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## **THE IMPACT OF VISUAL ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH COMMUNICATIONS ON E-COMMERCE ADOPTION CASE STUDY: THE DIFFERENT ROLE OF BLOGGER'S VISUAL ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH ON YOUTUBE, INSTAGRAM AND SNAPCHAT**

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### **Abstract**

The growth of e-commerce has resulted in the increasing use of Social Media Sites (SMSs) around the world. Bloggers' reviews on SMSs such as YouTube, Snapchat and Instagram is known as visual electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM). Blogger's visual eWOM is one of the new marketing tools used by companies to increase SMSs users' adoption of e-commerce. There has been a growth in consumers' use of bloggers' visual eWOM on YouTube, Snapchat and Instagram. Studies show that understanding the differences between factors that influence the impact of bloggers' visual electronic word of mouth is still inadequate. Companies use general eWOM marketing strategies for all of SMSs, and this has led to a misunderstanding of consumers' attitudes to e-commerce. In fact, SMSs' characteristics are different. For example, YouTube allows users to "like" and "dislike" videos and to write comments on bloggers' public videos. Whereas, Snapchat lets users watch and comment on live videos in private and only the "blogger" can see the comments. Snapchat has no "like" and "dislike" function that publicly shows SMSs users' evaluations of bloggers' videos that reflect other SMSs users' appraisals. Accordingly, consumers may have different attitudes to using visual eWOM SMSs. This study focuses on understanding the factors that influence Saudi consumers who use visual eWOM on SMSs including YouTube, Snapchat and Instagram. Saudi SMSs users are one of the highest adopters of e-commerce in the world. E-commerce is growing in Saudi Arabia due to numerous international firms investing in the country's economy. However, understanding the adoption of e-commerce among Saudi SMSs users' is still limited. This study uses a quantitative method and data was collected using online surveys. The survey questions were designed to collect data on the factors identified from a literature review. The factors are: personal preference, social classification and how the SMSs' characteristics influence e-commerce adoption. The collected data ranges from January to February 2017. A total of 400 Saudi SMSs users participated in the survey. The data has been analysed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The findings indicate that 61 percent of respondents use e-commerce through SMSs. The respondents have acknowledged that their purchasing decisions are mainly based on bloggers' visual eWOM on SMSs. However, the respondents have diverse attitudes to using SMSs. For example, consumers use Instagram due to its simplicity of use through mobiles and also the visual nature of the platform.

Nevertheless, consumer purchasing decisions are highly based on visual eWOM on YouTube because of its unique appearance. YouTube presents positive and negative consumers evaluation of products or services through its "like" and "dislike" functions under the video. The study shows that Snapchat has less influence on consumers' purchasing decisions. The findings indicated that Saudi SMSs users are from a middle social class with low yearly salaries and bachelor's level degrees. Therefore, these users need greater incentives to develop their adoption of e-commerce. This study highlights the importance of digital

marketing strategies for managers using SMSs to meet consumer eWOM attitudes in using e-commerce.

**Keywords:** Blogger, E-commerce, Saudi Arabia, Social Media, Visual Electronic Word of Mouth.

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