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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# To What Extent Do Saudi Consumers Trust Snapchat Advertainments

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| ARTICLE INFO | ABSTRACT |
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| <br><br>**\*Corresponding Author:**<br><br>m.helmi@seu.edu.sa | Marketers are increasingly leveraging social media platforms for brand advertising. Recent research explores the degree to which consumers trust Snapchat advertisements and the factors contributing to building that trust. The study's findings will help shed light on what drives Saudi consumers to trust Snapchat ads. Using a quantitative approach, random samples were gathered through social media platforms. The study's key results show a strong correlation between trust in Snapchat ads and tendency to trust and a significant correlation between trust in Snapchat ads and perceived advertising content quality. |

## INTRODUCTION

Social media and web technology have enormously transformed people's lives, creating new ways to connect, collaborate, and socialize. Saudi Arabia considered as one of the highest annual growth rates in Social media users worldwide which grew by 32% vs. a worldwide average of 13% (Radcliffe & Bruni, 2019). With the growing technology of using smart devices, there has been a marked shift towards online shopping. Online shopping allows customers to look for their needs and wants enjoyment and convenience. Approximately 80% of marketers make substantial investments in social media in general and in online advertising in particular (Ben Amor & Mzoughi, 2023; Faruk et al., 2021). There are a variety of online shopping advantages including home delivery and saving time (Cherrett et al., 2017), which attracts massive customers to shop online.

Snapchat has been popular in recent years, it is one of the newest mobile applications in the social media world. In 2019, Snapchat reported 188 million daily users around the world and 300 million people use the app each month. To be more specific there are about 9 million daily users in Saudi Arabia (Radcliffe & Bruni, 2019). The report by Statista (2023), demonstrate Snapchat at the fourth-ranked (70%) most-used social media platform in Saudi Arabia after the highest-ranked platforms (WhatsApp-Instagram-Tiktok). It is evident that mobile applications attract millions of people who want to communicate with others around the world. Hence, they feel more comfortable sharing

information through the platforms as they find these platforms more convenient than the other available communication platforms (Makki et al., 2018).

Saudi Arabia is witnessing an increasing growth in the number of users and online shoppers, as well as increased growth in electronic stores that sell their products to consumers. The number of Internet users in Saudi Arabia is approximately 18.1 million users. 18% of Internet users in Saudi Arabia use it for e-commerce purposes. The volume of e-retail trade reaches 800 million dollars annually, which is considered 20% of the total trading volume. Arguably, increasing the number of online shoppers means steading the growth of e-retail trade in the Kingdom.

Multiple online shopping channels are available to customers including social media besides companies' websites (Y. Zhang et al., 2017). This research concentrates on the extent of consumers' trust in social media advertisements, specifically on Snapchat. The previous research examined the trust of customers in social media platforms (e.g. Yahia et al., 2018);  however, it neglected the study of advertisements on those platforms. Also, this research will contribute to the study of advertising in one of the popular social media platforms "Snapchat". Recently, Snapchat has gradually gained popularity among youth consumers and more and more companies are incorporating Snapchat into their mobile marketing campaigns. Although one of the most recent research to study Snapchat ads on students' buying behavior in Saudi Arabia, however, there is a need to study further aspects such as Trust in ads through Snapchat (Alqahtani & Xue, 2022). However, little academic research has been successfully conducted to explore Snapchat's platforms (Chen & Lee, 2018; Al-khresheh et al., 2023).

**Trust in Snapchat Ads**

Trust from the perspective of online shopping can be defined as the basis of e-commerce which retailers or service providers  need to build trust when they communicate with customers through social media platforms (Cheng et al., 2017; Hajli, 2020; Tuncer, 2021). Trust is considered a way to attract customers to purchase products or services through social media platforms (Hasbullah et al., 2016; Irshad et al., 2020; Al-khresheh et al., 2021). Trust is an essential factor in attracting and retaining customers and influencing consumer behavior, and it has been researched in several ways (Davis et al., 2011). Trust is an important construct catalyst in many transactional relationships, fostering cooperation, reducing perceived risks, and enabling successful exchanges between parties (S. W. Wang et al., 2015). Previous studies for instance focus on how online trust influences consumer purchase decision-making (Lăzăroiu et al., 2020; Waheed et al., 2010); increasing the trust by using influencers on purchase intention (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Romero-Carazas et al., 2024). However, there is a lack of studies about what significant factors affect online trust in advertisements. Also, the popularity of Snapchat in Saudi Arabia and the users spending a lot of time during the day on Snapchat led the research to dig down to understand to what extent Snapchat users trust Snapchat advertisements.

In 2020, Snapchat launched dynamic advertisements which are considered as a new e-commerce offering designed to help product marketers grow their online business by simplifying the consumer purchase journey and increasing their profits. Snapchat is making online shopping easier for customers to buy products. The recent new features of Snapchat regard advertisements, making shopping easier for customers by only swiping the user to the advertiser page. The advertisements can include several industries such as retail, travel, finance, online services, and entertainment. Therefore, the Snapchat app is likable and trusted for sharing videos and contacts. However, we do not yet know the extent to of Saudi consumers trust the advertisements on Snapchat.

Snapchat users always receive advertisements while using the Snapchat App within Saudi Arabia domain because Advertising on social media is more popular than ever. Where many companies use social media, including Snapchat, to advertise their products. If Snapchat users click on the link will

see the advertisement on Snapchat and then forward them to the brand page. Hence, their transaction will be on the brand page not on the Snapchat app. This technique and technology help both customers and brands with product transactions that would not have been as simple before. It also helps the brands get their products seen by target customers who might not see that product or even think about it. It can be argued that Snapchat users often like and accept watching pictures and videos but watching the advertising might differ. There is a lack of research to examine this issue and trust in advertising more precisely. The following will illustrate the antecedent factors of trust in Snapchat's advertisements.

## Tendency to trust

Trust tendency is a personal trait that influences how someone evaluates others, behavior, and its related outcomes (H. Zhang et al., 2020). Trust is a fundamental part of human social behaviors and interactions. Where interpersonal trust is important to make friendships and secure social life. Hence, trust is an important element in dealing with people and it should break fear to be able to deal with strangers. Similarly, customers need trust to deal with strangers when shopping online and we do not know with whom we are dealing in virtual marketplaces (Alarcon et al., 2018). Studies on trust that focus on the individual are rare. Individual trust serves as a metaphor for a person's competing priorities (Cheng & Macaulay, 2014). In the initial stages of trust formation, cognitive trust, and personality-based trust stand out. Similarity-based trust is another name for cognition-based trust. Reputation is a key factor in determining trust tendency for trust based on cognition (Xu, 2014). Personality-based trust, also known as basic trust and dispositional trust, alludes to a general predisposition to believe. Personality-based trust is the basis from which trust or distrust can arise is the disposition to trust, which is based on a person's belief in humanity and possession of a trustworthy perspective. This tendency is a byproduct of ongoing encounters that last a lifetime and the socialization process (Cheng et al., 2017).

Organizational trust elements might not be appropriate in the interpersonal interactions-heavy social media communication scenario. In addition, despite the significance of trust in social media communication, little is known about the cognitive factors that affect trust. It is generally unknown what elements ultimately affect trust and how this influence plays out (Cheng et al., 2017). Prior research found that there are strong positive correlation between interpersonal trust/ tendency to trust and trust in the media (Jackob, 2012). However, advertising on Snapchat forwards consumers to a website that consumers might trust the website because forward from a trustworthy platform but might be more cautious about transactions. The number of Apps that provide services via smart devices is huge. At the same time, the level of awareness for application users has increased. The developers of apps not only try to protect the apps from any attack but also seek to increase the level of consumer trust regarding personal information. This concern will be more critical when the app provides a service of communication because the app users will share a variety of materials including videos, pictures, and documents. Hence, the tendency to trust can differ individually depending on differences in personality, trait, and state. Online shoppers have the same concern when dealing with strangers' advertisements, which tendency to trust Snapchat advertisements influences customer trust depending on personality. Based on the discussion the research proposes the following hypothesis:

*H1: There is a positive significant correlation between the tendency to trust and trust in Snapchat ads in Saudi Arabia.*

## Perceived advertising content quality

Information is becoming a prerequisite with the increasing business between the customers and companies to create an active partnership which leads companies to improve the level of information quality, especially on their websites because that information is accessible. From this concept, the

level of information quality is becoming more challenging in the context of e-commerce because influencing the success of online companies is due to helping customers make decisions based on the content of online information. The information help customers to shop online to find their needs and wants of alternative colors, sizes, and designs. Content quality not only refers to the features or services offered on websites but also companies have to focus on the design of how to present to consumers (M. Wang et al., 2009).

Prior research demonstrated that the information quality of the website influences consumer trust (e.g. Kang & Namkung, 2019). We can argue that the content quality that will appear on social media, including Snapchat Ads, will influence consumer trust. Also, the advertisement design always motivates customers to look to the advertisement whether the advertisement is a picture or video the content quality has to be high level to add value to that advertisement in general. Platforms of social media have opportunities and challenges to build trust with users and maintain them (Voicu, 2020). Snapchat is considered one of the greatest apps for sharing videos. The number of users and the statistics regarding video-sharing reflect to what extent users can trust Snapchat as a platform to communicate with others. Therefore, Snapchat users trust the application in terms of sharing their information between users. It can be argued that trust can build a good reputation with app administrators to trust the information and materials from them including the advertisements: Based on the discussion the research proposes the following hypothesis:

*H2: There is a positive significant correlation between perceived advertising content quality and trust in Snapchat ads in Saudi Arabia.*

### Research Model

In the following, Figure 1 demonstrates the correlation between the dependent and independent variables.
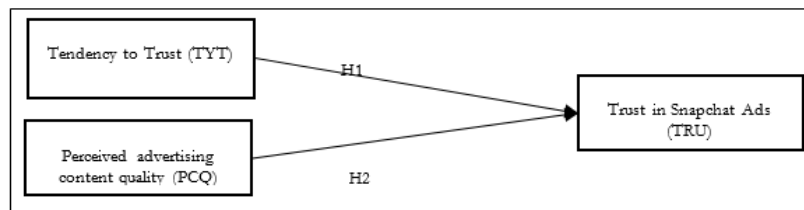
## METHODOLOGY



**Figure 1: Reserch Model**

### Research design

In this research, the researcher uses a descriptive research design to determine the relationship between the dependent variable (trust in Snapchat ads) and independent variables (tendency to trust and perceived advertising content quality) on the Snapchat App. Depending on the nature of the research, data will be collected from online platforms as a quantitative method. The researcher conducts quantitative methods and non-probability sampling to collect the data from participants. The researcher uses an online questionnaire to collect data from participants as a survey method from the respondents based on the research nature. The researcher distributes the questionnaires to a random sample of Saudi users' social media will be suitable for the study to answer the questionnaire.

### Method

The online survey questionnaire targeted online users on social media as a random sample. The questionnaire will be used as a tool to collect the necessary information about the research to suit its suitability to achieve the objectives of the research and answer the research question. This proposal

determined the influencing factors of consumers' trust toward Snapchat advertisements. Hence, the measures that are used in the design questionnaire are prepared based on a review of the relevant literature and previous studies in this field. The research collected data from 136 samples. After completing the data collection through the research sample, the data was entered and statistically analyzed using the SPSS. To achieve the objectives of the research and analysis of the collected data, the data were coded, and several appropriate statistical methods were used. The following are the methods that were used: Valid frequencies, percentages, and cumulative percentages to identify the initial data for the search terms and to determine the opinions of the target sample towards the questions included in the research. The research has checked the Cronbach Alpha, which was used to extract the reliability of the measurement tool.

### Measurement

The measurement of trust in advertisements using four items and paraphrasing them to fit the research purpose. Perceived advertising content quality used four items, and the tendency to trust used three items, all items have been paraphrased to fit the research purpose. The Likert scale of 5 points has been applied, for more details see (Agag & El-Masry, 2017).

## RESULTS

### Descriptive data

The research collected 136 random samples with 22.1% Female and 77.9% male, as shown in the below Table 1. The average age of less than 30 years is (59.6%); the age between 30-39 is (27.9%); 40-49 is (8.8%); greater than 50 is (3.7%). Regarding monthly income, the data illustrated that less than 1000 SR is (18.4%); 1000-300 SR is (14%); greater than 5000 SR is (67.6%). The data illustrated that the participants who clicked on Snapchat advertisements with 79.4% and those who already purchased from Snapchat about 63.2%.

**Table 1: Demographic information and respondent experiences on Snapchat**

| Items | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|
| Gender | |
| Male | 77.9 |
| Female | 22.1 |
| Age | |
| Less than 30 years old | 59.6 |
| 30-39 years old | 27.9 |
| 40-49 years old | 8.8 |
| Greater than 50 years old | 3.7 |
| Monthly income | |
| less than 1000 SR | 18.4 |
| 1000-300 SR | 14 |
| grater than5000 | 67.6 |
| Click on Snapchat ads | |
| Yes | 79.4 |
| No | 20.6 |
| Buying through Snapchat ads | |
| Yes | 63.2 |
| No | 36.8 |

## Reliability analysis

The result shown in the table below, Table 2, reliability test that Cronbach's Alpha value for trust in advertisements is (α = 0.92), the tendency to trust (α = 0.91), and perceived advertising content quality (α = 0.91). The results of the reliability test for this researcher presented are reliable as shown in the table below:

### Table 2: Measures variables

| Variables | Mean | SD | Reliability |
|---|---|---|---|
| Trust (TRU) | | | 0.92 |
| I believe that online product buying sites are trustworthy (TRU1) | 3.51 | .996 | |
| These online buying sites are trusted (TRU2) | 3.51 | .996 | |
| Online commercial product websites have integrity (TRU3) | 3.54 | .926 | |
| I think most e-commerce websites lead to maximum customer benefit (TRU4) | 3.99 | 1.058 | |
| Tendency to trust (TYT) | | | 0.91 |
| It is easy for me to trust people and most things in my life (TYT1) | 3.13 | 1.256 | |
| My tendency to trust people or things in my life is high (TRT2) | 3.10 | 1.200 | |
| I tend to trust people and things in my life even when I have little knowledge about them (TYT3) | 2.63 | 1.393 | |
| Perceived advertising content quality (PCQ) | | | 0.91 |
| The Snapchat application provides enough information about the displayed advertisement (PCQ 1) | 3.50 | .989 | |
| The Snapchat application provides reliable information about the advertisement displayed (PCQ 2) | 3.48 | .927 | |
| Snapchat provides reliable advertising access services (PCQ 3) | 3.59 | .907 | |
| This Snapchat app ensures users' privacy and security (PCQ 4) | 3.52 | .919 | |

## Hypotheses test

It has tested the correlation between variables in the current research. In the table below, Table 3 shows the relationship between two quantitative variables which are independent and dependent variables. In H1, the relationship between the tendency to trust and trust in advertisements was positively significantly correlated, r = 0.693, p-value > 0.001. In H2, the relationship between perceived advertising content quality and trust in advertisements is also positively correlated, r = 0.831, p-vale > 0.001. Therefore, all the independent variables are accepted because are significantly correlated, and the significant value is 0.001.

### Table 3: Correlation analysis

| Hypothesis | Variables | Correlation (r) | Significant (p) | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| H1 | TYT--TRU | 0.693 | 0.001 | Accepted |
| H2 | PCQ--TRU | 0.831 | 0.001 | Accepted |

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research sought to understand how the participants dealt with Snapchat and its advertisements. Therefore, we ask several questions related to Snapchat and their attitude as appears in Table 2. The research succeeded in achieving the research objectives, as well as providing empirical evidence of the relationship between the tendency to trust, perceived advertising content quality on Snapchat, and trust in advertisements that appear on Snapchat in the context of Saudi users. The objectives were achieved by correlation analysis and the research hypotheses were accepted based on Spearman's rho test. To conclude, the more perceived advertising content quality the more trust in Snapchat advertisements, and the more tendency to trust Snapchat users the more trust in Snapchat ads.

The theoretical and empirical contribution of this research will help marketing researchers and managers with the important aspects including to what extent customers trust Snapchat advertisements. The recommendation of this research is regarding ways to increase consumer trust in these advertisements. However, there are some limitations not addressed in the current research but give a direction for future research to a deeper understanding of other factors that influence trust in the same context. This is not only but also will give a hint of future research regarding the effect of trust on Snapchat's advertisement to purchase intention at a company website that attracted Snapchat users to its website. Also, it is important to understand more about different genders between men and women regarding of tendency to trust and how different groups perceived quality content as it has been discussed by Zeffane (2015).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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