



**NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

**SEEKING PRODUCT INFORMATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA  
AND THE EFFECT OF THE REVIEWER'S COMMENTS ON  
PURCHASE INTENTION**

**PhD THESIS**

**Sabina KWAKYE**

**Nicosia**

**September, 2024**

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**Nicosia**  
**September, 2024**

**Approval**

We certify that we have read the thesis submitted by Sabina Kwakye titled “**Seeking Product Information on Social Media and the Effect of the Reviewer’s Comments on Purchase Intention**” and that in our combined opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration.

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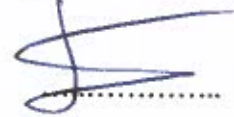
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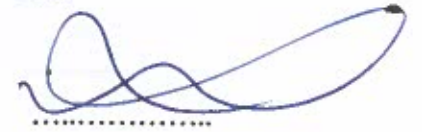
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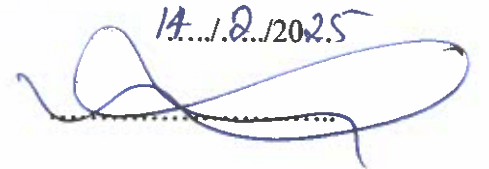


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**Declaration of Ethical Principles**

I hereby declare that all information, documents, analysis and results in this thesis have been collected and presented according to the academic rules and ethical guidelines of Institute of Graduate Studies, Near East University. I also declare that as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced information and data that are not original to this study.

**Sabina Kwakye****26/06/2024**

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**Sabina Kwakye**

**Abstract****Seeking Product Information on Social Media and the Effect of the Reviewer's  
Comments on Purchase Intention****Kwakye, Sabina****Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Ertugan****PhD, Department of Business Administration****September 2024, 39561 pages**

It has become commonplace for most people to conduct product research on social media. In spite of earlier studies, it is unclear how individual reviewers' comments about products influence consumers' decisions to purchase. This is because previous studies addressed the effect of general reviews. In terms of contributions, this study examines how dependent consumers are on social media to learn about products before making a purchase, considering the moderating effects of trust and risk. Surveys were used to gather the data in a quantitative manner. Three hundred and eighty-four (384) students made up the sample. Correlation analysis was conducted after the exploratory factor analysis. Thereafter, the hypotheses of the study were evaluated with the PROCESS macro. It was established from the study respondents that the majority of them looked for product-related comments on social media while looking for details concerning an item, they might find appealing to purchase. In the model used in this study, it was also found that the risk factor lessened the effect of the other factors. In summary, this inquiry is more trustworthy, and its findings assist academics, managers, retailers, and webmasters, among others, by laying the groundwork for future research projects and offering useful advice that may enhance advertising and marketing initiatives, particularly in an artificial intelligence era.

**Key Words:** Reviewers' comments; social media; purchase intention; risk; trust

## Özet

### **Sosyal Medyada Ürün Bilgisinin Aranması ve Yorumcunun Yorumlarının Satın Alma Niyetine Etkisi**

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Çoğu insan için ürünleri araştırmak için sosyal medyayı kullanmak yaygın hale geldi. Önceki araştırmalara rağmen, yorumcuların ürünle ilgili yorumlarını ve bunların satın alma niyetlerine nasıl yol açtığını anlamada bir boşluk var. Katkıları açısından bu çalışma, satın alma niyeti ile sosyal medya arasındaki bağlantıda risk ve güvenin düzenleyici etkisini göz önünde bulundurarak insanların satın alma niyetinde ürün bilgisi için sosyal medyaya bağımlılığını analiz etmektedir. Veriler anketler kullanılarak niceliksel olarak toplanmıştır. Örneklem 384 öğrenciden oluşmuştur. Araştırmanın hipotezleri açıklayıcı faktör analizi ve korelasyon analizi yapıldıktan sonra PROCESS makrosu kullanılarak test edilmiştir. Ankete katılanlar arasında çoğu kişinin, satın almayı düşünebilecekleri bir ürün hakkında bilgi ararken sosyal medyada ürünle ilgili yorumları aradığı doğrulandı. Ayrıca bu çalışmada sunulan modelde risk faktörünün diğer değişkenlerin etkisini azalttığı da görülmüştür. Sonuç olarak, bu araştırma daha güvenilir ve sonuçları akademisyenlere, denetçilere, tüccarlara ve web yöneticilerine, örneğin gelecekteki araştırma çabaları için bir çalışma oluşturmada ve özellikle bu çağda tanıtım çabalarını ve pazarlama faaliyetlerini artırabilecek pratik rehberlik sağlamada fayda sağlar. yapay zeka..

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Eleştirmenlerin yorumları; sosyal medya; satın alma niyeti; risk; güven

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**List of Abbreviations**

<b>MSD:</b>	Media System Dependency
<b>eWOM:</b>	Electronic Word-Of-Mouth
<b>WOM:</b>	Word-Of-Mouth
<b>PI:</b>	Purchase intention
<b>R:</b>	Risk
<b>T:</b>	Trust
<b>DSM:</b>	Dependency on social media for Reviewer's comments
<b>TR</b>	Total Risk
<b>SRP</b>	Seeking reviewers' product-related comments

## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

A large portion of human existence has been impacted by social media (Munsch, 2021). An "online world" has emerged where individuals live since social media hosts a large number of users (Pineida, 2020; Singer and Brooking 2018). The majority of individuals now base many of their major decisions, including those involving purchases, on the material they see or hear on social media (Voramontri and Klieb 2019). It seems almost natural to be on social media these days. Hence, according to Ben Abdelaziz, Saeed, and Benleulmi (2015), social media is currently perceived as a major component affecting judgements made about online purchases.

A person's decision to use a product or service and their willingness to exchange money for it constitute their buy intention, which is the last phase before they make a purchase (Alalwan, 2018). There are a number of considerations before making a purchase. Filelieri et al. (2018) claim that until people are informed about a good or service, there are circumstances in which they are unaware that they need it (Ben Abdelaziz, Saeed, and Benleulmi 2015; Rosário and Raimundo 2021). This is because social media users are exposed to data that influence their propensity to make purchases and aids in their decision-making.

In order to influence consumers' purchase intentions, marketers typically leverage social media platforms to run both paid and organic (or unpaid) advertisements (Jothi and Gaffoor, 2017). Using social media to advertise to specific audiences and sway their purchasing intentions was described by Alalwan (2018). According to De Jans, Cauberghe, and Hudders (2018), the majority of businesses also utilise influencers on social media to market their goods and disseminate information to both current and prospective clients. According to Lim et al. (2017), the rationale behind the utilisation of celebrities and influencers on social media by organisations in their advertisements is because their followers tend to perceive them as trustworthy due to their tendency to relate to them more. Credibility is the most crucial component of internet ads, according to Tran (2017).

Regarding messaging, information, and advertisements, marketers are primarily concerned with how their target and current customers would perceive the veracity of these sources (Tran, 2017). Marketers have realised recently how crucial word-of-mouth recommendations and client evaluations are to enhancing the legitimacy of their

brands, goods, and services. Numerous scholarly investigations have scrutinised the potential influence of online reviews on consumers' purchase intentions, particularly in cases when the evaluations are deemed reliable or credible (Ariffin, Mohan, and Goh 2018; Sa'ait, Kanyan, and Nazrin 2016). An investigation on this subject was conducted by Chan et al. (2017), who found that hotels saw an increase in reservations when they had a high number of current, favourable internet reviews.

It is not surprising that more individuals are utilising social media than conventional media to assess products and services information, given the steady rise in technology usage (Alalwan 2018; Ben Abdelaziz, Saeed, and Benleulmi 2015; Rosário and Raimundo 2021). Previous research has demonstrated that consumers get dependent on social media because of continuously searching for these goods and services on the platform (Ben Abdelaziz, Saeed, and Benleulmi 2015; Kheiravar 2018; Li et al., 2019; Luqiu and Kang 2021). Stated differently, a continual search for product and service material on social media results in a dependence on such platform for information, which ultimately affects the inclination to make a purchase (Alalwan 2018; Luqiu and Kang 2021; Rosário and Raimundo 2021).

### **Statement of the problem**

Social media has significantly changed many facets of human existence, impacting decision-making, communication, and interaction (Munsch, 2021). With millions of users, social media has developed into a simulated "online world" where individuals go about their everyday lives and do important things like buy goods or services (Pineida, 2020; Singer & Brooking, 2018). Social media is now an essential component of online decision-making processes since the information shared their influences consumers' purchasing intentions (Voramontri & Klieb, 2019).

Purchase intention is impacted by a variety of factors and is described as the point at which a person decides to purchase a good or service and is prepared to pay for it (Alalwan, 2018). Users are exposed to product information and reviews on social media, which may catch their attention and affect their purchase propensity (Ben Abdelaziz, Saeed, & Benleulmi, 2015; Rosário & Raimundo, 2021). This is why social media is so important to this process. By leveraging social media influencers to increase their reputation and trustworthiness, marketers utilize these platforms to promote products and services through both organic and paid channels (Alalwan, 2018; De Jans, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2018; Lim et al., 2017; Tran, 2017).

Despite the fact that research on how social media affects consumer behaviour is growing, little is known about how “specific comments” made by reviewers, as opposed to “reviews from social media as a whole,” influence consumers' intentions to make purchases, particularly when such intentions are influenced by perceived risk and trust. Previous research has primarily addressed social media reviews as a group phenomenon, ignoring the complex influences of individual reviewer comments on consumer decision-making (Ariffin, Mohan, & Goh, 2018; Sa'ait, Kanyan, & Nazrin, 2016; Chan et al., 2017).

Additionally, while prior studies have examined social media dependence as a form of platform addiction, minimal research has been conducted on the influence of dependence on social media for information specific to products on purchase intentions (Kheiravar, 2018; Li et al., 2019; Luqiu & Kang, 2021). The current research intended to bridge these research gaps by investigating risk and trust's moderating roles in the relationship between purchase intention and dependence on social media for reviewers' remarks.

### **Purpose of study**

The goal of the present study was to investigate trust and risks' role in the relationship between purchase intentions and dependence on social networks for individual reviewer comments. This study offered a number of new insights. This is the foremost study to concentrate on the nuanced effects of comments made by social media reviewers on the propensity to purchase. Most existing research aggregates communications on social media, with no distinction between the different effects of supposed risk and trustworthiness concerning "individual reviewer comments." Little study has been conducted on risk and trust's effects on social media reviews and purchase intention. Previous studies have focused on the concept of social media reviews and how they affect purchase intention. Studies on the subtle impacts of individual reviewers' comments, as divergent to compounded reviews from social media, is lacking, nonetheless. Thus, the present study attempted to fill in the gap by focussing on the feedback from individual reviewers.

Furthermore, rather than emphasising the need for product information on social media, previous studies on social media dependence focused on people's addictions to platforms. Rather than treating social media addiction, this study focused on dependency on social media, which is the “reliance on social media”. Furthermore, a



diverse group of academically accomplished people with strong social media participation were recruited for this study. These individuals came from several countries and continents and were based in a region (North Cyprus) which has not been previously studied. Thus, this study offers data on the dynamics of social media influence based on replies from people who are aware of and have been exposed to various cultural perspectives and content on social media. Additionally, a diverse pool of participants enhanced the generalisability of the present study's results by reducing skewed replies and, as a result, boosting our comprehension of risk and trust's perceived influence on purchase intentions driven by social media.

### **Significance of study**

Based on resources gathered from previous research, it is quite evident that peer reviews have an important place in online media and as such, affect the purchase intention of existing and potential clients. Online peer reviews however take different forms. The most common type of peer review is what we see on websites and social media sites, mostly on organizations' pages, groups, and typical online consumer communities. These types of peer reviews are extremely popular and as such, they have received massive attention from marketers, consumers, organizations, and other stakeholders. Another form of online peer review that is gaining ground in recent studies is the comment section of organizations' advertisements, published posts, and general comment sections of posts on the products and services of organizations.

In spite of the abundance of research on the connection that exist between peer reviews and purchase intention, there is insufficient studies on the topic of seeking reviewer's comments about products in social media, the dependence on social media for reviewers' comments, and the moderating effects of trust and risks on the relationship between online reviews and purchase intention. The goal of the study was to determine how trust and risk affect the relationship between purchase intention and dependence on social media reviews. In simple words, "do risk and trust make customers perceive social media reviews differently, and does the dependency on social media reviews make customers see the product or service negatively or positively?"

This study launched a guide for this field of inquiry by investigating the controlling role of risk and trust in the connection between purchase intention and reliance on social media evaluations. Prior research has examined the role that reviews

play generally and the impact of social media reviews on purchase intention. Research on how dependent consumers are on social media for product feedback, or how risk and trust influence this dependence, is lacking, nevertheless. Utilising the study's results, organisations can ascertain how risk and trust affect the association between a purchase intention and dependence on social media reviews. If it is proven that individuals depend on social media to read reviews, then greater focus would be required. Additionally, greater focus would be required to handle this trend if it were proven that consumers rely on social media for reviewers' opinions.

The research's conclusions will assist organisations in determining how risk and trust moderate the relationship between purchase intention and dependency on reviewer's comments on social media. Additionally, greater focus would be required to handle this trend if it were proven that consumers depend on reviewers' opinions on social media. In the event that the assumptions prove to be correct, organisations will need to figure out how to use individual peer review to their benefit in the social media space. It would also imply that the opinions of individual social media reviewers should be taken into account and their effects mitigated while producing content for commercials.

### **Research questions**

The research aims to answer the following questions to conclude the study:

Q1. Do people seek product-related comments on social media?

Q2. Do people depend on social media for reviewer's product-related comments?

Q3. Does risk and trust of reviewers' comments affect purchase intention?

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Literature review**

#### **Introduction**

The growing usage of social media in marketing and its bearing on consumer behaviour are the subjects of this overview of the literature. The study commences by scrutinizing the transition in promotional tactics toward social media channels and the significance of reviews in influencing customer decisions. The review discusses how decision-making is made easier by trustworthy and easily obtainable information found online, which increases sales.

The paper then explores the interaction between consumers and media by examining the media system dependency (MSD) paradigm. The study also discusses the social influence theory. It emphasizes how people become informationally dependent on social media and how this affects their intent to make purchases. The review goes into further detail about how perceived risk affects consumer behaviour and how trust in reviewer comments works.

To sum up, the intention behind this review of the research is to offer a comprehensive knowledge of how social media dependency, perceived risk, and trust in reviews affect consumers' purchasing intentions. By looking at these factors, the review offers insights into the complex interactions that exist between social media, customer reviews, and buying behaviour. Following the completion of the literature evaluation, the study's conceptual model, and hypotheses were created in light of the research gap identified by the review.

#### **Theoretical foundation of the study**

##### ***Social Influence Theory***

Through the lens of social influence theory, persons view and respond to actual or perceived social interactions, and how this affects their attitudes, feelings, and behaviours. This theory is crucial to comprehending human behaviour in social circumstances because it offers insightful information about group dynamics, persuasion, and compliance. The hypothesis is based on the notion that social factors roles, conventions, and social interactions have a big impact on people. These social components establish a framework in which people modify their attitudes and behaviours to conform to the demands or deeds of others. The theory delineates

multiple fundamental notions, such as conformity, compliance, and obedience, each of which characterises distinct manifestations of social influence (Kelman, 1958). The theory offers a thorough grasp of how social influences impact human behaviour and decision-making by looking at these ideas.

**Conformity.** The process of altering one's conduct to match the reactions or deeds of others is referred to as conformity, and it frequently results from actual or perceived peer pressure. This behaviour reflects the strong influence that peer pressure and group standards may impact a person's decisions since it is motivated by a desire to blend in, be accepted, or avoid social rejection. There are many ways that conformity might appear, from adjustments in external behaviour to modifications in internal ideas. It frequently happens in social situations when people feel pressured to adopt the viewpoint or conduct of the majority in order to preserve peace, steer clear of controversy, or just fit in. For example, in social settings such as meetings, people may agree with the prevailing viewpoint even while they secretly disagree with it.

This phenomenon demonstrates how people may repress their actual beliefs or take on behaviours they may not necessarily support in order to cope with the pressure to fit in. Because conformity appeals to our innate need for approval from others and social connection, it has a strong influence. People may feel uneasy or anxious when they believe that their opinions or behaviour conflict with those of the group; conformity serves to reduce these feelings. When people have a strong need to fit in, they may follow group norms even when they go against their moral principles or superior judgement.

**Compliance.** Contrarily, compliance entails altering one's conduct in response to a request made explicitly by another individual. Compliance typically results from a clear and explicit request, in contrast to conformity, which is frequently influenced by subliminal and implicit societal forces. Social norms or the perceived authority of the individual making the request are frequently the driving forces behind this type of social influence. For instance, even though they would prefer to go home, a worker might stay late at work because their management urged them to.

The desire to obtain a favourable result or to stay away from unfavourable outcomes, like punishment, social exclusion, or rejection, frequently motivates compliance. People may cooperate with requests even when they do not personally agree with them or perceive their worth in order to prevent confrontation or preserve societal harmony. The power dynamics and societal norms that shape interpersonal

relationships are frequently the source of compliance dynamics. People are more inclined to comply with demands from people they respect or who are in a position of authority, demonstrating how social hierarchies and power dynamics affect how people behave.

**Obedience.** A more hierarchical and structured type of social influence is obedience, in which a person complies with a direct order or direction from a higher authority figure. In contrast to compliance, which is complying with requests, and conformity, which is shaped by group norms, obedience is defined by the overt use of power and authority. The social norms associated with hierarchical relationships and the authority figure's perceived legitimacy are the usual sources of the act of obedience. Obedience can be demonstrated, for example, by soldiers obeying instructions from a commanding officer even when such commands conflict with their personal convictions.

Respect for the person in charge, fear of punishment, and the conviction that they have the right to command behaviour are frequently the main causes of obedience. Social and organisational frameworks can be so engrained with obedience that people may follow instructions even when they are unethical or uncomfortable for them personally. This facet of social influence emphasises how crucial it is to comprehend the relationships between power and authority in influencing people's behaviour, especially when there are significant stakes involved or dire repercussions for disobedience. Giving up one's autonomy to follow the orders of a superior is a common component of obedience, which can have serious moral and ethical ramifications.

To comprehend how social influences affect the conduct of consumers and purchasing decisions, the theory of social influence is commonly applied in marketing. Marketers leverage the idea of "social proof," which suggests that people are inclined to mimic other people's behaviour to react correctly in specific situations, to their advantage (Cialdini, 2019). Social proof, which offers a kind of social validation, is a potent technique for influencing consumer behaviour because it lowers the ambiguity involved in decision-making.

***Social proof*** in marketing can take many different forms, including product evaluations, reviews, consumer testimonials, and endorsements from influencers or well-known people. These components give the impression of popularity and dependability, which inspires others to imitate. Customers are more inclined to believe

in a product and feel comfortable making a similar buying decision when they witness other people using it well.

Additionally, social proof draws on the psychological idea of conformity, which holds that individuals typically behave in ways that align with the views of the majority. Metrics like the quantity of comments, likes, and shares on social media posts, together with ratings and reviews on e-commerce platforms, can be used to track this in digital marketing. Potential customers have a sense of urgency to acquire in order to avoid missing out on a well-liked or well-reviewed product as a result of these obvious signs of other customers' approval and happiness. Furthermore, social proof can be especially useful in lowering perceived risk because it increases the brand's reputation by confirming from other people that the good or service lives up to expectations.

Customer trust and purchasing intent are significantly impacted by social proof, which includes testimonials, online reviews, and endorsements from influencers (Aral, 2021). By offering third-party validation, these types of social proof function as persuasive instruments that lessen the perceived risk involved in a transaction. A study by Chen, Wang, and Xie (2011) found that consumers are further disposed to purchase an item if they perceive that others have done so and have given positive reviews. This phenomenon highlights how important peer influence is in instances where consumers make decisions since they seek the opinions and experiences of others to help them make their own decisions. A product's perceived popularity and excellence are reinforced by the obvious support of other customers, a phenomenon known as the "bandwagon effect," which is sparked by positive reviews and endorsements.

Since social media and digital technologies have grown in popularity, the techniques of social influence have proliferated. Likes, shares, endorsements, and comments serve as forms of influence on platforms on social media such as "Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram," which serve as forums for user interaction and communication (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020). These interactions serve as modern-day instances of social proof, where a person's decisions and opinions are heavily impacted by the clear involvement of others. Globally, the impacts of social influence are amplified by the quick dissemination of information and the simplicity with which individuals can voice their thoughts and endorsements. Customers may now more easily than ever access peer evaluations and feedback on social media, which can instantly change their perceptions of brands and influence their intention to buy.

Among the finest illustrations of social influence in the digital age is influencer marketing. Influencers are individuals with substantial social media followings and who, in the eyes of their audience, are reliable sources of information about ideas, goods, or companies. Influencers have the ability to shape attitudes, trends, and consumer behaviour because they are trustworthy sources of knowledge and counsel (Lou & Yuan, 2019); Because they are seen as genuine and approachable, their endorsements have a lot of weight and frequently bridge the gap between celebrity endorsements and personal suggestions.

Influencer marketing is a powerful tactic for companies trying to get more awareness and credibility because it takes use of the faith that followers have in these social media stars. Brands may access into trusted networks and take advantage of the social impact held by well-known influencers by partnering with them.

A thorough framework for comprehending how people is impacted by the social environments in which they live and work is provided by the Social Influence Theory. Applications for this idea can be found in several areas, such as marketing, organisational behaviour, digital media, health, and education. Through the application of social influence theory, professionals can devise more efficacious strategies to modify actions, sway judgements, and generate superior results in many contexts. For example, in public health, knowing social influence can be used to create campaigns that use group dynamics and peer norms to effectively change health-related behaviours.

Managers can impact corporate culture, increase compliance with organisational goals, and promote collaboration in organisational contexts by utilising the ideas from “social influence theory”. Social influence theory is a useful tool for analysing and directing human behaviour across a variety of fields since it can be applied to varied circumstances.

By applying this theory, the study aims to explore the ways in which risk and trust mediate the relationship between the intention to purchase and seeking out social media reviewers' opinions. The study aims to examine consumers' dependence on social media reviews for purchasing decisions is influenced by their perceived legitimacy and trustworthiness, by using social influence theory to this setting. The study will also look at the degree to which reviews on social media impact the intention to purchase goods or services, influenced by perceived risks and trust. The results of this study will advance our comprehension of how social influence functions in digital

situations and offer insights into the psychological mechanisms underpinning online consumer behaviour, when considering individual reviewer comments.

### ***Media system dependency theory***

“Media System Dependency (MSD)” Theory examines how people, media, and society interact, with a focus on the influence that media systems have on audiences and the other way around. This theory plays a critical role in explaining how the media shape’s public opinion, behaviour, and societal change. Given that the media is a vital source of information, entertainment, and guidance, the MSD Theory offers a context for understanding how people and media systems are interdependent. This relationship is dynamic and reciprocal, reflecting how audience requirements and societal structures generate media content, which in turn influences those same audiences and structures. The interaction is not one-sided.

Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur created the Media System Dependency Theory in the 1970s in response to earlier ideas that viewed media effects as mostly uniform and direct. On the words of Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur's (1976) theory, the stability of social structures and the pursuit of individual goals, such as the desire for knowledge, comprehension, and direction in daily life, have an impact on how dependent people are on media. According to the theory, there are three primary categories of dependency: play, understanding, and direction. The various ways that individuals engage with media are demonstrated by these categories.

**Understanding.** Understanding describes how the media plays a vital part in assisting people in making sense of the world around them, acting as a crucial interpretive tool for events, problems, and the larger surroundings. Media outlets offer narratives and frameworks that affect how individuals interpret information and experience reality through news broadcasts, documentaries, and other informational content. The media not only informs the public but also shapes its understanding of intricate social, political, and cultural issues by providing context, background, and expert commentary. This component of media dependency is especially important during uncertain or crisis situations, when people look to the media for guidance and comfort, depending on reliable sources to help them understand and navigate the events that are happening.

**Orientation.** Orientation refers to the use of media as a behaviour guide that provides guidance, examples of behaviour, and patterns for various facets of life.



When people turn to the media in order to learn how to act in particular social contexts, make educated judgements, or conform to prevailing cultural norms and expectations, this aspect of media dependency is clearly visible. In addition to offering job guidance, fashion trends, lifestyle recommendations, and even moral or ethical standards, the media frequently acts as a point of reference for people who are looking for guidance. Self-help books, advice columns, and reality TV shows, for example, frequently provide situations that viewers may identify with or aspire to, which influences viewers' social and personal behaviour. This advice covers the development of long-term ideals and ideologies in addition to immediate decision-making.

**Play.** "Play" refers to the use of media for escape, enjoyment, and leisure, emphasising the role that media plays in giving people a way to unwind and have fun. In this dimension, media provide people with an essential way of escape from the stresses and strains of everyday life, allowing them to relax and momentarily detach from their obligations. Movies, TV series, and video games, are examples of entertainment that social media platforms offer; they provide a variety of content to meet a wide range of likes and preferences. This allows consumers to select the experiences that best fit their requirements or moods at any given time. Beyond being a simple diversion, the media's play role promotes cultural involvement and socialisation since shared media experiences frequently serve as the starting point for interpersonal interactions, community building, and conversations. This facet of media reliance highlights how important entertainment is for conserving psychological health and general well-being, in addition to creating a feeling of community and connection in a culture where media is pervasive.

The MSD Theory is especially useful in the marketing industry since it clarifies how media influences customer behaviour. Customers rely largely on the media to educate them about goods, services, and brands in a market that is becoming more and more digital (Kheiravar, 2018). Because people rely on media to help them sort through the deluge of options available in the market, brand message, advertising, and customer reviews are more effective because of this reliance on media for consumer guidance. Because they rely increasingly on digital media to make judgements about what to buy, consumers are more susceptible to the influence of the media because the content they receive greatly affects how they behave and view the world.

The advent of social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter providing spaces for peer reviews, influencer marketing, and user-generated content, has

highlighted this dependence even more. This change has further entwined media consumption with customers' opinions of brands and their decision-making processes. Users' attitudes and decisions are influenced by the information they come across online when they interact with content offered by brands, influencers, and peers. Social media's instantaneous and participatory nature exposes users to content that has the capacity to alter their opinions and behaviours on a regular basis, allowing for more individualised and pervasive media impact.

Because digital media allows for real-time communication and more audience interaction, social movements have become more widespread and impactful. Social media platforms are now indispensable resources for planning demonstrations, spreading awareness, and promoting social change (Kheiravar, 2018). The emergence of social media has further highlighted this need by providing platforms for peer evaluations, influencer marketing, and user-generated content on websites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. This change has further entwined media consumption with customers' opinions of brands and their decision-making processes. Users' attitudes and decisions are influenced by the information they come across online when they interact with content offered by brands, influencers, and peers. People are continuously exposed to content that has the power to change their views and behaviours because of the immediate and social media's interactive features, which enables media influence to be more individualised and widespread.

The MSD Theory emphasises the media's ability to influence society change in addition to consumer behaviour. Media is a useful tool for social movements, in the spread of information, rallying support, and framing concerns in ways that the general public finds relatable (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989). Among the most significant features of the media's role in promoting social transformation is its ability to influence public opinion and behaviour. With the introduction of digital media, which enables more interactivity and real-time contact between movements and their followers, this has been particularly clear.

Particularly, social media platforms have developed into vital resources for planning protests, spreading awareness, and supporting social causes; they frequently cut through traditional media routes to directly reach audiences throughout the world (Kheiravar, 2018). Through these platforms, the democratisation of media has given people and organisations the ability to affect change more quickly and broadly than in the past.

The theory of media system dependency provides a thorough framework for comprehending the dynamic interactions that occur between people, the media, and society. The theory sheds light on how media shapes public opinion, political behaviour, consumer habits, health communication, catastrophe response, and wider societal transitions by highlighting the interdependent elements of understanding, orientation, and play. The applications and consequences of MSD Theory are still essential for comprehending the function that media plays in contemporary society, even as it continues to change.

This study made use of the Media System Dependency (MSD) Theory to scrutinise the intricate dynamics of how the concepts of risk and trust affect the relationship between asking for social media reviewers' comments and intention to purchase. By doing this, it hopes to further our understanding of how media affects society in the digital age. Understanding the elements that affect purchasing decisions is essential in today's world of ever-growing connectivity, where social media significantly impacts how customers behave.

MSD Theory offers an insightful paradigm for researching how individuals depend on media, particularly social media, for guidance and information. Customers are becoming more and more dependent on social media platforms for reading reviews and comments prior to making purchases. Individual perceptions of danger and trust, however, moderate this dependence, thus it is not consistent.

This research aimed to clarify the intricacies of how risk and trust, in conjunction with MSD Theory, interact to shape consumer behaviour. It specifically looks at whether the degree of trust people have in reviewers and the perceived risk of a purchase affect how reliant people are on social media for reviewer opinions. By stressing how media dependency is a dynamic interaction driven by individual psychological features rather than merely a passive reception of information, this strategy provides a broader viewpoint in the decision-making process.

## **Reviews**

Businesses are increasingly employing social media in their marketing operations to promote their products and services (Amin, 2018). Social networking sites' popularity has increased and has brought about changes in how consumers investigate items and make choices about what to purchase. Internet users usually scan web pages rather than reading them thoroughly to swiftly and effectively locate the

information they require (Nielsen, 2018). The growing influence of social networking components, which provide users with several channels for sharing and receiving recommendations related to consumption through electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), complements this scanning behaviour (Al Mahmud, 2020).

Customers' decision-making processes are becoming increasingly individualised in the present digital era. Customers typically look up internet reviews of products before making a purchase instead of relying just on product marketing messaging, which can be perceived as biased and driven by a desire to sell. This conduct is motivated by the presumption that word-of-mouth (WOM) communication, including testimonials and online reviews, is an authentic, free source of information derived from actual experiences with the product or service (Sa'ait, Kanya, & Nazrin, 2016). Consumer trust and confidence are significantly shaped by the perceived relatability and authenticity of these customer reviews.

Studies have indicated that because they are viewed as originating from an unbiased standpoint, people tend to view online evaluations as having greater credibility than traditional marketing. Customer evaluations typically present a more balanced perspective, weighing both the advantages and disadvantages of a product, in contrast to advertising, which are skilfully written by marketers to emphasise the finest features while maybe downplaying any drawbacks. Customers that are searching for trustworthy information to guide their decisions find resonance in this transparency.

According to Dellarocas (2003), reviews get credibility from their source, which is other customers who have no financial incentive to recommend the product. Consequently, compared to traditional media marketing, these evaluations often have a greater influence on decision-making and customer behaviour. Peer reviews are now valued more highly than marketing messaging, which emphasises how crucial authenticity and trust are becoming to the consumer experience.

Social psychology underpins the idea of social proof, which holds that people often seek to the behaviours and viewpoints of others for guidance, particularly in unknown or unclear circumstances. When it comes to online reviews, this phenomenon is especially noticeable because customers rely on other people's opinions and experiences to help them make well-informed judgements about what to buy (Cialdini, 2019). Put another way, prospective consumers are more likely to think that a good or

service is dependable and high-quality if they hear positive testimonials from previous users.

Online reviews reveal other customers' opinions and behaviours, which makes them a powerful source of social proof. Reassurances serve to reassure prospective customers that their choice to acquire a product is well-founded, based on the contentment and experiences of people who have already made the same decision. This validation is essential for lowering the perceived risk of a purchase, particularly for customers exploring unknown companies or products (Cialdini, 2019).

Furthermore, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) has become more powerful due to social media platforms' quick and easy accessibility. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) spreads quickly and widely, instantly reaching a huge number of individuals, unlike traditional word-of-mouth, which is limited by the scope and speed of interpersonal meetings. Due to their vast networks and quick messaging capabilities, social media platforms are excellent venues for reviews, recommendations, and user opinions to proliferate (Cialdini, 2019). This immediacy not only increases the power of eWOM but also enables marketers to interact with customers in real time, impacting consumer views of brands and decisions to buy on a far greater scale.

Social media's extensive reach and the simplicity with which customers may share their thoughts and experiences online make electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) a highly effective tool for marketers. Good feedback and referrals have the power to spread quickly, giving a product or service more exposure and legitimacy. However, negative reviews can spread just as quickly, which emphasises how important it is for firms to actively monitor and manage their online reputation (Cialdini, 2019). In today's digital world, social proof, represented by online reviews and electronic word-of-mouth has a bigger impact than ever on consumer behaviour and marketing strategies.

Furthermore, brand-customer interactions on social media platforms possess a substantial influence on consumer opinions and purchasing decisions. In the digital world, where individuals are more connected and vocal than ever, the nature and value of these communications greatly affect how consumers view goods and businesses. Companies that actively engage with their audience by responding to enquiries, addressing grievances, and expressing appreciation for comments can foster a feeling of loyalty and trust among customers and improve their brand's reputation generally (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020).

Social media engagement on a regular and relevant basis can establish a win-win feedback loop for the company's clients and brand. Customers' satisfaction levels can be greatly increased when they perceive a brand to be attentive and sensitive to their demands and concerns. This response demonstrates to consumers that the brand appreciates them and is dedicated to making sure they have a good experience, which can promote long-term loyalty and repeat business (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020). From the standpoint of the brand, this kind of interaction presents a chance to establish a solid, favourable reputation. Brands may show their dedication to providing high-quality customer service as well as their readiness to hear from and act upon customer feedback by publicly and effectively responding to customer questions and complaints. A brand can differentiate itself from its rivals by being transparent and responsive, projecting a trustworthy and customer-focused image.

According to Mangold and Faulds (2009), brands can greatly improve their public image and fortify customer connections when they use social media channels to handle client complaints and feedback. Furthermore, social media interactions provide a special chance for brands to become more approachable and relatable by humanising themselves. Perceiving a brand as more than just a nameless corporation that cares about its experiences increases the likelihood that customers will develop a personal connection with it. Customers are further disposed to recommend and return to a product when they are happy with it. Increased brand endorsement and loyalty may result from this intimate relationship.

Furthermore, through the acquisition of valuable insights from this exchange, companies can enhance their comprehension of the needs and desires of their clientele. Brands are able to recognise patterns, foresee possible problems, and adjust their offerings by examining the reviews and comments they receive on social media. Over time, this proactive strategy helps to create a stronger, more flexible brand while also enhancing the consumer experience.

Online reviews, which are a major factor in determining purchase decisions, have a noteworthy influence on consumer activities in the digital marketplace. Both their quantity and quality are highly influential. The general opinion reflected in these evaluations, whether favourable or unfavourable, has a significant influence on customers' plans to purchase a product. A product that obtains a lot of evaluations is more likely to be seen by potential customers and acquire popularity, giving the impression that it is widely used and accepted. Hu, Liu, and Zhang (2019) have drawn

attention to this phenomenon, suggesting that consumers are likely to infer a product's popularity and dependability considering how many reviews it has received, independent of the specific content of those assessments.

Customer behaviour is also greatly influenced by the overall sentiment that the reviews represent. Positive reviews reinforce the notion that the product is of excellent quality and that other customers have had positive experiences with it, which can raise consumer confidence and increase the likelihood of purchase (Hu, Liu, and Zhang, 2019). Conversely, a high percentage of unfavourable reviews may discourage prospective customers by making them doubt the product's dependability or worth. Based on the experiences of others, this group emotion serves as a type of social proof, influencing customers to make a purchase or not.

The breadth and specificity of the evaluations' content matter just as much as their quantity and overall emotion. Detailed product reviews that provide clear and comprehensive insights typically have a greater impact on prospective customers than those that are too general or unclear. Thorough evaluations furnish buyers with significant insights regarding the attributes, functionality, and possible limitations of the merchandise, empowering them to arrive at more knowledgeable conclusions.

Prospective customers can more accurately determine whether a product will satisfy their requirements and expectations when reviewers share their experiences with particular features of the product, such as its simplicity of use, durability, or encounters with customer support. This degree of information is particularly engaging since it helps bridge the gap between the product's marketing claims and users' real experiences. Customers frequently rely on these in-depth evaluations to confirm the veracity of the data supplied by the manufacturer and to learn about features of the product that might not be immediately clear from the description or photos (Hu, Liu, and Zhang, 2019). Reviews that include comparisons to related items and clear, tangible examples of the product in action add a lot of value by assisting customers in making better decisions.

The number and calibre of reviews, along with the perceived reliability and validity of the review's source, significantly influence the review's perceived worth to potential customers. How much weight a customer gives to the information presented is largely determined by how reliable the review source is. Reviews from verified customers, those who have been shown to have really bought the product, are typically taken at face value. This verification gives the review an extra degree of legitimacy by

assuring other prospective customers that the comments are based on real experiences rather than made-up or biased data.

Furthermore, reviews from people with a great deal of knowledge or experience with the product category are frequently seen as more trustworthy and instructive. These reviewers are thought to possess a greater comprehension of the attributes, performance, and quality of the product, which enables them to offer more perceptive assessments. For instance, a thorough evaluation from a person with a lot of experience utilising comparable items might provide a more complex viewpoint that new users may find especially helpful (Barbro, Mudambi & Schuff, 2020). This degree of experience might lessen the uncertainty frequently connected with online shopping by giving potential customers greater confidence in the product's advantages or disadvantages.

The reliability of the source becomes even more important in light of the frequency of fabricated or biased evaluations. Customers are becoming more conscious of the existence of fake reviews, whether they are deliberately critical evaluations intended to harm a competitor's reputation or excessively favourable endorsements intended to artificially increase a product's rating. Customers who become sceptical may start to doubt the veracity and accuracy of the evaluations they read as a result of this awareness. Luca and Zervas (2016) examine how the increase in fraudulent reviews has heightened customer vigilance, leading them to look for indicators of credibility such confirmed purchases, in-depth personal experience narratives, and consistency among reviews.

The effect of a review's source reliability on its perceived utility is also related to the larger online economy, where consumers heavily rely on trust when making decisions (Barbro, Mudambi & Schuff, 2020). When consumers are unable to physically inspect things before making a purchase, they greatly depend on the opinions of others to determine the suitability and quality of a product. A review's perceived credibility not only increases the review's value but also helps to establish trust in the product and the site hosting it. In response, websites such as Yelp, TripAdvisor, and Amazon have put in place mechanisms to confirm the legitimacy of reviews. These mechanisms include labelling reviews from confirmed buyers, employing algorithms to identify questionable behaviour, and letting people rank how helpful a review is. The goal of these initiatives was to improve the review system's general dependability so that users may make more informed selections.



In conclusion, internet evaluations play a key role in contemporary marketing tactics since they offer important information and have a big impact on customer choices. Using eWOM wisely and interacting with customers on social media will remain crucial to a business's success as it navigates the ever-changing digital landscape. Businesses hoping to improve their marketing efficacy and establish enduring relationships with their clientele must comprehend the intricacies of Internet reviews and how they influence consumer behaviour.

### **Social media comments**

It is essential to comprehend the part user comments play in digital communication as more and more businesses use social media platforms for marketing. Social media remarks have developed into an essential element that greatly affects consumer behaviour and brand perception. Social media commenting is the process through which users respond to content provided by individuals, groups, and companies through posting comments on social media. Text updates, images, videos, articles, and ads are just a few of the social media posts that have these comments.

As a dynamic platform for user interaction, feedback, and the growth of online communities, social media comments are an essential part of online communication. Users can engage in real-time communication by sharing their ideas, opinions, and experiences on a variety of issues thanks to these comments (Chen, 2019). This exchange of ideas is essential because it not only gives people a platform to voice their opinions, but it also encourages discussion and debate, which makes the internet a livelier and more interactive place.

Social media comments play a function that goes beyond simple communication; they have a significant impact on public opinion and the wider conversation about a range of topics (Chen, 2019). Users contribute to the narrative surrounding postings, articles, and videos by highlighting or disputing things they disagree with or by highlighting portions of the content that speak to them. This collective input has the power to influence public opinion since user feedback aggregates frequently represent the dominant viewpoints in a community or society at large.

Moreover, comments made on social media significantly influence how information is viewed and shared on other platforms (Kim and Johnson, 2020). The prominence of comments can amplify specific opinions and promote the spread of content, particularly those that are liked, upvoted, or otherwise supported by other

users. A thoughtful analysis or a thought-provoking question, might increase the visibility of the original post and encourage additional interaction, so expanding its audience. Because they have the power to influence the conversation's direction and the virality of material, comments serve as both a reflection and a shaping of public opinion. Participation from users in the form of likes, responses, and shares is also very important. Comments with a higher number of likes and frequent replies are typically regarded as more influential and credible (Xiao & Li, 2020). This exchange emphasizes the value of both the comments made by individuals and the responses they receive from the community.

Building communities also depends on the social component of comments on social media. Regular engagement in comment sections helps users connect with other like-minded people, which fosters the development of online communities based on common interests, values, or objectives. These groups can enhance users' social media experiences by offering assistance, promoting a feeling of community, and facilitating idea sharing.

Moreover, brands, companies, and content producers can benefit greatly from social media comments. By providing clear insights into the opinions, preferences, and worries of the audience, they help content producers better understand how their work is seen and what subjects appeal to their target audience (Liu & Park, 2020). In order to better craft messages that correspond with the expectations and interests of the audience, this feedback loop can be used to guide future content strategies.

One form of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is social media comments. eWOM is an electronic form of word-of-mouth in which customers share their thoughts and first-hand experiences with goods and services. According to recent studies, eWOM on social networking sites has the potential to affect the purchases that consumers make (Chen, 2019). Comments influence final purchase decisions by giving prospective customers information on the functionality, quality, and satisfaction of the product (Liu & Park, 2020).

Social media comments are a great source of real-time feedback because of their accessibility and immediacy. This makes them an invaluable tool for customers looking for reliable information. Since social media comments are user-generated content rather than commercials, which are occasionally perceived as biased, people view social media comments as more trustworthy than traditional advertising (Smith, 2019).

Social media remarks influence both brand impression and consumer behaviour. Good feedback has the power to improve a brand's reputation by encouraging customer loyalty and trust. On the other hand, unfavourable remarks might harm a brand's reputation, resulting in a drop in customer confidence and possible revenue (Jones, 2020). According to Kim and Johnson's (2020) study, companies that actively interact with consumers in the comments section can lessen the effect of unfavourable remarks and enhance consumer perception of their businesses.

In addition, social media comments, both in quantity and quality, have a big impact on how customers behave and how they view a good or service. A lot of encouraging and upbeat comments can lead to a "bandwagon effect," in which the product's apparent acceptance and popularity inspire more people to buy it on the belief that if the majority of people feel content with it, then they will be too (Zhou & Duan, 2019). A product's success can be increased by this impact, which increases its desirability merely due to its extensive support.

On the other hand, even if the product is of excellent quality, a significant number of unfavourable reviews might have a negative effect and discourage potential customers (Park & Lee, 2019). Negative reviews, particularly when they take up much of the discourse, might make potential buyers doubtful and uneasy. This makes them wonder about the product's worth and dependability, which eventually discourages them from buying it. This highlights the significant impact that social dynamics seen in online comments may have on consumer choices and emphasises how crucial it is for firms to manage and interact with their online communities successfully.

Participation from users in the comments section can have a big impact on perceptions and choices since it creates a forum for vibrant discussions and idea sharing that offer more in-depth understanding of the characteristics and functionality of products (Ngai, Tao, & Moon, 2019). Discussion participants frequently share personal stories, pose queries, and offer comments that aren't always present in the official product specifications. Engaging in this type of interaction allows prospective customers to weigh a wider range of viewpoints and insights before making a purchase, which promotes better informed decision-making.

Additionally, when businesses actively encourage and take part in these exchanges, they strengthen their bonds with clients while also improving the calibre of the conversations. Companies can boost trust and loyalty by exhibiting a dedication

to openness and customer service by answering enquiries, resolving issues, and providing insightful information (Hajli, 2018; Ngai, Tao, & Moon, 2019).

Creating successful marketing strategies needs awareness of the impact of comments made on social media. To establish trustworthiness and social evidence, brands might use positive remarks in their marketing campaigns. To demonstrate their dedication to client happiness and ongoing development, they can also proactively respond to unfavourable remarks (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

Social media comment analysis and monitoring offer insightful information about consumer preferences and industry trends. Targeted marketing campaigns, improved customer service, and product development can all benefit from this data (Cheng & Jiang, 2020). Although comments on social media have many advantages, they can sometimes present difficulties. The possibility of spam and phoney remarks can skew people's perceptions of what real feedback is worth. Consequently, businesses must put procedures into place to authenticate comments and preserve the integrity of their online presence (Luca & Zervas, 2016).

Furthermore, because social media comments are publicly visible, corporations must carefully balance ethical and privacy issues. To keep customers' trust, critical situations must be handled openly and with respect for user privacy (Moriuchi, 2020). Social media comments are an essential component of digital marketing strategies since they have a big impact on customer behaviour and brand impression. Brands may boost consumer engagement, establish trust, and improve their reputation by comprehending the dynamics of comment interactions and making efficient use of them. Maintaining a competitive edge will depend on your ability to read the subtleties of social media remarks as the digital world changes.

### **Purchase intention**

Marketing researchers should focus on purchase intention because it has a significant impact on consumer behaviour and sales results (Monfared et al., 2021). Knowing what influences consumers' decisions to purchase a good or service is essential to developing effective marketing tactics. The likelihood that a consumer will purchase a specific good or service is referred to as purchase intention. It is a multifaceted, intricate construct influenced by social, psychological, and economic factors.

These days, social media can significantly influence customers' intents to make purchases. Consumer behaviour is greatly impacted by eWOM on social media platforms. By fostering trust and offering social proof to prospective customers, positive eWOM can greatly increase purchase intention (Zhu, Cheng, & Liang, 2019). Customers who view social media content as credible are more likely to form favourable buy intentions, according to research by Erkan and Evans (2018).

Another important factor influencing buying intention is brand trust. Consumers who think a company is trustworthy and dependable, more probably intend to make a purchase from them. According to Papapas, Giannakos, and Chrissikopoulos (2019), trust increases the likelihood of buying intention by lowering the perceived risk involved with the transaction. Purchase intention is also highly influenced by brand perception, which encompasses reputation and image. Positive brand perceptions can enhance consumers' emotional attachment to a brand, increasing their likelihood of making a purchase (Kim, Kim, & Hwang, 2020).

Customers' decisions to buy can be greatly influenced by the amount and valence (positive or negative) of internet reviews. Comprehensive, current, and reliable reviews have demonstrated a more favourable influence on purchase intention (Park and Nicolau, 2019; Filieri, 2019). Customer intents to buy are influenced by online reviews, which are a valuable source of information.

The whole evaluation of a product's usefulness based on what is provided as opposed to what is obtained is known as perceived value; it is one of the most significant elements influencing purchase intention. Customers are more inclined to plan to buy goods that they believe to be high-quality (Grewal, Roggeveen, & Nordfält, 2020). Purchase intention is greatly influenced by perceived quality, or the view of the client about the overall quality or superiority of a product (Zeithaml, 1988).

Purchase intention is directly impacted by customer behaviour towards a brand or product that are developed as a result of personal experiences or outside influences. Purchase intention is more likely when one has a positive opinion of a product (Ajzen, 1991). Additionally, emotions are important. While negative emotions can discourage a purchase, pleasant feelings like enthusiasm and enjoyment can encourage it (Bagozzi, Gopinath, & Nyer, 2019).

Purchase intention may be influenced by cultural influences as well. Diverse cultural backgrounds give rise to distinct consumer behaviours and expectations, which in turn impact the formation of purchase intentions (De Mooij, 2019). For

example, individualist cultures may emphasize personal preferences and benefits to the self, while collectivist societies may place greater value on peer pressure and societal standards.

The website of the Psychology Encyclopaedia states that purchasing behavior is a component of consumer behavior and includes pre-purchase, post-purchase, consumption, appraisal, and disposal actions. The decision to purchase a product was primarily influenced by the product's worth and social media recommendations from other customers. The results show that the evaluation of social media advertising was influenced by creative aspects, attention-grabbing factors, emotional appeal, and celebrity endorsement. If the aforementioned characteristics were given enough attention, social media marketing may become more successful, and customer purchase intent could rise.

A plethora of intricately interacting factors, including customer attitudes and emotions, perceived value and quality, online reviews, social media and eWOM, and cultural influences, all impact purchase intention. By better understanding these drivers, marketers can develop more effective strategies to increase consumers' purchase intentions; staying abreast of these elements as the digital landscape evolves will be crucial to retaining a competitive edge in the market. This study intends to contribute to this body of knowledge by examining the relationship between individual comments and purchase intention.

## **Risk**

Risk as a concept is complex and important in several areas of decision-making, including project management, healthcare, finance, and environmental studies. Making wise decisions and reducing unfavourable consequences requires an understanding of risk, including its nature, evaluation, and management techniques. Traditionally, risk has been defined as the possibility of a bad outcome or the chance that something bad may happen (Aven, 2016). Risk and uncertainty are inextricably related, and it can be quantified in terms of impact and likelihood. Risk is defined as the probability of an event happening, multiplied by its effects, according to Kaplan and Garrick (1981).

Risk perceptions held by individuals and organisations are significantly shaped by psychological biases, cultural background, and personal experiences. Psychological biases, such as confirmation bias or optimism bias, can cause people to underestimate

or overlook risks due to pre-existing beliefs or emotional responses. Cultural background also influences risk perception by framing how risks are understood and prioritised within different societies, with varying norms and values influencing what is considered acceptable or alarming. Personal experiences also significantly impact risk perception, as people may be more or less fearful of certain risks based on past experiences or personal experiences (Slovic, 2016).

The subjective character of risk perception emphasises the need to address and take into account a variety of viewpoints and biases, which makes it especially significant for risk management methods and policy creation. In order to establish plans and policies that connect with many stakeholders and have a higher chance of being adopted and implemented successfully, effective risk management must take these subjective elements into account (Slovic, 2016). Acknowledging and reducing the impact of psychological and cultural elements can result in more thorough and sophisticated risk management procedures that more closely match the real risks and anxieties of the impacted communities.

Risk's social and psychological dimensions play a major role in defining people's perceptions of and responses to danger in their communities, as well as how they behave in different situations. Effective risk communication becomes essential in public health and safety issues because it is essential in influencing public opinion and behaviour (Renn, 2018). Effective communication helps dispel the mystery surrounding possible dangers and gives the community the knowledge it needs to assess the kind and seriousness of threats. A timely and correct dissemination of information not only fosters public trust in authority but also improves the public's capacity for making informed judgements.

To effectively communicate risks, one must listen to concerns with empathy, speak in an understandable manner, and be transparent about uncertainties and risk management procedures. This strategy reduces panic, promotes adherence to safety precautions, and creates a collaborative environment where people are more inclined to take preventive action and support neighbourhood-wide projects. Risk communication strategies prioritise accuracy and transparency, making communities better equipped to manage risks and negotiate crises with confidence and resilience (Renn, 2018).

Since different cultural attitudes can have a substantial impact on how risks are assessed and addressed, cultural influences are important in defining how risk is

perceived as well as managed. The perception of risk varies greatly throughout cultures; historical events, social conventions, and cultural values may lead certain societies to consider particular hazards as more manageable or tolerable than others. Cultures that are very individualistic, for example, might value individual freedom and creativity even in the face of great danger, whereas cultures that are highly collectivist might place greater emphasis on prudence and the welfare of the society, which would lead to more conservative risk management strategies (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982; Renn, 2018). Understanding and acknowledging these cultural differences is crucial for creating successful risk management methods in today's globalised world, as contacts between people from different cultural backgrounds are becoming more frequent.

Incorporating cultural perspectives into risk management strategies guarantees that policies and procedures are culturally aware and have a higher chance of being approved and put into effect. Organisations and governments can better address the concerns and expectations of various populations by incorporating cultural insights into risk management techniques. This can result in more inclusive and successful risk management solutions (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982).

In order to maintain a delicate balance between environmental preservation and economic growth, sustainable development strategies increasingly recognise the significance of integrating risk management into both industrial operations and policy-making. This strategy necessitates a thorough comprehension of potential environmental effects as well as the capacity to foresee and reduce hazards related to industrial operations (Kasperson, 2018).

Through the integration of risk management, industries can detect possible threats, assess the gravity and probability of these risks, and put policies in place to stop or lessen negative environmental impacts. This guarantees that industrial operations continue to be profitable and do not exhaust the resources they depend on, in addition to aiding in the preservation of natural ecosystems. Here, sustainable development entails proactive risk management and mitigation in order to establish robust and sustainable industrial practices, rather than merely upholding the status quo.

The application of risk assessment tools in policy-making is essential for directing choices that promote sustainable resource management. With the aid of these instruments, policymakers are able to assess the possible long-term effects of different economic endeavours and balance them against environmental expenses. Risk



assessments offer a framework for well-informed decision-making that prioritises sustainability by using scientific evidence and predictive models. This guarantees that environmental health is not sacrificed for economic progress, enabling a more balanced approach to development (Kasperson, 2018).

Furthermore, incorporating risk management into the process of formulating policies aids in the development of rules and rewards that motivate businesses to embrace more environmentally friendly practices, therefore promoting a mutually beneficial relationship between financial goals and environmental care. In general, encouraging responsible industrial expansion and guaranteeing the welfare of future generations depend on the connection of risk management with sustainable development initiatives (Kasperson, 2018).

Risk is a ubiquitous idea that influences decision-making in many different contexts. To reduce unfavourable results and accomplish desired goals, risk management and understanding are essential in numerous fields such as finance, healthcare, environmental studies, and project management. Because risk is multifaceted, it necessitates a comprehensive strategy that includes theoretical underpinnings, useful tactics, and an understanding of psychological and cultural influences. As the world grows increasingly interconnected and complex, effective risk management will remain a critical issue. The present study intends to contribute to the existing literature, by examining the moderating effect of risk on the relationship between seeking social media reviewers' comments and purchase intention.

## **Trust**

A basic component of human interactions, trust is important for interpersonal relationships, corporate behaviour, and societal dynamics. It affects how people make decisions and work together, and how systems like healthcare and financial markets operate. According to Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995), trust is the capacity of one party to be open to the acts of another in the expectation that the latter will fulfil a specific task that is necessary for the former, even in the absence of the other party's capacity to be watched over or managed. Reliability, competence, honesty, and kindness are all necessary components of trust (McKnight & Chervany, 2001).

According to Simpson (2007), a deeper level of trust improves a relationship's overall quality by helping partners overcome obstacles and fortifying their bond. As the cornerstone of emotional intimacy and harmonious relationships, trust is essential

to the stability and fulfilment of intimate partnerships. People are more likely to have a deeper emotional connection when there is trust between them because they feel confident in their partner's honesty and dependability. This feeling of security lowers the likelihood of disagreements and miscommunications, creating an atmosphere that is conducive to candid and open communication. Building consistent and dependable behaviour over time, repeated interactions, and regular fulfilment of commitments, helps strengthen the perception that one's spouse is trustworthy and encouraging. Building trust requires both parties to meet each other's expectations as well as to show a commitment to the partnership by acting with integrity and honesty.

With the growth of digital platforms and e-commerce, trust has become a vital component in enabling online transactions. According to Gefen, Karahanna, and Straub (2003), a number of important factors, such as website design, perceived security, privacy rules, and prior experiences, affect trust in online environments. Users' trust in the authenticity of the company can be increased by creating a visually appealing and well-designed website that is simple to use. Additionally important is perceived security, since customers want to feel certain that their money and personal data is safe from possible intrusions.

Transparency is facilitated by clearly stated privacy policies, which increases confidence. Additionally, as positive past interactions lead to increased confidence, past experiences with the website or similar platforms can have a substantial impact on consumer trust. Customer trust is greatly increased by trust signals like safe payment icons and customer feedback. Good customer ratings reassure users that their transactions are safe from fraud, and secure payment icons offer social evidence and validation from past customers. Online companies can boost customer confidence and promote more regular and significant online purchases by skilfully utilising these trust signals (Yoon, 2020).

Trust in social media platforms has a big impact on how users interact with content and other users. Users are more likely to actively participate on a platform by exchanging personal information, commenting on postings, and communicating with other users when they feel confident in the privacy and security protections in place. Users can feel more at ease knowing that their interactions are not being used maliciously and that their personal data is secured in a secure and private environment. Because users feel more comfortable voicing their thoughts and disclosing personal

information without worrying about illegal access or data breaches, this trust promotes more candid conversation (Beldad, de Jong, and Steehouder, 2010).

Users may limit their interaction, withhold important information, or even leave a platform entirely if they believe it is unreliable or does not have proper security safeguards. Users may limit their interaction, withhold important information, or even leave a platform entirely if they believe it is unreliable or does not have proper security safeguards. As stated by Beldad, de Jong, and Steehouder (2010), strong privacy and security policies are therefore necessary to promote user satisfaction, increase engagement, and guarantee that users feel safe when interacting online.

In many different sectors, including human relationships, organizational behaviour, internet interactions, financial markets, healthcare, and governance, trust is an essential element. The well-being of individuals and communities, as well as the efficient operation of systems, depends on an understanding of the dynamics of trust and the application of tactics to establish and preserve it. The importance of trust is growing as society becomes more digitally connected and integrated, and as a result, studies and practice are focusing heavily on this topic.

The objective of this research is to contribute to the existing literature by investigating the moderating influence of risk on the association between the desire to buy and the pursuit of social media reviewers' remarks.

## **Dependency**

The concept of dependency is complex and applies to many fields, such as psychology, sociology, economics, and medicine. To create interventions, policies, and tactics that work, it is essential to comprehend the various aspects of dependency and its consequences. The term "psychological dependency" describes an emotional or mental attachment to a substance, activity, or individual (Pitafi et al., 2020). Addiction is frequently linked to it, as people get dependent on substances like alcohol, narcotics, or gambling.

The term "social dependency" describes how people or groups depend on other people for different kinds of help, approval, and support. It is important in determining how people interact with one another and create relationships. Social dependency can appear in a variety of settings, including social networks where people look to their peers for approval, guidance, and companionship; family dynamics where members frequently rely on one another for financial support, emotional support, and

caregiving; and community organisations where groups rely on their combined resources and efforts to accomplish shared objectives or to support one another during difficult times.

Social dependence has benefits as well; it can promote collaboration, solid relationships, and a safety net in trying times. A good balance between independence and interdependence in social connections is necessary since an imbalance in this dependency can occasionally result in problems like over-reliance or a lack of autonomy. Since social dependency affects how people interact, connect, and create supportive networks, understanding it is essential to addressing the dynamics within different social structures.

In interactions within families, social reliance is frequently visible, especially in the caregiving dynamics when dependents, such as elderly parents, largely depend on carers for both emotional and physical support (Pearlin et al., 1990). With this kind of dependency, emotional support, reassurance, and the upkeep of social relationships are just as important as the more pragmatic components of care, such as assistance with everyday tasks and medical requirements. As they look to other family members or social networks for approval and support in order to cope with the mental and physical strains of caregiving, carers may also experience a reciprocal type of dependency.

Social dependence is evident in peer relationships as well, as people frequently turn to their peers for approval, validation, and a feeling of community. This is seen outside of familial systems. People in these relationships look to their social groups for approval and affirmation in order to feel more confident in themselves and a part of the community. This type of social dependency strengthens the ties that bind peer groups together and gives people the confidence and support they need to negotiate social contexts, which is important for forming identity and creating a feeling of social cohesiveness.

The term "technological dependency" refers to the dependence on technology for employment, play, communication, and daily living. People and communities are growing more reliant on digital technology as they are incorporated into daily life. While there are many advantages to technology, including greater productivity and connectedness, there are also drawbacks, like over-reliance and possible harm to social connections and mental health (Kuss & Lopez-Fernandez, 2016). Digital addiction and the digital divide are two issues that highlight the intricacy of technological dependency (Van Deursen & Van Dijk, 2014).

The concept of dependency is complex and applies to many different fields. Since each type of dependency has distinct traits and ramifications, addressing the issues of dependency requires interdisciplinary methods. Policymakers, practitioners, and academics can create more successful interventions and strategies to help individuals and communities if they have a better knowledge of the various dimensions of reliance.

The current study addressed dependency as reliance, as opposed to an addiction. The study aimed to analyse how seeking reviewers' comments leads to dependency on social media, and how dependency mediates seeking reviewers' comments and purchase intention.

### **Seeking product-related reviews and purchase intention**

Businesses use a range of attractions in their advertising to sway the opinions and purchase intentions of their intended market. Consumer perceptions and behavior are influenced by the credibility of reviews. Value and attitude towards reviews have a direct bearing on credibility (KV, Kp & Kamath, 2021). The way that consumers feel about online advertising also has a significant impact on how likely they are to notice the advertisement (Brahim, 2016).

Controversial advertisements are one type of advertising that quickly garner attention. Sometimes offensive content appears in controversial advertisements. This could have a number of detrimental repercussions, including unwelcome press, unfavourable word-of-mouth, complaints to the advertising authorities, a decline in sales, or even a boycott of the offending brand or product (Crosier & Erdogan, 2001). But this, too, has two sides, just like anything else. When designed and executed properly, controversial ads can occasionally prove to be quite effective (Martins et al., 2019). Many businesses have been able to accomplish this with success, increasing revenue and drawing attention to their brand.

Purchase intention and attention-grabbing components are positively correlated; even though KV, Kp, and Kamath (2021) define attention-grabbing elements differently, they nevertheless include things like the kind of comments, number of views, and reactions to an interactive advertisement. On the other hand, the "predisposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to a particular brand after the advertising stimulus has been shown to the individual" could be used to define attitude towards brands. Manchanda et al., (2002) discovered a temporal separation between

the exposure to advertisements and the subsequent behaviour of purchases, where customers' decisions to return to websites and make purchases are influenced by advertising weight, copy, timing, and reviews.

According to a study based on online buying, customers' cognitive faith and propensity to make larger purchases are positively correlated with positive eWOM (Al Mahmud, 2020). The notion of positive word-of-mouth has been widely employed by marketing professionals due to its ability to assess the efficacy of advertising and other marketing strategies, as well as serve as a dependable source of product-related information. Consumers can gain confidence when making purchasing decisions by reading online reviews; a product or brand reviews are consumers' thoughts or comments on a certain brand or product (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017). A growing number of businesses are utilising social media to advertise their goods and services (Amin, 2018). Seldom do online users read a web page from start to finish; instead, they scan it and take only the information they need (Sa'ait et al., 2016; Wineburg & McGrew, 2019).

People should find what they need with minimum effort and in a quick and easy manner when searching for information (Sa'ait et al., 2016). Because social networking media aspects have become more popular and improved, customers now have more possibilities for finding out information relevant to a product. This opens up a variety of channels for customers to share their recommendations for consumption by participating in online communities and leaving reviews (Al-Mahmud, 2020). Therefore, anyone who provides information, critiques, or comments regarding a good or service qualifies as a reviewer.

Since many customers utilise internet reviews as their first stop when making purchases, their popularity has made them a valuable instrument for marketing communications. In 2021, Monfared et al. conducted a study on ratings and reviews: the results indicated that although these factors significantly influence social presence, proximity, familiarity, and informational support, they have no discernible effect on purchasing intentions or emotional support. However, this contradicts the findings of (Ben Abdelaziz et al., 2015).

Since many customers utilise internet reviews as their first stop when making purchases, their popularity has made them a valuable instrument for marketing communications. A study on ratings and reviews by Monfared et al., (2021) found that even though they greatly influence social presence, intimacy, familiarity, and

information support, reviews have no significant effect on emotional support or buy intentions. However, this contradicts the findings of (Ben Abdelaziz et al., 2015).

Customers' decision-making process is facilitated by online customer reviews, which reduce anxiety and increase purchase intention (Wang et al., 2016). Also, the features of the product as well as the users have a significant influence on the process of making decisions. Positive reviews on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) platforms tend to elicit more referrals from friends than do negative ones. Prior to making a purchase, consumers usually study previous customer reviews rather than relying solely on marketing (Wang et al., 2016). Examining comments left by other customers online can boost potential customer's self-assurance when making purchases.

The Social Influence Theory explains how product reviews influence customers' inclinations to purchase on social media. The Social Influence Theory, according to Spears (2021), emphasises that people's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours are frequently influenced by their social environment and the opinions of people in their social circle. Consumers using social media for reviews are simply seeking social proof, the psychological phenomenon whereby individuals believe that other people's actions indicate the optimal course of action in a particular circumstance.

Reputable peers or influencers can offer a positive or negative influence on a buyer's purchase intentions. Social influence can take two forms: normative and informational. The normative effect encourages a sense of uniformity and belonging, and online reviews give the impression that the information is more trustworthy and diagnostic (Bhukya & Paul, 2023; Spears, 2021). Accordingly, the more favourably expressed the online review is, the more likely it is that buyers will purchase the goods, and vice versa (Yunjeong & Jieun, 2024). Based on the reviewed literature and theory, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H1:** Seeking reviewers' product-related comments on social media affects purchase intentions

### **Dependency on social media for Reviewer's comments on products**

Because so many consumers research products online before making a purchase, online reviews have become increasingly significant as a marketing technique. According to the findings of the Monfared et al. (2021) study, social presence,

proximity, familiarity, and informational support are all considerably impacted by ratings and reviews, but emotional support and purchase intention are not significantly affected by them. The widely acknowledged media system dependence theory (MSD) was selected as the theoretical foundation for this study in an effort to ascertain how consumers utilising social media as a source of information can change their affective and cognitive opinions about making a purchase. The basis of MSD is the unique and fundamental idea of media dependence relations, which provides a compelling theoretical explanation of why individuals use media and its influences (Ben Abdelaziz et al. 2015; Kheiravar 2018). Dependency was described by BallRokeach and DeFleur (1976) as "a relationship in which the satisfaction of needs or the attainment of goals by one party is contingent upon the resources of another party".

If individuals depend on the media to provide them with knowledge whenever they need it, then the media has a big influence (Jung & Moro, 2012; Kheiravar, 2018). The duration of a medium's use determines audience dependency (Luqiu & Kang, 2021). Furthermore, it is possible that a person becomes more dependent on a medium since it fulfils their needs (Kheiravar, 2018).

Media dependence interactions are separated into two levels by the MSD approach: micro-level interactions with people and macro-level relationships with other systems, like the political and economic systems. The interaction between people and media is the main emphasis of the micro-level dependent relationships, sometimes called individual media system dependency (Kheiravar 2018). Ben Abdelaziz et al. (2015) state that although micro-level reliance evaluates people's motivation to use the media for information gathering, the relationships between the media, society, and audience are explained by macro-level dependency. The micro-level dependence is the subject of the current investigation.

When one party requires the resources of another to accomplish its objectives, it is likely to go through the same procedure every time it needs that resource, hence perpetuating the dependence (Chiu & Huang, 2015). Individuals use social media to look for information and depend on it to help them reach a goal: making decisions (Chen et al., 2017; Kheiravar, 2018). Consequently, becoming dependent on social media results from using it for product research and decision-making (Zhao & Zhang, 2017).

People are likely to develop dependent relationships with the media contingent on how well it meets their needs and expectations, which influences how they use it



(Li et al., 2019). Kheiravar (2018) asserted that individuals develop complete dependence on social media when it provides them with the information they require; based on these findings, Further confirmation of the idea that media consumption habits shape people's dependence was provided by Luqiu & Kang (2021). The research also demonstrated that relying on social media for informative purposes leads to dependency. And as confirmed in preceding studies, more people are using social media to examine items (Ben Abdelaziz et al., 2015; Kheiravar, 2018; Li et al., 2019; Luqiu & Kang, 2021). Based on this, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H2:** Seeking reviewers' product-related comments has a positive impact on dependency on social media.

**H3:** Dependency on social media mediates the relationship between seeking reviewers' product-related comments and purchase intentions.

### **Risks of buying a product**

A person's attitude and perceived value influence their purchase activities. Customers are driven to buy online in search of more affordable, higher-quality goods, which eventually influences their level of pleasure and influences their propensity to make a purchase (Alharthey, 2021). Future recurring purchases from customers are contingent upon the company's present online performance and, more significantly, how they try to sway them using digital marketing strategies and social media reviews. They also depend on the companies' reliable media presence and customer support procedures. It uses the internet to send customers targeted promotional adverts.

In the context of this study, risk is defined as the worry that a product will not live up to consumer expectations or demands, that it won't be sustainable, or that it would harm the user's reputation. When a review conveys negative information about a product, customers may perceive it as risky (Lăzăroiu et al., 2020). An extensive array of studies suggests that purchasing intentions are adversely affected by perceived risk (Chan et al., 2017; Grégoire et al., 2015). Chan et al. (2017) showed how consumers' views of the likelihood of a product malfunction negatively impacted their intention to make a purchase.

The effect of risk in the connection between the intention to purchase and the search for product-related comments made by reviewers on social media is well captured by media systems dependency theory. This is for the reason that customers

are unsure and likely to encounter negative outcomes while making high-risk purchases. MSD theory suggests that high-risk purchases increase reliance regarding plans to purchase and comments on social media. To lessen this risk, and for reliable and comprehensive product information, individuals are more inclined to rely largely on comments made on social media platforms. Due to this growing reliance, the information gleaned from these reviewers' remarks is crucial in helping them decide what purchases they will make. Since social media platforms are interactive and social, consumers use them more often in high-risk circumstances. This is because they are at liberty to ask other users for rapid advice and comments on these platforms.

Ben Abdelaziz et al. (2015) claim that people who utilise social media and believe that items that get bad reviews are risky are more likely to be aware of the products' drawbacks, and to adopt other users' unfavourable judgements about them. Risk hurts customers and is likely to make them less likely to make a purchase (Lăzăroiu et al., 2020). The following theory is put out if looking for product information on social media causes consumers to become dependent on it and if a reviewer's assessment that highlights a product's potential risks has the power to affect a buyer's desire to buy:

**H4:** Risk moderates the relationship between dependency on social media reviewers' comments and purchase intentions.

### **Trust in the reviewer's comments**

Regarding this research, trust is defined as the conviction that product reviews are reliable as well as the guarantee that the item will fulfil the buyer's requirements. According to research by Filieri et al. (2018), consumers rely on authority sources, popularity metrics, and unbiased evaluations when making decisions about which services to use. Put differently, the foundation for trusting product reviews on social media has to do with the confidence that the performance and quality of a product or service are equivalent to or similar to those of previous consumers' reviews.

According to Monfared et al., (2021), trust is the primary element influencing consumers' views and decisions. The findings of Filieri et al., (2018) show that customers see expert sources, popularity signals, and two-sided evaluations as useful tools for evaluating the performance and quality of services—but not source trustworthiness.

The foundation of online business transactions is trust (Lee, Park, and Han, 2011). Marketing managers have just realised how important internet reviews are to consumers' decision-making. In an effort to strengthen their impact on consumers' decision-making, online retailers have started including online customer reviews (OCRs) into their advertisements (OEAs). When consumers believe that OCRs are more reliable, their buying intentions increase.

While trust has a favourable effect on satisfaction, contentment with online reviews influences the propensity to buy. Furthermore, it has been discovered that the perceived information quality of favourable internet evaluations significantly influences trust, contentment, and intention to buy (Al Mahmud, 2020).

Trust is the most important component in internet commercial transactions (Lee et al., 2011; Monfared et al., 2021). Marketing managers have realised of late how significant an influence internet reviews have on consumers' decision-making. According to research, customer evaluations found online may be a more trustworthy information source than content produced by sellers (Jain et al., 2021). Online vendors have begun using online consumer reviews (OCRs) in their advertising because of the growing impact that OCRs have on consumers' decision-making processes. In internet stores, reviews are more reliable than advertisements. The likelihood that a potential consumer will purchase an item increases when they think that OCRs are more trustworthy (Primanda et al., 2020). Thus, purchase intentions are impacted by trust in reviews (Jain et al., 2021; Monfared et al., 2021).

Complementary theories that explain how trust moderates the relationship between social media reviews and purchase intentions are the Media System Dependency (MSD) Theory and the Social Influence Theory. The ways in which social media reviews impact customers' decisions and how trust influences those mechanisms are explained by both theories. Social influence functions more effectively when the information source is reliable (Primanda et al., 2020). Customers are further expected to follow and accept trustworthy sources, increasing the likelihood that they will make purchases. According to the MSD hypothesis, people depend on the media to fulfil a range of needs, and the degree of this dependency determines how the media shapes people's opinions and behaviour.

If consumers depend on social media to find information about products and their intention to make a purchase is influenced by trust in the information, then the following hypothesis is put forth:

**H5:** Trust moderates the relationship between dependency on social media reviewers' product-related comments and purchase intentions.

***Dependency on social media for information and intention to purchase***

Media dependence has been shown to have a favourable impact on purchase intentions due to its ability to give adequate product information. If customers feel they don't have enough knowledge to make an informed choice, they are reluctant to buy things (Lorenzová & Borlind, 2018). Consumers become confused when specific product information is lacking or is difficult to find through typical offline communication channels (Chauhan & Sagar, 2021; Lorenzová & Borlind, 2018). However, because user-generated content is more enriched and easier to obtain, it can have a great impact on consumers' decision to purchase when it is provided by social media platforms (Lu et al., 2020).

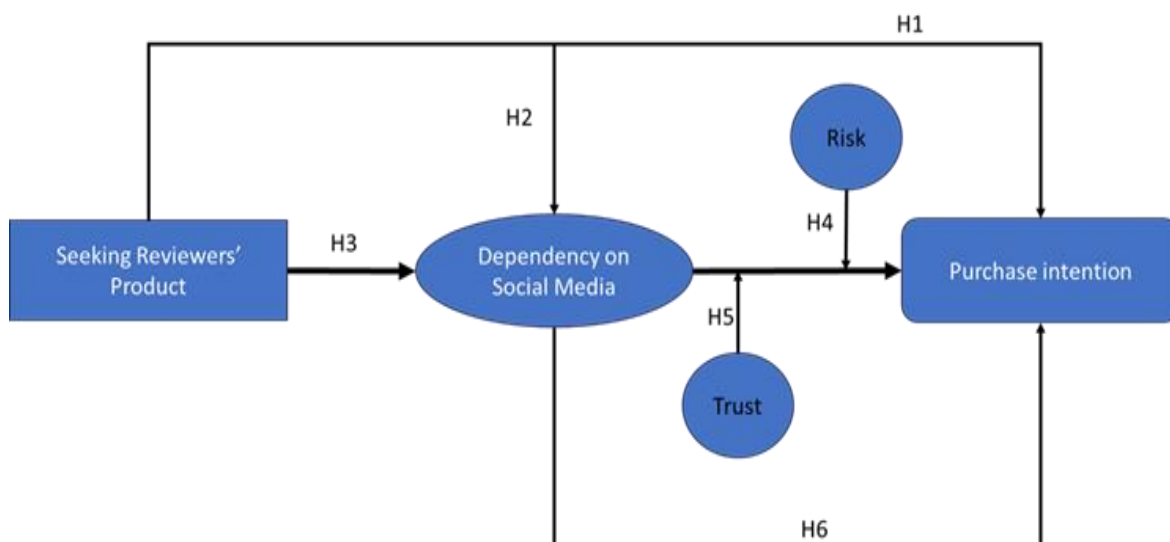
Because consumers who are ignorant about a product find it difficult to make informed decisions during the purchase process (Ariffin et al., 2018), they may postpone and might even stop purchasing things, to prevent mental drain, which influences their choice of product. Customers become reliant on social media for product knowledge since it offers them thorough information from a variety of sources (Wang et al., 2016). If individuals grow reliant on social media for product research and if buyers depend on social media reviewers' comments to learn enough about products to make wise purchases, then we propose the following hypothesis:

**H6:** Dependency on social media for reviewers' comments on products influences purchase intention.

**Conceptual Model**

This section presents a conceptual framework that illustrates the relationships between key factors influencing the way that consumers behave on social media. Specifically, the model (Figure 1) looks at how consumers' intentions to purchase products are impacted by seeking reviewers' comments on social media platforms, and it also considers the roles of trust and perceived risk, highlighting their moderating effects on the relationship between social media dependency and purchase intention. By outlining these interconnections, the model provides a thorough understanding of the social and psychological factors that influence consumer choices in the digital era.

Figure 1

*Conceptual model*

The hypotheses are:

**H1:** Seeking reviewers' product-related comments on social media affects purchase intentions

**H2:** Seeking reviewers' product-related comments has a positive impact on dependency on social media.

**H3:** Social media dependency mediates the relationship between seeking reviewers' product-related comments and purchase intentions

**H4:** Risk moderates the relationship between dependency on social media reviewers' comments and purchase intentions.

**H5:** Trust moderates the relationship between dependency on social media reviewers' product-related comments and purchase intentions.

**H6:** Dependency on social media for reviewers' comments on products influences purchase intention.

This study sets a precedent in this field of inquiry by examining the moderating roles of trust and risk on the relationship between purchase intention and dependence on social media reviews. Previous studies have examined how “collective” social media reviews affect consumers' propensity to make purchases. The connection between purchase intentions and confidence in social media reviews has also been the subject of earlier research. Rather than focusing solely on the relationship between

reviews and purchase intentions, as has been the focus of earlier research, the current study examines trust and risk as modifiers of the relationship between dependency on “individual” reviewers’ comments on social media and purchase intentions.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **Methodology**

This section offers details about the methodology for this research. It lists the different parts of the research process and gives a thorough explanation of each one to guarantee transparency and clarity. The part starts by going over the research methodology that was employed, along with the reasons for choosing it and how it fits in with the goals of the study. After that, it goes into great detail about the research design, outlining the study's framework and how it aids in answering the research questions. In addition, the targeted demographic is identified in this section along with its features and study-relevant relevance. It clarifies the reasoning for the choice of this particular group and how it contributes to the study's broader goals.

A thorough discussion of the sample and sampling strategy is also provided, along with the rationale behind the technique selection and the process for selecting participants from the target demographic. This guarantees that the sample is suitable for the aims of the study and representative. The procedure section concludes by outlining the exact steps taken to carry out the research. This covers the procedures followed throughout the research, the devices and tools utilised, and any particular protocols or guidelines. This part provides readers with a comprehensive grasp of the technique by going over these important points, which enables them to evaluate the reliability and validity of the research findings.

This research is a quantitative research study that collects quantitative data and makes an analysis using quantitative analysis techniques. The choice of quantitative research was influenced by the aim of this research. Large data sets were gathered quickly in order to ensure that the research's findings were objective and generalisable. This is because the goal of the study was to investigate how risk and trust moderated the relationship between the intention to purchase, dependence on social media, and seeking out individual reviewers' comments on social media.

According to Basias and Pollalis (2018), the use of quantitative study is vital in enhancing the generalisability of research. A quantitative study, according to the research, enables the gathering of data from a larger sample or population, allowing the sample to represent a variety of groups. A sample's ability to represent a variety of groups allows for the availability of a greater range of opinions or thoughts regarding a certain subject, which allows for the generalisation of the results. This is one of the

grounds behind the research's decision to employ a quantitative methodology. This is because almost every human at one point in time has to make a purchase and review is known to affect purchase intention. Advertisement is also used in almost all nations of the world. This shows that the topic affects the masses of people. To make the results more applicable in other parts of the world, it was essential to gather information from a wider population, to make the results more generalizable.

The problem of subjectivity and objectivity in research is another factor in the choice to employ a quantitative research methodology. The same study by Basias and Pollalis (2018) came to the conclusion that quantitative research reduces subjectivity in research results by collecting and analysing larger data. In contrast to qualitative studies, quantitative studies provide researchers with more objective data because the process of collecting and analysing the data is less influenced. Objective results are more acceptable and scientific; hence, this was another reason that influenced the choice of a quantitative method.

### **Research design**

As a descriptive correlational study, the goal of this study was to characterise and scrutinise the correlations between variables without modifying them. While the correlational component of the research aimed to investigate the direction and degree of relationships between various variables, the descriptive component concentrates on accurately describing the features of study participants. The study specifically tried to ascertain how the variables of risk and trust influence the relationship between consumers' purchase intentions and their dependence on individual reviewers' comments on social media.

Data for this study was collected in a natural, real-world environment, making it a field study rather than a controlled laboratory experiment. The researcher maintained minimal interference with the participants to preserve the authenticity of their responses. The only direct involvement of the researcher occurred during the distribution and collection of ethics forms and questionnaires, ensuring that the researcher's presence did not significantly impact the participants' responses. This minimal level of interference was crucial in maintaining the objectivity and validity of the data.

Regarding the time frame, this research is categorized as a cross-sectional study. Instead of gathering data over an extended period, a cross-sectional study does so at a



single point in time. In the present study, data gathering lasted for one (1) month; In addition to using online tools like Google Forms to reach a larger audience, the researcher needed this time to travel between several cities to distribute paper questionnaires. The researcher was able to gather data from a wide sample of participants in a constrained amount of time by using this method.

The individual level is used as the analysis unit in this study. This is because the researcher considers the responses of the participants on an individual basis. The ordinal scale is the unit of measurement applied to the data that was gathered. This scale is appropriate for evaluating the relative ranking of attitudes, preferences, or perceptions among participants because it provides a particular ranking of the variables but does not define the precise difference between them.

### **Participants**

The student body in North Cyprus, a distinctive location that draws students from many continents and nations, participated in this study. North Cyprus offers a rich and varied setting for research because it is a melting pot of various ideologies, civilisations, and overall life perspectives. The researcher selected the sample from such a broad group of students to make sure it was more diverse and representative of the world's population, or to an extent, the region's population. The study benefits greatly from this diversity since it enables us to record a wide range of viewpoints and actions, which is critical when looking at factors like social media dependence, trust, and purchasing intentions among various social and cultural backgrounds.

Students have a stronger online presence than non-students, which is another imperative factor in the choice to target this group. Students, especially those in North Cyprus, are usually more engaged with social networking sites, online reviews, and marketing than they are offline. Their inclination towards online activities renders them a perfect subject for a research study that examines the connection between social media usage, perceived dangers, trust, and intention to buy. With their varied origins and frequent online interactions, students are likely to be more exposed to online evaluations and marketing from North Cyprus as well as their home countries.

Students' frequent online interactions imply that they are more familiar with the aspects being studied, such as their dependence on social media for reviews and information, and how these factors affect their decisions to buy. Students can offer valuable and pertinent data for the study because they are accustomed to and involved

in these online interactions. As a result, they provide the best sample for our research and provide insightful information about the ways in which various factors may influence the association between consumer behaviour and social media dependency.

### ***Target population***

The sample for this research was drawn from four (4) selected universities in North Cyprus. The selected schools are top Universities that have the largest number of international and national students undertaking undergraduate and graduate courses. The selected schools are based in different locations and cities in North Cyprus, to make the sample more diverse as well.

The sample was drawn from undergraduate and graduate university students from the selected universities. The selected schools are Near East University based in Nicosia, with 27,000 student population (Near East University, 2022), Cyprus International University based in Haspolat with over 22,000 student population (Student life, n.d.), Girne American University based in Girne with 18,000 student population (Girne Amerikan üniversitesi, n.d.), and Eastern Mediterranean University based in Famagusta with 18,000 student population (Eastern Mediterranean University, 2022). Table 1 lists the participants from the student body according to the data that was available between 2022 and 2024.

**Table 1**

<i>The population of students from which the participants were drawn</i>			
Name of institution	Location of school	Population of students	Source of information
Near East University	Nicosia, North Cyprus	27,000	(Near East University, 2022)
Cyprus International University	Haspolat, North Cyprus	22,000	(Student life, n.d.)
Girne American University	Girne, North Cyprus	18,000	(Girne American University, n.d.)
Eastern Mediterranean University	Famagusta, North Cyprus	18, 000	(Eastern Mediterranean University, 2024)
Total population of students in selected institutions		85,000	
Total population of students in North Cyprus		108,295	(Olomoinfo, 2022)

### ***Sampling technique and sample size***

The 384 students who made up the study's sample size were chosen using the convenience sampling method. As stated in the preceding paragraphs, this study intends to arrive at objective results that are generalizable. It is therefore imperative that the researcher works with a more diverse sample and the appropriate sample size. The researcher was able to choose participants using the sampling technique, which included individuals from a variety of backgrounds.

This study's sample size consisted of 384 students chosen using a convenience sampling method. Previous research that looked at subjects related to this one had sample sizes ranging from 150 to 300 (Brahim, 2016; KV et al., 2021). Olomoinfo (2022) shows that there are 108,295 university students in North Cyprus, hence the sample size of 384 used in this study was deemed adequate to represent the number of university students in North Cyprus, since the 200 utilised in prior studies was inadequate. At the universities chosen for this study, over 78% of all students in North Cyprus attend classes. That is,

$$85,000/108,295 * 100\% = 78\%$$

Using a sample size calculator available online, the number of students with high social media participation (384) was selected as the sample size (Net, C., n.d.). Furthermore, according to Lakens (2022), the 384-sample size is appropriate for this investigation.

### ***The respondents' demographic characteristics***

The three demographic characteristics of the respondents that were taken into account for this study were gender, age, and level of education. An overview of the respondents' demographic details is shown in Table 2. The study's conclusions showed that 54.4% of respondents were men, 46.6% were older than 30, and 58.9% had earned an undergraduate degree.

**Table 2**

#### ***Respondents' demographic characteristics***

		Gender	
		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Male	209	54.4
	Female	175	45.6

Total		384	100.0
<b>Age</b>			
		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	18-24	91	23.7
	25-30	114	29.7
	30+	179	46.6
	Total	384	100.0
<b>Education</b>			
		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Undergraduate	226	58.9
	Graduate	158	41.1
	Total	384	100.0

### Data collection instrument

This study gathered data with a questionnaire. The questionnaire was based on existing scales of measurement from previous studies. Therefore, the validity and reliability of the questionnaire was assured. The scales are however adapted to reflect the variables under study in this research. A 5-point Likert scale that was modified to correspond with the study's themes was used in the survey. The 5-point Likert scale was adapted to align with the study's themes where “5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree”. The information was gathered in person by giving the forms to the participants at their schools as well as online using Google Forms.

The questionnaires for this study were created once the goal and questions were decided upon, and after gathering materials from earlier comparable investigations. There were four demographic questions on the survey. Variable 1 (dependence on social media for product reviews; action orientation scale), created by Grant (n.d.), consisted of seven items, with a Cronbach alpha of 0.874. The second variable, purchase intention, included six items and a Cronbach alpha of 0.865. Chen & Chang (2012) created the five items that make up variable 3 (trust), and the Cronbach alpha for that variable was 0.867. Variable 4 (finding product-related social media comments from reviews) has six questions, and its Cronbach alpha was 0.779; It was created by Borah (2014). Chen & Chang (2012) created four questions for variable 5 (risk), and the Cronbach alpha was 0.713. The Cronbach alpha for all 28 items is 0.926.

Cronbach's alpha must be at least 0.7 in order for a study to be considered reliable, according to Hair (2014); this proved that all of the study's variables were reliable. The questionnaire consisted of two components.

There were two sections to the questionnaire. Below is an explanation of the contents of the two sections:

**Section I:** The study participants' demographic data is included in this section. This included their age, their gender, their nationalities, and whether or not they were students. These questions were asked to gather information to guide the researchers to know whether the participants fall into the expected sample of the research; especially the question of whether they are students or not. These details will also enable us to understand the diversity of the sample. Section I collects the Categorical data for this research (ordinal and nominal data).

**Section II:** This section contains the questions that concern the variables under study. This section collects the scale or numerical data for this study. The questions covered online advertisement, peer review, and purchase intention. The following explanations of the variables apply to this study:

**Seeking reviewers' product-related comments on social media:** "The opinion or feedback of customers regarding a particular product or brand constitutes a product or brand review. Seeking reviewers' product-related comments on social media in the current study refers to the process of actively looking for product information on social media."

**Dependency on social media for reviewers' comments on products:** "In the current study, this refers to people increasingly relying on social media to research products. If people go to social media any time they need product information, they are dependent on social media."

**Risk:** "Risk in the context of this research refers to the fear of a product not meeting the expectations or needs of the customer, a product not being sustainable, or a product that can cause reputational damage to the user."

**Trust:** "Trust in the context of this research refers to the belief that reviews about a product are trustworthy and that the product will meet the customer's expectations."

**Purchase Intention:** "For the purpose of this research, purchase intention is defined as the point before purchase, where an individual decides that he or she wants to buy a particular product or service. Purchase intention is the dependent variable for the study."

## **Procedure for the study**

### ***Ethical consideration***

Once the purpose and questions of the study were determined, the questionnaires were created using the resources gathered from earlier, similar investigations. Subsequently, a request was made to the scientific research ethics committee of Near East University for permission for the questionnaire and study. This study was granted ethical approval under application number NEU/SS/2022/1318. The right permissions were received from the schools from which the sample was drawn, and an ethics consent form was distributed to the participants for their approval before the questionnaires were handed out to them. The participants' identities were hidden, and they maintained their anonymity throughout the investigation.

### ***Pilot study***

The research first conducted a pilot study based on a 50-participant sample to ascertain the feasibility of the study and the validity of the questionnaires. These participants were selected randomly and were handed out the questionnaires. Following analysis of the pilot study's data, the research was adjusted as needed, and the questionnaire was changed in light of the results.

### ***Data collection procedure***

The collection of data was both physical and through google forms. The printed hard copies of the questionnaire and the ethics consent forms were handed over to the participants and then the completed questionnaire was taken back. First, the researcher handed out the ethics consent form to the participants and after the participants returned the approved consent form, they were handed the questionnaire form. In this period, the participants are asked if they were students, and their nation of origin, to make sure they fall within the estimated sample.

### **Data analysis**

IBM SPSS, a statistical package for the social sciences, version 25, was used in this study to analyse the data that were gathered. This software is best for analysing data on topics related to the one studied in this research. The descriptive statistics for the data were first analysed. This was to make sure that the data was devoid of mistakes and sufficient for analysis. In this, the linearity, normality, and errors were assessed.

The researcher was also able to comprehend the sample dynamics and the data, including the demographic division, thanks to the outcomes of the descriptive analysis.

Using exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the relations between the variables in the observation were identified. To be confident the variables were connected, a correlation study was conducted. The study's hypotheses were tested by the researcher using SPSS version 4.2's PROCESS macro. The researcher used SPSS to have accurate results for mediation and moderator, by using process macro-4.2, using different models such as Model 1 for moderator Model 4 for mediation, and Model 14 for moderator and mediation together. Moreover, we used AMOS to determine the conformity factor analysis. This comprehensive approach to data analysis ensured that the study's findings were both accurate and robust, providing reliable insights into the research questions.

### **Validity test for the study**

Factor loadings were utilised in the analysis, and a convergent validity test was utilised by the researcher to assess the study's validity. To ascertain whether several indicators intended to measure the same construct are in fact related, convergent validity is crucial. The validity of the concept is supported when an indicator exhibits a high factor loading, which is generally greater than 0.7. This implies that the indicator accurately represents the underlying construct. Table 18, which presents a thorough summary of the factor loadings for each indicator, contains the detailed analysis findings.

A discriminant validity test was carried out in addition to a convergent validity test to evaluate the study's construct validity even further. It is ensured by discriminant validity that there is no strong correlation between theoretically separate constructs. Fornell and Larcker (1981) state that comparing the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct with the correlations between the constructs is one of the essential statistical techniques for evaluating discriminant validity. When the square root of the AVE is higher than the correlations with other constructs, discriminant validity is proven, demonstrating that each construct is unique and different from the others. Table 19, which shows the correlations between the constructs and whether the condition for discriminant validity was met, summarises the results of the discriminant validity test.

**Reliability test for the study**

Using Cronbach's alpha, a statistical measure commonly used to evaluate the internal consistency of a group of items or signals inside a scale, the reliability of the analysis's conclusion was evaluated. Test items' degree of measurement of the same underlying construct is indicated by Cronbach's alpha. Higher Cronbach's alpha values (often more than 0.7) indicate that the items are likely to assess the intended construct reliably and have a high level of internal consistency (Sekaran & Bougie 2013). This technique is essential for assessing the dependability of the analysis's findings since it makes sure that every component of each construct functions harmoniously to appropriately depict the idea under study. The validity of the conclusions reached from the analysis was bolstered by the researchers' confirmation that the data gathered from the study were reliable and consistent, as demonstrated by the results of the Cronbach's alpha test.



## CHAPTER IV

### Findings and analysis

#### Introduction

The data collected from various sources, including surveys, interviews, and secondary data, are meticulously analysed to identify critical factors influencing the subject of study. Quantitative data are presented in statistical formats, such as tables and graphs, to illustrate numerical trends and correlations. The researcher begins by summarizing the demographic characteristics of the study participants, establishing a foundation for understanding the subsequent analyses. Following this, we delve into the core findings, addressing each research question and hypothesis.

#### Rate of realization

A total of four hundred students from Near East University, Girne American University, Cyprus International University, and Eastern Mediterranean University were given questionnaires as part of this study's sample frame. However, 384 of the surveys were filled out. This suggests that 96% of respondents to the survey actually completed it. Table 3 displays the realization rate for this study.

**Table 3**

*Realization rate*

	N
Questionnaires distributed	400
Questionnaires Completed	384
Realization rate	96%

#### Descriptive statistics results

Three hundred and eighty-four (384) people in all participated in the study; 191 of them were men and 193 were women. Of the overall sample, 50.3% of participants were female and 49.7% of participants were male. There were 226 undergraduates (58.9%) and 158 graduates (41.1%). Considering the ages of the participants for the survey, 91 students fell within the 18-24 age bracket, 114 students fell within the 25-30 age bracket, and 179 students were above 30 years of age.

### Reliability of the study

Cronbach's alpha was employed to assess the analytical result's dependability. This technique is especially helpful for assessing the validity of scales that are employed in surveys, assuring that a scale's components consistently measure the same underlying construct. The five measuring scales in the questionnaire were determined to be dependable in this study using Cronbach's alpha.

As indicated by Table 4, the calculated Cronbach's alpha values for each scale are higher than the 0.7 cutoff point, demonstrating sufficient dependability. Within social science research, this cutoff point is commonly acknowledged because it implies that each scale's components consistently measure the same underlying construct (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

Tests of reliability, such as Cronbach's alpha, are important because they show how consistent the measuring instrument is across time and among various populations. High reliability increases the results' credibility by guaranteeing that the data was obtained with confidence and that it might be utilised to make significant inferences. This is especially crucial in social science research because complex human behaviours and attitudes are frequently examined there, and the validity of the study's conclusions depends on the precision and consistency of these measurements.

**Table 4**

*Cronbach tests*

	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Seeking reviewer's product-related comments on social media	6	.799
Dependency on social media for reviewers' comments on products	7	.874
Risk	4	.713
Trust	5	.867
Intention to purchase	6	.865

The 28 attitude statements in the questionnaire had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.926, demonstrating the measuring scale's extremely high degree of internal consistency and reliability. This demonstrates how the items on the scale are related to each other and consistently assess the same underlying construct or idea. This reliability analysis is

provided in detail in Table 5, which also illustrates how each item contributes to the scale's overall consistency. The high-reliability score attests to the validity of the results and implies that inferences about the attitudes of the participants may be made with confidence using the data obtained from these attitude statements. The good internal consistency scale suggested that it can be reliably and successfully used to assess related constructs in studies or contexts that are similar to it.

**Table 5**

*Cronbach Alpha for all variables*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.926	28

### **Analysing the mean responses to the attitude statements given in the questionnaire**

This section presents the survey replies and their outcomes. This section provides a detailed analysis of the average answers to the attitude statements that were part of the survey. Through the computation of the average response for every statement, the analysis provides an understanding of the participants' general tendencies and attitudes as a whole. By using this method, we are able to determine the attitudes and sentiments that are most prevalent among the sample group and provide a quantitative overview of the way respondents as a whole see the subjects of the study.

The individual mean scores for each attitude statement are first looked at in the analysis. These sentences were thoughtfully constructed to capture a range of participant attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions pertinent to the study's main theme. The mean scores offer a simple method of assessing the replies' central tendency, showing whether respondents generally agreed, disagreed, or were undecided about each statement. These measures allow us to compare the relative strength of various attitudes as well as how they could differ among various demographic segments.

The results, which give a clear picture of the participants' overall responses, are presented in detail after these mean scores have been calculated. This section discusses the importance of these results in connection to the study themes in addition to emphasising the typical answers. By examining patterns, trends, and any noteworthy deviations from the norm, it contributes to a more comprehensive knowledge of the

opinions of the participants. The average scores offer a simple method of assessing the replies' central tendency, showing whether respondents generally agreed, disagreed, or were undecided about each statement. These measures allow us to compare the relative strength of various attitudes as well as how they could differ among various demographic segments.

The results, which give a clear picture of the participants' overall responses, are presented in detail after these mean scores have been calculated. This section not only highlights the common responses but also discusses the importance of these results in light of the study themes. By examining patterns, trends, and any noteworthy deviations from the norm, it contributes to a more comprehensive knowledge of the opinions of the participants.

### ***Seeking reviewer's product-related comments on social media***

Table 6 presents the one sample test output for the scale of seeking reviewers' product-related comments on social media.

**Table 6**

*One-sample results on seeking reviewers' product-related comments on social media*

Attitude statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Decision
I seek for reviews supporting my opinion	384	3.69	.902	.046	Low perception
I seek reviews supporting others' opinion	384	3.58	.913	.047	Low perception
I seek for reviews that offer a balanced view	384	4.11	.834	.043	High perception
I seek for reviews supporting my point of view	382	3.62	.967	.049	Low perception
I will repeat purchasing a product with my perceived brand benefits based on the online reviews	384	3.82	.885	.045	High perception
I seek reviews supporting other's points of view	384	3.59	.907	.046	Low perception

N=384, Decision weighted average=3.735

In interpreting the output for this scale, it can be observed in Table 6 that the means are above 3.5 and closer to 4, with the average of the means being 3.735. Four (4) on the 5-point Likert scale represented “agree”. This indicates that the majority of the participants agreed to “seek reviewers’ product-related comments on social media.”

The interpretation of the attitude statements highlights varied behaviours among participants regarding how they interact with online reviews. The analysis shows that there is a low perception for seeking reviews that support one’s own opinion, with participants showing a mean tendency that is not strongly prevalent. Similarly, there is a low perception for seeking reviews that align with others' opinions, indicating that participants do not heavily rely on reviews that simply reflect other people's views. The same low perception applies to seeking reviews that support their own point of view, further suggesting that confirmation bias is not a significant driver for most participants.

In contrast, there is a high perception for seeking reviews that offer a balanced view, with participants strongly valuing reviews that provide both positive and negative perspectives. This indicates that participants prefer comprehensive and impartial information when making decisions. Additionally, there is a high perception for repeating purchases based on perceived brand benefits from online reviews, highlighting the influential role that online reviews play in reinforcing brand loyalty and encouraging repeat purchases. Finally, the decision for seeking reviews that support others' points of view is also classified as low perception, reinforcing the overall tendency to avoid reviews that are simply confirmatory. This collective insight reflects a nuanced approach by participants, who prioritize balanced and informative reviews over those that merely confirm existing opinions.

\*\*\*Important finding: most participants seek reviewer’s product-related comments on social media.

### ***Dependency on social media for reviewers’ comments on products***

Table 7 presents the one sample test output for the scale of Dependency on social media for reviewers’ comments on products.

**Table 7**

*One-sample results on Dependency on social media for reviewers' comments on products*

Attitude statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Decision
Decide whether to buy products/brands or not	384	4.01	.897	.046	Low perception
Decide which products/brands are good, and which are not	384	4.09	.891	.045	Low perception
Decide whether to buy a certain brand/product or not	384	4.10	.830	.042	High perception
Know what products/brands make a good impression on others	384	4.01	.761	.039	Low perception
Decide what products/brands to buy	384	4.10	.788	.040	High perception
Decide between different products/brand alternatives	384	4.23	.808	.041	High perception
Choose the right product/brand	384	4.20	.828	.042	High perception

N=384, Decision weighted average=4.106

Similar to the mean results of the seeking reviewers' product-related comments on social media scale, the mean results of Dependency on social media for reviewers' comments on products are inclined towards "agree". The mean results for the questions are all above 4, which indicates that the majority of the participants agree to depend on social media for reviewers' comments on products.

The majority of participants have a low propensity to depend their purchases exclusively on the information or reviews that are accessible. Additionally, there is a poor attitude regarding the use of reviews to judge the calibre of goods or businesses. This suggests that participants may utilise other criteria to evaluate companies or products rather than primarily depending on reviews to determine their overall quality.

In contrast, participants show a high perception in deciding whether to purchase a specific brand or product. This suggests that reviews and other online information significantly influence their final decision to make a purchase. Participants have a low perception of using reviews to understand what products or brands make a favourable impression on others. Participants demonstrate a high perception in deciding what products or brands to buy. This highlights that reviews and online information are crucial in guiding their choices and shaping their preferences, suggesting that these factors play a significant role in their overall purchasing decisions. Similarly, in choosing between different product or brand alternatives, participants show a high perception. This indicates that they heavily rely on reviews and comparisons to differentiate between options and make an informed decision. Participants also exhibit a high perception in selecting the right product or brand. This reflects their reliance on reviews and online feedback to ensure they make the most suitable choice, reinforcing the place of detailed and balanced information in their decision-making process.

\*\*\*Important finding: Most participants depend on social media for reviewers' comments on products.

### *One sample test output for Risk*

Table 8 presents the one sample test output for the scale of Risk

**Table 8**

#### *One-sample results on Risk*

Attitude statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Decision
The product/brand will not meet my desirability criteria	384	3.80	.888	.045	High perception
The product/brand will not work properly concerning my requirements	384	3.81	.813	.041	High perception

I would face negative consequences if I used this product/brand, because of social or environmental harm	384	3.38	1.079	.055	Low perception
Using this brand/product will damage my reputation as a person	384	2.95	1.206	.062	Low perception

---

N=384, Decision weighted average=3.485

Regarding the risk of reviewers' comments about products on social media, the participants were divided on the perceived risk. With the first two questions regarding the desirability and workability of the product, most of the participants agree that negatively reviewed products are risky to purchase. However, when it comes to the sustainability of the environment or society, and damage to a person's reputation, most participants have a low perception towards it.

\*\*\*Important findings: Most participants agree that negatively reviewed products are a risky purchase. Most participants have a low perception towards the risk associated with social or environmental harm, or reputational damage associated with buying negatively reviewed products.

### *One sample test output for Trust*

Table 9 presents the one sample test output for the scale of Trust.

**Table 9**

#### *One-sample results on Trust*

Attitude statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Decision
The product/brand's reputation is generally reliable	384	3.93	.844	.043	High perception
The product/brand will work properly concerning its reliability	384	3.88	.762	.039	Low perception
The product/brand's claims are generally trustworthy	384	3.87	.840	.043	Low perception



The product/brand will meet my expectations	384	3.89	.832	.042	High perception
The product/brand keeps promises and commitments regarding quality	384	3.90	.770	.039	High perception

---

N=384, Decision weighted average=3.894

The average answers to all of the questions in the one sample t-test for the trustworthiness of product-related remarks made by reviewers on social media are very nearly 4. The aforementioned suggests that a significant proportion of the respondents concur that positive product endorsements on social media are reliable.

With a mean score of 3.93, participants agree that social media reviews may be used to determine a product or brand's reputation. The "High perception" decision suggests that participants place significant trust in the reputation of the products or brands, indicating that reputation has a significant impact their overall evaluation and decision-making process. Despite a relatively high mean score of 3.88, the decision on 'The product/brand will work properly concerning its reliability' is categorized as "Low perception," indicating that while participants generally agree that a product or brand is likely to work reliably when they trust reviews, there can still be some doubts or a lack of strong faith in the brand's or product's ability to function consistently.

The Low perception decision on "The product/brand's claims are generally trustworthy" suggests that participants are somewhat sceptical and do not fully trust the claims made by the products or brands, possibly indicating the need for further validation or evidence before accepting these claims. The High perception decision on "The product/brand will meet my expectations" indicates that participants generally believe that the products or brands are capable of delivering on what they promise, aligning with their expectations. Regarding "the product/brand keeps promises and commitments regarding quality", the mean score of 3.90 suggests that participants agree with the statement that products or brands maintain their promises and commitments to quality; the "High perception" decision reflects a strong belief in the product or brand's commitment to upholding quality standards, reinforcing the overall positive perception of the brand's reliability and integrity.

\*\*\*Important finding: The majority of participants trust positive reviews about products on social media.

***Intention to purchase***

Table 10 presents the one sample test output for the scale of Intention to purchase.

**Table 10**

*One-sample results on Intention to purchase*

Attitude statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Decision
I intend to purchase products/brands because of buyer's reviews online	384	3.74	.922	.047	Low perception
I expect to purchase products/brands online shortly as I get affected by buyers' reviews	384	3.71	.946	.048	Low perception
I avoid buying products/brands that are not widely approved in buyers' reviews	384	3.81	1.085	.055	Low perception
Overall, I am glad to purchase reviewers' recommended products/brands because they are trustworthy	384	3.96	.884	.045	High perception
When I have to choose between two similar products/brands, I choose the one that is more widely recommended in online reviews	384	4.22	.889	.045	High perception
I will not consider products/brands not favoured in online reviews when making an online purchase	384	3.98	1.062	.054	High perception

N=384, Decision weighted average=3.903

The mean output for the questions related to Intention to purchase is inclined towards 4, which is agreed. This shows that most participants concur that product reviews on social media have an impact on their decision to purchase.

Starting with the statement "I intend to purchase products/brands because of buyer's reviews online," the mean score of 3.74, paired with a "Low perception" decision, indicates that while participants are somewhat influenced by online reviews, this influence is not particularly strong. This suggests that although online reviews are a consideration for participants, they are not the primary factor driving their purchasing intentions. Similarly, for the statement "I expect to purchase products/brands online shortly as I get affected by buyers' reviews," the mean score of 3.71 also corresponds to a "Low perception" decision. This implies that even while participants are aware that internet evaluations may have an impact on their future purchases, this influence is not immediate. In the case of "I avoid buying products/brands that are not widely approved in buyers' reviews," the mean score of 3.81 still results in a "Low perception" decision. This indicates that although participants are somewhat cautious about purchasing products or brands that do not receive broad approval in reviews, this caution is not overwhelming.

In contrast, the statement "Overall, I am glad to purchase reviewers' recommended products/brands because they are trustworthy" receives a mean score of 3.96, leading to a "High perception" decision. This reflects a strong level of trust in the recommendations provided by online reviewers. Participants feel confident that products or brands endorsed by reviewers are reliable. The strongest influence is observed with the statement "When I have to choose between two similar products/brands, I choose the one that is more widely recommended in online reviews," which has a mean score of 4.22 and is classified as "High perception." This indicates that participants place considerable weight on the collective opinions of reviewers when faced with choosing between similar options. Lastly, for the statement "I will not consider products/brands not favoured in online reviews when making an online purchase," the mean score of 3.98 also results in a "High perception" decision. This suggests that participants are likely to dismiss products that do not receive positive reviews.

Overall, the analysis shows that participants heavily rely on online reviews to guide their purchasing decisions, with a particular emphasis on avoiding poorly reviewed products and choosing highly recommended ones.

\*\*\*Important Findings: Reviewers' product-related comments on social media influence most participants' intention to purchase.

### ***Mean Scores of the Study Variables***

The research variables' mean scores displayed in Table 11 offer a comprehensive summary of the respondents' perspectives of different parts of the study. Each variable's mean score is calculated from multiple items, reflecting the overall trend and average response from the participants. Notably, all the mean scores exceed the mid-point of 3.00, which suggests that, on average, respondents have a favourable or positive perception towards the variables being measured. This generally positive trend indicates that the variables and the results derived from them are satisfactory and aligned with the expectations or hypotheses outlined in the study.

**Table 11**

*Mean Scores of the Study Variables*

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Means</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<b>DSM</b>	7	4.11	0.829
<b>IP</b>	6	3.90	0.965
<b>T</b>	5	3.89	0.810
<b>S</b>	6	3.74	0.902
<b>R</b>	4	3.49	0.997

### **Correlation analysis**

Understanding how the variables interact and influence one another within the context of the research is essential, and this study examined the relatedness of the variables. Using the Pearson correlation approach, a bivariate correlation study was carried out. Pearson correlation is a statistical technique for figuring out the strength and direction of a linear relationship between two variables. It offers a correlation coefficient, with values indicating a strong positive or negative linear link, respectively, closer to 1 or -1, and no linear association, or weaker, closer to 0. The five (5) scales that were employed in the study's analysis required their Pearson correlation coefficients to be determined.

The results of these Pearson correlation analyses are shown in the accompanying tables, which offer a comprehensive knowledge of the correlations

between the variables. Finding the variables that are more independently of one another and those that are tightly associated can be facilitated by comparing the strength and direction of the connections between the variables using these tables. In order to derive significant inferences from the data and provide a strong basis for additional analysis or real-world applications grounded on the study's findings, it is important to comprehend these linkages.

### ***Correlation analysis of reviews and purchase intention***

The correlation between reviews and intention to purchase is shown in Table 12.

**Table 12**

*Correlation between seeking reviewers' comments on social media and purchase intention*

		REVIEWS	PURCHASE INTENTION
REVIEWS	Pearson Correlation	1	.469**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	384	384
PURCHASE INTENTION	Pearson Correlation	.469**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	384	384

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

Based on Table 12, it can be observed that the correlation coefficient is .469, which according to Evans (1996), is a moderate positive correlation. It can therefore be held that there is a moderate positive relationship between reviews and purchase intention and is significant at a 0.001 level ( $r=.469$ ,  $p<.001$ ). This strong significance level, based on a sample size of 384 participants, confirms that the observed correlation is likely to reflect a genuine relationship between the variables. This indicates that as individuals seek more reviews on social media, their intention to make a purchase also tends to increase.

### ***Correlation analysis of dependency and purchase intention***

Table 13 presents the correlation between dependency and purchase intention.

**Table 13***Correlation between dependency and purchase intention*

		PURCHASE INTENTION	DEPENDENCY
PURCHASE INTENTION	Pearson Correlation	1	.464**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	384	384
DEPENDENCY	Pearson Correlation	.464**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	384	384

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

The correlation coefficient for dependency and purchase intention is 0.464, significant at a 0.001 level ( $r = .464$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Purchase intention and dependency have a moderate positive relationship.

### ***Correlation analysis of risk and purchase intention***

Table 14 presents the correlation between risk and purchase intention.

**Table 14***Correlation between risk and purchase intention*

		PURCHASE INTENTION	RISK
PURCHASE INTENTION	Pearson Correlation	1	.590**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	384	384
RISK	Pearson Correlation	.590**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	384	384

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

Risk and purchase intention has a 0.590 correlation value, which is significant at the 0.001 level ( $r = .590$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Evans (1996) found a moderately positive connection between purchasing intention and risk. As the correlation has a p-value below 0.001, it is considered statistically significant, indicating that the likelihood of the association being the result of random variation is less than 0.1%. The importance of this finding, with a sample size of 384 participants, indicates that the association between purchase intention and perceived risk is possibly going to be a consistent and significant trend in the population.

### *Correlation analysis of trust and purchase intention*

The relationship between purchase intention and trust is shown in Table 15.

**Table 15**

*Correlation between trust and purchase intention*

		PURCHASE INTENTION	TRUST
PURCHASE INTENTION	Pearson Correlation	1	.598**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	384	384
TRUST	Pearson Correlation	.598**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	384	384

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

The purchase intention and trust have a 0.598 correlation coefficient, which is significant at the 0.001 level ( $r=.598$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Risk and purchasing intention were found to be strongly positively correlated by Evans (1996). This significant finding, based on a sample size of 384 individuals, emphasises the validity and possible population representation of the association between trust and purchase intention.

### **Summary of correlation of all the scales**

Table 16 presents the correlation of all the scales in the questionnaire

**Table 16**

*Summary of correlation of all the scales*

	TS	TDSM	TR	TT	TIP
TS	1				
TDSM	.525**	1			
TR	.415**	.389**	1		
TT	.361**	.492**	.576**	1	
TIP	.469**	.464**	.590**	.598**	1
N=384					
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

## Factor analysis

The researcher breaks down the observable factors into smaller, easier-to-manage groups and investigate the relationships between these groupings using exploratory factor analysis (EFA). EFA, according to Hinkin (1998), is a technique that examines patterns of correlations between observed data in order to help uncover underlying factors or constructs. Promax rotation, an oblique rotation type that permits factor correlation, and Kaiser normalisation rotation, which modifies factor loadings to improve interpretability, were the two methods used to extract factors for this investigation. A common technique to reduce the number of variables, keeping most of the original variance is principal component analysis (PCA).

As per Hair's (2014) recommendation, only elements exhibiting a factor loading value of 0.4 or above were taken into account. When determining whether items have a significant association with the factors they are meant to represent, a threshold of 0.4 is frequently employed. The degree of relationship between each item and the underlying factor is measured by factor loadings. Bartlett's test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) score were used to ensure that the data was suitable for factor analysis. Factor analysis may be conducted with a sufficiently large sample size: the sample size of 384 was adequate and the KMO value of 0.903 is significantly higher than the suggested cutoff of 0.6. Moreover, the test of sphericity of Bartlett yielded a significance level (p-value) of less than 0.05, suggesting that there might be strong enough correlations between the variables to allow a factor analysis. This statistical validation shows that the observed variables are suitably categorised into factors for additional interpretation and analysis, hence supporting the reliability and validity of the factor analysis results.

Five separate factors are responsible for 61.38% of the variance overall, per the findings of the exploratory factor analysis. With seven items and a loading range of 0.469 to 0.893, DSM accounted for 34.59% of the variance overall. Six items on the PI loaded between 0.591 and 0.876, and this factor explained 9.81% of the variance in total. The loadings of five components in the T construct ranged from 0.638 to 0.880, accounting for 7.23% of the variation in total. Six items in the SRP had loadings ranging from 0.480 to 0.837, which accounted for 5.01% of the overall variation. After removing 2 of the 4 components that comprised R's original construct, the remaining



two items, which loaded between 0.725 and 0.856, explained 4.74% of the variation. Table 17 presents the findings from the exploratory factor analysis.

**Table 17**

*Exploratory Factor Analysis Results*

Factor	Factor Loading	% of Variance Explained	Initial Eigenvalues	Cronbach's Alpha
<b>Factor 1: Dependency on Social Media</b>				
DSM1	.837			
DSM2	.816			
DSM3	.893			
DSM4	.469	34.59%	8.992	0.874
DSM5	.724			
DSM6	.796			
DSM7	.564			
<b>Factor 2: Purchase Intention</b>				
PI1	.591			
PI2	.876			
PI3	.802	9.81%	2.549	0.865
PI4	.679			
PI5	.758			
PI6	.621			
<b>Factor 3: Trust</b>				
T1	.880			
T2	.808			
T3	.839	7.23%	1.880	0.867
T4	.638			
T5	.802			
<b>Factor 4: Seeking Reviewers' Product</b>				
SRP1	.776	5.01%	1.303	0.779

SRP2	.837			
SRP3	.560			
SRP4	.674			
SRP5	.480			
SRP6	.633			
<b>Factor 5: Risk</b>				
R3	.725			
R4	.856	4.74%	1.233	0.737

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*Note: DSM (dependency on social media), PI (purchase intention), T (trust), SRP (seeking reviewers' product-related information), R (risk)*

To verify the unidimensionality of the constructs being studied, CFA was used. This means that every set of measures was evaluated to verify that it reflects a single underlying factor. This methodology must be applied in order to validate the constructs' structure that were discovered during the investigation. For this, a powerful structural equation modelling tool called AMOS version 24 was utilised. The investigators employed convergent validity tests to evaluate the construct validity. The test of convergent validity determines if elements that should be related are indeed related. Factor loadings, which show the degree of correlation between each observable variable and its associated latent construct, are one way to examine convergent validity. Factor loadings should be high enough, usually greater than 0.5, according to Hair (2014), to show that the items have a strong relationship with the factors they correspond to.

To evaluate validity, other criteria were applied in addition to factor loadings. The composite reliability (CR), a gauge of the constructions' internal consistency, must be larger than or equal to 0.6 in order to guarantee that the items are appropriately measuring the construct. For a construct to demonstrate significant convergent validity, its Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which compares the variance collected by the construct to the variation caused by measurement error, must be at least 0.5. The CFA results, which are compiled in Table 18, show that every concept satisfies the essential standards for validity and reliability. Given the sufficient factor loadings, CR values over 0.6, and AVE values above 0.5, the constructs are valid and reliable. The found constructs are reliably represented thanks to this thorough study, which also makes it safe to employ them in subsequent analyses.

**Table 18**  
*Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results*

Construct	Items	Factor Loading	CR	AVE
DSM (Factor 1)	7	0.660 - 0.833	0.888	0.53
PI (Factor 2)	6	0.641 – 0.775	0.860	0.51
T (Factor 3)	5	0.730 – 0.792	0.870	0.57
SRP (Factor 4)	6	0.662 – 0.870	0.878	0.55
R (Factor 5)	2	0.626 – 0.937	0.770	0.63

*Note: DSM (dependency on social media), PI (purchase intention), T (trust), SRP (seeking reviewers' product-related information), R (risk)*

The results of a discriminant validity test, which evaluates whether or not constructs that are meant to be distinct from one another are in fact separate and not highly associated, are shown in Table 19. Discriminant validity guarantees that every construct is distinct and assesses various notions. The fact that a construct shares more variation with its own indicators than it does with other constructs indicates that each construct is distinct from the others.

**Table 19**  
*Discriminant validity test*

	SRP	DSM	R	T	PI
SRP	<b>0.678</b>	.525**	.415**	.381**	.469**
DSM	.525**	<b>0.737</b>	.389**	.502**	.464**
R	.415**	.389**	<b>0.803</b>	.566**	.590**
T	.381**	.502**	.566**	<b>0.740</b>	.612**
PI	.469**	.464**	.590**	.612**	<b>0.719</b>

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

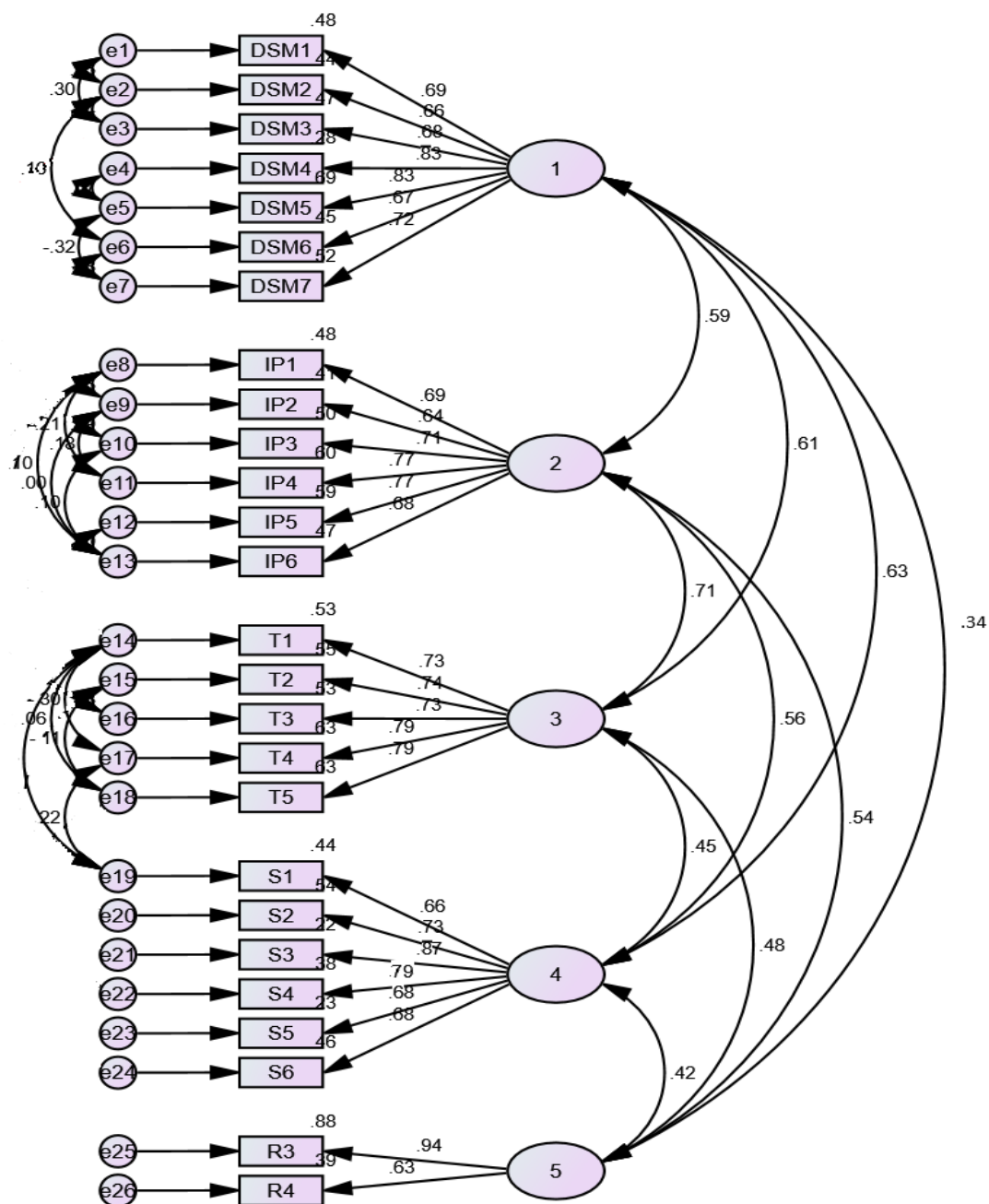
*Note: DSM (dependency on social media), PI (purchase intention), T (trust), SRP (seeking reviewers' product-related information), R (risk)*

The diagonal values (in bold) represent the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct, and they are all greater than the corresponding off-diagonal correlation coefficients. The constructs exhibit acceptable discriminant validity, even if there are noticeable correlations between them in the off-diagonal

values; nevertheless, these correlations are not as strong as they are in the diagonal values. Checking that the notions of seeking reviewers' product-related information (SRP), dependency on social media (DSM), risk (R), trust (T), and purchase intention (PI) are distinct and measure different ideas is crucial to confirm the robustness of the study's findings.

“Chi-square/degree of freedom (CMIN/DF), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Normative Fit Index (NFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)” are the six essential indicators identified by Kaynak (2003) for evaluating the goodness of fit in structural equation modelling. The degree to which the proposed model fits the observed data is comprehensively evaluated using these measures. The CMIN/DF value for this experiment, as indicated in Table 20, was 2.189, well within the acceptable range of fewer than three as recommended by Bagozzi & Yi (1988). This indicates that the model strikes an appropriate parsimony between model complexity and goodness of fit. In addition, it was found that the values of the CFI, NFI, and IFI were, correspondingly, 0.936, 0.890, and 0.937, all of which are in the range of 0.9. These findings show that, in compliance with the standards set by Bentler & Bonett (1980), Byrne (1989), and Hu & Bentler (1998), the model satisfactorily fits the data.

Figure 2 captures the Confirmatory Factor Analysis results. Additionally, the model's fit is further supported by the RMSEA value of 0.056 and the SRMR value of 0.054. A successful fit is shown by the SRMR value, which calculates the difference between the observed and predicted correlations and is less than the 0.08 benchmark. The appropriateness of the model is further confirmed by the fact that the RMSEA value, which accounts for model complexity, is below the 0.06 criterion recommended (Hu and Bentler, 1998; Browne and Cudeck, 1992). Together, these fit indices demonstrate that the proposed model meets the standards for model fit in structural equation modelling and provides a reasonable fit to the data. Consequently, it can be said that the model is reliable and well-suited to the data based on the outcomes displayed in Table 20, offering a strong basis for more research and interpretation.

**Figure 2***Confirmatory factor analysis***Table 20***Fit Indicators for the CFA Model*

Model	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF	CFI	NFI	IFI	RMSEA	SRMR
	558.251	255	0.000	2.189	0.936	0.890	0.937	0.056	0.054

## Hypotheses testing

The PROCESS macro in SPSS version 4.2 was used by the researchers to test the study hypotheses. Table 21 compiles the details of the hypothesis. The investigation's results showed that, following Jan et al.'s (2019) criteria, the hypotheses generated statistically significant results. The findings demonstrated a very modest correlation between the SRP, PI, and H1 (Seeking reviewers' product-related comments on social media affect purchase intentions) ( $R^2=0.2201$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The findings of H2 (Seeking reviewers' product-related comments positively impact dependency on social media) indicate that the SRP has a negligible effect on DSM ( $R^2=0.2758$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). H3 (Dependency on social media mediates the relationship between Seeking Reviewers' product-related comments and purchase intentions); DSM moderates and positively influences both the SRP and PI, mediating the link between them ( $R^2=0.5259$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). R moderates the relationship between DSM and PI and has a weak impact on the relationship between DSM and PI, according to H4 (Risk moderates the relationship between seeking reviewers' product information, dependency on social media reviews, and purchase intentions,  $R^2=0.4462$ ,  $p=0.070$ ). H5 was rejected. DSM has a minimal but positive influence on PI, according to H6 (Dependency on social media for reviewers' comments on products influences purchase intentions,  $R^2=0.2150$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). Therefore, all of the hypotheses had statistically significant results and were accepted, with the exception of H5, which was rejected.

**Table 21**

*Result of Hypothesis Testing*

	Linkage	$R^2$	F Test	$\rho$ - value	B Coefficient	Hypotheses Acceptance
H <sub>1</sub>	S → IP	0.2201	107.7801	.0000	0.5640	Accepted
H <sub>2</sub>	S → DSM	0.2758	145.4959	.0000	.6174	Accepted
H <sub>3</sub>	S → DSM → IP	0.5259	1760709	.0000	0.3072	Accepted
H <sub>4</sub>	S → DSM → R → IP	0.4462	76.3477	.0070	-0.0271	Accepted
H <sub>5</sub>	S → DSM → T → IP	0.4446	75.8512	.0545	-0.0191	Rejected
H <sub>6</sub>	DSM → IP	0.2150	104.718	.0000	0.474	Accepted

To investigate the intricate linkages between the moderator (Total Risk; TR), the mediator (Total Dependency on social media; TDSM), and the dependent variable (Total Purchase Intention; TPI), the present research used Process Macro Model 14. Figure 3 shows that the total purchase intention (TPI) tends to decrease as the amount of perceived risk (TR) rises. This implies that even when customers extensively rely on social media for information, increased risk perceptions may reduce their desire to make a purchase (TDSM). The moderating effect of TR suggests that risk can affect the nature, strength and direction of the relation between social media dependency and purchase intention, which, in the case of high risk, can ultimately result in a fall in purchase intention. This research emphasises how important risk perception in terms of consumer decision-making, especially when considering the influence of social media.

Figure 3

*Model representation between the variables*

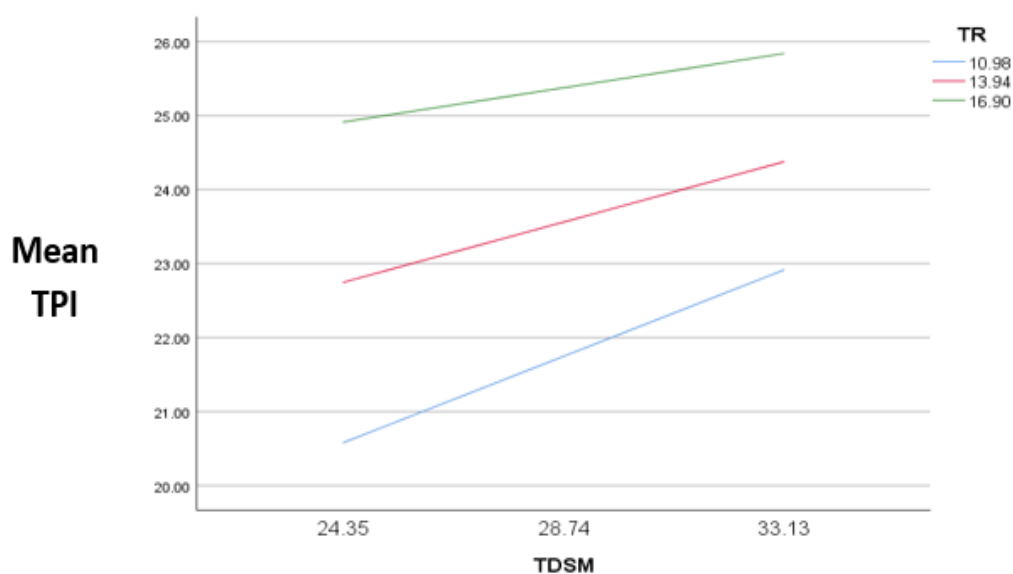


Figure 3 is a line plot representing the relationship between three variables: TDSM (Total Dependency on social media), TPI (Total Purchase Intention), and TR (which might stand for Total Risk). All three lines slope upwards, indicating a positive relationship between TDSM and Mean TPI.

## CHAPTER V

### Discussion

#### Introduction

The results of the data collected and analysed for this research are thoroughly discussed in this section, offering an in-depth exploration of the findings. The results are not only presented in detail but are also carefully compared to the outcomes of previous studies to provide context and validate the current research. The similarities and the differences between the results of this study and earlier research are underlined, underscoring patterns or trends that may indicate consistent outcomes across different studies, and this comparison helps to better understand how the present study aligns with or differs from the body of knowledge currently in existence. Additionally, any differences are examined, which may reveal new insights or suggest areas for further investigation. This comprehensive discussion helps to situate the study within the broader research landscape and paves the way for drawing meaningful conclusions based on both the current findings and their relationship to existing literature. Finally, a conclusion is made, summarizing the key insights, contributions, and the study's implications in light of the present findings and the findings from previous research.

#### Findings from related literature

##### *Reviews and trust*

According to Sa'ait, Kanya and Nazrin (2016), consumers these days are more inclined to believe recommendations from friends and family since they come from an unpaid source and are usually truthful accounts of the consumers' experiences. This change in perception underscores a rising mistrust of conventional advertising strategies, which are frequently seen as prejudiced and self-serving. Furthermore, because word-of-mouth recommendations originate from people who are thought to have no stake in promoting a specific good or service, they are frequently regarded as more relatable and believable. Because of this, companies are concentrating more and more on using these personal networks to establish credibility and trust with potential clients.



### ***Dependency***

Jung and Moro (2012) and Kheiravar (2018) both assert that the media can exert influence if individuals start depending on them for information. Consumers are depending more and more on social media to enlighten them about products, since it puts them in a better position by compiling accurate information from multiple sources (Wang et al. 2016). This shift reflects a broader trend where traditional media sources are often bypassed in favour of the immediacy and interactivity that social media platforms provide. Furthermore, social media not only gives users access to a variety of opinions and real-time reviews, but it also makes it easier for users to communicate directly with brands and other users. This dynamic has led to a more empowered consumer base that values transparency and authenticity in product information. As a result, businesses are adapting their marketing strategies to engage more effectively through social media channels and build stronger relationships with their audience.

According to Kheiravar (2018) and Jung and Moro (2012), media can have a noteworthy influence if people start depending on them for information. Customers become reliant on social media for product knowledge since it offers them a beneficial position by aggregating thorough information from various sources (Wang et al. 2016). This dependency on social media is driven by its capacity to deliver real-time updates, user-generated reviews, and peer opinions, which collectively enhance the credibility and relatability of the information. Additionally, because social media platforms are participatory, users may participate in conversations, pose questions, and get direct feedback from brands and other users. Because people are more likely to believe the opinions and experiences shared inside their digital networks, this growing dependence on social media thereby changes consumer perceptions as well as purchase decisions. This changing environment emphasises how vital it is for companies to regulate their marketing plans to utilise social media and effectively cater to their target market's requirements and desires.

### ***Reviews and purchase intention***

According to certain studies, consumer reviews on the internet may be a better source of trustworthy information than content produced by sellers. When online consumer reviews (OCRs) are perceived as more reliable, prospective customers are likely to make a purchase (Primanda, Setyaning, Hidayat & Ekasasi, 2020). This dependability arises from the belief that user reviews are less biased and more honest

than promotional advertising, which is frequently perceived to have a business purpose. Positive customer reviews can also have a big impact on prospective customers by lowering perceived risk and offering social proof. The vast number of evaluations that are available increases the impact of OCRs by enabling customers to identify patterns and shared experiences. Because bad reviews may quickly damage a company's credibility and revenue, companies are realising the essence of constantly monitoring and managing their online reputation. This change emphasises how crucial it is becoming to establish and preserve trust through sincere interactions with clients and top-notch support.

Consumers look for online reviews because they make decision-making easier by relieving mental strain and improving purchasing intention at the same time (Wang, Tariq & Alvi, 2021). Online reviews offer a comprehensive overview of a product's advantages and disadvantages by compiling feedback and insights from a diverse user base, facilitating consumers in making well-informed decisions. Customers may swiftly evaluate solutions without having to do in-depth individual research because to this reduction in cognitive strain. A purchase is also more likely when there are a lot of favourable evaluations because it gives the buyer confidence and confirmation. In order to preserve a positive internet reputation, companies are thus putting more of an emphasis on encouraging happy clients to write reviews and quickly responding to any unfavourable comments. This dynamic highlight how important it is for online reviews to shape customer behaviour and purchase decisions in the digital era.

### ***Risk and purchase intention***

An extensive collection of studies indicates that purchasing intentions are adversely affected by perceived risk (Chang and Chen 2008; Grégoire et al. 2015; Kim & Lennon 2008; Mitchell and Papavassiliou 1999). Ben Abdelaziz and colleagues (2015) found that social media users are more likely to adopt other users' negative opinions about products and to recognise the adverse features of the products that receive critical remarks. This heightened awareness can exacerbate concerns and reinforce scepticism, leading to a decreased likelihood of purchase. Negative comments and reviews often serve as powerful deterrents, as they amplify perceived risks and undermine consumer confidence. Consequently, businesses must proactively address and mitigate negative feedback, striving to resolve issues transparently and improve their overall reputation. By doing so, they can reduce the perceived risk and

foster a more positive perception among potential customers, ultimately enhancing their purchase intentions and customer loyalty.

### **Empirical findings from this research**

- Most participants seek reviewers' product-related comments on social media.
- Most participants depend on social media for reviewers' comments on products.
- Most participants agree that negatively reviewed products are a risky purchase.
- Most participants are nonaligned to the risk associated with social or environmental harm, or reputational damage associated with buying negatively reviewed products.
- The majority of participants trust positive reviews about products on social media.
- Reviewers' product-related comments on social media influence most participants' intention to purchase.
- There is a moderate positive relationship between reviews and purchase intention.
- There is a moderate positive relationship between purchase intention and dependency.
- There is a moderate positive relationship between purchase intention and risk.
- There is a strong positive relationship between purchase intention and risk.
- Dependency can be accepted as a mediator in the relationship between Seeking reviews and purchase intention.
- The interaction of Trust (moderator) and dependency (mediator), therefore has an *insignificant* influence on the relationship between seeking reviews and purchase intention. Trust is therefore not a moderator for the presented model.
- The interaction of Risk (moderator) and dependency (mediator), has a *significant* influence on the relationship between seeking reviews and purchase intention. Risk is therefore a moderator for the presented model.

### **Hypotheses results**

After the analysis of the present study's data, all the hypotheses for this study have been accepted, except hypothesis 5 (Tables 21 and 22).

**Table 22***Hypothesis table*

Hypothesis	Accepted/Rejected
H1	Accepted
H2	Accepted
H3	Accepted
H4	Accepted
H5	Rejected
H6	Accepted

The findings show that S and DSM significantly and generally have a good impact on IP, with most hypotheses being accepted based on strong statistical evidence. The rejection of H5 highlights the need for further research into the combined effects involving DSM, T, and IP, as the results were not as robust as expected. Overall, these findings offer insightful information on the connections between the factors under study and suggest areas for further investigation to enhance understanding and application.

**Research questions**

Following the data gathering and analysis, the predetermined research topics were methodically addressed. These were the questions that were developed to direct the research and to go into particular facets of the topic. To glean important insights, the data was subjected to a thorough analytical procedure after it was gathered. To guarantee that the data was appropriately evaluated and that the conclusions were solid, this process included a number of statistical approaches and procedures.

The analysis sought to evaluate the theories and provide a thorough response to the research inquiries. Overall, the study's methodological rigour and the validity of its conclusions are highlighted by the successful answering of the research questions through careful data collecting and analysis. This comprehensive methodology ensured that the results were well-supported and contributed significantly to the field of research.

***Do people seek product-related comments on social media?***

**Yes.** Per the findings of the current research, it is evident that most people especially, the participants of this study, seek product-related comments on social media. This is also backed by previous literature.

This trend reflects how consumers are making more and more decisions based on digital platforms, with social media acting as the main information source for goods and services. The study's findings demonstrate that before making a purchase, participants use social media to read reviews, weigh opinions, and get advice from other customers. Research indicates that people consider internet evaluations and comments as more reliable and authentic when compared to conventional forms of advertising or marketing. Social media material is dynamic and user-generated, giving prospective customers access to an extensive array of viewpoints and knowledge that aid in decision-making.

The study's results are consistent with previous research, which emphasises social media's significance as a major factor influencing contemporary consumer behaviour. Additionally, it says that companies should place a high priority on maintaining their online persona and reputation on these platforms because favourable consumer reviews and participation can have a big influence on their bottom line. The study validates earlier research and emphasises the continued usefulness of social media in influencing purchase decisions by confirming that it is not only an additional tool but rather a vital component in the decision-making process of consumers.

***Do people depend on social media for reviewer's product-related comments?***

**Yes,** majority of the respondents depend on social media for reviewers' comments on products. Indeed, many individuals depend a lot on social media reviews since these sites have developed into major hubs for user reviews and peer-to-peer recommendations. Because social media is easily accessible and offers a diverse spectrum of perspectives, its influence over purchasing decisions has increased dramatically. Users may readily access reviews, unboxing videos, and first-hand accounts provided by other customers on social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube (Nevalainen, 2019). Compared to traditional advertising, these sources provide incisive information that is often perceived as being more genuine and approachable.

Social media's interactive features enable prospective customers to participate in conversations, pose questions, and view real-world product usage, all of which help them make better educated decisions about what to buy. Social media reviews also frequently contain visual content, such images and videos, which provide a more thorough and accurate depiction of the product and facilitate decision-making.

Furthermore, the instantaneous and real-time aspect of social media platforms contributes to the dependence on them for opinions pertaining to products. Soon after a product is published, consumers can rapidly compile a wide range of opinions, enabling them to evaluate the consensus before making a purchase. This real-time feedback loop is especially helpful in markets that move quickly, where customer preferences and trends might shift at any time.

Essentially, the reliance on social media for reviewers' feedback is a reflection of a larger movement towards more user-driven and democratised information sources, where peer experiences and collective knowledge are valued more highly than traditional advertising avenues. This pattern emphasises how crucial community-driven information and social proof are becoming in influencing customer behaviour and decision-making.

### ***Does risk and trust of reviewers' comments affect purchase intention?***

**Yes**, the perception of risk and the level of trust in reviewers' comments significantly affect purchase intention, but their roles can differ contingent on the specific situation and model used to analyse consumer behaviour. In the present research, while risk and trust are important influences, trust appears to be less impactful as a moderator in influencing purchase intention, whereas risk plays a more significant moderating role.

Consumers' level of confidence in reviewers' comments generally relates to how much they think the information they provide is trustworthy, neutral, and credible. Customers are more likely to be convinced by encouraging remarks and suggestions when they believe the evaluations, which increases the possibility that they will make a buy. Trust can come from a number of places, including the reviewer's perceived level of experience, the consistency of their assessments, and the openness of the review procedure. In numerous consumer behaviour models, trust is frequently seen as a crucial element that might amplify the persuasiveness of evaluations.

In this specific study, however, the link between reviewers' comments and intention to purchase is not considerably moderated by trust. This suggests that while trust may still play a role, its influence may not be strong enough to alter the overall relationship in the model presented. This could be due to various factors, such as the homogeneity of trust levels across the sample or the possibility that other factors, such as the reviews' content or the reviewers' perceived level of knowledge, are more important.

In this specific study, however, the association between reviewers' remarks and purchase intention is not considerably moderated by trust. This shows that while trust may still play a role, its influence may not be strong enough to alter the overall connection in the model provided. There are a few possible explanations for this, including the sample-wide homogeneity of trust levels or the possibility that other variables like the reviews' content or the reviewers' perceived level of expertise, have a stronger impact.

Essentially, the dependence on social media for reviewer's comments reflects a broader shift towards more user-driven and democratised information sources, where peer experiences and collective knowledge are valued more highly than traditional advertising avenues. This pattern emphasises how crucial community-driven information and social proof are becoming in influencing the choices and decisions of customers.

## **Discussion**

Despite the large number of studies on the subject, there remains a research gap concerning the relationship between online reviews and purchase intention. These gaps include the product-related comments made by individual reviewers on social media, the dependence on reviewers' comments on social media, and the moderating influence of risks and trust. This study attempted to bridge this gap by looking at people's dependence on social media for comments from individual reviewers and the part reviews play in influencing purchase intention. The study's objective was to find out how trust and risks impacted the association between the intention to buy and the reliance on the opinions of social media reviews. In simple words, do risk and trust make customers perceive social media reviewers' comments differently, and does the dependency on social media reviews make customers see the product or service negatively or positively?

After surveying 384 students studying in North Cyprus universities, this study was able to achieve its aim. The majority of people, and specifically the study participants, search social media for product-related comments, according to the study's findings. When looking for information on a product they might wish to buy, most individuals depend on social media. Additionally, it was shown that most students depend on social media for information. This result aligns with a study by Primanda, Setyaning, Hidayat, and Ekasasi (2020), which found that individuals typically depend mostly on word of mouth when making purchases because they trust it more than formal advertisements.

The findings of the current research support the Media System Dependency (MSD) theory by demonstrating that those who depend on social media for proof are more likely to have their purchasing decisions impacted by the media. The fundamental premise of MSD theory, according to Jung and Moro (2012) and Kheiravar (2018), is that people are significantly influenced by the media when they actively seek out information from these media. When knowledge is crucial to a person's decision-making process, like when making a purchase, this influence is even more noticeable. The study's participants, who confirmed their dependence on social media for product-related information, exemplify this dynamic, as their dependence on these platforms highlights the role of media as a powerful tool in shaping consumer behaviour. The study's results and the MSD theoretical framework's alignment highlight the theory's applicability in modern environments where social media is prevalent.

Moreover, the utilisation of MSD theory in interpreting the findings of this investigation implies more extensive consequences for comprehending the impact of digital media in contemporary consumer society. The degree of reliance on social media platforms keeps rising as they become more and more the main sources of entertainment, information, and social contact. This dependence highlights the media's ability to influence attitudes and actions while also highlighting how media consumption is changing in the digital era.

The study's validation of the MSD theory suggests that social media will continue to influence people's purchase decisions as long as people look to it for guidance. As a result, marketers and researchers should take media dependency into account when developing their strategies and analyses. This demonstrates the



applicability of MSD theory as a useful paradigm for examining how people, media, and society structures interact in a media environment that is undergoing fast change.

A negative correlation of 22% was seen between the intention to purchase and the desire to seek product-related comments made by reviewers on social media. This implies that the intention to purchase and the pursuit of product-related comments from reviews on social media are not strongly correlated. The high volume of reviews that flood social media platforms with comments and reviews may be the cause of the low correlation between the SRP and IP. This abundance of reviews, while seemingly beneficial, can paradoxically lead to decision fatigue, where consumers struggle to process and analyse the data effectively. With hundreds or even thousands of opinions to consider, distinguishing between genuine, helpful feedback and less credible or irrelevant comments becomes a significant challenge. This difficulty in sifting through such vast amounts of information can obscure the connection between the reviews and the consumers' final purchasing decisions, as the clarity and impact of individual reviews are diminished within the noise of the larger discourse (Ariffin et al., 2018; Sa'ait et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2016).

Ensuring that the reviews fulfil specific standards of quality is essential to resolving this issue and improving the reviews' overall value (Sa'ait et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2016). Reviews of superior quality are usually distinguished by comprehensive, precise, and impartial commentary that offers lucid insights into the product's merits and demerits. Reviews that are comprehensive and well-written have a higher chance of connecting with prospective customers since they provide them with specific information that is directly related to their requirements. Platforms and companies can enhance the calibre of reviews by promoting thorough user feedback, providing rewards for thorough reviews, and putting in place mechanisms that emphasize or prioritize the most beneficial and reliable remarks.

This study also suggests incorporating expert viewpoints with social media reviews to improve their ability to influence purchase intentions. Through the integration of industry experts' perspectives with regular consumers' experiences, companies may present a fuller and more equitable picture of their offerings. While user reviews offer relatability and authenticity, expert reviews can offer authoritative and technically sound assessments. This two-pronged strategy can assist customers in sifting through the deluge of information, facilitating their ability to believe and act upon the reviews they come across. The quality and utility of the information available

can also be increased by filtering reviews to highlight the most intelligent and reliable remarks. This will ultimately result in better connections between social media review-seeking behaviour and purchase intentions.

The correlation between the SRP and DSM was 27.6%. The findings suggested a weak relationship between the SRP and DSM. When people use social media continually to get information, they start to become dependent on it (Chen et al., 2017); multiple studies, including Kheiravar's (2018), have supported this conclusion. It is also confirmed by the current study that individuals utilise social media to research products. Customers find it difficult to make well-informed decisions based solely on social media reviews, especially in the absence of expert perspectives. This is explained by the lack of consensus among social media reviews, where there are differing opinions, information overload, and inconsistent information; nevertheless, this explains the weak relationship between the SRP and DSM.

The participants' varied backgrounds may also have contributed to the limited correlation between the SRP and DSM. Even though the main sample was taken from North Cyprus, it represents a diverse range of cultural influences, philosophies, and points of view, increasing its worldwide audience representativeness compared to a local group that is homogeneous. However, cultural differences may still influence the limited correlation seen, such as varying levels of trust in online sources, disparate communication ideologies, as well as different perspectives on the use of social media. A more complete understanding of the weak link revealed by the study can result from these cultural aspects that influence how individuals perceive and rely on the comments made by social media reviewers.

Consistent with Li et al. (2019), the extent to which social media meets users' information needs determines how dependent they are on it. Users naturally become more dependent on social media platforms to make informed decisions, including what to buy, when they regularly discover useful and pertinent information there. In order to enhance the correlation between the search for product-related comments from reviewers (SRP) and reliance on social media (DSM), it is imperative that consumers continuously come across informative content whenever they interact with these platforms. Businesses should clearly indicate when a review has been submitted by verified customers who have actually purchased and used their products, according to the survey results. In addition, the addition of expert opinions alongside user reviews can help address the issue of information overload by providing authoritative

perspectives that assist users in prioritising and interpreting the large amount of available data. This combination of user-generated content and expert analysis can create a more balanced and trustworthy information environment, encouraging greater dependency on social media for making purchase decisions. In contrast, inconsistent or misleading information might otherwise undermine trust and reduce the efficacy of social media as a dependable source of product insight.

The link between the SRP and PI is 52.3% when mediated by DSM. The findings suggest that DSM functions as a useful mediator in the interaction between PI and SRP. The relationship between the SRP and the PI may be influenced by marketing and advertising initiatives. Strong and widely disseminated marketing messaging possesses the ability to reduce the mediating influence of DSM. Similarly, if customers consider social media evaluations as simply one source of information out of several, there may be a moderate mediation effect. The efficacy of this kind of mediation may depend on how many social media posts are believed to be more trustworthy and high-quality than other sources of information. For organisations to produce reliable social media reviews, they must work with industry experts and influencers. Influencers' involvement could potentially boost the effect of social media comments and encourage users to depend more on the platform. The study also suggests incorporating social proof elements like the number of views, likes, and shares into the review display, as these can enhance users' perceptions of social media comments by making them appear more valuable.

There was a 44.5% interaction between SRP, DSM, R, and PI. This suggests that, with R acting as the moderator, there was a weak association between the SRP, DSM, and PI. R in this study's analysis comprised the following attitude statements: "using the product/brand would damage my reputation or image as a person," which addresses societal concern and identity as well as the need to maintain a good reputation in society, and "I would face negative consequences if I use this product/brand because of social or environmental harm" which addressed sustainability issues. Therefore, consumers' concerns about sustainability, identity and society issues, and reputational issues can be blamed for the weak relationship. According to Lăzăroiu et al. (2020), negative reviews about a product make consumers think it's risky. For this reason, the researchers advise businesses to monitor on social media reviews and respond to any concerns expressed, particularly those on sustainability and reputational harm. To ease the fears of potential customers who

might rely on reviews to assist them pick what to buy, social media professionals for organisations should also address negative product reviews in-depth. DSM development can be aided by resolving problems pertaining to perceived risks.

The relationship between purchase intentions and dependency on social media for reviewers' comments on products was 21.5%. It is clear from earlier research and study results that consumers get reliant on social media for reviews as they constantly look for information from it. Comparing previous studies' report with the present study's findings, it is evident that individuals rely on social media to help them decide what to buy. As long as they discover relevant or fascinating content, people will keep looking for it on social media. This suggests that individuals will become dependent on social media and their purchase intentions will be influenced if they discover crucial product information there. They will also likely seek out other pertinent information on social media. The reason the study's dependence on social media did not strengthen the bond between the SRP and PI may be explained by this parallel. Consequently, consumers may stop looking for information in this way and become less reliant on social media if they are unable to locate interesting product information about a product they want to buy on social media.

Likewise, information that is entertaining and encourages reliance on social media but isn't helpful in evaluating a product's value isn't likely to persuade someone to buy it. According to the researchers, for DSM to successfully mediate the SRP and PI, the information that is made available must be interesting and helpful. Therefore, it is advised that product reviews be written to address the relevant issues that the majority of consumers have with the product. Companies would need to take an active part in review sites, provide information, dispel myths, and fix mistakes in products or services. Social media listening technologies can be used to do this.

***There was an unexpected outcome based on our research.*** In examining hypothesis 5, which stated that "Trust" moderates the relationship between dependency on social media reviews and purchase intention. The hypothesis was rejected. The P value for hypothesis 5, which stated that "Trust moderates the relationship between seeking reviewers' product information, dependency on social media reviews and purchase intention", was above 0.05, which makes the result insignificant. Hence, it was rejected. Consequently, the association between the intention to purchase, and seeking individual reviewer's comment on social media has

been found to be unaffected by trust. This outcome goes against the conclusions of Monfared et al. (2021), who hypothesised that trust is an important factor to take into account when making judgements about purchases. However, this is justifiable, since Monfared et al. (2021) considered the aggregation of reviews as opposed to individual reviewer's comments in the present study.

Trust is therefore not a substantial moderator of the association between dependence on social media reviewers' comments and purchase intention. In other words, even though people might depend on the opinions of social media reviewers to learn about things, their final purchasing decisions are not significantly influenced by how much they trust these reviews. This suggests that other factors, such as the sheer volume of reviews, the specific content of the comments, or perhaps even external influences like brand reputation or peer recommendations, might have a more notable impact on consumers' purchasing intentions. Reviews may be the main informational tool used by customers to get a general impression of a product; but ultimately, consumers may base their purchasing decisions on a combination of additional criteria beyond just trust in the reviewer.

Stated differently, individuals' propensity to purchase is not significantly impacted by their level of faith in the opinions of social media reviewers, even if they depend on their comments for perspectives and insights. This may be the result of customers becoming more conscious of the potential biases and unpredictability in online reviews, where sponsored content, phoney reviews, and differing personal preferences can all have an impact on how reliable reviews are viewed. Because of this, even while customers would appreciate the information offered, they might approach it warily and compare it to other sources of information before deciding what to buy. This research emphasises how important it is for platforms and marketers to encourage evaluations that are viewed as authentic and of high quality in addition to their quantity. This will help to ensure that trust can really be converted into increased buy intentions when it exists.

Several possible reasons could explain why trust was found to be an insignificant moderator in this context:

*People's use of social media is changing*, which conforms with broader changes in how consumers engage with material and interpret the information they come across. One obvious shift is the increasing mistrust of reviews, which is partly due to the proliferation of sponsored content and influencers. Influencers are more common

on social media, and because of this, people may perceive their content as biased or unauthentic because it is frequently driven by financial gain. The power of trust has been weakened by the commercialisation of social media reviews, as consumers are becoming more conscious of the fact that many reviews are influenced by sponsorships or business agreements rather than being totally neutral (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Users begin to have less faith in these evaluations as a result of the credibility of these reviews being questioned.

Users' methods of assessing reviews may be changing as a result of this change, with a greater focus now being placed on the information's relevancy and specificity rather than the reviewer's reputation. Users are increasingly searching for reviews that provide precise, in-depth insights that are directly relevant to their needs, rather than just accepting a review at face value just because it comes from a well-known influencer or other seemingly reliable source. Reviews that are thorough, have practical applications, or include both a product's advantages and disadvantages may be given priority. This shift represents a more critical and discriminating way of consuming content on social media, where the specificity and quality of the information are valued more highly than the reviewer's perceived reliability.

*Cultural influences could also be important.* The way trust is viewed and how it affects purchasing decisions is greatly influenced by cultural factors. Since trust is a concept that is not universally understood and is instead firmly ingrained in cultural norms and values, what is regarded as trustworthy in one culture may not be in another. The establishment and maintenance of trust in various civilisations can be influenced by cultural variations such as “individualism versus collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance,” as per Hofstede's cultural aspects theory (2001). For instance, people may rely more on well-known brands and expert reviews for purchase decisions in cultures with high levels of uncertainty avoidance because these sources are viewed as more stable and credible. On the other hand, informal evaluations from peers and social media influencers may be more trusted in low uncertainty avoidance cultures because people from these cultures are more at ease with ambiguity and don't require official confirmation as much.

In the case of this study, the analogy of cultural influences on trust is particularly relevant because the participants included international students from different continents, countries, and cultural backgrounds. This diversity means that the study's findings are shaped by a wide range of cultural perspectives on trust and decision-

making processes. International students bring with them varying expectations, norms, and values regarding what constitutes trustworthy information, particularly in the context of online reviews and content on social media.

Students from countries where collectivism is highly valued, for example, might give more weight to ratings and opinions expressed by influencers who share their values or by members of their social networks. Students from more individualistic cultures, on the other hand, might value independent research over reviews and be wary of them. They might also value first-hand product experience or accurate information over social media recommendations. Thus, it is possible to interpret the participants' varying degrees of trust in reviewers' comments on social media, as a reflection of their respective cultural upbringings.

This range of viewpoints supports the analogy because it highlights the ways in which cultural factors the degree to which trust acts as a mediator in the link between purchase intentions and social media dependence. The study offers a deeper knowledge of how cultural variations affect trust dynamics in a globalised environment because it includes people from a variety of cultural situations. This emphasises how critical it is to consider the cultural context when analysing customer behaviour and creating global marketing campaigns.

These cultural differences in how trust is viewed can have a big impact on how trust influences judgements about what to buy. Word-of-mouth recommendations or reviews from within one's social network may be a more effective way to build trust in collectivist societies, where community and group viewpoints are valued more highly. This is because these are perceived as endorsements from reliable sources within the group. Individuals in more individualistic societies, on the other hand, could depend more on their judgement and personal experiences to develop trust than on the opinions of others. This implies that depending on the cultural setting, social media reviews' efficacy and the degree to which trust influences purchasing intentions can differ significantly. A one-size-fits-all strategy might not work in a globalised marketplace; therefore, marketers and companies need to customise their approaches to meet the cultural norms and trust dynamics of their target customers. Gaining an understanding of these cultural quirks is essential to interacting with customers and building trust in ways that work in various cultural contexts.

*Furthermore, the abundance of false information and phony evaluations on social media may have damaged trust to the point that it is no longer a useful*

moderator. Instead of depending just on faith, users may take a more practical stance and cross-reference data from other sources (Luca & Zervas, 2016). Users are becoming more wary of the content they come across online in the age of digitisation due to the prevalence of false information and phoney reviews. Reports of phoney endorsements from bots, influencers paid to promote items without disclosing their relationships, and altered reviews have all contributed to this scepticism. Consequently, there is now less faith in internet evaluations, which has caused customers to look for other methods of verifying the information they are given.

By comparing information from several sources before making a purchase, people can now take a more practical approach to decision-making rather than depending only on trust (Luca & Zervas, 2016). In order to do this cross-referencing, one may look for professional or expert opinions, compare and contrast products directly from reliable sources, or even examine reviews across several platforms. Customers can reduce the risks involved with relying on evaluations that may be biased or erroneous by triangulating information in this way. The tendency of consumers becoming more discriminating and less reliant on a single source of information is reflected in this change towards a more critical and analytical approach to online material. It also emphasises how crucial it is for online reviews to be genuine and transparent, since customers are increasingly looking for reliability and consistency across a range of data points to help them make judgements about what to buy.

The fact that Hypothesis 5 was rejected shows how important it is to re-evaluate how trust functions in the connection between purchase intention and dependence on social media reviewers' comments. Although trust is still important in many situations, it doesn't seem to have much of a moderating influence in this particular connection. Regarding specific reviewer comments, trust plays an insignificant moderating role in the association between these comments and intention to purchase. In contrast, from previous studies, trust was discovered to act as a mediator in the interaction between the comments made by the collective reviewers and the intention to purchase. A more thorough and balanced perspective of a product can be obtained from the collective voice of several reviewers, even though individual reviews may be perceived as subjective and possibly biased, decreasing the impact on trust. Since user opinions are frequently viewed as more reliable and less manipulable when combined, trust plays a more important role in collective reviews.



Customers are more likely to see information as reliable and trustworthy when they see a consensus or trend among several evaluations, which consequently has a greater impact on their purchase intentions. This group confidence results from the conviction that it is more difficult to fabricate a big number of reviews and that the variety of viewpoints can counteract any personal prejudices. As a result, a consumer's decision to buy may not be significantly impacted by trust in the opinion of a single reviewer, but the collective opinions of multiple reviewers can significantly influence a consumer's behaviour, if the customer trusts the information, underscoring the importance of social proof in the decision-making process. To create more thorough models of consumer behaviour in the era of digitalisation, it will be crucial to investigate more variables and comprehend the underlying causes of this disparity.

However, risk continues to be a key moderator of both the relationship between the remarks made by a single reviewer and the intention to buy as well as the relationship between the comments made by a group of reviewers and the desire to buy. Customers give evaluations a lot of weight based on the perceived risk of making a purchase, regardless of whether the reviews are from a single reviewer or a group of reviewers. People make more thoughtful and cautious decisions when there is a perceived risk involved, such as when making costly purchases, trying out new brands, or selecting items that could have significant impact on their lives.

In the context of individual reviews, if a product is perceived as risky, consumers are likely to scrutinize the comments more carefully, looking for specific details and indicators that might mitigate their concerns. Even a single negative or highly detailed review can heavily sway their decision, given the heightened sensitivity to potential risks.

Similarly, in the case of collective reviews, the aggregated perception of risk plays a crucial role. If a large number of reviewers express concerns or highlight potential downsides, this collective assessment can amplify the perceived risk, strongly influencing purchase intentions. Conversely, an excessive amount of positive feedback can serve to lower perceived risk and raise the possibility of a purchase. As a result, risk constantly plays a key moderating role in these connections, influencing consumers' final purchasing decisions and their dependence on feedback.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **Conclusion**

#### **Introduction**

The study concludes with this chapter. The goals, methods, and findings of the study are summarised in this section. This section gives an overview of the study and then makes recommendations in light of the findings.

#### **Summary of the research process**

This study aimed to investigate the moderating effects of trust and risks on the link between purchase intention and dependence on social media reviewers' comments. Specifically, to ascertain whether risk or trust influences consumers' opinions on social media reviews and whether relying too much on these reviews influences consumers' opinions of a product or service in a positive or negative light. Previous research has examined how social media reviews affect consumers' inclinations to make purchases. However, there was a dearth of studies on individual reviewer's comments and dependence. Thus, by addressing people's reliance on social media for product information and the part reviews play in affecting purchase intention, this study aimed to close the gap in the literature.

Three research questions guided the study and they were all answered in the study; Do people seek product-related comments on social media? Do people depend on social media for reviewer's product-related comments? Does risk and trust of reviewers' comments affect purchase intention? Consequently, the research came to the following conclusions: people use social media to search for product-related comments, they depend on social media to read reviews of products, and trust has little bearing on how much a consumer depends on social media for product information and how likely they are to make a purchase. However, the perceived risk of reviewer comments on social media moderates the association between customers' dependence on these platforms for product knowledge and their subsequent intentions to purchase.

Furthermore, there were five hypotheses derived from previous literature, the media system dependency theory, and the model of the study. The researchers developed a questionnaire after a thorough search of literature and theory. There were five scales of measurement as presented in the model of the study and 28 attitude statements in the questionnaire. After the questionnaires were prepared, they were sent

to the ethics committee for assessment and approval. The data was collected after the approval from the ethics committee was received. Twenty-six (26) attitude statements were however considered after the factor analysis.

Students at the four largest universities in North Cyprus were the source of the data collection. In-person and via Google Forms, 384 students who were chosen using the convenience sampling method took part in the study. Correlation and regression analyses were performed on the gathered data using SPSS version 25. To test the study hypotheses, the researcher employed SPSS version 4.2's PROCESS macro. Except for hypothesis 5, all six hypotheses were examined and found to be accurate based on the study.

### **Summary of findings**

The study discovered that social media is used by most participants to seek product-related comments from reviewers, and most participants depend on social media for product-related information. The majority of participants believe that purchasing products with negative reviews is risky. The majority of participants are more concerned with the potential harm to society or the environment, or the potential damage to their reputation from buying products with bad reviews.

In the same vein, participants trust positive reviews on social media about products. This means that positive reviews on products are believed to be true. Most participants' intentions to purchase are however *not* influenced by the comments they see on social media about products. This indicates that seeking reviews on social media and buy intention are related, although trust has been shown to be unimportant and not a moderator in this relationship.

The present study's findings indicate that buying products with poor reviews carries some risk. As a result, risk deters people from making a purchase. In this study, risk was initially described as the worry that a product would not live up to consumer expectations or demands, that it wouldn't be sustainable, or that it may harm the user's reputation. After the survey was analysed, the study characterised risk as the fear of a product not being sustainable and a product that can cause reputational damage to the user.

After the initial factor loading, the researchers decided the first two survey items, which addressed risk as the worry that a product wouldn't live up to the customer's expectations or needs, weren't relevant to the study. For this reason, following the data

analysis, the study's researchers redefined risk. The other components that were judged relevant to the study addressed risk in terms of concerns about a product's sustainability or potential to damage a user's reputation (social reputational damage).

## **Recommendations**

Based on the study's findings, the researchers make recommendations. There are suggestions for practitioners as well as for academics, particularly for future researchers.

### ***Theoretical implications of this study***

This study was guided by the theories of social influence and media systems dependency.

**Media systems dependency theory:** The results of this study demonstrate that risk mitigates the reliance on social media comments and their influence on purchase intentions, supporting and expanding the Media Systems Dependency theory. This expands our knowledge of the complex links between situational circumstances and media dependence and emphasises the ways in which context affects the impacts of media. Media dependence is therefore dynamic rather than static, and situational factors like perceived risk can have an impact on it.

By redefining risk to prioritise sustainability and reputational harm, the current study offers fresh perspectives on how media reliance affects risk perception. According to the MSD Theory, media can influence how people perceive and comprehend hazards. Indicating that media not only educates but also aligns with current issues that important to consumers, the emphasis on sustainability and reputational concerns reflects current society values and goals.

**Social influence theory:** Given that trust is a fundamental component regarding the dynamic between a follower and an influencer, the findings challenge the conventional wisdom that views it as an essential component of the influence process. However, the relationship between the intention to purchase and the desire to seek out reviewers' comments does not seem to be significantly influenced by trust, which suggests that other factors such as social proof, perceived expertise, or emotional engagement may have a greater impact on consumer behaviour.

Positive and negative reviews have different effects on consumers, with negative reviews having a greater influence on decisions not to make purchases because of

perceived risk. The social influence theory's negativity bias states that people are more prone to be convinced by unfavourable facts than by favourable ones. This is in line with the study's conclusions.

The results challenge existing assumptions within Social Influence Theory and MSD Theory, suggesting new areas for research and refinement

### ***Implication and Recommendation to Academia***

This study has filled in research gaps, because of the extensive literature review that brought added clarity on the subject of study in the research. This is the first study to concentrate on the indirect effects of individual reviewers' comments on social media, on the propensity to buy. The majority of current research combines social media interactions without differentiating between the unique impacts of perceived risk and reliability in relation to "individual reviewer comments." In this sense, the study has effectively contributed to the body of academic knowledge. Nevertheless, further studies are encouraged, to further extend knowledge on this topic. The study recommends the following:

- It is vital to perform cross-cultural research to better understand the disparities in trust and social media usage across cultural contexts, as these variances might vary greatly. This will assist in distinguishing trends in the link between trust, social media evaluations, and purchase intention that are common vs unique to a certain culture.
- Utilize behavioural economics concepts to comprehend the cognitive biases and heuristics that may affect how reliable social media reviews are regarded and how they influence consumers' purchasing decisions. This methodology has the potential to offer a deeper comprehension of the psychological foundations of consumer behaviour in digital settings.
- Provide courses and educational initiatives that emphasize digital literacy and teach students how to critically assess information and reviews found online. Improving customers' capacity to separate reliable information from reviews that may be skewed or fraudulent will help them make better-informed purchases.

### ***Implications and Recommendations to Stakeholders***

For this section, stakeholders refer to marketers, advertisers, small business owners, organizations, corporations, salespeople, and anyone who intends to influence

the purchase intentions of existing or potential customers. These findings are especially important practically.

The majority of students with high levels of social media participation, according to the study's findings, depend on social media for knowledge about products and utilise it to find reviewers' opinions on products. Though their interactions are modest, the SRP, DSM, and PI have a considerable impact on each other. By providing expert reviews, arranging for easy access to relevant information, and creating engaging material for the internet, webmasters, managers, retailers, as well as social media marketers can consciously manipulate reviews to their benefit. This will increase purchase intention by strengthening the correlation between the variables.

Among the principal determinants of consumer decision-making is perceived risk. Reducing perceived risks can be achieved by highlighting sustainable activities and protecting brand reputation. Given the significant relationship between sustainability, reputation management and risk perception, managers ought to give these areas top priority in their marketing strategy. According to the report, companies should routinely disseminate information about their sustainability efforts, which include sourcing ethically, employing eco-friendly materials, and lowering their carbon footprints. Press releases, company websites, and social media platforms can all be used for this. An establishment's dedication to sustainability may be credibly endorsed by obtaining and displaying certifications from reputable environmental organisations. In addition, companies ought to create eco-friendly products and integrate green practices into their operations, such cutting back on energy use, minimising their negative effects on the environment, and utilising sustainable resources. Through tackling environmental and social reputation concerns, companies can reduce this risk perception and improve customer trust.

Businesses may also profit from DSM if it was influenced by a different business or reviewer who had actual product knowledge. People get dependent on social media for knowledge about a product when they come across interesting information about the product there. If, on the other hand, a company or reviewer who disseminates information about a product is unable to address a query or issue with the product, the prospective customer can opt to buy a comparable product from a different source. Because various clients have varied needs and organisations need to meet their information needs, completeness of information is therefore essential to driving sales. Consequently, companies need to ensure the information they supply is accurate

regardless of the information's source, that is, reviewer comments, reviews, advertisements, or any other source, in order to keep their customers from switching to similar or replacement items.

In a similar vein, a company can boost sales of its goods by responding to inquiries and resolving issues with those of other companies. This is because they receive exposure by addressing problems their potential clients may have with other organization's products or services. By resolving these issues, they provide information that the consumers need, causing the consumers to acknowledge them as a low-risk option, which can aid purchase intention. Also, when organisations develop products that are a correction of what other organisations failed to correct in their own product, they would be perceived as the best option when it comes to purchasing the said product.

Furthermore, in terms of managerial implications, the digital environment is changing, which has an impact on how users search for information on social media. Most businesses are using artificial intelligence (AI) to provide solutions that facilitate and improve customer access to information about their products and services (Haleem et al., 2022). Using AI tools and being up to date with the rapidly evolving digital landscape is critical for any business looking to grow, expand, or hold onto its market share (Haleem et al., 2022; Khrais, 2020). Businesses can employ AI-powered social listening solutions to gather consumer reviews for sentiment analysis. Companies that successfully manage their brand's reputation can maintain a positive public image and quickly respond to negative comments or complaints.

### ***Limitations and recommendations for future researchers***

There are limitations to the study. First, the researchers note that a smaller sample size was used, and as a result, they recommend that larger sample sizes be considered in future studies. To compare how different groups feel about the comments made by social media reviews and their desire to make a purchase, it is also advised to use a larger sample frame that groups people according to their gender, culture, country of origin, or other distinguishing characteristics. Different people may acquire and use technology in different ways, which may affect how people interact with social media and, in the end, how social media affects them.

This study's additional flaw is that confounding variables might not have been taken into account, which could have affected the results by adding variables that

influence purchasing intention but weren't taken into account. These factors could be influenced by external factors, individual preferences, historical events, or financial situations. The study therefore recommends that future researchers include these or similar variables in their research.

Further suggestions for further research are provided by this study. It was concluded that the SRP and PI are mediated by DSM. Even in the presence of DSM, moderators can greatly decrease or increase intentions to purchase. The study finds that trust has no bearing on PI and that danger decreases it. Given that risk diminishes purchase intention and trust has no bearing on the relationship, what factors bolster DSM's mediating influence on the relationship between SRP and PI? It is consequently recommended by this study that future researchers carry out in-depth investigations into the elements that enhance dependence on social media for product information that may impact purchasing intentions.

In light of the study's findings, conducting a qualitative inquiry to gather additional information would be advantageous. Based on the results of this study, future research should consider including "user engagement" as a moderator of the relationship between the SRP and DSM as well as "usefulness of information" as a moderator between DSM and PI. Building on the findings of this study, subsequent research might look at people's opinions on artificial intelligence (AI) and whether they are amenable to using AI-powered tools to gather product-related data from social media platforms.

## **Conclusion**

Research on the subtle effects of individual reviewers' comments, as opposed to reviews from social media as a whole, was lacking. To close the gap, the present study specifically addressed individual reviewer's comments. These research gaps were successfully filled by this study. In the relationship between S and PI, this study also added a new variable (DSM), which hasn't been thoroughly examined in earlier studies. The focus of early studies on social media dependence was on people's addictions to platforms rather than their reliance on them for product information. However, the current study underlined that, unlike social media addiction, social media dependence is a reliance on social media. The research's conclusions are useful and significant from a theoretical, managerial, and academic standpoint.



According to the study's findings, consumers steer clear of goods that have received negative reviews. What steps does a company take when bad social media reviews of its products are posted? The researchers advise businesses that receive unfavourable social media evaluations to approach them strategically. This can entail addressing the Reviewer's source of concern. If a product has a defect, the manufacturer has to remedy it and provide an updated version in response to the review. The intention is to shift the preponderance of unfavourable reviews to the organisation's advantage. Companies might have to go above and beyond to respond to negative comments on their social media pages. However, they must go cautiously, since not doing so could further damage the business's already damaged reputation; for this reason, the majority of businesses choose not to respond to unfavourable reviews. Organisations can, however, restore their reputations if they proactively respond to unfavourable assessments.

This study has fulfilled the aim and purpose of the study. All the research questions have been answered, and all the hypotheses have been tested. The study has made important recommendations as well, and the study is therefore beneficial academically and practically.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A



YAKIN DOĞU ÜNİVERSİTESİ

BİLİMSEL ARAŞTIRMALAR ETİK KURULU

02.06.2022

Dear Sabina Kwakye

Your application titled **“Seeking product information on Social Media and the effect of the reviewer’s comments on purchase intention”** with the application number NEU/SS/2022/1318 has been evaluated by the Scientific Research Ethics Committee and granted approval. You can start your research on the condition that you will abide by the information provided in your application form.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Direnç Kanol

Rapporteur of the Scientific Research Ethics Committee

**Note:**If you need to provide an official letter to an institution with the signature of the Head of NEU Scientific Research Ethics Committee, please apply to the secretariat of the ethics committee by showing this document.

## Appendix B

### **Seeking product information on Social Media and the effect of the reviewer's comments on purchase intention**

#### **Re: Participant Information Sheet and Informed Consent Form**

Dear Participant,

The attached questionnaire is part of a research study that we are carrying out to understand the effect of customer reviews on online purchase intention. The data collected with this questionnaire will be used to understand how the participating university students see seeking product information on social media and the effect of the reviewer's comments on purchase intention. By filling in the attached questionnaire you agree to participate in this study.

Please note that your participation in the study is voluntary and whether you agree to participate or not, it will have no impact on your grades for the courses you are enrolled in. Your identity will not be revealed in any case to third parties. The data collected during this study will be used for academic purposes only and may be presented at national/international academic meetings and/ or publications. You may quit participating in this study at any time by contacting us. If you opt out of the study, your data will be deleted from our database and will not be included in any further steps of the study. In case, you have any questions or concerns, please contact us using the following information:

Assoc Prof Dr Ahmet Ertugan

Sabina Kwakye

Near East University

Near East University

Faculty of Economics and  
Administrative Sciences

Faculty of Economics and  
Administrative Sciences

Marketing Department

Department of Business Administration

(0392) 275 1000 ext 3125

(0392) 275 1000 ext 3125

[ahmet.ertugan@neu.edu.tr](mailto:ahmet.ertugan@neu.edu.tr)

[sabinakwakye@yahoo.com](mailto:sabinakwakye@yahoo.com)



**Seeking product information on Social Media and the effect of the reviewer's comments on purchase intention**

**SECTION 1**

**PERSONAL DETAILS**

Personal details

Please tick (✓) as appropriate:

**Your gender**

Male ☐ Female ☐

**Your age**

18-24 ☐ 25-30 ☐ 30+ ☐

**Your Occupation**

Student ☐ Homemaker ☐ Employed for wages ☐ Self-employed ☐

Out of work and looking for work ☐ Out of work but not currently looking for work ☐ Other ☐

**Your education**

School ☐ University undergraduate ☐ University postgraduate ☐

---

**SECTION 2**

Please tick (✓) to respond on a scale of 1 to 5 as

Strongly Disagree = 1 Disagree = 2 Neutral = 3 Agree = 4 Strongly Agree = 5

**Seeking reviewers' product-related comments on Social Media**

S1	I seek reviews supporting my opinions.	1	2	3	4	5
S2	I seek for reviews supporting the other opinions	1	2	3	4	5
S3	I seek reviews that offer a balanced view.	1	2	3	4	5
S4	I seek reviews supporting my point of view.	1	2	3	4	5
S5	I will repeat purchasing a product with my perceived brand benefits based on the social media reviews	1	2	3	4	5
S6	I seek reviews supporting the other points of view.	1	2	3	4	5

Please tick (✓) to response on a scale of 1 to 5 as  
 Strongly Disagree = 1 Disagree = 2 Neutral = 3 Agree = 4 Strongly Agree = 5

### Dependency on social media for reviewers' comments on products

The information available on social media helps me –

DSM1	decide whether to buy products/brands or not	1	2	3	4	5
DSM2	decide which products/brands are good and which are not.	1	2	3	4	5
DSM3	decide whether to buy a certain product/brand or not.	1	2	3	4	5
DSM4	know what products/brands make good impressions on others.	1	2	3	4	5
DSM5	decide what products/brands to buy.	1	2	3	4	5
DSM6	decide between different products/brands alternatives.	1	2	3	4	5
DSM7	choose the right product/brand	1	2	3	4	5

### Risk (SR)

When I read negative statements by other users on social media about certain product characteristics, I would likely suspect that –

R1	the product/brand will not meet my desirability criteria.	1	2	3	4	5
R2	the product/ brand will not work properly concerning my requirements.	1	2	3	4	5
R3	I would face negative consequences if I use this product/brand, because of social or environmental harm.	1	2	3	4	5
R4	using the product/brand would damage my reputation or image as a person	1	2	3	4	5

Please tick (✓) to response on a scale of 1 to 5 as  
 Strongly Disagree = 1 Disagree = 2 Neutral = 3 Agree = 4 Strongly Agree = 5

### Trust

When I read positive statements by other users on social media about a certain product/brand concerning its quality, I would likely think that –

T1	the product/brand's reputation is generally reliable.	1	2	3	4	5
T2	the product/brand will work properly concerning its reliability	1	2	3	4	5
T3	the product/brand's claims are generally trustworthy.	1	2	3	4	5
T4	the product/brand will meet my expectations.	1	2	3	4	5
T5	the product/brand keeps promises and commitments regarding quality.	1	2	3	4	5

### Purchase Intention (PI)

IP1	I intend to purchase sustainable products/brands, because of buyer reviews online	1	2	3	4	5
IP2	I expect to purchase products/brands online shortly as I get affected by buyers' reviews online	1	2	3	4	5
IP3	I avoid buying products/brands that are not widely approved in buyers' reviews	1	2	3	4	5
IP4	Overall, I am glad to purchase reviewers' recommended products/brands, because they are trustable	1	2	3	4	5
IP5	When I have to choose between two similar products/brands, I choose the one that is more widely recommended in online reviews	1	2	3	4	5
IP6	I will not consider products not favoured in online reviews when making an online purchase	1	2	3	4	5

## Appendix C

## Similarity Report

## ORIGINALITY REPORT

13%

SIMILARITY INDEX

12%

INTERNET SOURCES

9%

PUBLICATIONS

5%

STUDENT PAPERS

## PRIMARY SOURCES

1

[mdpi-res.com](https://mdpi-res.com)

Internet Source

4%

2

[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)

Internet Source

1%

3

Submitted to Yakin Doğu Üniversitesi

Student Paper

1%

4

[docs.neu.edu.tr](https://docs.neu.edu.tr)

Internet Source

1%

5

[link.springer.com](https://link.springer.com)

Internet Source

&lt;1%

6

Submitted to European University of Lefke

Student Paper

&lt;1%

7

Submitted to University of Hull

Student Paper

&lt;1%

8

Submitted to Latvia University of Life Sciences  
and Technologies

Student Paper

&lt;1%

9

[myscholar.umk.edu.my](https://myscholar.umk.edu.my)

Internet Source

&lt;1%

## CURRICULUM VITAE

### Personal information

First name(s) / Surname(s) Sabina Kwakye

**Address(es)** Lapta, Girne / Near East University, Near East Boulevard, ZIP: 99138, Nicosia / Turkish Republic of North Cyprus, Mersin 10 – Turkey

**Telephone(s)** 05428746887

E-mail: Sabinakwakye@yahoo.com

Nationality: Ghanaian

Date of birth: 22/05/1992

Gender: Female

### Work experience

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Feb 2023-Present</b>
Occupation:	Lead organizing
Main activities and responsibilities:	Sorting, grouping, and preparing leads for the sales team
Name and address of employer:	CIFA, Cyprus
<b>Type of sector:</b>	<b>Education</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>May 2020-Present</b>
Occupation:	Editing manager
Main activities and responsibilities:	Editing, proofreading, upgrading articles
Name and address of employer:	BD Center
<b>Type of sector:</b>	<b>Education</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>December 2019-August 2021</b>
Occupation:	Sales/ Customer support/compliance manager
Main activities and responsibilities:	Sales, compliance, general support
Name and address of employer:	MBL finance, Cyprus
<b>Type of sector:</b>	<b>Finance</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>January 2019-April 2019</b>
Occupation:	Sales and Marketing manager
Main activities and responsibilities:	Sales, marketing, advertising
Name and address of employer:	Uzun group, Cyprus
<b>Type of sector:</b>	<b>Construction and real estate</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>August 2014-August 2015</b>
Occupation:	Administrative secretary
Main activities and responsibilities:	Administrative duties, data and human resource management, information dissemination
Name and address of employer:	Koforidua SDA Hospital, Ghana
<b>Type of sector:</b>	<b>Health</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>2014-2016</b>
Occupation:	Examination invigilator/ Script Checking
Main activities and responsibilities:	Invigilating the senior and junior high school
	Leavers' exam, checking scripts to evaluate scores
Name and address of employer:	West African Examination Council, Ghana (Koforidua and Kumasi office)
<b>Type of sector:</b>	<b>Education</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>2014-2015</b>
Occupation:	Junior Common Room Hall Treasurer/ Financial Committee Chairperson

Main activities and responsibilities:

Budgeting, allocation of funds, cash book management, training of committee members

Name and address of employer:  
Ghana

Adehye Hall, University of Cape Coast,

**Type of sector:**

**Education**

## Education and training

<b>Date:</b>	<b>2020-Present</b>
Title of qualification awarded	PhD Business Administration
Name and type of organisation providing education and training	Near East University, Cyprus
Level in national or international classification	PhD/ postgraduate
<b>Date:</b>	<b>2016-2018</b>
Title of qualification awarded	Master of Marketing Management
Principal subjects/occupational skills covered	International business, Research methods, Quantitative analysis, social media marketing, consumer behaviour, financial management, marketing theory and management
Name and type of organisation providing education and training	Near East University, Cyprus
Level in national or international classification	Master's degree/ postgraduate
<b>Date:</b>	<b>2010-2014</b>
Title of qualification awarded	Bachelor of Management Studies
Principal subjects/occupational skills covered	Management, Law, Economics, Entrepreneurship, Marketing, public administration, management information systems, Accounting, communicative skills
Name and type of organisation providing education and training	University of Cape Coast, Ghana
Level in national or international classification	Bachelor's degree/ undergraduate
<b>Date:</b>	<b>2006-2009</b>
Title of qualification awarded	West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination, Business Certificate
Principal subjects/occupational skills covered	Economics, management, accounting
Name and type of organisation providing education and training	St. Monica's Senior High School, Mampong, Ghana
Level in national or international classification	Senior High School

## Language skills

Languages	Understanding			Speaking			Writing	
	Listening		Reading	Spoken interaction		Spoken production		
		B2	C1		C1	C1		B2
		B2	C1		C1	C1		B2
		A1	A2		A1	A1		A2

Skills	
Social skills and competences	Good communicative skills, Sociable and easily make friends, Social Media Marketing
Organisational skills and competences	Team player, can manage pressure, proactive,
Technical skills and competences	Good writing skills, analysis and research (especially qualitative)
Computer skills and competences	Microsoft office, SPSS
Artistic skills and competences	Articulate writer, Designer (cloth, jewellery), Music (composition and singing), Creative and innovative
Research Work	
<b>Master's thesis</b>	
Topic	How Youtube vloggers and referrals influence their audience's purchase intention of fashion and beauty products
Link	<a href="https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Sabina_Kwakye">https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Sabina_Kwakye</a> <a href="http://docs.neu.edu.tr/library/6686239247.pdf">http://docs.neu.edu.tr/library/6686239247.pdf</a>
<b>PhD thesis</b>	
Topic	Seeking product information on social media and the effect of the reviewer's comments on purchase intention
<b>Published article</b>	
Topic	Navigating Purchase Intentions: The Influence of Reviewers' Comments Moderated by Risk and Trust
DOI	<a href="https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14070552">https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14070552</a>
Peer Review	I review for <i>Humanities &amp; social sciences communications, Nature Publishing Group (ISSN: 2662-9992)</i>

REFERENCES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST