

QATAR UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING
ACTIVITIES ON CONSUMERS PURCHASE INTENTION: EXAMINING THE ROLE OF
BRAND EQUITY, RELATIONSHIP EQUITY, AND BRAND TRUST IN S-COMMERCE.

BY

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A Thesis Submitted to
the College of Business and Economics
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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ABSTRACT

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Title: An Investigation of the Impact of Social Media Marketing Activities on Consumer Purchase Intention: Examining the Role of Brand Equity, Relationship Equity, and Brand Trust in S-Commerce.

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This research addresses the great need to explore the different impacts of social media marketing activities on consumers' purchase intention in s-commerce in Qatar, which is less represented in the literature. Accordingly, this study investigates perceived SMMA influence on brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity and its impact on purchase intention with s-commerce brands on Instagram in Qatar. In addition, the study also examines the moderating impact of three customer characteristics (customer-firm relationship length, technology savviness, and social network proneness) on such relationships. An English and Arabic online questionnaire was developed and distributed through multiple online channels. With the use of SPSS and SPSS AMOS, data were analyzed using structural equation modelling. The outcomes revealed that the influence of perceived SMMA on brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity are significantly positive.

Consequently, brand equity and relationship equity significantly influence purchase intention. In addition, some of the customer characteristics were found to moderate the relationship between perceived SMMA and brand and relationship equities. However, none of the three customer characteristics moderated the

relationship between perceived SMMA and brand trust. Hence, this research has contributed to s-commerce, social media marketing, branding, consumer buying behavior, SMEs, and segmentation literature, which helps the owners and managers plan strategically, differentiate themselves, and achieve higher business operation and performance.

Keywords: S-commerce, Social Media Marketing Activities, Brand Trust, Brand Equity, Relationship Equity, Segmentation, SMEs.

DEDICATION

To my supportive parents, my wonderful siblings, and my dearest friends, thank you.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Social media has partaken a notable role in many individuals' lives, and it is not slowing down anytime soon. Platforms, particularly Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, have emerged into everyday communication (Ibrahim, Aljarah & Ababneh, 2020). The more people register on social media, the more significant influence has on people's daily lives (Tuten, 2020). Social media exist in the shape of social networking sites, microblogs, content communities, and virtual worlds where customers and enterprises share information, knowledge, and experiences (Arrigo, 2018). People not only enter social communities but contribute as well (Tuten, 2020). Marketing within social media occurs without mediation and is interactive between the customers and the brand (Ibrahim, Aljarah & Ababneh, 2020). Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch (2017) explain social media marketing as "a multidimensional and cross-functional concept that uses social media (often in combination with other communications channels) to achieve organizational goals by creating value for stakeholders." It has reached a requisite tool for brands and all sorts of businesses, with the chance of building a relationship, engaging with consumers, and growing deals more than ever (Macarthy, 2020).

A subset of electronic commerce (e-commerce) regarding the application of trading products and services is s-commerce (Tuten, 2020). Expansion of online trading activities concerning selling and buying within s-commerce rose with users' high growth on social media, particularly on Instagram (Din, Ramli, Abu Bakar, 2018). As a result, Instagram keeps updating its platform for businesses with new features and layouts to ease s-commerce and provide more control over how they want to brand their virtual store (Instagram, 2020). Consequently, many small businesses in Qatar started

displaying and selling their products on Instagram with a unique brand name and logo. Usually, businesses post images of their offerings on their social media page and encourage prospective customers to contact the firm directly to receive information regarding the product and delivery choices (Sembada & Koay, 2021).

Many s-commerce brands repost images tagged by their consumers on their stories, and some save consumers' photos or videos to their highlight. Highlights are categories of saved stories of photos and videos. In addition, businesses receive their payment through an external link for online payment while others receive the payment at delivery. See figure 1 for two examples of social media brand pages on Instagram in Qatar.

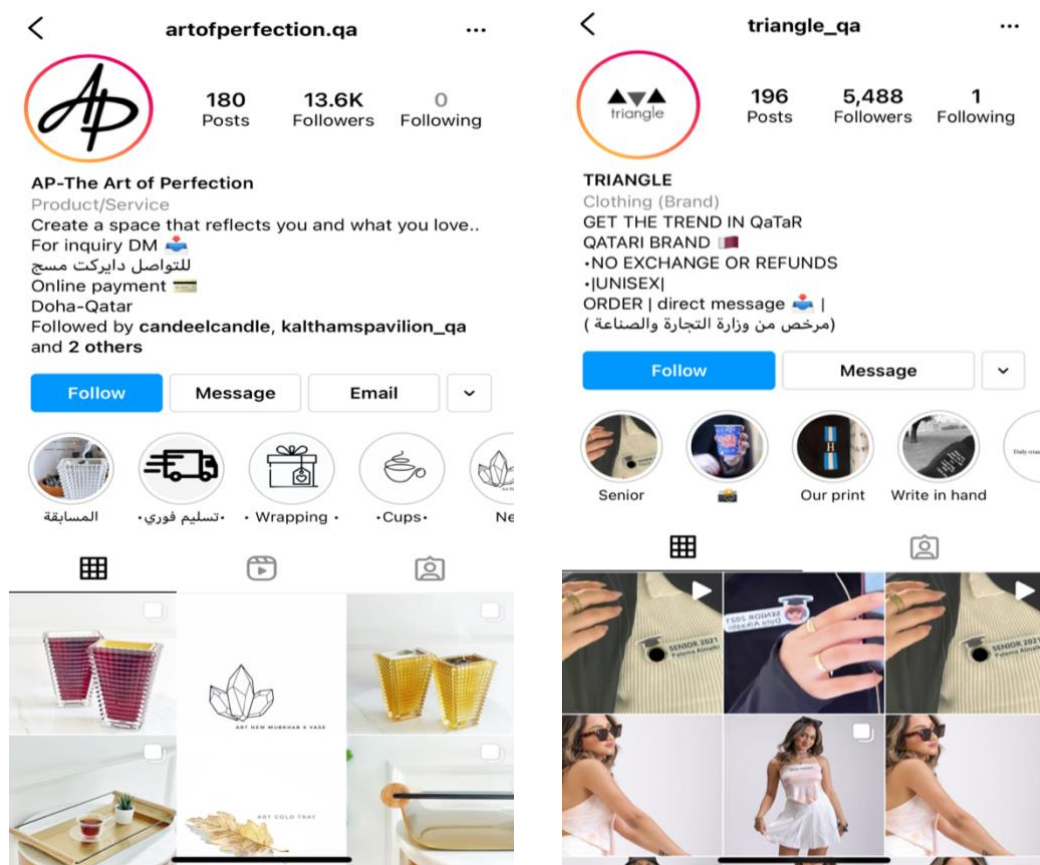


Figure 1. Examples of social media brand pages on Instagram

The thesis concentrates on the effectiveness of each attribute of perceived social media marketing activities (SMMA) that affects brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity, and its impact on customers' purchase intention in s-commerce. Additionally, considering three customer characteristics that influence customers' ability to process information and their intention as moderators.

The research will help s-commerce businesses identify the attributes of SMMA that influence their trade. Recognize the influence of trust as it will initiate the connection between the enterprise and the customer, which drives customers to purchase from the business. Acknowledge the influence of SMMA on their firm's value and growth as it supports differentiation from its competitors and allows to accomplish a niche market that can, later on, grow into a broader market. Moreover, enhancing their understanding of their target group can give insights on which customers to concentrate on to receive higher engagement on their social media page, leading to higher business performance.

1.2 Research Background

Social media's growth is perhaps one of the trendiest online marketing and branding lately (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). Social media is related to sharing, participating, interacting, and collaborating using online technologies (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Businesses utilize social media to communicate and deliver content to consumers and the public (Yan, 2011). Kim & Ko (2012) has introduced five attributes of perceived SMMA, ever since many researchers have adopted and consider it as dimensions that enhance the success of the brand (e.g., Liu, Shin, & Burns, 2021; Chen & Lin, 2019; Ebrahim, 2020; Zhang et al., 2019; Seo & Park, 2018; Yadav & Rahman, 2018; Ismail, 2017; Godey et al., 2016). The five attributes are entertainment,

interaction, trendiness, customization, and word of mouth (WOM).

The studies of the concept of perceived SMMA covered different regions and categories until lately. Godey et al. (2016) and Kim & Ko (2012) papers explored the SMMA of luxury fashion brands. Kim & Ko (2012) investigated Louis Vuitton consumers and those who had previous experiences with the brand's social media in Korea. Godey et al. (2016) examined consumers and followers of Burberry, Louis Vuitton, Dior, Gucci, and Hermès social media brand pages in four countries; China, India, France, and Italy. Ebrahim (2020) investigated the telecommunication companies' SMMA in Egypt.

The first attribute of the SMMA is entertainment. It may have the most substantial influence on customers' social media aspects as the emotion of fun is necessary to support customers to communicate on social media pages and share with others (Liu et al., 2018; Arli, 2017). The entertainment attribute is correlated with the social media brand page being fun and interesting (Godey et al., 2016). Godey et al. (2016) and Kim & Ko. (2012) observed entertainment attribute having a strong influence on the brand, giving a satisfactory model fit. However, Ebrahim (2020) did not find a satisfactory model fit and had to drop the attribute due to low factor loading.

The second attribute of SMMA is interaction. It allows brand information-sharing and sharing views with other people within the social platform (Godey et al., 2016). A social media brand page permits two-way conversation connecting the brand and its customers and interaction between customers and other customers (Simon & Tossan, 2018). Interaction on the brand's social media page promotes a closer relationship among the brand and customers, encourages information exchange and word of mouth (Shi, Chen, & Chow, 2016). Hence, interactivity and engagement with customers and other companies are among the SMEs' objectives (McCann & Barlow,

2015). Kim & Ko (2012) and Godey et al. (2016) learned that interaction has a strong impact on the brand, while Ebrahim (2020) had to drop the attribute because of low factor loading.

The third attribute is trendiness. It is related to current and recent information shared by the brand on its social media page (Godey et al., 2016). This source of product information for consumers on their purchase decisions has shifted from traditional media to social media (Chen & Lin, 2019). Customers prefer a social media page that provides the most up-to-date information, that fits their tastes, and has reliable content and services that decrease risk and anxiety (Seo & Park, 2018). Godey et al. (2016) and Ebrahim (2020) observed that trendiness significantly and strongly affects brands. However, Kim & Ko (2012) did not find a significant and had to drop the attribute.

The fourth attribute is customization. It is related to social media brands' ability to offer personalized information search and services (Godey et al., 2016). Consumers expected to recognize customization in the social media environment contrasted to other channels, for instance, direct mail and email, as social media is a fertile environment for brands to engage with consumers on a personalized level (Shanahan, Tran, & Taylor, 2019). Ebrahim (2020) finds that customization has a strong significance on brands. Godey et al. (2016) also find that it is significant but less influential than the previous attributes. On the other hand, Kim & Ko (2012) had to drop this attribute due to low factor loading.

The fifth attribute is word of mouth (WOM). It is related to the desire to transfer knowledge and post content linked to the brand on social media. It is a characteristic of e-word of mouth (eWOM) that enables information flow (Godey et al., 2016). Consumers not only receive information but as well as provide insights to others (Knoblich et al., 2017). The most significant source of gaining new consumers for small

businesses is the suggestions from the current buyers (He et al., 2017). Kim & Ko (2012) and Ebrahim (2020) discovered a strong influence of WOM on brands. Moreover, Godey et al. (2016) showed that WOM is significant but less influential than entertainment, interaction, and trendiness.

Social media activities by firms influence brands in many ways. For brands to succeed, there must be attention to brand quality, reputation, esthetic value, and trustworthy customer relationships (Kim & Ko, 2012). As stated by American Marketing Association, the brand's description is "name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition" (Keller, 2003). In addition, brands are associated with physical attributes, emotional connections, and personalities (Kohli, Suri, & Kapoor, 2015; Yan, 2011). Social media are more useful in branding for smaller establishments since the owner is the one who publishes and updates the page and can be more responsive to consumers' demands (Yan, 2011). Furthermore, branding's optimal objective is to receive a desirable acknowledgment from consumers and customers (Kohli, Suri, & Kapoor, 2015).

Many investigators analyzed the impact of perceived SMMA directly or indirectly on brand equity (e.g., Ebrahim, 2020; Hilal, 2019; Seo & Park, 2018; Yadav & Rahman, 2018; Godey et al., 2016; Kim & Ko, 2012) value equity/perceived value (e.g., Chen & Lin, 2019; Zhang et al., 2019; Yadav & Rahman, 2018; Kim & Ko, 2012) relationship equity (e.g., Yadav & Rahman, 2018; Kim & Ko, 2012) trust (e.g., Ebrahim, 2020; Zhang et al., 2019) customer engagement (e.g., Liu, Shin, & Burns, 2021) value and brand consciousness (e.g., Ismail, 2017) satisfaction (e.g., Chen & Lin, 2019) loyalty (e.g., Ebrahim, 2020; Yadav & Rahman, 2018; Ismail, 2017; Godey et

al., 2016), and purchase intention (e.g., Chen & Lin, 2019; Macharia & Cheng, 2019; Zhang et al., 2019; Kim & Ko, 2012).

Brand equity is the added value provided to the product due to past marketing activities (Keller, 2003). Kim & ko (2012) found that perceived SMMA positively and significantly impacts brand equity, including "brand awareness, perceived value, brand personality, brand association, and perceived uniqueness aspects." Godey et al. (2016) discovered similar results. They took into consideration brand awareness and brand image, and they realized that there is a more substantial influence on brand image than brand awareness. In contrast to these findings, Ebrahim (2020) failed to detect any significant association between perceived SMMA and brand equity. She considered the general elements of brand equity, which assess the added value to the brand, although there is a notable impact on brand equity through brand trust.

The definition of brand trust is a sense of confidence in the brand that can fulfill the usage expectations (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2001). Godey et al. (2016) and Ebrahim (2020) discovered that brand equity mediates between perceived SMMA and brand loyalty, and perceived SMMA directly influences brand loyalty. The interpretation of brand loyalty indicates the level of devotion a consumer has to a brand, which is associated with usage experience (Liu et al., 2012). Ebrahim (2020) further showed that brand trust has a mediating influence between perceived SMMA and brand loyalty.

Furthermore, relationship equity is about "the tendency of the customer to stick with the brand, above and beyond the customer's objective and subjective assessments of the brand" (Lemon, Rust, & Zeithaml, 2001). Kim & Ko (2012) assessed the customer service, correspondence of image with the brand, and affection in general and

found that perceived SMMA positively and significantly impacts relationship equity. However, they failed to find a notable impact of relationship equity on purchase intention. In contrast, in this study, brand equity strongly positively and significantly influence purchase intention. Purchase intention describes customers' likelihood of planning and being willing to buy a particular offering later on (Wu, Yeh, & Hsiao, 2011).

Moreover, Zhang et al. (2019) tested the mediation of trust, perceived value, and brand image between perceived SMMA's influence and purchase intention with age, gender, level of education, and income as control groups. They determined that the control group did not influence purchase intention. However, Kumar et al. (2016) introduced three customer characteristics that can affect customers' ability to process information and their motivation from social media's firm-generated content (FGC). They declare that for social media strategies to be effective, their impacts on different types of customers need to be recognized.

First, customer-firm relationship length, meaning customers who are more familiar with the brand, will have a more positive attitudinal response. The longer they have a relationship with the brand, the more satisfied they are, leading to customers having a positive response toward FGC. Second, customers' technology savviness, meaning the tech-savvy customers who are in different digital touchpoints are expected to engage and interact more through their social media platforms; and are more likely to pass on knowledge received from FGC with others online, leading to a higher response to FGC. Third, customers' propensity to regularly use social networking sites—social network proneness, means this type of customers put a higher value on connecting with the brand and interacting with others who share similar interests and

consumption behaviors. Regular social media users usually influence others' opinions with similar views, leading to a higher response to FGC messages.

After discussing the perceived SMMA and its influence on branding, customer behavior, and customer characteristics, it is essential to discuss the type of company. Small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) hold unique qualities, characteristics, and goals that distinguish them from the larger enterprises. According to Qatar Development Bank (n.d.), SMEs are enterprises whose number of employees is under 250, except firms in creative industries are under 100 employees, and annual turnover shall be under 100 million Qatari Riyals. SMEs have limited resources (Dahnil et al., 2014), and many SMEs start their enterprise small because of the lack of resources. Social media allows SMEs to implement and support e-commerce internet applications in a lower-cost approach, further improving into an emerging e-commerce model called s-commerce (Abed, Dwivedi, & Williams, 2016).

Moreover, it is critical to address social media platforms to be more precise in the research investigation. The previous academic papers concerning social media examined specific platform users use, namely Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and overall social media usage (e.g., Nikolinakou & Phua, 2020; Helme-Guizon & Magnoni, 2019; Shanahan, Tran, & Taylor, 2019; Choi, Thoeni, & Kroff, 2018, Arli, 2017; Hudson et al., 2016). Additionally, previous academic papers regarding SMMA mostly has not examined specific social media platform users (e.g., Ebrahim, 2020; Yadav & Rahman, 2018; Ismail, 2017; Godey et al., 2016; Kim & Ko, 2012), except Liu, Shin, and Burns (2021) which used big data from Twitter. Besides, Instagram is a popular Internet application globally. For example, a 2016 study revealed that Qataris rely on Instagram more than Facebook (Dennis et al., 2016). Whereas, non-Qataris use Facebook more than Instagram; however, almost half of Non-Qataris do use Instagram

(Ministry of Information and Communications Technology & Rased, 2015). Additionally, researchers used the Instagram platform to test s-commerce users in Indonesia, Kuwait, and the Gulf Corporation Council (GCC) countries (e.g., Sembada & Koay, 2021; Gibreel, AlOtaibi, & Altmann, 2018; Yahia, Al-Neama, & Kerbache, 2018). According to Yahia, Al-Neama, and Kerbache (2018), it is the most used platform. On the other hand, other research papers that addressed s-commerce did not concentrate on a single platform (e.g., Wijaya, Rai, & Hariguna, 2019; Akman & Mishra, 2017; Wang & Yu, 2017).

1.3 Research Gaps and Research Problem

The researcher discovered two main research gaps. First, according to the literature review conducted by the researcher, no research investigating customer characteristics such as customers' relationship length with the brand, tech-savvy customers, customers' proneness to social networks, and marketing activities on brand equity, relationship equity, and brand trust of social media brands. Addressing the common sense that segmentation can seize a more solid knowledge of customer's behavior and a greater targeting to reach the desired influence of marketing activity (Vinerean et al., 2013). In addition, human traits can be used for segmentation, which impacts social media brand content creation and publishing that improves businesses' social media marketing activities globally (Nikolinakou & Phua, 2020). Therefore, it is fundamental to examine customer behavior by considering customer characteristics with social media marketing activities and their influence on long-term values of the firm in order to enhance the marketing activity of the s-commerce brands.

Second, many research papers discussed SMMA on well-established brands such as high luxury fashion brands, telecommunication, and airline brands that are

greatly influenced by traditional media in which higher transference effect occurs (e.g., Godey et al., 2016; Ebrahim, 2020; Seo & Park, 2018) but not on s-commerce brands that are small businesses. Social media stores that do not have a physical presence may not leverage similarly to established brands (Sembada & Koay, 2021). However, social media acts as a significant warning to established brands as it provides an opening to new entrants with no difficulties, fundamentally forming a more volatile marketplace (Kohli, Suri, & Kapoor, 2015). Hence, focusing on small businesses of s-commerce is vital, yet it is barely examined in the literature (Sembada & Koay, 2021).

The main problem motivating this research is a great need to explore the different impacts of SMMA on consumers' purchase intention in s-commerce in Qatar. Based on the researcher's knowledge, these have not been done before. For example, the impact of SMMA on purchase intention can be affected by different factors that were less described in the literature. Such as the role of brand equity, relationship equity, and brand trust in s-commerce, more explicit Instagram as the platform, and the impact of different customer characteristics. Therefore, it is crucial to address them because s-commerce is an ideal choice for SMEs to establish in Qatar because of their lack of resources, less risk, and ease of establishment. Studying brand equity and relationship will help enterprises recognize their significant strengths (Lemon, Rust, & Zeithaml, 2001). Therefore, studying the effective strategies of social media brands can help acknowledge a niche market and have a higher chance of growing its marketplace. According to Kumar et al. (2016), for social media strategies to be successful, companies must consider the influence of social media interaction across various types of customers. Therefore, considering customer characteristics will enhance the understanding of social media brand strategies.

1.4 Research Aim and Objectives

The thesis aims to study the five attributes of perceived social media marketing activities (entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and word of mouth) of social media brands on Instagram and their influence on brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity with the moderating effect of customer characteristics and its influence on purchase intention in Qatar.

The research objectives are:

- (1) To decide research gaps in the area of social media marketing by collecting and reading relevant studies from well-established research articles.
- (2) To build a conceptual framework and hypothesis based on the research gap. Therefore, to examine the relationships between perceived SMMA and brand trust, brand equity, relationship equity, and its influence on purchase intention, with customer characteristics as a moderating effect.
- (3) To test the framework by collecting data from followers of social media brands, specifically Instagram users in Qatar, via distributing online questionnaires through email and different social media platforms.
- (4) To analyze the data using SPSS and SPSS AMOS to discover the validity and reliability of the measures, then draw various discussions and conclusions on Qatar's social media brands and the three customer characteristics.

1.5 Research Questions

RQ1 Do social media brands in Qatar apply the five social media marketing activities effectively?

RQ2 Does perceived SMMA positively and significantly influence brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity of s-commerce brands in Qatar?

RQ2.1 Does perceived SMMA positively and significantly influence brand trust of s-commerce brands in Qatar?

RQ2.2 Does perceived SMMA positively and significantly influence brand equity of s-commerce brands in Qatar?

RQ2.3 Does perceived SMMA positively and significantly influence relationship equity of s-commerce brands in Qatar?

RQ3 Does brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity of s-commerce brands in Qatar positively and significantly influence purchase intention?

RQ3.1 Does brand trust of s-commerce brands in Qatar positively and significantly influence purchase intention?

RQ3.2 Does brand equity of s-commerce brands in Qatar positively and significantly influence purchase intention?

RQ3.3 Does relationship equity of s-commerce brands in Qatar positively and significantly influence purchase intention?

RQ4 Do customer characteristics moderate the relationship between perceived SMMA and brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity of s-commerce brands in Qatar?

RQ4.1 Do customer characteristics moderate the relationship between perceived SMMA and brand trust of s-commerce brands in Qatar?

RQ4.2 Do customer characteristics moderate the relationship between perceived SMMA and brand equity of s-commerce brands in Qatar?

RQ4.3 Do customer characteristics moderate the relationship between perceived SMMA and relationship equity of s-commerce brands in Qatar?

1.6 Thesis Structure

The thesis comprises of five chapters:

1. The first chapter introduces the topic, followed by a research background, research gaps and research problem, research aims and objectives, and research questions.
2. The second chapter includes the literature review of relevant research constructs, the hypothesis development obtained from the literature, and the research framework.
3. The third chapter covers the research methodology, including the research philosophy, methodology, survey measures, sample of the study, and sampling technique.
4. The fourth chapter presents the data analysis and the research findings. The chapter includes descriptive analysis, sampling adequacy test, validity and reliability tests, and hypothesis results.
5. The fifth chapter exhibits the discussion and conclusion, including discussing the research findings, theoretical and managerial implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

1.7 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research topic, followed by an overview of previously conducted research. SMMA was introduced in 2012 by Kim and Ko, and significant articles have adapted the concept. On the other hand, s-commerce is an uprising concept and is being reviewed in the region and worldwide. Hence, based on

the literature, two gaps were identified, and a research aim was developed. The study aims to investigate the five attributes of social media marketing activities (SMMA) of social media brands on Instagram and their influence on brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity with the moderating effect of customer characteristics and its influence on purchase intention in Qatar. The next chapter will provide an extensive review of each construct.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The current chapter covers and analyzes various research areas such as social media marketing activities and each of its attributes (entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and word of mouth). It also covers brand trust, brand equity and its attributes (brand awareness and brand image), relationship equity, purchase intention, and customer characteristics (customer-firm relationship length, technology-savvy customers, prone to the social network). After that, based on the literature available, hypothesis development is presented. Lastly, the research framework is exhibited, which illustrates the relations and paths of the research constructs.

2.2 Perceived SMMA

The five attributes (entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and WOM) covers the brand's social media marketing activities (SMMA) as a holistic concept (Godey et al., 2016). For example, Algharabat (2017) asked students who are consumers and followers of a Facebook page to participate and found that the most substantial influence on forming SMMA in order is entertainment, interaction, word of mouth, trendiness, with customization as the least effective. However, Ebrahim (2020) concentrated on the telecommunication industry and discovered trendiness, customization, and word of mouth to be the most significant. While in the tourism industry, Hilal (2019) studied international tourists' perception of SMMA on Sri Lanka as a destination and saw that entertainment, customization, and eWOM were most substantial. Remarkably, the scholars receive results of SMMA attributes differently within diverse industries and countries. Pointing out that Ibrahim, Aljarah, and Ababneh (2020) conducted a meta-analysis review of SMMA's influence on brand

equity and purchase intention. They state that the moderating effect of the industry type, economic development, and sample type between SMMA and brand equity, as well on purchase intention, is not significant.

Perceived SMMA has provided an opportunity for brand building (Algharabat, 2017). It contributes to common branding goals similar to traditional marketing activities (Godey et al., 2016). Hence, it builds the brand image, brand awareness, attains new customers (Godey et al., 2016), builds a relationship with customers (Ismail, 2017), and forms marketing communication (Ibrahim, Aljarah, & Ababneh, 2020; Yadav & Rahman, 2018). E-marketers can assist their brand's performance and its competitor's performance by the five dimensions (Yadav & Rahman, 2017). Hence, each attribute of SMMA is vital because micro and small-sized enterprises established through Instagram usually concentrate on only social media marketing to build their brand.

2.2.1 Entertainment

Entertainment is in the sense of being interesting and fun (Godey et al., 2016). Based on Touchette, Schanski, and Lee (2015), the types of branded entertainment on social media are photos and advertisements, video and audio, contest, and games. They found that the most potent form of entertainment is photos and advertisements. According to Kraus et al. (2019), SMEs take pictures or videos through a smartphone providing a satisfactory quality. They insinuate that SMEs have difficulties creating rich, enjoyable, and entertaining content because owners usually lack time; however, it cannot be generalized as it is qualitative interview research with European SMEs.

Qatar's s-commerce brands mostly pay photographers to create content on their pages. Photos or videos professionally taken are posted on the page as permanent posts,

while multimedia taken from their smartphones are posted on their story. The story's feature is to upload content such as photos or videos with engagement features such as polls, ratings, questions and answers, that will exist for only twenty-four hours unless the brand decides to add it to the highlight of their page. In addition, Instagram allows users to tag the brand on their posts or story and permits the brand to share the photo or video on their business account. This feature increases the engagement between the customers and the brand, and other customers can see what type of customers the brand has. Hence, developing connections between users and the brand can undoubtedly help brands gain a positive image in consumers' minds (Touchette, Schanski, & Lee, 2015).

Another feature Instagram introduced is the "shop now" feature that improves the platform's hedonic motivation that can powerfully influence s-commerce than Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest (Yahia, Al-Neama, & Kerbache, 2018). This feature eases the purchase behavior as customers can click on the post, and product name and price appear. Therefore, content that enhances fun emotions will intensify consumer engagement with social media pages (Algharabat, 2017; Touchette, Schanski, & Lee, 2015). However, games and wordplay fail to have a strong promotional influence as it requires thinking from the user (Touchette, Schanski, & Lee, 2015). While all SMEs interviewed by Kraus et al. (2019) organized at least once a contest with a free giveaway for a way to engage with customers, all SMEs were satisfied with the result. Therefore, a customer's hedonic motive influences interaction, behavioral intention, and encourages relationships (Martín-Consuegra et al., 2019). Moreover, in the s-commerce context, hedonic motivation influences trust and, consequently, purchase intention (Yahia, Al-Neama, & Kerbache, 2018).

2.2.2 Interaction

Social media permits interaction between customers and firms (Khobzi, Lau, &

Cheung, 2019) and customers with other customers (Helme-Guizon & Magnoni, 2019). Instagram allows interaction by direct message and comment section under each post; SMEs choose to activate or deactivate their comment section and filter direct message (Suryani, Fauzi, & Nurhadi, 2020). Allowing interactions between consumer to consumer positively influences consumer brand engagement (Helme-Guizon & Magnoni, 2019). Examples of consumer brand engagement are consumers reading brands' posts, engaging in conversations with others, supporting the brands' posts (Simon & Tossan, 2018), liking, replying, and recommending the post (Khobzi, Lau, & Cheung, 2019).

When a theme of the post presents the gratification a viewer looks for, their motivation to process that post raises, which leads them to interact with the post (Wagner, Baccarella, & Voigt, 2017). Therefore, the content that resembles the consumer's gratification influences consumers to follow the brand and interact with it. Some studies examined customers participating in social media brand pages, such as becoming followers or fans, are desirable for firms (Khobzi, Lau, & Cheung, 2019).

Interaction results in emotional customer experience in s-commerce; even by coming across testimonies from other customers, it gives further experience (Wijaya, Rai, & Hariguna, 2019). Nonetheless, Dolan et al. (2019) suggest no relationship between active engagement, such as commenting or sharing, and entertainment; however, there is a relationship with consuming engagement such as clicking on to view pictures, to play videos, and clicking on to read more. Henceforth, devoting to consumer interaction with the brand will encourage consumers' behaviors (Martín-Consuegra et al., 2019). Accordingly, the interaction between the consumer and the marketer or consumer and other consumers significantly influences purchase behavior (Goh, Heng, and Lin, 2013).

2.2.3 Trendiness

Social media render customers space to trade reliable and up-to-date information (Yadav & Rahman, 2018). Hence, social media is the most feasible means of accessing information; that is why customers prefer social media page that provides the most up-to-date information (Seo & Park, 2018). Trendiness associates with the degree to which the brand displays the latest and trendiest information about the brand (Liu, Shin, & Burns, 2021). SMEs using social media provide information accessibility to both the customer and the business. It means customers can have direct information instead of calling or emailing, alongside businesses get information about their potential customers and their interests (Ainin et al., 2015). Therefore, many customers follow businesses through social media to obtain news, information, offers, and the newest deals of businesses and products (Knoblich et al., 2017). Thus, businesses that post information several times a week and promptly reply to customers strengthens' the relationship between the business and the customer (Simon & Tossan, 2018). For this reason, young customers view social networks as more reliable for acquiring information than traditional marketing (Ismail, 2017).

To gain perspective on SMEs' quality from consumers is by often updating Instagram posts about their products, uploading Instagram posts relevant to the business context, and sharing content that is similar to the actual product (Suryani, Fauzi, & Nurhadi, 2020). Malaysian study revealed that 63.3 percent of SMEs publish content on their Facebook page two times a day, 17.8 percent publish one time a day, and 10.4 percent two times a week, influencing information accessibility that affects customer relationships (Ainin et al., 2015). When the content is useful, informative people intend to engage and connect with brands; however, over-sharing information negatively affects brands (Arli, 2017). To confirm, a study by Macharia and Cheng (2019) exhibits

that information richness negatively moderates the influence among SMMA and behavioral intention, indicating that to share suitable and sufficient but not excessive information on social media increases purchase intention. Therefore, many SMEs do not mention price in their posts because they consider it inappropriate for social media (Kraus et al., 2019). Although recently, numerous s-commerce brands have taken a different path, and started to disclose prices on their page. In general, consumers must direct message or contact the brand through WhatsApp to receive further information. Hence, consumers contacting the business and the business sharing information encourages consciousness in terms of symbol, status, prestige, and prices; in return, it enhances customers to stay committed and loyal to the business (Ismail, 2017).

2.2.4 Customization

Customization describes a social media page providing customized information or service (Seo & Park, 2018). Customers look for a more customized, informative, and engaging experience online, which drives s-commerce (Zhou, Zhang & Zimmermann, 2013). It is the extent to which the messages customers receive reflect relevant individual characteristics (Hawkins et al., 2008), that is different from traditional media (Seo & Park, 2018).

This field of study is sometimes referred to as personalization. In social media literature, customization has taken part in two kinds. First, in the form of advertisement. Shanahan, Tran, and Taylor (2019) research propose that businesses can personalize interaction with customers to spot a particular good the customer has looked for or brand details the customer might find attractive. Furthermore, they defined personalized advertisements as customers' specific individual preferences, former buying histories, demographics, and current searches on the Internet. The second form

of personalization is communicating with individual users (Liu, Shin, & Burns, 2021; Seo & Park, 2018). Brands benefit from using social media for a customized customer response (Hewett et al., 2016). Liu, Shin, and Burns (2021) argue that entertainment, interaction, and trendiness can be delivered through mass communication, but personalization is delivered on a one-to-one individual level.

Personalization significantly influences engagement and customer attachment to the brand, consequently influencing customers' perceived quality and commitment to the brand (Shanahan, Tran, & Taylor, 2019). However, Seo and Park (2018) found that personalization did not increase customers' engagement. While it positively influences word of mouth (Choi, Thoeni & Kroff, 2018). Accordingly, customization aims to develop a more effective relationship and offer tailored services to meet customers' preferences (Shanahan, Tran, & Taylor, 2019; Yadav & Rahman, 2018).

2.2.5 Word of Mouth

WOM presents customers' willingness to forward information from social media's page to others (Seo & Park, 2018). It is the communication of positive or negative messages allied with the seller or the product within the social networks (Wang & Yu, 2017). Social media platforms offer users a choice to spread WOM (Jain et al., 2018). For example, knowledge transfer in the form of a direct message (Coulter & Roggeveen, 2012) or sharing publicly on one's page within the same platform or other social networks. Consumers decide on the sharing based on their self-image, as some knowledge is suitable for sharing publicly and others privately (Pasternak, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thomas, 2017).

Within s-commerce, customers who plan to buy a product commit to buying it and eventually share their product experience and review (Wang & Yu, 2017). A study

by Mikalef, Giannakos, & Pateli (2013) revealed that online social media shopping customers browse social media products for pleasure and discover new trends. They explain that it is more convenient and has a high range of available products, consequently influencing WOM and purchase intention. In addition, Choi, Thoeni, and Kroff (2018) suggest that responsiveness from the brand's social media page influences positive WOM. Therefore, when a person is more committed to the brand and receives a quick response, they are more inclined to spread positive WOM, and those who use social media intensely affect their spread of WOM when they receive quick responses.

Furthermore, users are more prone to transfer useful brand-related knowledge among close individuals than other contacts (Wang et al., 2016). Although Coulter and Roggeveen (2012) investigation revealed that a message received from a close individual does not imply that the customer will seek knowledge about the product in terms of viewing the suggested page and liking/following the page; therefore, if a message source does not provide a follow-up information exchange feature, the WOM will be less effective.

In s-commerce, receiving positive WOM positively influences purchase intention, while negative WOM negatively influence purchase intention (Wang & Yu, 2017) as customers value others' feedback more than what a business claim (Goodman, 2012). However, Khobzi, Lau, and Cheung (2019) argue that negative WOM may lead to unexpected positive WOM as some people might start to defend the business against negative publicity.

2.3 Brand Trust

Trust is the willingness of the customer to depend on a brand's ability to offer as entitled (Ebrahim, 2020). It is about positioning the brand as a promise, expecting it to

provide a level and type of value (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005). Customers' trust in marketers and other customers influences brand trust (Liu et al., 2018). According to Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán (2005), brand trust is a cause of past experience with the brand; the more positive experience with a brand, the greater the brand trust.

Trust is developed through many social media experiences, as it is a critical element in building positive links with the brand and creating long-lasting ties (Ebrahim, 2020). It is enhanced by the customer's involvement with the brand, the firm, their products, and other customers (Laroche, Habibi, & Richard, 2013). To foster trust with customers, marketers need to enhance social activities, support interactions between customers, respond promptly to customers' messages, and solve customer problems (Liu et al., 2018). Additionally, provide images of the existing offerings for trade rather than available images from distributors or deliver testimonies from past buyers (Sembada & Koay, 2021). Furthermore, improve feelings of community, usefulness, information sharing, and establish social bonds among customers (Laroche, Habibi, & Richard, 2013).

Yahia, Al-Neama, and Kerbache (2018) investigated the impact of social media businesses' perceived characteristics on trust in s-commerce. They found that trust positively influences the usage of s-commerce, similar results to Akman and Mishra (2017). Trust in s-commerce is critical in customers' purchase intention. Unlike e-commerce, such as Amazon allow a return policy, while sellers on s-commerce do not offer product returns after purchase (Gibreel, AlOtaibi, & Altmann, 2018). Another factor influencing trust is product differentiation, which negatively impacts trust (Yahia, Al-Neama, & Kerbache, 2018). The researcher describes product differentiation as products that customers cannot find elsewhere. Nevertheless, they

indicate that other users' presence reduces the effect of product differentiation on trust, as it lessens uncertainty about the business and helps users to encounter fewer poor experiences. However, Sembada and Koay (2021) studied factors influencing customers' intentions to purchase goods in s-commerce. They exhibited that customers who cannot obtain the product they want by substitute routes will interpret their thinking in a biased way, causing them to trust the business. Trust is influenced by price value when there is a habit of purchasing in s-commerce, but a good reputation, communicating in different languages, and entertaining content directly influences trust, and later the purchase intention (Yahia, Al-Neama, & Kerbache, 2018).

Cazier, Shao, and Louis (2006) discovered that in e-commerce, value similarity builds trust, and value unsimilarity damages trust. They define value similarity as the significance of the overlap between customers' values and those values they believe the business holds. They suggest that value similarity can be applied as an effective way for e-businesses to differentiate themselves to create and sustain a competitive advantage. They claim that at the beginning of e-commerce, the capability to provide secure transactions was an essential factor in encouraging customers to purchase online, while now people are used to online transactions and need other ways to attract new customers. Yet, Nikolinakou and Phua (2020) confirm that customers look for trust and safety from brands on social media. Signs of safety are often the drivers of the businesses themselves (Sembada & Koay, 2021). Furthermore, a customer's trust provides companies the advantage of a smooth and successful transition online (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005). Hence, the simplicity and security of trading influence s-commerce businesses' trust, leading to customers' intention to purchase (Sembada & Koay, 2021).

2.4 Brand Equity

According to Lemon, Rust, and Zeithaml (2001), a brand can grab new buyers' attention, and it signals buyers about the goods and services of the firm. Brand equity is conceptualized from the individual consumer perspective (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005; Keller, 1993). Keller (1993) explains that a brand is generated through marketing efforts distinctively attributing to that specific brand name; it means that brand attributes differ from another despite similar product offerings because of marketing efforts. Hence, a brand includes a comprehensive set of attributes that affect consumer choice, as it takes into consideration consumers' subjective and intangible evaluation of the brand beyond its objectively perceived value (Lemon, Rust, & Zeithaml, 2001).

Kohli, Suri, and Kapoor (2015) stated that a brand usually needs a massive investment over long periods of time, and once it is accomplished, it can secure the brand against new competitors. Furthermore, they stated that social media allows the brand to get noticed with lesser investments if they are creative about their use with fewer time boundaries because social media can quickly transfer information. They indicate that successful brands create meaningful differentiation. Hence, Anees-ur-Rehman and Johnston (2019) investigated business-to-business (B2B) SMEs' brand-oriented, market-oriented, and entrepreneurial-oriented strategies influencing brand equity. They found that SMEs' brand-oriented strategy revolves around creating and developing brand identity while interacting with the target customers positively influences brand equity. Moreover, the entrepreneurial-oriented strategy revolves around creating a culture that acts as autonomy, is innovative and proactive, positively influences brand equity, but has a lower influence than brand orientation. However, a market-oriented strategy that revolves around customers' needs and wants when

creating value negatively influences brand equity. In essence, differentiation rests at the core of branding (Kohli, Suri, & Kapoor, 2015).

Brand equity is commonly significant for low-involvement acquisitions with mild decision processes (Lemon, Rust, & Zeithaml, 2001). They mean purchase decisions for many products, including regularly purchased consumer packaged goods, often require little customer attention or involvement. However, according to Keller (1993), the brand image (part of brand equity) has an essential function in high-involvement acquisitions. Schivinski and Dabrowski (2016) observed that the firm-generated content indirectly influences brand equity within the alcohol-free drinks, apparel, and telecommunication category. Furthermore, Ebrahim (2020) tested the telecommunication category and received similar results as Schivinski and Dabrowski (2016) that perceived SMMA indirectly influences brand equity. Nonetheless, Seo and Park (2018) found that perceived SMMA directly impacts brand equity within the airline industry. Kim and Ko (2012) and Godey et al. (2016) both tested luxury fashion brands and affirmed that perceived SMMA directly influences brand equity, similar findings within e-commerce brands (Yadav & Rahman, 2018; Yadav & Rahman, 2017). Therefore, regardless of brand category, perceived SMMA directly and indirectly influences brand equity. Accordingly, to create brand equity is through marketing activities (Kohli, Suri, & Kapoor, 2015), establishing image and meaning (Kohli, Suri, & Kapoor, 2015; Lemon, Rust, & Zeithaml, 2001), and providing cognitive, social, personal benefits and brand experience (Zollo et al., 2020), that offers a well-known trade name and a pleasant and robust brand image (Keller, 1993). Hence, brand awareness and brand image attributes evaluate brand equity's potential sources (Keller, 1993).

2.4.1 Brand Awareness

Brand awareness reflects the brand's noticeability and is affected by the name, cueing symbols, and visual imagery (Aaker, 1996). It is the possibility of a brand name crossing the consumer's mind (Keller, 1993). Anything that causes the consumer to encounter or expose to the brand can potentially increase awareness (Keller, 1993). Brand awareness is influenced and enhanced by marketing communication tools under the enterprise's control (Lemon, Rust, & Zeithaml, 2001). Therefore, substantial degrees of brand awareness can raise marketing communication effectiveness (Keller, 1993). Within social media, the consequence is more substantial on brand equity (Yan, 2011). Besides, brand awareness diffuses much more virally through social media than traditional media (Kohli, Suri, & Kapoor, 2015). According to Aaker (1996), different awareness levels can be measured: recall, recognition, knowledge, top-of-mind, and opinion about the brand. He states that recognition is most suitable for new or niche brands, while recall and top-of-mind are more suitable for established brands.

For SMEs to start differentiating their brand, brand awareness is the initial step to stand out from competitors (Michaelidou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, 2011). SMEs find that social media is essential to increase brand awareness (McCann & Barlow, 2015). In the business-to-consumer setting, SMEs determine awareness as a significantly notable goal for using social media (Michaelidou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, 2011). Accordingly, Instagram is the best option to form awareness and devotion toward the brand (Ventre, Mollá-Descals, & Frasquet, 2021). Besides, awareness in s-commerce positively influences the purpose of social media usage (Akman & Mishra, 2017). However, s-commerce brands can not accomplish robust brand equity without considering brand image because of the virtual store aspect. Leong et al. (2020) explain that regularly participating in internet communities

improves awareness of others and helps consumers decide what to buy in s-commerce. Often when consumers buy a product, they post their purchases on their account and tag the brand. On the other hand, the brand can repost to their account story for their followers to see. Thus, it increases brand awareness and associates the brand with the type of consumers.

2.4.2 *Brand Image*

Keller (1993) interprets the brand image as "perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory." He states that associations' strength depends on the way the information enters customers' memory and how it is sustained as a brand image. The brand associations come in different types. It includes product and non-product aspects, symbolic benefits, experiential, or functional, besides it varies based on their favorability, robustness, and uniqueness (Keller, 1993).

An investigation by Chatzipanagiotou, Christodoulides, and Veloutsou (2019) revealed that the individualism and collectivism cultural dimension differs between the brand equity formation process and consumer behavior outcome. They discovered that collectivistic cultures such as Greek consumers intend to suggest brands based on relational brand equity elements, while individualistic cultures like German consumers intend to suggest based on imagery brand attributes. Furthermore, they demonstrate that consumers with collectivistic cultures intend to repurchase brands based on either relational or brand associations and reputation, while consumers with individualistic cultures intend to repurchase brands based on functional aspects. Hence, the value of brand associations of brands image differs from one culture to another.

Moreover, SMEs with brand-oriented values are more successful in creating

brand equity when the brand image is clear and consistent (Anees-ur-Rehman & Johnston, 2019). On the other hand, the SME founders' image has an influence on customers' perception of the firm; therefore, there must be consistency with the values they want to portray for their firms with their public image (Spence & Essoussi, 2010). Hence, when a brand has a high positive image level, marketing communication's effectiveness is higher (Keller, 1993).

2.5 Relationship Equity

Relationship equity is about creating real bonds between the customer and the firm (Lemon, Rust, & Zeithaml, 2001). It refers to a customer's desire to stay in a relationship with the brand (Kim & Ko, 2012). Hudson et al. (2016) explored social network use and brand anthropomorphism on relationship quality. They explain brand anthropomorphism as consumers' association of human characteristics with a brand. They found that presence of social media interaction and a higher brand anthropomorphism, the better consumers' relationship quality with the brand. Furthermore, they state that frequent social media interaction, the better the brand anthropomorphism, eventually influencing relationship quality. Furthermore, they considered risk concerns; when risk concern is high, and social media interaction occurs with an anthropomorphized brand, influence on relationship quality is stronger, influencing word of mouth as well. In s-commerce, the interaction between consumers, and consumers with sellers influence social support. Social support is associated with functions such as informational or emotional assistance for an individual (Thoits, 1995). Hence, social support significantly influences the quality of the relationship (Tajvidi et al., 2021).

The brand's role, including the customer's emotional tie with the brand, is vital (Lemon, Rust, & Zeithaml, 2001). Small ties with customers generated through social media can positively affect the brand's evaluation and purchase intention (Naylor, Lamberton, & West, 2012). Brands that consumers purchase because of an emotional bond will proceed to succeed as it is a stronger bond and a more stable situation that is not easily intruded upon (Kohli, Suri, & Kapoor, 2015). Moreover, relationship equity is more significant for high-involvement purchases than brand equity (Lemon, Rust, & Zeithaml, 2001). Kim and Ko (2012) analyzed luxury fashion brands and found that perceived SMMA influences relationship equity but not purchase intention. In contrast, Wang et al. (2021) explored non-durable goods and observed that relationship equity significantly mediates between SMMA and customer loyalty. Similar findings to Wang et al. (2021), Yadav and Rahman (2018) obtained their results within e-commerce brands. Additionally, Macharia and Cheng (2019) studied the hotel industry and discovered that perceived SMMA affects relationship equity and, thus, the purchase intention. Therefore, relationship equity is not enclosed in a particular product category.

Besides, one of the most crucial goals for SMEs is using social media to pursue customer relationships (Michaelidou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, 2011). The purpose of adopting social media for small businesses is to manage customer relationships and retain customers (He et al., 2017). Therefore, an efficient way to boost relationship equity is to establish solid consumer relationship by providing exceptional treatment, acknowledgment, and building a community with customers (Kim & Ko, 2012; Lemon, Rust, & Zeithaml, 2001).

2.6 Purchase intention

Social networking sites have grown remarkably towards their impact on

different components of customer behavior, such as buying and post- buying behavior (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Consumers start to collect a particular amount of information, then they evaluate, consider, and compare, eventually settling in purchase behavior (Chen & Lin, 2019). However, it is challenging to know and trace whether a particular behavior occurred, such as purchase behavior, in empirical research (Chen & Lin, 2019). Therefore, purchase intention is regularly applied in marketing and consumer studies as a predictive measure of purchase behavior (Morwitz & Schmittlein, 1992).

Purchase intention composite customers' desire and the likelihood of acquiring the product; it is viewed as a short-term attitudinal variable (Kim & Ko, 2012). In addition, purchase intention allows every respondent to separately consolidate all the factors that are likely to add to a purchase decision (Morwitz & Schmittlein, 1992). Based on the available literature, variables such as customer equity drivers, brand attitude, and satisfaction influences a brand's purchase intention (Macharia & Cheng, 2019; Arli, 2017; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016; Kim & Ko 2012). As well, trust is a significant influence on purchase intention in an s-commerce setting (Sembada & Koay, 2021; Yahia, Al-Neama, & Kerbache, 2018).

2.7 Customer Characteristics

2.7.1 Customer-Firm Relationship Length

Anything that affects the consumer to experience or be exposed to a brand is more likely to increase familiarity (Keller, 1993). Thus, familiarity is related to brand awareness. By reoccurring exposure to a brand, greater brand familiarity; customers can distinguish and recall the brand (Keller, 1993). Research by Sabiote and Román (2009) used the length of the relationship as a moderator in a service industry, a hair

salon, and financial service as samples. In the hair salon industry, they obtained that relationship length with the firm moderates the relationship between employees' genuine respect and interest during interaction with the customer, on customer satisfaction and trust. However, there is no moderating effect of relationship length on employees' genuity on satisfaction and trust in the financial service industry. Therefore, it is understandable that the type of business is important.

In an online context, Gefen (2000) explains that familiarity truly establishes trust. He explains that with Amazon.com customers, those who trust and are familiar with the brand influence their purchase intentions. Similarly, Cazier, Shao, and Louis (2006) found that in a B2C context, a person's familiarity with an online firm directly influences purchase intention and is mediated by trust. Moreover, customers with a longer customer-firm relationship strengthen FGC (Kumar et al., 2016).

2.7.2 Technology Savviness

Tech-savvy is also called technological sophistication. It is about the high rates of adoption of new and complex technologies; from phones to internet applications, it is a mental enabler that improves customers' interaction with the firm (Macdonald & Uncles, 2007), and social media engagement (Kumar et al., 2016). For example, Zhang, Omran, and Cobanoglu (2017) studied consumers between twenty-one to thirty-five years old (generation Y) who are tech-savvy and found that receiving a positive service experience or a negative service experience are more likely to participate in eWOM about either their positive or negative service experience. Likewise, Kumar et al. (2016) state that tech-savvy consumers potentially share the information received from FGC with others online.

2.7.3 *Social Network Proneness*

In a digitally linked world, consumers spend growing amounts of time communicating online with others sharing mutual interests and customer experiences (Kumar et al., 2016). Nasir et al. (2021) explain that one trait of susceptible customers is that customers are prone to the social network; when their social network account cannot be accessed, they sense they are out of contact as the social network is held to be part of their daily routine. They add that this type of customer is inclined to influence others and engage with the business's marketing efforts.

Moreover, Generation Y members who are regular and active users on social media can be more prone to engage in electronic WOM about their positive or negative experience when a positive or negative service experience is received. Additionally, they found that if hostile service occurred and was recovered, they were motivated to engage in an electronic WOM because of their regular use of social media (Zhang, Omran, & Cobanoglu, 2017). Besides, customers prone to social networking have a more substantial influence on FGC (Kumar et al., 2016).

2.8 Hypothesis Development

Social media has arisen as an essential medium for marketing communication (Rialti et al., 2017). The approach customers obtain information, compare products, and provide their opinions has changed (Wang et al., 2021). Perceived SMMA indicates that customers recognize a business or brand engagement in different SMMA (Koay et al., 2020). Customers' direct communication assessment, such as using and trying, and indirect communications, such as advertising, WOM, and reputation, influence brand trust (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2001). Developing and enhancing social media brand pages and providing value, exchanging knowledge, and promoting

interaction between users and the brand can strengthen the brand trust (Jain et al., 2018). Interaction between consumers and the marketer significantly impacts consumers' brand trust, giving consumers a positive feeling (Liu et al., 2018). Additionally, brand information transparency, such as being open and honest, builds trust for the brand, which leads customers to have confidence in telling other users (Choi, Thoeni & Kroff, 2018). Therefore, prior studies uncovered that SMMA directly influences brand trust (e.g., Ebrahim, 2020; Zhang et al., 2019).

In SMEs' fashion market, social media marketing allows a powerful branding influence (Hsiao et al., 2020). The actual value of a brand is established through consumers' knowledge about the brand and their response to the marketing activities (Keller, 1993). Therefore, social media marketing is an excellent contributor toward building compelling brands that can interact with consumers and build brand attachment (Ventre, Mollá-Descals, & Frasset, 2021). Cheung, Pires, and Rosenberger's (2020) study exhibit that SMMA attributes such as interaction, WOM, and trendiness boost the brand-building process and are essential drivers of brand engagement and brand knowledge. To discuss brand marketing, Ibrahim, Aljarah, and Ababneh (2020) meta-analyzed 15 articles on SMMA and Brand equity, and the result show a strong positive connection between them. They explain that because social media permits direct and close contact with the brand and other users, the five elements of SMMA grant tools to improve brand equity regarding perceptions and beliefs about the brand. Therefore, prior research has found that perceived SMMA positively influences brand equity (e.g., Wang et al., 2021; Koay et al., 2020).

Another type of marketing is relationship marketing, which underlines the significance of keeping a bond with consumers (Macharia & Cheng, 2019). Businesses form customer value on social media by interacting with consumers and cultivating

customer relationships (Michaelidou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, 2011). Highlighting that perceived SMMA is a solid tool to develop a relationship with customers (Ismail, 2017). Relationship marketing allows long-term relationship value compared to the brand value (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996). Michaelideou, Siamagka, and Christodoulids (2011) investigated business-to-business (B2B) SMEs in the United Kingdom using social media for branding objectives and found that social media grants gaining new clients, building relationships, raising awareness, and conveying the brand on the Internet. Therefore, relationship marketing by SMMA is predicted to impact relationship equity. Prior research has found that perceived SMMA positively influences relationship equity (e.g., Wang et al., 2021). Accordingly, based on the literature, the hypotheses of SMMA influences are formed.

H1. Perceived SMMA significantly and positively influences brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity.

H1a. Perceived SMMA significantly and positively influences brand trust.

H1b. Perceived SMMA significantly and positively influences brand equity.

H1c. Perceived SMMA significantly and positively influences relationship equity.

Digital technology and social networking continually change customer behavior and expectations (Suryani, Fauzi, & Nurhadi, 2020). Within e-commerce, there is a significant relationship between trust and online buying intention, as trust determines the user's decision regarding buying online (Yoon, 200). Kim, Ferrin, and Rao (2008) discovered that trust is the most substantial predictor of buying intention in an online context compared to the perceived benefit and perceived risk. Additionally, trust is a crucial mediator between social media usage and purchase intention and between eWOM and purchase decision (Prasad, Gupta, & Totala, 2017). Therefore, trust is

essential for a customer's intention to buy, in which lack of trust complicates the decision process (Li, 2019). Literature support that trust positively influences purchase intention (Ibrahim, Aljarah, and Ababneh, 2020; Zhang et al., 2019; Gibreel, AlOtaibi, & Altmann, 2018).

Brands present information related to their offerings and form associations that influence customers' minds in the buying process (Chovanová, Korshunov, & Babčanová, 2015). Customers draw specific conclusions from advertising, word of mouth (Hutter et al., 2013; Bettman, 1979), product stimuli, and other product-related information sources that are massively dependent upon what data are in memory and how they are placed (Bettman, 1979). These associations provide customers a reason to purchase and feel confident in the buying decision process (Aaker, 1992). Customers with high cognitive and involvement levels are more likely to make decisions based on their knowledge, experience, and judgment (Yan et al., 2016). To boost customers' purchase intention, businesses need to strengthen brand equity through brand experiences (Moreira, Fortes, Santiago, 2017). Therefore, appropriate marketing activities would construct satisfactory brand associations in consumers' minds and decide to buy recognized brands (Chovanová, Korshunov, & Babčanová, 2015). Hence, brand equity is positively associated with purchase intention.

The exchangeable marketing communication hugely influences customer decision-making and establishes a stronger relationship between the brand and the customer (Ho & Chung, 2020). Customers use social media to interact and enhance their relationships with firms; then, customers could participate in decision making more efficiently (Prasad, Garg, Prasad, 2019). Hence, relationship value is a precursor of behavioral outcomes in relationship marketing (Ulaga & Eggert, 2004). Therefore, relationship equity provides emotional benefits as consumers recognize the firm's

benefits in the future (Macharia & Cheng, 2019). Conquering relationship equity, customers will establish a bond that eases the decision-making process for the customers. Hence, Relationship equity positively impacts the consumer's purchase intention (Macharia & Cheng, 2019). Accordingly, based on the literature, the hypothesis of brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity on purchase intention are developed.

H2. Brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity significantly and positively influence purchase intention.

H2a. Brand trust significantly and positively influences purchase intention.

H2b. Brand equity significantly and positively influences purchase intention.

H2c. Relationship equity significantly and positively influences purchase intention.

Consumers receiving tremendous information and emotional assistance lead to a greater familiarity with others on s-commerce (Li, 2019). Moreover, familiarity aids in building trust in firms (Gibreel, AlOtaibi, & Altmann, 2018). Positive experience causes higher familiarity (Yoon, 2002). Customer-firm relationship length is associated with the customer's familiarity with a brand. The longer they follow and receive brand-related information from the marketing activities, the more significant the brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity. Tech-savvy customers are those who adopt the latest and complicated technologies. They tend to have higher interaction, engagement, and WOM compared to non-tech-savvy customers. Therefore, it leads them to consume and have more information processing related to the brand. Hence, tech-savvy customers allow to significantly raise brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity due to their involvement with the marketing activities. Furthermore, customers prone to social media spend a lot of time networking. They tend to communicate more and

share more with other people. Hence, it influences the brand evaluation, perception, and relationship of the brands. Therefore, customers' proneness to social networking strengthens the relationship between marketing activities and brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity. The following hypothesis is developed accordingly.

H3. Customer characteristics significantly moderate the relationship between perceived SMMA and brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity.

H3a. Customer characteristics significantly moderate the relationship between perceived SMMA and brand trust.

H3b. Customer characteristics significantly moderate the relationship between perceived SMMA and brand equity.

H3c. Customer characteristics significantly moderate the relationship between perceived SMMA and relationship equity.

2.9 Research Framework

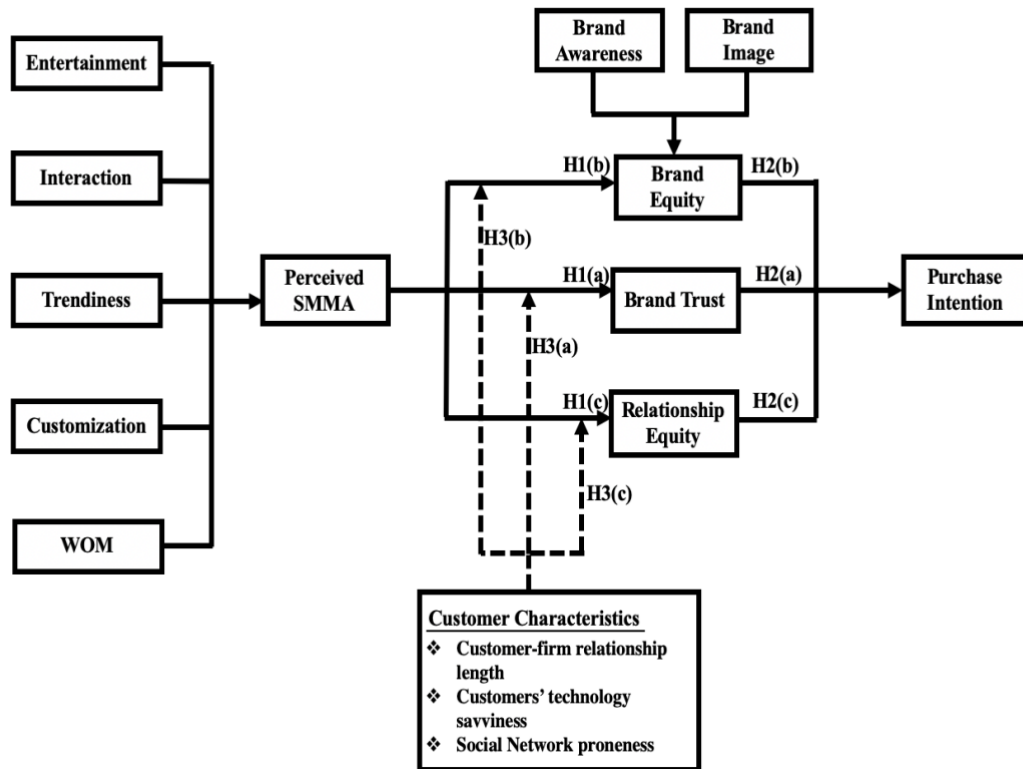


Figure 2. Research Framework

2.10 Chapter Conclusion

The second chapter presented various discussions that helped in developing the research hypothesis and research framework. The crucial point to note from this chapter is that there are three hypotheses. First, perceived SMMA significantly and positively influences brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity. Second, brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity significantly and positively influence purchase intention. Third, customer characteristics significantly moderate the relationship between perceived SMMA and brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity. The next chapter addresses the philosophy and methodology to test these hypotheses.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of five sections. First, it starts with the research philosophy followed by research methodology that explains how the research philosophy influences the research method. Then, an explanation of the sample size and sampling techniques of the current research. Next, a discussion on the instrument that is used to collect data. Lastly, an illustration of the questionnaire items and their sources in the measures section.

3.2 Research Philosophy

A philosophy review is a significant aspect of the research process; it justifies and provides confidence in using the appropriate methodology (Siangchokyoo & Sousa-Poza, 2012; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019; Holden & Lynch, 2004). Every social investigator engages with their research participants through either implicit or explicit beliefs regarding the social environment and how they can examine it (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Beliefs and assumptions help distinguish between different research philosophies (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), there are four assumptions: ontology, epistemology, human nature, and methodology. On the other hand, Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019) explain three assumptions: ontology, epistemology, and axiology.

After a clear understanding of the assumptions, epistemology is the most applicable to the researcher for the current investigation. Epistemology is "the relationship between the investigator and what can be discovered" (Howell, 2012, p. 29). The central notion of epistemology is the grounds of knowledge and how to obtain it (Mason, 2014). It attempts to illustrate the difference between opinion and knowledge

(Cruz, 2006). This research begins with transferring belief and opinion into knowledge. Knowledge requires truth that includes the researcher's belief to be justifiable or appropriately held (Steup & Neta, 2020). For example, the researcher has gathered information about social media marketing and its influence on brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity, eventually leading to purchase intention, and beliefs that similar results occur within s-commerce. Hence, there is a need to create appropriate design and tools to transfer the belief into knowledge or fact.

After discovering different assumptions and beliefs, objectivism and subjectivism are two conflicting approaches that help determine the research philosophy. Subjectivism emphasizes the role of knowing the research participant that researchers can describe their manner in various ways (Janečková, 2015). The contrasting approach to subjectivism is objectivism. Objectivism concentrates on rational expectations, and the research participants' intentions are discovered by their words and manner instead of unstated intentions (Janečková, 2015). Furthermore, the objectivism approach is about learning the fact about reality by replicating observations in very managed conditions (Hiller, 2016).

Hence, epistemology-objectivism attempts to find the fact about social life through observation, measuring facts, which law like generalization can be obtained about the social reality (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). Therefore, discovering this determines that the most suitable to the current research is objectivism because this research desires to obtain knowledge of reality and fundamental reason; meanwhile, the least desired knowledge to obtain are emotions or faiths.

Under epistemology and objectivism, it introduces the positivist philosophy. Positivism concentrates on identifying observable and measurable facts (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). It attempts to interpret and predict the social environment

occurrences by seeking causal connections and systems between attributes (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). The main objectives of positivism research are to gain replicable results with other researchers (Siangchokyoo & Sousa-Poza, 2012). Therefore, within this research philosophy, the researcher is independent of what is being examined, what and how to examine depends on objective criteria in preference to beliefs and interests, it aims to distinguish causal explanations that reveal predictability in social behavior, and the research language is formal that is based on a set of representations (Holdon & Lynch, 2004).

In general, positivist methods typically use the deductive approach (Crowther & Lancaster, 2008). The deductive approach is described as "developing a hypothesis (or hypotheses) based on existing theory, and then designing a research strategy to test the hypothesis" (Wilson, 2014, p. 13). Hence, chapter two introduces three hypotheses based on literature review, and henceforth the methodology and strategy are based on measuring the stated hypotheses. Furthermore, Ramanathan (2008) explains that the positivism approach requires operationalizing the concepts to measure them and present statistical probabilities. In other words, explicitly define variables by adopting suitable measures and materials (Adams & Lawrence, 2018).

The time horizon in research design depends on the research questions (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). The time horizon comes in two forms: cross-sectional and longitudinal. Based on the methodology and the objectives of the study, this research carries a cross-sectional study design. It is a one-time period or across a brief duration (Levin, 2006) and applies a survey strategy attempting to explain the scope of a phenomenon (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). This type of study is quick and practical, and it is not required for a follow-up investigation. In which the ethical consideration is brought up. Research ethics indicates how appropriate the

researcher's behavior is concerning the rights of those participating in the research or those influenced by it (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). This study topic does not provide any embarrassment to any participant or the distributors of the questionnaire. The participants are provided with a cover page before starting the questionnaire, consenting that the participation is entirely voluntary and are free to withdraw from the study at any time of discomfort, and the responses are confidential. Therefore, this study provides minimum to no risk physically and mentally to the participants; see appendix A for more details. Additionally, the researcher received ethical approval from Qatar University Internal Review Board (QU-IRB) to execute the data collection method; see Appendix E.

This research follows the positivism philosophical choice because it started with the researcher's belief and knowledge about social media marketing and s-commerce, followed by research on the topics within the literature and developing hypotheses. Furthermore, knowing the best methodological choice for this type of research is quantitative research, specifically survey. Hence, the quantitative method will provide insights and facts that can be supported with previous researches, and the study will be conducted at a particular period. Therefore, the philosophical and methodological decision meets the research objectives stated in chapter one.

3.3 Research Methodology

The positivist philosophy indicates that objective facts provide the best scientific confirmation that implies researchers are more prone to choosing a quantitative research method (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). Besides, the method of carrying quantitative study starts with topic selection; the researcher begins with an interest or an issue area of study and then narrows it down to a particular

research question that will be addressed in the study (Choy, 2014). Furthermore, it is used when the research starts with a theory or hypotheses and examines for verification or rejection of those hypotheses (Newman, Benz & Ridenour, 1998). Hence, conducting quantitative research is relevant for this study.

The quantitative study explains situations by gathering numerical data interpreted by applying statistics (Muijs, 2004). In the sense that each observation can be averaged without the need for interpretation (Adams & Lawrence, 2018). It falls under empirical studies or statistical studies, making it a dominant research method in social science (Newman, Benz & Ridenour, 1998). Accordingly, researchers must quantify participants' feelings, attitudes, or behaviors by allocating a number to a variable instead of presenting verbal data (Adams & Lawrence, 2018). Therefore, the quantitative method is a more suitable method to look at the cause and effect of certain events or situations (Muijs, 2004). In the earlier chapters, it exhibits the formulation of the hypotheses and the research questions. This study examines the influence of the SMMA on consumers' purchase intention by the three mediators and the three moderators. Hence, to verify the variables' positive impact and answer the research questions, it is most practical to take a quantitative approach.

3.4 Sample

By August 2020, Qatar's population reached 2.74 million (Planning and Statistics Authority, 2020). Out of the population, 1.22 million users are on Instagram (NepaleonCat, 2020). One key factor influencing the research's statistical significance is the sample size (Lance & Vandenberg, 2009). Representing the population based on the sample size depends on the homogeneity of members of the population (Adams & Lawrence, 2018). Additionally, the sample size bases on the type of the research and

the applied statistical tool (Siddiqui, 2013). For example, Thompson (2004), as cited in Siddiqui (2013), states that for factor analysis, at least 200 respondents are needed to obtain a stable result. However, Bartlett, Kotrlik, & Higgins (2001) argue that to conduct factor analysis should obtain above 100 responses. In addition, an article by Iacobucci (2010) supports that some structural equation models with 50 to 100 sample sizes can perform well.

To choose the sample size from the population, Siddiqui (2013) has proposed a sample size scale, in which "a sample size of 50 is very poor, 100 is poor, 200 is fair, 300 is good, 500 is very good, and 1,000 is excellent." In comparison, Cattell (2012) argues that there is no remarkable change when the sample size exceeds 250. However, Boomsma (1983) asserts that a sample size above 200 is relatively robust. This research has obtained 207 valuable responses; out of 235 responses, 25 did not follow at least one social media brand page on Instagram, and two responses were voided because of unreliable responses.

Sampling is the method researchers use to gather a comparatively lesser number of representative individuals from a predefined population to aid as subjects for observation or experimentation, depending on the researchers' study objectives (Sharma, 2017). The sampling method for the research is convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is "a type of nonprobability sample made up of those volunteers or others who are readily available and willing to participate" (Adams & Lawrence, 2018, p. 123). Furthermore, it is affordable and involves obtaining the proportion of the research population that is close and accessible (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016; Bhattacharjee, 2012). Moreover, within the convenience sampling, it is posting an online survey on social media. Therefore, social media sampling is a suitable tool to study those difficult to reach populations, and at the same time, increases the sample

size (Baltar & Brunet, 2012). Additionally, the sample is not restricted to a specific location; simultaneously, it is used by users of different socioeconomic backgrounds, ages, and education levels (Adams & Lawrence, 2018).

This sampling method was adopted because of limited accessibility to the target sample and limited resources, as the researcher did not hold a record of Instagram users. Moreover, the data collection was conducted during the pandemic, where other sampling techniques were difficult to carry out. Considering the target sample was difficult to reach through standard approaches such as phone calls, mail, or face-to-face (Roberts, 2014). Besides, it is argued that within the positivism approach, the researcher keeps least interaction with the participants because the study is based on facts, and views the world as external and objective (Wilson, 2014).

3.5 Instrument

A suitable instrument to use is an online questionnaire. An online questionnaire is similar to paper-and-pencil questionnaires; the findings are compatible with findings drawn from traditional methods (Gosling et al., 2004), but with the benefit of answers are directly stored in a database that saves time and costs (Muijs, 2004). A questionnaire helps obtain information inaccessible from observation of the user's behavior, getting high amounts of structured, simply analyzable information about a person's attitude, belief, and characteristics (Hyland, 2016).

The questionnaire are in two languages, Arabic and English. Back translation is carried out to confirm the quality and accuracy of the two languages' questions and statements. First, the questionnaire is written in English and translated into Arabic by the researcher with the help of a family member who is more fluent in Arabic. Afterward, the Arabic questionnaire is sent to a third party to translate it back to

English. Accordingly, the Arabic and English questionnaires are adjusted to get to an accurate match. The participants are given the choice of selecting their preferred survey language.

The questions and statements are developed from previous studies and are uploaded to a suitable online survey tool (e.g., Google Forms). The data were collected through multiple approaches. First, publishing on personal social media accounts like Instagram and Twitter. As mentioned, social media can contribute to a broader sample (Adams & Lawrence, 2018). Besides, diversified influencers with followers above ten thousand in Qatar were requested to attach and share the questionnaire's link on their page to reach a broader range of participants. Although nearly fifty people were contacted, only seven could post on their account page (_nmz, ghadabintk, qhbm, forough_piroozi, fatma.alyousif, elmirasworld, nesrinmashhour).

Furthermore, Qatar University students were invited to participate in the survey through email. The College of Business and Economics at Qatar University send an email to the college students and all the graduate students to participate in the survey. Qatar University students are familiar with social media and comprise a diverse sociodemographic variable such as age, gender, and background. Moreover, SPSS and SPSS AMOS software are used for data analysis and interpretation.

3.6 Measures

The target subjects to be a follower of at least one social media brand on Instagram in Qatar. The questionnaire provides an introduction to the study and an explanation about social media brands. Next, they are asked if they follow a social media brand on Instagram, and only if the participant answers "yes" they proceed to the main survey. This screen question ensures the participants' responses measure their

authentic experience rather than answering hypothetically.

The scales are based on previous research articles and are adjusted to fit the research context. For instance, perceived SMMA scales adopted from Seo and Park (2018), and Yadav and Rahman (2018) are similar to the research context of the SMMA attributes. However, scales based on Voss, Spangenberg, and Grohmann (2003), Suryani, Fauzi, and Nurhadi (2020), Shanahan, Tran, and Taylor (2019) provided the operational variables and are tailored to match the concepts of entertainment, interaction, and customization. Furthermore, the scale by Ebrahim (2020) is used similarly for brand trust because it is in the context of social media. However, the Ohanian (1990) scale is adjusted to fit the social media brand page to add more on brand trust. In addition, brand equity, relationship equity, and purchase intention scales are based on Kim and Ko (2012), Godey et al. (2016), and Arli (2017) with minor adjustments to achieve consistent statements. Moreover, Zhang, Van Doorn, and Leeflang (2014), and Lemon, Rust, and Zeithaml (2001) scales are rephrased to fit the social media brand page. Lastly, technology-savvy customers and social network proneness scales are adopted from Zhang, Omran, and Cobanoglu (2017), while customer-firm relationship length question is obtained from Liu, Leach, and Bernhardt (2005), it is rewritten to fit with the social media page. All the scales are modified and rewritten to offer the same pattern across all the statements.

The items and their sources are shown in Table 1. All statement items are measured using a five-point Likert scale anchored by [1] strongly disagree and [5] strongly agree. Except for the customer-firm relationship length, it is anchored by [1] less than one year and [5] more than six years, similar to a prior study. Lastly, they require to answer demographic questions such as age, gender, education, and nationality.

Table 1. Measurement Items and Sources

Variables	Items	Sources	Hypothesis
Perceived SMMA:			
Entertainment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The content of the social media brand page is enjoyable. 2. The content of the social media brand page is interesting. 3. The content of the social media brand page is fun. 4. The content of the social media brand page is pleasant. 	(Seo & Park, 2018; Voss, Spangenberg, & Grohmann, 2003; Suryani, Fauzi, & Nurhadi, 2020; Yadav & Rahman, 2018; Shanahan, Tran, & Taylor, 2019)	H1a. Perceived SMMA significantly and positively influences brand trust.
Interaction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. It is easy to interact with the social media brand owner/manager. 6. It is feasible to communicate through direct message (DM) or comment section. 7. It is feasible to share information on the social media brand page. 8. It is feasible to have conversations and exchange of ideas on the social media brand page. 9. It is easy to express opinions on the social media brand page. 		H1b. Perceived SMMA significantly and positively influences brand equity.
Trendiness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. The information shared on the social media brand page is up to date. 		H1c. Perceived SMMA significantly and positively influences relationship equity.

Variables	Items	Sources	Hypothesis
	11. The social media brand page presents accurate information.		
	12. The social media brand page presents useful information.		
	13. The social media brand page presents comprehensive information.		
	14. The content of the social media brand page is trendy.		
Customization	15. If I need information, I can find it on the social media brand page.		
	16. Social media brand page provides the information that I need.		
	17. Social media brand page provides a personalized service.		
	18. Social media brand page provides content that is tailored to my characteristics.		
	19. Social media brand page provides content that is personalized to my needs.		
WOM	20. I will post a positive opinion about this brand on my social media page.		
	21. I will share my opinion about this brand on my social media page.		
	22. I will pass information about this brand through my other social media accounts.		
	23. I will suggest this brand to my friends or family on social media.		

Variables	Items	Sources	Hypothesis
	24. I will share my opinion about this brand to my friends or family.		
Brand trust	25. The social media brand page is honest. 26. The social media brand page promises are genuine. 27. The social media brand page meets my expectations. 28. The social media brand page is reliable. 29. The social media brand page is trustworthy. 30. The social media brand page is dependable.	(Ebrahim, 2020; Delgado-Ballester, 2004; Ohanian, 1990)	H2a. Brand trust significantly and positively influences purchase intention.
Brand equity: Brand awareness	31. I notice the social media brand page among other rival brands. 32. I am always aware of the social media brand page. 33. I can recall some characteristics of the social media brand page. 34. I can recall the social media brand page's logo or symbol. 35. I do not have difficulty imagining the brand page in my mind.	(Arli, 2017)	H2b. Brand equity significantly and positively influences purchase intention.

Variables	Items	Sources	Hypothesis
Brand image	<p>36. The social media brand page is first in its field.</p> <p>37. The social media brand page is strong in my memory.</p> <p>38. The social media brand page has a clean image.</p> <p>39. The social media brand page is unique.</p> <p>40. The social media brand page value is consistent.</p> <p>41. The social media brand page is customer oriented.</p> <p>42. The social media brand page is brand oriented.</p>	(Godey et al., 2016; Kim & Kim, 2005)	
Relationship equity	<p>43. I feel I receive special treatment from the social media brand page.</p> <p>44. I have a natural liking toward the social media brand page.</p> <p>45. I feel enthusiastic about the social media brand page.</p> <p>46. I feel I am a member of the social media brand page community.</p> <p>47. I am committed to the social media brand page.</p>	(Kim & Ko, 2012; Zhang, Van Doorn, & Leeflang, 2014; Lemon, Rust, & Zeithaml, 2001)	H2c. Relationship equity significantly and positively influences purchase intention.
Purchase intention	<p>48. I am going to buy the products or services from the social media brand page in the future.</p> <p>49. I intend to buy products or services from the social media brand page in the future.</p> <p>50. Most probably, I will buy products or services from the social media brand page in the future.</p>	(Arlı, 2017)	

Variables	Items	Sources	Hypothesis
Customer Characteristics:		(Liu, Leach, & Bernhardt, 2005)	H3a. Customer characteristics significantly moderate the relationship between perceived SMMA and brand trust.
Customer-firm relationship length	51. How long are you following the social media brand page?		
Technology-Savvy		(Zhang, Omran, & Cobanoglu, 2017)	H3b. Customer characteristics significantly moderate the relationship between perceived SMMA and brand equity.
	52. I use technology devices, such as laptops, tablet, smartphones, smart watch or other technology devices, very often.		
	53. Using mobile devices is easy.		
	54. I use mobile devices frequently.		
	55. I use mobile applications (apps) very often.		
	56. Using mobile applications (apps) is easy.		
	57. I use mobile applications frequently.		H3c. Customer characteristics significantly moderate the relationship between perceived SMMA and relationship equity.
Social network proneness		(Zhang, Omran, & Cobanoglu, 2017)	
	58. I access social networking sites such as Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Facebook, or other networking sites very often.		
	59. I use social networking sites frequently.		
	60. I regularly interact and communicate with others on social networking sites.		
	61. I frequently participate in topics on social networking sites.		
	62. I am an active user on social networking sites.		

3.7 Chapter Conclusion

Chapter three discusses the philosophy and methodology of the study. The philosophy of the research explains that this research begins with transferring belief and opinion into knowledge. Therefore, it will focus on the objectivism approach by concentrating on rational expectation and learning participants' intentions by their words rather than unstated intentions. The positivist method falls under this approach. It attempts to identify observable and measurable facts. Hence, the philosophy helped to narrow the plan of the methodology of the research. The study conducted quantitative research by distributing an online questionnaire through convenience sampling. The questionnaire was distributed in Arabic and English through multiple social media accounts and emails to students at Qatar University College of Business and Economics. This research has received 207 valuable responses. The next chapter will exhibit the findings using the data collected on software SPSS and SPSS AMOS.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of the research findings. The analysis was done using SPSS 23 and SPSS AMOS 26. First the section introduces the descriptive analysis of the research participants. Then provide the results of KMO and Bartlett's test that confirms the sample adequacy. Followed by the validity and reliability tests of the constructs and the dataset. Finally, the last sections present the results of the research hypothesis.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

This study received a total of 235 responses. However, 25 respondents do not follow at least one social media brand page on Instagram, and two respondents are eliminated because of unreliable responses. Therefore, 207 valuable responses are used in this study. In addition, the research participants provided four demographic information, including gender, age, nationality, and education level shown in table 2. The majority of the participants are males with 63 percent, and 37 percent of the respondents are females. The male respondents in this study are higher because a male influencer posted on their account had a substantial number of male followers. Furthermore, the majority of the participants are from the age of 18 to 24 years old, that is 64 percent of the respondents. Follows the respondents from the age of 25 to 31 that form 23 percent of the sample data. Respondents ages 32 to 38 make up 8 percent of the sample data. Lastly, respondents above the age of 39 consist only 5 percent of the sample data. In this research, most respondents are Qataris, with a proportion of 69 percent, while 31 percent are non-Qataris. Besides, the education level is divided into four categories, including high school, undergraduates, postgraduates, and other

educational degrees. Mostly, the participants fall under the undergraduate education level with 46 percent, and high school education level with 33 percent. In addition, participants under the postgraduate education level comprise 20 percent of the sample data. Meanwhile, only 1 percent of the sample data falls under other educational levels.

Table 2. Demographic Variables

Variables	n	Percentage
Gender		
Female	77	37
Male	130	63
Age		
18-24	133	64
25-31	47	23
32-38	17	8
39-45	7	4
Above 45	3	1
Nationality		
Qatari	143	69
Non-Qatari	64	31
Education Level		
High School	68	33
Undergraduate	96	46
Postgraduate	41	20
Other	2	1

The participants in this research study were required to consider a social media brand page on Instagram and stated the category it falls under. As appears in table 3 mainly the brand category falls under the fashion industry with 34 percent. Followed by the technology industry with 26 percent. Afterward, 23 percent of the participants selected the food industry. While, 9 percent of the participants chose other categories, and only 8 percent chose the services industry.

Table 3. Social Media Brand Category Distribution

Variables	n	Percentage
Social Media Brand Category		
Food	47	23
Fashion	71	34
Technology	53	26
Services	17	8
Other	19	9

4.3 Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test expresses the sampling adequacy. The outcome of KMO is 0.887, and according to Kasier (1974), the index in the 0.80s is meritorious. Therefore, it is appropriate to use the sample for further analysis as the sample is sufficient. Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant 0.00 that is below 0.05. Pallant (2013), as cited in Hadi, Abdullah, and Sentosa (2016), indicates that the significant value below 0.05 specifies that the data do not generate an identity matrix and are therefore suitable for further analysis as it can be considered multivariate normal.

Table 4. KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.887
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	8244.841
	df	1830
	Sig.	0.000

4.4 Validity and Reliability Test

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test the construct validity. First, CFA was used to measure the factor loading and model fit within SMMA. After review, factor loadings below 0.5 were dropped (Hulland, 1999; Truong & McColl, 2011), and Cronbach's α above 0.70 were acknowledged as an acceptable level of reliability (Cortina, 1993). A few items were removed from the constructs to receive a satisfactory model. The following indices are used to evaluate if the model fits the data: chi-square (χ^2), degrees of freedom (df), chi-square/degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF), p-value (p), goodness of fit index (GFI), Adjusted goodness to fit (AGFI), Normed fit index (NFI), incremental fit index (IFI), comparative fit index (CFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (Lee, Hsing, & Li, 2021). The χ^2 measures between observed data and the model; the investigator prefers attaining a nonsignificant χ^2 when linked to the df (Kunnan, 1998). However, the χ^2 model fit is sensitive to the sample size, and the sample sizes above 200 most likely indicate significance (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). Furthermore, GFI, AGFI, NFI, IFI, and CFI values above 0.90 reflect a good model fit (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010; Kunnan, 1998). Moreover, values less than 0.08 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010; Lee, Hsing, & Li, 2021) or less than 0.06 provide close fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Therefore, this model resulted into a satisfactory fit; $\chi^2=94.489$, $df=67$, $CMIN/DF=1.410$, $p=0.015$, $GFI=0.943$, $AGFI=0.910$, $NFI=0.926$, $IFI=0.977$, $CFI=0.977$, $RMSEA=0.045$. As a result, a reliability test was applied to measure the consistency of the variables amidst each construct was above acceptable value. Table 3 displays the items and the Cronbach's α of each construct.

Table 5. CFA and Reliability Test of Perceived SMMA

Construct	Items	Factor Loading	Cronbach's α
Entertainment	The content of the social media brand page is interesting.	0.60	0.74
	The content of the social media brand page is fun.	0.74	
	The content of the social media brand page is pleasant.	0.77	
Interaction	It is feasible to have conversations and exchange of ideas on the social media brand page.	0.81	0.73
	It is easy to express opinions on the social media brand page.	0.74	
Trendiness	The social media brand page presents accurate information.	0.67	0.77
	The social media brand page presents useful information.	0.72	
	The social media brand page presents comprehensive information.	0.80	
Customization	Social media brand page provides a personalized service.	0.76	0.82
	Social media brand page provides content that is tailored to my characteristics.	0.77	
	Social media brand page provides content that is personalized to my needs.	0.82	
WOM	I will post a positive opinion about this brand on my social media page.	0.78	0.86
	I will share my opinion about this brand on my social media page.	0.91	
	I will pass information about this brand through my other social media accounts.	0.78	

Brand equity construct has two variables. Therefore, the validity and reliability of this model were constructed. Furthermore, due to this model being small, there was a perfectly fit index with RMSEA being very high; $\chi^2=3.092$, $df=3$, $CMIN/DF=1.031$, $p=0.378$, $GFI=0.994$, $AGFI=0.970$, $NFI=0.992$, $IFI=1$, $CFI=1$, $RMSEA=.12$. Few items were dropped, and each variable received an acceptable Cronbach's α above 0.70; see Table 4.

Table 6. CFA and Reliability Test of Brand Equity

Construct	Items	Factor Loading	Cronbach's α
Awareness	I am always aware of the social media brand page.	0.88	0.76
	I can recall some characteristics of the social media brand page.	0.64	
	I can recall the social media brand page's logo or symbol.	0.84	
Image	The social media brand page has a clean image.	0.80	0.78
	The social media brand page value is consistent.	0.80	

Hence, after transforming which variables on SPSS, the whole set of constructs was used to test the convergent validity, as the variables within the constructs should be related. As a result, the interaction was removed from perceived SMMA and other items from the study. Accordingly, the model presented a satisfactory model fit; $\chi^2=87.319$, $df=55$, $CMIN/DF=1.588$, $p=0.004$, $GFI=0.940$, $AGFI=0.901$, $NFI=0.934$, $IFI=0.975$, $CFI=0.974$, $RMSEA=0.053$. Table 5 illustrates the standardized factor loadings and the Cronbach's α of each construct.

Table 7. Validity and Reliability Test for Structural Equation Model

Construct	Items	Factor Loading	Cronbach's α
Perceived SMMA	Entertainment	0.66	0.77
	Trendiness	0.67	
	Customization	0.65	
	WOM	0.72	
Brand trust	The social media brand page is reliable.	0.79	0.80
	The social media brand page is trustworthy	0.85	
Brand equity	Awareness	0.75	0.73
	Image	0.77	
Relationship equity	I have a natural liking toward the social media brand page.	0.78	0.72
	I feel enthusiastic about the social media brand page.	0.73	
Purchase Intention	I am going to buy the products or services from the social media brand page in the future.	0.75	0.86
	I intend to buy products or services from the social media brand page in the future.	0.82	
	Most probably, I will buy products or services from the social media brand page in the future.	0.92	

After conducting divergent validity, discriminant validity was tested. The square root of each construct's average variance extracted (AVE) must be higher than the correlation coefficients to determine if the constructs are not related (Henseler, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2015). Table 6 verifies that discriminant validity was confirmed.

Table 8. Discriminant Validity

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	AVE Square Root
1 Perceived SMMA	1					0.676
2 Brand trust	0.475	1				0.821
3 Brand equity	0.729	0.557	1			0.760
4 Relationship equity	0.613	0.395	0.578	1		0.755
5 Purchase Intention	0.487	0.318	0.532	0.530	1	0.833

This research study has three moderators, and two of them are scales. Therefore, the scales were tested for reliability. Technology savviness Cronbach's α was 0.91; the first item was deleted as it gave a stronger Cronbach's α value. Social network proneness Cronbach's α was 0.80. Hence, the two moderators had high reliability values.

4.5 Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The paths of the structural equation model were drawn to test the model fit and the hypothesis. The model fit was satisfactory, it supports the goodness fit of the structural model; $\chi^2=94.768$, $df=59$, $CMIN/DF=1.606$, $p=0.002$, $GFI=0.935$, $AGFI=0.899$, $NFI=0.929$, $IFI=0.972$, $CFI=0.971$, $RMSEA=0.054$. Table 7 provides the summary of the hypothesis results and figure 8 illustrates the results of structural equation model. Hence, (H1) perceived SMMA significantly and positively influences brand trust

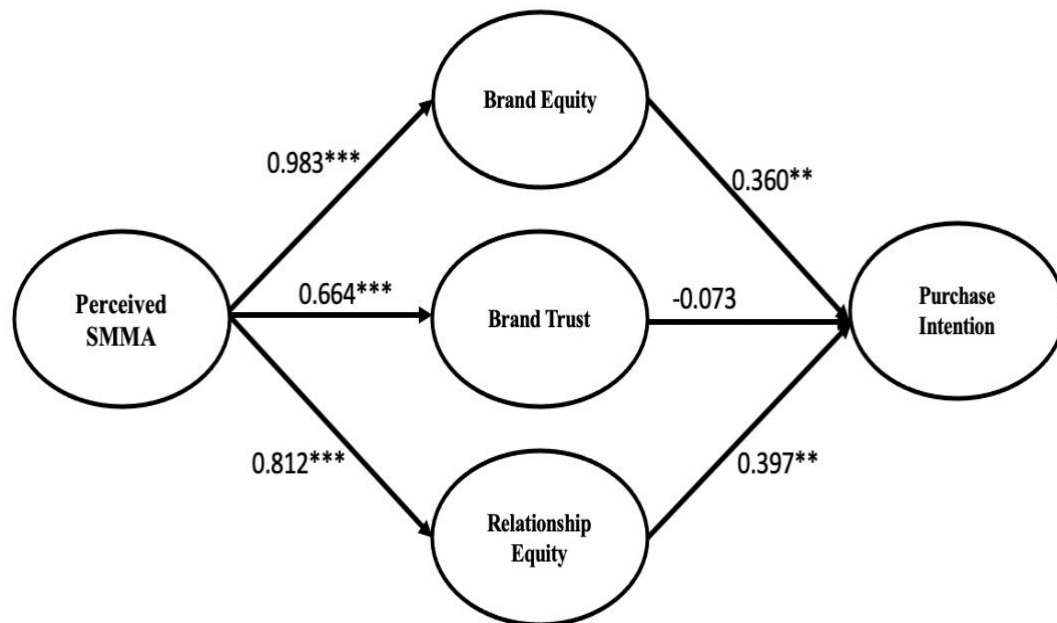
($\beta=0.664$, $t=7.625$), brand equity ($\beta=0.983$, $t=10.202$), and relationship equity ($\beta=0.812$, $t=8.593$). To be more precise, entertainment, trendiness, customization, and WOM of perceived SMMA positively and significantly influence brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity. Furthermore, (H2b) brand equity ($\beta=0.360$, $t=2.045$) and (H2c) relationship equity ($\beta=0.397$, $t=2.394$) significantly and positively influences customer's purchase intention. However, the brand trust had a negative influence ($\beta=-0.073$, $t=-0.739$) and was insignificant. Therefore, only H2a was rejected.

Table 9. Summary of SEM Result

Hypothesis relationship	Standardized Path estimate	<i>P</i>	Result
H1a Perceived SMMA → Brand Trust	0.664***	0.000	Supported
H1b Perceived SMMA → Brand Equity	0.983***	0.000	Supported
H1c Perceived SMMA → Relationship Equity	0.812***	0.000	Supported
H2a Brand Trust → Purchase Intention	-0.073	0.460	Rejected
H2b Brand Equity → Purchase Intention	0.360**	0.041	Supported
H2c Relationship Equity → Purchase Intention	0.397**	0.017	Supported

*** $P < 0.001$.

** $P < 0.05$



*** p < .001

** p < .05

$\chi^2=94.768$, $df=59$, $CMIN/DF=1.606$, $p=0.002$, $GFI=0.935$, $AGFI=0.899$, $NFI=0.929$, $IFI=0.972$, $CFI=0.971$, $RMSEA=0.054$.

Figure 3. Results of structural equation model

4.6 Moderation Test

To test customer characteristics moderating the relationship between perceived SMMA and brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity (H3), SPSS and SPSS AMOS were used. There are three customer characteristics - technology-savvy customers, social network proneness, and customer-firm relationship length. Started with computing all variables on SPSS to simplify the process. In addition, technology-savvy customers and social network proneness are both scales; therefore, they were standardized (converted to z-scores) on SPSS. The interaction variable was computed by taking the z-score of perceived SMMA and multiplying it with the z-score of technology savvy. A separate variable was computed by multiplying the z-score of perceived SMMA and the z-score of social network proneness. The data set was opened

on SPSS AMOS, and paths were drawn. Hence, significance was reviewed of each interaction variable, and if it is significant, the estimates were plotted on a graph to check if the moderator strengthens or weakens the relationship.

Technology-savvy customers significantly moderate between perceived SMMA and relationship equity (P value=0.05). However, there is no significant moderation between perceived SMMA and brand trust (p=0.236) and brand equity (p=0.862). Figure 7 illustrates that technology-savvy customer strengthens the positive relationship between perceived SMMA and relationship equity.

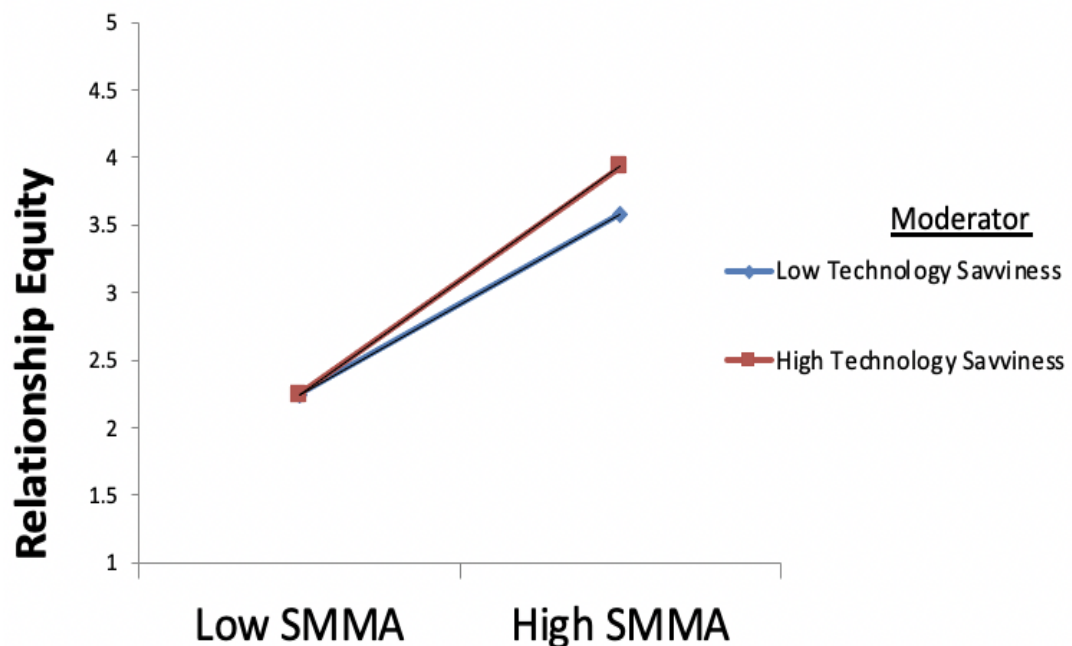


Figure 4. Technology-savvy moderates between perceived SMMA and relationship equity

Customers prone to the social network significantly moderate between perceived SMMA and brand equity (p=0.018). However, there is no significant moderation of social network proneness customers between perceived SMMA and

brand trust ($p=0.212$) and relationship equity ($p=0.370$). Figure 8 illustrates that social network proneness dampens the positive relationship between perceived SMMA and brand equity.

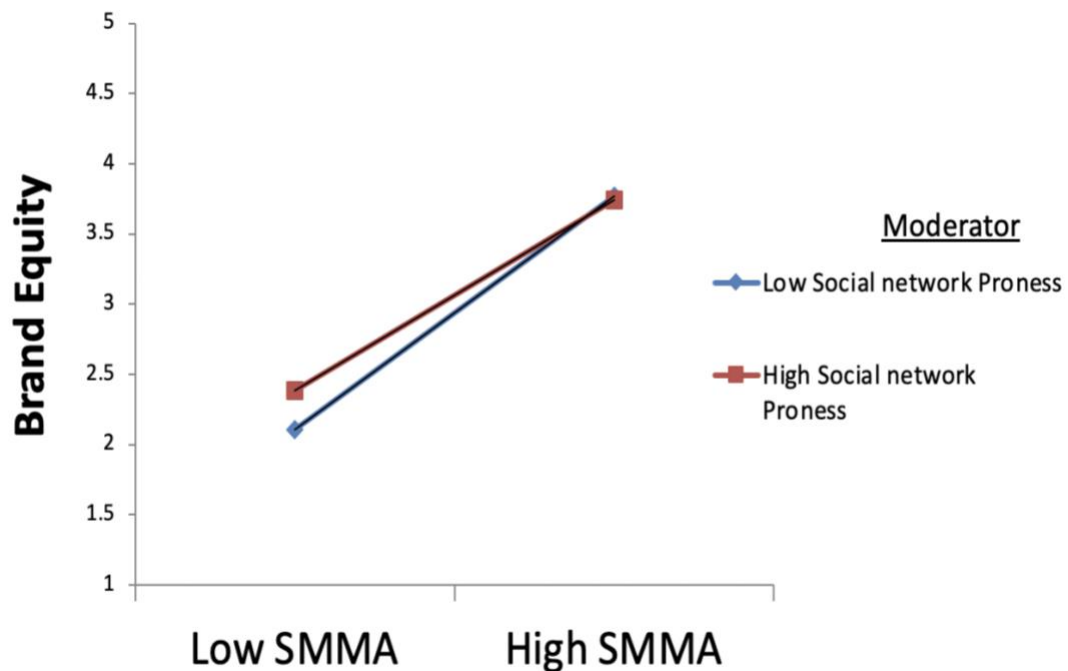


Figure 5. Social network proneness moderates between perceived SMMA and brand equity

The third customer characteristic is the relationship length between the customer and the firm. The method to test the moderation was to use a multi-group moderation by comparing the chi-square difference. First, the items were grouped into two categories on SPSS. Relationships less than three years were considered a short-term relationship length, and more than three years were considered a long-term relationship length (Liu, Leach, & Bernhardt, 2005). Following, on SPSS AMOS, two groups were selected from the dataset. The path between perceived SMMA and brand

trust showed no significant p-value ($p=0.718$), concluding that there is no significant moderation of customer-firm relationship length between perceived SMMA and brand trust. Likewise, the path between perceived SMMA and brand equity ($p=0.774$) did not show any significance, concluding that there is no significant moderation of customer-firm relationship length between perceived SMMA and brand equity. Nevertheless, the path between perceived SMMA and relationship equity showed a significant p-value ($p=0.009$), concluding that there is a high significance moderation of customer-firm relationship length between perceived SMMA and relationship equity.

4.7 Chapter Conclusion

The fourth chapter concludes that most of the subjects are Qatari males from 18 to 24 years old, with an educational level of undergraduate and high school. Based on Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test the sample is adequate. Therefore, the study was competent to carry out validity and reliability tests. Hence, due to low factor loading, the interaction attribute and a few items from the constructs were dropped. Nonetheless, all the constructs have Cronbach's α above 0.70. Moreover, the structural equation model resulted in perceived SMMA significantly and positively influencing brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity. Consequently, brand equity and relationship equity significantly influence purchase intention. However, the result illustrates that brand trust does not positively and significantly influence purchase intention.

In addition, moderation tests resulted in customer-firm relationship length, and tech-savvy customers moderate the relationship between perceived SMMA and relationship equity. On the contrary, customer-firm relationship length and tech-savvy customers do not moderate between perceived SMMA and brand equity. Furthermore, customers prone to social networking moderate the relationship between perceived

SMMA and brand equity, but they do not moderate between perceived SMMA and relationship equity. However, none of the three customer characteristics moderates the relationship between perceived SMMA and brand trust. The next chapter will discuss the results and present the research contributions, limitations, and future research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion and Conclusion

After reviewing numerous available researches and articles, two gaps were developed. First, according to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study investigated perceived SMMA influence on brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity, and its influence on purchase intention with s-commerce brands in Qatar. Second, no research conducted a moderating test with the three customer characteristics (customer-firm relationship length, technology savviness, social network proneness). Hence, the research aim was to investigate the five attributes of social media marketing activities (entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and word of mouth) of social media brands on Instagram and their influence on brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity with the moderating effect of customer characteristics and its influence on purchase intention in Qatar. A measurement scale was formed based on previous research and was modified to fit the research context to investigate the model. After uploading the questions and the statements in Arabic and English, it was distributed through multiple channels.

Similar to previous studies, some attributes were dropped because of low factor loading. This could be due to the features of social media platforms differing wildly and users interacting in brand-related activities in different ways (Nikolinakou & Phua, 2020). Although, in this study, only the interaction attribute was dropped. Therefore, entertainment, trendiness, customization, and WOM of perceived SMMA were used to test the hypothesis. Hence, the most influential is WOM, corresponding with He et al. (2017) that small businesses win new customers from recommendations. Noticing close factor loadings of these attributes, it follows by trendiness, entertainment, and

customization. The analysis helps answer the first research question (RQ1): do social media brands in Qatar apply the five social media marketing activities effectively? Thus, the marketing activities of SMMA are experiences the customers encounter that influence their perception and valuation of brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity.

To answer the second research question (RQ2.1), does perceived SMMA positively and significantly influence brand trust of s-commerce brands in Qatar? The results verify that perceived SMMA positively and significantly influences brand trust, similar to Ebrahim's (2020) results. Therefore, the finding confirms that perceived SMMA by s-commerce brands on Instagram influences the brand page's reliability and trustworthiness. Hence, developing and improving social media brand pages in terms of providing value and knowledge exchange strengthens brand trust (Jain et al., 2018). In addition, marketers enhance social activities, support interactions between customers, respond promptly to customers' messages, and solve customer problems will build brand trust (Liu et al., 2018).

Unlike literature (e.g., Sembada & Koay, 2021; Ibrahim, Aljarah & Ababneh, 2020), trust does not significantly influence purchase intention, meaning there is no notable difference in data, plus results reveal a negative direction. This result answers the third research question (RQ3.1): does brand trust of s-commerce brands in Qatar positively and significantly influence purchase intention? The insignificance may be because customers within s-commerce brand pages do not find that brand trust to be the reason to purchase, and there must be a mediator to influence their purchase intention. Yahia, Al-Neama, and Kerbache (2018) explain that the habit of purchasing, price value, and communicating in different languages positively influences trust, and later the purchase intention. They also explain that product differentiation negatively

influences trust. Nevertheless, Sembada and Koay (2021) exhibited that customers who cannot obtain the product they want by substitute routes will interpret their thinking in a biased way, causing them to trust and then intend to purchase from the s-commerce business. Therefore, the results show that perceived SMMA positively influences brand trust, but further investigation on variables such as differentiation, lack of substitute routes, and purchase habit could uncover the impact on the purchase intention.

Perceived SMMA positively and significantly influences brand equity. This answers the second research question (RQ2.2): does perceived SMMA positively and significantly influence brand equity of s-commerce brands in Qatar? Alike (e.g., Koay et al., 2020; Yadav & Rahman, 2018; Kim & Ko, 2012), this study supported similar results. Brand equity in this research consists of brand awareness and brand image, with the brand image being slightly more influential than brand awareness, but both being extremely important. Additionally, perceived SMMA influence on brand equity is more influential than brand trust and relationship equity; this corresponds with Yan's (2011) statement that within social media, the result of marketing activities is more substantial on brand equity. SMMA influences people's perception of the brand, and also they can notice the brand's characteristics. Therefore, with the minor transference effect of traditional marketing, businesses can achieve brand associations within social media. Supporting Godey et al. (2016), SMMA contributes to common branding goals similar to traditional marketing. Therefore, it is possible to get noticed with lower investments (Kohli, Suri, and Kapoor, 2015). Besides, for smaller businesses, social media are more useful in branding since the owner is the one who publishes and updates the page and can respond directly to consumers' demands (Yan, 2011).

Furthermore, suitable marketing activities create pleasing brand associations in consumers' minds and decide to purchase acknowledged brands (Chovanová,

Korshunov, & Babčanová, 2015). Hence, it is witnessed that brand pages attaining brand equity signals customers about the business's goods and services, which later impacts the customer's buying behavior. Therefore, brand equity positively and significantly influences purchase intention, answering the third research question (RQ3.2): does brand equity of s-commerce brands in Qatar positively and significantly influence purchase intention? Moreover, Chatzipanagiotou, Christodoulides, and Veloutsou (2019) discussed repurchase intention compared consumers with collectivistic cultures and individualistic culture. Qatar is a collectivistic culture; they are expected to repurchase brands based on either relational or brand associations and reputation.

Coinciding with Wang et al. (2021) and Macharia & Cheng's (2019) results, perceived SMMA positively and significantly influences relationship equity which answers the second research question (RQ2.3) does perceived SMMA positively and significantly influence relationship equity of s-commerce brands in Qatar? Accordingly, the marketing activities of s-commerce brands promote a special bond between the firm and the customer. Consistent with He et al. (2017) and Michaelidou, Siamagka, and Christodoulides (2011) remark, small businesses adopt social media to manage and pursue customer relationships. Hence, marketing activities provide social support that influences the relationship quality between the brand and the customer (Tajvidi et al., 2021).

Therefore, achieving relationship equity, customers will establish an emotional tie and brand's valuation that eases the decision-making process. Similar to Macharia and Cheng's (2019) study, relationship equity positively and significantly influences consumers' purchase intention. Answering the third research question (RQ3.3): does relationship equity of s-commerce brands in Qatar positively and significantly influence

purchase intention? The result implies that the customer's satisfaction and experience eventually impact purchase intention, further impacting repeat purchase and loyalty. Small ties with customers generated through social media can positively affect the brand's evaluation and purchase intention (Naylor, Lamberton, & West, 2012). Brands that consumers buy because of an emotional bond will proceed to succeed as it is a stronger bond and a more stable situation that is not quickly interrupted (Kohli, Suri, & Kapoor, 2015). Likewise, it is a long-term value (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996).

The following discussion will answer the fourth research question (RQ4): do customer characteristics moderate the relationship between perceived SMMA and brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity of s-commerce brands in Qatar? This study tested three customer characteristics. First, the relationship length (short and long-term relationship) within the business and the customer. Customers following a brand page on Instagram receive information and cues every time the business updates its page, impacting their familiarity with the firm's goods and services. That encourages customers to interact and engage with the firm. The analysis has revealed that a relationship length between the customer and the firm moderates between perceived SMMA and relationship equity. The longer the customer follows the brand page, the greater the bond and an emotional tie between the customer and the firm. Considering that relationship equity is a long-term value.

However, the result does not significantly differ between customer-firm relationship length and brand trust. Gefen (2000) emphasizes that familiarity truly establishes trust. In this study, familiarity does not moderate between the perceived SMMA and brand trust. Therefore, insignificance on brand trust could be due to the customer's initial trust being fulfilled from the marketing activities. Undoubtedly, it is the technology era in which trust is not similarly comparable to the beginning of the

rise of e-commerce and s-commerce. On the other hand, the customer-firm relationship length does not significantly moderate between SMMA and brand equity. As previously discussed, familiarity is highly correlated with brand awareness. However, interestingly there is not a significant difference. It can be because of over-loading information, as customers on social media follow numerous social media brand pages that they see but do not grasp information and signs because they move on rapidly to the next content. Therefore, time does not influence brand equity.

The second customer characteristic is tech-savvy customers. Customers that are more into technology, such as frequently using different technology devices and mobile applications, significantly moderate between perceived SMMA and relationship equity. In other words, for these types of customers, the more tech-savvy they are, the higher the influence on the value of the business's relationship when social media marketing occurs. In addition, tech-savvy customers are associated with the likelihood of sharing information with others. Therefore, when customers receive a memorable experience with a brand, they tend to interact and share with the firm and others about their experience, allowing a stronger emotional tie with the brand. However, the results do not show significance on brand trust and brand equity, equivalent to the results of customer-firm relationship length.

The third customer characteristic is the customer's proneness to the social network. Customers that spend much time networking significantly moderate between perceived SMMA and brand equity. Kumar et al. (2016) describe that customers prone to social networking put more value on connecting with the brand. Interestingly, the results reveal that customers communicating on different social networking sites decrease the influence on brand equity when social media marketing activities occur. Meaning, these customers are less interested in obtaining brand awareness and brand

image of a brand. Moreover, active users do not significantly moderate between perceived SMMA and brand trust and relationship equity. Active users and non-active users are not different when it comes to the bond between the customer and the brand, and the trust perceived by the customer.

5.2 Theoretical Implication

This research fills a critical research gap in social media marketing and s-commerce. There is a massive amount of studies on social media and social media marketing. Today, it is still increasing because social media has evolved into every business's marketing plan. SMMA was introduced by Kim & Ko (2012) and was further investigated by Godey et al. (2016). Since then, enormous studies have been done from different markets and industries; latest articles (e.g., Cheung, Pires, & Rosenberger, 2020; Panigyrakis, Panopoulos, & Koronaki; 2020; Khan, 2019). Therefore, it is a solid field of study and allows for further investigation.

However, studies on s-commerce businesses from the marketing activities aspect have been limited. S-commerce in Qatar and worldwide is rising, while few researchers have concentrated on the marketing activities aspect. This research studied the perceived SMMA of s-commerce firms on Instagram in Qatar from a customer's perspective. The findings in this research study present that the four attributes (entertainment, trendiness, customization, and WOM) are part of SMMA, and it had to drop the interaction attribute due to low factor loading. Nonetheless, a study by Yadav and Rahman (2018) with a similar measurement scale presented that the five attributes are part of SMMA in e-commerce. Hence, this implies that the fields of literature of s-commerce and e-commerce are separable.

One promising study area is brand building in s-commerce (Tajvidi et al., 2020). The findings have contributed to the branding literature from the small businesses in s-

commerce. The significance of researching small businesses is that SMEs comprise 95 percent on average of businesses in most countries (World Trade Organization, 2016). No doubt there is a massive quantity of research on this area. However, to the researcher's knowledge, studies on s-commerce small businesses utilizing branding tools on their social media page are limited. Furthermore, building values regarding relationship equity and brand trust for small businesses in s-commerce is a new prospect to investigate. This research initiates further research on this matter.

This study also adds to the influence of related constructs on attitude towards customer's purchase behavior in s-commerce that has not been studied previously (i.e., brand equity and relationship equity). Furthermore, studies by Sembada and Koay (2021), Gibreel, AlOtaibi, and Altmann (2018), and Yahia, Al-Neama, and Kerbache (2018) investigated the influence of trust on purchase intention in s-commerce. However, the results in the literature contradict the findings of this study. Therefore, this has opened new opportunities for investigation.

There is a pool of data on segmentation. Segmentation is the practice of classifying individuals into sub-groups with common characteristics. The traditional way to segmentation is demographic segmentation, and more current ways are motivations, preferences, and customer attitudes (Marcus, 1998). The three customer characteristics of social media users tested in this study were introduced by Kumar et al. (2016). Thus, this study has further analyzed the three customer characteristics with different concepts, contributing to the segmentation within social media. Learning about customer segments assists the understanding of the individuals within the segment who will react in similar ways to the marketing activities (Cooil, Aksoy & Keiningham, 2008). Furthermore, it provides business planning to the firm, allowing assignment of growth and retention plan to each segment (Bayer, 2010).

5.3 Managerial Implication

This study provides insightful managerial recommendations. The research helps s-commerce brands to assist in establishing a strategic plan for their business, learn their strengths and its competitors, and be able to create differentiation within the online context. S-commerce brands that seek to build brand equity, relationship equity, and brand trust concentrate on creating compelling SMMA. Pointing out that customers tend to share their opinions and pass information about the brand, pushing customers toward this activity helps gain new customers. Therefore, to be effective, the content must be useful and accurate, pleasant and interesting, and personalized according to customers' characteristics and needs.

Brands differentiating themselves create and sustain a competitive advantage (Cazier, Shao, & Louis, 2006). Therefore, differentiation creates firm value in terms of brand equity and relationship equity. Brand equity permits customers to recall, recognize, be aware, and be at the customer's top of mind. Furthermore, to promote relationship equity, provide exceptional treatment, acknowledgment, and build community with customers (Kim & Ko, 2012; Lemon, Rust, & Zeithaml, 2001). The firm value allows for purchase behavior and loyalty. Furthermore, differentiation allows capturing market share within s-commerce and provides growth opportunities to the s-commerce brands. For example, opening their brick-and-mortar store with lesser risk, knowing their products and services will be known to many people. In addition, an opportunity to collaborate with local and international businesses.

Furthermore, this research verifies that creating a brand image and brand awareness is possible even with no transference effect of traditional marketing. Therefore, working on the brand page on Instagram effectively, such as providing unique content related to the brand instead of posting raw pictures and videos of the

product or service, creates pleasant business operation and customer purchase behavior. In addition, being creative allows brands to get noticed with lesser investments (Kohli, Suri, & Kapoor, 2015).

Monitoring customer characteristics supports s-commerce brands' segmentation and targeting methods, which promote higher business performance. Customers that follow the brand page longer influence the business's relationship equity. Therefore, the brand page must encourage people to follow the brand page and stay a follower an extended period—the frequency and consistency of sharing content on the brand page influence customer's following decisions. Moreover, technology-savvy customers influence the business's relationship equity. Therefore, they should be given extra care to strengthen the relationship equity. A simple way to recognize tech-savvy customers is that their public social media profiles can provide clues about the characteristics of the customer. Furthermore, customers prone to social networking reduce their valuation of brand equity. Consequently, it is crucial to reconsider targeting these types of customers.

5.3.1 Managerial Checklist

The following list helps decision-makers and marketing managers to establish a strategic plan and create differentiation that helps them to grow bigger and achieve higher business performance:

- Provide content in terms of photos and advertisements, video and audio, contests, and exciting and fun games to the target customers.
- Use Instagram features such as story, highlight, and post efficiently. For example, use story's feature to upload content with engagement features such as polls, ratings, questions and answers. In addition, repost photos or videos tagged by the customers.

- Provide sufficient information in the posts and highlight that increases customer's trust, brand noticeability of name and logo, brand perception, and relationship with the brand.
- Post information several times a week by updating Instagram posts about the products, uploading Instagram posts relevant to the business context, and sharing content similar to the actual product but must not share excessive information.
- Provide content relevant to individual characteristics and promptly reply to customers to encourage WOM.
- Create and sustain a competitive advantage by providing unique and creative content related to the brand instead of posting raw pictures and videos of the product or service. Additionally, provide exceptional treatment, acknowledgment, and build community with customers.
- Monitor customer characteristics. Therefore, investigating customers' following behavior and profiles gives clues about the user's characteristics. Knowing customers' behavior helps to navigate the marketing communication. If customers are tech-savvy, provide exceptional treatment and acknowledgment, and if the customers are prone to social networking, provide adequate branding because they will dampen the brand equity.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research

The limitations of this research and future study suggestions are as follow. First, the subjects of the research were restricted to the citizens and residents of Qatar. Socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, and socioeconomic status could significantly impact the research topic. Qatar might have a particular culture that might be different from other countries. Therefore, future studies should review s-commerce

brands with geographic and socio-demographic variables that might provide varying results. Hence, when examining the research phenomenon, it can raise the generalizability of the results.

Second, this study looked at s-commerce brands in general and did not concentrate on specific brand industries. Future research could focus on fashion or technology brands in s-commerce, as it is the most followed brand category on Instagram from this sample study. The research can provide a more thorough understanding of the topic of marketing activities, branding, and purchase intention in s-commerce. For example, Macharia and Cheng (2019) observed that information richness negatively moderates the influence among SMMA and behavioral intention, indicating that sharing relevant and sufficient but not excessive information on social media increases purchase intention. Therefore, studying other constructs that influence the brand and purchase behavior contributes to extending knowledge on s-commerce brands.

Third, the study used convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method. Because of hard to find the target group of participants, it was the optimal option for this research. Yet, many would argue that the results cannot be generalizable. Furthermore, the sample size is adequate and fair but not great. A larger sample size can reduce any type of error and provide higher confidence in the results. Another limitation of the methodology section is that the interaction attribute from the perceived SMMA was dropped due to low factor loading. The interaction attribute is an essential element when purchasing on s-commerce. Even though the scales were adopted from previous research with an accepted model fit, it is crucial to revise the measurement scales to minimize any validity issues. For future investigation, to fulfill the expectations of an appropriate design method of the research is to conduct a probability

sampling, receive a great sample size, and confirm measurement scales.

Fourth, the research adopted a positivism research approach. The results in positivism research lack in-depth explanations because of the nature of a descriptive study (Dudovskiy, n.d.). Therefore, future research should take a qualitative approach to receive an in-depth understanding of different factors such as SMMA, brand trust, and customer characteristics in s-commerce. Uncovering details about each attribute of SMMA will enrich the field of literature and provide insightful information that improves s-commerce brand's marketing performance. For example, the most effective entertainment content, customer interaction preference and engagements, the ideal quantity of information sharing, customers' judgments on personalization, and what content is worth sharing with others. These few remarks can reveal other constructs that have not been studied yet. In addition, since the results did not show a positive impact of brand trust on purchase intention, considering the majority of literature available confirms significant influence. Therefore, future research can uncover the logic behind it. Furthermore, observe the three customer characteristics segments to unveil the reason for the insignificance in the results. For instance, customer-firm relationship length not moderating between perceived SMMA and brand equity, and social network proneness customers between perceived SMMA and relationship equity.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: English Cover Letter



Research Title: An Investigation of the Impact of Social Media Marketing Activities on Consumer Purchase Intention: Examining the Role of Brand Equity, Relationship Equity, and Brand Trust in S-Commerce.

Purpose of the research: The researcher is conducting this study as part of her master's thesis at Qatar University. The purpose of this research is to study the five attributes of social media marketing activities (entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and word of mouth) and their impact on consumers' willingness to purchase from the social media brand page through three concepts: brand trust, brand equity, and relationship equity. This study will also examine customer characteristics' effect on these three concepts. The focus of the study is only on the brands that are established on Instagram.

Participation: You are cordially invited to participate in the research by completing the questionnaire on the next page. This study requires 350 participants. To complete the survey, it will take only approximately 10 minutes of your valuable time.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria: Participants must be following at least one social media brand page on Instagram. Those who do not follow at least one social media brand page on Instagram will be excluded from the study. Additionally, participants who are less than 18 years old or live outside Qatar will also be excluded from the study.

Voluntary, withdrawal, and confidentiality: Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary, and you are free to cancel your participation in this study at any time of discomfort. The questionnaire does not ask about your name or email or any other personal details. Therefore, your responses are anonymous and will be kept confidential. All the data that is provided will be used solely for academic purposes and no one outside the research team will have access to the collected data. Your responses will be stored electronically and protected with a strong password, and for future uses it will be stored in a secure hard drive that is accessible only by the research team members. If you are a student, your participation will not affect your relationship with your instructor and will not negatively affect your grades.

Risks of participation: There are no anticipated risks or any discomforts from taking part in this study, and you can withdraw from the study at any time.

Benefits: Your participation in this research will add knowledge to the subject of social media marketing activities of social media brand pages and their impact on consumer purchase intention. Furthermore, your participation will provide a greater understanding of the different customer characteristics on social media. If you are a student, please be informed that you will not gain any academic benefits by participating in this study.

Contact Information: If you have any concerns or would like to be informed about the results of the study, you are more than welcome to contact the researcher on the following e-mail address: lf1204776@qu.edu.qa.

By clicking on "Start" you acknowledge that you have read the above information and agree to participate in this study voluntarily.

Appendix B: English Questionnaire

Section 1

[Intro to section 1] To proceed to the main questions, you must be following at least one social media brand page on Instagram. Social media brands are explained as brands established on social media with unique attributes such as name, symbol, sign, or design that are intended to be different from other sellers.

Do you follow at least one social media brand page on Instagram?

[yes]

[No]

If clicked “No”

[Thank you note] I'm sorry, you do not meet the essential requirement for this survey. I sincerely thank you for your time.

Section 2

If clicked “Yes”

[Section 2 opening text] Please keep in mind one social media brand page on Instagram while answering the survey questions.

In what of the following categories does that social media brand fall under?

[1] Food

[2] Fashion

[3] Technology

[4] Service

[5] Other

Section 3

[Section 3 opening text] Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Statements	[1] Strongly Disagree	[2] Disagree	[3] Neutral	[4] Agree	[5] Strongly Agree
[Section 3.1]					
Social Media Marketing Activities					
The content of the social media brand page is enjoyable.					

The content of the social media brand page is interesting.					
The content of the social media brand page is fun.					
The content of the social media brand page is pleasant.					
It is easy to interact with the social media brand owner/manager.					
It is feasible to communicate through direct message (DM) or comment section.					
It is feasible to share information on the social media brand page.					
It is feasible to have conversations and exchange of ideas on the social media brand page.					
It is easy to express opinions on the social media brand page.					
The information shared on the social media brand page is up to date.					
The social media brand page presents accurate information.					
The social media brand page presents useful information.					
The social media brand page presents comprehensive information.					
The content of the social media brand page is trendy.					
If I need information, I can find it on the social media brand page.					

Social media brand page provides the information that I need.					
Social media brand page provides a personalized service.					
Social media brand page provides content that is tailored to my characteristics.					
Social media brand page provides content that is personalized to my needs.					
I will post a positive opinion about this brand on my social media page.					
I will share my opinion about this brand on my social media page.					
I will pass information about this brand through my other social media accounts.					
I will suggest this brand to my friends or family on social media.					
I will share my opinion about this brand to my friends or family.					
[Section 3.2] Brand Trust					
The social media brand page is honest.					
The social media brand page promises are genuine.					
The social media brand page meets my expectations.					
The social media brand page is reliable.					
The social media brand page is trustworthy.					

The social media brand page is dependable.					
[Section 3.3] Brand Equity					
I notice the social media brand page among other rival brands.					
I am always aware of the social media brand page.					
I can recall some characteristics of the social media brand page.					
I can recall the social media brand page's logo or symbol.					
I do not have difficulty imagining the brand page in my mind.					
The social media brand page is first in its field.					
The social media brand page is strong in my memory.					
The social media brand page has a clean image.					
The social media brand page is unique.					
The social media brand page value is consistent.					
The social media brand page is customer oriented.					
The social media brand page is brand oriented.					
[Section 3.4] Relationship Equity					
I feel I receive special treatment from the social media brand page.					
I have a natural liking toward the social media brand page.					

I feel enthusiastic about the social media brand page.					
I feel I am a member of the social media brand page community.					
I am committed to the social media brand page.					
[Section 3.5] Purchase Intention					
I am going to buy the products or services from the social media brand page in the future.					
I intend to buy products or services from the social media brand page in the future.					
Most probably, I will buy products or services from the social media brand page in the future.					
[Section 3.6] Customer Characteristics					
I use technology devices, such as laptops, tablet, smartphones, smart watch or other technology devices, very often.					
Using mobile devices is easy.					
I use mobile devices frequently.					
I use mobile applications (apps) very often.					
Using mobile applications (apps) is easy.					
I use mobile applications frequently.					

I access social networking sites such as Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Facebook, or other networking sites very often.					
I use social networking sites frequently.					
I regularly interact and communicate with others on social networking sites.					
I frequently participate in different topics on social networking sites.					
I am an active user on social networking sites.					

For how long have you been following the social media brand page?

[1] Less than 1 year

[2] 1–2

[3] 3–4

[4] 5–6

[5] More than 6

[Section 4] Demographic Questions

Age

[1] 18-24

[2] 25-31

[3] 32-38

[4] 39-45

[5] Above 45

Gender

[1] Female

[2] Male

Nationality

[1] Qatari

[2] Non-Qatari

Education level

[1] High School

[2] Undergraduate

[3] Postgraduate

[4] Other

[Thank you note] Thank you for taking your valuable time to complete this survey. We genuinely value the information you have provided. Your responses will contribute to the investigation of consumer behavior and introduce relevant approaches to social media marketing.

Appendix C: Arabic Cover Letter



عنوان البحث: البحث في تأثير أنشطة التسويق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على نية الشراء للمستهلك: فحص دور قيمة العلامة التجارية، وقيمة العلاقة، والثقة بالعلامة التجارية في التجارة الإلكترونية عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.

الغرض من البحث: تقوم الباحثة بهذه الدراسة كجزء من رسالتها للحصول على درجة الماجستير في جامعة قطر. الغرض من هذا البحث هو دراسة الخصائص الخمسة لأنشطة التسويق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي (الترفيه، والتفاعل، واخر الصيحات، والعوامل الشخصية، والكلام المتداول) وتأثير هذه الخصائص على رغبة المستهلكين في الشراء من صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي من خلال ثلاثة مفاهيم: الثقة في العلامة التجارية، قيمة العلامة التجارية، وقيمة العلاقة بين العلامة التجارية والعميل. يقوم هذا البحث أيضاً بتناول ودراسة تأثير شخصية العميل على تلك المفاهيم الثلاثة. وتركز هذه الدراسة على العلامات التجارية التي تم إنشاؤها على منصة الإنستغرام فقط.

المشاركة: الرجاء المشاركة في البحث من خلال اكمال الاستبيان في الصفحة التالية. تتطلب هذه الدراسة 350 مشارك. تستغرق تعبئة الاستبيان حوالي ١٠ دقائق من وقتك الثمين.

معايير الإدراج والاستبعاد: يجب أن تكون متابعاً لصفحة علامة تجارية واحدة على الأقل على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على منصة الإنستغرام لكي تشارك/تشارك في هذا البحث. لذلك سيتم استبعاد أولئك الذين لا يتابعون صفحة علامة تجارية واحدة على الأقل على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على منصة الإنستغرام من الدراسة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، سيتم استبعاد المشاركين الذين تقل أعمارهم عن 18 عاماً أو الذين يعيشون خارج قطر من الدراسة.

المشاركة الطوعية، الانسحاب، والسرية: مشاركتك في هذا الاستبيان طوعية تماماً، ولك مطلق الحرية في إلغاء مشاركتك في أي وقت تشعر فيه بعدم الراحة. الاستبيان لن يطلب منك كتابة اسمك أو بريدك الإلكتروني أو أي بيانات شخصية أخرى خاصة بك. لذلك، فإن ردودك تعتبر غير محددة المصدر وسيتم الاحتفاظ بها في سرية تامة. وسيتم استخدام جميع المعلومات التي قمت بتقديمها للأغراض الأكاديمية والبحثية فقط، ولن يتمكن أي شخص خارج فريق البحث من الوصول إلى تلك البيانات التي تم جمعها. كما سيتم تخزين الردود الخاصة بك بصورة محمية إلكترونياً بكلمة مرور (سر) قوية وللاستخدامات المستقبلية، سيتم تخزين تلك البيانات في محرك أقراص صلب (Hard drive) آمن لا يمكن الوصول إليه إلا من قبل أعضاء فريق البحث. إذا كنت طالباً، فلن تؤثر مشاركتك على علاقتك مع أستاذك ولن تؤثر سلباً على درجاتك بأي شكل من الأشكال.

مخاطر المشاركة: لا توجد مخاطر متوقعة أو أي مضايقات من المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، ويمكنك الانسحاب من الدراسة في أي وقت.

الفوائد: ستنضيف مشاركتك في هذا البحث الي المعرفة التي تمتلكها في موضوع أنشطة التسويق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لصفحات العلامات التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي وتأثيرها على نية الشراء للمستهلك. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، فإن مشاركتك ستساهم في إيجاد فهم أكثر لمختلف العوامل الشخصية لعملاء العلامات التجارية المختلفة عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي. إذا كنت طالباً، فاعلم أنك لن تحصل على أي مزايا أكاديمية من خلال المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

بيانات الاتصال: إذا كانت لديك أي استفسارات أخرى أو ترغب في أن يتم إبلاغك بنتائج الدراسة لا تتردد في التواصل مع الباحثة عبر البريد الإلكتروني وذلك على العنوان البريدي الإلكتروني التالي:

Lf1204776@qu.edu.qa

عند الضغط على الزر "ابدأ" فإنك تقر بأنك قد قرأت المعلومات المذكورة أعلاه وتوافق على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة طواعية.

شكرا جزيلا لك علي المشاركة في هذه الدراسة ...

Appendix D: Arabic Questionnaire

قسم ١

[مقدمة قسم ١] قبل بدء الإجابة على الأسئلة الرئيسية، يجب أن تكون متابع صفحة علامة تجارية واحدة على الأقل على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على منصة الإنستغرام. يمكن تعريف العلامات التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على أنها علامات تجارية تم إنشاؤها على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي مع خصائص فريدة مثل الاسم أو الرمز أو العلامة أو التصميم الذي يكون مختلفاً عن البائعين الآخرين.

هل تتابع صفحة علامة تجارية واحدة على الأقل على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على منصة الإنستغرام؟

[نعم]

[لا]

لو الجواب "لا"

[ملاحظة شكر] أنا آسف، أنت لا تنطبق عليك الشروط الأساسية لهذا الاستطلاع. أشكر على وقتك.

قسم ٢

لو الجواب "نعم"

[مقدمة قسم ٢] ضع في بالك صفحة علامة تجارية واحدة على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي عبر الإنستغرام أثناء الإجابة على أسئلة الاستطلاع.

في أي من الفئات التالية تدرج تلك العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي؟

[1] الأكل

[2] الموضة

[3] التكنولوجيا

[4] خدمات

[5] أخرى

قسم ٣

[ملاحظة قسم ٣] يرجى توضيح مدى موافقتك أو عدم موافقتك على العبارات التالية:

[5] أوافق بشدة	[4] أوافق	[3] محايد	[2] لا أوافق	[1] لا أوافق على الإطلاق	
[قسم ٣.١] أنشطة التسويق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي (Social Media Marketing Activities)					
					محتوى صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي ممتع.

					محتوى صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي مثير للاهتمام.
					محتوى صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي مرح.
					محتوى صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي مسر.
					من السهل التفاعل مع مالك/مدير العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.
					من الممكن التواصل من خلال الرسائل (DM) أو قسم التعليقات.
					من الممكن مشاركة المعلومات على صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.
					من الممكن إجراء محادثات وتبادل الأفكار على صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.
					من السهل التعبير عن الرأي على صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.
					المعلومات التي يتم مشاركتها على صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي حديثه.
					صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي تقدم معلومات دقيقة.
					صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي تقدم معلومات مفيدة.
					صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي تقدم معلومات شاملة.
					محتوى صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي عصري.

					إذا كنت بحاجة إلى معلومة، يمكنني العثور عليها في صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.
					صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي توفر المعلومات التي أحتاجها.
					صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي توفر خدمة مخصصة.
					صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي توفر محتوى مصمماً وفقاً لخصائصي.
					صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي توفر محتوى مخصصاً لاحتياجاتي.
					سأقوم بنشر رأي إيجابي حول هذه العلامة التجارية على صفحة وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي الخاصة بي.
					سأشارك رأيي حول هذه العلامة التجارية على صفحة وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي الخاصة بي.
					سأقوم بتمرير معلومات حول هذه العلامة التجارية من خلال حساباتي الأخرى.
					سأقترح هذه العلامة التجارية على أصدقائي أو عائلتي على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.
					سوف أشارك رأيي حول هذه العلامة التجارية مع أصدقائي أو عائلتي.
[قسم ٣.٢] الثقة بالعلامة التجارية (Brand Trust)					
					صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي صادقة.
					صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي وعوده حقيقية.

					صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي تلبية توقعاتي.
					صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي موثوقة.
					صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي جديرة بالثقة.
					صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي يمكن الاعتماد عليه.
[قسم ٣.٣] قيمة العلامة التجارية (Brand Equity)					
					ألاحظ صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي من بين العلامات التجارية المنافسة الأخرى.
					أنا دائماً على علم بصفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.
					يمكنني تذكر بعض خصائص صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.
					يمكنني تذكر شعار أو رمز صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.
					لا أجد صعوبة في تخيل صفحة العلامة التجارية في ذهني.
					صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي تعد الأولى في مجاله.
					صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي قوية في ذاكرتي.
					تحتوي صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على صورة نظيفة.
					صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي فريدة من نوعها.

					قيم صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي متناسق.
					صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي موجهة نحو العملاء.
					صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي موجهة نحو العلامة التجارية.
[قسم ٣.٤] قيمة العلاقة (Relationship Equity)					
					أشعر أنني أتلقى معاملة خاصة من صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.
					لدي إعجاب طبيعي بصفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.
					أشعر بالحماس تجاه صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.
					أشعر أنني عضو في مجتمع صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.
					أنا ملتزم بصفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.
[قسم ٣.٥] نية الشراء (Purchase Intention)					
					سأشتري المنتجات أو الخدمات من صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في المستقبل.
					انوي شراء منتجات أو خدمات من صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في المستقبل.
					على الأرجح، سأشتري منتجات أو خدمات من صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في المستقبل.

[قسم ٣.٦] شخصية العميل (Customer Characteristics)					
					أستخدم في كثير من الأحيان أجهزة تقنية، مثل أجهزة الكمبيوتر المحمولة أو الأجهزة اللوحية أو الهواتف الذكية أو الساعات الذكية أو أجهزة تقنية أخرى.
					استخدام الأجهزة المحمولة سهل.
					أنا أستخدم بشكل متكرر الأجهزة المحمولة.
					أستخدم تطبيقات الجوال كثيرًا.
					استخدام تطبيقات الهاتف المحمول سهل.
					أنا أستخدم بشكل متكرر تطبيقات الهاتف المحمول.
					أتصفح مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي أحياناً كثيرة مثل الإنستغرام، أو تويتر، أو سناب شات، أو الفيس بوك، أو مواقع الشبكات الأخرى.
					أستخدم مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي بشكل متكرر.
					أتفاعل بانتظام مع الآخرين وأتواصل معهم على مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي.
					كثيراً ما أشارك في مواضيع مختلفة على مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي.
					أنا أستخدم نشط على مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي.

منذ متى وأنت تتابع صفحة العلامة التجارية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي؟

[1] أقل من سنة

[2] ١-٢

[3] ٣-٤

[4] ٥-٦

[5] أكثر من ٦ سنوات

[قسم ٤] أسئلة ديموغرافية

العمر

[1] ١٨-٢٤

[2] ٢٥-٣١

[3] ٣٢-٣٨

[4] ٣٩-٤٥

[5] فوق ٤٥

الجنس

[1] أنثى

[2] ذكر

الجنسية

[1] قطري

[2] غير قطري

مستوى التعليم

[1] ثانوي

[2] جامعي

[3] دراسات عليا

[4] أخرى

[ملاحظة شكر] شكراً لك على اعطائنا من وقتك الثمين لإكمال هذا الاستبيان. نحن نقدر بصدق المعلومات التي قدمتها. ستساهم ردودك في تحقيق سلوك المستهلك وتقديم الأساليب المناسبة في التسويق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.

Appendix E: QU-IRB Ethical Approval



Qatar University Institutional Review Board **QU-IRB**

QU-IRB Registration: IRB-QU-2020-006, QU-IRB, Assurance: IRB-A-QU-2019-0009

DATE: April 13, 2021

TO: Hatem El-Gohary
FROM: Qatar University Institutional Review Board (QU-IRB)

PROJECT TITLE: 1708707-1An Investigation of the Impact of Social Media Marketing Activities on Consumer Purchase Intention: Examining the Role of Brand Equity, Relationship Equity, and Brand Trust in S-Commerce.

QU-IRB REFERENCE #: QU-IRB 1520-E/21
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: April 13, 2021
REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # 2&4

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The Qatar University Institutional Review Board (QU-IRB) has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to Qatar Ministry of Public Health regulations. Please note that exempted proposals do not require renewals however, any changes/modifications to the original submitted protocol should be reported to the committee to seek approval prior to continuation.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records.

Documents Reviewed:

- Consent Form - Arabic Consent Form (UPLOADED: 03/31/2021)
- Consent Form - English Consent Form (UPLOADED: 03/31/2021)
- Other - Thesis (UPLOADED: 03/19/2021)
- Other - QU-IRB Check List (UPLOADED: 03/17/2021)
- Qatar University - IRB Application - Qatar University - IRB Application (UPLOADED: 04/4/2021)
- Questionnaire/Survey - Arabic Questionnaire (UPLOADED: 03/17/2021)
- Questionnaire/Survey - English Questionnaire (UPLOADED: 03/17/2021)

If you have any questions, please contact QU-IRB at 4403 5307 or qu-irb@qu.edu.qa. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

Best wishes,

Dr. Ahmed Awaisu
Chairperson, QU-IRB

