

QATAR UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER ATTRIBUTES ON COLLABORATING
BRAND CREDIBILITY AND ADVOCACY

BY

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ABSTRACT

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Title: The Effects of Social Media Influencer Attributes on Collaborating Brand
Credibility and Advocacy

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This thesis investigates different characteristics and dimensions related to social media influencers that might affect some brand outcomes after being endorsed by /collaborating with the influencer in brand communications. This study specifically examines the impact of three dimensions—social media influencer credibility, attractiveness, and endorsement content quality—on the collaborating brand’s credibility. It also examines the influence of brand credibility on brand advocacy. The study also explores the mediating role of brand credibility and the moderating role of digital experience. To achieve these aims, the researcher employed the premises of two theories: the stimulus–organism–response theory and the social learning theory. The data were collected using an online questionnaire from 281 respondents. The findings reveal that social media influencer credibility significantly influences the credibility of the collaborating brand which in turn exert significant impact on brand advocacy. A mediating effect of collaborating brand credibility is identified between social media influencer credibility and brand advocacy. The findings have essential managerial implications that assist managers in choosing the most effective social media influencer for their brand.

Keywords: Social Media Influencers, Brand Credibility, Brand Advocacy, Digital Experience Stimulus-Organism-Response Theory, Social Learning Theory.

DEDICATION

*To my parents Mrs. Ghazwa & Mustafa Al-Qatami, whose love, encouragement and
prays of day and night make me able to get such success and honor and to my siblings*

Zaid, Ghalia and Hamza Al-Qatami.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

Approximately 3.2 billion people of the 7.6 billion people worldwide use social media (KEMP, 2018), meaning almost half of the people in the world are social media users. As a result, many companies/brands have become aware of the importance of their presence on social media and have redistributed significant portions of their marketing budgets from traditional media to social media in order to seize potential business opportunities from this digital channel (Uzunoglu, 2014). Social media has created the biggest shift in the way brands engage customers since the industrial revolution (Johansson, 2017). From the marketing perspective, the global reach to customers is considered marvellously large and very quick compared to previous traditional methods of communication. If Facebook alone was a country, its users would make up the third-largest country in the world, after China and India (Park, 2017). Having a social media strategy allows corporations to stand out in a rapidly changing digital era because it enables companies to talk to their clientele base and easily access many customers' discussions/insights to align the organization's goals with customers' identified needs and wants (Saravanakumar, 2012). Companies have also recognized the power of influential members of social media (i.e., bloggers or social media influencers) who have emerged as a new communication venue for brands seeking to communicate with their customers. These individuals are recognized as opinion leaders or social media influencers because they mediate the information they receive and then pass it on to customers in their own influential way (Uzunoglū, 2014). As a result, influencers' communication might affect the audience's attitudes and outcomes toward the collaborating brand. For example, it might boost brand awareness, brand image, brand

credibility, brand attitude, brand loyalty, brand advocacy, intended purchase intention, and actual purchase intention. Social media influencers are currently a hot topic for marketers and a great marketing instrument for marketers to boost their market share figures (Uzunoglū, 2014). However, marketers should be very careful because social media can not only give businesses a big boost, but can also significantly harm their brand image if dissatisfied customers protest loudly on social media. Therefore, marketers have to plan their marketing strategy carefully and choose the most effective influencer for their brands (Saravanakumar, 2012). As social media influencers are considered online opinion leaders mainly due to their knowledge, expertise, and influential power (Uzunoglū, 2014), this study will investigate variables related to social media influencers, such as credibility, attractiveness, and endorsement content quality, that might influence the brand outcomes.

This thesis investigates different characteristics and dimensions related to social media influencers that might affect some brand outcomes after being endorsed by /collaborating with the influencer in brand communications. This study specifically examines the impact of three dimensions—social media influencer credibility, attractiveness, and endorsement content quality—on the collaborating brand’s credibility. It also examines the influence of brand credibility on brand advocacy. The study also explores the mediating role of brand credibility and the moderating role of digital experience. To achieve these aims, the researcher employed the premises of two theories: the stimulus–organism–response theory and the social learning theory.

1.2 Research Problem

A real-life example that the researcher experienced triggered her to think further about the phenomenon under study. Boutiqaat Beauty Shop is an application that has boutiques/e-shops for almost every social media influencer and celebrity in the Middle East (Paracha, 2018). In these e-shops, influencers choose which products to sell based on their personal experiences and preferences and then promote those products on their own social media pages (Paracha, 2018). Laura (hypothetical name for the purposes of this study), a social media influencer, promoted Dokhan (hypothetical name), which is an electric Bakhoor (perfumed oil woodchip) burner, on her Snapchat account and informed her audience that they could purchase it from her store in the Boutiqaat App. Within a few days, Dokhan had sold out of her online boutique, and she started sharing people's positive reactions, comments, and reviews of the sold-out endorsed electric Bakhoor burner on her social media accounts. When the researcher attended a subsequent gathering with her friends, some of them were complaining and frustrated because Laura's e-shop in the Boutiqaat app had sold out of the Dokhan. When the researcher informed her friends that she had seen similar electric Bakhoor burners from other brands available online at other websites, her friends surprisingly said they would never buy the product from other places because they do not trust the other brands whereas they believed the products promoted by Laura were the best available in the market. These friends were actually not familiar with any of the Bakhoor burner brands because it is a new product in the market that none of them had tried before. This experience demonstrated that the researcher's friends associated high brand credibility with the Dokhan simply due to Laura enthusiastically promoting/endorsing the product online.

This example led the researcher to think deeply over the next few days about which of Laura's characteristics may have made this product endorsement so positively influential on customers. The researcher then closely investigated Laura's characteristics and found that she has highly perceived credibility; she is perceived as an elegant and classy woman who spoke enthusiastically about this new product in the market to her followers. Based on this experience and other similar examples related to social media influencers' power to influence people, the researcher decided to study the effect of social media influencers' attributes, such as credibility, attractiveness, and endorsement content quality, on the collaborating brand's credibility and advocacy.

Research related to social media influencers is a relatively recent development, with only a few influencer characteristics having been studied, such as number of followers they have on social media, their impact on the purchase decision process, brand match, and public image, to determine how these factors can positively or negatively affect the audience outcome toward the brand (Deepa, 2013; Khamis, 2016; Uzunoglu, 2014). Therefore, little is known about how influencer characteristics (e.g., credibility, attractiveness, and the quality of the content they present) affect brand outcomes. This thesis aims to address this gap by exploring different personal variables associated with the influencers, like their perceived credibility and attractiveness, on the collaborating brand's credibility and brand advocacy. Furthermore, the perceived quality of the content presented by influencers preoccupy marketers' social media activities. This study responds to this focus by examining the effect of influencers' endorsement content quality on the collaborating brand's credibility. The new concept of digital experience, which has not yet been studied in-depth, will be closely investigated within the context of social media

influencers in the study. Therefore, this research introduces a conceptual model that captures the proposed moderating effect of digital experience on the three influencer dimensions and brand credibility, with the mediating effect of brand credibility.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objective of this thesis is mainly to study what matters the most in social media influencer dimensions to help lead to positive audience outcomes. The study will explore the effect of influencers' (a) credibility, (b) attractiveness, and (c) endorsement content quality on the collaborating brand's credibility. The study will also investigate if a correlation can be drawn between the collaborating brand's credibility and brand advocacy. The study considers the mediating effect of the collaborating brand's credibility that can affect the strength of the association between the three influencer dimensions and brand advocacy. Finally, the moderating effect of digital experience on the three influencer dimensions and the collaborating brand's credibility will also be studied.

1.4 Research Contributions

This study contributes to the existing literature related to the relatively new phenomenon of social media influencers, which is considered an emerging concept (Uzunoglu, 2014). Most previous studies have closely conceptualized social media influencers, compared them to celebrities, or studied their impact on indicators such as customers' intended purchase intention or actual purchase behaviour. However, most of these studies have not closely investigated which characteristics related to the social media influencer have most significantly affected consumers' outcomes after an endorsement. This thesis aims to address this gap.

In addition, the concept of attractiveness has been widely studied in athletics and

the celebrity persona domains, and a lot of opposing findings related to this topic have emerged (Amos, 2008). The current study examines the impact of source attractiveness beyond the typically studied constructs, like purchase intention and product evaluation (Amos, 2008), instead examining the impact of source attractiveness on opinion formulation towards brand-related measures such as credibility and advocacy. Therefore, this research will fill the gap of the sparse attention paid to the relationship between social media influencers' attractiveness and audience outcomes after an endorsement. Similarly, endorsement content quality has only been studied in the context of online blogs and websites, and few studies have investigated the relationship between social media influencers' content quality and audience outcomes; this study aims to examine this relationship. Furthermore, most previous studies exploring how social media influencers' characteristics impact customers' attitudes are qualitative in nature. This thesis, however, employs a quantitative approach in investigating the effect of various influencer dimensions on altering customer outcomes. Another important contribution for this study is that it investigates the impact of social media influencers on two critical parameters for companies (i.e., brand credibility and brand advocacy). Previous research has mostly studied the effect of social media influencers on purchase intention, electronic word of mouth (EWOM), brand attitudes, and brand loyalty (Lim, 2017; Till, 2000; Veirman, 2017). The current study also considers the mediating effect of the collaborating brand's credibility, which can affect the strength of the association between the three influencer dimensions and brand advocacy.

This thesis also examines a relatively new concept of digital experience by exploring how digital experience can moderate the relationship between the three social

media influencer dimensions and brand credibility. Digital experience is a very new concept that has been recently addressed with the rapid increase of time users spend on mobile phones and social media; therefore, this study investigates its influence on social media influencers' effectiveness. The current thesis also offers practical insights in helping practitioners develop a better understanding of which social media influencer dimensions aid in the formation/shaping of positive brand credibility and brand advocacy among customers. The findings of this study may provide practitioners with some guidance on how to select appropriate influencers for their brands.

1.5 Research Context

According to "Digital in 2018" insight report, Qatar has the highest internet penetration and is ranked as number one across the world in 2017 and 2018 (Victor, 2018). Since 2013, Qatar had a very high internet penetration, and was the second after South Korea (ictQATAR, 2014). Qatar's population is around 2.7 million, and the internet users are 2.6 million with Facebook being the most utilized social media platform with 2.3 million users (Victor, 2018). The highest social media penetration in Qatar is on Facebook (81%), followed by WhatsApp (80%), followed by YouTube (55%), Instagram (42%) and Twitter (35%) (Social media usage in Qatar, 2018). Until today, Facebook dominates the highest penetration in Qatar which is 81% (social media stats, 2019) and young Arabs have reported that they visit Facebook every day to get news about the world more than they visit other news sources like websites, channels and newspapers (Radcliffe, 2017). Moreover, many individuals especially women use social media for career building in Qatar and as a tool for sharing their political point of views (Saleem, 2018).

It has been reported that Qatar has the highest percentage of population in the world

using social media platforms through mobile phones (Asif, 2017). These numbers show the importance of social media for the people in Qatar and highlights a huge opportunity for businesses to be present on social media and target their customers through social media platforms (Ridout, n.d.). A study conducted to learn more about individuals' habits and opinions towards social media in the middle east, found that women between 18-24 old report that they use online platforms and as their main source for getting more information about products and brand (Radcliffe, 2017). This shows, that many businesses are present on social media and that many individuals are fully dependent on social media to learn more about product and brands before purchasing. Moreover, 94% of the marketers in the survey, reported that social media influencer marketing plays a big role in the success of their business online and offline (Radcliffe, 2017). In Qatar, the success of social media platforms like Instagram have helped emerge great local talents in various fields ranging from baking to fashion (Da, 2017). Most of these individuals were not aware of their talents before, however social media platforms have helped drive local talents and innovation among individuals. Most of the businesses on social media in Qatar, have been gaining high number of followers and most of them have been very profitable as they are providing high quality services and products to customer with suburb customer service at the comfort of their own home (Anon, 2017).

1.6 Research Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research approach, and a self-administered survey was created on the Qualtrics platform and distributed online. The survey was presented in two languages, English and Arabic, so respondents could select their preferred language. Presenting the survey in two languages also expanded the scope of the response rate. The

survey was distributed over a period of 1 month, during which 352 surveys were completed, but only 281 responses were considered useable. The data collected were analysed using SPSS software.

1.7 Thesis Structure

This thesis comprises five chapters. The first chapter presents the introduction, research problem (explaining the importance and gaps in the current research), research objectives, research contributions (including how the study will address the existing gaps), and methodology. Chapter Two reviews the literature related to the constructs being studied. A theoretical framework is also presented to explain the proposed relationships between the constructs, followed by a hypothesis development section that further explains the rationale behind the several hypotheses proposed. Chapter Three discusses the methodology employed in the study, which includes the research type, measurements for testing hypotheses, data collection instruments, and sampling techniques. Chapter Four discusses the findings/results of the data analysis, along with descriptive and inferential testing. The descriptive testing includes an analysis of sample characteristics and a normality test. Furthermore, the inferential testing includes an exploratory factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's tests, a correlation test, a collinearity test, and regression analyses. Chapter Five presents the key results of the study, theoretical and managerial implications, limitations of the research, and future recommendations related to the research area studied.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a theoretical background for the constructs deployed in this study. Specifically, this chapter discusses social media, social media influencers, and the effect of social media influencer attributes (credibility, attractiveness, and content quality) on brand advocacy. The chapter also presents a conceptual framework that explains the study model and the development of hypotheses that will guide this research.

2.2 Social Media

Social media is considered an internet-based application that focuses on consumer-generated content where users can share their opinions, personal experiences, and views and build communities of mutual interests (Evans, 2008). Web 2.0 describes a second generation of the World Wide Web; as it grew in popularity, social networking moved to web-based applications like social media apps (Instagram, Snapchats, etc.; Deepa, 2013). Many marketers use social media to create value for their customers through online engagement; consequently, social media has become one of the most important sources for sharing information mainly due to its fast speed and collective two-way communication platform (Braatz, 2017; Rebelo, 2017).

In the current digitalized world, social media is a constantly evolving phenomenon because it is part of the internet technology regularly being improved. For instance, Twitter started with a 140-character limit, which has since been revised to a 280-character limit. Such improvements are the result of more individuals accessing social media through mobile devices (Gligorić, 2018). Social media accounts are not limited to individuals; businesses also have them as well. The business use of social media has been facilitated by

the fact that social media has totally transformed the manner in which businesses communicate with their target audience. Social media is considered a powerful tool through which marketers promote their goods and services and perform economically better (Rebelo, 2017). Therefore, researchers (e.g., Albuquerque et al., 2012; Hartmann, 2010; Zhang et al., 2012) have concluded that social media wields more power than traditional media in influencing consumer behaviour.

The use of social media comes with both benefits and challenges. For instance, communication is no longer limited by distance and time. Individuals and businesses can access information, build communities, and interact easily in real time. However, businesses need to develop a content strategy for every social media platform in an effort to effectively utilize it to meet consumers' needs (Agostino, 2017). The number of social media users is expected to continue increasing drastically as the number of mobile users grows (Woods, 2016). In 2010, 97 million users accessed social media; today, more than 2.77 billion people use social media, and that number is expected to reach 3.02 billion by 2021 (Number of social media users worldwide 2010-2021, 2019). The number of social media users has almost tripled in the last decade due to the increased number of mobile users as well as the growing popularity of the internet and social media across the world. Interactive marketing through social media has become the dominant means through which firms ensure that their marketing campaigns reach millions of consumers in just a matter of minutes. Over the years, the advertising industry has had to change several times in order to adapt to Millennials' shifting advertising preferences, putting huge pressure on brands to take into consideration new as well as innovative advertising techniques (Tsimonis, 2014). Since 2017, spending on digital advertising via social media has been predicted to

surpass the spending on television advertising for the first time in history (Woods, 2016).

2.3 Social Media Influencers

The social media era started in around 2003, when LinkedIn was first launched, followed by both Myspace and Facebook in 2004 (Deepa, 2013). Social media has changed the way of advertising from traditional advertising (e.g., billboards, newspapers, magazines, and radio) to using influencer marketing. Social media influencers are described “as people who have amassed a large number of followers on social media, to the point of steering purchase and lifestyle patterns among customers” (Hennesey, 2018, p. 1). Social media influencers are ordinary people who have the ability to influence others due to their perceived authority, reliability, knowledge, position, and/or relationship (Talaverna, 2015). Hennesey (2018) described social media influencers as individuals who have apparently moved from collecting “likes” to monetizing content because they can influence the attitudes of their followers. Social media influencers engage their audiences on social media by regularly providing them with updated content (Lim, 2017).

Social media influencer marketing has attracted growing attention lately due to the results it has been yielding in influencing potential buyers. Due to the popularity of social media influencers, many corporate organizations now invite social media influencers to become their brand ambassadors or product endorsers (Tapinfluence, 2017). Several marketers have reported that they work with social media influencers because they increase brand awareness and message reach while help build brand credibility (Liestyana, 2016). The concept of influencer marketing is similar to the concept of “trusted advisor”. Similar to the notion that consumers trusted celebrities they saw on TV, social media influencers are trusted on social media (Lisichkova, 2017). Previous studies have shown that social

media influencers are even more trusted than celebrities because consumers tend to perceive them as ordinary people (Berger et al., 2016; Lisichkova, 2017; Rebelo, 2017).

Using influencer marketing benefits both the brand and the customer. In a poll conducted by Forbes, 80% of owners of online businesses reported that influencer marketing was the main factor in boosting their business to higher levels (DeMers, 2017). Brands usually spend a lot of time and effort to gain customers' trust; the process takes a lot of time especially for new businesses/brands. However, influencers have already invested a lot of time with their followers, creating trust and loyalty, which makes it easy for customers to believe the influencers as well as their recommendations and advice. Therefore, the brand content transmitted through influencers to customers tends to be regarded as credible. In addition, studies have demonstrated that influencer marketing leads to higher return on investment (ROI) and is more effective than traditional media because it is less costly than TV and billboard advertisements while also able to target niche customer segments. Every influencer has an audience with specific demographics; therefore, brands enjoy the flexibility of choosing which influencer has an audience that mostly suits their target audience characteristics. This would help them correctly, quickly, and effectively reach their target audience in a fresher and more casual way through influencers (Boyd, 2006).

On the other hand, individuals follow social media influencers because they perceive value from them. For example, customers follow influencers to get recommendations and tips in certain fields, like sports, lifestyle, and fashion. Customers tend to value being associated with the bloggers (especially when they view the social media influencers as their idol). Lim et. al. (2017) reported that 82% of consumers believe

the content of social media influencers to be reliable and are therefore ready to follow their recommendations. In addition, influencers tend to engage customers and send information about brands in a new, creative, and memorable way. Influencer marketing is not pushy/intrusive because people explicitly choose to follow the influencer or the brand's social media page and are then exposed to the joint brand and influencer advertisements (Deepa, 2013).

In addition, influencer marketing has proven to be effective in enhancing brand image and attitude and creating differentiation in highly competitive markets (Mattke, 2019). Studies have demonstrated that social media influencers' recommendations tend to increase purchase intentions, drive conversations among individuals, and encourage buyers to advocate online for their most loved brands (Nielsen, 2013).

Compared to celebrities, social media influencers' endorsement generates more buzzwords and produces the most cost-effective strategy (Lim, 2017). Indeed, 82% of follower polls have reported that followers perceive social media influencers to be more reliable, compelling, credible, trustworthy, knowledgeable, and able to build rapport quickly with customers when compared to celebrities (Lim, 2017). Furthermore, according to a Nielsen marketing survey, influencer marketing yields 11 times higher ROI than other digital marketing (Lim, 2017). Celebrity endorsement tends to raise brand awareness whereas influencer marketing tends to drive product engagement and brand loyalty (Lim, 2017).

From the consumer perspective, using social media influencers is challenging because consumers are not able to clearly distinguish between paid endorsements and genuine endorsements, especially in Middle East region of the world. In many other areas,

if social media influencers do not clearly disclose that they are doing a paid endorsement, they can get into trouble. For example, the Federal Trade Commission may fine such an influencer \$250,000, and the influencer might lose credibility (Wood, 2016). According to the Nielsen survey, 92% of consumers believe recommendations of friends and family rather than any other form of recommendations (Grimes, 2012). Social media influencers' messages are considered to be as nearly trustworthy as those of a friend. According to a joint study by Twitter and the analytics firm Annalect, 56% of respondents rely primarily on friends' recommendations while 49% rely on influencers (Swant, 2016). Marketers have to take into consideration several aspects when choosing a social media influencer for their brand. Some factors cited in the literature include likes, followers, and the number of shared posts.

2.4 Social Media Influencer Credibility

According to Hass (1981), an influencer's perceived credibility indicates whether an individual identifies the recommendations of a source as factual, true, believable, or unbiased. In other words, social media influencers' credibility refers to the believability of the information they create and disseminate on their social media platforms. If the source can create a change in the opinion of the customer; then the source is perceived to be credible (McGinnies & Ward, 1980, as cited in Ohanian, 1990). Social media influencer credibility is a multidimensional construct made up of two sub-dimensions: trustworthiness and expertise (Ohanian, 1990). Ohanian (1990) indicated that source credibility is normally utilized to focus attention on the affirmative traits of influencers, which influence the consumers' acceptance of the information. Trust and expertise tend to reduce the perceived uncertainty and risks. Customers' perception regarding social media influencers'

credibility depends on several elements, which include expertise, knowledge and trust (Anwar, 2017). Erdogan (1999) suggested that individuals regard a source as being highly credible when it is in accordance with their value structures and personal attitude; a source perceived to be highly credible will positively influence individuals' behaviours, attitudes, opinions, and/or beliefs via an internalization process that occurs when followers embrace the source influence as credible.

Source trustworthiness is based on consumers' perceptions about the honesty, integrity, and believability of the source (Erdogan, 1999, as cited in Thusyanthy, 2018). Trustworthiness, which describes social media influencers' dignity, believability, and honesty, tends to lead to a higher acceptance of the delivered message. Social media influencers usually put effort into cultivating and maintaining a trustworthy, honest, and positive relationship with their audiences. In doing so, the influencers' followers associate higher levels of trustworthiness with the source. Source expertise explains the extent to which a communicator is perceived to make valid affirmations (Hovland et al., 1953, as cited in Thusyanthy, 2018). Source credibility is used to analyse the effectiveness of influencers in product endorsement; customers can attribute the product endorsed to an actual product performance or other unrelated product attributes, like source emotions or level of knowledge, leading to brand credibility, as evaluated by attribution theory (Shan, 2016). Several factors build source credibility, the most important being the level of expertise and knowledge endorsement shown about a product or domain being promoted. In addition, the accuracy and honesty of the information presented by the influencer demonstrates how much the customer can depend on the influencer (Rebelo, 2017; Thusyanthy, 2018). Several researchers in the field of communication have investigated

different constructs that conceptualize source credibility, coming up with more than eight different conceptualizations. However, in this research, the most recent scale developed by Ohanian (1990) is used.

It is also vital to note that credibility and expertise go together because, when individuals have expertise in certain fields, they are perceived to be credible. Thus, social media influencers who have a large number of followers are usually perceived to be experts in their fields; users follow them to get information. Some individuals are perceived to be more credible. For instance, opinion leaders in diverse contexts such as economic, political, and social fields are considered more credible and trustworthy because they have more knowledge in the field compared to others. Individuals tend to have a feeling of confirmation and security towards individuals whom they perceive to be more knowledgeable in the field. Customers usually perceive a social media influencer as credible and possessing the expertise to create information related to the product. Previous studies have found that influencers who have greater expertise induce more positive attitudes and behaviour changes among customers than less expert sources (Shan, 2015). In addition, a higher credibility source drives EWOM among customers (Djafarova, 2016; Wei, 2012). Influencers' credibility and perceived trustworthiness are two features making them effective brand promoters (Lisichkova, 2017).

McGinnies and Ward (1980), as cited in Ohanian (1990), manipulated a source's trustworthiness and expertise to evaluate the effect of each of the two elements on the persuasiveness of the communicator. The authors found that a source alleged to be trustworthy and an expert produced the most attitude change. The study further indicated that a communicator perceived to be trustworthy was persuasive regardless of whether he

or she was an expert or not. Individuals tend to associate higher trustworthiness levels with the source when there is a higher perceived similarity between the source and individual. Thus, a highly credible source is more persuasive than a less credible source in influencing audience attitudes and behavioural intentions (Djafarova, 2017). Cheung (2012) and Pentina (2018), found that social media influencers' credibility also relies on other characteristics, like their social status. Social media influencers' high social status positively relates with their credibility and can boost their success because many people tend to be interested and follow influencers to observe their high-end exemplary life, with which they want to be associated (Ledbetter & Redd, 2016). Consumers perceive sources with a high number of subscribers/followers as more attractive and trustworthy, especially when endorsing a product, as stated in source credibility theory (Ohanian, 1990). In addition, studies have shown that perceived credibility towards the endorsers tends to increase if they have the same ethnicity and personality (Zahaf & Anderson, 2008). Moreover, two-sided messages (like messages on social media) tend to be related to social media influencers' higher levels of credibility than one-sided messages because two-sided messages are more complex and need more effort to process and weigh them (Djafarova, 2017).

2.5 Social Media Influencer Attractiveness

According to literature, source attractiveness is a multidimensional construct with myriad definitions being used to operationalize it. Attractiveness is defined as a "stereotype of positive associations to a person and not only entails physical attractiveness but also other characteristics such as personality and athletic ability" (Erdogan, 1999, p. 299). Physical attractiveness is very important in forming one person's initial judgement of another person

(Ohanian, 1990). Most studies regard source attractiveness as an independent variable that is not related to source credibility. However, in recent studies, researchers like Ohanian (1990) have regarded endorser attractiveness as a third dimension that shapes the endorser's overall credibility (Sertoglu, 2014). According to the source credibility model, source trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness are the three most influential factors leading to increased purchase intention and positive attitudes towards the brand and advertisement (Amos, 2008).

Attractiveness has been defined in terms of both physical and facial attractiveness. According to the source attractiveness model (McGuire, 1985), communicator attractiveness is determined by perceptions related to similarity, familiarity, and likeability of the source (Amos, 2018). Source attractiveness is conceptualized and assessed by how beautiful, elegant, classy, likable, and physically attractive the source is perceived to be (Amos et al., 2008; McCracken, 1989; Ohanian, 1990, as cited in Wang, 2018). Some studies have conceptualized constructs like source familiarity and likeability as part of source attractiveness (Amos, 2008). Therefore, when individuals feel the source is familiar to them and likable, they tend to associate the source as being more attractive and persuasive (Ohanian, 1990; Sertoglu, 2014). In other words, individuals tend to perceive a source that is like them to be more credible (Ping Jeng, 2016).

On the other hand, according to Kahle and Homer (1985), source attractiveness is mainly shaped based on the perceived physical attractiveness of the source, not the source's likability. Source attractiveness is more effective and has a higher impact on consumers' decision when the product endorsed is related to one's attractiveness (Goldsmith et al., 2000; Ohanian, 1990; Wei, 2012; Wei, 2013). An advertisement with a physically

attractive source has been proven to have a higher acceptance rate among customers than advertisements with no attractive source. Baker and Churchill (1997), as cited in Pappu (2011), observed that individuals tend to form positive opinions of people who are physically attractive and have a status of power and wealth. Brand recall increases when participants see an attractive source (Kahle & Homer, 1985). To improve brand credibility, brands focus on ensuring that their brand is perceived as attractive to their potential consumers (Zhang et al., 2017), indicating that social media influencers' attractiveness plays a major role in brand credibility.

2.6 Social Media Influencer Endorsement Content Quality

In the modern business environment, numerous products and brands have been communicated through social media. However, the capacity of consumer memory is narrow. Previous research has shown that individuals forget around 80% of the information that they have received in 24 hours (Kulkarni, 2005). Therefore, to ensure that consumers do not forget about their brands, organizations utilize third-party endorsers to promote their products and services. By using endorsers, organizations are more visible to consumers as endorsers have a high appeal to specific target audiences and use a more interpersonal method of communication. To take this a step further and make the information even more memorable in consumers' minds, marketers expect social media influencers to present high content quality information.

Zeithaml (1988) indicated that the quality of endorsement content is a vital determinant of product choice and consumer behaviour. Thus, to increase the brand visibility of a company's products or services, the communicator needs to create high quality content. The fast-developing technology in the digital media environment has

enabled communicators to create messages more frequently online. Minimal empirical research on endorser content quality currently exists (Kang, 2010). The quality of the content is mainly measured through the level of informativeness of the communication and accuracy of the information. The endorser must provide authentic content that covers an interesting topic in a specific time (Banks, 2008; Weil, 2006). In the contemporary blogosphere, endorsement-related criteria such as passion, authority, transparency, legitimacy, and authenticity are deemed important. For instance, communicated messages' authenticity level decides the credibility of social media influencers rather than the communicators themselves (Banks, 2008; Weil, 2006). Kang (2010) found that social media influencers' legitimacy is enhanced by their personal devotion and passion to the communicated messages, particularly when the influencers have authority and knowledge regarding the domain they are presenting.

Meyer (1988) evaluated the quality of content using six measures: fairness/unfairness, bias/unbiased, accurate/inaccurate, tells the whole story/does not tell the whole story, trusted/untrusted, and balanced/imbanced. John and Kaye (2009) measured the content quality using measures like believability, fairness, accuracy, and depth. Banks (2008) identified three variables that form content credibility: authenticity, insightfulness, and consistency. Recent research has shown that the credibility of the channel along with the quality of the content influences how the audience perceives the message. Previous studies have highlighted the important attributes of high content quality, including variables like authenticity and timeliness. Endorsement content quality is measured using different variables, like vividness, interactivity, entertainment, position, and valence (Peters, 2013). These dimensions are believed to influence the number of

“likes” and comments the endorsement gets (Peter, 2013). For instance, endorsement content that is entertaining or has high interactivity can lead to positive behaviour outcomes (Peter, 2013). The need for high quality endorsement content that creates value for, enriches, and engages the audience, leading them to become interested consumers, has grown in recent years.

In an effort to generate demand for certain brands in a highly competitive marketplace, it is important for content creators to differentiate their content. This means that social media influencers need to create high quality content for the endorsed brands to ensure that their audiences are engaged while supporting their growth strategies. The more the information communicated is perceived as useful for consumers, the higher and more positive impact it will have on the audience. In other words, consumers tend to adopt information that they perceive as useful, and this is theoretically explained using the information adoption model, which is adapted from the elaboration likelihood model (Cheung, 2012). The information adoption model is used to explain how people adopt mediated information like social media and any content posted on the internet. The model explains how both information quality and source credibility affects how EWOM influences people (Cheung, 2012). The challenge social media influencers face is how to produce high quality content that converts visitors and followers into engaged audiences. Therefore, content marketing has become increasingly significant in communications and marketing practice. Content marketing is perceived to be valuable for businesses because it attracts new audiences and prospective consumers and engages customers in less time (Nousiainen, 2015). To make the content go viral online, the endorser has to show emotions (e.g., anxiety, anger, surprise) when presenting the content (Milkman, 2012).

2.7 Brand Credibility

Erdem and Swait (2004) defined brand credibility as the “willingness of firms to deliver on their claims (their trustworthiness) and their ability to deliver what they promise (their expertise)” (p. 191). Brand credibility is reflected in the believability of the information conveyed by the brand (Erdem & Swait, 2004). According to the brand credibility model, (e.g., Alam et al., 2012; Kemp & Bui, 2011; Sweeney & Swai, 2008; Wang & Yang, 2010, as cited in Thusyanthy, 2018), brand credibility comprises two main key dimensions: trustworthiness and expertise (Erdem & Swait, 2004). Trustworthiness explains the brand’s willingness to deliver what it promised whereas expertise refers to the brand’s ability to deliver what has been promised continuously (Erdem & Swait, 2004). Brand credibility is formed by brand-to-consumer and consumer-to-brand communications over time (Sweeney & Swait, 2008). In other words, it is a demonstration of a personal brand experience. Perceived high brand credibility increases consumers’ expectations from the brand and, in turn, leads to higher probability of brand choice (Erdem & Swait, 2004).

Brand credibility has been intensely studied in the literature, but only a few researchers have studied brand credibility in the context of social media influencers’ advertising. Brand credibility is mainly shaped through the marketing strategies that the brand chooses to adopt (Baek, 2011). Brand credibility comes from all activities that brands carry out, such as traditional and non-traditional advertisements. The antecedents of brand credibility include consistency, brand investment, and clarity. Consistency refers to the harmony among the marketing mix strategies of the brand over time. Similarly, brand investment refers to the marketing budget spent on advertising sponsorship and corporate social responsibility in order to show consumers that the brand is committed to delivering

what it promises in the long run. Finally, clarity refers to how easily and clearly customers grasp the information presented (Erdem & Swait, 2004; Sweeney & Swait, 2008). Over time, brand credibility can be increased through marketing activities like digital advertising and sponsorships, which shows the consistency and clarity of the content (Jeng, 2016). To increase brand credibility, firms have to use marketing mix strategies for their brands, like high quality packaging and expensive endorsers, which serve as a signal of quality to enhance the brand's credibility (Veeva, 2012). To achieve higher brand credibility, marketers have to ensure that they use a more consistent marketing mix over time (Erdem & Swait, 2004).

Brand credibility plays a major role in consumers' decision making. Chung and Cho (2017) utilized signalling theory to indicate that imperfect/unclear information occurs in endorsed advertisements, leaving consumers with asymmetric information. Brand credibility decreases information asymmetry in message communication, thereby decreasing the perceived risk of the promoted product and increased confidence in purchasing the product (Chung & Cho, 2017; Erdem & Swait, 2004; Wernerfelt, 1988). Brand credibility is one of the most effective signals in providing information to consumers because individuals use it as a proxy for product quality. Using brand credibility as a signal, consumers can save effort when gathering information and “processing costs (e.g., reading product reviews on a Web site or on social media, seeking advice from experts or other consumers)” (Chung & Cho, 2017, p. 485). Thus, brand credibility reduces information asymmetry in consumers' decision making, thereby decreasing perceived risk and increasing consumers' confidence in products. In the social media context, Chung and Cho (2017) indicated that endorsers transfer some parts of their personality traits to the brand,

which is communicated to the consumer through the endorsement. As Taylor (2016) reported, endorsements using celebrities are less effective because their brand credibility, enabling them to alter consumers' attitudes, has decreased slightly compared to that of social influencers. Yet 20% of television commercials in the US still use celebrity endorsement to create brand credibility (Scheinbaum, 2018). Moreover, customers who perceive credibility based on the quality of the product will experience enhanced brand credibility. Therefore, to increase and sustain positive brand credibility, brands have to always look for innovations and improve their products. Brand credibility is important for forming a customer base, marketing share, and brand equity.

2.8 Brand Advocacy

Brand advocacy refers to the favourable communications that customers actively share about a brand to other customers or their defence of the brand when it is attacked by others (Wilk, 2018). Brand advocates are people who are freely willing to spend effort and time to recommend the brand to others. Jones and Taylor (2007) perceived brand advocacy as being analogous to affirmative recommendations by highly connected engaged/involved customers. In an online environment, brand advocacy is developed through social media platforms and channels as a result of various communications and interactions that take place, to which the consumer is continuously exposed. In addition, social networking and socializing that occur from consumer to consumer are considered part of brand advocacy (Wilk et al., 2018).

When consumers perceive brand advocacy from other consumers to be credible, they tend to adopt this information in order to lessen the amount of anxiety associated with a new product purchase. Melancon et al. (2011) found that brand advocacy should be

perceived as a relational behaviour whereas Keylock and Faulds (2012) saw it as simply social advocacy. Thus, brand advocacy in general is habitually perceived as being freely provided by satisfied consumers who advocate for a product or services that they have used because they believe it is worth evangelizing it to others to experience.

Brand advocacy usually stems from a consumer's loyalty to the brand, which eventually leads to positive word of mouth. For customers to be loyal to a brand and serve as a source of referral, they usually have to become committed to a brand representing their desired self-image first. Once the connection is established between the consumer and the brand, consumers are highly likely to speak positively about the brand. Studies have found a positive relationship between brand advocacy and product acceptance and purchase intentions. Consumers who have strong social relationships with a brand are more likely to truly express their brand preferences on a social media platform by advocating their self-expressiveness for the brand. The antecedents of the self-brand connection include attitudes toward the brand, perceptions related to the brand quality, and brand uniqueness. Brands that engage their customers online tend to create brand advocates because customers co-create value with brands through interactions.

The literature reports some types of advocates. For instance, silent loyalists are perceived to be loyal only to themselves; hence, they do not volunteer information. This means that silent loyalists only volunteer information regarding a brand when they are asked. In addition, friends and families are perceived to be the first source of information for consumers. Mercenary brand advocates are consumers whose loyalty relies on rewards, convenience, and marketing promotions that they receive. Lastly, enthusiast brand advocates perceive themselves to be authoritative due to their extensive brand experience

and interest.

In addition, online brand advocacy is evident when brands utilize memes, viral videos, and posts regarding their brand information on their social media profiles. Some bloggers also encourage consumers to become brand advocates for some brands online by spreading positive information regarding the brand. Online brand advocacy is encouraged through the reach, transparency, and accessibility of the internet, which facilitates effective EWOM in the online community. According to Nousiainen (2015), online brand advocacy affects offline purchase decisions because online conversations with online communities regarding a brand can stir and empower offline engagement and conversations. This implies that online brand advocacy might affect offline brand advocacy.

2.9 Digital Experience

Digital experience explains consumers' online and mobile experiences. Online experience focuses on studying the intensity level of online purchases (i.e., one or more online purchases per day) whereas that of mobile experience explains how long individuals have been using mobiles (e.g., using smartphones for more than 2 years versus less than 2 years; Kim, 2017). According to Lisichkova and Othman (2017), consumers' past digital experience is a predictor of individuals' online purchase intentions, social presence, and online trust. Customers' high digital experience through frequent social media involvement also imperatively increases the customers' purchase intention.

Due to the rapid increase of smartphones, the rate of online shopping through mobile shopping apps has increased. Many organizations have focused on developing their businesses on mobile applications, where they can interact and engage with their consumers. Smartphones have also intensified the use of social media influencers to

influence users to purchase online. A stark difference exists between using smartphones versus computers. For instance, Wang (2015) concluded that mobile devices' smaller screens increase the search costs. Mobile devices are perceived to have an increased attractiveness as the first search is perceived to be greater than the second search. Therefore, mobile devices are more attractive in terms of digital experience than computers (Wang, 2015). Mobile shopping on smartphones incorporates numerous benefits, like time convenience, reduced cognitive efforts, and efficiency, which elevate the perceived mobile shopping value and leads to increased purchase intentions. Therefore, consumers who have higher digital experience usually appear on more social media platforms than customers with lower digital experience (Emmanouilides & Hammond, 2000; Forsythe & Shi, 2003, as cited in Kim, 2017).

Brengman (2005) labelled individuals with high digital experience as “shopping lovers” in the study; these individuals are usually excited about shopping online frequently and browsing new websites. They use the internet to collect information, engage in business, have fun, and shop online. They also tend to be opinion leaders in their circles and advocates who are loyal to the brand by spreading positive word of mouth and convincing others to purchase from the brand. Therefore, internet retailers should focus more on engaging individuals who have high digital experience levels because this segment is likely to perceive higher credibility of the endorsed product and brand as they already associate high credibility with online shopping. In addition, individuals with high digital experience spend a lot of time online and have the potential to spread positive word of mouth online (Brengman, 2005). Meanwhile, marketers will have to invest more efforts in shaping a positive brand credibility perception among individuals with less digital

experience because they do not usually shop extensively online due to the high risks they associate with online experience.

Lisichkova and Othman (2017) argued that consumers’ purchasing decisions are influenced by EWOM because, as they browse more online, they are more likely to come across other people’s reviews. EWOM (either from other customers or social media influencers) and product browsing are inseparably connected, thereby enhancing the probability of purchasing a product or service (Kim, 2017). For instance, Lisichkova and Othman (2017) suggested that one factors that can have an effect on online purchase intentions is privacy. Individuals with higher digital experience—specifically online experience—tend to be more inclined to share information with others online while advocating for certain products.

Table 1. Summary Table of relevant prior work

Construct examined	Related constructs/ dimensions studied	Context	Key findings	Research study
Source credibility	Trust, expertise, knowledge	Students attending business schools	The higher the source perceived credibility is, the more it positively affects customers’ brand attitude, favorable behavior, and purchase intentions	Anwar, 2017

Construct examined	Related constructs/ dimensions studied	Context	Key findings	Research study
	Dignity, believability, and honesty	Field experiment in a metropolitan Australian city	Source credibility explains the extent to which a communicator is perceived to make valid assertions that lead customer lead to a higher acceptance of the delivered message	Pappu, 2011
	Expertise and trustworthiness	Consumer behaviour on Instagram	The endorser's credibility is transferred onto the product and brand being endorsed; the higher the influencer credibility is the more it will positively impact the credibility of the brand	Vidyanata, 2018
Source attractiveness	Similarity, familiarity, and likeability	Meta-analysis from journal articles to study endorsers effectiveness	Source trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness are the three most influential factors leading to increased purchase intention and positive attitudes towards the endorsing brand	Amos, 2008

Construct examined	Related constructs/ dimensions studied	Context	Key findings	Research study
	Attractive, Classy, Beautiful, Elegant, Sexy	Students from different educational level	Source attractiveness does not impact advertising effectiveness among consumers	Sertoglu, 2014
	Physical attractiveness, customer attitudes	Public university students	Social media influencers' attractiveness fails to influence customer purchase intention but is significant to stimulate respondents' positive attitude	Lim, 2017
Social Media Influencer Endorsement Content Quality	Vividness, interactivity, informative, entertainment, position, and valence	Holistic framework is proposed, that covers major elements of social media (from theories)	High quality and attractive endorsement content quality tends to lead to positive behavioral outcomes and increased customer-brand engagement (i.e. number of likes and comments) on the endorsed posts	Peters, 2013

Construct examined	Related constructs/ dimensions studied	Context	Key findings	Research study
	Useful, pertinent, and high-quality information	Social media users, who shop online	High quality information is perceived to be a significant factor in online marketing due to its impact on purchase intentions and perceived trustworthiness of the endorsing brand	Lisichkova and Othman (2017)
Brand Credibility	Trustworthiness, expertise, consistency, brand investment, and clarity	Airline Advertising	Brand credibility leads to risk-minimization for customers, they trust the brand and perceive less risks associated with it. Highly perceived brand credibility increases consumers' expectations from the brand and, in turn, leads to higher probability of brand choice	Erdem & Swait, 2004
	Integrity, reliability,	Major cities of Pakistan	Highly credible brands constantly offer high quality	Alam, 2012

Construct examined	Related constructs/ dimensions studied	Context	Key findings	Research study
	truthfulness, trust-spreading		products that leads to greater tendency to generate customer loyalty	
Brand Advocacy	Consumer brand relationship, word-of-mouth or recommendations, brand engagement, online reviews	Online posts in online community forums	Brand advocacy usually stems from a consumer's loyalty to the brand. Customers tend to perceive the brand advocacy of other customers very credible and they adopt the information in order to lessen the amount of anxiety associated with a new product purchase	Wilk, 2018
	Customer engagement, loyalty, brand identification, brand trust, brand commitment, involvement	Interviews with customers of Yoogaia (first company to offer yoga,	Online brand advocacy stirs online and offline engagement and conversations that positively impacts customer's purchase decisions	Nousiainen, 201

Construct examined	Related constructs/ dimensions studied	Context	Key findings	Research study
		pilates and other kinds of exercising classes (online)		
Digital Experience	Online purchases, mobile experience	Mobile log data and mobile surveys to study individuals mobile experience	Online experience has a positive effect on online purchasing intentions and other positive product- and brand-related outcomes (i.e. spread positive word of mouth online and convincing others to purchase from the brand).	Kim, 2017
	Online shopping, EWOM, social media marketing	Online surveys in the United States and Belgium were conducted to	Individuals with high digital experience levels are likely to perceive higher credibility of the endorsed product and brand as they already associate high	Brengman 2005

Construct examined	Related constructs/ dimensions studied	Context	Key findings	Research study
		study the internet shopper's lifestyle	credibility with online shopping	

2.10 Theoretical Framework

2.10.1 Stimulus–Organism–Response Theory (S-O-R)

The theoretical model of the current study is built on the SOR model developed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974). The SOR theory explains the mediating factors that influence an organism's response to environmental stimuli. In other words, certain cues in the environment stimulate individuals' affective and cognitive states, resulting in certain behavioural outcomes (Chan et al., 2017, as cited in Tang, 2019; Xiao & Benbasat, 2011).

The SOR model consists of three basic components: stimulus, organism, and response. Stimulus refers to the triggers that can arouse the individual (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). A stimulus may exist in different forms, such as the display of products, the environment of a store, brands, logo, word of mouth, and social media influencers' advertisements. The stimuli consist of many factors that can interact and compete among themselves as stimuli (Jacoby, 2002). Although encountering these stimuli might not

necessarily lead to certain predicted outcomes, research evidence (e.g., Jacoby & Brooks, 1984; Jacoby, Lindsay, & Toth, 1992, as cited in Jacoby, 2002) seems to suggest that, when an individual is exposed to stimuli, it can result in the individual subconsciously beginning to process the information. Research tends to label this situation as “implicit learning and learning without awareness” (Jacoby, 1992, p. 54).

The second component of the SOR is organism, defined as the “internal processes and structures intervening between stimuli external to the person and the final actions, reactions, or responses emitted,” which are regarded as subconscious processes (Chang, Eckman, & Yan, 2011, as cited in Lin, 2015, p. 235). These intervening processes and structures include factors that are perceptual, physiological, and psychological (i.e., feeling and thinking activities; Fang, 2014). The organism component is further described as the “storehouse” of a person’s emotive and cognitive systems as well as where all prior experiences are stored, which is often referred to as “long-term memory” and includes attitudes or feelings related to the brand.

As Eroglu et al. (2001) introduced, the organism component of the SOR model has cognitive response properties. Several researchers (e.g., Babin et al., 2003; Donovan, Rossiter, Marcolyn, & Nesdale, 1994; Fiore et al., 2000; Hu & Jasper, 2006, as cited in Ha & Im, 2012) have shown that the stimuli elicit not only emotional responses, but also cognitive responses within the organism; both types of responses affect subsequent behaviours. Cognitive responses include perceptions, thoughts, comprehension, beliefs, and knowledge that come as a result of various stimuli (Ha & Im, 2012). The reason for including the cognitive responses in the organism dimension of the SOR model, according to Kim (2014, p. 18), is because “it is viewed as an active processor of information and the

environmental stimuli were viewed as an information input influencing internal decision-making". Therefore, the cognitive responses can be related to consumers' behaviour because they represent consumers' internal processes, such as perceived brand credibility, which has to do with the extent to which the consumers believe the brand does what it promises. Moreover, through perception, the customer has an idea about the social media influencers' dimensions and is able to make judgements about brand credibility. Whenever the customer is subjected to the stimuli in the form of social media influencers' dimensions of a brand to which they can relate, their cognitive ability plays a vital role in the establishment of brand credibility (Kim, 2013). Some operative components of the environment, including social media influencers' appealing and pleasant dimensions, serve to evoke an important sensation of both arousal and pleasure that essentially leads to the formation of brand credibility (Kim, 2013). Cognitive responses are also elicited before emotional responses (Lin, 2015) as consumers need to process the information they receive about the brand, which may come through word of mouth, as in the case of brand advocacy, or any other modes of advertisement that lead to fostering brand credibility (Kim, 2012).

The SOR model in its real form focuses on pleasure, arousal, and dominance (PAD). PAD is a representation of emotional and cognitive states and processes that act as mediators between the stimulus and persons' behavioural responses (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Mehrabian and Russell (1974) conceived of pleasure as a continuum ranging from extreme pain to extreme happiness. In the current study, positive emotional responses refer to the feelings that the consumer has, which is positive and directed toward the social media influencer characteristics. These emotional responses also represent the affective dimension of the organism component. Mehrabian and Russell (1974) conceptualized

arousal, the second sub-factorial component of the SOR model, as both physical activity and the mental state of alertness, which ranges from being sleepy to being anxious. These characteristics (i.e., sleepiness and bodily tension) of the organism act as mediators and interactions that take place between them to produce responses. The dominance dimension of the SOR refers to the level of control the individual has or does not have, which ranges from extreme feelings of a lack of control over or influence on the individual's environment or surroundings to feelings of being in control or influential (Reisenzein, 1994, as cited in Ha, 2012). Consequently, this relates to the level of credibility/influence customers attribute to different social media influencers.

In the SOR, response is described as the final outcome regarding decision, in which the behaviour can be described as approach or avoidance (Sherman, Mathur, & Smith, 1997, as cited Lin, 2015). According to the SOR model, response follows the exposure of the organism to stimuli and a situation where the person develops an inner organism, which eventually leads to a responsive behaviour. Although various response theories are available in the literature, arguably the most common has been the approach–avoidance model. People react to what is available or what they see in their environment (Ezeh & Harris, 2007, as cited in Wu, 2016). Approach behaviour consists of the positive behaviour in which the individual is willing to engage in terms of the desire to stay, shop, explore, and intend to purchase or positively talk about the product whereas avoidance is considered to be the opposite behaviour.

The focus of the current study is on the approach behaviour, which refers to positive behaviour that may be directed towards a setting, such as a consumer's behaviour towards the different social media influencer dimensions (i.e., credibility, attractiveness, and

content quality). For instance, when consumers see social media influencers promoting a brand (stimulus) and perceive those social media influencers to be credible by putting trust in them, believing in their expertise when they share their stories about the brands (organism), and finding them attractive enough to motivate them to have a positive brand attitude, they are likely to spread positive information about the product, which may lead to brand advocacy (response; e.g., Bitner, 1992, as cited in Wu, 2016).

Brand advocacy represents the approach of the response component. Therefore, the focus of this study is on positive emotional responses and approach behaviours (i.e., brand advocacy) because brands use social media influencers to create positive feelings about their brands to customers. Based on the theoretical framework of this study, brand credibility is added as a mediator of the relationship between social media influencers' credibility and brand advocacy.

2.10.2 Social Learning Theory

Bandura's (1963, as cited in Lim, 2017) social learning theory has been widely applied in the marketing field, especially in the communication and advertising fields. The theory states that individuals exhibit favourable attitudes based on motivations from socialisation agents in a direct or indirect way. This theory has been adopted in many studies where researchers try to study consumers' behaviour as a result of various socialisation agents, like celebrities, social media influencers, family, or peers. Makgosa (2010, as cited in Lim, 2017) used this theory to explain the impact of celebrity endorsement on customer behaviour. Thus, social learning theory can be used to justify how an individual's brand advocacy is highly influenced by the individual's perceived brand credibility and various social media variables (i.e., source credibility, source attractiveness, and social media

influencer content quality).

2.11 Conceptual Framework

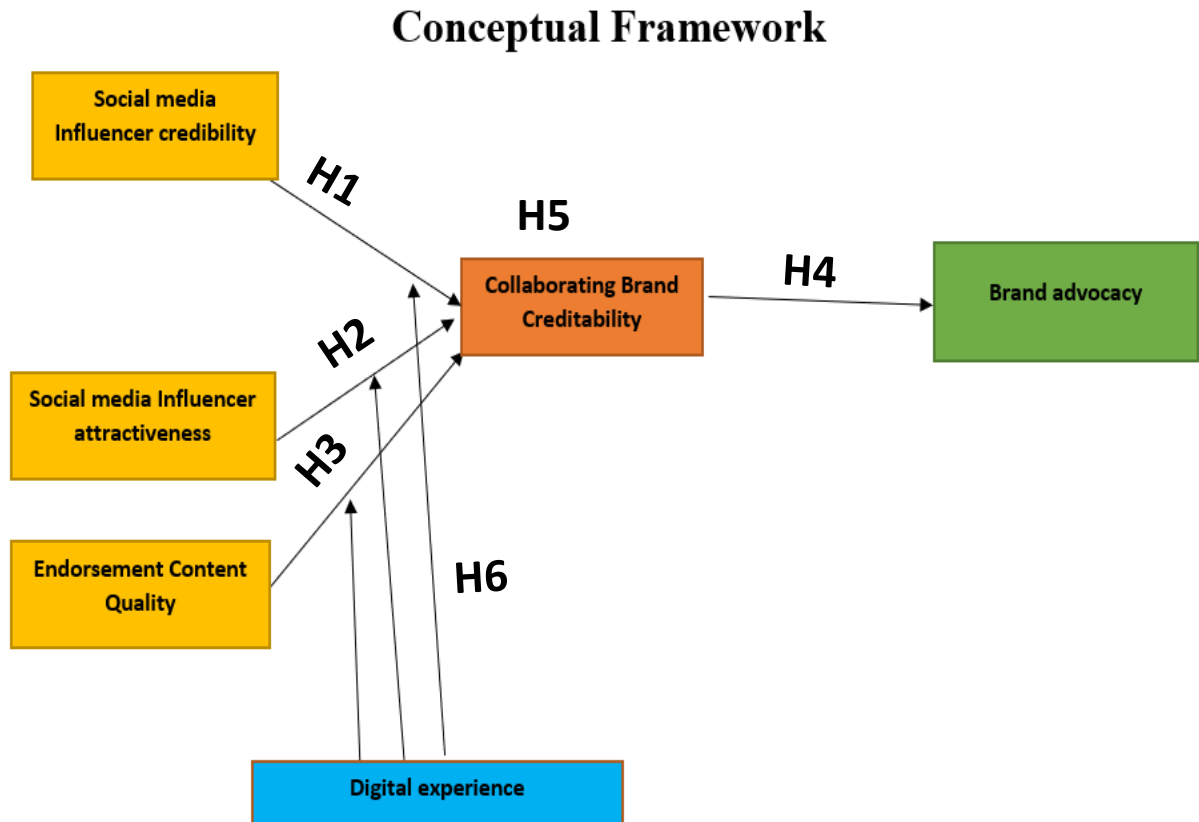


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

2.12 Hypothesis Development

Previous studies have shown that the higher the perceived social media influencers' credibility is, the more it positively affects customers' brand attitude, favourable behaviour, and purchase intentions (Mikulas & Svetlik, 2016, as cited in Anwar, 2017). According to the meaning transfer model (McCracken, 1989, as cited in Anwar, 2017), the credibility of the endorser is transferred to the credibility of the brand, which is why so many

organizations have focused on building brand credibility by using credible social media influencers to promote their products' and brands' credible celebrity endorsements. A firm's credibility is largely dependent on the quality of information conveyed through the brand's marketing communication strategies. Social media influencers are considered to be communication tools that brands use to signal credibility because endorser credibility is transferred to brand credibility. Credible social media influencers are beneficial because their credibility will impact the product positioning of the brand, which will lower the consumers' perceived risks and minimize further consumer information gathering (Wang, 2016). Therefore, a firm can work towards building brand credibility that is largely driven by the credible information conveyed by the credible influencer (Wang, 2016).

Consumers tend to assess the credibility of the communication and brand after they assess the credibility of the endorser. Therefore, the higher the influencer credibility, is the more it will positively impact the credibility of the brand because the endorser's credibility is transferred onto the product and brand being endorsed (Vidyanata, 2018). Hence, endorser credibility and brand credibility are positively associated with each other (Chung, 2017). Moreover, several previous studies have found that source credibility has a positive effect on brand beliefs, brand attitudes, and brand credibility (Pappu, 2011). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H1: A social media influencer's credibility is positively related to the collaborating brand's credibility.

The attractiveness of the source is found to create attitudinal and behavioural responses towards the endorsed product and brand (Wei, 2012). A communicator's attractiveness has an impact on attitude formation and change (Erdogan, 1999). In addition, physical

attractiveness of the social media influencer has been proven to have a high tendency in driving positive consumer attitudes towards the endorsing brand (Lim, 2017). Source attractiveness has a direct influence on the effectiveness of the message (McGuire, 1969). Previous studies have found that attractive sources help brands recognition, increase positive brand attitude and brand loyalty, and drive positive word of mouth (Wei, 2013). According to Till and Busler (2000), influencers who have attractive characteristics or attributes can lead to positive affirmative consumer attitudes.

Some research supports the arguments made regarding the positive effect of source attractiveness on attitude change whereas other studies did not find any correlation between the variables. Source attractiveness facilitates attitude change, but does not increase attitudinal change towards the endorsed brand (Kahle, 1985). According to Amos (2008), attractiveness does not have any impact on advertising effectiveness among customers. Similarly, Sertoglu (2014) demonstrated that attractiveness does not impact advertising effectiveness among consumers (i.e., purchase intention). Therefore, the nature and scope of the construct of source attractiveness remains uncertain and debatable, making it worthy of further attention and investigation by researchers (Amos, 2008).

Regardless of the contradictory findings, regarding the impact of physical attractive source on positive customer outcomes, most scholars support the contentions that social media influencers' physical attractiveness plays a positive role in influencing customers' perceptions of the collaborating brand's credibility. As stated in many previous studies, source attractiveness has a positive impact on customers' preference, likability and believability of the endorsed product and brand. In addition, an attractive source has an affirmative effect on products and brands when compared to unattractive influencers. Many

studies have shown that attractive endorsers tend to receive a more positive response from consumers than non-attractive endorsers because consumers consider attractive endorsers to be more reliable, trustworthy, and credible (Anwar, 2017; Wei & Lu, 2013). Joseph (1982) indicated that, when customers see individuals they admire use, wear, or even display certain products, the customers are more likely to be influenced to purchase those specific brands rather than other brands. These findings are consistent with other studies indicating that the attractiveness of an influencer enhances the affirmative attitude impact on the brand and product endorsed (Ohanian, 2018).

McGuire (1985) found that source attractiveness openly impacts the endorsement effectiveness and positive associations between the brand and individual. Thus, social media influencers' attractiveness plays a major role in subconsciously influencing consumers' opinions towards brands (Anwar, 2017). Consequently, consumers are more likely to accept the information given by an attractive source (Schlecht, 2003). Researchers have reported a positive relationship between source attractiveness and consumer attitude towards the brand (e.g., Petty et al., 1983), including when developing effective messages (Schlecht, 2003). Therefore, the researcher postulates the following:

H2: A social media influencer's attractiveness is positively related to the collaborating brand's credibility.

According to Lisichkova and Othman (2017), endorsement content quality is perceived to be a significant factor in online marketing due to its impact on purchase intentions. Lisichkova and Othman (2017) suggested that endorsement content quality in terms of availability of useful, pertinent, and high quality information positively influences the perceived trustworthiness of the brand (which shapes an important part of brand

credibility). When perceiving the social media influencer information as credible, customers' positive attitude towards the advertised product is shaped, which has implications for consumers' behaviour like EWOM and brand advocacy (Berger & Milkman, 2012; Chung & Cho, 2017; De Vries et al., 2012; Nejad, Sherrell, & Babakus, 2014; Valcke et al., 2013; Van Noort et al., 2012 as cited in Peters, 2013).

According to Yang and Lim (2009), individuals trust brands and associate higher brand credibility when there is a great level of interactivity of the brand on social media. For individuals to interact with brands on social media, brands usually hire social media influencers to present attractive content that is usually focused, authentic, and insightful. Similarly, attractive endorsement content quality tends to be vivid, interactive, informative, and entertaining, leading to increased customer–brand engagement; consequently, this increases the influence of the number of likes and comments on the endorsement (Peter, 2013). Increased customer–brand engagement due to high quality and interesting content presented by the endorsing social media influencer positively impacts consumers' behavioural outcomes towards the endorsement (Peter, 2013). Based on the previous discussion regarding the affirmative effect of endorsers' high quality content, the researcher hypothesizes the following:

H3: Endorsement content quality is positively related to the collaborating brand's credibility.

From a marketing strategy point of view, brand advocacy is considered one of the most significant outcomes due to its role in influencing individuals' purchase intention. Brand advocacy usually stems from consumer loyalty, so it is usually shaped after brand loyalty. Brand trustworthiness positively impacts customer brand loyalty because of the

high value associations created with the brand. Highly credible brands have a trust tag attached to them, resulting in a greater tendency to generate loyal customers if they keep offering high quality products. Therefore, brand credibility is directly linked to customer loyalty (Alam, 2012).

An increase in brand credibility increases brand loyalty and advocacy. Customers are committed to brands that help them represent their self-concepts by offering high quality products and services. Keh and Xie (2009) found that positive brand reputation due to brand expertise and credibility leads to brand advocacy. A direct effect has been shown between brand trust (part of brand credibility) and brand advocacy (Kwon dan Matilla, 2015; Tuškej et. al., 2013, as cited in Liestyana, 2016).

Sweeney and Swait's (2008) study focused on evaluating the effect of brand credibility on consumer loyalty. Their findings indicated that brand credibility has a primary impact on customer satisfaction and a secondary impact on loyalty. When social media influencers promote a certain product that has high brand credibility, consumers' purchasing intention will increase. This is achieved by ensuring that their products are of high quality and meet consumers' needs. Highly credible brands positively correlate to higher purchase intentions and brand loyalty (Erdem & Swait, 2004; Sheeraz, 2016). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: The collaborating brand's credibility is positively related to brand advocacy.

As previously mentioned, endorser credibility is transferred to the collaborating brand's credibility (Vidyanata, 2018). Similarly, source attractiveness has been found to have a positive impact on consumers' attitude towards the brand (e.g., Petty et al., 1983). Source content quality has also been shown to have positive effects on advertisement

outcomes. Ohanian (1990) concluded that source expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness shape the brand's credibility. Therefore, many studies have found a mediating effect of brand credibility on the relationship between social media influencer attributes and positive outcomes (i.e., customer loyalty and purchase intention). For example, Alam et al. (2012, as cited in Thusyanthy, 2018) found that brand credibility mediates the association between source trustworthiness and quality on customer brand loyalty. Pappu's (2015) study proved that brand credibility mediates the relationship between endorser credibility and brand equity. It has been argued that brand credibility fully mediates the impact of influencer endorsement towards purchase intention, which means that, without the high brand credibility of the collaborating brand, endorser effectiveness will not be very influential on customers (Vidyanata, 2018).

Brand credibility is considered to be a mediator between endorser credibility and purchase intention because it has a strong influence on purchase intention (Chung, 2017; Goldsmith, 2000). Brand credibility and brand attitude mediate the relationship between source attractiveness and source credibility on purchase intention. An attractive endorser positively influences the brand credibility for the endorsed brand. In addition, a positive relationship exists between influencer attractiveness and credibility on collaborating brand credibility, loyalty, and other positive attitudes (Lim, 2017). The role of brand credibility as a mediator drives affective commitment and decision towards the endorsed brand, which mainly drives purchase intention and positive recommendation (Jeng, 2016). Furthermore, brand credibility mediates the relationship between source perceived content quality and brand choice as well as other brand considerations/decisions (Erdem, 2004). An increase in brand credibility leads to an increase in customer satisfaction and brand loyalty and

drives positive word of mouth and recommendations. Brand credibility mediates the relationship between high brand satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendations (Sweeney, 2007). In addition, studies have shown that brand trust (part of brand credibility) influences brand advocacy and mediates the relationship between perceived content quality of the source and brand loyalty. Based on this discussion, it is hypothesized that:

H5: Brand credibility mediates the relationship between (a) social media influencers' credibility, (b) social media influencers' attractiveness, and (c) endorsement content quality and brand advocacy.

The number of times that consumers shop online or using mobile devices is operationalized as digital shopping experience (Emmanouilides & Hammond, 2000; Forsythe & Shi, 2003, as cited in Kim, 2007). Studies have shown that, the more people shop online, the more likely they will purchase products more quickly that are promoted by social media influencers (Uzunoglu, 2014). Based on previous studies, the main player/predictor related to mobile purchases is determined by individuals' digital experience patterns. Drawing on this, studies have shown a positive relationship between the level of online shopping and purchase intention. Digital experience plays a vital role in enhancing social media marketing because users with higher digital experience tend to be more experienced online and more disposed to shopping online as they have already overcome the risks associated with online shopping and trust online shopping more than individuals with low digital experience levels (Bank et al., 2013). Therefore, they tend to trust online products and brands more than others. Individuals with high digital experience levels usually possess more shopping apps and make more frequent mobile purchases than individuals with low digital experience levels. Digital experience helps explain consumers'

mobile shopping behaviours; therefore, it likely influences the strength of the relationship between the three social media influencer attributes and customer credibility.

The more a user engages with a mobile phone application, the more positive attitude the user will have towards the endorsing brand. Using mobile apps positively impacts a user's perceived image towards the endorsing brand and product, and it drives a positive persuasive impact (Bellman, 2011). Therefore, the higher digital experience level an individual has and more exposure the user has to mobile apps, the more the user will benefit from his or her perceptions of the brand. In addition, the more an individual shops online and is satisfied, the more he or she will trust the brand. Online browsing has a positive effect on online purchasing intentions and other positive product- and brand-related outcomes (Kim, 2017). Therefore, the research proposes the following hypothesis:

H6: Digital experience moderates the relationship between (a) social media influencers' credibility, (b) social media influencers' attractiveness, and (c) endorsement content quality and brand credibility.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the literature review was discussed, different concepts were introduced, and the presumed hypothesis were developed. This chapter discusses the research design, the process of how the data were collected. This chapter includes five parts, the research context, the measuring items of the questionnaire, data collection instruments, sampling techniques and the adopted data analysis techniques.

3.2 Research Type

This thesis aims to study the impact of three social media influencers dimensions on collaborating brand credibility and advocacy. The three dimensions considered include (a) social media influencer credibility which composes of trustworthiness and expertise, (b) attractiveness and (c) the quality of endorsement content. The impact of these three independent variables on collaborating brand credibility is examined and the effect of collaborating brand credibility on brand advocacy is also further examined. Furthermore, the moderating impact of digital experience is studied between the three social media influencer dimensions and collaborating brand credibility. This research adopts a quantitative explanatory research approach. Quantitative research usually includes a deductive logic where the researcher starts with hypotheses developed based on existing theories. Then the researcher collects data and uses statistical methods to analyze the data and generalize the results generated to a greater population size (Cooper, 2014). Quantitative approach is used in this study because the aim of this thesis is to examine what causes favorable outcomes related to the endorsed brand like high credibility and brand advocacy based on the effect of different social media influencer attributes. The constructs

used in the study hypotheses were well-conceptualized and examined. Furthermore, all the measuring items used for all constructs are well-established in literature.

3.3 Measures and Questionnaire Design

The data in this study were collected through a self-administered survey. The survey was provided in Arabic and English to ensure it reaches the highest number of participants in Qatar and capture the viewpoints of different segments. The questionnaire was available on Qualtrics, an online questionnaire platform. The data were collected using a convenience sampling method. All the questions in the questionnaire were based on previously developed scales from the literature. Some of the questions were adapted to fit the context of the study, which is social media influencers. The questionnaire composed of five sections and had a total of 34 questions. First, there was an introductory paragraph that has information related to the following, (a) the purpose of this questionnaire, (b) description of “Social media influencers” and “sponsoring brand” (c) suggested time for the completion of the questionnaire (d) confidentiality agreement (see appendix A). The first section revolved around questions related to social media usage and incorporated four questions starting with a filter question about whether the respondent has a social media account and had to choose from two possible answers, either “yes” or “no”. If the respondent picked “No” than the questionnaire would immediately end and if they pick “yes” than they would proceed to the next question which asks if they follow any social media influencers inside or outside Qatar. If respondents choose “no” they do not follow social media influencers then the survey would end. However, if they choose “yes” they follow social media influencers they will be directed to the next two questions which are open-ended questions. The first question required respondents to state the name of one

social media influencer in or outside Qatar and state the name of one brand they promote frequently. Those two questions aimed to activate a specific social media influencer and a specific brand in respondent's mind, which s/he refers to while answering the questionnaire remaining questions.

The second section comprise of 3 items addressing respondents' behavior towards brand advocacy of the collaborating brand. The third section had 6 items measuring the respondent's behavior toward the collaborating brand credibility. The fourth section has 23 questions and covered three main independent variables of the study which include social media influencer credibility, attractiveness and endorsement content quality. All the questions in the questionnaire sections, were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where "strongly disagree" is the lowest and "strongly agree" is the highest. The last section measured the respondents' digital experience and they had to choose between 5 levels with "never" being the least and "once-twice daily" being the highest. In addition, the last section also had questions related to the respondent's personal information like their gender, age group, educational level and nationality (Qatari or no Qatari).

A pilot test for the questionnaire was conducted among 16 individuals and three corrections were then made to the questionnaire. Firstly, many respondents were confused if they had to refer to an influencer in Qatar or outside Qatar. Therefore, I had to add "in or outside Qatar" to make it clearer for the respondents that both options were accepted. In addition, while asking for the social media influencer attractiveness there was a question that said, "I believe this social media influencer is handsome", which I acquired from measuring items in previous studies. However, some people during the pilot test said they will leave it as neutral because it is not applicable for their female influencers. Therefore,

I added “beautiful” or handsome to this measuring item to be appropriate for both genders and not lead to confusion among participants.

Based on the hypotheses proposed in chapter two, the below table (1) maps the utilized measuring items used to measure each construct, along with the source.

Table 2. Questionnaire Mapping Table

Hypothesis	Variables	Items	Source
H1: Social media influencer credibility is positively related to	Social media influencer credibility (Independent variable)	I believe this social media influencer is: -An expert - Experienced - Knowledgeable – Qualified	Adapted from Ohanian, Roobina, (1990)
H2: Social media influencer attractiveness is positively related to collaborating brand credibility	Social media Influencer attractiveness (Independent variable)	I believe this social media influencer is: - Attractive - Classy - Handsome - Elegant - Good-looking person	Adapted from Ohanian, Roobina, (1990)

Hypothesis	Variables	Items	Source
H3: Endorsement content quality is positively related to collaborating brand credibility.	Social media influencer endorsement content quality (Independent variable)	I believe the content presented by this social media influencer is: - Authentic - Insightful - Informative - Consistent - Biased - Focused - Accurate - timely - popular	Adapted from Kang (2010)
H4: Collaborating brand credibility is positively related to brand advocacy.	Brand credibility (Mediating variable)	-This brand delivers what it promises. -This brand's product claims are believable. -Over time, my experiences with this brand have led me to expect it to keep its promises, no more and no less. -This brand is committed to delivering on its claims, no more and no less.	Adapted from Edem & Swait (2004)

Hypothesis	Variables	Items	Source
		-This brand has a name you can trust. -This brand has the ability to deliver what it promises.	
H5: Brand credibility mediates the relationship between SMI credibility, SMI attractiveness, c) endorsement content quality and brand advocacy.	Brand advocacy (Dependent variable) a) b) c)	- I tend to recommend this brand to others. - I talk to other people positively about my experience with this brand - I suggest to others that they should purchase this brand	Adapted from Kim et al. (2001).

Hypothesis	Variables	Items	Source	
H6:	Digital experience	Digital experience	- I purchase online once-twice daily	Adapted from Kim et al (2017)
moderates the relationship between SMI	(Moderating variable) a)	- I purchase online once-twice a week - I only purchase online once-twice in a month		

3.4 Sampling and Data Collection Process

The researcher adopted a convenience sampling technique. The questionnaire was sent online to the researcher's friends' and colleagues. The researcher requested these people to forward the questionnaire link to other individuals they know whom have social media accounts and following social media influencers; therefore, they fit the survey requirements. In addition, the researcher had the survey on an Ipad and circulated this Ipad among customers in the shop in their workplace, Ooredoo Qatar (telecommunication company). In the researcher workplace tower, there is a shop located in the ground floor that has heavy food step in it, therefore the researcher believed it would be worthwhile to ask customers walking into the shop to kindly fill in the questionnaire. This way, allowed the researcher to meet people from different backgrounds, age groups and educational backgrounds. In addition, many Ooredoo staff members in the company and senior managers from the marketing department like the chief marketing officer, executive director of digital marketing received the questionnaire via E-mail and filled in the

questionnaire. In addition, the researcher distributed the questionnaire among Qatar university students via the Ipad in the student activity center that had a lot of students, and most of the population in this place are eligible to answer the questionnaires because there is a high chance that they will be having social media accounts and follow social media influencers.

All of the participants in the sample had to have a social media account and follow social media influencers. 352 responses were collected with only 281 useable responses. Some responses were eliminated because some of the respondents were not eligible to continue the questionnaire (i.e., they do not have social media accounts or were not following any social media influencers). Most of the people in the sample collected were in younger age groups because people of higher age groups usually did not have social media accounts or do not follow influencers.

Kline (1979) as cited in (Trninić, 2013), recommended that an optimal sample size should be at least 100 and many other authors said the number should be at least above 200. As cited in the study of (MacCallum, 1991), researchers Reise, Waller, and Comrey (2000) said that the sample size number is dependent on the level of communality variables and the level of overdetermination of the factors. Therefore, sometimes when communalities are high, and factors/loadings are high/well defined sample size of 100 is acceptable. However, when the communalities are low and the number of indicators per factor is small, a sample size of 500 respondents seems to be inadequate (Costa, 2018). In addition, the larger the population variation is the bigger the sample size is needed. Similarly, the higher the accuracy is required the bigger sample size needed (Hopkins, 2006). Therefore, the researcher in this study compiled a sample of 281 respondents that ensures it meets required

sample size based on the population size, margin of error and desired confidence interval (Mordkoff, 2016).

3.5 Data Analysis

Chapter four will discuss the data analysis in three parts: descriptive data analysis, inferential data analysis and lastly the conclusions. The descriptive data describes the characteristics of the sample and involves a normality test. The inferential data analysis includes inferences made about population based on the data analysis of the sample and the tests conducted in this section include exploratory factor analysis, correlation, regression and PROCESS for moderation and mediation analysis. The data were analyzed using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). The last section in chapter four discusses the conclusions made based on the hypotheses tested.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the analysis of the collected data and provides in depth discussion of the study's results. Firstly, descriptive analysis of the sample data will be presented, and this includes sample characteristics and normality test. Afterwards, inferential data analysis will be presented which includes Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), reliability test, Pearson's correlation, collinearity and linear and multiple regression analysis, and mediation and moderation tests.

4.2 Descriptive Data Analysis

All the scales used to measure the variables under investigation were adapted from reputed sources and some scales are modified to fit within the context of social media influencers.

This section will discuss both sample characteristics and normality testing.

4.2.1 Sample Characteristics

This section describes the respondents' characteristics related to gender, age group, educational level and nationality. 352 questionnaires were collected but only 281 were usable and analyzed in SPSS; the remaining questionnaires were either incomplete or invalid. Below, charts representation and description of the sample are presented.

Gender

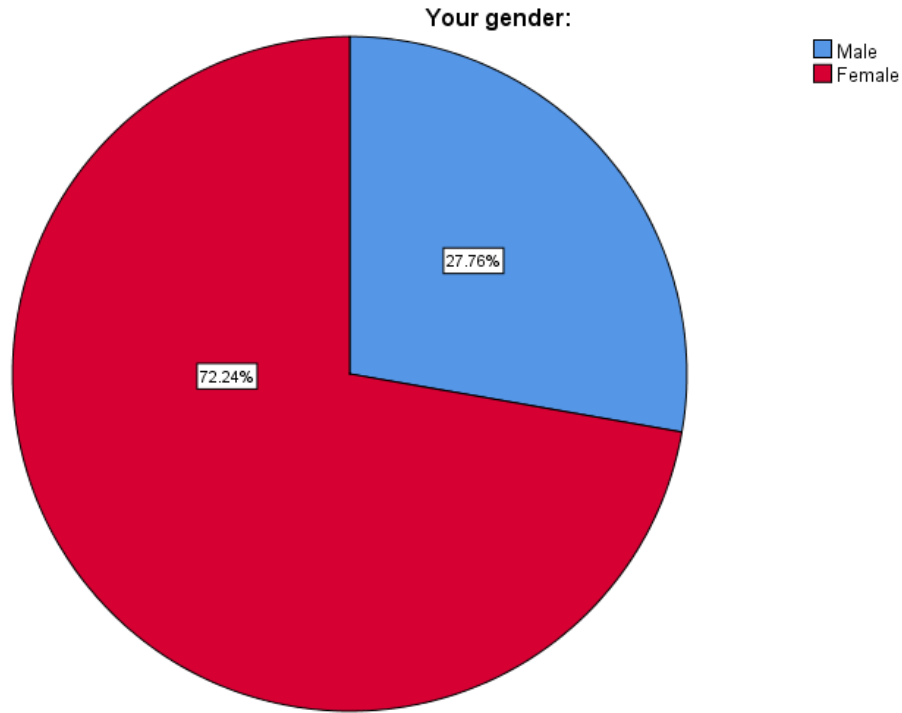


Figure 2. Graphical representation of the gender distribution

The respondents composed of 72.2% females and 27.8% males. The sample is mainly composed of females because a convenience sampling method is employed. In addition, according to the Supreme Council of Information and Communication Technology (ictQatar) more women compared to men tend to be active on social media channels in Qatar; 67% of women check their social media account daily compared to only 59% of males (Habib, 2011). Moreover, according to another study conducted by Northwestern University in Qatar, women tend to use social media more productively than men for generating content on social media, building a career and for political influence (Varghese, 2018). In addition, another study by Rassed ictQatar found that women in Qatar are aware of the different type's social media platforms and more women than men tend to use

Instagram and WhatsApp in Qatar. Moreover, more women compared to males use social media for e-commerce in Qatar. For example, 1 in every 3 women in Qatar uses Instagram for e-commerce compared to only 21% of all males (understanding emerging social media platforms in Qatar, 2015). Moreover, there has been a rise in the number of fashion bloggers on social media in Qatar. Similarly, overall data has shown a significant growth in the number of women using social media in Qatar (Saleem, 2018). Therefore, this shows that there is a tendency to get higher female respondents for questionnaires related to social media; as the number of females using social media is significantly higher than the number of male social media users in Qatar (Saleem, 2018). In addition, the ratio of female students in universities in Qatar outnumber men, almost 2:1, because the percentage of females in universities is 68% compared to the percentage of males 31% (Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, 2017).

Age

In this study, the participants were divided into 6 age groups ranging from, below 18, 18-24 years old, 25-34 years old, 35-44 years old and 45-54 years old. Most of the respondents fall in the age group of 18-24 years old, followed by 25-34-year-old, followed by 35-44 years old. The groups with the least percentage are 18 and below followed by the age group of 45-54 years old.

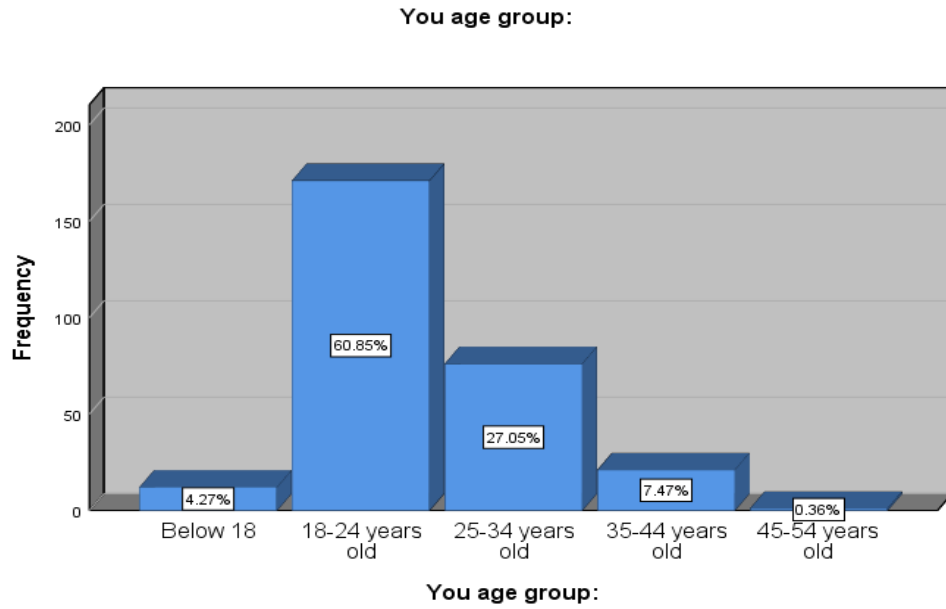


Figure 3. Graphical representation of the age distribution

Educational level

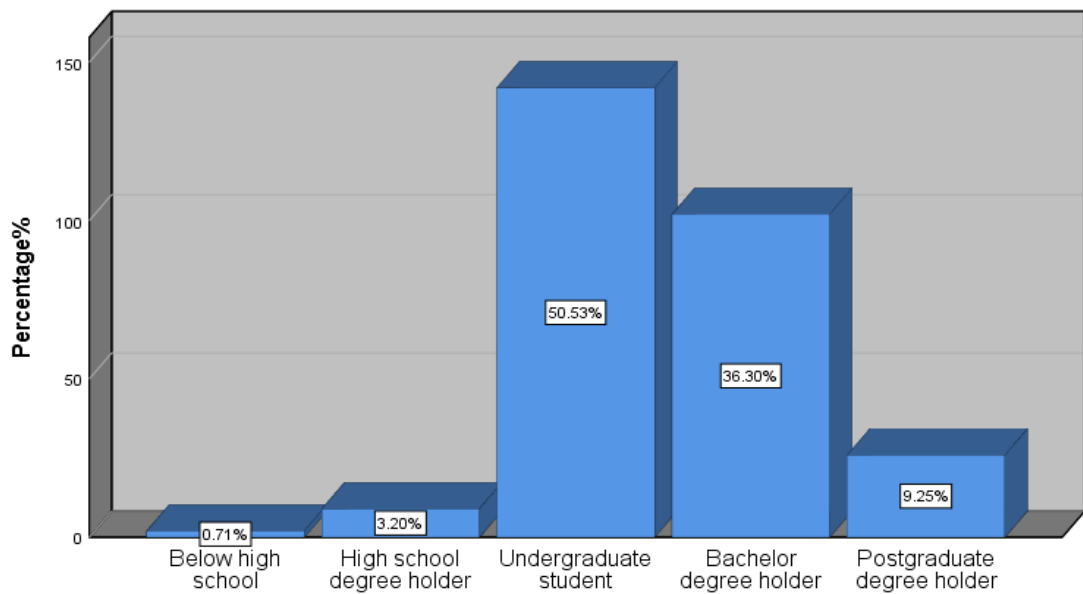


Figure 4. Graphical representation of the educational level distribution

The educational level was distributed into 5 levels in this study. The highest educational level category is “undergraduate degree holder” and the lowest educational level category is “below high school”. Almost half of the respondents fall in the undergraduate degree (50.53%), followed by bachelor’s degree holder (36.30%), followed by postgraduate degree holder (9.25%), followed by high school degree holder (3.20%) and the least number of participants was in the lowest educational level which is below high school (0.71%).

Nationality

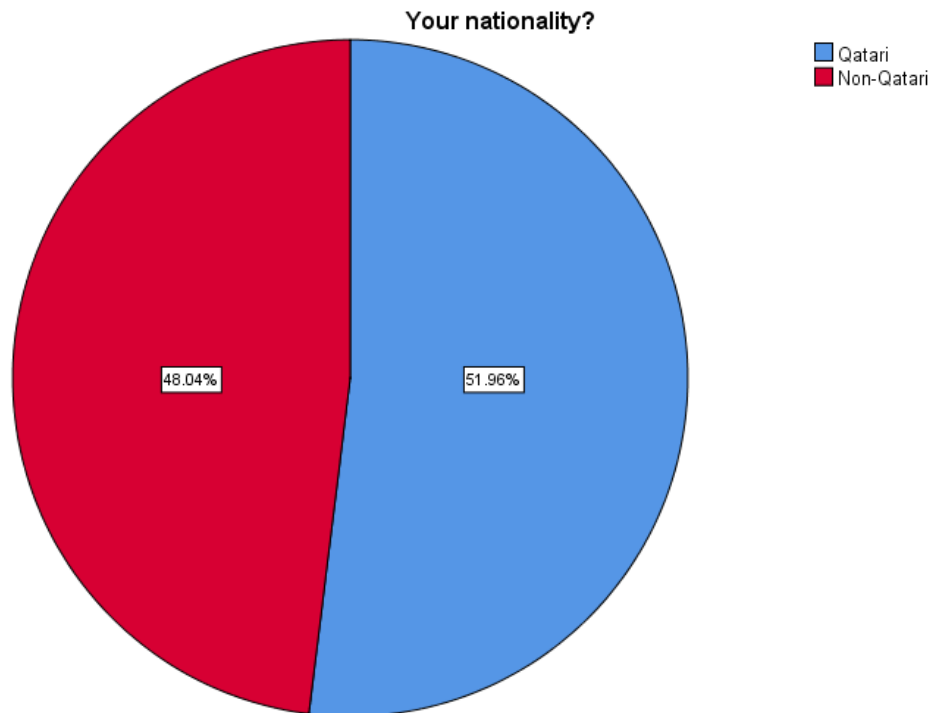


Figure 5. Graphical representation of the nationality distribution

The respondents were almost equal in percentage of Qatari's VS. non-Qatari's and this is because the researcher collected data from Ooredoo shop where people from different nationalities walk-in; in order to make the sample as representative as possible. Moreover, most of the Qatari's respondents were collected from Qatar University. As reported by the statistical data of Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics (2017), most of the students in Qatar university are of Qatari nationality (69.36%) compared to non-Qatari's (30.64%).

4.2.2 Normality test

The purpose of normality test is to determine if the sample data is normally distributed or not. In order, for the researcher to determine whether to use parametric or non-parametric tests. The tests of normality were conducted using Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS)' statistical test with Lilliefors (LF) significance level and ShapiroWilk (SW). For normally distributed data the KS and SW tests, must be insignificant i.e. P value is greater than .05. If P value is less than .05 this means that the normality test has failed, meaning the data is not normally distributed (Mordkoff, 2016).

Table 3. Normality test

Variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a		Shapiro-Wilk			Inference		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.	Data is not normally distributed	
SMI credibility	.086	281	.000	.951	281	.000	Data is not normally distributed	
SMI attractiveness	.142	281	.000	.909	281	.000	Data is not normally distributed	
SMI endorsement content quality	.144	281	.000	.953	281	.000	Data is not normally distributed	
Brand credibility	.143	281	.000	.960	281	.000	Data is not normally distributed	
Brand advocacy	.135	281	.000	.943	281	.000	Data is not normally distributed	

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

According to the table above, P value is lower than 0.05; therefore, the data are not normally distributed. According to the central limit theorem, in large samples the data should be assumed to be normal regardless of the actual sample distribution (Mordkoff, 2016). The central limit theory states that any sample of 30 or more is regarded as having a normal population distribution (Mordkoff, 2016). In other words, as the sample gets bigger the more confident is attributed to the sample and it is considered as being normally distributed and normality assumption is essential especially for researches using regression (like the case for this thesis). Therefore, the researcher will proceed with parametric tests for this thesis (Field, 2009).

4.3 Inferential data analysis

Inferential statistics uses different techniques that allow generalizations to be made about the population based on the sample collected. However, the sample is not expected to perfectly represent the population, as it will never be 100% accurate because of a naturally incurring sampling error. This section includes, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test, reliability test, correlation test, collinearity test, linear regression, multiple regression and mediation and moderation tests.

4.3.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) attempts to measure latent variables, which can't be measured directly. These variables can be measured through the facets or other underlying variables that shape the latent variables. EFA is used to understand the structure of variables, measures underlying variables, and the relationship between variables. In addition, EFA is used to reduce the size of information as much as possible but retaining the message derived from the original information, for example, by combining variables

that are collinear and reducing the number of measuring items into more precise set of questions (Field, 2009).

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

Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin test (KMO) is used to measure the sample adequacy of the variables. The KMO presents the ratio of squared correlations between variables. The KMO variables are between 0 and 1. A value of 0 indicates diffusion in the pattern of correlations and it is considered inappropriate. A value close to 1 indicates that patterns of correlations are relatively compact and so factor analysis should yield distinct and reliable factors. Kaiser recommends accepting values greater than 0.5; 0.5 is regarded as barely acceptable, values between 0.5 and 0.7 are mediocre, values between 0.7 and 0.8 are good, values between 0.8 and 0.9 are great and values above 0.9 are superb (as cited by Hutcheson & Sofroniou, 1999 in Field, 2009).

Table 4. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Construct			KMO	Barlett's Test (Chi-square)	Inference
Social media influencer credibility			0.893	4590.240	Sample is adequate
Social media influencer attractiveness					Sample is adequate
Social media influencer content quality					Sample is adequate
Brand credibility					Sample is adequate
Brand advocacy					Sample is adequate

In the above table the KMO value for all constructs is greater than 0.8, almost 0.9 which shows that the sampling is adequate and EFA test could be conducted.

4.3.3 Exploratory Factor Analysis

The Exploratory Factor Analysis was conducted to take out items with cross loadings, low commonalties below 0.3 and loadings below 0.4. In addition, the analysis shows which items are perfectly used to measure different variables/factors. According EFA results, six constructs were identified which are brand credibility, social media influencer credibility which composes of trustworthiness and expertise, social media influencer attractiveness, social media influencer content quality and brand advocacy.

Table 5. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Items	Factors							Variables
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I believe this social media influencer is reliable	.851							Social media influencer
I believe this social media influencer is sincere	.818							trustworthiness
I believe this social media influencer is honest	.743							
I believe this social media influencer is dependable	.740							
I believe this social media influencer is trustworthy	.728							
I believe this social media influencer is qualified		.760						Social media influencer
I believe this social media influencer is knowledgeable		.709						expertise
I believe this social media influencer is an expert		.696						
I believe this social media influencer is experienced		.663						
I believe this social media influencer is skilled		.576						

Items	Factors							Variables
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I believe this social media influencer is handsome/ beautiful			.945					Social media influencer
I believe this social media influencer is good-looking person			.854					attractiveness
I believe this social media influencer is attractive			.748					
I believe this social media influencer is elegant			.664					
I believe the content presented by this social media influencer is accurate				.716				Social media influencer content quality
I believe the content presented by this social media influencer is focused				.653				(Part one)
I believe the content presented by this social media influencer is timely				.620				
I believe the content presented by this social media influencer is consistent				.418				

Items	Factors							Variables
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I believe the content presented by this social media influencer is insightful					.659			Social media influencer content quality
I believe the content presented by this social media influencer is authentic					.620			(part 2)
I believe the content presented by this social media influencer is informative					.550			
This brand delivers what it promises						.872		Brand credibility
This brand with my experiences over time, have led me to expect it to keep its promises, no more and no less						.771		
This brand product claims are believable						.757		
This brand is Committed to delivering on its claims, no more and no less						.740		

Items	Factors							Variables
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
This brand has the ability to deliver what it promises						.651		
This brand has a name you can trust						.595		
I talk to other people positively about my experience with this brand							.817	Brand advocacy
I tend to recommend this brand to others							.788	
I suggest to others that they should purchase this brand							.767	

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.^a

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

A total of 33 measuring items were used to measure the 6 constructs. For the constructs of brand credibility and brand advocacy, all the measuring items for these constructs were perfectly loaded on one factor and no items were dropped out. Furthermore, for the social media influencer credibility construct no items were dropped however the items were

divided into two measuring variables which are social media influencer trustworthiness and expertise; which aligns with Ohanian (1991) conceptualization of source credibility. In fact, this thesis conceptualizes social media influencer credibility as composing of trustworthiness and expertise in line with Ohanian's conceptualization, however the researcher in this study merges social media influencer trustworthiness and expertise together under a variable titled "social media influencer credibility". Furthermore, a total of 3 items were dropped from 2 constructs which are social media influencer attractiveness and social media influencer content quality. One item was eliminated from social media influencer attractiveness construct, which is "I believe this social media influencer is classy" due to cross loading. Two items were eliminated from social media influencer content quality construct, the two items eliminated are "I believe the content presented by this social media influencer is biased" and "I believe the content presented by this social media influencer is popular" due to cross loading. The 6 constructs used in the framework explain 68.351% variance of the total variance. All the loadings in the pattern matrix are above 0.4 which shows that the items are valid, and all commonalties were above 0.3 which proof adequacy. The results of goodness-of-fit test show chi-square value of 400.152, $df=246$ and p value of .000

4.3.4 Reliability test

Reliability test measures the internal consistency and reliability of the measuring items in the questionnaire. Reliability test is usually used to analyze the data when the questionnaire has multiple Likert scale statements to determine if the scale is reliable or not. The Cronbach's alpha value is between 0 to 1. According to Nunnally (1978), the recommended cut-off point is 0.7., that shows the minimum measure of internal consistency, and how

closely related the items are. Therefore, the nearer the value to 1, the higher the reliability is across the items (Iacobucci, 2003). Overall, reliability is concerned with the degree to which a measurement is free of errors (Maclean, 2011).

Table 6. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items	Analysis
SMI credibility	0.893	10	Highly reliable
SMI attractiveness	0.882	4	Highly reliable
SMI content quality (Part 1)	0.759	4	Acceptable
Brand credibility	0.880	6	Highly reliable
Brand advocacy	0.841	3	Highly reliable

In the above table, all values for the Cronbach's are higher than 0.7 for all variables. This shows that all the scales used are very reliable, have internal consistency and provide consistent results Nunnally (1978) as cited in Iacobucci (2003).

4.3.5 Regression Analysis

In this part four tests were conducted. Firstly, Pearson's correlation test which investigates the strength and direction of the relationship between two or more variables was performed. Secondly, collinearity test, which studies the extent of similarity between variables, was

conducted. Furthermore, regression analyses were performed. Lastly, PROCESS by Hayes (2018), was used to conduct the analysis for mediation and moderation.

4.3.6 Pearson’s Correlation Test

Pearson’s correlation test examines the strength and the direction of the relationship between two or more variables. The correlation coefficient value ranges from -1 to +1. The larger the absolute value coefficient, the more it signifies a strong relationship between values. Moreover, the sign of the coefficients tends to signify the direction of the relationship, if the coefficient value is positive than this means both variables increase or decrease together. However, if the sign is negative than this means if one variable increases the other decreases (Maclean, 2011).

Table 7. Pearson’s Correlations Test

			Social media	Social media influencer	Social media influencer content quality	Brand credibility	Brand advocacy
Social media influencer credibility	Pearson Correlation		.325**	.338**	.599**	.290**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N		281	281	281	281	281

			Social media influencer content quality				
			Social media influencer credibility	Social media Influencer attractiveness	influencer content quality	Brand credibility	Brand advocacy
Social media Influencer attractiveness	Pearson Correlation		.188**	1	.239**	.239**	.338**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002		.000	.000	.000
	N		281	281	281	281	281
Social media influencer endorsement content quality	Pearson Correlation		.276**	.239**	1	.228**	.599**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000		.000	.000
	N		281	281	281	281	281
Brand credibility	Pearson Correlation		1	.188**	.276**	.543**	.325**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.002	.000	.000	.000
	N		281	281	281	281	281
Brand advocacy	Pearson Correlation		.543**	.239**	.228**	1	.290**

		Social media influencer credibility	Social media Influencer attractiveness	Social media influencer content quality	Brand credibility	Brand advocacy
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	281	281	281	281	281

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

According to the above table, all the correlation coefficient values are positive and significant because all the P values are below 0.05. It is worthy to note, that all the relationships in the table have highly passed the significance test at 0.01 level and there were zero/no correlations in the table at 0.05 level at all. This shows, that all variables in the framework correlate very well together.

4.3.7 Collinearity Tests

Collinearity tests examines the relationship between two or more predictors/variables; if the relationship between the two variables is strong then the two variables are highly correlated. If the variables are highly correlated, this can be an issue because the regression model estimates of the coefficients will become unstable and there will be standard errors for the coefficients. The Collinearity is measured by variance inflation factor (VIF) and

tolerance. If the VIF for a variable is higher than 10 this is an issue that needs further investigation. Similarly, if the tolerance value is less than 0.2 this means the variable is a linear combination of other independent variables and this is an issue (Field, 2009).

Table 8. Collinearity test

No	Variables in the model	Tolerance	VIF
1	Social media influencer credibility	.601	1.665
2	Social media Influencer attractiveness	.884	1.132
3	Social media influencer content quality	.639	1.564
4	Brand credibility (dv)	1.000	1.000
5	Brand advocacy (dv)	1.000	1.000

All the tolerance for the variables above is higher than 0.2 and the VIF value is lower than 10. This signifies that the constructs are different and are measuring different things; they are not highly correlated and measuring the same thing.

4.3.8 Regression test

There are two types of regression test, linear and multiple regression. While the linear or simple regression test predicates an outcome variable from one predictor variable, the multiple regression test predicates an outcome from multiple predictor variables.

Therefore, linear and multiple regression tests tend to support or reject the proposed hypotheses which explains the relationships between variables. Furthermore, regression tests examine if the relationship between the two variables is significant and if the relationship is positive or negative (Maclean, 2011).

After the regression test is conducted, there are several output values that are displayed that will be explained further. Firstly, the R value which reflects the correlation value between the independent/predictor and dependent variables. The R^2 is simply the square of R value and it measures the amount of variability/variance in the dependent variable accounted by the best combination of linear variables. Moreover, the P value indicates the level of significance for each variable. If the P value is lower than 0.05 this shows that there is significance and the null hypothesis is true. The F value shows the ratio of mean squares. The mean squares are simply an estimate of the population variance that accounts for degrees of freedom (DF) (Field, 2009).

Regression test of collaborating brand credibility on social media influencer credibility, attractiveness and content quality

The multiple regression model explains 12.2% of the variance in the collaborating brand credibility (F value= 12.825, p-value for H1 = .002, H2= .166, H3=.08). Social media influencer credibility is the only significant predictor of collaborating brand credibility (Beta = .224, t = 3.081, p-value=0.002). Contrary to expectations, the results show that social media influencer attractiveness Beta= .083, t= 1.387, p-value=.166 and endorsement content quality Beta= .122, t= 1.730, p-value=.085 do not have a direct significant influence on brand credibility. Therefore, social media influencer credibility is the only constructed positively related to collaborating brand credibility.

Regression test of brand advocacy on collaborating brand credibility

The linear regression model explains 8.4% of the variation in brand advocacy and the, $R^2 = 0.084$, F value = 25.564, P - value = .000. The collaborating brand credibility has high and significant impact on brand advocacy, with the $Beta = 0.240$, $t = 5.056$ and p -value = .000. In other words, social media influencer credibility and collaborating brand credibility positively impact brand advocacy.

4.4 Mediation and moderation test using PROCESS

PROCESS is a modeling tool that is used for mediation and moderation analysis and their integration (Hayes, 2012). As stated by Hayes (2012), PROCESS of mediation analysis is used to answer questions of “how” (e.g., Baron & Kenny, 1986; Judd & Kenny, 1981; MacKinnon, Fairchild, & Fritz, 2007 as cited in Hayes, 2012), however moderation analysis is used to answer questions of “when” (e.g., Aiken & West, 1991; Jaccard & Turrisi, 2003 as cited in Hayes, 2012). Mediation analysis aims to study the extent to which a casual variable X, influences the outcome of variable Y through a mediator variable. In this study, we investigated the extent to which social media influencer credibility influences brand advocacy through the collaborating brand credibility. On the other hand, moderation analysis examines if the size or sign of the effect of variable X on variable Y varies based on the moderator variable (Hayes, 2012). This study will examine, if the size and sign of the effect of social media influencer credibility on collaborating brand credibility will vary based on users’ digital experience.

PROCESS is used in this study and not other alternative modeling tools (i.e. structural equation modeling) because PROCESS is a recent method that is employed by well-recognized scholars in the marketing field. In addition, PROCESS is recognized for its ease

of use and simplicity in running the mediation and moderation tests on SPSS, and straightforwardness in reading and interpreting the output (Hayes, 2012).

4.4.1 Mediation analysis

The analysis reveals a direct significant impact of social media influencer credibility on brand advocacy ($\beta = .3325$, $t(1,279) = 5.7392$, $p < .001$). However, when the mediating effect of the variable collaborating brand credibility is added to the relationship between social media influencer credibility and brand advocacy the $R^2 = .3091$, $F(2, 278) = 62.1865$, $\beta = .5929$, $t(2,278) = 9.5184$, $p = .0000$. The results show that there is a significant mediating effect of collaborating brand credibility which explains 30.91% of the variance in the relationship between social media influencer credibility and brand advocacy. The bootstrap results for indirect effect from the output at 95% confidence interval is .1532 (.0277 and .2787). The indirect effect is significant, and the confidence intervals does not include 0, therefore a mediating effect of collaborating brand credibility is positively established. However, if the confidence interval includes 0, then p value will be insignificant and not mediation effect will be found.

Table 9. Mediation test

Variable	Beta value	p-value	Lower limit	Upper limit
Constant	.9250	.0016	.3540	1.4961
variables				
SMI credibility	.1532	.0169	.0277	.2787
Brand credibility	.5929	.0000	.4703	.7156
R ²	.3091			

4.5 Moderation analysis

According to the results, social media influencer credibility and digital experience account for an insignificant amount of variance in collaborating brand credibility. In the regression, social media influencer credibility has B value = .3468, p-value = .0000, LLCI= -.2307 and ULCI= .4628. Digital experience has B value= -.0161, p-value =.7436, LLCI= -.1127 and ULCI= .0806. The regression outcome shows that $R^2 = .1120$, $F(3,277) = 11.3607$, $p = .000$ and the interaction level and effect is not significant with P value = .1670, $b = -.1038$, $p = .1670$, LLCI= -.2512 and ULCI= .0437. The confidence interval in the interaction effect includes 0 which means it is not significant and the P value is greater than 0.5. Therefore, this shows there is no moderating effect of digital experience on the relationship between social media influencer credibility and collaborating brand credibility.

Table 10. Moderation test

Variable	Beta value	p-value	Lower limit	Upper limit
Constant	3.8517	.0000	3.7811	3.9223
variables				
SMI credibility	.3468	.0000	.2307	.4628
Digital experience	-.0161	.7436	-.1127	.0806
Interaction level	-.1038	.1670	-.2512	.0437
R ²	.1120			

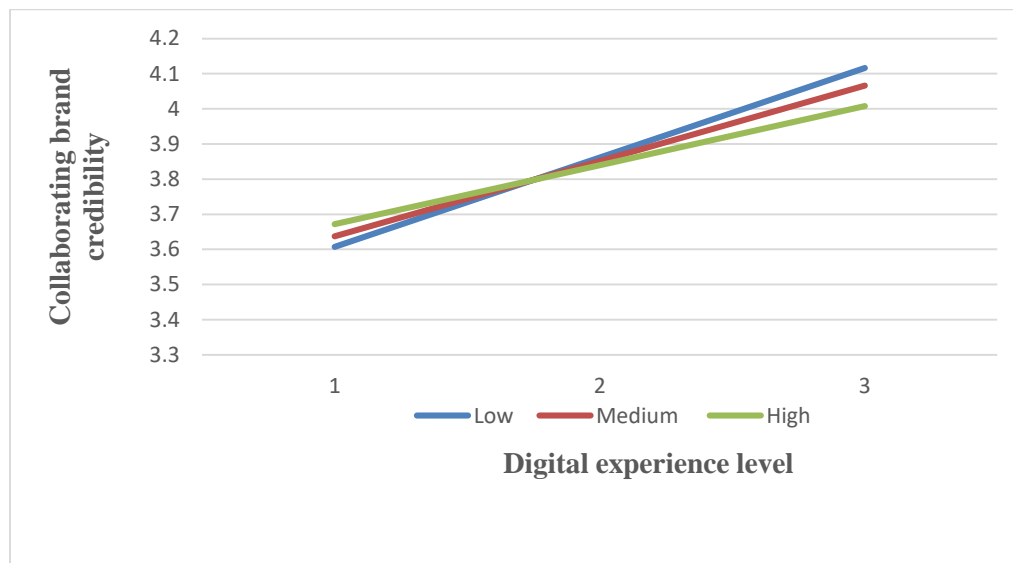


Figure 6 Interaction plot

Examination of the interaction plot above shows that as digital experience increases the collaborating brand credibility did not increase in the same manner. Similarly, digital experience at low, medium or high level does not enhance the effect of collaborating brand credibility. Therefore, this shows that digital experience does not interact or enhance the effect of the relationship between social media influencer credibility and collaborating brand credibility.

Table 11. Hypothesis testing and regression outputs

Hypothesis	R	R2	Sig. (p-value)	F	T	β	Inference
H1: Social media influencer credibility is positively related to collaborating brand credibility.	0.349	0.122	.002	12.825	3.081	.224	Hypothesis accepted
H2: Social media influencer attractiveness is positively related to			.166		1.387	.083	Hypothesis rejected

Hypothesis	R	R2	Sig. (p- value)	F	T	β	Inference
collaborating brand credibility							
H3: Endorsement content quality is positively related to collaborating brand credibility.			.085		1.730	.122	Hypothesis rejected
H4: Collaborating brand credibility is positively related to brand advocacy.	0.290	0.084	.000	25.564	5.056	0.240	Hypothesis accepted
H5: Brand credibility mediates the relationship between a) social media influencers credibility, b) social media	.5560	.3091	.000	62.1865	9.5184	.5929	Hypothesis partially accepted

Hypothesis	R	R2	Sig. (p-value)	F	T	β	Inference
influencers attractiveness, endorsement content quality and brand advocacy.							
H6: Digital experience moderates the relationship between a) social media influencers credibility, b) social media influencers attractiveness, c) endorsement content quality, and Brand credibility	.3346	.1120	.7436	11.6403	-3.274	-	Hypothesis rejected

4.6 Discussion

In this study, six hypotheses were proposed. Regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables for the first four hypothesis. Afterwards, regression with PROCESS by Hayes (2018) was used to conduct the mediation and moderation analyses. The first hypothesis (H1) assumes there is a relationship between social media influencer credibility and collaborating brand credibility. The results show a significant positive relationship between social media influencer credibility and collaborating brand credibility, which supports H1. This aligns with the findings of Erdem and Swait (2004), that states endorser credibility and brand credibility are positively linked to each other. Moreover, the results of this study align with the findings of (Zahaf & Anderson, 2008), that states in an endorsement the source's credibility is linked to creating a positive brand image, brand attitude and brand credibility towards the endorsing brand. According to several previous studies, the higher the credibility of the social media influencer is the more positively it will impact customer's attitudes towards the brand and generate more favorable outcomes like purchase intention (Braatz, 2017).

The second hypothesis (H2), states that there is a relationship between social media influencer attractiveness and collaborating brand credibility. The results show no support for H2 as social media influencer attractiveness does not have a direct significant influence on brand credibility. The findings confirm Caballero et al.'s (1989) findings, which state that the endorser attractiveness has no impact on the advertising effectiveness on the customer (as cited in Ohanian, 1990). Similarly, Ohanian (1990), stated source attractiveness is not a powerful dimension to increase customer positive outcomes towards the advertisement. However, many studies like the study of Ohanian (1990), show that

source attractiveness is positively related to creating positive attitudinal and behavior responses towards the products and brand endorsed (excluding purchase intention). The impact of attractiveness in advertisements remains debatable and uncertain, therefore the impact of source attractiveness is worthy of being studied further (Amos, 2008). The findings of this study also align with the findings of, Joseph (1982) and Kahle and Homer (1985) that source attractiveness can only be significant and have an impact on customers outcomes when the product endorsed is important to enhance the beauty/attractiveness of the customer like makeup and fragrances. In other words, having an attractive influencer could be effective only when the product is related to beauty. However, in this study many of the brands that the respondents mentioned were non-beauty brands such as restaurants, telecom companies, high-end luxury brands and electronics brands. Most of the mentioned product categories are purchased less frequently and therefore require a lot of thinking from the customer. According to the elaboration likelihood model, people use the peripheral route to persuasion when they are motivated by superficial things like the attractiveness of the person delivering the message more than the facts. Usually peripheral route is used for frequently purchased products like makeup that increase a person's attractiveness. However, when individuals are buying expensive products that they do not purchase often, they use the central route to persuasion where they think elaborately and listen carefully to the logic behind the message being sent rather than the source attractiveness. In this thesis, most individuals mentioned products they do not purchase frequently. Thus, social media influencer attractiveness does not seem to have an impact on their decision because they use the central route to persuasion, which mainly focuses on facts and the logic behind the endorsed message.

The third hypothesis (H3) proposes that social media influencer content quality positively relates to collaborating brand credibility. The results of this study show no support H3 as social media influencer content quality does not have a direct significant influence on brand credibility. The content of an endorsement/message comes in different categories, for example, in the form of text, visual and audio. To study the content quality of the endorsements; each message category should be assessed, analyzed and studied differently (Jaakonmäki, 2017). However, in this study, we did not divide the endorsements into categories. Therefore, a visual endorsement can be very influential on creating positive customer outcomes, but individuals might not regard it as being accurate, informative or insightful because there is no text in the image endorsement. As a result, individuals in this survey might have wrongly assessed the quality of the endorsement because the factors to be assessed are not applicable for all types endorsements they might be referring to. Furthermore, the results of this study, align with the findings of Lee et al. (2014), that show having a message/endorsement that is highly informative does not necessarily yield positive outcomes or increase customer engagement. In fact, when measuring the effectiveness of content quality, simply measuring the observed elements like “the level of informativeness in the message” is not enough to capture the perceived quality of the message. In fact, the emotional variables in the message should be captured and measured along with level of informativeness in the message because a message that is simply regarded as informative can decrease customers engagement however when there are positive emotions incorporated with the message it increases persuasiveness and customer engagement (Jaakonmäki, 2017). Therefore, the emotional element has to be measured in the message in order to show clear perception about the quality of the content

presented. Moreover, the perceived quality of the content of the message tends to differ based on the individual's judgement towards the promoted product or service. For example, an individual might find the content presented as high quality for gaming related products but not high-quality content for a political endorsement (Kang, 2010). Furthermore, a study conducted by adobe found that posts with visual content (imagery), tends to be the best in engaging audience compared to posts without visual content (Bakhshi, 2015). Influencer's content that includes imagery tends to yield to a high number of likes and comments (engagement) on the endorsed posts (Bakhshi, 2015). Therefore, in order to precisely assess the content quality of the influencer's message, the endorsement should be firstly categorized into audio, visual and text. In addition, the emotions (i.e. negative emotions like anger and anxiety) portrayed within the message should be taken into consideration especially in text and audio messages as they tend to impact the level of perceived quality associated with an endorsement. Finally, the product endorsed should be considered too while analyzing the quality of the content presented.

The fourth hypothesis (H4) states that collaborating brand credibility is positively related to brand advocacy. The results highly support H4 and prove there is a positive relationship between collaborating brand credibility and brand advocacy. This result is in accordance with Sweeney and Swait (2008) study, that states brand credibility which is mainly formed based on the brands marketing activities with the customers; positively impacts the customer satisfaction and loyalty commitment towards the brand. Brand advocacy mainly composes of loyalty and commitment towards the brand. In addition, Erdem & Swait, 2004; Thusyanthy, 2010, found that the credibility of the source tends to positively affect the credibility of the endorsed brand which then positively impacts higher

purchase intentions, brand loyalty (which consist of a big part of brand advocacy) and choice formation.

The fifth hypothesis (H5) assumes that collaborating brand credibility mediates the relationship between social media influencer credibility, attractiveness and content quality on brand advocacy. The results of this study partially support H5 and prove that collaborating brand credibility positively impacts the relationship between social media influencer credibility and brand advocacy. The results are in line with (wilk, 2018) findings that state brand trust (which composes of a big part of brand credibility) has a strong influence on brand advocacy. In addition, Erdem and Swait (2004) argue that the endorser credibility reflects on the brand credibility and versa-vice.

The sixth hypothesis (H6) suggests digital experience moderates the relationship between social media influencer credibility, attractiveness and content quality on brand credibility. The results of this study prove that digital experience does not have an impact on the relationship between social media influencer credibility and brand credibility. This hypothesis was formed based on the existent literature review regarding digital experience, which states that the more individuals spend time online and purchase products online, the less they will fear online shopping. Therefore, the less risk individuals associate with online shopping, the more they will find online shopping and social media influencers credible and trustable (Kim, 2017). Therefore, we propose that the higher the individual digital experience level is, the more credibility they will associate with social media influencers and this will positively influence the collaborating brand credibility. However, according the findings of this study high digital experience levels does not positively impact the relationship between social media influencers credibility and collaborating brand

credibility. No moderating effect of digital experience has been found, and this can be attributed to the product types respondents referred to in the research.

In this study, most of the respondents referred to high end luxurious brands like “Hermes, Pandora, Gucci and Louis Vuitton” and luxury brands from other product categories. The moderating effect of digital experience on the relationship between social media influencer credibility and collaborating brand credibility might have failed to work because most of the product categories that respondents referred to while answering the questionnaire were high end products that required high involvement and thinking from customers before purchasing them. According to Kim (2017), the impact of digital experience on other variables might differ based on the customer’s involvement with the product. For example, the impact of digital experience might differ for non-frequently purchased products like electronics, furniture and other high involvement products categories compared to less frequently purchased products of low involvement, (Kim 2017). Furthermore, Petty (1983) study, found that the credibility of the celebrity in an advertisement plays a vital role only when the product endorsed is a product of low involvement then the celebrity credibility highly impacts and yields positive customer attitudes towards the endorsed products and brand. However, when the product endorsed is a high involvement product then celebrity credibility and status have no effect on the customers attitudes towards the endorsed product or brand.

Most of the respondents (60%) in this study, fall between the age group of 18 to 24 years old, therefore usually the purchasing power of these individuals tends to grow as they grow old (Park, 2018). Therefore, we would propose that all the high-end luxurious brands they referred require a lot of thinking before they purchase them and are high involvement

products. Thus, their level of digital experience and the credibility they associate with social media influencers will not positively impact the level of credibility they associate with the collaborating brand because most of the respondents are referring to high involvement products. Finally, it could be that having most of the sample from the same age group with no significant variance in their digital experience might have led to the insignificant moderation effect.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications, Limitations and Future Research

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions of this research, followed by the theoretical and managerial implications and lastly the limitations and future research suggestions.

5.2 Research Conclusions

This thesis investigated the impact of three social media influencer attributes—the influencer’s credibility, attractiveness, and endorsement content quality—on the collaborating brand’s outcomes, which include the collaborating brand’s credibility and brand advocacy. In addition, the mediating effect of the collaborating brand’s credibility and the moderating effect of digital experience were analysed. This research was based on two main theories, the stimulus–organism–response theory and the social learning theory, to explain the proposed framework and how the variables relate to each other.

The findings indicate that only one antecedent of social media influencer dimension (i.e., social media influencer credibility) has an effect on the collaborating brand’s credibility. Neither social media influencer attractiveness nor endorsement content quality have a significant impact on the collaborating brand’s credibility. Therefore, the use of credible social media influencers is an important marketing instrument for marketers to use in order to develop desired outcomes like brand credibility and brand advocacy. Less attention should be focused on an influencer’s attractiveness and endorsement content quality, as these two variables do not have a significant impact.

Interestingly, the findings revealed that the collaborating brand’s credibility had a direct, significant, and substantial impact on brand advocacy. Another interesting finding was related to the mediating effect of the collaborating brand’s credibility between social

media influencer credibility and brand advocacy. In other words, if a brand has positive credibility perceptions, the influencer credibility will be more effective in enhancing brand advocacy. These results show it is beneficial for brands to have positive perceived credibility when engaging in influencer marketing; brands can strengthen their credibility by hiring credible influencers. It should be noted that one-time short-termed collaboration with influencers might not be very effective in positively impacting the collaborating brand's credibility because this variable requires deep customer processing over time. Yet long-term collaboration with an influencer could be fruitful as influencer credibility will positively impact brand credibility. In return, the mediating impact of brand credibility will lead to more effective influencer marketing. Another interesting point is that the collaborating brand's credibility showed a direct, significant, and substantial impact on brand advocacy. Digital experience did not have any significant moderating effect on the relationship between the three related social media influencer attributes and collaborating brand credibility. Thus, the current study has provided a better understanding of the determinants driving brand advocacy in the context of social media influencers.

5.3 Theoretical and Managerial Implications

The findings of this thesis can assist researchers, marketing managers, and social media influencers in several ways. The results could be useful for various scholars investigating different aspects of marketing in social media as well as those who want to focus specifically on social media influencers. The findings might be also valuable to both influencers as well as marketing managers during the planning of their media campaigns.

5.3.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to scholars' existing understanding of the relatively new concept of

social media influencers. This study highlights the importance of using social media influencers as part of digital marketing plans to create favourable brand-related perceptions. The effect of unexplored constructs in social media marketing was empirically examined in this thesis, which identified two brand-related dimensions (credibility and advocacy) that are formed by credible social media influencers. Indeed, this finding fulfils one objective of the study regarding the impact of different social media influencer characteristics on brand-related attributes. The findings emphasize the importance of social media influencer characteristics—namely, credibility in building and strengthening positive customer perceptions—and the relationship with the endorsing brand.

The findings further demonstrate how the collaborating brand's credibility leads to brand advocacy, and they identify the difference between both constructs, thereby fulfilling another identified objective. This study aligns with the previous research of Sweeney and Swait (2008). The relationships mentioned herein clarify how a credible influencer could influence individuals and turn them from customers into brand advocates. This study revealed that a credible influencer has positive implications on the collaborating brand in terms of brand credibility and brand advocacy. In fact, the findings prove that influencer credibility stimulates positive behaviour and attitude towards the collaborating brand. The effect of credible influencers on higher perceived brand credibility is in line with Erdem and Swait's (2004) study.

Through this study, the researcher tried to explain the role of influencer credibility and the collaborating brand's credibility in the formation of brand advocacy. The researcher identified that influencer credibility has both direct and indirect effects in developing brand advocacy. The indirect effect is significantly mediated through the

collaborating brand's credibility. In fact, the mediating effect of the collaborating brand's credibility is relatively high as it shapes 30.91% of the variance in the relationship between social media influencer credibility and brand advocacy. This relationship has not been addressed in most previous research; hence, this finding contributes to the social media influencer and branding research streams. Such findings achieve another study objective concerning examining the antecedents of developing brand advocacy with a social media influencer.

H2 predicates that social media influencer attractiveness is related to collaborating brand credibility. However, there was no support for direct relationship between the two variables, and this is consistent with some previous studies. This thesis provides a possible explanation for this result which could be further examined in future research, that source attractiveness in social media is a moderating variable that is based on product type.

This study has also provided a conceptual model related to brand credibility and advocacy that scholars can use to build on and expand in the new context of social media influencers. Most previous research has focused on studying the effect of social media influencers on brand advocacy without explaining the antecedents and relationships that stimulate and drive brand advocacy. Thus, the current study adds to the current social media literature by investigating the important concepts associated with branding in the new context of social media influencers (Veloutsou, 2015).

5.3.2 Managerial Implications

Marketing managers need to acknowledge that influencer marketing is one of the beneficial, influential, and effective ways to build strong and positive relationships with customers. Influencer marketing leads to increased brand awareness and positive behaviour

and attitudes towards the collaborating brand, product purchase, brand loyalty, and advocacy. However, marketers should be very careful when choosing the appropriate social media influencer for their brand; a wrong choice might negatively impact the brand's credibility and image, not to mention lead to ineffective marketing money allocation. Therefore, the conceptual model and findings in this paper provide important insights and implications related to influencer marketing for marketing managers.

First, marketing managers can glean insights into how and why individuals perceive influencers as more credible than others. Second, the study verified that, when individuals perceive an influencer who promotes a collaborating brand to be credible, individuals develop positive perceptions towards the collaborating brand. Although collaboration with a social media influencer yields benefits for brands, this does not mean a brand should collaborate with any influencer. Rather, marketing managers should choose the most effective influencer with a similar brand match and positively perceived trustworthiness and expertise, which shape the overall credibility of the influencer. Currently, many marketing managers mainly consider the number of followers an influencer has on social media as the main indicator of their effectiveness in impacting customer perceptions and behaviours. However, marketing managers should note that the number of followers an influencer has does not clearly determine the effectiveness of the influencer because they might have a high number of fake followers.

Even when the influencer has a high number of followers, his or her expertise may be in a different context or domain than the collaborating brand (Veirman, 2017). Therefore, brands should consider the expertise and trustworthiness of the credibility in the domain of their brand. For example, Naked Juice promotes the tastiest and most nutrient-

rich bottled smoothies. They have a strong brand credibility in the domain of healthy drinks. Naked Juice conducted a successful campaign with the influencer Kate La Vie, who has approximately 246,000 followers on social media—not a very high number compared to other social media influencers. However, the company choose Kate La Vie because she promotes healthy lifestyles in a way related to beauty and fashion. Therefore, she has established credibility among her followers in the domain related to healthy, fashionable, and sustainable lifestyles. Naked Juice could have selected another social media influencer with a greater number of followers on social media, but instead the company choose an influencer who compliments and strengthens their brand credibility and who is aware and perceived to be credible and knowledgeable in promoting a healthy lifestyle. This campaign was remarkably successful. Such cooperation will enable the brand (in this case, Naked Juice) to grasp the maximum benefits from influencer marketing because Naked Juice targeted the right customer segment (i.e., Kate La Vie followers).

Influencer marketing is well-known for attracting and targeting the right customer segments. Nonetheless, brand managers should understand that sometimes they might be motivated to collaborate with an influencer because they are popular, have a high number of followers, and/or are physically attractive. However, they should be aware that these variables, especially source attractiveness, will not increase the effectiveness of influencer marketing. Therefore, the least effort should be dedicated towards assessing influencer attractiveness; this is not to say that an influencer should be devoid of such an attribute, but the effectiveness of this attribute is minimal, especially when the product endorsed is not related to enhancing the attractiveness of an individual, like makeup or clothing products. In addition, brand marketers should not necessarily deviate from factors like popularity or

number of followers.

Furthermore, this study provides implications for influencers on how to gain and build their credibility. Social media influencers have to make sure that they are knowledgeable about the brand they are endorsing in order to show expertise and experience while promoting the brand. Once this is achieved, the influencer is then perceived as qualified and skilled by customers. If individuals perceive the influencer to be promoting the brand honestly, they will perceive the influencer as trustworthy, dependable, and reliable. Thus, the findings imply that influencers should focus primarily on earning their followers' trust and gaining credibility in order to be effective brand promoters.

On the other hand, marketing managers should closely investigate social media influencers' characteristics before cooperating with them in order to ensure the highest level of influencer marketing effectiveness. The implications of this study for marketing managers and influencers can help them understand what they should focus on in order to amplify their influence. The study findings demonstrate that the collaborating brand's credibility has a significant effect on brand advocacy. Consequently, this offers valuable insights for marketing managers seeking to stimulate brand advocacy. Thus, it is recommended that marketing instruments like influencer credibility be utilized along with other secondary instruments like the collaborating brand's credibility to maximize the effect of brand advocacy. Marketing managers could make their customers brand advocates by working on brand credibility and collaborating with credible influencers.

This study has identified and provided managers with tools to drive brand advocacy online. Marketing managers should consider influencer marketing because individuals tend

to trust the messages from the influencer more than messages from the brand. In addition, the credibility of the brand also plays an integral role in building brand advocacy. Therefore, marketing managers should make sure they have positive brand credibility. In order to achieve that, marketing managers should ensure that their brand claims and promises are believable and delivered to the customer. It should be clear to managers that developing positive brand credibility is a lengthy process that requires customers to go through intensive cognitive and emotional processing with the brand over a long period. However, marketing managers could still exploit influencers to affect brand advocacy, especially if they coupled this with influencer marketing.

For example, Yoogaia, a start-up company offering yoga and other exercise classes online, was the first company to offer online, live, real-time yoga classes in which people could participate from home. Yoogaia developed a successful digital marketing strategy to increase brand advocacy. As a result, today Yoogaia is aiming to reach international markets with online yoga and wellness services (Nousiainen, 2015). The marketing managers at Yoogaia simply engaged customers with the brand through credible influencers in this domain and through other forms of online advertising. As a result, individuals started trusting the brand and became loyal to Yoogaia. Marketing managers kept approaching these loyal customers and strengthening the customer brand's relationship through influential experts in the field of yoga. Those brand loyalists ultimately became brand advocates who continued to speak positively about Yoogaia online and promote it to others. A consistent collaboration with credible influencers over time would encourage followers to perceive the brand as being credible due to the emphasis on customers' well-being.

5.4 Limitations

Like any study, the current study has several limitations. Only the variables presented in the framework were examined. However, other independent variables, such as the number of followers that social media influencers have on social media and influencer–consumer similarity, can impact the brand-related outcome. The type of the product (low versus high involvement) could moderate the impact of social media influencer credibility on the collaborating brand. Therefore, examining other social media influencer factors could have provided a clearer picture regarding the impact of social media influencers on endorsements.

In addition, a convenience sampling method was used due to the tight timeframe of the research. Therefore, almost 70% of the respondents were female, which is a demographic misrepresentation. Furthermore, some cultural limitations could have potentially taken place. For example, during the fieldwork, one of the respondents chose to strongly agree when the questionnaire asked if a social media influencer was attractive. However, the respondent then loudly stated in an embarrassed voice tone that “I can’t say a male influencer is attractive”. This real-life example the researcher witnessed during data collection shows that the female respondent changed her initial thought about the influencer’s attractiveness because she remembered he was a male, and she did not feel comfortable confessing that a male influencer was attractive. Such a reaction can be attributed to the cultural context in this region, which can alter the results related to social media influencer attractiveness.

Moreover, the construct of digital experience was only examined from one perspective which is in the context of online shopping. However, digital experience can be

studied from a broader perspective related to individuals overall experience with the internet in general and their involvement and usage of smartphones (Kim, 2017).

Finally, social media is a new area being explored in marketing, and social media influencers are even newer. Therefore, currently there is a limitation in finding a large number of articles related to the role of social media influencers in marketing communications. The researcher had to focus additional efforts and thinking to derive information from studies in other multidisciplinary fields. For example, most of the studies referred to celebrities and other famous individuals in the context of social media, which meant the researcher had to contextualize what to examine regarding important social media influencer attributes.

5.5 Future Research

There are many areas related to social media influencers that are worth investigating in the future. The number of followers a social media influencer has could be studied further because it can have an impact on how consumers view the brand endorsement as well as the audience outcome regarding the endorsement. For example, a low number of followers can negatively impact the influencer's trustworthiness, credibility, and authenticity. However, a large number of followers is related to higher perceptions of popularity and likability (Veirman, 2017). Therefore, if an influencer has a low number of followers on social media, the audience will perceive lower credibility for the social media influencer, which will negatively impact the collaborating brand's credibility and advocacy.

Moreover, the type of the endorsed product should be considered because this can impact the audience outcomes related to the influencer's product endorsement. For example, some researchers argue that it is important for brands to bring in an attractive

endorser for the product only when attractiveness is critical (e.g., with makeup, clothing). However, if the product is technically related, then the attractiveness of the source does not impact consumer outcomes. Similarly, perceived trustworthiness of the source matters more when marketers are choosing endorsers for a technically related product than non-technically related product. Therefore, the type of product should be studied in line with the impact of influencer endorsements because some influencers might be influential in impacting customers' decisions for one product but not others.

The gender of the influencer should also be further studied because endorsers' gender has generally been viewed as influential (e.g., Erdogan, 1999; McCracken, 1989, as cited in Erdogan, 2001) in product endorsements. Some previous research has shown that the audience tends to respond differently to male versus female endorsements. For example, previous research has found that male spokespersons tend to be more persuasive because higher levels of expertise and prestige are usually related to males (Knoll, 2016). However, other studies have demonstrated that female influencers tend to be more influential, especially for an attractiveness-related product. Therefore, future researchers could consider influencer gender as it might affect the effectiveness of the influencer endorsement.

Furthermore, future research can investigate the effect of sponsorship/endorsement disclosure on influencer marketing. Many influencers do not disclose a paid advertisement, leading many individuals to perceive it as an actual recommendation by the influencer, which positively encourages them to try the product because they are not aware that the influencer is receiving monetary benefits for providing this recommendation. Influencers on social media, especially on Snapchat, tend to casually promote products, as if it is a part

of their daily life; therefore, some followers might wrongly assume they are recommending a product rather than providing a product endorsement. Previous studies have shown that the credibility perceived with the product and brand tends to decrease sometimes when the influencer discloses it is a paid ad. Therefore, future research should further investigate the impact of disclosed versus non-disclosed endorsements on customer persuasion, influencer credibility, and the collaborating brand's credibility (Boerman, 2017). In this paper, influencer credibility was studied as being composed of trustworthiness and expertise. However, other researchers have stated that influencer credibility also includes other elements, such as prestige, financial power, likability, and self-presentation (Knoll, 2016). Therefore, qualitative research will allow researchers to further explore which characteristics the audience perceives as creating social media influencer credibility.

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Appendix (A) Questionnaire Questionnaire in English

Dear Respondent,

I am currently studying for the Master of Science in Marketing at Qatar University. This study aims to understand the effect of social media influencer's attributes on sponsoring brand. Social media influencer is an individual who has a large number of audience/followers on social media and might affect attitudes of social media users through their posts on social media. Sponsoring brand (e.g., some companies sponsor social media influencers to say and write positive things about their products, services, offers, and events with an aim of enhancing their brands among consumers).

Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary and you can freely withdraw at any time. Please answer all the questions to the best of your knowledge. Be assured that all your responses will be strictly confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this research.

Approximately 5 minutes will be taken from your valuable time in order to answer this survey. If you have any further questions or would like to be informed about the results of this study, please feel free to contact me at ma1607958@qu.edu.qa.

This research is supervised by Dr. Tamer Elsharnouby, college of Business and Economics, Qatar University.

We thank you so much and highly appreciate your valuable response.

Sincerely yours,

Masa Mustafa Al-Qatami.

Please indicate that you have read, understood and if you agree to participate.

Kindly click on "Yes" to start the survey.

If you do not wish to participate, kindly click "No" to exit.

YES NO

SECTION A

1. Do you have an account on at least one of the social media platforms (i.e. Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, etc... ?)
 - Yes
 - No
2. Do you follow social media influencers/blogger(s), on social media platforms?
 - Yes
 - No
3. Please name ONE social media influencer/ blogger that you follow? If you follow more than one, **please specify the name of the one** you most frequently follow. Please keep him/her in mind while you answer the subsequent questions.

-
4. Please name ONE brand this social media influencer talks about or promotes on

social media platforms. If s/he promotes more than **one brand**, please name the one s/he talks about **more frequently**.

SECTION B

Please answer the following question based on your experience with the “**brand**” that the social media influencer/blogger you referred to talks about or promotes on social media:

	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I tend to recommend this brand to others.					
I talk to other people positively about my experience with this brand.					
I suggest to others that they should purchase this brand.					
I intend to share my brand experiences with others online more frequently in the future.					
I will always provide my brand experiences at the request of others online.					
I will try to share my brand experiences with others online in a more effective way.					

SECTION C

Please answer the following question based on your experience about the “**brand**” that the social media influencer/blogger you referred to talks about or promotes on social media:

	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<u>This brand is:</u>					
Good					
Pleasant					
Worthless					
<u>This brand:</u>					
Delivers what it promises					

Product claims are believable					
Committed to delivering on its claims, no more and no less.					
Has a name you can trust					
Has the ability to deliver what it promises					
With my experiences over time, have led me to expect it to keep its promises, no more and no less.					

SECTION D

Please answer all the following questions referring to the **Social media influencer/blogger** you have specified above:

	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I believe this social media influencer is:					
An expert					
Experienced					
Knowledgeable					
Qualified					
Skilled					
I believe this social media influencer is:					
Dependable					
Honest					
Reliable					
Sincere					
trustworthy					
I believe this social media influencer is:					
Attractive					
Classy					
Handsome/beautiful					
Elegant					
Good-looking person					
I believe the content presented by this social media influencer is:					
Authentic					
Insightful					

Informative					
Consistent					
Biased					
Focused					
Accurate					
Timely					
popular					

SECTION E

Personal Information

1. How often do you buy online?

- Never
- Sometimes but not in a regular basis
- Once-twice daily
- Once-twice a week
- Once-twice in a month

2. Your gender:

- Male
- Female

3. You age group:

- Below 18
- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55 years or older

4. Your current educational level:

Below high school
 High school degree holder
 Undergraduate student
 Bachelor degree holder
 Postgraduate degree holder

5. Your nationality?

- Qatari
- Non-Qatari

Thank you very much for your time.

Questionnaire in Arabic

أعزائي المشاركين/

أنا أدرس حاليًا لنيل درجة ماجستير العلوم في التسويق بجامعة قطر. أقوم بإجراء دراسة تهدف إلى فهم تأثير السمات الشخصية للأشخاص المؤثرون على منصات التواصل الاجتماعي على العلامات التجارية الراحية لهم. الشخصية المؤثرة في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي هو شخص يكون لديه عدد كبير من الجمهور/المتابعين على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، ويمكن أن يؤثر عليهم من خلال منشوراته التي ينشرها عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي. العلامة التجارية الراحية هي شركة تقوم برعاية بعض الشخصيات المؤثرة في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لتجعلهم يقولون أو يكتبون أشياء إيجابية عن منتجاتهم وخدماتهم وعروضهم وأنشطتهم بهدف تعزيز علاماتهم التجارية بين المستهلكين. إن مشاركتكم في هذا الاستبيان هي مسألة طوعية بالكامل ويمكنكم الانسحاب بحرية في أي وقت. يُرجى الإجابة على جميع الأسئلة وفقًا للمعلومات المتوفرة لديكم، وتأكيدوا أن جميع إجاباتكم سيتم التعامل معها بسرية تامة وسوف تُستخدم فقط لغرض هذا البحث.

لن تستغرق الإجابة على هذا الاستبيان سوى 5 دقائق فقط من وقتكم الثمين. إذا كان لديكم أي أسئلة أخرى أو في حال رغبتكم بمعرفة نتائج هذه الدراسة، فلا تترددوا في التواصل معي عبر ma1607958@qu.edu.qa.

يُشرف على هذا البحث د. تامر الشرنوبي، الأستاذ المشارك بكلية الإدارة والاقتصاد، جامعة قطر.

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام والتقدير

ماسة مصطفى القطامي

إن كنت موافقاً اختر "نعم" للمتابعة. إن لم تكن موافقاً، اختر "لا" لعدم استكمال الاستبيان.

القسم أ

1- هل يوجد لديك حساب (أو حسابات) على منصة (أو منصات) التواصل الاجتماعي (مثلاً إنستجرام، سناب شات، فيسبوك، تويتر، وغير ذلك...؟)

- نعم
- لا

2- هل تتابع أحد الشخصيات المؤثرة (المدونين) عبر منصات التواصل الاجتماعي؟

- نعم
- لا

3- يُرجى ذكر اسم شخص مؤثر/مدون تتابعه عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي؟ إذا كنت تتابع أكثر من شخص، فيرجى تحديد اسم الشخص الذي تتابعه في أكثر الأحيان. ويرجى أن تضعه/تضعها في ذهنك أثناء إجابتك على الأسئلة التالية.

4- يُرجى ذكر اسم أحد العلامات التجارية/الشركات التي يتحدث عنها هذا الشخص المؤثر على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي أو يروج لها عبر منصات التواصل الاجتماعي، وإذا كان/ت يروج/تروج لأكثر من علامة تجارية/شركة، فيُرجى ذكر اسم العلامة التجارية/الشركة التي يتحدث/تتحدث عنها في أغلب الأحيان.

القسم ب

يرجى الإجابة على السؤال التالي استنادًا إلى تجربتك مع "العلامة التجارية/الشركة" التي يتحدث عنها الشخص المؤثر/المدون الذي أشرت إليه أو يروج لها عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي:

أوافق بشدة	أوافق	محايد	لا أوافق	لا أوافق على الإطلاق	
					أنا أميل إلى التوصية بهذه العلامة التجارية/الشركة للآخرين.
					أتحدث مع الآخرين بشكل إيجابي عن تجربتي مع هذه العلامة التجارية/الشركة.
					أقترح على الآخرين أنه ينبغي عليهم شراء هذه العلامة التجارية/منتجات هذه الشركة.
					أنوي أن أشارك تجاربي مع العلامة التجارية/الشركة مع الآخرين على الإنترنت بصورة أكبر في المستقبل.
					سوف أشارك تجاربي مع العلامة التجارية/الشركة عند طلب الآخرين مني ذلك على الإنترنت.
					سوف أحاول مشاركة تجاربي مع العلامة التجارية/الشركة مع الآخرين على الإنترنت بطريقة أكثر فعالية.

القسم ج

يرجى الإجابة على السؤال التالي استنادًا إلى تجربتك مع "العلامة التجارية/الشركة" التي يتحدث عنها الشخص المؤثر/المدون الذي أشرت إليه أو يروج لها عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي:

أوافق بشدة	أوافق	محايد	لا أوافق	لا أوافق على الإطلاق	
					هذه العلامة التجارية/الشركة: جيدة
					ممتعة
					لا قيمة لها
					هذه العلامة التجارية/الشركة: تقي بوعودها
					وعود منتجاتها قابلة للتصديق
					تلتزم بالوفاء بوعودها، لا أكثر ولا أقل
					لها اسم جدير بالثقة
					لديها القدرة على الوفاء بما تعد به
					من خلال تجربتي معها، جعلتني أتوقع أنها ستفي بما تعد به

القسم د

يرجى الإجابة على الأسئلة الواردة أدناه التي تشير إلى الشخص المؤثر/المدون على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي الذي نكرته أعلاه:

أوافق بشدة	أوافق	محايد	لا أوافق	لا أوافق على الإطلاق	
					أعتقد أن هذا الشخص المؤثر على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي: متخصص
					ذو خبرة
					واسع الاطلاع
					كفاء
					ذو مهارة

					أعتقد أن هذا الشخص المؤثر على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي: يمكن الاعتماد عليه
					أمين
					موثوق
					صادق
					جدير بالثقة
					أعتقد أن هذا الشخص المؤثر على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي: جذاب
					راقي
					وسيم /جميله
					أنيق
					ذو مظهر حسن
					أعتقد أن المحتوى الذي يقدمه هذا الشخص المؤثر على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي: حقيقي
					ذو رؤية
					غني بالمعلومات
					متسق
					به تحيز
					مركز
					دقيق
					يأتي في الوقت المناسب
					مُنْتَشِر

القسم هـ

معلومات شخصية

1- ما هو معدل شرائك عبر الإنترنت؟

- ولا مرة

- في بعض الأحيان ولكن ليس بشكلٍ منتظم
- مرة واحدة-مرتين في اليوم
- مره واحدة-مرتين في الأسبوع
- مرة واحدة-مرتين في الشهر

2- جنسك:

- ذكر
- أنثى

3- الفئة العمرية الخاصة بك:

- أقل من 18
- 18-24 عامًا
- 25-34 عامًا
- 35-44 عامًا
- 45-54 عامًا
- 55 عامًا أو أكثر

4- مستواك التعليمي الحالي:

- أقل من التعليم الثانوي
- حاصل على شهادة التعليم الثانوي
- طالب جامعي
- حاصل على شهادة بكالوريوس
- حاصل على شهادة الدراسات العليا

5- جنسيتك؟

- قطري
- غير قطري

شكرًا جزيلاً لكم على وقتكم.

Appendix (B) Exploratory Factor Analysis

Total Variance Explained							
Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings ^a
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
	1	9.062	30.208	30.208	8.506	28.353	28.353
2	3.668	12.228	42.436	2.377	7.925	36.277	6.433
3	2.532	8.439	50.875	3.151	10.502	46.779	5.739
4	1.645	5.482	56.357	1.324	4.414	51.193	3.795
5	1.325	4.416	60.773	.937	3.122	54.315	5.424
6	1.262	4.208	64.980	.816	2.719	57.034	4.256
7	1.011	3.370	68.351	.509	1.695	58.729	4.481
8	.784	2.613	70.964				
9	.715	2.384	73.348				
10	.641	2.136	75.484				
11	.630	2.099	77.583				
12	.618	2.060	79.644				
13	.540	1.800	81.444				
14	.535	1.783	83.226				
15	.471	1.571	84.797				
16	.459	1.531	86.328				
17	.413	1.376	87.704				
18	.384	1.280	88.984				
19	.363	1.211	90.195				
20	.360	1.201	91.397				
21	.351	1.168	92.565				

22	.334	1.114	93.679				
23	.300	.999	94.679				
24	.291	.972	95.650				
25	.278	.926	96.576				
26	.273	.911	97.487				
27	.235	.785	98.272				
28	.197	.658	98.930				
29	.174	.581	99.511				
30	.147	.489	100.000				

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

a. When factors are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

Goodness-of-fit Test		
Chi-Square	df	Sig.
400.152	246	.000

Factor Correlation Matrix							
Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	1.000	.360	.234	.202	.316	.594	.181
2	.360	1.000	.560	.310	.554	.354	.500
3	.234	.560	1.000	.311	.613	.222	.562
4	.202	.310	.311	1.000	.246	.274	.199
5	.316	.554	.613	.246	1.000	.281	.602
6	.594	.354	.222	.274	.281	1.000	.197
7	.181	.500	.562	.199	.602	.197	1.000

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Model Summary ^b									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.349 ^a	.122	.112	.59716	.122	12.825	3	277	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), MSMICONEQU1, MAttract, MSMICRED									
b. Dependent Variable: MbrandCred									

Appendix (C) Regression Analysis

Regression test of collaborating brand credibility on social media influencer credibility, attractiveness and content quality

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	13.720	3	4.573	12.825	.000 ^b
	Residual	98.777	277	.357		
	Total	112.497	280			
a. Dependent Variable: MbrandCred						
b. Predictors: (Constant), MSMICONEQU1, MAttract, MSMICRED						

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.173	.282		7.710	.000		
	MSMICRED	.229	.074	.224	3.081	.002	.601	1.665
	MAttract	.071	.051	.083	1.387	.166	.884	1.132
	MSMICONEQU1	.122	.070	.122	1.730	.085	.639	1.564
a. Dependent Variable: MbrandCred								

Regression test of brand advocacy on collaborating brand credibility

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.290 ^a	.084	.081	.59390
a. Predictors: (Constant), mBrandADV				

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.017	1	9.017	25.564	.000 ^b
	Residual	98.409	279	.353		
	Total	107.426	280			
a. Dependent Variable: MSMICRED						
b. Predictors: (Constant), mBrandADV						

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3.080	.185		16.693	.000		
	mBrandADV	.240	.047	.290	5.056	.000	1.000	1.000
a. Dependent Variable: MSMICRED								

Appendix (D) Mediation and Moderation test using Process

Mediation test of brand credibility on the relationship between social media influencers credibility and brand advocacy

```
*****
***
Model   : 4
      Y   : mBrandAD
      X   : MSMICRED
      M   : MbrandCr
```

```
Sample
Size: 281
```

```
*****
***
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
  MbrandCr
```

```
Model Summary
      R      R-sq      MSE      F      df1      df2
p
.3249   .1056   .3606   32.9379   1.0000   279.0000
.0000
```

```
Model
      coeff      se      t      p      LLCI
ULCI
constant  2.5247   .2343   10.7759   .0000   2.0635
2.9859
MSMICRED  .3325     .0579    5.7392   .0000   .2185
.4466
```

```
Standardized coefficients
      coeff
MSMICRED  .3249
```

```
*****
***
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
  mBrandAD
```

```
Model Summary
      R      R-sq      MSE      F      df1      df2
p
.5560   .3091   .3904   62.1865   2.0000   278.0000
.0000
```

```
Model
      coeff      se      t      p      LLCI
ULCI
constant  .9250   .2901    3.1886   .0016   .3540
1.4961
MSMICRED  .1532   .0637    2.4032   .0169   .0277
```

.2787
MbrandCr .5929 .0623 9.5184 .0000 .4703
.7156

Standardized coefficients

coeff
MSMICRED .1267
MbrandCr .5017

***** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y

Direct effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
c'_ps	c'_cs				
.1532	.0637	2.4032	.0169	.0277	.2787
.2045	.1267				

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
MbrandCr	.1972	.0448	.1178	.2925

Partially standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
MbrandCr	.2632	.0548	.1624	.3747

Completely standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
MbrandCr	.1630	.0347	.0976	.2323

Bootstrap estimates were saved to a file

Map of column names to model coefficients:

Column	Model Coefficient
COL1	MbrandCr constant
COL2	MbrandCr MSMICRED
COL3	mBrandAD constant
COL4	mBrandAD MSMICRED
COL5	mBrandAD MbrandCr

***** BOOTSTRAP RESULTS FOR REGRESSION MODEL PARAMETERS

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

MbrandCr

	Coeff	BootMean	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
constant	2.5247	2.5224	.2567	1.9946	3.0191
MSMICRED	.3325	.3332	.0629	.2100	.4598

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

mBrandAD

	Coeff	BootMean	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
constant	.9250	.9268	.3148	.3360	1.5727
MSMICRED	.1532	.1541	.0647	.0213	.2814
MbrandCr	.5929	.5915	.0648	.4570	.7186

Moderation test of digital on the relationship between social media influencers credibility and collaborating brand credibility

Model : 1
 Y : MbrandCr
 X : MSMICRED
 W : digialex

Sample
 Size: 281

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 MbrandCr

Model Summary

	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2
p	.3346	.1120	.3607	11.6403	3.0000	277.0000
	.0000					

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI
ULCI					
constant	3.8517	.0358	107.4398	.0000	3.7811
3.9223					
MSMICRED	.3468	.0590	5.8812	.0000	.2307
.4628					
digialex	-.0161	.0491	-.3274	.7436	-.1127
.0806					
Int_1	-.1038	.0749	-1.3857	.1670	-.2512
.0437					

Product terms key:

Int_1 : MSMICRED x digialex

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	.0062	1.9200	1.0000	277.0000	.1670

Focal predict: MSMICRED (X)
 Mod var: digialex (W)

Data for visualizing the conditional effect of the focal predictor:
 Paste text below into a SPSS syntax window and execute to produce plot.

DATA LIST FREE/
 MSMICRED digialex MbrandCr .

```

BEGIN DATA.
  -.6194      -.6192      3.6070
   .0000      -.6192      3.8616
   .6194      -.6192      4.1162
  -.6194      .0000      3.6369
   .0000      .0000      3.8517
   .6194      .0000      4.0665
  -.6194      .7325      3.6722
   .0000      .7325      3.8399
   .6194      .7325      4.0076

```

END DATA.

GRAPH/SCATTERPLOT=

MSMICRED WITH MbrandCr BY digialex .

Bootstrap estimates were saved to a file

Map of column names to model coefficients:

```

      Conseqnt Antecdnt
COL1   MbrandCr constant
COL2   MbrandCr MSMICRED
COL3   MbrandCr digialex
COL4   MbrandCr Int_1

```

***** BOOTSTRAP RESULTS FOR REGRESSION MODEL PARAMETERS

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

MbrandCr

	Coeff	BootMean	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
constant	3.8517	3.8530	.0360	3.7807	3.9216
MSMICRED	.3468	.3466	.0679	.2141	.4796
digialex	-.0161	-.0164	.0437	-.1011	.0713
Int_1	-.1038	-.1080	.0765	-.2643	.0395