588				
ADV53								.671				
ADV54								.662				
ADV55								.622				
BRI61									.710			
BRI62									.914			
BRI63									.862			
BRI64									.555			
BRI65									.606			
BRL71						.725						
BRL72						.832						
BRL73						.825						
BRL74						.788						
BRL75						.781						
BRT81										.753		
BRT82										.835		
BRT83										.715		
BRT84										.634		
BRT85										.617		
BRA91	.774											
BRA92	.799											
BRA93	.766											

BRA94	.623	
BRA95	.577	
PIN101	.731	
PIN102	.754	
PIN103	.783	
PIN104	.857	
PIN105	.751	
CBV201		.724
CBV202		.780
CBV203		.773
CBV204		.868
CBV205		.786
APR301		.453
APR302		.566
APR303		.711
APR304		.493
APR305		.630

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 12 iterations.

Appendix E: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	14.407	30.652	30.652	14.407	30.652	30.652	5.698	12.122	12.122
2	6.296	13.396	44.048	6.296	13.396	44.048	5.307	11.292	23.415
3	4.787	10.185	54.233	4.787	10.185	54.233	4.752	10.111	33.526
4	4.160	8.852	63.085	4.160	8.852	63.085	4.390	9.340	42.866
5	2.879	6.125	69.210	2.879	6.125	69.210	4.252	9.047	51.912
6	2.004	4.264	73.474	2.004	4.264	73.474	4.007	8.525	60.437
7	1.717	3.653	77.126	1.717	3.653	77.126	3.657	7.781	68.218
8	1.328	2.826	79.952	1.328	2.826	79.952	3.477	7.399	75.617
9	1.138	2.422	82.374	1.138	2.422	82.374	3.176	6.757	82.374
10	.928	1.974	84.348						
11	.828	1.762	86.110						
12	.715	1.522	87.632						
13	.612	1.301	88.934						
14	.467	.994	89.927						
15	.435	.924	90.852						
16	.353	.751	91.602						
17	.323	.686	92.289						
18	.307	.652	92.941						
19	.267	.569	93.510						
20	.251	.534	94.043						
21	.216	.459	94.502						
22	.211	.449	94.951						
23	.204	.433	95.384						
24	.186	.395	95.779						
25	.172	.365	96.144						
26	.160	.340	96.484						
27	.152	.322	96.806						
28	.140	.298	97.104						
29	.136	.290	97.394						
30	.123	.262	97.656						
31	.118	.251	97.907						
32	.104	.221	98.128						
33	.096	.205	98.333						
34	.091	.194	98.527						
35	.090	.192	98.719						
36	.082	.174	98.894						
37	.075	.160	99.054						

38	.073	.156	99.210
39	.070	.148	99.358
40	.066	.141	99.499
41	.055	.117	99.616
42	.053	.112	99.728
43	.050	.106	99.833
44	.047	.099	99.932
45	.032	.068	100.000
46	5.207E-17	1.108E-16	100.000
47	-1.848E-16	-3.931E-16	100.000

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Appendix F: Normality Assumptions of the Datasets

Descriptive Statistics									
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Std. Error	Kurtosis	Std. Error
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
SCD1A	553	1.60	5.00	3.91	0.85	-0.68	.104	-.014	.207
SCR2A	553	1.00	5.00	3.81	0.89	-1.32	.104	1.556	.207
SC_A	553	1.90	5.00	3.86	0.75	-0.94	.104	.598	.207
EWM3A	553	1.40	5.00	4.01	0.72	-1.75	.104	2.825	.207
FOF5A	553	1.60	5.00	3.84	0.86	-1.23	.104	.900	.207
ADV5A	553	1.60	5.00	3.79	0.77	-0.98	.104	.570	.207
SMMP_A	553	1.88	4.85	3.88	0.54	-1.39	.104	2.134	.207
BRI6A	553	1.80	4.80	3.76	0.77	-0.78	.104	-.378	.207
BRL7A	553	1.40	5.00	3.76	0.89	-1.13	.104	.188	.207
BRT8A	553	1.40	4.80	3.67	0.86	-1.11	.104	.480	.207
BRA9A	553	1.60	4.80	3.85	0.74	-0.91	.104	.009	.207
BRK_A	553	1.80	4.60	3.76	0.61	-1.73	.104	2.779	.207
PIN1A	553	2.00	4.80	3.92	0.67	-1.38	.104	1.559	.207
CBV2A	553	1.60	4.80	3.97	0.65	-1.57	.104	2.336	.207
APR3A	553	1.80	4.60	3.83	0.56	-1.14	.104	.956	.207
Valid (listwise)	N 553								

Appendix G: Reliability Assessment Results

Factor	Item correlation	total Cronbach's α if Item Deleted	Factor	Item correlation	total Cronbach's α if Item Deleted
SCD - 5 variables Cronbach's α = 0.949			BRL-5 variables Cronbach's α = 0.877		
SCD11	0.82**	0.943	BRL71	0.76**	0.841
SCD12	0.80**	0.946	BRL72	0.77**	0.843
SCD13	0.87**	0.936	BRL73	0.75**	0.841
SCD14	0.90**	0.930	BRL74	0.64**	0.871
SCD15	0.91**	0.928	BRL75	0.68**	0.86
SCR -5 variables Cronbach's α = 0.946			BRT-5 variables Cronbach's α = 0.857		
SCR21	0.81**	0.945	BRT81	0.75**	0.808
SCR22	0.89**	0.936	BRT82	0.74**	0.815
SCR23	0.89**	0.946	BRT83	0.60**	0.844
SCR24	0.91**	0.943	BRT84	0.65**	0.833
SCR25	0.92**	0.940	BRT85	0.67**	0.834
EWM - 5 variables Cronbach's α = 0.933			BRA-5 variables Cronbach's α = 0.774		
EWM31	0.784	0.927	BRA91	0.58**	0.729
EWM32	0.891	0.909	BRA92	0.66**	0.70
EWM33	0.842	0.916	BRA93	0.61**	0.707
EWM34	0.781	0.926	BRA94	0.53**	0.766
EWM35	0.863	0.911	BRA95	0.54**	0.76
FOF -5 variables Cronbach's α = 0.936			PIN - 5 variables Cronbach's α = 0.799		
FOF1	0.89**	0.914	PIN101	0.65**	0.744
FOF2	0.77**	0.935	PIN102	0.66**	0.741
FOF3	0.82*	0.934	PIN103	0.67**	0.732
FOF4	0.91*	0.906	PIN104	0.49**	0.788
FOF5	0.89**	0.912	PIN105	0.52**	0.797
ADV - 5 variables Cronbach's α = 0.895			CBV -5 variables Cronbach's α = 0.883		
ADV51	0.83**	0.895	CBV201	0.74**	0.854
ADV52	0.76**	0.911	CBV202	0.75**	0.851
ADV53	0.84**	0.891	CBV203	0.72**	0.859
ADV54	0.79**	0.903	CBV204	0.66**	0.872
ADV55	0.76**	0.909	CBV205	0.75**	0.851
BRI - 5variables Cronbach's α = 0.818			APR - 5variables Cronbach's α = 0.839		
BRI61	0.56**	0.800	APR301	0.69**	0.804
BRI62	0.69**	0.759	APR302	0.73**	0.787
BRI63	0.54**	0.803	APR303	0.64**	0.812
BRI64	0.62**	0.781	APR304	0.56**	0.829
BRI65	0.67**	0.764	APR305	0.67**	0.801

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.673
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	63098.712
	Df	1770
	Sig.	.000

Appendix H: Characteristics of the Use of Technologies

Online Experience

Frequency	Count	Percentage (%)
Yes	544	98.4
No	9	1.6
Total	553	100

Frequencies of Online Purchasing

Frequency	Count	Percentage (%)
None/Never	9	1.6
1 – 2 times	29	5.2
3 – 4	154	27.8
5 – 7	59	10.7
More than 8	302	54.6
Total	553	100

Level of Knowledge in Using Computer

Level of knowledge	Count	Percentage (%)
Very Poor	0	0
Poor	19	3.4
Moderate	129	23.3
Good	322	58.2
Very good	83	15.0
Total	553	100

Level of Knowledge of Using Internet

Level of knowledge	Count	Percentage (%)
Very Poor	0	0
Poor	9	1.6
Moderate	150	27.1
Good	329	59.5
Very good	65	11.8
Total	553	100

Knowledge Level of Smartphones or any Other Similar Devices

Level of knowledge	Count	Percentage (%)
Very Poor	0	0
Poor	10	1.8
Moderate	111	20.1
Good	350	63.3
Very good	82	14.8
Total	553	100

Having a Computer, Smart Devices and Internet at Work or Home

	Response	Count	Percentage (%)
Computer at Work	Yes	501	90.6
	No	52	9.4
Internet at Work	Yes	491	88.8
	No	62	11.2
Computer at Home	Yes	553	100
	No	0	0
Internet at Home	Yes	553	100
	No	0	0
Smart device	Yes	553	100
	No	0	0.0

Number of hours spend on Computers at Work

NO of Hours	Count	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 hour	86	15.6
1– 3 Hours	199	36.0
3 – 6 Hours	161	29.1
More than 6 hours	107	19.3
Total	553	100

Number of hours spend on Internet at Work

NO Hours	Count	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 hour	180	32.5
1– 3 Hours	173	31.3
3 – 6 Hours	143	25.9
More than 6 hours	57	10.3
Total	553	100

Number of hours spend on Computer at Home

NO Hours	Count	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 hour	292	52.8
1– 3 Hours	153	27.7
3 – 6 Hours	89	16.1
More than 6 hours	19	3.4
Total	553	100

Number of hours spend on Internet at Home

NO Hours	Count	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 hour	196	35.4
1– 3 Hours	168	30.4

3 – 6 Hours	134	24.2
More than 6 hours	55	9.9
Total	553	100

Number of hours spent on Smartphones, Tablets or any Other Devices

NO Hours	Count	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 hour	10	1.8
1– 3 Hours	206	37.3
3 – 6 Hours	222	40.1
More than 6 hours	115	20.8
Total	553	100

Method for purchasing a product Online

	Response	Count	Percentage (%)
Internet at Work	Yes	116	21
	No	437	79
Internet at Home	Yes	322	58.2
	No	231	41.8
Internet using Devices	Yes	474	85.7
	No	79	14.3

Appendix I: Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Characteristic	Group	No. (%)
Gender	Male	412 (74.5%)
	Female	141 (25.5%)
Age	Less than 25	124 (22.4%)
	25 – 34	283 (51.2%)
	35 – 45	89 (16.1)
	45 – 54	28 (5.1%)
	55 – 65	29(5.2%)
Academic degree	High School or Less	45 (8.1%)
	Diploma	29 (5.2%)
	Bachelor	290 (52.4%)
	Masters	189 (34.2%)
Income	Less than 200,000 SR*	170 (30.7%)
	200K – 400K SR	169 (30.6%)
	400K – 600K SR	120 (21.7%)
	More than 600K SR	94 (17.0%)
Nationality	Saudi	369 (75%)
	Non-Saudi	138 (25%)

Appendix J: Engagement with SNSs and Behavioural Patterns Results

Number of Online Friends

NO Hours	Count	Percentage (%)
Fewer than 10	103	18.6
11– 30	76	13.7
31 – 50 Hours	68	12.3
More than 50	306	55.3
Total	553	100

Engagement in Facebook

Description	Group	Count	Percentage (%)
Use	No	142	25.7
	Yes	411	74.3
Length	Less than 2 years	123	22.2
	2 – 4	189	34.2
	More than 4 years	241	43.6
Account	No	73	13.2
	Yes	480	86.8
Account Length	Less than 2 years	103	18.6
	2 – 4	163	29.5
	More than 4 years	287	51.9

Description	Group	Count	Percentage (%)
Use	No	108	19.5
	Yes	445	80.5
Length	Less than 2 years	119	21.5
	2 – 4	253	45.8
	More than 4 years	181	32.7
Account	No	53	9.6
	Yes	500	90.4
Account Length	Less than 2 years	93	16.8
	2 – 4	270	48.8
	More than 4 years	190	34.4

Engagement in YouTube

Description	Group	Count	Percentage (%)
Use	No	0	0
	Yes	553	100
Length	Less than 2 years	47	8.5
	2 – 4	170	30.7
	More than 4 years	336	60.8
Account	No	140	25.3
	Yes	413	74.7
Account Length	Less than 2 years	116	21.0
	2 – 4	202	36.5
	More than 4 years	235	42.5

Engagement in Other Social Media Networks

Description	Group	Count	Percentage (%)
Use	No	0	0
	Yes	553	100
Length	Less than 2 years	68	12.3
	2 – 4	234	42.3
	More than 4 years	251	45.4
Account	No	9	1.6
	Yes	544	98.4
Account Length	Less than 2 years	58	10.5
	2 – 4	319	57.7
	More than 4 years	176	31.8

Engagement in the main Social Media Groups

Description	Group	Count	Percentage (%)
Facebook	No	268	48.5
	Yes	285	51.5
Twitter	No	200	36.2
	Yes	353	63.8
YouTube	No	113	20.4
	Yes	440	79.6
Others	No	114	20.6
	Yes	439	79.4

Number of groups they Engaged in with the main Social Media Groups

Description	Group	Count	Percentage (%)
Facebook	Fewer than 2 groups	298	53.9
	2 – 4	177	32.0
	More than 4 groups	78	14.1
Twitter	Fewer than 2 groups	249	45.0
	2 – 4	65	11.8
	More than 4 groups	239	43.2
YouTube	Fewer than 2 groups	208	37.6
	2 – 4	168	30.4
	More than 4 groups	177	32.0
Others	Fewer than 2 groups	312	56.4
	2 – 4	106	19.2
	More than 4 groups	135	24.4

Number of years they have been Engaged with groups in the main Social Media Groups

Description	Group	Count	Percentage (%)
Facebook	Fewer than 2 Years	289	52.3
	2 – 4 Years	176	31.8
	More than 4 Years	88	15.9
Twitter	Fewer than 2 Years	240	43.4
	2 – 4 Years	245	44.3
	More than 4 Years	68	12.3
YouTube	Fewer than 2 Years	265	47.9
	2 – 4 Years	164	29.7
	More than 4 Years	124	22.4
Others	Fewer than 2 Years	266	48.1
	2 – 4 Years	219	39.6
	More than 4 Years	68	12.3

Time they Spend Engaged with groups in the main Social Media Groups

Description	Group	Count	Percentage (%)
Facebook	Fewer than 2 Hours	496	89.7
	2 – 4 Hours	47	8.5
	More than 4 Hours	10	1.8
Twitter	Fewer than 2 Hours	345	62.4
	2 – 4 Hours	180	32.5
	More than 4 Hours	28	5.1
YouTube	Fewer than 2 Hours	373	67.5
	2 – 4 Hours	113	20.4
	More than 4 Hours	67	12.1
Others	Fewer than 2 Hours	321	58.0
	2 – 4 Hours	184	33.3
	More than 4 Hours	48	8.7

Appendix K: Descriptive Statistics of the ISMMM Model Factors

Descriptive Statistics for Factors and their Statements

Item	Average	St dev
SCBN11	3.80	0.92
SCBN12	3.80	0.92
SCBN13	3.93	0.84
SCBN14	3.92	0.85
SCBN15	3.90	0.86
Aggregated Average	3.87	0.80
SCBR21	3.84	0.90
SCBR22	3.83	0.88
SCBR23	3.72	0.90
SCBR24	3.81	0.82
SCBR25	3.75	0.85
Aggregated Average	3.79	0.71
EWM31	3.95	0.94
EWM32	3.88	0.87
EWM33	3.84	0.88
EWM34	3.75	0.93
EWM35	3.86	0.97
Aggregated Average	3.86	0.86
FOF1	3.81	1.05
FOF2	3.85	0.94
FOF3	3.91	0.85
FOF4	3.84	1.01
FOF5	3.66	0.98
Aggregated Average	3.81	0.88
ADV51	3.49	0.94
ADV52	3.66	0.97
ADV53	3.36	0.92
ADV54	3.46	0.88
ADV55	3.29	0.89
Aggregated Average	3.45	0.84
SCD11	3.88	0.85
SCD12	3.73	0.90
SCD13	3.80	0.91
SCD14	3.71	1.02
SCD15	3.74	1.04
Aggregated Average	3.77	0.77
BRL71	3.88	0.98
BRL72	3.77	0.89
BRL73	3.67	1.15
BRL74	3.71	1.22
BRL75	3.76	1.15
Aggregated Average	3.76	0.89
BRT81	3.74	1.05

BRT82	3.67	0.90
BRT83	3.62	0.95
BRT84	3.71	1.18
BRT85	3.63	1.28
Aggregated Average	3.67	0.86
BRA91	4.00	0.85
BRA92	3.77	0.85
BRA93	3.68	1.00
BRA94	3.82	0.91
BRA95	3.76	1.04
Aggregated Average	3.81	0.73
PIN101	3.94	0.74
PIN102	3.83	0.75
PIN103	3.91	0.86
PIN104	3.80	0.84
PIN105	3.95	0.86
Aggregated Average	3.89	0.86
BRA91	3.95	0.80
BRA92	4.05	0.79
BRA93	3.78	0.69
BRA94	3.89	0.81
BRA95	4.07	0.84
Aggregated Average	3.95	0.65

Appendix L: Multi-group Analysis

Measurement Weights between Male and Female Respondents

			Male		Female		z-score	Path Number
			Estimate	P	Estimate	P		
SMMP	<---	SC	0.681	0.000	0.973	0.000	2.034**	1
BK	<---	SMMP	0.313	0.000	0.645	0.000	4.285***	2
PI	<---	SMMP	0.467	0.000	-0.258	0.024	-5.514***	3
PI	<---	BK	-0.121	0.374	1.655	0.000	9.086***	4
CB	<---	PI	0.388	0.000	-1.577	0.091	-2.105**	5
CB	<---	BK	0.293	0.000	3.125	0.009	2.357**	6
AP	<---	CB	1.003	0.000	0.679	0.000	-5.362***	7
BRI	<---	BK	0.466	0.000	0.477	0.000	0.080	8
BRL	<---	BK	0.648	0.000	0.982	0.000	2.455**	9
BRT	<---	BK	1.074	0.000	1.221	0.000	0.929	10
EWM	<---	SMMP	0.386	0.000	0.718	0.000	2.872***	11
FOF	<---	SMMP	0.671	0.000	0.796	0.000	1.330	12
OA	<---	SMMP	-0.028	0.755	-0.053	0.565	-0.193	13

Notes: *** p-value < 0.01; ** p-value < 0.05; * p-value < 0.10

Measurement weights between Less than 35 years old group and >=35 years

			Young "<35"		Old ">=35"		z-score	Path Number
			Estimate	P	Estimate	P		
SMMP	<---	SC	0.864	0.000	0.240	0.000	-6.889***	1
BK	<---	SMMP	0.565	0.000	0.091	0.001	-9.889***	2
PI	<---	SMMP	0.392	0.000	0.092	0.003	-3.342***	3
PI	<---	BK	0.429	0.001	0.003	0.969	-2.72***	4
CB	<---	PI	0.450	0.000	0.610	0.000	2.852***	5
CB	<---	BK	0.516	0.000	0.340	0.000	-2.171**	6
AP	<---	CB	0.834	0.000	0.622	0.000	-3.517***	7
BRI	<---	BK	0.846	0.000	-0.998	0.000	-6.294***	8
BRL	<---	BK	1.072	0.000	2.434	0.000	5.11***	9
BRT	<---	BK	1.274	0.000	0.946	0.000	-1.919*	10
EWM	<---	SMMP	0.544	0.000	0.920	0.002	1.239	11
FOF	<---	SMMP	0.750	0.000	1.706	0.000	2.762***	12
OA	<---	SMMP	-0.025	0.667	0.327	0.189	1.377	13

Notes: *** p-value < 0.01; ** p-value < 0.05; * p-value < 0.10