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INSTAGRAM INFLUENCE ON THE CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOUR OF FEMALE STUDENTS IN KSA

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ABSTRACT

The advent of social media, and specifically Instagram, has shifted Marketing focus, and consequently consumer behaviour. The purpose of this study is to measure the level of influence Instagram has on female college students' consumption habits in KSA in order to help companies in enhancing their digital content on Instagram, by providing a deep analysis of the effectiveness of different digital marketing instruments. This study has combined qualitative and quantitative data, for a deeper analysis and understanding of this problem. The data were collected from 103 female students from Effat University and King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, and from three digital Marketing managers. The results indicate the positive influence of Instagram advertisements on students' consumption behaviour. However, those advertisements can only have an influence within the limits each student offers.

1 INTRODUCTION

Digital Marketing is the newest trend in Marketing, in which companies utilize online platforms in order to build brand awareness, get engaged with consumers, and to monitor their “online behaviour” closely. Social Media has offered companies the needed instruments which facilitated this process. About 35% of total Saudi population are social media users [1]. That mean, 8.9 million individuals are reachable and available on different social media platforms. Therefore, enormous Marketing efforts must be invested on digital Social Media in order for companies to be able to convey their messages to a huge number of potential customers and consumers. Among Middle Eastern countries, Saudi Arabia is considered one of the most social media revenue generators [1]. This indicates the huge influence social media has on both: businesses and consumers in Saudi Arabia. The continuous exposure to digital social media, has changed many different factors affecting consumers’ attitude, and shaped their preferences. Duffett [2] claims the advertisements on social media affected consumers positively. Consumers who are frequently engaged in social media tend to create positive attitude toward digital Marketing efforts [3]. Besides that, advertisements in social media influence offline purchase behaviour [4].

Social media is considered a convenient platform to search for product and brand [5]. Consumers get engaged in social media for the purpose of creating identities for themselves [6]. In addition, young consumers seek instantaneous forms of social media, which can gratify their needs, and keep them updated with the rapidly changing trends [7]. According to Solomon [8], there are four key factors playing a profound role in shaping consumers’ behaviour: culture, society (External), personality, and psychology (Internal). Thoene [9] has found a positive correlation between the number of companies followed on social media platforms, and the number of purchasing decisions made by those followers. This can be understood by the constant information companies are sending regarding their promotions and special deals, in which followers (customers) are exposed to on a daily basis.

The rapid growth of Instagram in Saudi Arabia has facilitated the process of e-commerce market development in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, Instagram can be considered a tool to test the viability of products/ services before their official launch, due to its low marketing costs and high popularity. Companies can know the actual feedback directly from their consumers, which will help them in improving the products/services they’re providing. Furthermore, the increasing number of opinion leaders on Instagram has helped those companies to reach more potential customers. Therefore, this study measure the level of influence Instagram has on female college students’ consumption habits in KSA.

2 METHODOLOGY

This study will gather the primary data by combining both qualitative and quantitative data to get accurate results, and to offer deeper understanding of this problem.

2.1 Investigation Methods

Quantitative method refers to an investigation process where data collected are in the form of quantified numbers, and objectively comparable relationships. In this study, quantitative data will be collected via surveys distributed online. This approach will provide useful quantified answers and will allow collecting more responses. Qualitative method is a method used to peer into humans' behaviour's by observing and analysing their direct responses. One-to-one interviews will be conducted typically with consumers and digital marketing managers. This method will help in providing deep insights about attitudes and behaviours, and will complement the responses gathered from the previous approach.

2.2 Sample

There are three digital marketing managers participated in the interview section whom are from Memac Ogilvy Advertising Co., Nahdi Medical Co. and Gluetube Digital Agency. This study focuses on female college students in Jeddah. Jeddah is the most diverse city in KSA, which makes it a well representative of the population of KSA. The students will be selected randomly from two universities in Jeddah. Total of 103 students had participated in the online survey, which are from Effat University and King Abdulaziz University (KAU). These two universities were chosen for the following reasons:

- Represent the private and the public sector.
- Diversity in backgrounds and ethnics.
- Different social classes and purchasing power.
- Different levels of education.

2.3 Designing the Questionnaire

Questionnaire is a data-collecting instrument that will be used in both previously discussed methods: survey and interviews. This instrument will provide variety of answers and opinions from the targeted segment, which will facilitate the process of analysing and comparing all data collected.

In this study, the survey questionnaires were developed for the purpose of collecting information about female college students' social media usage, specifically Instagram, and assessing its influence on these students' purchasing decisions. On the other hand, interviews will be conducted with digital Marketing managers, to know both perspectives. The aims of these interviews are to peer into

students' consumption behaviour, and to determine the extent to which digital Marketing managers can influence it.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result of online survey

Table 1 shows 99% of the participated in this study are female and only one male involved. Majority of the participants about 55.345% are fall in to group age of 20 to 21 years old. There are 25.16% and 8.74% of the participants are from group age of 22 to 23 and 18 to 19 years old respectively. Only 7.77% of the participants are above 23 years old.

Table 1: The demographic of the participants

Characteristic	Items	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	1	0.97
	Female	102	99.03
Age Group	18 to 19	9	8.74
	20 to 21	57	55.34
	22 to 23	29	28.16
	Other	8	7.77

Figure 1 shows majority about 78% of the participants have lower income ranging from 1000 to 1500 SR. There are 8% and 4% of the participants have income 1500 to 2000 SR and 2000 to 2500 SR respectively. About 10% of the participants have income more than 2500 SR.

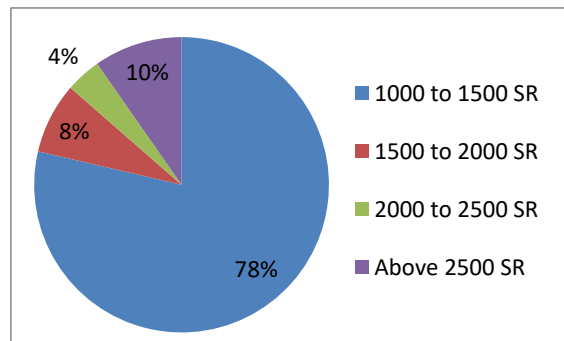


Figure 1: Monthly income of the participants

Out of the 103 participants, about 94.17% of them admit they have used social media often and 5.83% of the participants do not use social media. Figure 2 outlines

that, about 62% of the participants who have used social media visited Instagram the most compared to Twitter (21%), Path (12%) and Facebook (5%).

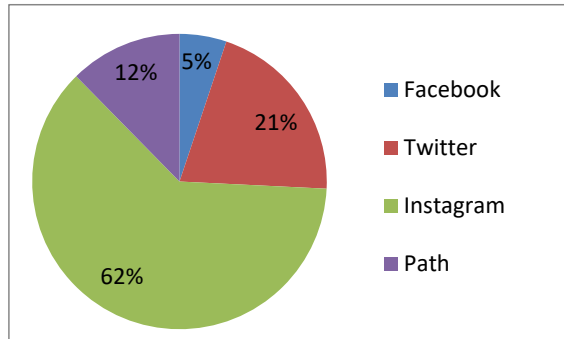


Figure 2: The platform that participants have used the most

Figure 3 show the main attributes for using the platform and about 93.2% of the participants agreed that convenience is important and extremely important to them. Besides that, others attributes such as credibility, instant updates, real-life experiences and variety of information and opinions have mark the important and extremely important percentage of 70.87%, 77.67%, 78.64% and 85.44% respectively.

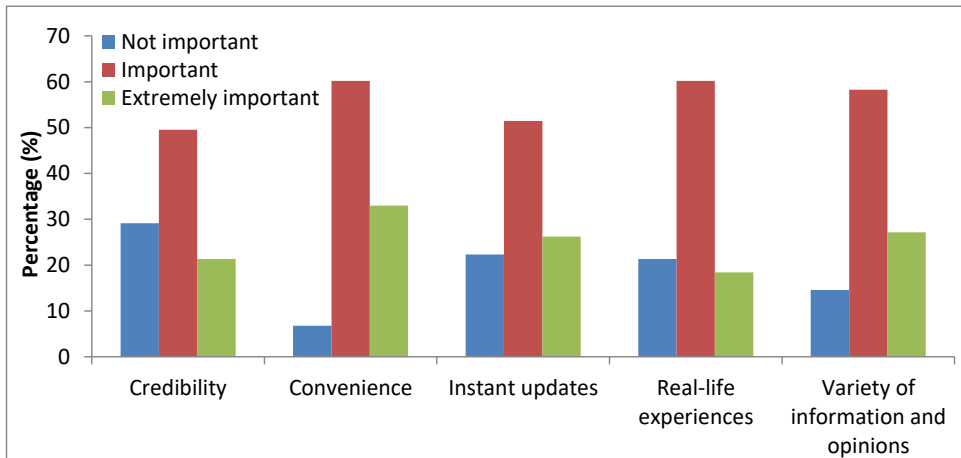


Figure 3: The main attributes for using the platform

Besides that, 95.1% of the participants do have their own Instagram account and 4.85% does not have Instagram account. Figure 4 highlights majority about 70% of them using Instagram daily. There are 22% and 2% of the participants use the Instagram 1to 5 times a week and 1to 5 times a month respectively. About 6% of the participants claim them no longer using Instagram.

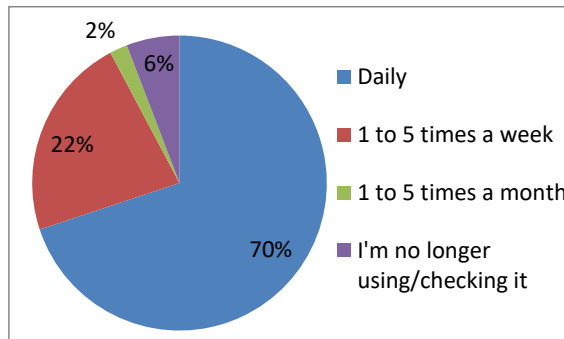


Figure 4: The frequency of using Instagram

Figure 5 shows about 46% of the participants exposed to 1 to 5 promotions or advertisements on Instagram per day. There are 25%, 14% and 15% of the participant claims they have exposed to 5 to 10, 10 to 15 and more than 15 promotions or advertisements on Instagram per day.

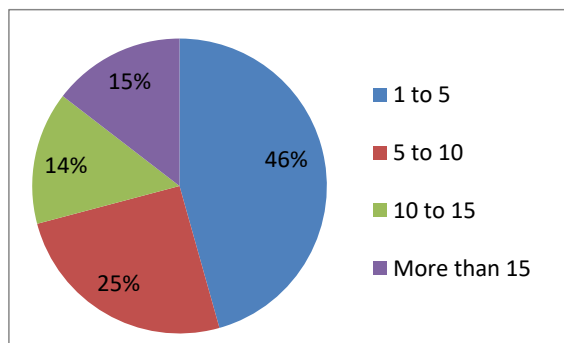


Figure 5: The number of promotions or advertisements appears on Instagram per day

Besides that, 49.5% of the participants agreed that they often purchase what is recommended in Instagram and 50.5% of the participants don't trust any review/recommendation posted in Instagram.

Next, about 52.4% of the participants agreed that the advertisement promoted directly from the brand page have higher influence intensity, while there are 47.6% of the participants claim brands and products promoted by bloggers may influence the purchasing decision. The participant prefer direct advertisement because of credibility, legitimate and they don't trust bloggers. The reasons of participant prefer

indirect advertisements are the real person review the product after using and also compare across others company products.

Figure 6 shows the most influential product advertised on Instagram is beauty (Makeup, Daily Essentials, and Fashion) contributes by 79.6%, follow by food about 41.8%, electronics devices about 216.3% and 2% for others.

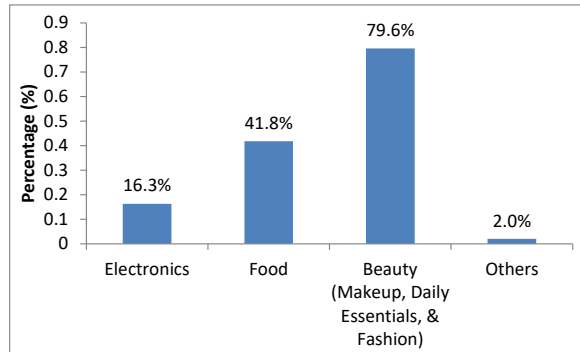


Figure 6: Most influential product advertised on Instagram

Figure 7 shows that 69.9% of the participant purchase to satisfy an important specific need. There is 61.2% of the participant purchases simply because of happy. About 14.6% and 11.7% of the participants purchase because of enhance their social image and cope with a negative issue happening in their life respectively.

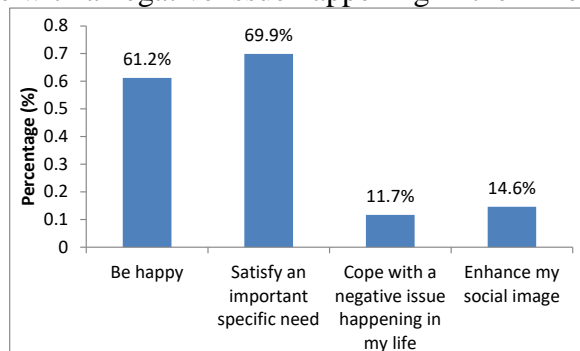


Figure 7: The reasons of purchase

Figure 8 shows that 78.6% of the participants honestly feel happy after purchases and 33% satisfied about them. There are 4.9% participants feel regret after purchases and 18.4% do not have any special feeling.

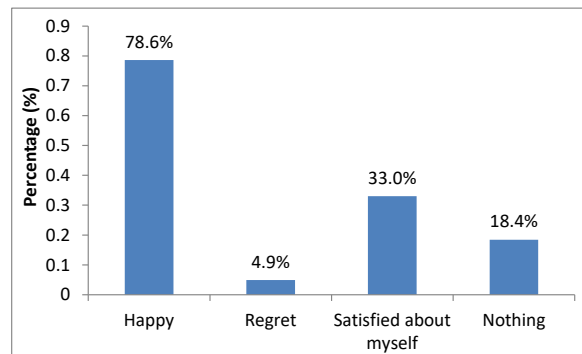


Figure 8: The feeling after purchase

3.2 Managers Interviews

Manager's interviews were conducted with three digital marketing managers in Jeddah, namely Memac Ogilvy Advertising Co., Nahdi Medical Co. and Gluetube Digital Agency.

3.2.1 *Among social media platforms, which one is more effective? In terms of ROI*

- Facebook is the best social media platforms and has, by far, the best ROI because they have a very robust ad management system with a very high and sophisticated level of targeting.
- It depends mainly on your brand objective, target audience, budget, and your KPI! For our company, we're highly active on Instagram, as our target audience-female- have strong presence there.
- Corporates focus on Twitter and LinkedIn while Consumer Goods focus on Facebook and Instagram.

3.2.2 *Which type of advertisement is more influential? Direct/indirect, why?*

- The method and platform for advertisement varies from audience to audience and also the context in which the advertisement is being served. However, as a golden rule direct marketing is always more beneficial, both to the customer and to the brand.
- Indirect advertisements trigger audiences' emotions, due to its credibility and tone of voice. On the other hand, a company must understand first its target audience very well, in order for them to design a proper and influential content, which conveys the right message to the right audience. The point is: the answer depends on the content and the message the company wants to convey.
- Each one has its advantages and disadvantages. Direct marketing sometimes make consumer feel special and trigger his/her wants and needs without reaching the point of being pushy (i.e. Email marketing). On the other hand, indirect marketing is

that consumer comes to your brand because they either relates to the product have interest or common behaviour.

3.2.3 From your experience, what are the main factors of a successful digital campaign?

- There has to be a story to be told. The campaign should have share-ability in built. It should have at least 2-3 reasons why people would love to share it. The campaign should give people a reason to co-create content for the brand and business. Last but not least, the reach of the campaign to the target audience would finally define the success.

- Brand proposition (the content of the campaign), must resonate well with the target audience. Also, selecting the right channel, and creatively visualizing the message are key success factors in any digital campaign.

- Well executed strategy, artworks and contents that drag followers into potential customers. As digital marketing is much convenient than on ground/ off-line marketing.

3.2.4 Currently, do you implement a co-creation strategy by utilizing customers' feedback?

- Yes, it's critical to our strategy.
- We've recently started implementing this strategy. By doing so, we'll enhance our customers' experiences by knowing their exact needs.
- For sure! In fact, consumer feedback satisfies both consumer demand and company aspiration. Feedback help track consumer trends, likes, dislikes, demands and wishes.

3.2.5 In your opinion, what are your responsibilities as a digital Marketing manager toward the society?

- Our responsibility is to provide opportunities to the society for ethical engagement and entertainment with various brands. As a society, primarily all of us are looking to be entertained and informed via various digital platforms. It is a duty of any marketing evangelist like me to provide such content within the ethical boundaries. There is no reason for us to overpromise as to what a brand can do for the society.

- To fulfil our customers' needs through utilizing our data. Provide a contextual and personalized digital experience, away from commercial and hard-selling techniques.

- To provide a credible content by being transparent, offering good quality products branded in an excellent way (visuals and contents).

3.2.6 What challenges do you face in this field?

- A lot of them. Can't count!

- The most challenging parts are: to be up to date with the rapidly changing trends of this field, to integrate between online and offline touch points, and to provide a trustworthy and valuable content to your customers.

- The challenge of maintaining several accounts prosper and evolve over time, manage colleagues handling several projects for clients and maintain happy clients. Constant meeting and update in other to make new deals.

3.2.7 *How the future of digital Marketing will look like?*

- There is no future of digital marketing! The future lays in stakeholder engagement in a platform agnostic environment, which means irrespective of the online or offline world, your marketing strategy should be able to tap into the right moment for engagement with the customer. The future, hence is, marketing that is omnipresent yet technologically advanced.

- In one word: omnichannel! This means, to offer your customers an integrated experience across all channels, online and offline touch points!

- As long as the consumer is educated and open for change hopefully it reaches better place in 10 years ahead from now.

4 CONCLUSION

This study has shown the positive influence that marketing on Instagram has on female college students' purchasing decisions. Instagram is considered a convenient platform to search for products before purchasing them. Also, the real-life experiences, and the variety of information posted on Instagram have encouraged these students to depend heavily on its reviews and advertisements. However, the main issue female college students are facing with those advertisements is trust.

This study also highlighted the issue of overconsumption in Saudi and its relationship with marketing on Instagram. The continuous exposure to Instagram and its advertisements on a daily basis has uncovered a deep-rooted problem in the Saudi society, which is overconsumption. The point is: students' consumption behaviour is purely driven by their own beliefs and personalities, and marketing can only have an influence within the limits each student offers.

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