

Social Media Marketing, Placing Orders and Selling Products: Examination and Analysis

Abstract

The current study aimed to examine the mechanisms and effects of social media marketing as they would apply to order and sell products. The current research is an applied descriptive survey employing a correlational design. The required data were collected through library archives, including various documents and questionnaires. The statistical population of the research was the producers and sellers of wooden products in the Tehran market (including beds and wardrobes, TV tables, and furniture, among others) who used at least one of the social networking services and platforms such as Instagram or Facebook to market their products. Since the size of the research population was deemed unlimited, Morgan's table was used to determine the optimal samples, the findings from which were revealed to be 384 individuals. The primary tool of this research was questionnaires. Research hypotheses were tested using SmartPLS 3 and the partial least squares method. The research findings indicated that the dimensions of social media marketing, i.e., electronic word-of-mouth, interaction, entertainment, customization, and currentness, affect ordering wooden products, while ordering products directly affects selling products, thereby establishing all research hypotheses.

Keywords: *Marketing, social media, ordering products, selling product*

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Introduction

social media platforms are now becoming a significant avenue increasingly for not only communication but also conducting business. The rapid expansion of the Internet is perceived to have led to the emergence of two key features, namely, social media and online search engines. In the business realm, social media has established a new communication avenue for direct interaction between companies and customers (Vertadi and Mahendravat, 2019). The expansion of social media has made companies of all types seek new ways of interacting to reach their customers (Godey et al., 2016).

Companies are now less interested in traditional marketing practices, such as environmental advertising, because they attract a relatively small number of potential customers. With the recent explosion of social media and the growing number of users, companies are now exploiting opportunities to communicate directly with their customers through social media services (Mohammed Shafiei et al., 2018). Social media marketing is a multi-dimensional structure, including electronic word-of-mouth advertising, which is defined in terms of the extent to which customers of various brands exchange information and upload content to social networks (Mohammed Shafiei et al., 2018). The next component is the potential for customization, which is the extent to which social network channels provide search preferences and customized services (Godey et al., 2016). Based on their daily interaction with social media platforms, people are more likely to have habitual behavior toward such platforms and most of the marketing activities posted on them. This, in turn, enriches the level of customers' skills and knowledge related to these activities (AlAlwan and others, 2017). The currentness of

social media platforms has propelled them into the main channel of seeking out first-hand news and the most relevant information.

Shirkhodaei et al. (2016) examined the effect of social network platforms on the formation of brand trust and loyalty within the brand community using evidence from Instagram, the findings from which suggested the impact of personal and social identity on brand communities, the effect of social interaction on loyalty and trust and the use of brand image, and the effect of brand trust on brand loyalty. Jahid et al. (2021) showed that using social network platforms is highly influenced by adaptability, perception of information technology, and ease of use. Adaptability refers to the suitability of a product or service for users of a particular platform, implying that the more compatible the product or service is to and to the tastes of consumers across different platforms. Promotions in this platform, the more such product or service is deemed necessary for the promotional purposes of the company using it. The results of this study indicate that using social media for marketing positively affects the performance of small and medium-sized companies in terms of sales volume, customer relations, productivity, and innovation. This, in turn, suggests that the better the management of social networks for marketing purposes, the better the overall performance of such companies. Streimikienė et al. (2020) examined the effect of social media on the sale of products. They revealed that regular interaction of entertainment and gaming companies with customers on social media positively affects sales, as entertainment service users tend to follow such accounts enthusiastically. This study focuses on the main characteristics and components of companies that use social media.

Therefore, regular communication and the use of influencers are highly recommended to promote the sales of companies. Companies are advised to communicate regularly with which customers it has been established to promote sales increasingly.

In the current business setting, one of the advertising practices for encouraging and motivating customers is to employ social media to introduce services and products to that. Marketers are highly interested in knowing the effect of effort and resources they assign to a marketing tool, such as advertising in social networks, on order registration and product sales because customer retention and increasing the purchasing power of customers is paramount to the modern competitive markets, which, in turn, has driven companies to generate particular. The prospective contribution of this research to the corresponding literature is to form a thorough understanding of the influence of the dimensions of social media advertising on order registration and sales of wooden products, through which marketing planners can decide on the most effective advertising tool when plotting the company's future horizon. Examining and analyzing various dimensions of social media marketing and conducting comprehensive and detailed studies is paramount to the literature on digital marketing. Despite the significance of social media marketing and its perceived effects on small and large businesses, the literature on social media marketing is uncharacteristically thin, necessitating more in-depth examinations.

Like the rest of the world, our country has evidenced ever-increasing growth in the use of social networking platforms. Various networking services are now involved in the lives of Iranians, and people from all sorts of social statuses spend a significant share of their time thereon. This leads to countless opportunities to introduce businesses to the public through social media, which marketers and businesses can utilize to shape a favorable image of their brands, products and services. Of them in the minds of consumers and to promote themselves in a more positive light. Today, many industries and businesses involved in producing luxury wooden products take advantage of social networking platforms, the frontrunner of which is Instagram, to showcase, offer, and, ultimately, sell their products. Therefore, the current research sought to address whether the dimensions of social media marketing affect the process of ordering and selling wooden products.

Social media marketing

Social media marketing can be broadly defined as a sub-class of internet marketing that involves producing and sharing content on social media to achieve the beneficiary company's marketing goals. As such, customers can get familiar with the brands and products of companies through social media (Oh et al., 2015). Strong social media marketing leads to significant business success, brand recognition, and increased customer

count and sales volumes. Social media-based ads are rather distinct forms of internet advertising, yet, as they are on the web, customers can have different perceptions and experiences when interacting with such exposure. The social-oriented nature of media advertising enables the user to engage more with the individuals and groups targeted by advertisements (through so-called likes, re-sharing, commenting, posting, and learning). Logan et al. (2012) have called for more research on the interacting mechanisms of social media. Researchers are encouraged to dedicate more academic sources to determine the main components of advertising in social network platforms that can impact the customer's reaction and perception towards social media advertising (Oh et al., 2015). Toaten and Soleiman (2017) argue that one of the primary purposes of using social media for advertising and communication is to help shape consumer decision-making. Evidence from the literature also reveals that social media advertising positively affects profits and performance and that the spectrum of social media applications is expanding (Li et al., 2019). The development of the image of the company or the image of the brand name, better exposure of the brand name, and better promotion of identified products and services are among the other virtues of social media marketing.

Product Order

Market orders are one of the most fundamental mechanisms involved in buy/sell transactions that a trader receives, valued at the current market price. Even market orders with an extremely high probability of proceeding are not immune to some degree of failure. The Internet has completely altered the traditional way of selling goods and services, as information technology and the resulting speed of operations and varying sales methods have made headways in communication with customers and suppliers. Consumers now expect simpler and quicker solutions to be provided to them than before, as the overall ordering process and services are deemed more effective and reliable than ever (Faezi and Norouzi, 2015).

Purchase intention was defined by Crosno et al. (2009) as the likelihood of purchasing a specific brand from a variety of items throughout the purchasing process. It refers to the possibility that a consumer in a particular buying situation could determine a particular product group in the future. That is, increased levels of purchase intention in the mind of the consumer will eventually lead to higher levels of probability of purchase. Bagozzi believes that there are three types of purchase intention, namely (1) future-oriented purchase intention, (2) present-oriented purchase intention, and (3) goal-oriented purchase intention. Fishon and Ajzen (1975) state that "the best single predictor of a person's behavior will is his/her intention to perform that behavior." The purchase intention

scale is often used to identify the possibilities of buying goods during a specific period (Ardakani and Janbazi, 2015).

Product sales

Selling can be most simplistically defined as helping the customer determine if the goods and services he/she is looking for are worth more than the amount the seller is asking for, where the seller seeks to highlight the benefits and quality of the product. Despite the variety of products, buyers often prefer to buy a product that best fills their needs gaps. The goal of marketing is to increase profits through selling more, which can only be achieved through focusing on the demands of consumers, and, as such, producers and suppliers must be able to produce and supply goods that are of competitive advantage

over other producers while fully responding to the demands of the customers. As such, focusing on marketing leads to more sales and, as a result, higher profit margins. That is, marketing and sales are highly relevant and must be in tandem with each other and aim to meet the customer's needs and increase profits. They are two business functions of the same realm, in that both are effective in attaining potential customers (leads) and generating income from that place. All being said, selling refers to all endeavors that lead to selling goods or services, while marketing attracts people's interest to the goods and services sold. Based on the discussion above, the current research model is shown in Figure 1:

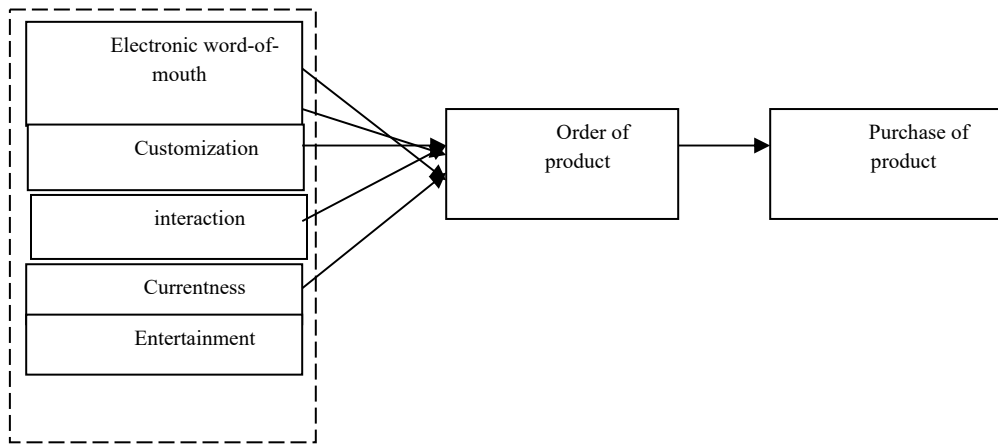


Figure 1: Conceptual research model (Dolega et al., 2021; Haji Ali Akbari and Mousavi, 2020)

Research Methods

The current research is an applied descriptive survey employing a correlational design. The required data were collected through library archives, including various documents and questionnaires. The statistical population of the research was the producers and sellers of wooden products in the Tehran market (including beds and wardrobes, TV tables, and furniture, among others) who used at least one of the social networking services and platforms such as Instagram or Facebook to market their products. Since the size of the research population was deemed unlimited, Morgan's table was used to determine the optimal samples, the findings from which were revealed to be 384 individuals.

The obtained data were then inputted into Smart PLS3 and SPSS 21 for statistical analysis.

Findings

The demographic statistics of the respondents revealed that 24 (75%) of the respondents were male and 8 (25%) of the respondents were female. Regarding educational level, the highest percentage (42%) pertained to respondents with a high-school equivalent qualification, while 1 percent, representing

the minimum, had Ph.D. degrees. Regarding the level of familiarity with the Internet and social networks, 46% were very familiar with social networks, while a staggeringly low 2% had familiarity with the Internet

The descriptive statistics of each research variable, including mean, standard deviation, minimum value, maximum value, skewness, and kurtosis, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of variables

Variable	Central tendency		Dispersion		Distribution		Size
	Mean	Median	SD	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis	
eWOM	3.58	4.00	1.04	1.08	-0.53	-0.75	330
Currentness	2.65	2.67	0.56	0.32	0.28	0.30	
Customization	4.10	4.00	0.99	0.99	-1.26	1.25	
Interaction	3.54	3.67	1.00	1.00	-0.33	-0.87	

Entertainment	3.74	4.00	1.01	1.02	-0.75	0.35
Ordering	3.96	4.00	0.87	0.75	-0.96	0.65
Purchase	4.03	4.00	0.87	0.76	-0.91	0.56

Results from Table 1 indicated that the variable representing currentness (4.10) had the highest average, while the customization variable (2.65) had the lowest average. The results of the measurement model are presented in Table 3.

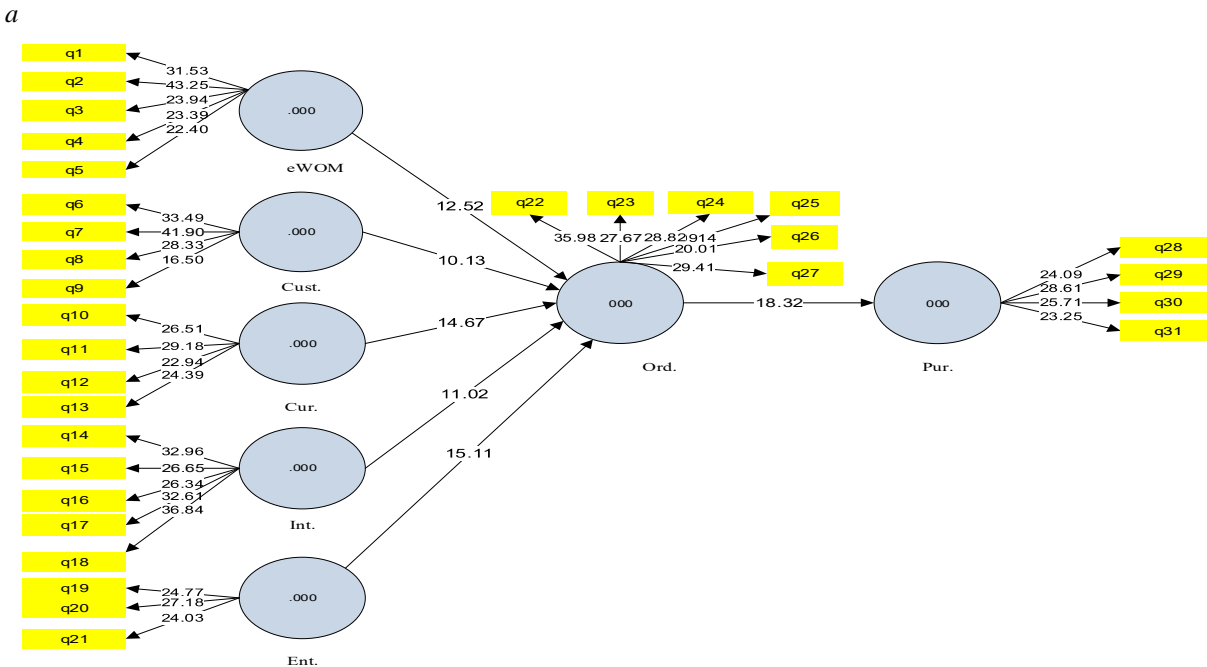
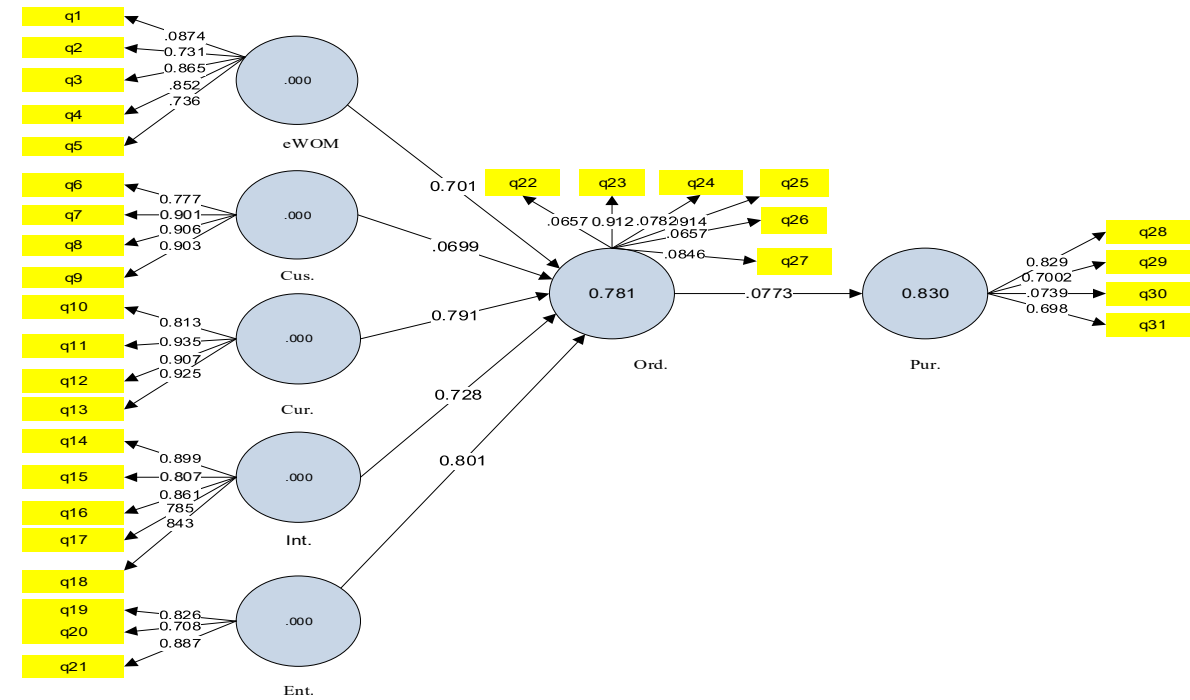


Figure 2: a) The structural equations model of the research and the coefficients of the factor loadings, b) The structural model of the research with significant coefficients

As shown in Figure 2, all the variables with a favorable factor load (more than 0.70) indicate the suitability of inter-variables correlation with the relevant variable.

According to the data analysis algorithm in PLS, after measuring the factor loadings of the items, composite reliability, shared reliability, and Cronbach's alpha was calculated; t Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all variables was above 0.7, which is optimal. Findings further revealed that all the variables have optimal composite variability. The shared reliability for all factors is more significant than 0.5, which means that the three conditions of Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and shared reliability are established, and the reliability of the research model can be confirmed.

Table 2: Results from the convergent validity test

Research variables	AVE (average variance extracted)
eWOM	0.654
Currentness	0.634
Customization	0.640
Interaction	0.606
Entertainment	0.640
Ordering	0.766
Purchase	0.670

According to the above tests, it can be concluded that the research model had good convergent validity. (Table 2)

Table 3: Correlation matrix and mean the square root of the extracted variance of each of the research variables in the studied sample

Research variables	eWOM	Customization	Currentness	Interaction	Entertainment	Order	purchase
eWOM	0.81						
Currentness	0.74	0.80					
Customization	0.65	0.71	0.74				
Interaction	0.76	0.68	0.70	0.76			
Entertainment	0.77	0.80	0.63	0.79	0.82		

Table 5: Path coefficients of research variables

Relation	Path	Standard coefficient	Sig. level	Hypothesis results
1	eWOM → Order	0.701	12.72	Approved
2	Customization → Order	0.699	10.13	Approved

Ordering	0.73	0.65	0.80	0.69	0.79	0.80	
Purchase	0.77	0.63	0.66	0.78	0.75	0.71	0.78

The findings from Table 3 indicated that the mean square root of the variance of all research variables was higher than their correlation with other variables. Therefore, the second test for examining the divergent validity of the research variables was also established. That is, the research tools have adequate validity, and the structural model of the research can be tested.

Table 4: calculated R2 and Q2 for research variables

Research variables	Sample size: n=384	
	R2	Q2
Electronic word-of-mouth	0.544	0.341
Currentness	0.664	0.565
Customization	0.466	0.669
Interaction	0.631	0.544
Entertainment	0.495	0.516
Ordering	0.280	0.611
Purchase	0.413	0.598

According to Table 4, the Q2 index was positive for the dependent and predictor variables, which showed that the predictor variables were able to predict the dependent variables significantly and the inter-construct predictive power of the model is strong.

The goodness of fit index (GoF) was calculated through the following formula.

$$GOF = \sqrt{\text{communality} \times R^2} = \sqrt{0.634 \times 0.981} = .788$$

The mean commonality is equal to the AVE of each variable, and the average AVE value of the variables was estimated to be 0.634. Also, the average R2 of all endogenous variables was determined to be 0.981. According to these findings, it can be concluded that the tested model fits perfectly with the examined sample.

The summary of the results of the path coefficients and their comparison is shown in Table 5.

3	Currentness → Order	0.791	14.67	Approved
4	Interaction → Order	0.728	11.02	Approved
5	Entertainment → Order	0.801	15.11	Approved
6	Order → purchase	0.773	18.32	Approved

Discussion and conclusion

The current study aimed to examine the mechanisms of social media marketing and their effect on ordering and selling products. The results show that the coefficient of influence of electronic word of mouth on orders of wood products is 12.72 positive and greater than 1.96, so it can be concluded that electronic word of mouth has a significant impact when ordering wood product. Today, with the increasing significance of electronic word-of-mouth advertising, studying the attitude of customers exposed to this type of advertising can be of high practical significance for wood product companies, stores and marketers. Electronic word-of-mouth can generate an extensive range of information, which can, in turn, influence the behavior of consumers in terms of their purchase intention and, ultimately, ordering a particular brand or product. Therefore, internet websites and social networks can have a profound effect on consumers' purchasing decisions and, as a result, the sale of wooden products by implementing avenues to show the opinions of previous buyers to potential consumers. The findings for this hypothesis are in line, either wholly or in part, with those of Mohammad Shafiei et al. (2019), Ghat'i and Sheikh Alizadeh (2018), and Yan et al. (2018).

According to the findings, the coefficient for the effect of customization on ordering wood industry products is 13.10. Considering that the coefficient is positive and more than 1.96, it can be concluded that customization has a statistically significant effect on the ordering industry. Customizing social media content can improve the quality of user experience by allowing users to control their interactions and get precisely what they want, through which not only can the user save a great deal of time and money, but also, he/she would be able to compare products with different brands and hence make an informed decision. According to the result of this hypothesis regarding the effect of customization on the order of wooden products, with the assumption that users know the best and what their goals and real needs are, it can favorably affect the customer's order and purchase decision. The findings for this hypothesis are consistent with the research findings of Amouzadeh et al. (2019).

According to the research findings, the coefficient for the effect of interaction on ordering wood industry products is 11.02, which is positive and more than 1.96. Hence, it can be concluded that the effect of interaction on ordering wood industry products is statistically significant. In discussing this

correlation, high-speed ordering of products is thought to be the direct aftermath of having deployed a platform for the customers of wooden products in social media for mutual interaction, which requires providing support, interaction, and continuous online communication for social media customers. Therefore, the interaction pathways in social network platforms, which include the so-called likes, comments, saving, following, and sharing, should be analytically addressed. User engagement with posts is a conventional indicator for evaluating social media performance, but it does not necessarily translate into sales. These findings nevertheless indicate that the more virtual interactions of the pathways above on Instagram are of higher quality, the higher the consumer's brand awareness. Brand awareness represents the elements through which a brand is remembered or reminded; hence the breadth of the brand manifests a range of purchase situations and brand-related applications. This finding is in contrast to the research findings of Azizian Kohan et al. (2020), but it is in line with the findings of Amouzadeh et al. (2020), Mohammad Shafiei et al. (2019), and Rahimnia et al. (2017). The analysis also revealed that the coefficient for the effect of currentness on ordering wood industry products is 14.67, which is positive and higher than 1.96, and thus it can be concluded that currentness has a significant effect on ordering wood industry products. Given that up-to-date information is disseminated in social networks on a non-stop, consistent basis, consumers expect to receive the latest information on the topic they are searching for. Up-to-date information involves the latest information about a brand or product, feedback, and fresh ideas, which shape or develop consumer knowledge and trust in the brand, thereby enhancing positive consumer awareness of the brand or product.

According to the findings, the coefficient representing the significance of the effect of entertainment on ordering wood industry products is 11.15, which is positive and higher than 1.96. This implies that entertainment has a significant positive effect on the order of wood industry products. Currently, internet-based entertainment is perceived as one of the most functions of cyberspace, a majority of which is free of charge. Internet entertainment in various formats, such as online games, is expanding daily, the variety of which has led to an attractive competitive, and interactive environment for an extensive range of users. The findings regarding the effect of entertainment on the order of wooden products indicated that using entertainment features embedded in social networks

along with its more intended functions of establishing communication can lead to the experience of novel ways of establishing social communication in the marketing realm. This result is in line with those of Azizian Kohan et al. (2020) and Amouzadeh et al. (2020)

Findings from the research revealed that the coefficient representing the significance level of the effect of orders on the sale of wood industry products is 18.32, which is more than 1.96, and hence it can be concluded that the ordering process has a positive, statistically significant, effect on the sale of products wood industry. Considering that selling is helping the customer determine if the goods and services he/she is looking for are worth more than the amount the seller is asking for, ordering products through social media platforms, including Instagram, can lead to enhanced quality levels of selling products. The findings for the hypothesis above are consistent with the research findings of Dolega et al. (2021), Jahid et al. (2021), and Štreimikienė et al. (2020).

Based on the results of the present study, wood product manufacturers and sellers should improve and promote their websites and channels on various social media platforms by improving promotional factors. such as designing company logos, slogans and branding, whereby they can facilitate the exchange of information and experiences for their consumers. Furthermore, they are advised to improve electronic word-of-mouth advertising to transfer the experiences of the behavior of customers after purchasing wooden products to other potential customers, and hence increase the intention to buy off potential customers who might be searching for information and evaluating options. Future researchers are also recommended to perform the same study using qualitative methods, employing a research population made up of digital marketing experts, hence identifying and ranking the main factors affecting advertising in social networks. The current study was plagued with several limitations, among which are that it was conducted only by Instagram users and that extending the findings to other social networking platforms such as Facebook and Telegram should be done with utmost caution.

Result:

The emergence of social media has significantly affected marketing practices, so that researchers abroad have conducted numerous studies to investigate this phenomenon. Considering that social media is an emerging phenomenon and many companies insist on using it (especially in Iran), marketing through social media is an emerging field in which consumers share their experiences and evaluations of brands and products. They share different things like wooden products through online communication channels like Instagram. With the growth of information technologies, the influence of the Internet and the personal effects of people on each other in

face-to-face communication and in virtual space and online environments on the decision to order and buy products has increased. Since advertisements through social media such as Instagram are not directly under the company's control, it is difficult to manage this type of advertisement, therefore, taking into account the five dimensions that affect social media, namely electronic word-of-mouth advertising, interaction, up-to-dateness, customization Entertainment can be optimistic about the trend of improving product orders and consequently product sales.

Conflict of interest

None

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Ethics statement

None

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