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THE EFFECT OF PALESTINIAN SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON THE PUBLIC OPINION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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The Effect of Palestinian Social Media Influencers on the Public Opinion in the Middle East

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DEDICATION:

With great pride, I dedicate this thesis to every aspiring mother student who perseveres, challenges, and builds bridges to attain wisdom and reach a fulfilling life. In her darkest times, she cares, fights, and stands strong for her family, herself, and her ambitions.

With deep sorrow, I dedicate this message to the souls of the children of Palestine, some of whom never had the chance to dream, let alone realise their dreams.

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Dreams, no matter how daunting, do come true.

To my dearest family,

To my beloved mother and father, your encouragement and sacrifices have been the cornerstone of my achievements. Your belief in my abilities has fuelled my determination, and I am endlessly thankful for your love.

To my hardworking husband, Dr. Amjad Abu Dawod, thinking of you gives me a reason to keep going and pushing further for our future. I am blessed to have you by my side.

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RESUMO

Na era dixital os *influencers* das redes sociais emerxeron como axentes poderosos de cambio, capaces de incidir na opinión pública e repercutir nas normas sociais. Este estudo investiga o papel dos *influencers* das redes sociais sobre a opinión pública no Oriente Medio, especificamente en Palestina, unha área caracterizada pola súa dinámica socio-política única. A investigación enfócase en comprender as estratexias empregadas por estes *influencers*, a magnitude do seu impacto e os marcos teóricos subxacentes que explican a súa influencia.

A tese investiga as tendencias contemporáneas no desenvolvemento das redes sociais no Oriente Medio, enfocándose no papel poderoso dos *influencers* para dar forma a tendencias e influenciar audiencias. Os *influencers* son activos cada vez máis valiosos e buscan aumentar a credibilidade e a confianza na sociedade. Establecer relacións con estes *influencers* é esencial para que tanto individuos coma empresas se manteñan actualizados con contidos e actividades relevantes. A importancia dos *influencers* na vida actual e nas estratexias de comunicación subliña o seu papel en dar forma ao discurso público e aos comportamentos das audiencias, xa sexan seguidores ou non.

A opinión pública nas redes sociais emerxeu como unha tendencia significativa que impacta na sociedade moderna. Plataformas como Facebook, YouTube, Instagram e TikTok revolucionaron a forma na que as persoas se comunican e expresan as súas opinións nun ambiente globalmente conectado. Estas plataformas facilitan o intercambio de ideas e axudan ás persoas a manterse ao tanto das tecnoloxías actuais. A investigación explora o impacto destas plataformas na vida das persoas e examina como se forman e expresan as opinións públicas na era dixital. Comprender estas dinámicas é crucial para aproveitar eficazmente as redes sociais no Oriente Medio.

A investigación ten como obxectivo identificar como os *influencers* das redes sociais afectan á opinión pública no Oriente Medio. Isto inclúe analizar as ideas dos *influencers* nas redes sociais, as estratexias de contido e os marcos reguladores das plataformas de redes sociais. O estudo implica entrevistas en profundidade con *influencers* palestinos para proporcionar ideas sobre a interacción entre o uso das redes sociais e a

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opinión pública. Os resultados mellorarán a comprensión de como operan os *influencers* e como se moldea a opinión pública no contexto da tecnoloxía moderna no Oriente Medio.

A tese ten un valor significativo para as sociedades e os grupos obxectivo influenciados polo uso das redes sociais no Oriente Medio. Ao explorar o papel de plataformas como Facebook, YouTube, Instagram e TikTok, os resultados permiten guiar os *influencers* no marco das políticas públicas. A investigación mellora a comprensión de como operan estas plataformas e o impacto real dos *influencers*, o que conduce a mellores políticas e programas de formación máis eficaces para a integración das redes sociais. Ademais, os resultados do estudo poderían servir como base para investigacións futuras, reforzando teorías relacionadas coa adopción de tecnoloxía e proporcionando unha comprensión máis ampla do uso das redes sociais nunha rexión conflitiva.

Os *influencers* das redes sociais son cruciais na formación de tendencias e na influencia nas decisións dos seguidores ao aproveitar as plataformas para comunicar e intercambiar ideas a nivel global. Teñen un impacto substancial nos seguidores, guiando a toma de decisións e moldeando a opinión pública. Poden impulsar cambios no comportamento do consumidor e influenciar cuestións políticas e sociais. Mentres os *influencers* afectan positivamente moitos aspectos do compromiso nas redes sociais, é crucial recoñecer as limitacións e os perigos como o potencial para o discurso de odio ou a inexactitude dos datos transmitidos nas redes. Esta investigación busca equilibrar estas perspectivas, ofrecendo ideas sobre os beneficios e desafíos dos *influencers* das redes sociais no Oriente Medio e o seu papel na formación do discurso público.

A tese estrutúrase en sete capítulos. Cada un deles aborda diferentes aspectos do estudo sobre a influencia dos *influencers* palestinos das redes sociais na opinión pública no Oriente Medio. O Capítulo I ofrece unha visión xeral da investigación, detallando o seu propósito, antecedentes e a xustificación para estudar os *influencers* das redes sociais no Oriente Medio. Este capítulo esboza a declaración do problema, a importancia e a contribución da investigación, xunto cos criterios para a selección de *influencers* específicos. O Capítulo II mergúllase na revisión da literatura e abrangue diversas fontes como estudos, libros e artigos. Inclúe definicións, trata a aparición das redes sociais, regulacións, normas das plataformas, opinión pública e o contexto específico de Palestina, incluíndo o seu conflito con Israel.

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O Capítulo III presenta os obxectivos e hipóteses da investigación, divididos en obxectivos principais e secundarios, e explora tres teorías clave: Modelo de Aceptación de Tecnoloxía 3 (TAM 3), Teoría de Gratificacións e Teoría de Goffman. O Capítulo IV esboza a metodoloxía da investigación, incluíndo as preguntas de investigación, os métodos de recollida de datos e o marco analítico. Detalla o proceso de realización de entrevistas en profundidade a 12 *influencers* palestinos. O Capítulo V enfócase na análise de datos e resultados, usando Análise de Contido Cuantitativa (QCA) dos *insights* das redes sociais dos *influencers* e Análise de Contido Cualitativa das entrevistas. Este capítulo examina como os influencers impactan na opinión pública e discute as regulacións e ferramentas utilizadas nas redes sociais. O Capítulo VI discute os resultados dos *insights* e das entrevistas dos *influencers*, mentres que o Capítulo VII achega as conclusións da investigación e resume os resultados relacionados coas principais variables do estudo.

O Capítulo II ofrece unha ampla revisión da literatura sobre diversos aspectos das redes sociais, opinión pública e o papel dos *influencers* cun enfoque específico no Oriente Medio e Palestina. O capítulo comeza establecendo o escenario para unha exploración completa da literatura existente relacionada coas redes sociais e os seus impactos multifacéticos. Mergúllase na definición e aparición das redes sociais, esbozando os seus usos positivos e negativos, e discutindo os dereitos das persoas nas plataformas de redes sociais. O capítulo destaca o papel significativo que as redes sociais xogan no século XXI e examina as regulacións en evolución destas plataformas. Discútense as regras e restricións específicas de plataformas populares como Facebook, YouTube, Instagram e TikTok, xunto cos problemas de protección da propiedade intelectual, ética, acoso, discurso de odio e discriminación nas redes sociais.

O capítulo centra a atención na opinión pública, definíndoa e explorando as ferramentas utilizadas para expresar as opinións públicas. Examina a natureza da opinión pública no Oriente Medio e a súa interacción coas redes sociais, subliñando a importancia da opinión pública como unha forza poderosa na formación dos paisaxes sociais e políticas. Ademais, o capítulo aborda a definición e aparición dos *influencers* das redes sociais, categorizándoos por tipos e características. Explora os seus dominios, obxectivos e a variedade de contidos que producen, incluíndo retransmisións en directo, textos, fotografías, vídeos, compartidos e eventos. Esta discusión tamén inclúe as actitudes

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públicas cara aos *influencers*, as limitacións que enfrontan e o concepto de identidade en liña. O capítulo examina, ademais, a popularidade de diversas plataformas de redes sociais e os efectos significativos que os *influencers* teñen no estilo de vida, principios e decisións.

Proponse un enfoque específico sobre Palestina, detallando a súa localización, lingua oficial e o conflito con Israel. O capítulo revisa o uso da tecnoloxía e as redes sociais en Palestina, a natureza da opinión pública dentro da rexión e o papel dos *influencers*. Esta sección pinta unha imaxe detallada de como se utiliza as redes sociais nunha rexión marcada polo conflito e destaca os desafíos e as oportunidades únicas que enfrontan os *influencers* palestinos. A revisión da literatura conclúe resumindo as principais ideas obtidas dos estudos previos e establece a base para os capítulos seguintes da investigación. Esta revisión sitúa a investigación dentro do corpo existente de coñecemento e identifica baleiros e áreas para investigacións futuras, especialmente no contexto dos *influencers* palestinos das redes sociais e o seu impacto na opinión pública.

O Capítulo III esboza os obxectivos e hipóteses que guían esta investigación. Comeza introducindo os obxectivos principais do estudo, que se centran en comprender as actividades dos *influencers* palestinos das redes sociais e os seus efectos na opinión pública. O obxectivo principal é explorar como estes *influencers* moldean as discusións, percepcións e opinións entre as súas audiencias. Ademais deste obxectivo principal, a investigación considera varios obxectivos secundiarios.

O capítulo evoluciona, entón, para formular as hipóteses das que emana a investigación. Introduce o marco teórico que apoia o estudo, comezando coa teoría principal: Modelo de Aceptación da Tecnoloxía 3 (TAM 3). Esta teoría axuda a explicar como os usuarios chegan a aceptar e usar a tecnoloxía, o que é crucial para comprender a dinámica entre os *influencers* das redes sociais e as súas audiencias. Ademais, discútense dúas teorías secundarias: a Teoría das Gratificacións, que explora os motivos detrás do consumo de medios e como os medios satisfán diversas necesidades, e a Teoría de Goffman, que examina como os individuos se identifican nas interaccións sociais.

TAM 3 proporciona unha base para analizar a aceptación e uso das tecnoloxías das redes sociais por parte dos *influencers* e as súas audiencias. A Teoría das Gratificacións ofrece ideas sobre as motivacións psicolóxicas e sociais detrás de seguir *influencers*,

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mentres que a Teoría de Goffman aclara os aspectos performativos da presenza en liña dos *influencers*. Xuntas, estas teorías crean un marco conceptual completo que guía a metodoloxía e a análise da investigación, permitindo unha comprensión máis profunda das interaccións complexas entre os *influencers* palestinos das redes sociais e a opinión pública no Oriente Medio. Este marco establece o escenario para o exame detallado dos roles dos *influencers* e o seu impacto, como se discute nos capítulos seguintes.

O Capítulo IV, "A Metodoloxía da Investigación", esboza o enfoque estratéxico adoptado para abordar as preguntas de investigación e resolver os obxectivos establecidos nos capítulos precedentes. Comezando cunha introdución, o capítulo proporciona unha visión xeral completa da metodoloxía da investigación empregada. A continuación, delinea as áreas temáticas da investigación, incluíndo a opinión pública en Palestina, a influencia das plataformas de redes sociais nos *influencers* e o seu contido, e a participación dos palestinos nas plataformas de redes sociais.

O capítulo tamén describe os tipos de investigación realizadas, facendo fincapé nunha combinación de enfoques cualitativos e cuantitativos para garantir unha análise completa. Os métodos de recollida de datos inclúen análise de contido cualitativa (QCA) e análise de contido cuantitativa, que se usan para analizar os *insights* das redes sociais dos *influencers*. Ademais, a metodoloxía incorpora a revisión da literatura para contextualizar os resultados, así como entrevistas persoais en profundidade cos *influencers* seleccionados para reunir perspectivas e experiencias en primeira persoa.

Doutra banda, o capítulo detalla a estratexia de selección da mostra de investigación, que abarca tanto enfoques analíticos como de investigación de campo. A mostra inclúe participantes seleccionados para entrevistas en profundidade baseadas en criterios específicos, proporcionando perspectivas e *insights* diversos sobre as preguntas de investigación. Explícase a racionalidade para seleccionar o método de mostra, facendo fincapé na importancia de garantir a representatividade e a fiabilidade no proceso de recollida de datos.

A metodoloxía é desenvolvida cun exame detallado dos métodos de recollida de datos empregados. Estes inclúen análise de contido cualitativa dos *insights* das redes sociais, análise de contido cuantitativa de diversas categorías dentro dos *insights* e análise de contido cualitativa das entrevistas en profundidade. Por último, o capítulo subliña a

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importancia de garantir a validez e fiabilidade da medición para manter a integridade dos resultados da investigación. En xeral, o Capítulo IV proporciona unha metodoloxía sólida para realizar a análise de datos e presentar os resultados da investigación.

Os resultados da investigación (Capítulo V) aclaren o complexo panorama dos roles dos *influencers* na formación da opinión pública no Oriente Medio, ofrecendo ideas valiosas sobre as súas experiencias, motivacións, desafíos e estratexias. A exploración das experiencias dos *influencers* coas regulacións das redes sociais revelou unha multitude de desafíos, que van desde consecuencias persoais ata implicacións financeiras e impactos psicolóxicos. Estes desafíos motivaron adaptacións estratéxicas entre os *influencers*, incluíndo reducións na frecuencia e alcance do contido, restricións de conta e evitación de temas sensibles. Ademais, os resultados subliñaron as preocupacións dos *influencers* sobre o esgotamento psicolóxico da súa audiencia para abordar cuestións regulatorias.

Ademais, a investigación mergúllase na extensión do control e exemplos de regulacións das redes sociais atopadas polos *influencers*, destacando un control significativo sobre o contido en medio de desafíos como a restrición de contido e o peche de contas. A relación matizada entre expresar opinións e influenciar as opinións doutros emerxe como un tema central, coa énfase dos *influencers* en factores contextuais, dependencia da audiencia e natureza subxectiva do impacto. As ideas sobre as condicións que conducen á influencia nas opinións doutros subliñaron a complexidade dos factores que contribúen á efectividade da expresión dun *influencer*, incluíndo relevancia, credibilidade e impacto a través de diversos formatos de medios.

Os resultados tamén evidencian elementos clave na influencia da opinión pública no Oriente Medio, incluíndo contido envolvente, apelo emocional, carisma persoal e responsabilidade social. A pesar dos impactos positivos citados polos *influencers*, recoñecéronse desafíos como dificultades de medición e posibles inconvenientes. As motivacións dos *influencers* para afectar a opinión pública variaban desde conexións persoais ata cuestións sociais, o que reflicte unha ampla gama de motivacións. Ademais, as consideracións para a continuación e o compromiso inquebrantable entre os *influencers* destacaron a inevitabilidade da comunicación e os complexos procesos de toma de decisións influenciados por consideracións de saúde mental e factores externos.

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A análise dos *insights* dos *influencers* das redes sociais descubriu estratexias matizadas e impactos na opinión pública dentro do Oriente Medio. A análise do número de seguidores destacou un panorama heteroxéneo, con *influencers* que presumen de números diversos de seguidores que varían desde miles ata millóns. Esta variación subliña os diferentes niveis de alcance e influencia a través do espectro de *influencers*, indicando unha interacción complexa entre o tamaño da audiencia e a influencia. Ademais, a avaliación das métricas de compromiso, incluíndo gustos, comentarios e compartición, proporcionou ideas sobre a interacción da audiencia e a receptividade ao contido, coa exhibición de taxas de compromiso máis altas por parte dos *influencers* que demostran unha conexión máis profunda cos seus seguidores.

Ademais, a análise demográfica revelou patróns sobre a idade, a localización e o xénero das audiencias, ofrecendo ideas valiosas para adaptar o contido e a mensaxe para actuar eficazmente nos demografías obxectivo. O contido político emerxeu como especialmente salientable entre os *influencers*, subliñando o seu papel significativo en dar forma á opinión pública sobre cuestións socio-políticas na rexión. A ampla variedade de temas e formatos, incluíndo contido de estilo de vida, político e de entretemento, resalta a natureza multifacética do impacto dos *influencers* no discurso público.

En xeral, estes resultados ofrecen ideas inestimables sobre o alcance, o compromiso, a demografía da audiencia e as estratexias de contido dos *influencers* das redes sociais no Oriente Medio. Ao explorar os *insights* obtidos da súa presenza en liña, esta investigación contribúe a unha comprensión máis profunda do seu papel en dar forma á opinión pública e impulsar o cambio social na rexión. Estas ideas teñen implicacións para empresas, formuladores de políticas e investigadores que buscan aproveitar a influencia dos *influencers* das redes sociais na formación do discurso público e fomentar un compromiso significativo con audiencias diversas.

A investigación conclúe cunha exploración completa do papel crucial que os *influencers* das redes sociais xogan na formación da opinión pública no Oriente Medio. Aborda cuestións fundamentais sobre como os *influencers* navegan e influencian o discurso público no medio da dinámica socio-política complexa da rexión. A través dunha análise das ferramentas dos *influencers*, a interacción cos seguidores e o panorama regulativo, o estudo ofrece unha comprensión matizada dos seus roles multifacéticos e os impactos na formación da opinión pública. Estes resultados axudan a iluminar as

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dinámicas de poder e as estratexias de comunicación dentro do ámbito dixital do Oriente Medio, subliñando a influencia significativa exercida polos *influencers* na formación das percepcións e actitudes sociais.

No capítulo VII referente ás conclusións demóstrase como a investigación alcanza con éxito o seu obxectivo principal de determinar a actividade e os efectos dos *influencers* palestinos das redes sociais na opinión pública. Subliña o impacto substancial destes *influencers* en dar forma ao discurso público a través da creación de contido estratéxico e a interacción coa súa audiencia. Ademais, o estudo resolve os obxectivos secundarios explicando as ferramentas empregadas polos *influencers*, a interacción dinámica entre *influencers* e seguidores, os desafíos presentados polas regulacións das redes sociais e a distinción entre expresar opinións e influenciar as opinións de outros. Estas conclusións ofrecen ideas valiosas sobre as dinámicas instauradas entre os *influencers* e as súas audiencias, contribuíndo a unha comprensión máis profunda do discurso público en Palestina.

A resolución das hipóteses afirma as bases teóricas da investigación e a súa manifestación nas actividades e nos impactos dos *influencers* palestinos das redes sociais. A validación das hipóteses arraigadas en marcos teóricos como o Modelo de Aceptación da Tecnoloxía 3, a Teoría das Gratificacións e a Teoría de Goffman proporciona unha comprensión matizada dos patróns de adopción tecnolóxica, motivacións psicolóxicas e estratexias de presentación persoal dos *influencers*. Os resultados subliñan a importancia da percepción da facilidade de uso e utilidade na adopción tecnolóxica, a natureza recíproca da creación e consumo de contido impulsado por necesidades psicolóxicas e a presentación estratéxica empregada polos *influencers* para dar forma ao discurso público. En xeral, estas conclusións afondan na nosa comprensión do panorama dixital e dinámicas dos *influencers* en Palestina, ofrecendo ideas sobre a interacción complexa entre tecnoloxía, psicoloxía e estratexias de comunicación na formación da opinión pública.

Aínda que esta investigación aclara o impacto dos *influencers* das redes sociais na opinión pública no Oriente Medio, deben recoñecerse varias limitacións. O estalido da guerra de Gaza en outubro de 2023 e os desafíos posteriores, como a perda de electricidade e conexión á Internet en Gaza, influenciaron significativamente o discurso das redes sociais e dificultaron a capacidade da investigadora para contactar cos *influencers* da rexión. As dificultades para chegar aos *influencers* e obter detalles

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abranguentes dos *insights* dalgúns deles, xunto coas negativas a proporcionar opinións debido a preocupacións de seguridade, complicaron aínda máis o proceso de investigación. Ademais, a presenza de *influencers* nas prisións israelís impediu o compromiso directo, limitando o tamaño da mostra e a diversidade de participantes. Estes desafíos poden ter implicacións para a exhaustividade e precisión dos resultados, subliñando a necesidade dunha interpretación cautelosa e de investigación adicional sobre o papel dos *influencers* das redes sociais na rexión.

As recomendacións que emanan da investigación abranguen diversos aspectos co obxectivo de mellorar a comprensión e eficacia dos *influencers* das redes sociais na formación da opinión pública no Oriente Medio. En primeiro lugar, é preciso a realización dunha avaliación completa das regulacións das redes sociais para equilibrar a liberdade de expresión coa creación de contido responsable. Recoméndanse programas de apoio e recursos para *influencers* que enfrontan desafíos legais ou psicolóxicos, xunto con iniciativas educativas para aumentar a conciencia sobre as consecuencias legais e a creación de contido ético. Avógase pola colaboración entre *influencers* e organismos reguladores, así como o desenvolvemento de directrices éticas que reflictan matices culturais. Tamén se propoñen campañas de concienciación pública, estudos lonxitudinais e oportunidades de colaboración entre *influencers* para fomentar un ecosistema de apoio e influír positivamente no discurso público. Ademais, preséntanse recomendacións específicas para os *influencers* palestinos que destacan a importancia da comprensión da audiencia, a creación de contido ético, as oportunidades de colaboración e os marcos reguladores aliñados cos esforzos de defensa da causa palestina. Ao implementar estas recomendacións, os *influencers* poden aproveitar eficazmente as súas plataformas para avogar polo cambio social, mantendo a transparencia, a autenticidade e a responsabilidade.

A investigación futura no ámbito dos *influencers* das redes sociais e a opinión pública no Oriente Medio ofrece camiños prometedores para unha comprensión e visión máis profundas. Investigar os mecanismos psicolóxicos que están detrás da influencia do contido dos *influencers* nas actitudes e comportamentos da audiencia podería proporcionar ideas valiosas sobre os procesos de formación de opinión. Ademais, os estudos comparativos entre diferentes redes sociais permitirían identificar se certas plataformas exercen maior influencia na formación da opinión pública, tendo en conta a natureza

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diversa do contido e o compromiso da audiencia. Afondar nos efectos a longo prazo dos *influencers* nas dinámicas da opinión pública ofrecería ideas cruciais sobre o impacto sostido do contido do *influencer* ao longo do tempo. Ademais, explorar o papel dos *influencers* en situacións de crise, como conflitos ou pandemias, podería axudar a entender as súas contribucións ao discurso público e á resposta durante momentos críticos. Por último, unha análise comparativa entre *influencers* locais e internacionais, así como entre aqueles involucrados en activismo fronte ao entretemento, podería descubrir intersección matizadas entre a familiaridade cultural, as perspectivas globais e a formación de opinión pública. Abordando estas áreas, a investigación futura podería avanzar sobre o coñecemento existente e axudar a seguir desentrañando a relación entre os *influencers* das redes sociais e a opinión pública no Oriente Medio.

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ABSTRACT

In the rapidly evolving digital age, social media influencers have emerged as powerful agents of change, capable of shaping public opinion and influencing societal norms. This doctoral research investigates the role of social media influencers in molding public opinion within the Middle East specifically from Palestine, an area characterized by its unique socio-political dynamics. The research focuses on understanding the strategies employed by these influencers, the extent of their impact, and the underlying theoretical frameworks that explain their influence.

This research investigates contemporary trends in social media development in the Middle East, focusing on the powerful role of influencers in shaping trends and influencing audiences. Influencers are increasingly valuable assets in socities seeking to enhance, credibility, and trust with their audiences. Establishing relationships with these influencers is essential for individuals and businesses to stay updated with relevant content and activities. The importance of influencers in modern life and communication strategies underscores their role in shaping public discourse and audiences' behaviors wheather followers or not.

Public opinion on social media has emerged as a significant trend impacting modern society. Platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok have revolutionized how people communicate and express their views in a globally connected environment. These platforms facilitate the exchange of ideas and help individuals stay abreast of current technologies. The research explores the impact of these platforms on people's lives and examines how public opinions are formed and expressed in the digital age. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for leveraging social media effectively in the Middle East.

The research aims to bridge the gap in literature regarding the role of influencers and public opinion in the Middle East. The primary research question seeks to identify how social media influencers affect public opinion in the region. This includes analyzing influencers' insights in social media, content strategies, and the regulatory frameworks of social media platforms. The study involves in-depth interviews with palestinian influencers to provide insights into the interaction between social media use and public

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opinion. The findings will enhance understanding of how influencers operate and how public opinion is shaped in the context of modern technology in the Middle East.

This research holds significant value for socities and target groups influenced by social media usage in the Middle East. By exploring the role of platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, the findings aim to guide influencers and shape public policies. The research enhances the understanding of how these platforms operate and the real-world impact of influencers, potentially leading to better policies and more effective training programs for social media integration. Moreover, the study's findings could serve as a foundation for future research, reinforcing theories related to technology adoption and providing a broader understanding of social media usage in a conflict-ridden region.

Social media influencers are pivotal in shaping trends and influencing follower decisions, leveraging platforms to communicate and exchange ideas globally. Influencers have a substantial impact on followers, guiding decision-making and shaping public opinion. They can drive changes in consumer behavior and influence political and social issues. While influencers positively affect many aspects of social media engagement, it is crucial to acknowledge the limitations, such as the potential for hate speech and the inaccuracy of social media data in representing public opinions. This research aims to balance these perspectives, offering insights into the benefits and challenges of social media influencers in the Middle East and their role in shaping public discourse.

The research is structured into seven comprehensive chapters, each addressing different aspects of the study on the influence of Palestinian social media influencers on public opinion in the Middle East. Chapter I provides an overview of the research, detailing its purpose, background, and the justification for focusing on social media influencers in the Middle East. This chapter outlines the problem statement, significance, and contribution of the research, along with the criteria for selecting specific influencers. Chapter II delves into the literature review, covering various sources such as studies, books, and articles. It includes definitions and the rise of social media, regulations, platform rules, public opinion, and the specific context of Palestine, including its conflict with Israel and the role of social media influencers.

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Chapter III presents the research objectives and hypotheses, divided into main and secondary objectives, and explores three key theories: Technology Acceptance Model 3

(TAM 3), Gratifications Theory, and Goffman's Theory. Chapter IV outlines the research methodology, including the research questions, data collection methods, and analytical framework. It details the process of conducting in-depth interviews with 12 Palestinian influencers. Chapter V focuses on data analysis and findings, using Quantitative Content Analysis (QCA) of influencers' social media insights and Qualitative Content Analysis of the interviews. This chapter examines how influencers impact public opinion and discusses the regulations and tools used on social media. Chapter VI discusses the findings from the influencers' insights and interviews, while Chapter VII concludes the research, summarizing the findings related to the main variables of the study.

Chapter II provides an extensive literature review on various aspects of social media, public opinion, and the role of social media influencers, with a specific focus on the Middle East and Palestine. The chapter begins by setting the stage for a comprehensive exploration of the existing literature related to social media and its multifaceted impacts. It delves into the definition and rise of social media, outlining its positive and negative uses, and discussing the rights of individuals on social media platforms. The chapter highlights the significant role social media plays in the 21st century and examines the evolving regulations that govern these platforms. Specific rules and restrictions of popular platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok are discussed, along with issues of intellectual property protection, ethics, bullying, hate speech, and discrimination on social media.

The chapter then focuses on public opinion, defining it and exploring the tools used for expressing public opinions. It examines the nature of public opinion in the Middle East and its interaction with social media, underscoring the importance of public opinion as a powerful force in shaping social and political landscapes. Additionally, the chapter addresses the definition and rise of social media influencers, categorizing them by types and characteristics. It explores their domains, objectives, and the variety of content they produce, including live streams, texts, photographs, videos, shares, and events. This discussion also includes public attitudes towards influencers, the limitations they face, and the concept of online identity. The chapter further examines the popularity of various social media platforms and the significant effects influencers have on lifestyle, principles, and decisions.

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A specific focus is provided on Palestine, detailing its location, official language, and the ongoing conflict with Israel. The chapter reviews the use of technology and social media in Palestine, the nature of public opinion within the region, and the role of influencers. This section paints a detailed picture of how social media is utilized in a region marked by conflict and highlights the unique challenges and opportunities faced by Palestinian influencers. The literature review concludes by summarizing the key insights gained from the reviewed literature and setting the foundation for the subsequent chapters of the research. This comprehensive review situates the research within the existing body of knowledge and identifies gaps and areas for further investigation, particularly in the context of Palestinian social media influencers and their impact on public opinion.

Chapter III outlines the objectives and hypotheses that guide this research. It begins by introducing the primary aims of the study, which focus on understanding the activities of Palestinian social media influencers and their effects on public opinion. The main objective is to explore how these influencers shape discussions, perceptions, and opinions among their audiences. In addition to this overarching goal, the research identifies several secondary objectives. These include determining the extent of influencers' impact on public opinion, identifying the tools and methods used by influencers to engage and influence their followers, understanding how followers interact with and respond to influencers' messages, examining the regulatory environment of social media platforms, and differentiating between personal expression and the intentional shaping of public opinion by influencers.

The chapter then transitions to discussing the hypotheses that underpin the research. It introduces the theoretical framework that supports the study, starting with the main theory: Technology of Acceptance Model 3 (TAM 3). This theory helps explain how users come to accept and use technology, which is crucial for understanding the dynamics between social media influencers and their audiences. Additionally, two secondary theories are discussed: Gratifications Theory, which explores the motives behind media consumption and how media fulfill various needs, and Goffman’s Theory, which examines how individuals present themselves in social interactions, particularly relevant in the context of influencers curating their online personas.

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The chapter further elaborates on how these theories reflect on the thesis. TAM 3 provides a foundation for analyzing the acceptance and use of social media technologies

by influencers and their audiences. Gratifications Theory offers insights into the psychological and social motivations behind following influencers, while Goffman's Theory sheds light on the performative aspects of influencers' online presence. Together, these theories create a comprehensive conceptual framework that guides the research methodology and analysis, enabling a deeper understanding of the complex interactions between Palestinian social media influencers and public opinion in the Middle East. This framework sets the stage for the detailed examination of influencers' roles and their impact, as discussed in subsequent chapters.

Chapter IV, "The Research Methodology," outlines the strategic approach adopted to address the research questions and objectives established in the preceding chapters. Beginning with an introduction, the chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the research methodology employed. It further delineates the thematic areas under investigation, including public opinion in Palestine, the influence of social media platforms on influencers and their content, and Palestinians' engagement on social media platforms.

The chapter then outlines the types of research conducted, emphasizing a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches to ensure a comprehensive analysis. Data collection methods include qualitative content analysis (QCA) and quantitative content analysis, which are used to analyze social media insights of the influencers. Additionally, the methodology incorporates literature review to contextualize the findings and personal in-depth interviews with selected influencers to gather firsthand perspectives and experiences.

Further, the chapter details the research sampling strategy, which encompasses both analytical and field research approaches. The sample includes participants selected for in-depth interviews based on specific criteria, providing diverse perspectives and insights into the research questions. The rationale for selecting the sampling method is explained, emphasizing the importance of ensuring representativeness and reliability in the data collection process.

The methodology is elaborated upon with a detailed examination of the data collection methods employed. These include qualitative content analysis of social media "insights," quantitative content analysis of various categories within the insights, and qualitative content analysis of in-depth interviews with selected participants. Additionally,

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the chapter addresses research sampling strategies, emphasizing the rationale behind the selection of analytical and field research approaches. Lastly, the chapter underscores the importance of ensuring the validity and reliability of measurement to uphold the integrity of the research findings. Overall, Chapter Four provides a robust framework for conducting the subsequent data analysis and presenting the research findings.

The research results (chapter V) shed light on the multifaceted landscape of influencers' roles in shaping public opinion within the Middle East, offering valuable insights into their experiences, motivations, challenges, and strategies. The exploration of influencers' experiences with social media regulations revealed a myriad of challenges, ranging from personal consequences to financial implications and psychological impacts. These challenges prompted strategic adaptations among influencers, including reduced content frequency and scope, account restrictions, and avoidance of sensitive topics. Additionally, the findings underscored influencers' concerns regarding psychological exhaustion and the intelligence of their audience in navigating regulatory landscapes.

Furthermore, the research delved into the extent of control and examples of social media regulations encountered by influencers, highlighting significant control over content amidst challenges such as content restriction and account closure. The nuanced relationship between expressing opinions and influencing others' opinions emerged as a central theme, with influencers emphasizing contextual factors, audience dependency, and the subjective nature of impact. Moreover, insights into the conditions leading to the influence on others' opinions underscored the complexity of factors contributing to the effectiveness of an influencer's expression, including relevance, credibility, and impact through various media formats.

The findings also elucidated key elements in influencing public opinion in the Middle East, including engaging content, emotional appeal, personal charisma, and societal responsibility. Despite the positive impacts cited by influencers, challenges such as measurement difficulties and potential drawbacks were acknowledged. Influencers' motivations for affecting public opinion ranged from personal connections to societal issues, reflecting a diverse array of motivations. Additionally, considerations for continuation and unwavering commitment among influencers highlighted the inevitability of communication and the complex decision-making processes influenced by mental health considerations and external factors.

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The analysis of social media influencers' insights uncovered nuanced strategies and impacts on public opinion within the Middle East. The examination of follower count highlighted a heterogeneous landscape, with influencers boasting diverse follower numbers ranging from thousands to millions. This variation underscores the differing levels of reach and influence across the spectrum of influencers, indicating a complex interplay between audience size and influence. Additionally, the assessment of engagement metrics, including likes, comments, and shares, provided insights into audience interaction and receptivity to content, with influencers exhibiting higher engagement rates demonstrating a deeper connection with their followers.

Moreover, the demographics analysis revealed intriguing patterns regarding the age, location, and gender distribution of influencer audiences, offering valuable insights for tailoring content and messaging to resonate effectively with target demographics. Political content emerged as particularly prevalent among influencers, underscoring their significant role in shaping public opinion on socio-political issues in the region. The diverse array of topics and formats, including lifestyle, political, and entertainment content, further highlights the multifaceted nature of influencers' impact on public discourse.

Overall, these findings provide invaluable insights into the reach, engagement, audience demographics, and content strategies of social media influencers in the Middle East. By dissecting insights gleaned from their online presence, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of their role in shaping public opinion and driving societal change in the region. These insights hold implications for marketers, policymakers, and researchers seeking to harness the influence of social media influencers in shaping public discourse and fostering meaningful engagement with diverse audiences.

The research concludes with a comprehensive exploration of the pivotal role social media influencers play in shaping public opinion in the Middle East. It addresses fundamental questions regarding how influencers navigate and influence public discourse amidst the region's complex socio-political dynamics. Through an examination of influencers' tools, interaction with followers, and the regulatory landscape, the study offers a nuanced understanding of their multifaceted roles and impacts on public opinion formation. These findings shed light on the power dynamics and communication strategies

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within the digital realm of the Middle East, underscoring the significant influence wielded by influencers in shaping societal perceptions and attitudes.

Chapter VII on conclusions demonstrates how the research successfully achieves its main objective of determining the activity and effects of Palestinian social media influencers on public opinion. It underscores the substantial impact these influencers have in shaping public discourse through strategic content creation and audience interaction. Additionally, the study addresses secondary objectives by explaining the tools used by influencers, the dynamic interaction between influencers and followers, the challenges posed by social media regulations, and the distinction between expressing opinions and influencing the opinions of others. These conclusions offer valuable insights into the dynamics established between influencers and their audiences, contributing to a deeper understanding of public discourse in Palestine.

The resolution of the hypotheses affirms the theoretical foundations of the research and their manifestation in the activities and impacts of Palestinian social media influencers. The validation of hypotheses rooted in theoretical frameworks such as the Technology Acceptance Model 3, Uses and Gratifications Theory, and Goffman's Theory provides a nuanced understanding of the patterns of technology adoption, psychological motivations, and personal presentation strategies of influencers. The results highlight the importance of perceived ease of use and usefulness in technology adoption, the reciprocal nature of content creation and consumption driven by psychological needs, and the strategic presentation employed by influencers to shape public discourse. Overall, these conclusions deepen our understanding of the digital landscape and dynamics of influencers in Palestine, offering insights into the complex interaction between technology, psychology, and communication strategies in shaping public opinion.

While this research sheds light on the impact of social media influencers on public opinion in the Middle East, several limitations must be acknowledged. The outbreak of the Gaza war in October 2023 and subsequent challenges, such as the loss of electricity and internet connection in Gaza, significantly influenced social media discourse and hindered the researcher's ability to contact influencers from the region, potentially biasing the representation of perspectives. Difficulties in reaching influencers and obtaining comprehensive insight details from some individuals, along with refusals to provide opinions due to security concerns, further complicated the research process. Additionally,

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the presence of influencers in Israeli prisons prevented direct engagement, limiting the sample size and diversity of participants. These challenges may have implications for the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the findings, emphasizing the need for cautious interpretation and further investigation into the role of social media influencers in the region.

The research recommendations encompass various aspects aimed at enhancing the understanding and effectiveness of social media influencers in shaping public opinion in the Middle East. Firstly, there's a call for a comprehensive assessment of social media regulations to balance freedom of expression with responsible content creation. Support programs and resources for influencers facing legal or psychological challenges are recommended, alongside educational initiatives to raise awareness about legal consequences and ethical content creation. Collaboration between influencers and regulatory bodies, as well as the development of ethical guidelines reflecting cultural nuances, is advocated for. Public awareness campaigns, longitudinal studies, and opportunities for collaboration among influencers are also suggested to foster a supportive ecosystem and positively influence public discourse. Additionally, specific recommendations for Palestinian influencers highlight the importance of audience understanding, ethical content creation, collaboration opportunities, and regulatory frameworks aligned with advocacy efforts for the Palestinian cause. By implementing these recommendations, influencers can effectively leverage their platforms to advocate for societal change while maintaining transparency, authenticity, and accountability.

Further research in the realm of social media influencers and public opinion in the Middle East holds promising avenues for deeper understanding and insight. Investigating the psychological mechanisms underlying the influence of influencers' content on audience attitudes and behaviors could provide valuable insights into opinion formation processes. Additionally, comparative studies across different social media platforms would illuminate whether certain platforms wield greater influence in shaping public opinion, considering the diverse nature of content and audience engagement. Delving into the long-term effects of influencers on public opinion dynamics would offer crucial insights into the sustained impact of influencer content over time. Moreover, exploring the role of influencers in crisis situations, such as conflicts or pandemics, could shed light on their contributions to public discourse and response during critical moments. Lastly, a comparative analysis between local and international influencers, as well as between those

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involved in activism versus entertainment, could uncover nuanced intersections between cultural familiarity, global perspectives, and public opinion formation. By addressing these areas, future research can build upon existing knowledge and unravel the intricate relationship between social media influencers and public opinion in the Middle East.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the research

Social media can trace back to the Phreaking Era (1950's- Early 1990's) which highlighted the use of internet systems and telecommunications for people to interact. The Era of Bulletin Board Systems (BBS's) (1979- 1995) facilitated uploading or downloading software, e-mailing, and messaging via public message boards. The commercial Online Services' era (1979-2001) witnessed the commercialization of computer communication systems. The World Wide Web (WWW) era (1991) which focuses on using the internet worldwide. The IRC, ICQ, Instant Messenger (1983-1996) which is known as a platform for the real time interaction between people. Social Media Sharing (1999): Peer-To-Peer (P2P), BitTorrent which allows sharing of files and documents between people. Social Networking Sites (1997-2008) which is so frequent in the history of social media communication and networking sites. Social Bookmarking (1996-2003) which is used to save and manage bookmarks and the Blogs (1994-1999) which is considered a kind of diary or journal. Real Time and Location Based Social Networking (Post 2008) is the last era which focused on online interaction and allows people to share images and videos as well (Yolmo, 2014).

Previous studies highlighted the key role of social media uses in the Middle East. Users of social media in the Middle east use social media to share, edit and exchange different ideas. Users of social media in the Middle East are those who use the online professional networking sites such Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok to express their attitudes and their ideas Miller (2017).

Previous studies also highlighted the importance of social media platforms. Social media platforms have revolutionised the way we communicate and interact. Undoubtedly, these platforms have become an integral part of our daily life. Results of previous studies show that political analysts in social media, for example, allow populations in developing countries to tell their own ideas and opinions and to talk about their own culture, traditions, and local concerns. However, results argue about the negative impacts of social media on politics and economics which appear on citizens' attitudes towards political corruption which creates social pressure among citizens (Mullor, 2018).

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Results of a research for Nguyen (2017) shows that Facebook for example has become one of the most widely used social networks in the world. Users of Facebook have

reached about three billion in 2021, only half of this number uses Facebook daily (Edosomwan, 2010). Users use Facebook mostly for educational purposes, communicating and sharing resources. Results of a research for Khan (2017) about users of YouTube and their engagement in social media shows that the strongest predicting purposes for participation in YouTube was entertainment. Results of a research for Hermina (2019) about Instagram shows that Instagram platform like other platforms has the high virtual presence of such an effective platform being the second largest globally with posts' high visibility. The results of another research for Yang 2020 about the use of TikTok platform shows that such a platform has also been used widely for entertainment, socialization, formativeness, and academic purposes.

Social media influencers play a crucial role in the technological revolution. These influencers are those individuals who have formed a reputation for their knowledge and expertise on a certain topic and have numerous followers on social media platforms. Those influencers have their own posts and content. They are those individuals who create their own brands and encourage their followers to buy their products. One can find these influencers on any of the social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok.

Previous studies highlighted the significant role of influencers. Good influencers need to be confident when they create their own content, confident when they specialize in their area. Good influencers can communicate and interact with individuals, followers by asking questions and accepting suggestions, being honest with the audience and keeping up with the authentic content (Vodak, 2019; Biaudet; 2019).

Studies show that the role of influencers in the Middle East differs from other influencers role in other regions in terms of cultural norms as those influencers need to be mindful of cultural norms. In other words, influencers need to be careful about their postings and content. For example, posting in the Arabic makes it difficult for users in other countries to engage with the content. Influencers in the Middle East prefer to post on snapchat and TikTok. However, Instagram and YouTube are more popular in other countries. In addition, influencers in the Middle East need to consider the brand partnership as most influencers often partner with local brands which make it more difficult for other countries to get global competition.

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Previous studies also highlighted the role of public opinion in the social media revolution. Public opinion in social media has a strong influence on people's lives and their reputation. Public opinions are those individuals who create their own products for their own needs. Public opinion thoughts and ideas can also shape people's political views. In other words, governments and individuals can express their political opinions and engage in their political discourse (Weeks, 2017).

1.2 Problem of the statement

This research aims to investigate contemporary trends in social media development in the Middle East. These trends are related to influencers in social media who have become powerful figures in the mirror of social media, in shaping trends and in influencing customers' behaviour. Influencers are those valuable assets for businesses who look for increasing the brand exposure and build their credibility and trust with their audience. It is essential for people to build relationships with these influencers to keep up with relevant content and research, while staying up to date with the new activities. However, being an influencer today has become an important aspect in modern life and modern communication strategies.

On the other hand, public opinions in social media have also an important trend which also impacts on modern society. Public opinions are those affirming attitudes and affirming opinions where people can express their views and ideas. The use of different platforms in social media is another trend in this research which needs research as well. Examples of platforms are Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. All these platforms have made a huge change in people's lives. The use of the different platforms made life easier in the way people communicate and exchange their ideas in such a global village and in the way, people keep up with the current technology.

All the previous trends are the focus on this research. They are essential in life and chosen in this research to keep up with the development of the technology of social media. These trends exist to strengthen the use of modern technology in the Middle East. In addition, the researcher finds that there is a lack of literature in this area and in the Middle

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East. Also, there is a need for more research to focus on the role of influencers and the role of public opinion.

The main research question in this research is to identify how social media influencers in the Middle East affect the public opinion. In other words, the relation between social media influencers and public opinion in the society. This question is used in this research to clarify the role of influencers in the Middle East and to make people use modern social media with high efficiency. This research also includes sub questions about the influencer's posts, content, and platforms' regulations and how these posts affect public opinions life. These sub questions are also set to clarify the impact of the influencers post on people's lives in marginalized countries which are also set up to strengthen the use of social media in an effective way in the Middle East.

All the questions are meant to determine and to clarify the role of influencers and the role of public opinions in the Middle East. In depth-interviews with the political analysis influencers in the Middle East will answer these questions. All the questions are also set to give more insight on how social media influencers use social media and how public opinion can cope with this modern technology.

1.3 Significance and contribute of the research

This research would illuminate issues that are significant to businesses and target groups who are influenced by the utilisation of social media in the Middle East. In addition, findings of the research can help influencers and public opinions to draw better policies in relation to the use of Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. Findings of the research would also increase the knowledge of the use of the different platforms and the knowledge of the real work of the influencers. Findings of the research would gear training programs on social media integration and on the use of the platforms. Moreover, findings could serve as a foundation for the research community who wish to proceed with further research on the usage of social media. In addition, findings would add to the understanding of social media adoption or acceptance as global phenomena and could also reinforce theories related to technology use. Finally, this research would add a general view about social media adoption in a country characterised by on-going conflict.

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1.4 Why social media influencers?

Today, the use of Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok as well as other social media platforms, have made a huge change in people's lives. The use of such platforms made life easier in the way they communicate and exchange their ideas in such a global village and in the way, people keep up with the current events. Not only that, but social media has become a powerful tool as it shares people's opinions and information.

However, and despite all the advantages which social media brought into our life and despite all the positive changes that social media supported achieving, there are few negative sides to consider. Social platforms may lead to overuse, bad health, weakened, physical depression, stress, anxiety. Social media can be also additive as it leads to impulsive behaviour and lack of mindfulness when overusing. Cyberbullying is another example of these major concerns which may also lead to depression and suicide. Social media can also lead to lack of real-life relationships which lead to unrealistic expectations which lead to jealousy and freights.

Influencers of social media play a significant role in shaping trends and in influencing followers' decisions. These influencers have built a huge reputation for their knowledge and expertise in different areas such as technology as they have the power to exchange opinions and guide decision making. These influencers can create change and encourage their followers to purchase products as followers respect their opinions. However, it is good to know that influencers have made a good impact on the lives of the children and adolescents as they spend substantial time engaging in the content.

Public opinions are those opinions which can influence political and social issues as they become powerful tools for politicians, companies, and individuals. Additionally, social media plays a vital role in shaping people's perception of political issues and parties as well. However, While, social media can have a deep impact on public opinions, it is good to consider the limitations in this area. Social media data may not always have accurate representatives of public opinions as surveys using representative samples may not be reliable methods. Moreover, social media can also be a base for hate speech which may negatively affect political discourse.

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1.5 Structure of the research

CHAPTER I introduces the research in overview to the topic to determine previously what is the idea of the research and the aims of it. In this chapter, the research explored the effect of Palestinian social media influencers in the Middle East. The Chapter includes background of the research, the justification of selecting the topic of influencing through social media in the Middle East, the problem statement, the significance and contribution of the research, in addition, the justification of selecting specific influencers and the structure of the research.

CHAPTER II includes the reviewing of related literature to influencing through social media and an overview of Palestine. In literature review, there are various literature related subjects such as studies, books, articles, electronic documents, and other types of papers related to the topic of the research in its various variables. This chapter includes introduction, the definition and rise of social media, social media regulations, platforms rules and restrictions, public opinion and definition, tools of expressing public opinions, social media influencers: definition and rise, content of influencers on social media, and effects of social media influencers on different domains besides a specific section for Palestine; its location, the conflict with Israel, use of social media, its public opinion and its influencers.

CHAPTER III discusses the objectives and hypotheses of the research. as the objectives divides into main objective and secondary objectives, while the hypotheses are three which are Technology of acceptance model 3 (TAM 3), Gratifications Theory and Goffman''s Theory and their reflexes on the thesis.

CHAPTER IV focuses on the research methodology, the research questions, and method of data collection. In addition to analytical research, the analytical Framework, analysis Procedures. This chapter includes the data and procedures of personal in-depth interviews, which were conducted with 12 Palestinian influencers among specific qualifications.

CHAPTER V describes the data analysing and finding of the research, through Quantitative Content Analysis (QCA) of the "Insights" of influencers' pages on social media and Qualitative Content Analysis of in-depth interviews. In addition to the

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characteristics of the "Insights", based on the findings, which related to the features and characteristics of them. In terms of qualitative content analysis of in-depth interviews, the research introduces general characteristics of the interviewees. The research includes QA of in-depth interviews in term of affecting public opinion on social media, QA of in-depth interviews in term of regulations of social media platforms, QA of in-depth interviews in term of tools to affect public opinion on social media and QA of in-depth interviews in term of the difference between expressing opinions and affecting others' opinions.

CHAPTER VI is describing the discussion of the finding of the research related to selected influencers' "Insights" and discussion of in-depth interviews with the influencers.

CHAPTER VII introduces the conclusion of the research based on the various findings related to the main variables of the research.

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CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

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2.1 Literature review

2.1.1. Introduction

In this literature review chapter, we delve into the existing body of knowledge and research surrounding social media, influencers and public opinions. By synthesising and analysing the various studies, theories, and findings in this field, we aim to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of research. This review will not only highlight key themes and trends but also identify gaps in the literature that warrant further investigation. Through this exploration, we seek to contribute to the ongoing discourse and deepen the understanding of the topic.

2.1.2. Social media

Social media nowadays stands as one of the main factors that have positively been affecting life in various aspects. The global competition in the field of social media has changed people's lives. Social media as one aspect in this technology plays a vital role in such competition especially among influencers worldwide. No doubt, social media is one of the aspects that makes diverse options available for both users and influencers by using Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. Influencers today try to use different applications through social media to achieve the target message they need. Users of these social media applications invest in these platforms for learning, searching, and communicating with different people as well as other purposes such as monetizing. All these facilities help in keeping up with people's relations and interests.

Social media today appears to be an important part in almost everyone's life. In fact, lots of studies agree that social media not only became part of our life, but also part of one of the main tools when using social networking sites as means of communication. Social media can create a significant impact in our life. An example of that, children, young people, all professions use different platforms in their business to present, communicate, interact, and express their needs. Another example of the importance of social media is the wide spread of image-sharing, video-sharing, and sharing instant messages. Social media is growing rapidly as everything has become online. However, to

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meet such rapid growth, everything must be available on internet as people need also to adopt social media techniques. For example, digital marketing is one of the means for promoting online businesses. The only concern today is that many people especially teenagers have become addicted to the internet, but if they use technology in a proper way, the rapid change will continue benefiting them as it grows.

This chapter reviews the definition and rise of social media, the use of social media positively and negatively in the Middle East, the rights of human beings in social media and the role of social media in the 21st century. In addition, social media development, regulations and rules will be a focus as well. The chapter also includes effects on public opinion of Middle Eastern influencers and Intellectual property protection on social media and a focus on public opinion in the Middle East. The chapter reviews social media influencers in terms of definition and rise, attitude toward social media influencers, limitations facing influencers (limits of freedom, online identity vs. real identity and fandom base, popularity of social media platforms, effects of social media influencers in different domains and influencers from the Middle East. This chapter concludes by reviewing related studies both nationally and internationally.

2.1.2.1. Definition and rise

Today, the huge evolution of social media has been increasing daily. A lot of people of different ages use social media various times. Definitions of social media vary among scholars and among the users of such media as well. Research agrees that there is no global specific definition that would for social media (Carr & Hayes, 2015). However, most social media definitions focus on digital technologies which users apply through interaction. In other words, "social media" is a term that allows people to communicate, connect and share messages and ideas with people by posting, editing, and texting files (Terry, 2009).

Merriam Webster (2022) defines social media as forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, private messages, and other content (such as videos). According to Kietzmann et. al. (2011, p. 241):

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"Social media employ mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and communities share, co- create, discuss, and modify user-generated

content. Given the tremendous exposure of social media in the popular press today, it would seem that we are in the midst of an altogether new communication landscape."

Carr and Hayes (2015, p. 8) define social media formally as: "social media are Internet-based, disentrained, and persistent channels of personal communication facilitating perceptions of interactions among users, deriving value primarily from user-generated content". Such writers also define social media in a way to summarise the intended concept as:

"Social media are Internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others".

It is undeniable that the rise of social media presents a valuable tool during the time of technology. Social media creation is more than thirty years old. This appears clearly in most technology users such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok (Manrai, 2013; Kaplan, 2009; Kietzmann et al., 2011). It is worth mentioning that history divided social media into different eras such as:

1. The Phreaking Era (1950's- Early 1990's) which is the use of internet systems and telecommunications.
2. Era of Bulletin Board Systems (BBS's) (1979-1995) which is used for uploading or downloading software, e-mailing, and messaging via public message boards.
3. The commercial Online Services (1979-2001) which is used for commercial computer communication systems.
4. The World Wide Web (WWW) era (1991) which focuses on using the internet worldwide.
5. The IRC, ICQ, Instant Messenger (1983-1996) which is known as a platform for the real time interaction between people.
6. The Social Media Sharing (1999): Peer-To-Peer (P2P), BitTorrent which allows sharing of files and documents between people.
7. Social Networking Sites (1997-2008) which is so frequent in the history of social media communication and networking sites.
8. Social Bookmarking (1996-2003) which is used to save and manage bookmarks and the Blogs (1994-1999) which is considered a kind of diary or journal.

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9. The last era is named as Real Time and Location Based Social Networking (Post 2008) which focuses on online interaction and allows people to share images and videos as well. (Yolmo, 2014).

According to Drahosova (2017), social media has been always away of connection and communication between influencers, fans. Today individuals are allowed to connect, communicate and to be in touch with distant people. For example, India is rated as the second country in the world to use internet and to use different platforms such as Facebook, YouTube...etc as such platforms are rated as the most preferred ones in social media.

However, there are many passive issues in social media that need to be discussed as well. For example, influencers and users need to consider the fake news which are transmitted among users in different ways and cause disturbance for people (Babu, 2020). Such fake news allows spreading of hatred among people and create a communal clash as well. All this may also lead to physical clashes between people especially in the Middle Eastern culture which is known as conservative and sensitive (Abudabbous, 2021). Not to forget also that social media may lead to create some disasters as people with fake profiles can behave with fraudulent acts with other either socially or financially. Even though social media plays an important role with the political parties to promote their campaigns, increase their votes through, social media needs to consider the rules, regulations, and rights as well (alobaidi, 2021).

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2.1.2.2 The use of social media (positive and negative)

In recent years, the use of social media in the Middle East has rapidly increased. Despite the negative effects in using social media platforms which might lead to serious problems in politics, society and economy, people still consider the positive effects and the benefits of using these platforms. The positive effects of using social media can be summarized as building relationships between people all over the world, sharing experiences and knowledge which provides the opportunity to talk and to express ideas, increasing the visibility of people, educating people, and increasing their awareness as well. Social media also provides authenticity for users, allows users to have conversations and create web content as well. According to Hootsuite (2022), 50% of people under 25 go to social media when researching brands. A percentage of 72% of businesses say customer services on social media is the responsibility of the marketers. This website also shows that 39 million people have accounts on Facebook and monthly active users have been increasing year-over-year.

The research highlighted the key role of social media use in the Middle East. Good users use social media positively to share, edit and display their ideas in a positive way. While other users use social media in various aspects. According to a Pew Research Centre survey between (2005 and 2015) and Miller et al. (2017) users of social media have changed according to life circumstances. However, research agrees that users of social media are those who use the online professional networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. Scholars characterised such users as those who say “yes” to a question about whether they use social media or not. Research also highlighted five demographic factors which play a significant role in the analysis of social media users. These factors are the age differences, gender differences, socio-economic differences, racial ethnic similarities, and community differences (Miller et al., 2017)

Research agrees that social media can be used positively when users use it to open communications between people for business purposes. Social media can be used positively when employees use social media to share ideas and work in an effective way, to encourage content such as videos, to communicate collaboratively, to encourage members to be part of the company's employees and when users encourage discussions of marketing and communications as well (Edosomwan, 2011). According to Radovic et. al. (2017), positive users use social media for searching positive content which focuses on

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entertainment and humour. While negative users use social media to search for negative issues which focus on sharing risky behaviour.

A recent research conducted by Radcliffe and Abuhmaid (2019) about social media in the Middle East showed that weaponization of social media is increasing vastly. An example of that is the use of Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Tik Tok. The research states that despite the closure of hundreds of inappropriate accounts due to negative use, the rapid use of social media in the Middle East continued to grow from time to time. Lots of users showed their interest in using social media positively as a leading online platform that benefits and supports employees and business people in their work.

Many users in the business field showed their interest in using social media as a leading online platform that benefits and supports employees and businessmen in their work. Another report on social media use in the Middle East showed that the use of Facebook is increasing especially between Arab youth. This has resulted in some challenges related to online freedom of expression in some regions. In Saudi Arabia for example, the use of social media is considered as a powerhouse and one of the big markets for using Snapchat and YouTube all over the world. However, the rise of social media influencers has become more tragic when it resulted in threatening responses, such as what happened in Iraq (Radcliffe, 2019).

2.1.2.3 The rights of human being in social media

Human rights are those moral principles or norms for certain standards of human behaviour. Human rights are those basic rights that belong to any person in the world. Human rights are always protected by international laws. Human rights include the right to life, liberty, freedom, freedom of opinion, freedom of expression and the right to education, health, and employment. Human rights in social media appears to be an important issue which allows users of social media to consider developing the potential of the human being. In other words, human rights are all about living life free of fear, harassment, or discrimination (Salha et al, 2021; Lukose & mathur, 2019; Sarikasi, 2012).

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In the digital age, the pervasive use of social media platforms reflects both the advantages and drawbacks of modern technology. These platforms serve as invaluable

sources of information, fostering global education and connectivity. However, alongside these benefits, social media presents pressing concerns, particularly regarding privacy infringement and the violation of fundamental human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), a response to the atrocities of World War II, articulates the inalienable rights of individuals, including freedom from torture, freedom of expression, and the right to seek asylum. Yet, as evidenced in contemporary discourse, these rights face ongoing threats in the digital realm. Instances of online harassment, censorship, and the dissemination of hate speech highlight the urgent need to safeguard human dignity and uphold the principles outlined in the UDHR ("What are human rights violations?", n.d.).

In this context, social media platforms have transcended their initial roles as mere communication tools to become pivotal arenas for the exercise and protection of human rights. While these platforms enable unprecedented information dissemination, they also present significant challenges to privacy, freedom of expression, and access to information.

Lukose and Mathur (2019) point that social media is the circle for human rights education. Users of social media have the right to express their individual opinions. They have the right to express their internal privacy and the right for education as well. Human rights in social media are defined as moral principles for human behaviour that are protected in law. They are the basic rights and freedom where everyone in this world is part of (Gonzalez, 2016).

Scholars argue that our life in the Middle East is surrounded by social media. At the same time, everyone is part of this media. Everyone has the right of freedom of speech and the right to family life and privacy. A research for Salha et al. (2021) about digital rights in the Middle East points out that there are few issues that need to be taken into consideration in social media human rights. These crucial facts play an important role in research. These facts are considered as rights:

1. The right to access the Internet via computer, mobiles and other devices.
2. The right to privacy including personal information and communications.
3. The right to be forgotten as part of social media remains retrievable on web sites in the Middle East areas.
4. The right to access information due to lack of public awareness.

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5. The right to access the social media economy which is part of the country's development.
6. The right to freedom of expression.
7. Hate speech, discrimination and sexual harassment which remains a challenge for the large countries.
8. Fake news which is the unreliable false information around the countries.

Research also debates about human rights, freedom, security, public and private access. Private companies play an important role in social media platforms and social media is circulated according to business interests. The debates raise few questions for discussions and need to be studied as well. The first question about whether private agreement for free individuals can be studied from a human rights perspective. Second debate is about the process of production as an issue of right to work. The third question is the right to access and share the common cultural and private properties. All these questions are a matter of discussion for future research (Sarikakis, 2012).

According to Jorgensen and Zulita (2020), even though social media platforms positively impact human rights as this impact allows individuals to learn and to educate around the world, there are still negative human rights challenges that lead to violence and discrimination. Awareness for users and the use of such platforms is needed to face and to deduce these negative impacts.

McLeod (2018) argues about the communication rights which include the right to freedom of opinion and self-expression. McLeod in his article addresses communication rights from four perspectives which are communication rights of people, communication rights for people with communication disabilities, communication rights of children and communication rights related to language. Moreover, McLeod points out that there are three steps considered to support communication's rights which are knowledge of people, adjusting communication style and taking time to listen. In addition, there should be a set of principles to follow in the application of international human rights' law in conjunction with communication and language.

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2.1.2.4 The role of social media in the 21st century

There is no doubt that social media plays a significant role in the current century. Social media has a real impact on developing countries and in making life easier. No one denies the benefits that users and influencers get out of it. For example, the use of Facebook for education purposes and businesses. The use of Instagram, Tik Tok and YouTube applications worldwide. However, and despite the countless number of countries that are using social media and despite the benefits of such a tool, there is still a debate about the virtual role of this tool.

According to Carr and Hayes (2015), social media has changed a lot in our life. Today the technical infrastructure and the internet system has been progressing rapidly. It allows users and influencers of social media to get more information and more news. Not only that but the rapid spread of mobile phone devices also facilitated access to social media as well (Tamimi, 2018; Lupton, 2014).

Scholars today debate about the impacts social media creates upon society and culture. In other words, the debate whether social media is considered as a positive or negative power in our daily life. Although scholars argue that social media has a useful impact on society in the way they share ideas, information, exchange chats and make communications easier, many scholars debate about the negative aspects of such a tool. Recent research is still searching on how to overcome the negative impacts that social media creates such as those related to privacy, human rights and societal issues (Slaha, 2021; Lukose & Mathur, 2019).

According to Amedie (2015), social media nowadays creates a lot of benefits around the world. Social media for instance removes cultural obstacles and borders between peoples and cultures. People can connect and communicate easily. On the other hand, social media has negative impacts upon our life due to global isolation. In his research, Amedie (2015) also talks about what is called Facebook depression that users come across when they spend a massive time. Amedie assures that Facebook depression leads to risk of isolation and anxiety and such risk leads to psychological problems. Criminal activities, bullying and terrorism through social media are also an example of negative impacts which writers highlight for a future discussion (Jacobs, 2014; Auzeen, 2012).

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Proforma Graphic Services (2019) examines and explains the different ways that companies can break down social media and use analytics. The author notes that it can be based on the account's performance metrics to audience insights to get the most out of the company's social media profiles. Companies can even look at the best times to post to ensure audience's engagement and see the breakdown of their audience to target their posts to the optimal demographic.

2.1.2.5 Social media regulations

For achieving a true and effective use of social media and for meeting the international obligations there must be clear requirements for users to follow. Scholars highlighted the importance of social media regulations. Regulations as a term refers to any policy or rules conducted by the government or the regulatory agencies for developing any business (Kazeroony, 2010).

McQuail (2010) defines social media regulations as: "a process of control and guidance which is conducted by the government for public goals" (p. 465). McQuail adds that the reasons for conducting social media can be for the protection and support of the public, protection of the individuals and their rights, protection and developing the communication system, promotion of freedom to communicate and keeping an effective operation of the free market.

Freeman (2015) defines social media regulations as applying legally binding implantations to media institutions to achieve the policy goals such as freedom and competition. Freeman points out that such regulations could be implemented either by legislative authority or non-governmental organisations.

According to Quinn (2016) *A Uses of Gratifications Approach to Privacy Regulation,* the privacy regulations in social media and gratifications have a relationship with the individuals' attitudes and behaviour. However, Osuigwe (2018) points out that regulating social media could expose users to risk of losing privacy and the freedom when sharing information. Duffy (2014) states that the use of social media regulations on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube have been conducted to give attention to activists and

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users to publicise their movements. Duffy adds that the role social media regulations on these sites were ignored, and more attention needed to be given.

Arguelles (2019) in his study Social Media Regulations in Asia concludes that social media regulations are expected to involve restrictions on freedom and to find the good balance between keeping social media as a space for freedom and creativity and to make sure people are protected from harm. Moreover, governments play a pivotal role in their power to involve the police and regulatory responsibilities by security authorities, media communication regulation bodies, and the justice department.

A study by Mark (2018) argues about how social media has strongly regulated and oppressed journalists and activists in some countries. Journalists who work through different platforms such as Facebook need to have a better process in which the company can reflect the values of people in a better way. This would help the democratic countries and governments in better reflecting people's values. Mark also argues that there are many countries where the rights of people to social media are violated and oppressed. Lots of platforms appear to abide by human rights principles, whiles some governments pose serious threats to human rights. In such situations, platforms need to work transparently and not to deny the effect of these acts. Mark suggests that there should be more strategies and approaches to be taken into considerations regarding social media regulations.

Common (2022) in his article entitled Beyond the usual suspects: a taxonomy of social media regulations in countries with human rights issues discusses two categories of regulations which are divided into two types of legislations. The first category is related to laws in social media and is divided into laws that are concerned with users' laws and are organized to prevent people from using social media. The second category is designed to deal with users of a variety of social media platforms. The study tries to focus more on the complex interactions between public and private sectors and local laws that platforms need to follow to keep a clear access to a growing number of jurisdictions. All these regulations and human rights' laws in social media require users and influencers to be aware of it and to keep up with. Denial of human rights could create new norms. Countries with more social media laws and human rights' principal provides the environment for better communication through social media platforms.

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2.1.2.6 Development of social media regulations

Before talking about the development of social media regulation, there should be a need to talk about the level of social media users worldwide. A lot of research today discussed and emphasised the powerful effects of the use of social media through the ways people can connect and communicate.

Over the past 20 years, human beings have witnessed a huge development in social media regulations. (Suzor et al ,2018). Wherever we have society and culture we have social media regulations (Quinn, 2016).). Development organisations have been using social media regulation for years and years. An example of these vast developments appears clearly in using Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat. Research points out that social media regulations are developing rapidly and starting a new exciting phase (Ugyal, 2014; Paul, 2013).

Scholars agreed that any development in social media regulations allow countries to voice their own concerns and their own vision. In addition, social media regulations allow traditional media resources to be controlled by the government to achieve more legislation.

In terms of Politics, social media regulations allow local populations in developing countries to tell their own stories and to talk about their own culture, songs, and resources. However, poor populations started having effective voices through social media. Fun is another important part that countries aim for enjoying life. It is a good effort to empower and communicate with communities (McQuail, 2010).

Mullor (2018) debates the negative impacts of social media on politics and economics. Such an impact appears on citizens' attitudes towards political corruption which creates social pressure among citizens. Mullor adds that a higher political awareness is needed to support such criticism.

According to Makvand (2018), organisational culture plays an important role in shaping peoples' lives. Culture which is defined as people's beliefs and opinions play an important role in the development of social media regulations. Makvand adds that culture is the core of social media development as culture affects organisational members' behaviours and beliefs in terms of leaderships and communications between people.

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Makvand in his research included that the challenge between culture and social media networks brought a lot of discussions for scholars' future research.

Carr and Hayes (2015) state that over the recent years, infrastructure development, the use of mobile devices, computer systems and the mass personal interactions are an example of social media development. However, such development can create huge implications on the communication system which allow users and scholars to dig and to explore more about theories of social media. More studies and discussion are needed to keep pace with these recent developments.

2.1.2.7 Platforms rules and restrictions

Over the past 20 years, there has been wide attention to understanding the effects of social media platforms, rules and restrictions to understanding the negative and positive effects of such platforms. Users of these platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok need to consider how and when to use these platforms.

Scholars highlighted the importance of considering the rules and restrictions of social media. According to Bragado and Miguel (2013), platforms of social media are created to build interactive and collaboration tasks to enhance the relationships for both the users and the recipients as well. Moreover, platforms are also created to create a stimulating atmosphere around a collaborative creative learning process.

DeNardis and Hackl (2015) point out that platform rules and restrictions can promote constraint rights. There are three main areas that need to be taken into consideration when talking about these rules. These areas are considering the anonymous speech and individual privacy, the second area is to express liberty and freedom and the third area is related to technical affordance and permission with less innovation. Scholars add that these areas have an essential role in providing human beings with access to social media rules.

Scholars highlighted a few trends in social media regulations. Users of social media need to consider when dealing with platform rules in terms of socio-economic. For example, social media is inevitable in tension with freedom of expression. Social Media

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Rules are unavoidable in public communications, many types of media rules are regulated according to models of control. Such rules have a strong influence from culture and can apply in different ways. However, current rules and regulations have to adapt with the pressure of globalisation as global communication takes less account to human rights regulations and the trend today is towards fewer rules and regulations (Jorgensen & Zulita, 2020; Suzor, 2018; McQuail, 2010).

Salakhova (2021), in his article about platforms' regulations, states that social media platforms should include considerations of norms of law and behaviour, reality of self-regulation, new forms of self- regulation, implementing the ecosystem approach and discussion of long-term future. Salakhova recommends that it is important to understand what starts the regime of state regulations of the digital platform- who are the participants in such relationship who make the decisions in the process- and to distinguish clearly between the concepts of state and private regulations.

A study for Jian (2020) about "Characterizing Community Guidelines on Social Media Platforms" argues about the rules and guidelines on social media platforms. The study results confirm that there is a clear comprehensive coverage of all the different platforms, but there is a variability in the coverage of such platforms, and it is unclear on why these variabilities exist. Jian predicts that platforms may have focus on the rules regarding the misbehaviours on the platforms as it is the most crucial element on the users' platforms. The analysis of the study shows that platforms made some choices in terms of the accepted and unaccepted behaviour. However, the study analysis also shows that there is no moderation system is perfect and such choices may contribute to the challenges and the implications that platforms users may encounter. The study provides an insight about misbehaviour in platforms in social media and an insight about inciting violence suppression. The study recommends future work about understanding social media users' perception of the violation of such rules.

In the following sections, more information about social media platforms is provided. Specifically, information about the rising, development, importance and role of Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok is highlighted.

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- Facebook

Facebook is one of the platform tools that has been rising and developing over the years. Facebook is a social networking website which was founded by Mark Zuckerberg when he was at Harvard university in (2004). Facebook became one of the biggest social networks in the world. Although the users of Facebook have reached about three billion in 2021, half of that number use Facebook every day (Edosomwan, 2010)

Scholars highlighted the importance of using Facebook in education (Ruhi & Chugh, 2015; Wichadee, 2013). According to Ruhi and Chugh (2015) the use of Facebook in teaching and learning has been growing in recent years. There are many benefits of using such tools such as increasing the interaction between teachers and students, improving the performance of both teachers and students, and giving a higher convenience of learning as well. However, Ruhi and Chugh talk about the challenges and the limitations for the use of Facebook in education. One of these challenges range from the students' dominance to privacy concerns. In addition, Facebook usage guidelines could be controlled by students to encourage social media adoption. More future research is needed to discuss the use of Facebook in social media education as well (Rambe & Ng'ambi, 2014) state that students' experiences, academic interactions, and engagements in Facebook rely on gender, breaching the hierarchical boundaries. However, using Facebook for learning requires the use of the positive points in all the phases of Facebook interaction. Writers recommend that educators need to use Facebook to encourage academic networking and building online communities.

According to Raniera and Manca (2013), Facebook, as a social media platform, plays a key role in enhancing the learning environment. Such writers point out that there are three main factors Facebook can allow and support in learning. These factors are summarised in mixing information and learning resources, hybridization of expertise and widening context of learning. Other kinds of educational use of Facebook may affect such adoption of Facebook as a learning environment. In addition, the research emphasises that Facebook is still the most popular network site, there is a good body of literature on Facebook and numerous studies about education are growing (Yunus, Saeed & Kabilan, 2021).

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A research for Nguyen (2017) argues about the advantages and disadvantages of the educational usage of Facebook worldwide. As for the advantages, the research confirms three main usages of Facebook for educational purposes: facilitating communication, interpersonal collaboration and sharing resources. However, Facebook usages would create problems for students such as distraction, ineffective collaboration and communication and cyber-bullying. In addition, and despite all the advantages of using Facebook, and even though using Facebook allows promoting connections in learning, students still feel the gap between the actual usage and the real perception. Some challenges related to the usage of Facebook need to be further discussed.

It is worth mentioning that social media use is growing rapidly. During the last year people who were using the different platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok in each country has increased by almost 1 million new users every day. More than 3 billion people around the world now use social media each month, with 9 in 10 of those users accessing their chosen platforms via mobile devices. Reports of 2018 show that, number of internet users in 2018 is 4.021 billion, number of social media users in 2018 is 3.196 billion, number of mobile phone users in 2018 is 5.135 billion.

An example of such growth appears in the number of older users joining social media too. On Facebook alone, number of users aged 65 and above has increased by almost 20 percent in the past 12 months. The number of teenagers using Facebook has also increased, but the number of users aged 13 to 17 has only grown by 5 percent since January 2017.

Latest reports show that Egypt has at least 45.9 million active Facebook users. This number appears to be the highest number of Facebook users in the Middle East. Iran is ranked the second with the number of users on Facebook. Reports of 2022 show that users of Facebook in Iran are 40.000,000 while reports of 2022 also show that Bahrain has the least numbers of users in the Middle East. Number of users are 1,607,400 users. Figure 1.1 below shows statistics about internet usage (including Facebook) in the middle East and around the world. Also, figure 1.2 shows some interesting statistics about some Middle Eastern countries and the Facebook users they have.

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INTERNET USERS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE WORLD IN 2022						
MIDDLE EAST REGION	Population (2022 Est.)	Pop. % of World	Internet Users 31-JULY-22	% Population (Penetration)	Internet % Users	Facebook 31-JULY-22
Middle East	268,302,801	3.4 %	213,889,560	79.7 %	3.9 %	156,984,100
Rest of World	7,666,159,830	96.6 %	5,262,009,857	68.6 %	96.1 %	3,083,886,277
WORLD TOTAL	7,934,462,631	100.0 %	5,475,899,417	69.0 %	100.0 %	3,240,870,377

NOTES: (1) Internet Users and Population Statistics for the Middle East were updated in July 31, 2022. (2) Facebook users were also updated for July 31, 2022. (3) Population estimates are based on data from the United Nations Population Division . (4) The most recent Internet stats come mainly from data published by Nielsen Online , ITU , Facebook and trustworthy local sources. (5) Data on this site may be cited, giving the due credit to www.internetworldstats.com . Copyright © 2022, Miniwatts Marketing Group. All rights reserved worldwide.

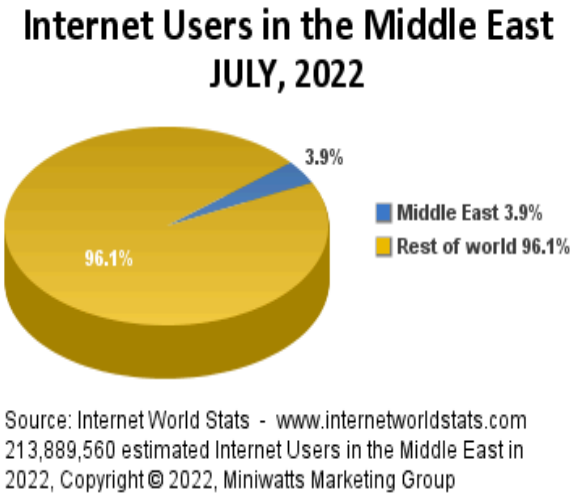


Figure 2.1: Internet users in the Middle East and around the world (Internet World Stats, 2022).

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Middle East Internet Users, Population and Facebook Statistics 2022						
MIDDLE EAST	Population (2022 Est.)	Users, in Dec/2000	Internet Usage 31-July-22	% Population (Penetration)	Internet % users	Facebook 31-July-22
Bahrain	1,804,583	40,000	1,804,583	100.0 %	0.8 %	1,607,400
Iran	85,777,708	250,000	78,086,663	91.0 %	36.5 %	40,000,000
Iraq	41,752,172	12,500	31,027,400	74.3 %	14.5 %	31,027,400
Israel	8,881,612	1,270,000	7,993,450	90.0 %	3.7 %	6,997,100
Jordan	10,370,272	127,300	8,700,000	83.9 %	4.1 %	7,367,000
Kuwait	4,375,865	150,000	4,332,106	99.0 %	2.0 %	4,138,700
Lebanon	6,776,509	300,000	5,692,267	84.0 %	2.7 %	4,502,900
Oman	5,328,207	90,000	5,061,797	95.0 %	2.4 %	3,325,400
Palestine (State of)	5,302,778	35,000	3,977,083	75.0 %	1.9 %	3,692,400
Qatar	2,962,541	30,000	3,179,400	107.3 %	1.5 %	3,179,400
Saudi Arabia	35,719,422	200,000	35,005,034	98.0 %	16.4 %	26,453,500
Syria	18,224,180	30,000	8,500,000	46.6 %	4.0 %	8,500,000
United Arab Emirates	10,088,517	735,000	12,176,400	120.7 %	5.7 %	12,176,400
Yemen	30,938,435	15,000	8,353,377	27.0 %	3.9 %	4,016,500
TOTAL Middle East	268,302,801	3,284,800	213,889,560	79.7 %	100.0 %	156,984,100

NOTES: (1) The Middle East Internet Statistics and Facebook subscribers data were updated for July 31, 2022. (2) CLICK on each country name to see detailed data for individual countries and regions. (3) The population estimates are based mainly on data from the United Nations Population Division. (4) Internet usage numbers come from various sources and are compiled here, see the site surfing guide for methodology. (5) The most recent usage information comes mainly from the data published by Nielsen Online, ITU , Facebook, and other trustworthy sources. (6) For Internet growth comparison purposes, the Middle East usage data published by ITU for the year 2.000 is provided. (7) Data may be cited, giving the due credit to Internet World Stats.
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Figure 2.2: Middle East Internet Users 2022 (Internet World Stats, 2022).

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- YouTube

The wide rapid use of YouTube has been increasing worldwide. Users of YouTube use different sites and different options to explore their needs, to pass information, to exchange ideas as well (Edosomwan, 2011). YouTube is another major platform which was founded in 2005 and is considered as one of the most popular online video communities. Lots of people today can rely on YouTube to share their videos, to connect with the world. YouTube is based in San Bruno, California and uses Adobe Flash Video technology to display video content, video blogging. In 2006 YouTube was purchased by Google Inc and grew rapidly as the company announced that the users of YouTube displayed more than 65,000 new videos uploaded and the site received 100 million videos views per day (YouTube, 2005).

According to Wattenhofer, Watenhover and Zhu (2012), YouTube became one of the major platforms in social media competition. Since 2005, YouTube has witnessed a huge success from the user-to-user social experience which characterised it from the traditional content broadcasters. This appeared clearly in the different YouTube aspects such as subscription graph, comment graph and video content. The research findings emphasise that reciprocal YouTube deviates from the traditional social networks to homophily, reciprocal linking and assortative. In addition, the research also shows that there is a strong correlation between YouTube users' social popularity and content popularity. However, the research suggests three main areas for future research. These areas are vital and need to be taken into consideration. The first one is related to the computationally intensive graph metrics. The second one is related to temporal dynamics of the social graphs in terms of their evolution. The last one is related to interrelation between social graphs and content broadcast/consumption patterns, including temporal analysis.

Khan (2017) conducted a research about users of YouTube and their engagement in social media. Khan followed the gratification framework in conducting his research. The results showed that the strongest predicting purposes for participation in YouTube was the entertainment motive, commenting, sharing and uploading. However, passive content consumption and video viewing was considered as a strong motive as well. Gender factors were also examined as males were more likely to dislike YouTube videos in comparison with females.

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Another research for Griffiths (2017) about video content viewing and content creation activities. The research followed the gratification theory as well. The research showed that there are stronger interests in YouTube addiction than content viewing as social gratifications have an impact on the different kinds of YouTube activities while technology gratification has no impact on them. Such results encourage scholars to explore new ways and further studies about users' gratification in YouTube.

No doubt that YouTube platform appears to be an excellent and useful service for the personal and public use all over the world. Such service includes sharing videos with people, selling products, websites open to people in public and a platform where people can introduce their company and market their products as well. Lee (2018) conducted a research about YouTube users and identified the characteristics of the online video services. The research shows that online services affect the flow as positive experience and satisfaction of users. It also shows that the interactivity, newness of recommendation service, diversity of content and entertainingness of content could affect the low level of experience flow. However, the recommendation service does not impact level of satisfaction. Lee includes that his research would be helpful for users' perception and experience of online videos.

It is worth mentioning also that the use of YouTube is also growing all over the world. An example of the growth in social media appear in the number of users. Reports show that YouTube has at least 2.476 billion users around the world in July 2022. Egypt has the biggest number with 45.9 million active users. According to YouTube's advertising audience data in 2022, 45.6% of YouTube's global users are females and 54.4% of YouTube's global users are males However, reports show that users aged 25 to 34 are considered for the largest share of YouTube's advertising audience. In the Middle East, number of channels are 200 channels with over than one million subscribers in the region and more than 30.000 channels and more than 10,000 subscribers. Figures 2.3 and 2.4 below show some statistics regarding YouTube users and subscribers since 2010.

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Year	YouTube MAUs
2010	200 million
2011	500 million
2012	700 million
2013	1 billion
2014	1.1 billion
2015	1.3 billion
2016	1.5 billion
2017	1.6 billion
2018	1.8 billion
2019	2 billion
2020	2.3 billion
2021	2.5 billion
2022 (As of Q3)	2.671 Billion

Figure 2.3: YouTube monthly active users since 2010 (Demand Sage, 2022)

Year	YouTube Premium Subscribers
2015	1.5 million
2016	3 million
2017	2.8 million
2018	10 million
2019	18 million
2020	30 million
2021	50 million

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Figure 2.4: YouTube premium subscribers since 2010 (Demand Sage, 2022)

As for YouTube users and subscribers in the Middle East, Figure 2.5 provides some statistics around subscribers' and video views.

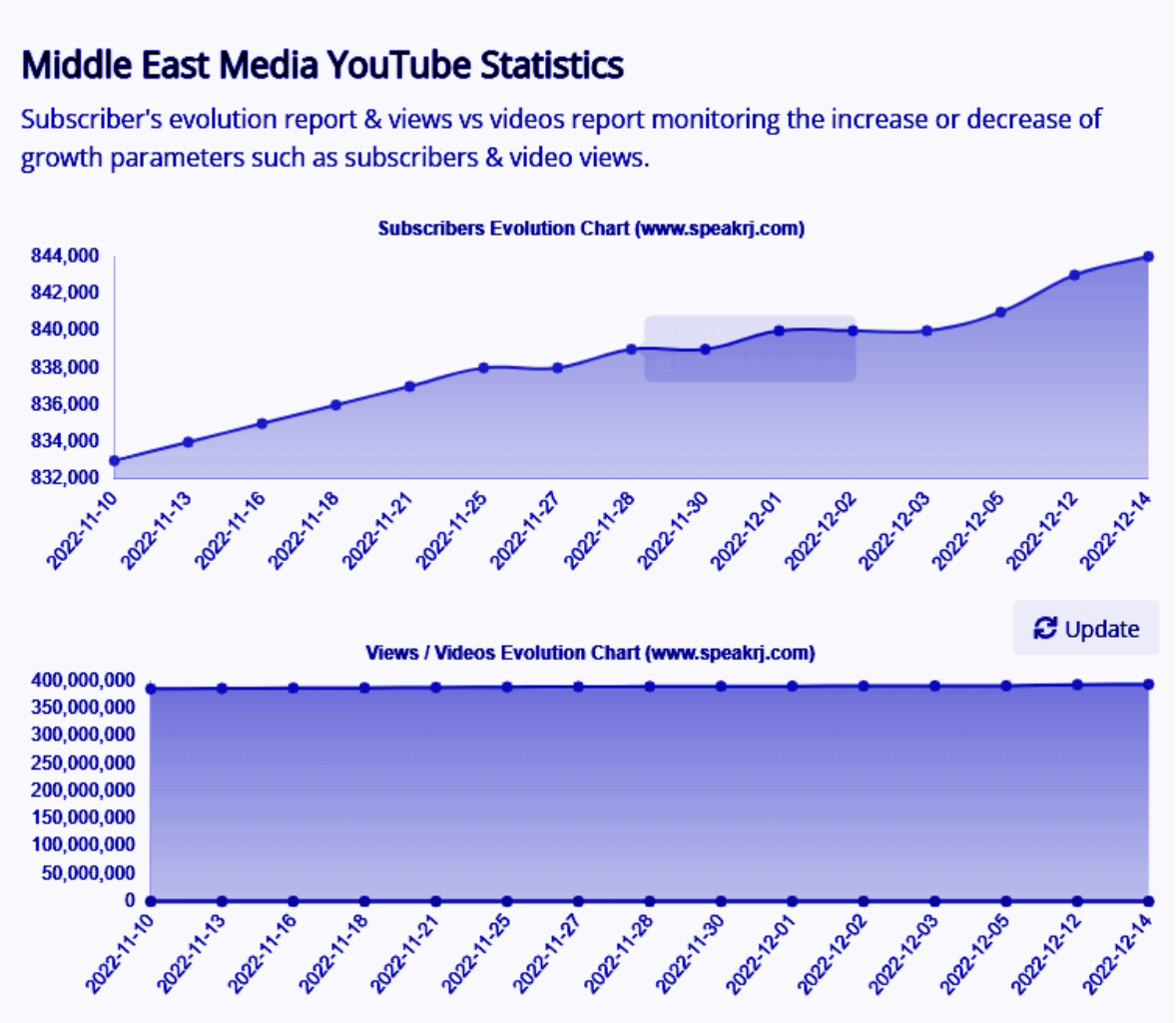


Figure 2.5: Middle East Media YouTube Statistics (Middle East Media, 2022)

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- Instagram

The rise of Instagram application was in 2010 by Kevin Systrom who was 27-years-old and working at Stanford University graduate at that time. Instagram achieved 25,000 users in one day. At the end of the first week, Instagram had been downloaded 100,000 times, and by mid-December, the number of users had reached one million. In 2011, Instagram raised $7 million in a series funding round. Instagram made a limited-feature website interface available in November 2012. In June 2014, the company introduced an application for the Amazon Fire device, and finally, in 2016, it created an application that made it compatible with Microsoft Windows tablets and computers. In 2018, Instagram was the second-most downloaded free app on the Apple app store (second only to YouTube's free mobile-device app). In 2019, one billion people will use Instagram every month. Instagram like other platforms can create and share photos, stories with friends, followers as well. In addition, Instagram allows users to explore and share everything from the users'' daily life (Blystone, 2020).

According to Reich and Pittman (2016), social media use is growing among young adults. For example, Instagram usage encourages young adults to explore options and select innovative ideas. The research about social media and entitled loneliness concluded that happiness and satisfaction increase when adults use Instagram applications while loneliness may decrease. However, the research points out that loneliness is pervasive in the countries where social media use is the highest. Moreover, interconnectedness and image-based social media on social media weaken loneliness.

Laksono (2019) conducted another recent research about Instagram use for instructional media. The aim of the research was to investigate the students' perception towards social media in education. The research showed that the usage of Instagram is high for instructional media in vocational schools (Tamimi, 2018; Zhi, Hung & Lin, 2015). Teachers use Instagram to share materials, share announcements, and consult other teachers as well.

Scholars also point out that the usage of Instagram positively affects social networking sites (Pornsakulvanich, 2017). Moreover, personality traits, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment, and attitudes play a vital role in social media support satisfaction, frequency and in the usage of technology worldwide.

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(Tamimi, 2018; Turel, 2014; Saidam, 2012). All these traits not only support social media in general, but also it encourages users and influencers in terms of businesses, economics, and politics as well (Tamimi, 2018).

It is worth mentioning that Instagram platform like other platforms has many advantages and disadvantages. One of the most important advantages of Instagram is building the brand (Hermina, 2019). Other important advantages include the high virtual presence of such effective platform being the second largest globally with posts' high visibility. In addition, high level of engagement among users leads to high marketing among targeted audience through pictures and videos. However, and despite all the advantages, scholars point out few disadvantages such as the technological limitations due to evolution of mobile technology, copyright issues and users' awareness about them, existence of fake accounts as users need to differentiate between the real, official accounts and the fake ones. Addiction to Instagram appears to be one of the most concerning disadvantages (Hermina, 2019).

Instagram is also one of the world's top social media platforms. Global advertising audience reach numbers shows that, Instagram has at least 1.440 billion users around the world in July 2022. As for the Middle East, Instagram use is one of the top social media platforms as well. Such use of Instagram in the Middle East is growing rapidly. Latest reports of global advertising audience reach numbers show that Instagram has at least 1.440 billion in July 2022. 47.2% of Instagram's global users are females and 52.8% of Instagram's global users are males. Figure 2.6 below shows the leading countries based on Instagram audience size as of January 2022.

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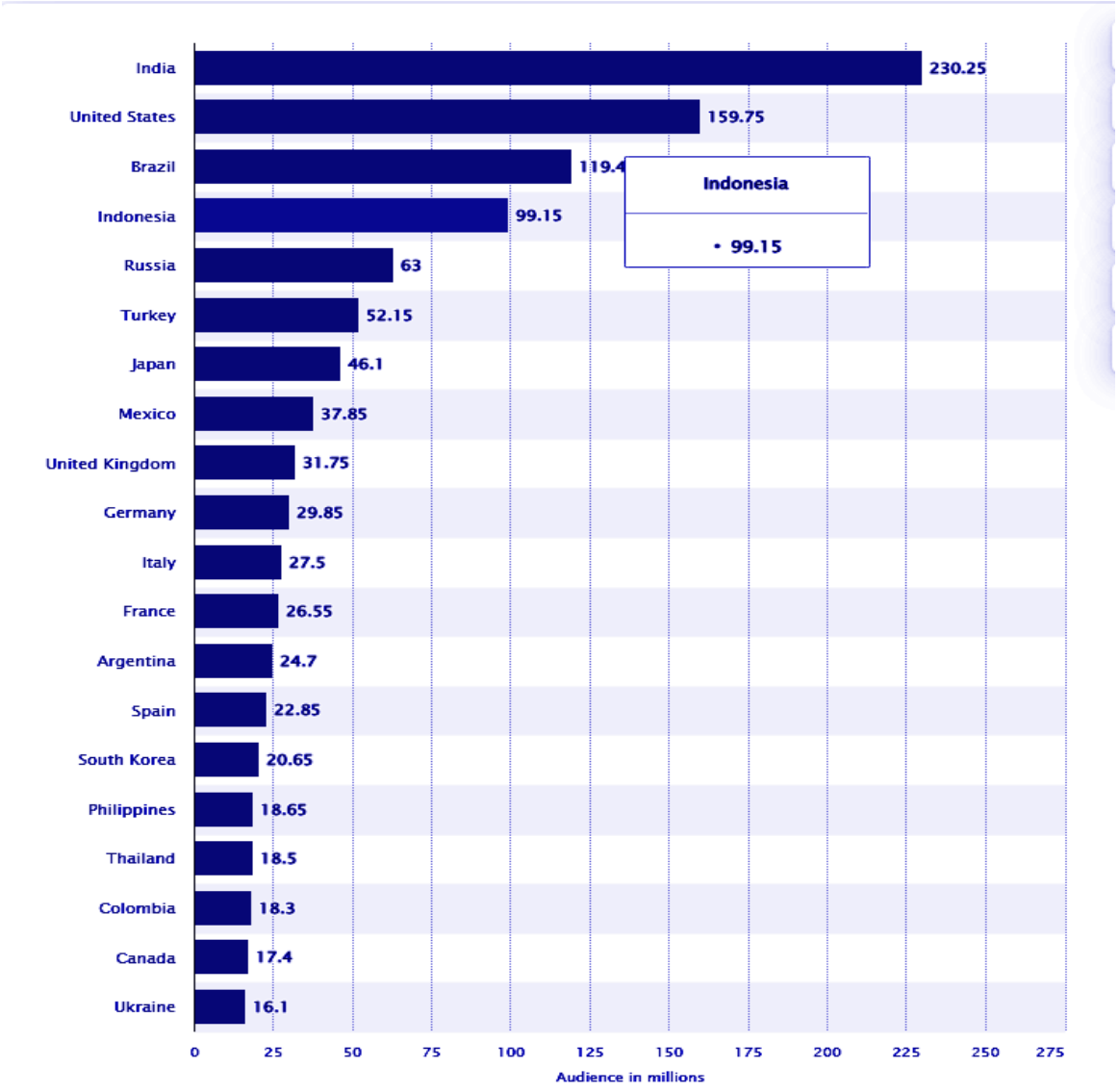


Figure 2.6: Leading countries based on Instagram audience size in millions (Statista, 2022)

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- TikTok

TikTok originated from China when Alex Zhu and Luyu Yang founded it in Shanghai. The online journey of TikTok started with uploading 3-5 minutes videos focusing on the entertainment music videos with friends. TikTok is not just music, however, it allows videos containing such diverse content as dancing, cooking, doing magic tricks, playing with pets, and re-enacting comedy skits. TikTok continues to grow. It was the most downloaded free app in the Apple App Store in the US in September 2018. It also ranked first on Google Play during October 2018.

Research highlighted the importance of using social media platforms and especially Tik Tok. There are four main reasons for using Tik Tok. These reasons can be summarised in entertainment, socialisation, formativeness, and academics (Yang, 2020; Gupta and Bashir, 2018).

According to Wandi (2020), the use of technology in general facilitates social life communities. TikTok from an Islamic perspective is a good weapon to make good relations with friends, getting information, socialisation, and amusement. It can decrease stress, tiredness, and develop thinking. However, TikTok can create negative impacts on people's lives when overused or misused. Users of TikTok need to consider morals, the rules, and regulations and to be wiser when using social media.

Talking about academic reasons, Yang states that TikTok attracts secondary school students towards uploading videos in the EFL classrooms. Students show their desire and support by their teachers in using TikTok for English Purposes. In addition, the usage of TikTok allows students to expand their learning knowledge and to express their ideas as well. Fahdin, (2021) mentions that TikTok plays a vital role in understanding the vocabulary of the English language. It improves Students'' reading, speaking, and listening when downloading videos of English material as well.

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Figure 2.7: TikTok infographics (Demand Sage, 2022)

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2.1.2.8 Intellectual property protection on social media

Before talking about Intellectual property protection on social media, there must be a need to talk about the definition of intellectual property. Research defines intellectual property as “property (such as an idea, invention, or process) that derives from the work of the mind or intellect, also: an application, right, or registration relating to this” ("Intellectual property," Merriam-Webster.com, 2022). While intellectual Property protection is a valuable intangible asset that should be protected to enhance your competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Intellectual property protection on social media is an important issue on a global scale. However, in the recent century, media as a tool faces a lot of challenges when spreading information around the world and when trying to adapt with the new trends of technological society. Users of media could be a reporter, journalists or people who is involved in the creation and change of the news. These changes result from the way of presenting facts and their work remains unappreciated due to violation of others work. Therefore, necessity of more work and motivation in the following the regulations of Intellectual property protection needs to be investigated. Necessity of educational knowledge and environmental knowledge needs further discussion as well (Denchev, 2019).

According to Eaton (2019), the huge spread of social media platforms created challenges to users, influencers, and regulators as well. The huge spread is also problematic and disastrous for intellectual property and copyright law as well. This appears clearly in the case of YouTube. For example, users of YouTube face challenges when using the report system and loading videos. Users need to follow regulation wisely to avoid combatting copyright infringements. Therefore, Eaton mentions ideas to consider when talking about intellectual rights. These ideas are:

1. To educate internet by making copyright common knowledge in a way users should not reveal the password or any personal details
2. To reassess what breaches copyright online.
3. Strict regulation on those who report copyright to prevent abuse.
4. Creators such as authors are treated like they hold ‘no moral claim’ above anyone else, such as publishers.

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As for Brooks (2020), intellectual property is a growing problem. The growth in social media can create challenges and one of them is the risk of intellectual property infringement. Therefore, companies need to monitor their own intellectual property from unauthorised use as infringement may occur in diverse ways such as unauthorised content that also emerges from the unlawful use of content or text.

Brooks adds that social media platforms should be protected from any intellectual properties' infringements. Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok are social media platforms that contain "takedown request." Takedown request is a form that users of social media can submit in case of any misuse, complaint, or any right breaching. However, internal procedures in protecting social media infringements such as implementing a policy to help, educate and to train employees need to be taken into consideration as well (Russ, 2020; Wichtowski, 2017; Ioanid, 2015).

2.1.2.9 Ethics on social media

Any research involving human beings should have some ethical considerations. Social media research's ethics have been a concern in recent times, mainly because of the growing literature on the topic and due to regulations that research firms put in place for any researcher before embarking on research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Ethical procedures that a researcher needs to employ depend much on the methods used for data collection and on the nature of respondent's personal information to collect. When research involves direct contact with people, there are likely to be more ethical issues to take into consideration (Thomas & O'Kane, 1998).

The most common ethical procedure to use with respondents is to have an informed consent form signed. To this end, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) suggested the following guidelines: "a fair explanation of the procedures to be followed and their purposes", "a description of the attendant discomforts and risks reasonably to be expected", "a description of the benefits reasonably to be expected", "a disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures that might be advantageous to the participants", "an offer to answer any inquiries concerning the procedures", and "an instruction that the person is free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation in the project at any time without prejudice to the participant" (p. 53).

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In this current research, and prior to asking respondents to sign the consent forms, it was important to build trust between the researcher and the interviewees, who live in areas of conflict and face challenges in their life. This process involved a thorough discussion about the research objectives. Then, the respondents received an information sheet indicating that interviewees were free to ask any questions they might have at any stage as well as the ability to withdraw at any stage.

2.1.2.10 Bullying through social media

The concept of bullying through social media has been increasing in recent years. It allowed scholars to dig and to navigate more in literature. Moreover, the competition through technology innovation and social media created disputes among users. Therefore, researchers highlighted the importance of Bullying in literature. Bullying refers to any aggressive behaviour from someone to another which can also be physical, verbal, or other actions (Corcoran, 2015).

According to Williams and Pearson (2016) Cyber bullying is a type of bullying which occurs online, through social networking sites, gaming, or chat rooms or through mobile phones and tablets. However, Cyberbullying may include:

1. Harassment such as offensive messages, embarrassing photos, and videos.
2. Denigration such as untrue information.
3. Flaming and the use of offensive language to cause a fight.
4. Stealing someone's site.
5. Exclusion or neglecting others.
6. Offending others like sending sexual images.

According to Hall and Lewis (2014) bullying can be classified into: Cyberbullying; physical bullying; adverse employment bullying; non-verbal bullying. All these classifications may occur in both the internal and external workplace such as: social media, emails, text messaging, cell phones and in community venues. Hall and Lewis summarised the classifications in workplace bullying framework in the following paragraph:

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"*The significance of the framework strives to show the growing importance and the blending of the internal workplace. The framework also indicates the extension of the modern workplace through the increasing. Responsibilities of being a positive steward for the company through usage of social media, Emails, and other technologies. The enforcement of harassment, workplace bullying, and cyberbullying may extend beyond the traditional workplace" (p.130).*

In addition to the previous classifications research also points out to several recommendations related to the internet community. These recommendations are vital, and the Internet community should consider them when dealing with bullying through social media (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014).

· The Internet Community should work together to address the harm.

· The Internet Community should identify, encourage and be effective.

Strategies of counter-speech if appropriate.

· The Internet Community needs to share knowledge and help develop educational materials.

· The Internet Community should encourage other interested parties to raise awareness of the problem of cyber hate.

· The Internet Community should welcome new thinking to promote a civil online environment.

Hinduja and Patchin (2014) added that cyberbullying may create negative impacts upon people's lives such as aggression, suicide, loss of confidence, fear, isolation, and self-harming. These impacts are serious and need to be considered.

A study for Carter (2013), about " Protecting oneself from cyber bullying on social media sites" states that bullies, victims, and third-party observers are three issues users need to take into account when using social media. These three issues need to be examined to protect individuals from cyber bullying behaviour on social media networks.

Bullying, which refers to insulting, threatening, or causing harm to others because they are weaker and vulnerable, is among the issues that Carter investigates in his study (Craig, 2020). Bullying can be physical such as kicking, verbal such as sarcasm, emotional such as threatening gesture or online cyber posting and the indirect exploitations of the

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individuals. The second issue which Carter points to is the victim using social media which results from individuals when they do not put themselves in the wellbeing position and believe in their honouring life. The last issue which Carter points to is called the "third party observers" when individuals or users take the role of defender in internet safety more than encourager and supporter of bullying.

However, Carter in his study includes recommendations for users on social media so they can protect themselves from bullying by ceasing to dialogue disrespectfully and being polite when they communicate and interact. Users need to be aware of the negative attitudes which come from other individuals by taking responsibility for the inappropriate online behaviours and by self-monitoring postings. There must be more strategies for upgrading security systems when using social media. This security can monitor and defend human rights. Moreover, internet service providers, public education and media awareness, formal and informal support are important aspects to discuss regarding cyberbullying.

2.1.2.11 Hate speech

Evolution and the rapid expansion of social media has changed people's lives. It has changed people's attitudes and personality towards the conception and the use of social media. Indeed, it created what searchers highlight as hate speech. Hate speech refers to the usage of language to insult or spread towards individuals based on religion, gender, or social status (Ruwandika & Weerasinghe, 2018).

The word "hate" means an "extreme negative feelings and beliefs held about a group of individuals or a specific representative of that group because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation." The term "hate speech" covers all forms of expression that "spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin" (Keyser, 2017).

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Ring (2013) summarised his research of hate speech in few recommendations. The recommendations encourage self-regulation in social media companies. Social media companies such as YouTube, Facebook, X, Instagram, and others should follow the regulation rules and avoid any illegal or any hate speech not permitted. However, there must be a control and a strict policy and staff members of the Federal Communications Commission to consider the content and the offensive forms as well. Dandekar (2018) points out that hate speech causes negative impacts on society.

Santucci (2018) in their research "Detecting Hate Speech" developed a detection system for hate speech as hate speech is a detection of social media texts in Italian language. However, the main question in their research is whether hate annotation is objective or subjective. Different people may create different annotations as well. Therefore, subjective perception of hatefulness deserves to be the focus of further studies and recommendations.

A study for Mondal (2017) about "Measurement study of hate speech in social media" classifies types of online hate speech into the following areas: behaviour, physical, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, religion, and disability. All these classifications play an important role in media as they reach inexpensive communication medium and allow everyone one to reach millions of users. The study includes that hate speech forms and unveil lots of important patterns as it gives not only a wide understanding of online hate speech, but also offers direction for detection and prevention methods.

Literature engages in a discourse surrounding the conflicting principles of freedom of expression and human dignity, emphasising the importance of mutual respect regardless of religious or gender differences. Hate speech, however, facilitates discrimination based on nationality and race. Botha (2016) underscores the inadequacy of hate speech bans in addressing the core issue of discrimination against minorities, even if hate speech is believed to inflict harm and silence its victims (p. 60).

Nelson Mandela the former president of South Africa states in his argument about the role hate speech plays in social media (Mandela, 2016) that:

"For to be free is not merely to cast off one`s chains but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others".

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Mandela (2016) concludes that users of social media need to be cautious when using social media. Scholars also agreed that social media misuse is growing faster. Users at times misuse the platforms of social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok especially when they display texts and ideas, which in turn creates challenges to balance human freedom of expression, human dignity and hate speech. However, development of effective educational tools to tackle hate speech and to promote more successful conversations in social media require further studies (Beatrice, 2017; Mandela, 2016: Botha, 2016).

2.1.2.12 Racism and discrimination

Racial discrimination in social media is another term that has been expanding in recent years. As already discussed before in regard to Bullying and hate speech, the increased usage of social media platforms, created more implications to users and companies as well. These implications appear clearly in the users'' behaviour of social media. Racial discrimination is a term literature discussed about and defined as: "the practice of treating someone differently because of his colour, gender or race." Or "the unfair treatment of an individual because of the skin colour, race, or national origin (White, 2017).

A research for Sobry, (2021) about "Youth perspectives on discrimination and racism in social media" includes the presence of denying racism and the reluctance to describe it as a temporary term in society. The research presents racism as a dominant democratic and humanitarian great power in society. Different discourses in society allow production, reproduction of discrimination and boundary construction.

David (2016) in his journal *Hate Speech and Covert Discrimination on Social Media* argues that Facebook adopts an undetected growing number of covert discrimination practices. This affects users, followers, and influencers as well. The effect appears clearly not only in the content, but it also triggers hate speech by followers. David summarised his journal and commented that hate speech and discrimination will continue to increase through interactions between users and the platforms unless a new adoption of the regulatory system emerges.

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According to Matamoros-Fernández& Farkas (2012), racial discrimination in social media was a research focus for years. Scholars summarized a few insights about racism. These insights came out from their review about racism. These insights are crucial for consideration:

1. There is a need for further studies on overt racist speech.
2. There must be more work on what is called the structural nature of racism by interrogating how race is shaped in social media and race.
3. There must be more research to talk about neglecting the role of race in the subfield and the reflexivity in the research design.
4. There must be a focus on what is called regulation of racism content and illegal racism on social media platforms.

Therefore, scholars point out to two more important ideas to be taken into consideration in regards of race and discrimination:

1. There must be more work from scholars about social media racism and discrimination. Especially in using Indigenous critical perspectives to understand the concept of race struggles as well (Bangstad, 2017).
2. There must be more work on how to deal with abuse and social media misuse. Scholars suggest some points such as: explaining to users the type of behaviour, reporting the problem and seeking information and support from the targeted people (Boddy& Dominelli, 2017; Ferrara, 2015).

2.1.3 Public opinion and definition

Scholars define public opinion differently: people's opinion versus a majority's opinion. However, public opinion is a political opinion that concerns the collective life of people. Moreover, public opinion is more focused on democracy and governance. It is increasingly becoming a source of validation of rule (Merriam-Webster, 2021).

In general, public opinion is held by all to focus on the welfare of everyone in order to support most people. It is characterised by consensus, reason, validity, logic, and overall welfare. It also gives more concern to politics, social, economic and culture as

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well. However, public opinion is an important concept as it focuses also on the moral values of society and has never been a destructive or negative concept. Public opinion consistently upholds principles such as freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and democracy (Ergasheva, 2019; Klasnja et al, 2017; Neubaum & Krämer, 2017; Anstead, 2015).

As per McGregor (2019), public opinion holds significant importance in supporting democracy and shaping the portrayal of social media. McGregor's research highlights concern among social media users who rely heavily on these platforms to gauge public opinion, particularly in the context of event coverage and debates.

Social media has two main important objectives in relation to public opinion. The first objective is to change the unwanted situation by adopting a collective mind set one which can be united by public users. The second objective is to adopt a new mental image for the company in the public's mind (Klasnja, 2017). However, this research more work and further studies recommended carrying out further studies on public opinion and its relationship with social media. Klasnja emphasised that in the following quote:

"We think continued work on researching public opinion via social media is a fruitful endeavour. And we urge scholars and practitioners to both work on improving our ability to measure mass public opinion via social media, and to follow. Solid guidelines for reporting results obtained via social media" (P.23).

A new study for Christenson et al. (2021) about "Going public in an era of social media: tweets and corrections, and public opinion" assures that there is a relationship between social media and public opinion as social media does affect public opinion in general. Social media appeals move social media overall as social media increases support of people in general and there is a chance for corrections among individuals. The study appears to be useful for the thoughts of the public who cares and deals with social media on different platforms.

A different study for Tran (2017) argues also about social media and public opinion. The study states that social media is considered the only platform where individuals can express their opinion about products, business, politics, and economy as well. The study includes that despite the benefits that social media gives to individuals, there are still many groups that abuse such media and spread their distorted beliefs to fulfil

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their own purposes. Therefore, the study recommends capturing opinions and social behaviours rather that getting overall positive or negative opinions. The study also recommends two issues to address which are an extracting aspect based on double propagation technique and a classifying opinion to work on the consideration of the context of reviewing the sentences.

A study for Li (2021) on the advantages and disadvantages of internet public opinion discusses that internet public opinion is an influential view which are expressed by the public through the internet to a certain focus. These opinions can form a strong voice of the public and would reflect public opinion (Zhihui, 2016). These opinions can be a channel to not only reflect public opinion but also to promote the domination of the government official decisions. In addition, Li adds that internet public opinion has many advantages compare the tradition media such as:

1. The rapidity and interaction of information.
2. Integration of sound and text.
3. Internet public opinion is also rich and free in spreading information by radio, newspapers,
4. It is not easy to control the online internet public opinion like the traditional media.
5. Network public opinion cannot be neglected as it is a reflection of media comments BBC news and others.
6. Network public opinion is one of the most representative tools among other existing means that can reflect thing in a direct and true way.
7. Network public opinion can supervise decision maker and decision making and other reacted aspects.
8. Network public opinion can support the decision makers to understand peoples' situations and can support the vulnerable people.

No doubt that comments of people can help decision makers to feel the trends of the public opinion and feel their likes and dislikes in regard to reasonable decisions and popularity as well.

On the other hand, another study for Shen (2016) about public opinion toward internet freedom in Asia argues about international online opinion polling in Asia among different countries. The study key finding shows that there is a huge support for internet

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freedom in Asia, a big freedom of expression online accompanied by strong support for Internet censorship and a strong support for censorship rules and decisions by the public.

Moreover, public opinion has a huge impact on how people view things in real life. Public opinion can also be influenced by public relations as media allow using a variety of advertising methods to get the message and change peoples' thoughts. An example of this is the use of the platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. These platforms can shape peoples' perceptions and change their opinions when they communicate and interact as well. Social media can transform and uncover the underlying facts. It can lead people to understand the reality of things (Choudharym, 2020; Boykoff, 2011).

According to Choudhary (2020), social media plays an important and a central role in informing the public about what is going on in the world. Choudhary summarizes peoples' attitudes towards public opinion in the following quote:

"Media accounts can play a central role in not only legitimizing certain courses of action, but the placing of trust and credibility in particular versions of the possible directions for social policies. They can also be used to insert doubt and confusion into a debate such as climate change and may reduce commitments action. The media are in essence a contested space in which the most powerful groups can establish the dominance of specific messages. But, as we have shown, the complexity of t reception process then creates the possibility of variations in attitudinal and behavioral response" (p. 403).

The researcher in this article recommends more discussion in regard to development of better-informed public debate.

2.1.3.1 Tools of expressing public opinions

As previously noted, public opinion is a significant factor in the realm of social media competition. Researchers have emphasised the importance of utilising tools to express and measure public opinion effectively, enabling individuals to share their views and opinions.

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Researchers classified tools of expression in public opinion into formal and informal ones. Formal tools are the new tools in measuring public opinion's views. These methods are important and need to be taken into consideration. Researchers such as Berinsky (2017) and McGregor (2019) summarise them in the following points:

1. Qualitative tools which focus on measuring the change of public opinion in recent years due to the evolution of politics, economic and cultural changes.
2. Quantitative tools which are known as the polling methods. This method can measure public opinion in the democratic countries, especially at the time of the elections.
3. The Quasi Experimental tool is another tool to measure public opinion, especially to assess the influence of editorials in the newspapers etc…
4. Analysis of Letters to Editorials and Legislators which also measures public opinion''s views. This tool is used when there is a need to measure the letters of the public to editors of daily newspapers and magazines.
5. Questionnaire tool which measures the public opinions by using a set of questionnaires to answer.

On the other side, the other classification of expressing public opinion is through informal tools. Informal tools of expressing public opinions are those old ones which were used years ago at the time of the governments to measure public opinions. These tools are summarised as:

1. Peasant rebellion which took place over history to support democratic governments.
2. Elections are considered as one of the most important ways to express people's feelings and votes towards the governments.
3. Interest groups and lobbying would be a valid tool to express public opinions.
4. The Media is another way to understand people's opinions.
5. Letters and telephone calls are also ways to express people's opinions
6. Protests in democratic governments are also among those informal ways to measure public opinions (Klasnja, 2017; Pew Research Centre, 2016).

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According to McGregor (2019), expressing public opinion in social media is an important aspect as it is a foundation of democracy, and it is formed to represent the

public's views and opinions. For example, journalists as influencers in social media also play an important role in manifesting and shaping the public opinion through news. McGregor states that elections and interviews are other examples that can be used to inform the use of social media and to present public opinion. However, and even though users of social media sometimes do not reflect the real views, journalists would report online sentiments and different trends as a form of public opinion that serves the narration of survey polling. Although, journalists appear to reflect public opinion through social media such as in debates, they are worried about the overreliance on social media to inform coverage.

Jun (2020) discusses the relationships between social media influencers and followers. The study shows how followers are loyal to social media, how they interact with the technology and how influencers interact with the brands. The study also revealed how the brands affect the influencers' authenticity and emotional attachments. Findings of the study show that influencer's interactivity is positive as it is related to influencers' authenticity and emotional attachment. Therefore, followers' emotional attachments to influencers' brand increases brand loyalty.

2.1.3.2 Public opinion in the Middle East

The Middle East term is a geopolitical one that refers to the region of the Arabian Peninsula, Anatolia (including modern Turkey and Cyprus, Egypt, Iran and Iraq). The Middle East term has had a widespread usage as a replacement of the term Near since the early 20th century. The term "Middle East" has led to some confusion over its changing. Middle Eastern countries are Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen (2015, FAO Report).

Middle Eastern countries have witnessed a huge evolution in time of social media. Public opinion started growing after the most recent developments in the Palestinian Israeli conflict and conflicts in other Middle Eastern countries. Conflicts have been affecting the Middle Eastern countries for more than 70 years now (Tamimi, 2018; Browning, 2011).

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Nugent (2018) commented in his book about public opinion in the Middle East, that the importance of public opinion started growing rapidly in the recent years. The term public opinion appears clearly in the methodological advancement in political science and polling became feasible and less expensive than in the past. However, this environment has encouraged researchers to conduct more research about public opinion in the Middle East including focusing on history and how it originated.

A research for Hale (2016) about public opinion in the Middle East Policy pointed out that any country's policy is affected and determined by three main factors. These factors are vital and need to be considered. The first factor is the effect of culture and history on public opinion on policy matters. The second factor is related to the current domestic policy considerations which lead to more implications and challenges. The third factor focuses on the public opinion polls as these polls have an impact on the policy and on the changing of the country's cultural issues including domestic conditions.

According to a study for Al-Sumait (2011) "Public Opinion Discourses on Democratization in the Arab Middle East", there are lots of political discussions on the Middle East that need to be mentioned as well. These discussions started to take place in the last decade and accelerated after the events of 11 September 2001. The Middle East has complained about democratic deficient conditions which created new discourses and new foreign policy objectives in the Middle East. These discourses were influenced by strategic political rhetoric more than the empirical assessments and influenced by the consequences of public perception and decisions. Therefore, public opinion in the Middle East started playing a crucial role in these discussions. Public opinion also played a pivotal role to highlight the gap between theoretical assessments of democratic attitudes and their empirical measures. The results of the study included that Arab populations are not given enough voices as polls over generalize the attitudes based on the interests and regional measures rather than reflection of the diversity of people's nation states.

McAlister (2005) suggests that public opinion has increased the interest of foreign countries outside the Middle East in the politics, economics, and culture of Middle Eastern countries. However, public opinion polls have had another impact in the Middle East, particularly evident in ongoing political conflicts and financial constraints that have affected these polls negatively. Further research is necessary to delve deeper into the complexities of public opinion in the Middle East.

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2.1.3.3 Public opinion and social media

In recent years, the use of social media in public opinion has had an effective impact. People started to understand the effects of these impacts every day. Alkhawaja & Jaradat (2020) point out that the evolution of social media allows the new generation to recognize that the use of social media platforms is not just for entertainment but such platforms have an important role in the social movements and changing political views as well.

A study by Dubios (2020) argues that journalists use social media data to report public opinion by using social media posts, identifying topics, and reporting sentiments. Dubios assures that journalists use aggregate social media data rather than using identifiable data when they report data. However, people who use social media are those who likely positively perceive journalists use on social media data to infer to public opinion. In addition, political postings are related to acceptance of the emerging journalists practice, which indicates that some people want to be heard publicly on social media while other no. The study concludes more recommendations for journalists on the ethical use of social media and social media platforms (Murphy, 2014).

Gazzar (2013) in the study about "The role of social media in the formation of public opinion towards Islamists: A content analysis" points out that content analysis in social media plays an important role. Content analysis in social media confirms the development of the negative attitudes towards Islamists and the development of the positive attitudes as well. Islamists in the study moves from positive attitudes to optimistic public opinion towards Islamists to having negative public opinion.

A study for Anderson (2017) about social media and the climate change opinion states that there is evidence of relationship between social media and climate change opinion, knowledge, and behaviour. There are several positive effects between those two areas. Social media does encourage greater knowledge of climate change. On the other hand, Carlson (2021) in another study about social media motivation using gratification theory talks about social media motivation and how it influences perceptions of trust among users. The study confirms that social media is also influenced by users' online motivation. This motivation can be classified into three types. The first is the information motivation, which takes place through using the internet to learn about current events. The

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second type is the social-interaction motivation, which takes place through using the internet to socialize with friends. The third one is the entertainment motivation which takes place through using the internet to pass time.

According to Weeks (2017), there is a strong relation between public opinion and social media. For example, social media prosumers are those consumers who are involved in customizing products for their own needs and can behave differently in terms of politics than the no prosumers. In addition, social media has a strong influence on people's lives, people's opinion leaders who can influence and persuade their peers about news and politics. Despite all the previous studies, the researcher observes that more research is needed to study the relationship between public opinion and social media.

2.1.4 Social media influencers: definition and rise

As a general term, influencers can influence, entertain, and inspire their audience and their culture as well. Influencers can also share and connect with their followers via a direct line of communication. Influencers are defined as a "person or thing that influences". Or a "person who has the power to influence many people, as through social media or traditional media" (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

The origin of the word influencer dates to the 17th century. Its origin is derived from the Mediaeval Latin "influential" meaning flowing in. The word is also derived from old French influence "emanation from the stars that acts upon one's character and destiny.

An influencer is also known as a "person or a group who has the power to influence the behaviour and opinions of others". An influencer is also defined as an "individual who has the power to influence others' decisions through their own authority, knowledge, position, or relationship" (Vodak, 2019).

Literature discusses few characteristics for those who want to be an influencer. These characteristics allow influencers to work in confident and trust when dealing with social media as they protect influencers' rights and allow them to enjoy their communication and interaction with people. These characteristics are:

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1. Influencers need to create content and to specialize in an area or certain field to become experts (Biaudet, 2017).
2. Influencers need to be confident and to prove themselves when using different platforms (Biaudet, 2017).
3. Influencers in social media need to be human beings who communicate and interact with followers by asking questions and getting suggestions (Vodak, 2019).
4. Influencers need to share their content with individuals in social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok and to reel them into the real platform.
5. Influencers need to be serious when becoming an online influencer especially in preparing their posts and their meetings with the individuals as well.
6. Influencers need to know that they use social networks. Therefore, they need to be assertive and try to get more opportunities which enables them to get more connections (Vodak, 2019).
7. Influencers need to work and share their business with companies and brands. Influencers need to be aware of how to benefit from working with brands (Taillon, 2020).
8. Influencers need to be transparent in their work. This requires influencers to declare the brand collaborations and sponsored content clearly. This means that influencers need to be honest clear with their audience (Vodak, 2019).
9. Influencers need to be proud of themselves and cautious of their work to keep up with the competition over social media

Heuvel (2022) in his article Micro influencers, defines influencers as: “social media users with a lot of followers”. Heuvel adds that there are many disparities among researchers when describing influencers with their number of followers. However, most of the researchers agree that influencers are those people who are described with a high level of engagement with their audience.

Social media explosion of the recent years has given rise to influencers. Between 2010 and 2019, the number of influencers has expanded. This appears obvious in their popularity as part of their strategy. Fake followers, bot technologies, and the pandemic crisis converging in 2019 and 2020 affected the influencer’s growth towards the public view. However, the social media rise of influencers is back to focus more on

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personalization and authenticity as large platforms give more opportunities to influencers to grow (Zulli, 2018).

According to Taillon (2021), there is a strong relationship between social media influencers and their followers as social media influencers allow to manage and affect followers' human brands. Results of the Taillon's study show that social media influencers attract followers as there is a positive attitude towards the influencers and followers of social media as well. Influencers use different platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube to market information and get promotion. These influencers can also use platforms to express their opinions, inform about their work, share their expertise, and express their passion (Markethub, 2016; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

2.1.4.1 Types and characteristics of influencers

Scholars point out that the influencers owe their fame to social media which witnessed a huge growth in recent years. Gomez (2019) in his article about social media influencers mentions the terms (micro-celebrity, instafamous, internet famous or influencer) which indicates all forms of fame in social media.

Researchers classified types of influencers into micro-influencers, macro influencers and mega influencers (Boerman, 2020; Gomez, 2019; Zulli, 2018). As for micro-influencers, they are those influencers who form the largest group of content creators and have the smallest following. Their concern is only on a particular area of interest. Macro-influencers are those who have around 100,000 to 200,000 followers and are considered as power middle influencers. They can use diverse platforms to promote their work. Mega-influencers are those with the top elite of social media and have over a million followers. They can use the top standards and functions of the platform to attract the attention of a large number of people.

A recent study for Zhou (2021) mentions two types of the influencers in social media. These types are crucial and need to be considered in social media work. The first type is called the "fast-influencers" and the second one is called only "influencers". The first type relates to the individuals who can achieve a prompt effect at the early stage but at the same time it can lose their superiority at the final stage. However, the second type

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which is the final-only influencers are those who fail to achieve any effect or performance at the early stage but can achieve at the final stage. The study concludes that with increase of the degree of assortative, the fraction of the fast-only influencers decreases, which shows that fast influencers can keep their superiority at the final.

A study for Lokithasan (2019) about the impact of gender and emerging of adults in social media. These influencers who establish reputation for themselves play an effective role in marketing for their organizations. These influencers work hard to influence consumers through power of social media as they have a big number of followers who can promote many consumers in a short time. The research was conducted mainly to study the perceptions and differences between male and female influencers towards emerging adults in social media. Results of the study included that female respondents are influenced by influencers who promote beauty products while male respondents focus on technology and gaming. Influencers posts for entertainment factor followed by in formativeness were the most important factors mentioned by the respondents.

However, a study for Narasimhamurthy (2014) was conducted in India about "Cultural impact and gender on Indian young adults in using social networking sites". The study attempted to get useful information about Indian young adults in socialization, entertainment, self-status seeking and information seeking as users of social media especially on Facebook and YouTube in India are increasing among individual. The study showed that there are four reasons for adults in India to use social media. These reasons are socialization, entertainment, self-status seeking and information seeking. There is a difference among male and female users of social media in information seeking and self-status seeking. Male adults use social media more in self-status seeing, while females use social media more in information seeking. Narasimhamurthy recommends more discussions about and considerations of cultural issues in India in relation to social media platforms.

According to Double Click (2006), the characteristics of the influencer are based on those who consider themselves experts in certain areas like in hobbies or interests and known in front of audience with the following definitions:

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1. Individuals often ask for their advice in marketing as they are knowledgeable.

2. They are always happy to recommend friends and followers when they have a new brand.
3. They have a huge social network to benefit people through based on their interests.
4. They have a wide experience in using different platforms such, blogs, social channels, websites, e-mail, and online discussion groups.

On the other side, researchers appear to be more concerned about the negative effects of social media influencers as there are concerns in literature that those influencers work on individuals may face depression and anxiety which lead to decreasing the time spent on using different platforms on social media (De Castro, 2021).

On the other hand, Vodak (2019) in his study "who is influencer" discusses the characteristics of influencers as mega-influencers, who have more than a million followers. Macro-influencers, who have a user base ranging from 100,000 to a million followers, brands and companies choose them as their business partners. Micro – influencers who have from 1,000 to 100,000 followers. Nano-influencers are a group that is expected to have more companies less than 1000 followers but have a huge impact on a relatively narrow market, Nano-influencers may seem to have too little influence, that they simply do not have enough supporters.

A recent research for (Zulli, 2018) mentions two types of influencers in social media. These types are crucial and need to be considered in social media work. The first type is called the fast-influencers and the second one is called only-influencers. The first type relates to the individuals who can achieve a prompt effect at the early stage but at the same time can lose their superiority at the final stage. However, the second type which is the final-only influencers are those who fail to achieve any effect or performance at the early stage but can achieve at the final stage.

2.1.4.2 Domain and objectives of influencers

Common social media influencers'' domains are fashion, lifestyle, photography, travel, politics, economic and social life. Even though influencers differ in their domains, still, they have shared objectives. Good influencers always have a clear target. Good influencers can choose a suitable platform to follow. Good influencers always focus on the

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content. Good influencers always listen to their audience. Good influencers are always creative and never quit working. Good influencers can collaborate with other influencers.

Influencing could happen in different levels and different domains. Individuals could be influenced to live or to produce their product or to get a certain idea. The term influencing is also related to motivating and inspiring which also leads to shaping public opinion as well. Therefore, inspiration can lead to create emotion which gives hope and faith. It's the connection that will connect the brand to the audience (Nadery, 2020).

According to literature, domains, and objectives of the influencers of social media are divided into three classifications. These classifications are known into streams which are source, message, and audience. As for the first stream, which is the source, influencers in social media focus on the perspectives of the influencers and communication professionals. The second stream which is the message focuses on the content strategies of the influencers and their posts. The third stream which is the audience focuses on the efficacy of the influencers and their recommendations (Hudders, 2021).

Securing influencers domains in social media are important to protect the influencers' work and rights. In addition, when influencers domains are secured, this allows a successful communication and a successful brand marketing. However, influencers who rely on social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok to promote their business may face risk of losing their business if they don't secure it. Therefore, domain strategy appears to be crucial for the influencers who have a high level of followers. Examples of the most popular influencers in the Middle East are:

1. Huda Kattan who is the best-known social media influencer in the Middle East. She was ranked number 1 in 2017 earning about $18,000 per post. She is also one of the best 25 influential people on the internet.
2. Ryan's World who is the world features toy reviews attract users with different kind of clout. Ryan's one of the top earners in YouTube who started in 2015. His most popular video has over 1.6 billion views.
3. PewDiePie who became famous for his reviews from gaming scene and one of the first YouTube channels to reach 80,000,000 in 2019.

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According to Enke (2019), creating a strategy with a set of objectives for the influencers to follow is important. Less objectives allow more effective results for the

influencers. However, there are few strategies that are helpful for their reputation. These strategies are:

1. Visibility which looks to make a name for the influencers on social media and an effect on the users (Duffy, 2019).
2. Branding is another objective which tend to maintain long –term relationship with influencers (Bakker, 2018). .
3. Positioning which tends to position themselves in the market. This also helps to explain the characteristics of the brand (Borchers, 2021).
4. Traffic which is needed for the influencer's visibility and positioning. This allows also influencers to increase their public (Duffy, 2019).
5. Concession which allows influencers to reinforce the visibility, branding and the positioning of the brand.
6. Brand loyalty which allows the community to share their experience with the brand (Bakker, 2018).

No doubt that influencers on social media today are the celebrities of our time. More influencers eventually outgrow social media. Therefore, if influencers want to create their own brand, they need to promote their own domains. Out of this research it appears clearly that there is a lack of research written in area of domains and objectives of influencers on social media.

2.1.4.3 Content of influencers on social media

Content on social media is a crucial element that influences various aspects. High-quality content empowers influencers to reach their goals in social media, business, and marketing. Engaging and top-notch social media content enables your followers to advocate for your business. This content can take various forms such as infographics, videos, images, or blogs. The primary aim of this content is to captivate and draw in the specific audience you are targeting (Li, 2020; Kaplan, 2018).

According to Al-Emadi (2020) in considering good influencers to work with, research highlighted three main criteria. These criteria play an important role in the influencer's fame and reputation. The first criterion is engaging with a conversation, triggering shares, and creating good content. The second criterion is that influencers need to be trusted by their readers and followers, especially when they write publications and

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contents. The third criterion is that the influencer is a person who needs to be known by his audience, needs to share or promote content in a collaborative way.

Dalbaere (2021) in his article social media influencers assures that there are three main routes researchers need to consider in the brand engagement. These routes are crucial and come in three dimensions which are: cognitive processing, affection and activation. These three dimensions play an important role not only on the influencers, but also on the development of the enhanced insight into consumer's specific cognition, emotion and behaviour during interaction.

A study for Du Plessis (2017) about "The role of content marketing in social media content communities" shows that sharing and engaging content in social media plays a crucial role as it enhances users' lives in the community. There are three main categories that emerged from the data of the study. These categories confirm the relationship between the brand and social media content which lead to connecting with the audience. These categories are building content communities, platform-specific content and understanding channels. Findings of the study add to literature the following points:

1. The study provides a good relationship between the brands and social media content communities.
2. The study spreads the knowledge of social media communities to include content communities.
3. The study also provides a prove o how content marketing support and benefit the brand in social media content.

On the other hand, a study for Wellman (2020) about "Ethics of Authenticity: Social Media Influencers and the Production of Sponsored Content" states that, influencers use the term authenticity as an ethical framework when producing sponsored content. These ethics of the authenticity focus on two areas: being true to oneself and brand and being true to one's audience. These ethics also keeps the influencers' identity and their relationship with the audience at the forefront while allowing them to profit from content made to benefit brand and destination.

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Another study for Kolo (2018) about "Social media celebrities as influencers in brand communication: An empirical study on influencer content, its advertising relevance and audience expectations" argues that influencers' communication does not rely on

certain categories as followers of social media always look for gratification through the consumption of the content like other traditional media content. Advertising is spread and accepted by followers of social media when the same conditions are fulfilled.

- Live stream

Live streaming is known as a social media feature on platforms like Facebook and Instagram, which allows users to share the unedited raw footage in real time. Live streaming is an effective route for influencers to achieve their objectives, to promote the product, and to promote the company news. Not only that but live streaming allows influencers to reach and interact with millions of people worldwide.

Live streaming has many benefits such as having many audiences to be involved in the event, especially if people are busy and they cannot make it to attend physically. Moreover, live streaming allows the flexibility to use different kinds of content. Pictures and texts. In addition, live streaming is characterised with ease and convenience as it provides reliable customers to support. Live streaming has always been affordable with free service (Rossetti, 2018).

According to Lin and Lee (2021), the use of live streaming in social media is connected to personality traits such as self-perceived facial attractiveness, motivation, and intention. There is a relationship between motivation and intention in live streaming. Intrinsic motivation and perceived behavioural control are main predictors for intention and motivation. These traits are affected by self-perceived facial attractiveness, extraversion agreeableness and internal locus control, while extrinsic motivation is also positively influenced by self-perceived facial attractiveness, a conscientiousness and extraversion. It appears clearly from the study that, intention and motivation are main traits that enhance the use of live streams on social media. On the other hand, Jian (2022) points out that live streaming is an effective and valuable application in social media as it increases the public domain flow and interest. Such application also promotes the developments of economy worldwide, affect fans behaviour and it is considered as word of mouth and a tool for amusement as well. The study proposes more discussions about the mechanism of the use of different platforms in marketing in social media.

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Finally, live streaming is an effective platform to show the importance of authenticity to both streamers and clients. It brings real texts, videos as well. (Woodcock, 2021). In addition, live streaming can moderate the negative effects of loneliness on the viewer's psychological, social and emotional life. It is proved to be an active tool for entertainment for users (Goh, 2012).

- Text

Text messaging in social media content is a simple and helpful application which keeps connections between people who matter more. It is an act of sending electronic messages that consist of alphabetic and numeric characters. Text messages were developed in the United Kingdom in the late 1980s and the first text messages were sent on December 3, 1992. It grew from one billion in 1999 to some thirty billion in 2005.

A research for Sheirkowski (2012) about the importance of text messages shows that texting messages has become a vital tool for communications among people. It became a crucial aspect in the world of young people's culture. The research included that there is a difference between people with high and low texting messages. Texting messages is one of the highly recommended aspects in people's daily lives. The researcher recommends more research to be conducted about text messaging uses in social media.

Another research for Plumb (2013) and Campbell (2008), about text messaging and non-verbal communication shows that lack of text messages in social media can create problems for the receiver who is trying to interpret the message which also results in misinterpretation of the message and a loss of cohesive commutation between two parties. In addition, the lack of non-verbal cues affects the richness of the information communicated between people. Good media always allow more information cues. The research recommends conducting more studies to determine the effectiveness of text messaging and non- verbal communication in social media. The restrictions imposed on both text messaging and non- verbal communications are recommended for future research as well.

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According to Oseni (2018), text messaging has many advantages such as:

1. Supporting learning in the classroom.
2. contributing to developments of theories and cognitive skills.
3. supporting sharing of information.
4. creating and maintaining relationships among people.
5. Text messaging allows peer-based and self-direct learning.
6. Text messaging can be assessed from any location in the world.
7. Text messaging is convenient in saving time and effort.

However, Oseni in his study also points out few disadvantages about text messaging such as:

1. Access to internet and the access to networks in developing countries is limited.
2. Text messaging sometimes leads to lack of communication and lack of understanding the ethical details which affects the data collection.
3. Text messaging may lead to risk of bullying and harassment.

Despite the previous mentioned disadvantages of text messaging, the study recommends further discussions regarding social relationship between researchers who use text messaging as an online research methodology.

- Photographs

The importance of including photographs in social media content has been expanding in our daily lives. Photographs allow people to communicate more on social media. Photographs also allow followers to see more of others' activities and by telling more stories that express people's thoughts. Not only that, but photographs also change people's culture, perception in social media (Pornsakulvanich, 2018).

On the other hand, literature discusses few important advantages for using photographs in social media. These advantages are considered as benefits that allow users to build attention among audience, to strengthen loyalty, and to communicate with virtual information and support engagement. These benefits are:

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1. Photographs lead to immortality.
2. Photographs can document people's journey

3. Photographs increase users' motivation in life.
4. Photographs save people's memories.
5. Photographs is a way of creating and innovation (Mogaji, 2020; Fahmy, 2003).

However, and despite all the benefits of using photographs in social media such as for sharing, keeping friends, and sharing activities and engagements, Mogaji (2020) in his study about photographs also points out three critical implications related to education. These implications need to be considered when using photographs in social media. These three implications are useful and need to be taken seriously as they lead to promotion and success of work. These implications are related to teaching and learning, ethics in sharing and university regulation. These implications need to be discussed as they help in the promotion of the students and their engagement as well (Faizi, 2013). When considering the role of photographs in teaching and learning, users and lecturers need to consider well the social and cultural issues in posting photographs and to also consider the rights of people (Allen, 2012).

Drawing upon research conducted with black American middle-class youth in a secondary school, this article highlights the use of participant photography with Black male youth. Participant photography is a visual method that places the power of photo documentation in the hands of research subjects, empowering them to document and reflect on social issues and cultural phenomena important to them. This article highlights the significance of the method when exploring the understudied lives of black middle-class males, ethical considerations of using visual methods with youth populations, as well as the benefits and dilemmas of engaging black male youth in participant photography. Visual and narrative data produced from the participant photography project are used to highlight the benefits and ethical dilemmas of the method when working with middle-class black male youth (Allen, 2012).

A research for Villi (2015) about phone photographs and mediated presence in social media states that sharing photos in social media is increasing rapidly. Mediating presence visually is an integral practice for using photos in people communication. Such increase and share show how photographs allow means for both maintaining connections between people and mediating presence.

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Another research for Lobinger (2016) about photographs in social media argues that there are three modes of photos sharing. These modes differ in regard to the role of the shared photographic objects. These three modes are essential and need to be taken into consideration. These modes are: Sharing photos to talk about images, sharing photos to communicate visually and phatic photo sharing. The research concluded challenges and implications for future critical research discussion of photo sharing as well.

- Videos

Shared video in social media has been growing in recent years especially with the evolution of technology. This provides advantages for communication and expand the aim of conferences worldwide.

When users of social media share videos with people, this means that:

1. Users increase the number of their audience. This is a good opportunity to expand business and engage in different platforms (Terry, 2020).
2. Users have a connection with their audience as users get to know people more. This leads to better customer and allow getting more insights about the customers (Terry, 2020).
3. Users can invent and choose their best posts to share with the audience (Terry, 2020).
4. Users have the access to run paid advertisements which vary according to the use of the platforms (Buddayya, 2019).
5. Users can also build their brand, and this leads to connect with interested leads where people always buy from the brand they know.
6. Users have a great opportunity to get the audience be familiar with businesses (Alobaidi, 2018).
7. User can also evaluate their performance and track how their business goes.

Lim (2012) and Kopf (2012) discuss a few steps in considering the best social media video strategy. These steps are essential as they aim to promote and encourage social media influencers and users as well. These steps are: To Set goals for video marketing like creating a brand awareness, to decide on your platform(s) such as to start with the ones that you already have audience established at, to select your video types so your audience know if the video is education, interviews or entertaining, to Plan content production

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which helps in saving time and money as well and to know what post-production entails especially if the video is targeted for editing or other options, to schedule & promote the video mainly for publishing purposes and understand & analyse metrics to understand the statistics associated with it.

Buddayya (2019) suggests that sharing videos on social media supports learning, develops cultural understanding, and gets behavioural benefits. The study suggests also that using videos in education needs to be focused towards content to promote students' engagement and their learning knowledge. However, another study for Richrdson (2020) discusses a few implications that researchers, teacher, educators, and video game designers share. Use of videos in learning allows shaping students' feelings towards independent learning. As for teachers and educators, selection of videos untapped potential to support virtual experiences for players. And for the designers selecting videos meets the scepticism beyond being used as a motivator or time fillers in learning.

Gella (2018) in her article A Dataset for Telling the Stories of Social Media Videos discusses the importance of including videos as a content in social media. Including videos in social media plays an important role between people. Including videos in social media allows everyone to tell their stories and to express their thoughts. However, and despite the advantages of including video content in social media, there are still many disadvantages for including videos like potential risks on confidentiality and copyright infringement (Rivas, 2019).

- Shares

The idea of sharing in social media started to increase over the years. Sharing in social media means to share a portion of something with another user. People sometimes share in social media for incentives, for bringing a valuable content to others, to define themselves to others or to grow the relationship and for self-fulfilment as well (Fu, 2017).

Sharing in social media is another evolution that has been increasing rapidly in the recent years. According to Kalogeropoulos (2017) and based on data from Reuters Institute Digital News Report found that people share in social media for the expanding news. They use a different number of platforms as they engage more with news outside by

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commenting on the news via emails. Moreover, People can also share for political reasons especially when they comment on the news stories in social media. People who have a high interest in hard news are more likely to share news and stories as well.

Oliveira (2020) in her article "why do people share" argues that informativeness and socialising are the strongest motivations in predicting news sharing intention. While entertainment and escapism were predicted not to be significant. Oliveira recommended more opportunities for future work as there is a lack of research in this field. Lee (2012) also studied the influence of information seeking, entertainment and status seeking on news sharing. Lee concluded that people who are driven by information, entertainment, and status seeking are more likely to share news in social media. Prior experience in social media plays a key role in sharing intention as well.

Sharing information and content always allow more connection and collaboration among users of social media. Sharing information leads also to better decisions, bring valuable and enlightening entertaining content to others within the field. In addition, by sharing, users and influencers of social media can build up the work of others and ensure the sustainable production rather than repeating same ideas which might be already exist (Zhang & Gupta, 2018).

However, literature points out some important concerns and considerations regarding sharing on social media. These concerns are crucial and need to be discussed as users need to be aware of these concerns. Social networks today are full of scammers hunting on personal information as they might use this information for identifying possibilities of theft, account issues and card fraud. Therefore, users and influencers on social media need to be cautious when sharing their content. For example, content of sharing must be trustworthy, users of social media need to know that people look for valuable information and great deals. Most of the users of social media always look for the funny, intriguing shares rather than the boring ones. Moreover, content of sharing also must be attractive as people care for the brands and things that they are passionate about. Users and influencers of social media need also to consider that good sharing always leads to better relationships with others as users always look for validation and credibility with other people when sharing. Finally, users and influencers of social media can crystallize people's thoughts if they follow the right rules and the right strategies in sharing (Nikolinakou & Phua, 2020; Zhang & Gupta, 2018; Villi, 2017; Kumpel & Keyling).

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- Events

An event is defined as a “celebration that involves a special event, since, in relation to a landmark purposeful, planned and organised” (Duarte, 2009). Cultural events are known as the relationships with the arts. An example of the cultural events are music, painting, sculpture, films and representations. In cultural events users can include plays, festivals, concerts, and music (Ribeiro, 2014).

Scholars highlighted a few important practices which support the idea of promoting the events. Users need to consider these practices in social media when dealing with events. Examples of these practices are:

1. Users need to define event market goals like being specific, measurable and attainable.
2. Users need to know their audience and define who is more likely to attend
3. Users need to consider the role of an effective event press release.
4. Users need to consider the effectiveness of the audience emails marketing and not to neglect such emails to reach out the competition.
5. Users need to have a professional event, as websites should be clear and to define their marketing timetable as well (Davey, 2022; Adamopoulos, 2015; Becker, 2011).

A study for Becker and Gravano (2012) about "Identifying content for planned events across social media sites" discuss diverse information about many kinds of events such as shows, conferences and festivals. The study also discusses users’ reactions to relate events in Facebook, YouTube, and other platforms. The study concluded that there is a challenge in identifying users’ content for events that are already planned and known in advance across different social media sites. Events platforms which are used to extract event features are sometimes missing and noisy. The study recommends a formulation of more strategies for working on the content associated with the events on different social media sites. Further future studies in this area are recommended.

Mete (2021) in "A study on impact of personality traits on attitudes towards social media influencers". The study aimed to understand the relationships between the personality traits and attitudes towards social media influencers. The study conducted with 221 respondents and used the five models of personality such as neuroticism, extraversion,

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openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. The questions in the study covered four basic areas such as envy towards influencers, advertising content value, credibility of social media influencers and perceived trustworthiness of the influencers. The study included that personal trait play an important role in social media influencers. Personal traits need to be understood by the followers to better comprehend attitudes and perceived trustworthiness of social media influencers.

According to Moise (2014), in his article “An empirical research of promoting different kinds of events through various social media networks websites” states that, audience and the potential customer play an important role in promoting events in social media networks and organisations. Audiences and consumers can change or adopt the new ideas, products and services as well. The use of social media for them to promote events is less expensive than using paid advertising in the newspapers. However, the use of social media may allow some risks, such as the use of the fake accounts of companies that exist, and they do not have accounts yet. The writer recommends more research to work on social media competitions and to work on promoting the idea of events as well.

2.1.4.4 Attitudes towards influencers of social media

An attitude is "a relatively enduring organisation of beliefs, feelings, and behavioural Tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols" (Hogg, & Vaughan 2005, p. 150) “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour" (Eagly, & Chaiken, 1993, p. 1).

Attitudes towards influencers of social media have been increasing. Research highlighted the importance of attitudes and its effects towards social media. Pornsakulvanich (2017) in his research about attitudes towards social media included that, personality traits, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment, attitude toward using social media influencers, did contribute to online social support satisfaction and frequency). In addition, perceived usefulness, social influence, number of friends on Facebook and amount of time on Instagram positively predicted overall support frequency (Zakour, 2004).

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According to Mete (2021) personality and attitudes towards social media are two related concepts which need to be mentioned in this research. Personality of individuals can affect attitudes and attitudes can affect social media influencers as well. Mete talks about five important factors in this area. These factors are crucial and need to be considered in social media. These factors are Extroversion which is the first factor as it is related to a strong positive feeling and stimulated by social interaction. The second factor is conscientiousness which is related to thoughtful decisions. The third factor is that neuroticism often exhibits neurotic characteristics, such as worry. The last factor is openness which describes people who are imaginative, creative and open. The researcher adds that there is a lack of research written about personality and attitudes and their relation towards social media influencers, more research is recommended to be considered in such areas.

Quinn (2016) in his article "uses gratification" argues about privacy attitudes and behaviours towards social media. Quinn concluded that the users of social media show a strong concern about privacy. However, the gratification approach in social media is useful for informing the relationship between social media and privacy management. In addition, the privacy paradox is temporary, and users of social media became aware of potential hazards of information sharing. This also shows the relation between attitudes and privacy regulation, and how these intersect with social media uses.

2.1.4.5 Limitations facing influencers

As already mentioned earlier in this research and despite all the advantages and regulations of social media influencers, there are still many limitations for the influencers of social media to follow. These limitations are important. These limitations should not be neglected as it can result in misleading advertising and potential liability. Research summarised these limitations as in the following step.

1. Rules for Social Media Influencer Advertising and Endorsements (Freeman, 2015). Influencers of social media need to be aware of the posts and the reviews which can be misconstrued or misused.
2. Censorship of the Social Media Influencers' Messages (Shierkowski, 2012). Censorship which is the public opinion may be conducted by the government and private institutions. Censorships on social media platforms like Facebook,

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YouTube, Instagram and Tik Tok may create their own messages and their customer behaviour.

3. Intellectual Property, Copyright, and Trademark infringement by the Influencer Online (Eaton, 2019). Influencers need to be aware of the intellectual properties, copyrights and trademark infringement of others, for example influencers'' advertisements should not violate or obstruct other rights.
4. Online Influencer's Violating Rights of Publicity (Russ, 2020). Influencers need to consider the rights of publicity. and the right of using people's identity for commercial purposes. For examples using photographs of other companies for trading purposes without consent is illegal and not accepted.
5. Social Media Influencer Privacy Concerns (Whichtowski, 2017).

A study for Bentley and Yalcin (2021), about "social media engagement for global influencers" argues about the role of consumers and influencers in social media and their communication with the online brand. The study also argues about the role of Influencers with their followers. The study shows that there is a cultural dimension that need to be discussed and taken into consideration as light engagement is not affected by cultural distances between influencers and followers. The study shows that level of such engagement increases when influencers and their followers are culturally close, and the effect is obvious in countries where environmental concerns are considered more important.

On the other hand, findings of a study for Goanta and Ranchordás (2020), about influencers on social media, identified severe legal limitations. Such limitations are beneficial in social media and need to be studies such as:

1. Influencers on social media need to provide a historical overview of the significance of influencers' marketing and engaging with the public.
2. Influencers need to analyse the concept of social media influence in term of freedom of expression and the right of publicity.
3. Influencers need to clarify how to contribute to the development of creative work.
4. Influencers need also to analyse the unfair business and to be aware of the new form activities.
5. Influencers need to understand the online platforms and how to cope with the legal frameworks.

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In addition to the previous points, influencers need to respect the rights of individuals as they should not release people's names or images without any permission or consent. It is important to be aware that there are rules for sharing and risk for the potential breaching of privacy.

2.1.4.6 Online identity (real identity)

Social media has an impact on users' identity. This impact could be positive or negative. To understand the individual behaviour, psychological impact and social impact, scholars highlighted the importance and effectiveness of the relationship between social media and identity.

The word Identity can also mean "subjectivity" (how we think of ourselves) or "representations" (how we represent ourselves" (Marwick, 2013). Identity also means, "the characteristics which distinguish people from others. Or the "unique identifying characteristics which are held by people" (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

According to Ugur (2017, p. 91), social media platforms can affect people's psychological lives and identity. Ugur summarised the relationship between social media and identity in the following quote:

"On one hand social media allows people to express themselves, on the other hand it takes their believability and reliability away, trivialises them by objectifying. "Mainstream media" can be formed within the frame of social media in one sense. Although this situation appears as if it has emerged by itself, the attractiveness of the like button, a profile of friend/follower list that forces participation leads people to become such that he/she has to plan all actions to be performed with a feeling of being kept under close watch continually".

Identity can provide platforms for people to express their feelings and to express their personality. Identity allows people to understand your character more, to shape people's perception, Identity always associates with virtual identity and real-life identity. Moreover, identity allows employers to use platforms to validate the identity of individuals and to post materials online which may exist forever (Wikipedia, 2022).

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A Study by Ezzat (2020) about the relationship between influencers and social media and the online identity in the Middle East focuses on the influencers and the construction of the online identity of the followers in the Arab developing countries. The study mentions that influencers of social media play an indirect role in their followers' online identity construction. In other words, there is no relationships between followers and influencers of social media.

However, another study for Pan (2017) " Who do you think you are?" classifies self- identity in social media into two levels: relational identity and social identity. Although these two levels vary on their effects on social media use, they have the same effect on the behaviour. The study reveals that users with high social self-online identity are more oriented towards variety seeking, while users with stronger relational identities are more oriented towards reinforcement. The study recommends more research about social media supporters who can focus on the social identity to encourage varies use, and more research to focus on the relational identity in case of enhancing and reinforcement.

Online identity can function in three ways. These three functions are classified as: "Media, Naming and Doing". As for Media, online identity can function when people have the identity of the internet itself. This appears clearly in the word "social" itself. As for Naming, Identity can function when identity works as human beings' identities. In other words, identities for those who use the internet. This appears clearly when people identify themselves through categories like gender, sexuality and age. The last function is "Doing" identity which appears when people work on their careers and doing what is called work off the internet (Marwick, 2013).

2.1.4.7 Fandom base

No doubt, that fandom base today has become one of the most famous cultural competitions in our daily lives. These competitions appear clearly in terms of social, politics and economic aspects. Fandom bases are important in social media as influencers can feel their community, they can improve their confidence, they can celebrate a lot and hang out with like-minded people.

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According to Dictionaries, the word “Fandom” was used in sports and theatre before being adopted by science fiction literature enthusiasts.

A fan base is a group of fans for a particular sport or team. Fan base could be also defined as “enthusiastic devotee” (as of a sport or a performing art) usually as a spectator (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

According to Smutradontri (2020), the research of fans in social media is not only related to a specific field of fandom, but it is also related to a wider field such as the research and knowledge of social media audiences and influencers.Fans appear to play an important role in the life of social media as they created meaningful connections among people by giving a new meaning to the social world. Not only by sharing knowledge, creating, and organizing themselves in vary platforms in social media, but also by building their true engagement, building a real community, empowering with the audience by bringing different skills to the world. In addition, fans play a crucial role in society towards other individuals when they focus on their cultural interests.

A recent study for Jia and Ma (2021) about "Transformation of fan culture under the influence of social media" discusses the role of fans in society and how fans’ culture influence is becoming stronger as well. The study raises two questions. The first question is how life of technology influence fandom, and the second question is how fans’ culture influences on the economy and society as well. The study appears to add more insights to the reader regarding fans’ culture, social media and how fans’ life work. The study results show that fans’ culture plays a significant role in the development of social media. It is considered as a participatory culture that is promoted and enhanced by technology. In addition, fans’ culture increases from time to time which allows the role of fans to change the economy of society as well. Findings of the study also include that social media promotes the role change of fans and the role of culture is crucial and should not be ignored in social economy. The study recommends that fans’ culture could be used in the entertainment of social media firms which in turn can help in obtaining more acquaintances with more customers. This also allows the department to govern the fandoms.

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A research for Parikh (2012) shows that fan communities use social media to take part in sports, film, television programs. Political fan communities use social media in the

same capacity as well. The research also shows that social media fans allow greater transparency in the relationship between voters and politicians. This relationship may also allow fan-celebrity between voters and politicians to de-legitimize the democratic process and such relationship may also allow youth to become more engaged in politics. Further studies about social media objectivity and its relationship with politics are in need to be explored.

2.1.4.8 Popularity of social media platforms

In recent years, the prediction of the Popularity of social media platforms is a challenging work especially with the tremendous spread of social media types of platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. Moreover, measuring the scale of popularity is not an easy task as well. Researchers highlighted the importance of viewing the content and the information in focusing and predicting the importance and popularity of social media platforms. However, there are many factors that affect the popularity, such as the content, the relevance of the viewers, real life events, images and tags.

According to Lin (2021) there are two main factors which play an important role in predicting the popularity of social media platforms. These factors are essential and need to be taken into consideration:

1. Semantic Feature Extraction such as images, videos, textual feature, the user related information and his ID, the social media posts that are categorised in using different systems and the tag feature as well.
2. Numeric Feature Extractions which appear clearly in terms of social media posts, timestamps, longitude and latitude. Lin included in his research that the previous two main factors which are the semantic feature extractions and the numeric features one is basic to compute the popularity score in social media.
3. Research for Sabate (2014), about the popularity of branded content suggests that richness of the content in terms of images and videos, proper publication time and use of links are effective tools to influence social media popularity. In addition, the published images during business hours are also an effective tool which need to be

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taken into consideration as it affects positively the p [popularity of social media platforms as well.

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A similar research for Ding (2019), provides a useful insight in regard to the importance of visual text, user, and temporal-spatial in predicting popularity in social media. The research includes that deep image features, text features and user information are crucial factors in social media popularity platforms.

Another research for Figueiredo (2014), about whether content determines information popularity. The research emphasises that content is important in driving the information popularity in social media. Content does impact popularity in social media as well. The researcher in the research recommends more efforts to future research in the field of content and popularity.

There is no doubt that social media platforms are becoming stronger in our daily life. It appears clearly that these platforms helped businesses to move forwards in life in terms of the following steps:

1. Landing the brands to the targeted audiences.
2. Optimizing the scope of diverse traffic and facilitating visits from various people.
3. Ability to expand popularity with ease.
4. Creating a content leaves an imprint on the viewer's brain.
5. Collaborating effectively with the appropriate accounts.
6. Analysing different posts and content creators to investigate insights.
7. Analysing feeds from the audience to ensure what is missing.

Despite all the mentioned steps regarding the platforms' popularity, the future of such platforms will be debatable topic. There will be huge opportunities and benefits for users to get from the use of social media platforms.

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2.1.4.9 Effects of social media influencers on different domains

In the recent years, the huge spread of social media influencers changed a lot in people's lifestyle, principles, and decisions as well. Such impact not only allows people to interact, communicate and entertain their social life, but it also allows people to increase their business in terms of politics and economics. Such impact also affects influencer on different domain for example:

- Lifestyle:

The term "lifestyle" means "the typical way of life of an individual. Group or culture" (Merriam-Webster, 2022). This term is related to the term reflect, promote and have a desirable lifestyle. An example of lifestyle habits could be sleeping patterns, eating tendencies, level of physical activity, stress management and hydration habit.

The evolution of social media influencers today encouraged researchers to highlight the importance of the influencers'' impacts on lifestyle. This evolution changes a lot in the influencers'' lifestyle. However, and despite all the advantages that social media brought to influencers such as reputation and communication. There are many disadvantages that people need to consider. These disadvantages can be summarised in getting the nasty comments, Influencers income depends on their popularity as they may end up jobless from one day to another.

A research for Marcin (2017) about the effects of social media influencers on lifestyle shows that influencers can live a different lifestyle as they have their own dream that makes them popular. Influencers have a strong relationship with their audience. Influencers can create their own content, which enables them to promote their brands and achieve their needs. Marcin concluded in his research that influencing a certain lifestyle has become a new century profession.

According to Chukwuere. (2017) social media can affect influencers' lifestyle in terms of education, as students in general are addicted to social media. This impact appears clearly in how students interact, communicate, think and socialise. This can also lead to a change in the students' academic and off academic life as well. Tang (2020) in his research also argues about the impact of social media influencers and culture. The research concludes that influencers are those people who come with different values and different

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practices. Therefore, influencers'' lifestyle may include their human behaviour, beliefs, fashion and lifestyle. As a result, and due to the cultural invasion, Influencers may lose their identity and replace it with a cross-cultural phenomenon.

- Principles

The term principles in Merriam-Webster (2022). Refers to a "comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine, or assumption". In the Oxford dictionary, (2022) principle refers to "a moral rule or a strong belief that influences your actions".

Social media plays an important role in affecting influencers' principles. Social media can grow brand awareness and can increase conversion rate. When talking about the effects of social media influencers principles, there will be a need to talk about the personal brand and online brand as well. These two factors are essential in the influencers'' principles and need to be taken into consideration. These two factors (personal and online brands) can strengthen the relationships between influencers and audience.

In addition, social media can affect influencers' principles in the following areas: trust, brand and expertise. Online influencers need to build a strong trust with the audience and a strong relationship in order to promote their work. Influencers also need to build a good brand when dealing with social media as one of the essential principles. Not only that, but influencers are in need to acquire influence and expertise through the power of social media in order to attract clients and share their market (Kim, 2012; Ioanid, 2015; Cialdini, 2004).

According to Cialdini, (2004), social media does affect influencers'' principles in the following areas:

1. Reciprocity: Reciprocity appears clearly in the quality of content offered. This allows followers to get useful information.
2. Consistency: Consistency allows customers to be satisfied with the quality of the marketing.
3. Social proof: Social proof is proved by the number of fans /followers in social media platforms.

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4. Authority: High authority and expertise allow more to follow in social media platforms.
5. Liking: liking allows uploading video contents and having an attractive design.
6. Scarcity: Scarcity recognizes customers who offer posts on Facebook for limited time for example.

Caildini concludes that the previous mentioned principles are crucial. However, Cialdini finds that the three main targets for influencer principles rely on motivation, social relationships consistency which all leads to better interaction with social media influence.

- Decisions

Before talking about the effects of social media on influencers decisions, there will be a need to define the term “decision”. The term decision an according to Merriam-Webster means, “to make a final choice or judgement about”. Taking a decision means “to make an important and official decision”.

Influencers' decisions mostly rely on social media. Influencers can do a better job when there are recommendations from people they trust and from people who inspire their audience. However, social media can also influence the psychological principles and encourage the audience actions in the following steps:

1. Building brand awareness, as social media influencers have a good knowledge of platforms and in creating the content (Alhaddad, 2015).
2. Strengthen the customers’’ relationship and build good affiliations with customers (Serman, 2020).
3. Improve buying decisions with unbiased opinions which lead to making views and attaining solutions (Cojocea, 2019).

In addition, in recent years, the role of the effects of social media on influencers has been expanded. Social media impacts on influencers appear clearly in different domains. One of these domains is the decisions of the influencers. There are many factors that influence the influences’’ decisions and outcomes. One of these factors are the cognitive and the affective factors. This factor is related to the individual difference factor which also shows that the affective component is related to the decision domain. However,

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decision domains can differ in many ways. One of the ways is whether the decision is frequent or rare, important and emotionally meaningful or not. Another way is whether the decision is a meaningful decision or less meaningful. Another way is connected to those who offered high ratings for the decisions which are related to living environments and schools (Delbaere, 2021; Zack, 2022).

A research for Cojocea (2019), shows that social media can influence an individual's decision-making. For example, social media does affect the social image of mobile games negatively and positively. Social media may allow influencers to decide, adopt or use the recent technologies as well. However, another research for Raita (2021), shows that macro social media affects influencers not only on their decisions, but social media also affect consumers behaviour in terms of content and forming communities to get the better consumption or behave in certain manner individually or collectively.

According to Serman (2020) social media does affect influencers' decisions and habits. Social attractiveness has a mediating effect between attitude and intention. Therefore, Trust, credibility, prior experience, perceived usefulness, sponsorship, social attractiveness, and subjective norms are factors that affect consumers to adopt recommendations in social media. However, and despite the previous factors that affect the influencers decisions, the researchers recommend more studies about social attractiveness and adoption of decisions in social technology.

2.1.4.10 Related studies on social media influencers and public opinion

Social media is considered as a tool that enhances the way people think through various platforms. An example of social media platforms is Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. Such platforms allow influencers to share, communicate and add news as well. Moreover, social media is considered a tool for global communications. This tool supports and encourages influencers to build high awareness and good relationships with audiences.

Many scholars discussed the use of social media and its relation to public opinion. Scholars agreed that public opinion plays an important role in social media. However,

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social media may affect people's opinion. Public opinions always have positive or negative effects towards the use of.

Despite all the studies in literature about social media, there is still very little research about the role of public opinion and influencers in social media. However, the researcher conducted a comprehensive review of international studies. The sample and findings of these studies, summarised in the table (1) titled 'International Studies Regarding the Role of Public Opinion and Influencers in Social Media,' provide valuable insights into the interactions between influencers and public sentiment across various platforms along with how these studies are related to the topic of the research.

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Table (1): International studies regarding the role of public opinion and influencers in social media

No.	Topic of the research	Author and year of the research	Sample	Main findings	Related to the topic
1	Why We Share: A Uses and Gratification Approach to Privacy Regulation on Social Media Use	Kelly Quinn, 2016	361 users, a survey research by using a canonical correlation	Certain privacy concerns are associated with explicit privacy activities	The research enhances people understanding of privacy regulation and sociality life
2	Personality, attitudes, social influence and social networking site usage predicting online social support	Vikanda Pornsakulvamich, 2017	Data were collected by cross sectional survey, 460 students' participants aged from 18-25 years	Personality traits, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment, attitudes towards social media contribute to social online satisfaction	The research was conducted to examine the traits of the relation with social media. It is funded by the faculty of journalists and social media communication at Thammasat university, Thailand
3	The rise of social media and its impact	Ashutosh Dandekar, 2018	Case research with reunion Katheryn Depril and Kate Mc Clure in India	Social media has changed life drastically. We cannot avoid social media if we want to proceed ahead. Social media need to be handled by sensible and sincere people	The author works on developing a butter spreader using generic product development process View project. Old Jeep (Rugged Automobile) Restoration and Alteration To develop a Mobile Instrumentation Engineering Laboratory View project Jeebs

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4	A research on positive and negative effect of social media on society	Akram Kumar 2017	Literature review and research method	Social media have positive and negative effects on society	The focus of the research is on the health field, business, education society and youth.
5	Social Media usage: 2005-2015	Andrew Perrin	Twenty-seven nationals surveys of American across the past decades	About 65% of adults now sue social networks sites	The research is conducted in collaboration of effective and analysis of individuals
6	Running head/developing and divining social media-	Carr & Hayes, 2015	Theoretical studies	The research explores the emergent developing uses of future theories	The research was conducted in 2014 at a meeting of the national communities' associations in Chicago
7	New Methods of Online Advertising: Social Media influencers	Dominik Zeljko, 2018	A questionnaire containing thirty-three questions. The survey questionnaire included questions on demographic information	The research and confirmed needs for the use of the said system, an example of an electronic business model was made.	The survey was conducted in Croatia during 2018.
8	Understanding the relationships between social media influencers and their followers: the moderating role of closeness	Brian Taillon, 2020	Qualitative content analysis and modelling with path analysis were used to analyse the data.	Results found attractiveness and likeability to positively predict attitudes toward the influencer	The role of closeness is identified as a moderator of consumers' behaviours toward social media influencers.

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9	Social media in public opinion research: Executive summary of the AAPOR task force on emerging technologies in public opinion research	Joe Murphy, 2014	survey life cycle, a questionnaire design, social media has been used for targeted recruitment of respondents for cognitive interviews and focus groups	The impact of differential access and use must be better understood and overcome if social media is to become a robust source of public opinion data in the years ahead.	The Author Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the American Association for Public Opinion Research.
10	Understanding the relationships between social media influencers and their followers: the moderating role of closeness	Brian Taillon, 2020	Qualitative content analysis and modelling with path analysis were used to analyse the data.	Results found attractiveness and likeability to positively predict attitudes toward the influencer	The role of closeness is identified as a moderator of consumers' behaviours toward social media influencers.
11	Journalists' use of social media to infer public opinion: The citizens' perspective.	Elizabeth Dubios, 2018	The research is an exploratory research based on a census-weighted online survey of Canadian adults (N = 1,500),	The research suggests some citizens want to be heard publicly on social media while others do no	This research is supported in part through a 5-year initiative on "Social Media Data Stewardship" funded by the Canada Research
12	When less is more: the impact of macro and micro social media influencers' disclosure	Samantha Kay,2020	Two experimental studies	consumers have higher levels of purchase intentions than when exposed to macro-influencers who do not disclose, as well as higher purchase intentions	Samantha Kay is a PhD student within the University of the Sunshine Coast Business School. Her PhD research focuses on native advertising on social media.

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				than for posts where sponsorship is not disclosed by influencers.	

Based on the related studies, social media has proved to be an effective tool in life. Globalisation has impacted all aspects including education and usage of the platforms. Today, the vast majority of the world population has been relying on such digital tools in different aspects in their life including teaching and learning. This appears clearly in the usage of communication and social media. Therefore, Influencers and people in charge need to consider such impact of social media and to take into consideration the negative issues that appear out of it.

2.1.5 Palestine

To set the context of this research, it is important to discuss the nature of the geographic and socio- cultural life in Palestine. In other words, this chapter will be introducing the location, official language, history, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and the use of technology and social media in Palestine.

2.1.5.1 Location and official language of Palestine

Historic Palestine lies on the Western edge of Asia and the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. It is bound to the north by Lebanon and Syria, to the west by the Mediterranean Sea, to the south by the gulf of Aqaba and the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula and to the East by Jordan (PASSIA, 2019). The full area of historic Palestine is 26, 323 square kilometers. As for the areas of contemporary Palestine, it is 6,020 square kilometers: 5, 655 square kilometers of which composes the West Bank with a total of and 365 square kilometers of which composes the Gaza Strip. Both areas are inhabited by approximately 5.5 million (Worldometer, 2023). The largest governorate of the West bank area is the Hebron governorate with an area of 997 square kilometers and population of

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around 822,435. The smallest governorate in the area is Qalqilya governorate in the north with around 127,025 inhabitants (PCBS, 2023).

Palestine is a Middle Eastern country that is divided politically into two areas: West Bank and Gaza Strip. Palestine has been occupied by Israel since 1948. It is part of what is known to Jews, Christians, and Muslims as the Holy Land. Most of the Palestinians live in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. However, many Palestinians immigrated to other countries such as Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia and other western countries (Caplan, 2019; Champagne & Abu-Saad 2006).

The official Language in Palestine is Arabic. East Jerusalem is the intended capital and Ramallah is the administrative capital (Amara, 2018; World Report, 2014). However, the main language spoken in Palestine (the West Bank and Gaza) is Palestinian Arabic which is a dialect of Standard Modern Arabic (Classical Arabic) (Siadam, 2012). There is not a huge difference between the dialects of Gaza and the West Bank. Palestinian Arabic is included in a subgroup of dialects of Levantine Arabic. Arabs who live in the Levant countries, or originate from them, (the eastern Mediterranean), countries such as Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, and Israel speak Levantine Arabic, which is also known as *shaami* Arabic (Palestinian MoEHE, 2012). Speaking other languages will depend on your locale in Palestine. In some cities, such as Ramallah, Jerusalem, or Bethlehem, people speak English, while in other cities people may speak only the basics of English that they have learned during school attendance (Palestinian MoEHE, 2012).

2.1.5.2 Palestine and Israel conflict

Palestine has a very rich history, dating back to the times before Christ. Its location and importance to many religions has turned it into a target for conflict over the centuries. The most recent conflict is the Palestinian–Israeli one, which has been affecting the Middle East for more than 75 years (Pappe, 2022; Broning, 2011; Di Mauro, 2012). Since 1967, Israeli occupation has led to reduced access to education and other essential services for Palestinians. Israeli occupation for the Palestinian territories is managed by a system of closure, curfews, aggression, and harassment.

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The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is perceived by some scholars to be a religious conflict, while others perceive it as an ethnic conflict between Arabs and Jews. Milton-Edwards and Hichcliffe (2008) believe that the roots of the conflict lie in ethno-political factors rather than purely religious differences (Milton-Edwards & Hichcliffe, 2008). Authors such as Juergensmeyer (1994) and Ranstorp (1996), take a different perspective, as the roots of conflict are purely religious. Regardless of the precise roots of the conflict, for the "better part of the century the conflict of two peoples over one land has defined the politics of the region and has had a major impact on many aspects of international politics, including political economy, and international and state terrorism" (Milton-Edwards & Hichcliffe, 2008, p.22).

According to the latest situational reports about the life of Palestinians, people in Palestine grow up in an unstable and unsafe environment and, as a result, they do not enjoy many of their basic rights (UNICEF, 2023). Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories face the following consequences of conflict: the threat of landmines and other unexploded ordnance, chronic malnutrition, violence at home and schools, anxiety, phobia and depression, a decline in education enrolment and loss of family members as well (OCHA, 2022). In one of the most recent studies about life satisfaction and positive emotions of a group of Palestinian school children, children were found to perceive school to be safer than home or any outdoor space (Veronese, Castiglioni, Barola & Said, 2012). Accordingly, young participants are at risk of negative adjustment to their uncertain living conditions (Veronese et al., 2012).

2.1.5.3 Use of technology in Palestine

The increased usage of technology in Palestine by influencers and fans became an important factor that encourages scholars to better understand the importance of this field. Despite the limited research carried out about technology use in Palestine, scholars work on researching factors that impair the application of technology in social media and in the usage of the platforms. Saidam (2012) states in one of his studies that:

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“numerous weaknesses still need to be overcome: the lack of substantial ICT penetration in businesses, education and government; the deficiency in intellectual property rights; the absence of leadership and coordination of private sector groups in private sector coalitions; the limited access to foreign markets for most firms; the small average size of ICT companies; the insufficient domestic credit and capital; the lack of innovation and creativity in the development of products and services; and the limited frequency spectrum allowed by the Israeli authorities”(p.1).

Technology is related intrinsically with social and cultural aspects of society (Tamimi, 2018; Selwyn, 2014). It is seen as part of culture that impacts the changing face of everyone's life and leads to better outcomes. As a result of diffusion, technology used by influencers allows changing the world and allows people to adopt changes in the society to make influencers and fans more equipped with good skills and knowledge. Influencers need such technology to survive and to prepare themselves for their future (Bani Hani, 2014).

2.1.5.4 Use of social media in Palestine

It is undeniable that the use of social media is growing in Palestine. This appears clearly in the way people use the different platforms to communicate, share information and create content. Like other countries, Palestine has access to the internet which enables it to use blogs, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok as well as other social media platforms.

A study for AlKhateeb (2021) about "Social Media Adoption and its Impact on SMEs Performance: A Case Study of Palestine" argues that social media in Palestine and mainly in the Middle East is influenced by seven factors. These factors are crucial and related to the adoption of technology. These factors are: technological context, organizational context, environmental context, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude toward technology, and ability to control technology. These factors allow influencers and users to adopt and adapt with usage of social media platforms which in turn can facilitate the benefits and the outcomes.

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Another study for AbuZayad (2015) about social media and freedom of expression in Palestine states that social media appears to be an important field where people can express their views and their opinion. Social media has become a main source of news recently. Most of the social, cultural, and political news are reported in Palestine by the Palestinian journalists.

Khamis (2016) in one of his studies about social media and Palestinian youth culture discusses that, social media influencers and users in Palestine have created lots of changes in peoples' social life, culture, opinions, and social routine. These changes have effects on the values and expectations of the Palestinian society. An example of these changes is the use of Facebook which allows everyone to share photos and personal information, add comments and use content. Use of Facebook allows everyone to access any site from anywhere which makes it possible for the youth to share their own personal information (Radcliffe, 2019). However, in the past, all this information was only shared by close friends and close families. While recently, Palestinians live a wider and more public life through interactions with others. All these changes in the Palestinian culture have created new different ideas about social life and democratic values. Khamis summarizes these ideas by the following quote:

"In the past, this information was only shared by family members and close friends. At present, Palestinian youth are living their lives far more publicly than their parents, creating citizens who have different ideas about social and democratic values. This crucial change in personal privacy shows how a new social value can harm the right to privacy which is very important to human rights and democracy" (p. 35).

It is worth also mentioning that social media platforms in Palestine have also changed the institutional forms of government to different forms free from governmental authority and power. In addition, these platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok allow Palestinians to practice free self-expressions and freedom of communication. YouTube remains as a powerful media tool in the Middle East as the number of channels has increased to more than 160% in the past three years. These channels attract billions of viewers to communicate and to express their opinions. The effective use of Instagram is also worth mentioning. It is one of the means of self-expression, freedom of communication and socializing (Radcliffe, 2019).

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Scholars found that use of social media platforms among Palestinian individuals help to reduce feelings of loneliness and to increase friendships. Socializing through social media is vital for health. People with limited social connections have poor mental health while people with unlimited social connections feel more relaxed and stable (Alexander, 2017). It is important to mention that over the last three years COVID-19 has played an important role in increasing the usage of technology and social media to ensure connection among Palestinians especially those people who suffer from social distancing.

However, Radcliffe points that despite all the previous mentioned benefits of the usage of such platforms, there are many disadvantages that need to be discussed. These disadvantages include that social media negatively affect peoples' productivity and impact their psychological health. In addition, social media use increases anxiety and depression as people spend lots of time on activities and interactions (Primack, 2017). All these disadvantages need more focus and more studies. The researcher finds that more research is needed to study the bounded culture and its relations to social media in Palestine as well.

2.1.5.5 Public opinion in Palestine

There is a close relation between social media and public opinion in Palestine. Social media is one of the effective tools for shaping public opinions. Television, press and internet platforms can spread the news and allow people to express their views and opinions about real situations. Social media can allow leaders of the agencies and institutions to talk freely, to pass information to the community to serve the political and economic ends (Zureik, 2023).

Research discusses that the relation between social media and public opinion started with media actors and created affair balanced coverage in times of refugees and migrants in the Middle East and Palestine. For example, social media allowed building support around people and influencing public opinion to meet their needs. In addition, social media worked on convincing legislators that their actions are being watched through newspapers, radios, and televisions as well. Not only that but social media has worked on developing personal contacts with media officials and reinforced cooperation with them as well (Hadeshian, 2006).

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Hadeshian (2006) summarizes the role of social media on public opinion in the following quote:

"Changing the mentality of the people to be more permissive, understanding and educative is of course a very difficult task for human rights workers and civil society members, however it is for these groups to bring to the surface societal evils that hinder the development and the growth of our society in a peaceful environment, making modifications and changes within our systems" (p.5).

In addition, media and public opinion are two unified lines in ruling the power of the Palestinians in a fair way and in providing an opportunity to create a global history with universal human rights and democracy.

Moreover, the use of social media platforms has presented a huge knowledge in the area and especially in changing the local and global public opinion in Palestinian issues. The Palestinian issues are one of the main issues where the media contributed to spreading the importance of Arab and Islam (Almasri, 2021; Abdalla, 2021).

2.1.5.6 Influencers in Palestine

Influencers of social media in Palestine like other influencers in other countries connect people together through different platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Tiktok. Scholars defined influencers of social media as dynamic people with a huge impact on their surroundings due to intellectual capacity (Alkhateeb, 2021). Those influencers refer to independent party who can affect people's behavior, views, opinions (Vidani, 2021). Moreover, these influencers can also affect and attract followers on social media platforms by sharing stories about their own lives, experiences, comments, photos and viewed as individuals or experts in one of the fields. They can influence their followers by creating content, sharing photos and videos as well (Alkhateeb, 2021; Vidani, 2021; Chae, 2018).

Influencers of social media in Palestine can be classified into: Mega-Influencer or Celebrities who can influence many people like actors, artists, celebrities, and athletes, Macro-Influencer or Opinion-Leader and known as innovators like executives, bloggers, and Journalists and Micro-Influencer who have a segment of consumers and can maintain

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themselves finely through constant communicating with other influencers and followers (Vidani, 2021). All these influencers have special attributes with specific characteristics and are called ACTIVE people as they have an activist mindset: A head in adoption Connected (socially and electronically) Travelers Information Hungry Vocal Exposed to media (Keller & Berry, 2003). Those active influencers are called so as they connect people together and they travel everywhere to get the information needed. They expose their voices to the media to influence their fans.

Influencers in Palestine have built relationships, trust, and credibility with their followers. Their followers respect their content and recommendation when sharing an influencer's content. Their followers can gain their attention and share their posts by putting their messages in front of an actively engaged audience. However, these influencers can change the perceptions of the followers and give a great deal of power in shaping public opinion. This ability of change would be successful if these influencers follow the rules, obligations, ethical issues, and rights of social media. These ethical issues are summarized in technology privacy, harassments, safety, ethical accounting, and discrimination (Robinson, 2020).

Robinson (2020) argues about two different ethical issues in social media. These issues are the virtual and the real identities of influencers on using different platforms. Even though virtual influencers and real influencers do the same job on social media like uploading content and sharing ideas, some platforms need to control accounts of their users to separate facts from fiction and to make sure that the important ethical issues are treated and maintained in trust. Robinson adds that moral responsibility and transparency in influencers' life in social media need to be taken into consideration. Real life influencers are most likely clear and responsible about their post and sharing more than those virtual influencers. Moral responsibility of virtual influencers needs to be understood and needs more concern.

Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories face the following consequences of conflict: the threat of landmines and other unexploded ordnance, chronic malnutrition, violence at home and schools, anxiety, phobia and depression, a decline in education enrolment and loss of family members as well (UNICEF, 2022). However, social media influencers have utilized their voices on social media to speak up against consequences of the conflict. Harry Potter star Emma Watson is an example of those

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influencers who spoke up and influence people's public opinions against such conflict. Watson not alone in her solidarity to speak up to Palestine but more and more others who reached a huge peak with a day- to- day airstrike in Gaza and forced their illegal evictions of Palestinians in Jerusalem Sheikh Jaraah neighborhoods. Bella and Gigi Hadid have been also active to support and to talk to social media about the Palestine-Israel issue by attending protests and influencing public opinions (Kingsley, 2021).

A study for Abbas (2015) about the cultural concerns in Palestine in using Facebook shows that influencers have utilized their voices to set values, attitudes, and social behavior of people. Influencers have utilized their voices in Palestine through different platforms to explore the role of these cultural values in perception of privacy, trust, and motivation in using Facebook and other social media platforms. Abbas adds that the influencers' role in the Palestinian culture in shaping people's attitudes and motivation of social media need to be discussed in further research as there is a close relation between cultural values and motivation of those users of social media.

Another study for Khamis (2016) about social media and Palestinian culture states that social media influencers have an effective role to play in Palestine. Despite the challenges of the Palestinian conditions as a stateless nation, lack of communication among people, nature of culture and social disintegration with all limitations of social media, influencers through different platforms managed to create a fair solution to let Palestinian live and adapt with the situation. Moreover, Social media influencers played an important role on social mobilization and deliberation of the Palestinians to ensure a better environment for living and for promotion of cultural life in Palestine.

Another study also for AbuZayad (2015) with a focus on "Freedom of Expression and Social Media in Palestine" states that the role of social media influencers in Palestine is a vital role. Such influencers have a lot to report in the recent years as social media becomes number one source of news. Palestinian influencers can report most of the events which take place socially and politically in Palestine. All the news is reported to Palestinian people by citizen journalists. However, AbuZayad describes the situation in Palestine as a problematic situation because many of these reporters who report the news are ordinary people who have no degrees in journalism or experience or may be political activists who use social media as a way of platforms to express their opinions.

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2.1.6 Conclusion

In light of the previous literature, social media has become a global phenomenon and has become an effective element in our daily life. Various evidence and various platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok have proved such effectiveness.

However, and despite the huge expansion of the usage of social media, influencers need to be sincere and sensible when dealing with social media. Influencers are those people who have the power to make decisions. They can affect their followers because of their authority, knowledge and their relationship with their audience as well.

In light of this chapter, there is a need also to conclude that public opinion in social media plays an important role as well. Public opinion allows individuals to know how people think. It can also regulate individuals as well.

This section discussed social media development and definition, social media platforms and their rules, ethics on social media in regard to bullying and hate speech. Public opinion in the Middle East and social media influencers are also discussed. Related studies were also added. Next section will be talking about the theoretical framework.

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CHAPTER THREE: OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

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3.1. Objectives of the research

3.1.1. Introduction

This research aims to investigate the effect of social media influencers on the public opinion in the Middle East. It will be focusing on the extent of influencers' effect on public opinion in the Middle East. It explores the tools required to affect the mass, particularly influencers' followers, and examines the way followers cope with influencers' messages and interact through social media.

The research aims to monitor and identify the regulations of social media platforms, such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok, and their effect on the influencers and their content from one hand, and from the other hand, how influencers try to cope with it. In addition, the research will discuss the difference between an influencer expressing his\ her opinion and an influencer affecting others' opinions from influencers' point of view.

The research delves into the significant role of Palestinian social media influencers within the context of the Middle East, aiming to uncover the nuances of their interactions with followers and the broader implications for public opinion. Each objective is tailored to explore the unique influence these influencers exert within the socio-political landscape of the region.

1. Main objective

To Determine the Activity of Palestinian Social Media Influencers and Their Effects on Public Opinion:

The main objective of this research is to delve into the activity of Palestinian social media influencers and elucidate their profound effects on public opinion. This overarching goal is multifaceted, aiming to uncover the intricate mechanisms through which Palestinian influencers actively shape discussions, perceptions, and ultimately, opinions within their audience base. Given the nuanced socio-political landscape of the Middle East, particularly within the context of Palestine, this objective seeks to comprehend the strategies employed by influencers to navigate and potentially wield influence over public discourse. By scrutinising their online presence, engagement tactics, and content dissemination strategies, this research endeavours to shed light on the pivotal role played

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by Palestinian influencers in shaping the socio-political narrative and collective consciousness of their audience. Through a comprehensive examination of their activities, this research aims to offer valuable insights into the dynamics of social media influence and its implications for public opinion formation in the Palestinian context.

2. Secondary objectives

1. To Determine the Extent of Palestinian Influencers' Effect on Public Opinion: This objective aims to assess the impact that Palestinian influencers have on public opinion, including their ability to mobilise, educate, and engage with their audience on matters of social, political, and cultural significance. through their followers' interaction with their content by analysing influencers' insights.
2. To Identify the Tools Required to Affect the Mass, Particularly Influencers' Followers: This aim investigates the specific methods and tools that Palestinian influencers utilise to connect with and influence their followers. It examines the content strategies, engagement tactics, and communication techniques that are most effective in this unique context.
3. To Identify the Way Followers Cope with Palestinian Influencers' Messages and Interact Through Social Media: Understanding the followers' perspective is crucial. This objective explores how Palestinian social media users receive, interpret, and engage with influencers' messages, including any patterns of behaviour or attitude changes in response to such interactions.
4. To Determine Social Media Platforms' Regulations and Challenges Toward Expressing Opinions: This aim delves into the regulatory environment of social media platforms and its impact on Palestinian influencers. It examines how platform policies and algorithms might affect the distribution and visibility of Palestinian voices and the challenges influencers face in expressing opinions within these digital spaces.
5. To Determine the Difference Between a Palestinian Influencer Expressing His/Her Opinion and an Influencer Affecting Others' Opinions: Distinguishing between personal expression and the intentional shaping of public opinion is essential. This objective focuses on analysing the intent behind influencers' messages, how they frame their content, and the authenticity and credibility perceived by their audience. It also considers the ethical dimensions of influence, particularly in the context of Palestinian social and political issues.

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By addressing these objectives, the research aims to provide an in-depth analysis of Palestinian social media influencers' role in shaping public opinion. It seeks to contribute valuable insights into the dynamics of digital influence, public discourse, and the specific challenges and opportunities faced by Palestinian influencers in the digital age, set against the backdrop of the Middle East's complex socio-political landscape.

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3.2. Hypotheses of the research

3.2.1. Introduction

Applying technology in social media requires the acceptance of the user. Without the acceptance of the user such acceptance will not be successful. In other words, user's acceptance determines the success of adoption, change and influence. Acceptance of technology in social media and resistance of the platforms should be applied before any professional development (Drouin, 2020; Tamimi, 2018; Ajibade, 2018). Understanding the factors that inhibit the use of social media in our daily life need to be applied before any professional development (Orben, 2020). Therefore, technology acceptance supports the development of social media platforms (Salloum, 2019; Granic, 2019; Anderson, 2018; Ajibade, 2018; Tamimi, 2018).

The use of social media in our daily life can be classified into two aspects. These two aspects play an important role as they determine the target of the users in regard to adoption of social media. These two aspects are: utilisation use and recreational use (Zhao, 2021; Chesney, 2008). As for utilisation use, individuals aim is to achieve outputs such as email systems. While in recreational use, individuals aim to achieve positive feelings from the system such as online games and online movies. Chesney (2008) pointed that these two aspects are not mutually exclusive as system may be used for fun and useful at the same time (Wartmann, 2021; Marc Lim, 2021; Fisher, 2018)

This section will delve into the theories and models pertinent to this research, explicating the variables that influence social media usage. It draws upon the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM 3), Uses and Gratifications theory, and Goffman's theory, which are foundational to the theoretical framework of this research. Detailed discussions will explore how these theories have been developed and their applicability to understanding the dynamics of social media interaction. Additionally, this section aims to establish the objectives of the research, providing a clear linkage between theoretical underpinnings and the research questions that guide the investigation into the effect of social media influencers on public opinion in the Middle East. This alignment is crucial for grounding the research in established academic discourse while addressing contemporary issues shaped by digital media landscapes.

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3.2.2. Theories related to social media

The English word theory derives from a technical term in philosophy in Ancient Greek. As an everyday word, theoria, θεωρία, meant "looking at, viewing, beholding". Theory is known as “a plausible or scientifically acceptable general principle or body of principles offered to explain phenomena”. Theory is also known as “an ideal or hypothetical set of facts, principles, or circumstances —often used in the phrase in theory” (Merriam-Webster, 2022). Theories allow enterprise of finding facts rather than of reaching goals.

This section will delve into three primary theories: the Technology Acceptance Model 3 (TAM 3), the Uses and Gratifications theory, and Goffman's theory. These theories are intricately linked to the individual's influence on social media.

In this research, the primary theory is considered to be the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), particularly TAM3. This model is paramount as it elucidates individuals' acceptance and adoption of technology, directly pertinent to the research's investigation into social media technology adoption. Secondary theories encompass Goffman's theory, which delves into the presentation of self in everyday life, offering insights into how influencers craft their online personas to sway public opinion. Additionally, the Uses and Gratifications theory explores individuals' proactive pursuit of media to fulfill specific needs, shedding light on users' motivations for engaging with social media content influenced by influencers.

A. Main theory: Technology of acceptance model 3 (TAM 3)

Technology of acceptance model 3 (TAM 3) is proposed by (Venkatesh & Bala, 2008). It has proved to be one of the most used models in the adoption and acceptance of technology in education (Davis et al, 1989). TAM 3 has a wide background and validation in research which made many to use in their studies (Adetimirin, 2015; Howard et al., 2010; Kurkinen, 2012; Venkateh & Bala, 2008). TAM 3 included an integrated model of the determinants of perceived usefulness (PU) which is defined as “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance.” and ease of use (EOU) which is “the degree to which a person believes that using a

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particular system would be free of effort" (Davis 1989, p. 985). The model combines TAM2 with the anchoring and adjustment determinants of perceived ease of use.

Technology of acceptance model (TAM 3) has three main relationships. The first one is the moderation effect of experience to the relationship between technology anxiety and perceived ease of use (Al Kurdi, 2020). In this relationship the power of technology anxiety decreases when the experience of system uses increases. The second relationship is the moderation effect of experience to the relationship between perceived use of ease and perceived usefulness (Gamble, 2018). In these relations guide the enterprise of finding facts rather than of reaching goals, when experience grows the effect becomes stronger. The last one is the moderation effect of experience to relationship between perceived ease of use and behavioural intention and here also when the experience increases the effect becomes stronger (Maruping, 2017; Sana'a 2016; Venkatesh & Bala, 2008.

B. Secondary theories:

1. Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratification theory by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974) is created on the assumption that people select media and content to satisfy psychological, social needs and needs. In this theory, Katz et al. (1974) identified five significant needs:

1. Individual integrative needs (enhance credibility, status) (Eginli, 2018).
2. Affective needs (emotion, pleasure, feelings) (Ma, 2019; Eginli, 2018).
3. Cognitive needs (acquire information, knowledge) (Ibáñez‐Sánchez, 2022; Sun, 2020; Hossain, 2019).
4. Tension release needs (escape & diversion) (Brailovskaia, 2020); Sun, 2020).
5. Social integrative needs (interact with family & friends) (Kujur, 2020; Kamboj, 2019)).

Similarly, the Dual Factor Model of Facebook Use proposed by Hofmann and Nadkarni (2013) explained the two motivational factors that drive an individual to use Facebook as a specific type of social networking site:

1. The need to belong, which refers to the innate drive to affiliate with others and gain social acceptance (Sheldon, 2021).

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2. The need for self-presentation, which relates to the continuous process of impression management (Sheldon. 2021; Hofmann & Nadkarni,2013).

People enjoy social media features that serve to their characteristics and are gratified by using them (Ryan et al., 2014). Uses and gratifications theory suggests that there are clear factors responsible for media use and these factors can illuminate its popularity (Katz, Blumler &Gurevitch, 1973). Research has provided the classification of users based on uses and gratification theory which are: Relationship maintenance (bringing the offline social network to be online) (Plume, 2018); Entertainment (engaging in passive social activities) (Pelletier, 2021); Companionship (using Facebook to avoid loneliness and improve interpersonal needs) (Qin, 2020); Surveillance gratifications (glancing photographs and status updates) (Abid, 2020); Escape (engaging in Facebook to escape from worries and problems and altering mood) (Ryan et al., 2014).

A research for (Kircaburun, 2020) about Uses and Gratifications of Problematic social media emphasises seven different gratifications for social media uses. These seven gratifications have a relationship with social media and the problematic use of social media. These gratifications are important and need to be taken into consideration:

1. Maintaining an existing relationship.
2. Meeting new people and socialising
3. Expressing more popular self
4. Passing time
5. Entertainment
6. Task management tool
7. Informational and educational use motives

The research concludes that the previously mentioned gratifications are crucial and need further investigations in regard to social media motives of social media and development of the problematic social media use (Bowden-Green, 2021; Marino, 2016).

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2. Goffman’’s Theory

Erving Goffman's who wrote “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life” (1959) provides a detailed description of social life interaction. Goffman through a micro-sociological analysis (Aspelin, 2022; Khan, 2020; Raab, 2019) and focus on unconventional subject matter explores individual identity, group relations (Merunkova, 2019; 0’Leary, 2018), the impact of environment, and the movement and interactive meaning of information (Hargreaves, 2016). When an individual appears in the presence of others, there will usually be some reason for him to mobilise his activity so that it will convey an impression to others that it is in his interests to. Therefore, the life world assumed by Goffman’s presentation of self is closer to rationality than to “being-in-the-world” (Merunkova, 2019). In the context of a public and accessible narrative of a “brand,” micro-blogging sites that allow messages to be viewed publicly across a platform and to spread through likes and re-shares (such as Twitter’s retweets) are ideal for personal brand construction (Johansson, 2007).

Goffman explores the nature of group dynamics through a discussion of "teams" and the relationship between performance and audience. He uses the concept of the team to illustrate the work of a group of individuals who "co-operate" in performance, attempting to achieve goals sanctioned by the group (O’Leary, 2018).

A research for (Merunkova and Slerka 2019) about "Goffman’’s theory as a framework for analysis of self-presentation on online social network", identifies five basic forms allow users to present their identity. These forms are: Public dairy, the influencers, the entertainer, job, education, and hobby. These forms are basic and need to be considered as they are suitable to perform users and those who interact with them. The research concludes that the presence of conscious effort can make a desired impression and Goffman’’s theory allow face to face interaction to be relevant in the online social networks. In addition, the research discusses the reasons that motivates users to share their personal information online (Serpa, 2018).

Another research (Klemsdal, 2022) about "Defining the work situation in organisation theory: bringing Goffman back in "discusses Goffman organisational perspectives as context is not well accommodated by organisational perspectives. Klemsdal argues in his conceptual framework and in bringing Goffman’’s theory of social situation that there is

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distinction between the context of work as a series of potential frames and the work situation as an enacted framework for structuring the specific work at hand. However, organisation of social agreements is a frame that affects what the actors do at work (Walsh, 2022; Yang, 2022; Djafarova, 2019; Tuncers, 2018).

According to Amit (2020) Goffman theory emphasises the adoption of social media technology. Social media technology is essential in our daily life as users of social media spend a lot of time interacting with others through various platforms. However, more qualitative research is needed to conduct on aspects related to the effects of social media on its users. Amit's conclusion based on Goffman theory argues that people use social media as front stages in their lives and real life is considered backstage. This constant move allows real conflict and creates a real-life identity in terms of people's psychology and rationality.

3.2.3. Reflexes of theories on the thesis

The researcher aims to expound upon the theoretical foundations underpinning the research. The primary objective is to explore the intricate relationship between social media utilisation and key variables such as influencers and public opinion. Drawing from established theories like TAM3, Goffman's theory, and uses and gratifications theory, the research seeks to elucidate how these variables interrelate and influence individuals' actual engagement with social media. It is hypothesised that there exists a positive correlation between social media usage and the identified variables. Specifically, influencers and public opinion are expected to impact users' interactions with social media platforms.

Table (2), presented below, illustrates the interplay between influencers, public opinion, and social media platforms. It outlines how influencers exert their influence on public opinion, which, in turn, affects the actual usage patterns of social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. This theoretical model serves as the foundation for understanding the dynamics of social media usage and its relationship with influencers and public sentiment.

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Table (2): Interplay Between Influencers, Public Opinion, and Social Media Usage

Component	Relationship	Description
Influencers	Influence on Public Opinion	Influencers, with their unique voices and content, hold significant sway over public opinion, shaping attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours among their followers and beyond. They often leverage their platforms to advocate for certain causes, share opinions, and influence societal discourse.
Public opinion	Influence on Social Media Usage	Public opinion, influenced by the narratives and content disseminated by influencers, plays a crucial role in driving engagement on social media platforms. Users often align their online behaviour, interactions, and content consumption with prevailing public sentiments and trends.
Social Media Platforms	Platform Usage	Social media platforms serve as the digital spaces where influencers disseminate their content and users consume information, interact with others, and engage with various forms of media. Platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok offer diverse avenues for expression, communication, and content sharing, shaping users' online experiences and behaviours.

This theoretical framework provides a comprehensive lens through which to analyse the complex interactions between influencers, public opinion, and social media usage, offering valuable insights into the mechanisms driving online behaviour and discourse.

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3.3. Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of this research centres around the acceptance and adoption of social media technologies by individuals, which is influenced by influencers' attitudes towards social media usage. Previous literature suggests that users' acceptance of social media leads to technology adoption, driven by their intentions and attitudes, which are influenced by perceived ease of use. Venkatesh and Bala (2008) assert that "the users' acceptance of social media uses leads to technology adoption." Conversely, influencers' resistance to social media usage can impede technology adoption. In this model, intentions and attitudes are utilised as predictors, although they are not directly measured in this research, aligning with the research's focus on social media usage, influencers, public opinion, and their impacts.

Moreover, the model emphasises that the adoption of social media technology hinges on individuals' attitudes and their impact on public opinion. Barriers and challenges to technology adoption hinder individuals' usage of the system, while the absence of barriers facilitates ease of use. These barriers and challenges, along with associated conditions, play a crucial role in the real adoption of social media. Howard et al. (2010) argue that "the barriers and the challenges which impede the adoption of the technology form the actual usage stop the individuals from the usage of the system." Conditions such as infrastructure support and training are essential in enabling influencers to accept and adopt social media effectively. For instance, influencers with less experience and training may face challenges in usage compared to those with more experience.

Additionally, the model highlights the importance of influencers' confidence and intention in realising the benefits and ease of using technology. Influencers with positive confidence and attitudes are more likely to perceive the usefulness of technology and its ease of performance. High intention among influencers also correlates with the significance of using technology, affecting the usage and performance of technology in real-life scenarios. This aspect has been extensively studied by scholars and underscores the critical role of influencers' attitudes and intentions in technology adoption.

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The figure below, developed by the researcher, reflects a synthesis of findings from extensive literature reviews and theoretical understanding. It illustrates the intricate relationship between influencers' attitudes towards social media usage and individuals' acceptance and adoption of these technologies. Overall, the proposed model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the dynamics of influencers' impact on social media usage and adoption.

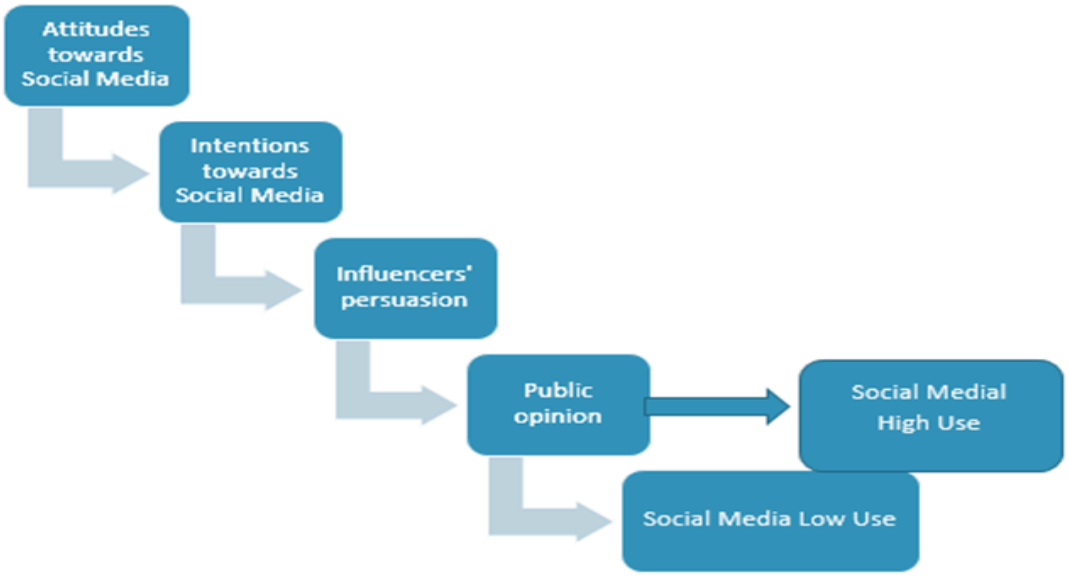


Figure 2.8: Conceptual Framework: Influencers' Impact on Social Media Technology Adoption. (Based on literature reviews and theoretical understanding, 2024).

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CHAPTER FOUR: THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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4.1. Introduction

Research methodology is a pathway to systematically solve the research problem. It is as a science of researching on how the investigation is done scientifically (Kothari, 2004). Creswell (2013) argues that research methodology is concerning the actions adopted on how to answer a set of research questions and research objectives. The selection of methodology is vital as it can direct the conduct of the research and shape the value of research outcomes (Creswell, 2013). The research methodology is a course of action by researchers in describing, explaining, and predicting phenomena.

The aim of this research is to explore the use and development of social media platforms in the Middle East. In other words, the research seeks to explore the platforms with the most number of users according to available statistics such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok, where Facebook remains the most popular social media site regarding number of users, followed by YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram and TikTok (Statista, 2024). Figure (3.1) illustrates the ranking of the most popular social networks worldwide as of 2024, showing the number of monthly active users in millions, based on information retrieved from Statista (https://www.statista.com/). This visual representation aids in comprehending the scale and dominance of these platforms globally and sets the stage for a deeper exploration of their specific impacts and roles within the Middle Eastern context.

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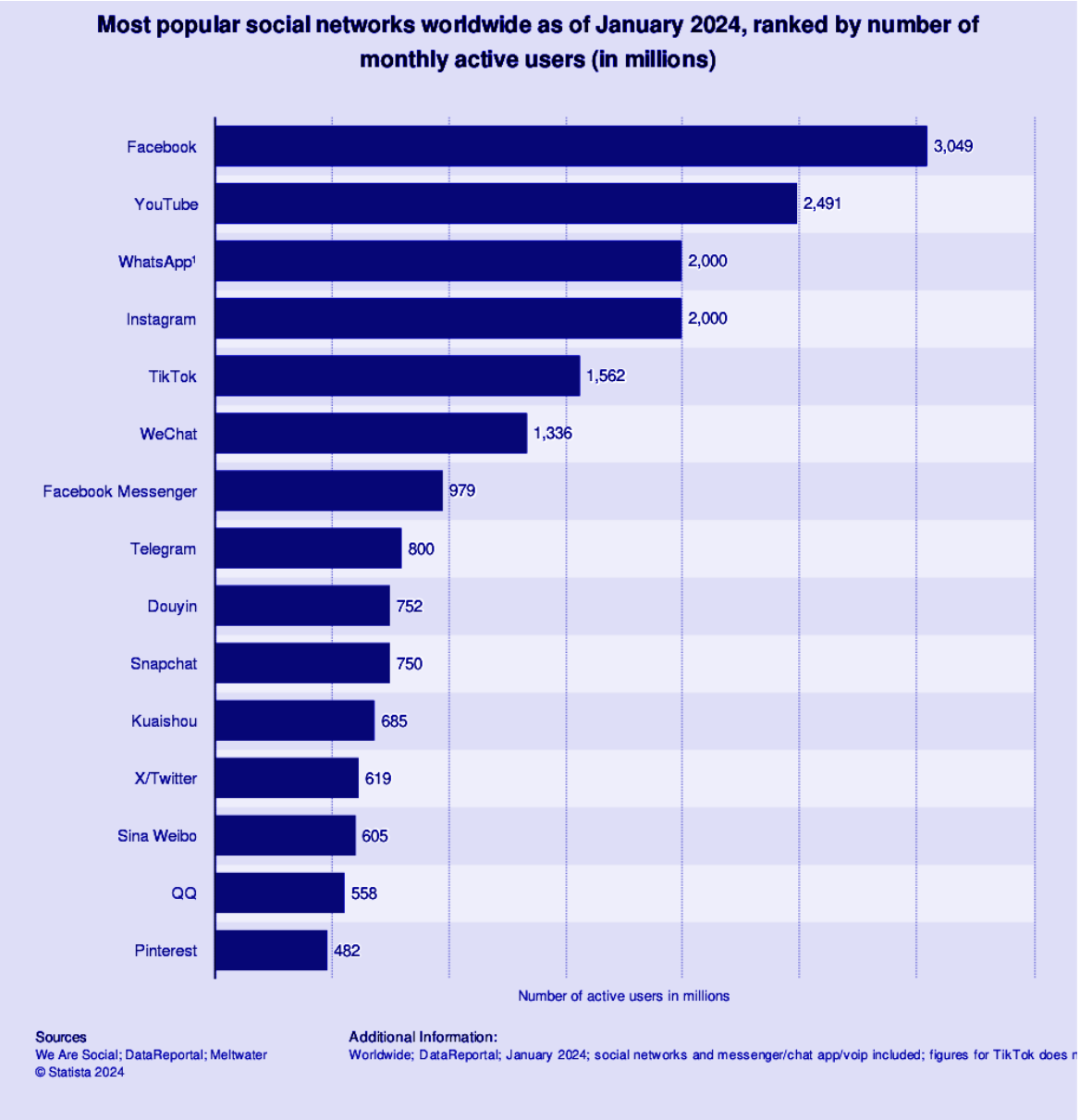


Figure (3.1): Most popular social networks worldwide as of January 2024, ranked by number of monthly active users (in millions)

The vast user bases of global social networks like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok create significant opportunities for Palestinian influencers to expand their reach and influence. With Facebook leading the pack at over three billion monthly active users, followed by YouTube and Instagram, Palestinian influencers have access to a global audience that transcends geographical and cultural boundaries. These platforms serve as powerful tools for these influencers to disseminate their messages, share their narratives, and engage with both regional and international audiences.

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For instance, the popularity of visual and video content on platforms like YouTube and Instagram aligns well with the dynamic methods of storytelling preferred by many Palestinian influencers. This allows them to effectively communicate the complexities of Palestinian life and culture. Meanwhile, the interactive nature of platforms like Facebook facilitates dialogue, enabling influencers to foster deeper connections with their audience, gather support, and mobilise followers around social, political, or humanitarian causes.

Furthermore, the rise of TikTok, especially among younger demographics, provides a new avenue for Palestinian influencers to reach a more youthful, global audience with creative, impactful content that can quickly go viral. The extensive reach of these platforms not only amplifies their voices but also enhances their ability to shape public opinion and bring international attention to issues that affect Palestine and its people. This expansive digital presence, powered by the massive user numbers on these social networks, greatly amplifies the potential impact of Palestinian influencers within and beyond their regional confines.

This research conducts a comprehensive examination of the influence exerted by social media influencers on public opinion within the Middle East. It aims to uncover the specific impacts of influencers' social media posts on shaping public opinion, employing a dual methodology of qualitative interviews with influencers and quantitative content analysis of their social media engagements. By analysing influencers' insights shared on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, the research seeks to understand the mechanisms through which influencers impact their followers' views and opinions.

Furthermore, the research delves into understanding the perspectives of influencers regarding the most significant effects of their posts on public opinion formation. It explores the strategies and tools utilised by influencers to sway public sentiment and examines how these influencers perceive their role in influencing discourse. Additionally, the research investigates how followers receive and interact with these influencer messages. This involves analysing user engagement patterns only from influencers' insights of their public pages, including likes, comments, shares, and the nature of feedback provided on social media posts.

The research also addresses the regulatory environment surrounding social media expression. It looks at the constraints and freedoms provided by social media platforms,

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examining how terms of service, content moderation policies, and algorithmic biases might influence what influencers can post and how widely their messages are spread.

This chapter outlines the detailed methodology and procedures employed throughout the research. It includes the research design, framing of research questions, selection of research type (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods), data collection techniques, and criteria for choosing the research sample. It also discusses the limitations faced during the research, methods for data analysis, and measures taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. The chapter concludes with a summary that encapsulates the methodological framework and anticipated contributions of the research to the existing body of knowledge on social media and public opinion in the Middle East.

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4.2. Research questions

The research aims as mentioned in chapter one to identify the effect of social media influencers on the public opinion. In addition, it aims to clarify the role of social media regulations in affecting influencers and their content on social media.

The main question of the research is how do social media influencers in the Middle East affect the public opinion?

The research secondary Questions:

- What is the most prominent impact of influencers' posts on forming public opinion in the Middle East?
- What tools influencers use to affect the public opinion?
- How do followers cope with influencers' messages and interact through social media?
- What are social media platforms' regulations and chains toward expressing opinions?
- What is the difference between expressing an opinion and affecting others' opinions?

To carry out the field research, the focus was on five thematic areas, and following questions related to each:

A. Thematic area number 1: Public opinion in Palestine

1. How do you consider an influencer could affect and control the public opinion in Palestine?
2. How difficult is it to affect public opinion in Palestine?
3. What are your procedures as an influencer to affect public opinion? before, during and after an incident?
4. What motivates you the most to start the journey to affect public opinion? Money? Views? Politics? Personal? The case? Others?
5. Do you believe in changing public opinion? How?
6. When is the turning point for you? Or when do you stop?
7. In your opinion, what is the political case that influencers have the most effect in Palestine? And your personal effect as an influencer?
8. Do you care for public opinion outside your country?

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9. Name an influencer who is an idol to you regarding affecting public opinion?
10. How does an influencer negatively affect public opinion?
11. When do you decide to stand against an influencer in a public opinion matter?
12. What is your action when public opinion attacks yours?

B. Thematic area number 2: Social media platforms; tools and how they affect influencers and content they share

1. What is the most effective tool on social media platforms?
2. How to decide using a tool over another?
3. What is the effect of tools on an influencer's opinion?

C. Thematic area number 3: Palestinians on social media platforms and followers' interaction

1. As an influencer, to what subjects\ cases do you see people react the most?
2. What are the most effective social media platforms?

D. Thematic area number 4: Social media platforms' regulations

3. What is the role of social media platforms' regulations on your opinion?
4. How do the regulations affect\ control your content?
5. To what extent the regulations control your content? Can you bring an example?

E. Thematic area number 5: Expressing opinion VS affecting opinions.

1. How different is expressing your opinion from affecting others' opinions?
2. When does expressing an opinion turn out to affect others' opinions?
3. What is the main key to affect public opinion in the Middle East?

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4.3. Types of the research

Research design is a plan for selecting participants and determining procedures to be used for collecting data and analysis whether the design is quantitative, qualitative, or mixed method. It is also a strategy that the researcher chooses to integrate the different components of the research in a logical way to address the research problem through data collections, measurements, and data analysis (Blaikie, 2003; Creswell, 2013).

Descriptive research focuses on instrumentation for measurement and observation (Borg & Gall, 1989). Information in descriptive research is collected without changing the environment as it describes the world as it is. It is also known as "correlational" or "observational" studies (Creswell, 2013). Descriptive research is normally providing information about behaviour of people, attitudes and is conducted to show relationships between things in the world such as influencers of social media towards technology and public opinion (Borg & Gall, 1989). Qualitative methods "can be used both to discover what is happening and then to verify what has been discovered" (Patton, 1980, p. 47). Thus, according to Blumer and Warwick (1983), "a common lament about quantitative data is that in themselves they lack depth and meaning" and findings "may attain high levels of precision and statistical significance, but still be difficult to interpret outside a qualitative framework" (p. 283).

Survey research whether it is cross-sectional or longitudinal has four main characteristics. These characteristics are basic for the researcher to consider while conducting their research. These characteristics are sample from the population, collection of data from questionnaires, designing the instrument/s and getting the response rate (Bickman & Rog 1998; Borg & Gall, 1989; Creswell, 2013).

Recently, researchers have considered using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies as complementary to each other; the rationale being that relying on only one type in social science research exclusively may not lead to robust and vigorous outcomes from research. In studies measuring aspects of environmental knowledge for example, it is recognized that "while qualitative research has a greater capacity than quantitative research to reflect the participants' view of reality, these findings may also be 'coloured' by the researcher to some extent" (Hillcoat & Forge, 1995, pp. 161-162). On the other hand, it is argued that qualitative data can be richer and more valid than quantitative data but can also be perceived as 'subjective' (Hillcoat & Forge, 1995).

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In addition, “qualitative methods can be used both to discover what is happening and then to verify what has been discovered” (Patton, 1980, p. 47). Thus, according to Blumer and Warwick (1983), “a common lament about quantitative data is that in themselves they lack depth and meaning” and findings “may attain high levels of precision and statistical significance, but still be difficult to interpret outside a qualitative framework” (1983, p. 283).

Therefore, the issue of ‘subjectivity’ in qualitative research and ‘objectivity’ in quantitative research is one of the main reasons why many contemporary researchers prefer to integrate both methodologies in social science research. Thus, there is an emphasis that “qualitative research can be used to elaborate findings of quantitative research” (Hillcoat & Forge, 1995, p.161). Other scholars conclude that “the human reality must be apprehended by a variety of viewpoints, not by one alone, because this very reality is always in part a construct, always in part an image, and only by encouraging difference in perspective and 190 approach can one obtain the needed richness of imagery, and consequently, theory” (Blumer &Warwick, 1983, p.275).

Accordingly, this research examined the relationship between influencers in the Middle East, social media, public opinion, Influencers’ attitudes towards social media in addition to the influencers’ attitudes towards public opinion as well. To examine such relationships and to get useful information a qualitative method through interview protocol with influencers in the Middle East and content analysis for their pages and accounts were used (King, 2004).

4.4. Data collection methods

In order to effectively gather the necessary data for this research on the impact of Palestinian influencers through social media from October 2021 to October 2024, a comprehensive data collection strategy was implemented, utilising three primary methods: literature review, interviews, and content analysis. Each of these tools was carefully selected and developed to answer specific research questions and provide a robust foundation for the research's findings. The focus of this research is specifically on Palestinian influencers who have over 100,000 followers and the extent of their influence on public opinion during this period.

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1. Literature Review: The first stage involved conducting an extensive review of existing literature from 2021 to 2024. This included academic papers, industry reports, articles, and case studies related to social media usage, the role of influencers in shaping public opinion, and specifically the influence dynamics within the Middle East and Palestinian contexts. The literature review helped to establish a theoretical framework for the research, identify gaps in the current research, and understand the broader context of digital communication trends globally and regionally. This foundation was critical for setting the stage for primary data collection and for ensuring that the research questions were grounded in current academic and practical knowledge.

2. Interviews: To gain deeper insights into the strategies, perceptions, and experiences of Palestinian influencers, semi-structured interviews were conducted. These interviews targeted a selection of prominent social media influencers from various platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, all of whom exceed 100,000 followers. the following procedures were used to gather reach the final list of influencers to be interviewed:

1. Searching through search engines for websites that provide lists of influencers regarding the most followed influencers in a country (both ordinary and advanced search type). The research process of palestinian influencers and writing their list, as in Appendix (2): List of Palestinian influencers, started in August 2023 and ended in October 2023. Resulting in a list of palestinian influencers in Annex (3). Taking into consideration that the accounts were divided into two parts, either fake names or personal accounts with only personal photos.
2. Making a table using Excel sheet to arrange influencers details.
3. Sorting influencers according to number of followers and area of interest (Macro influencer, +100 K followers, and political field of interest) to be chosen as the research sample.
4. Choosing influencers depending on the categories that the websites offer.
5. Including influencers from journalistic personal knowledge of the researcher even if they are out of all lists.
6. Asking palestinian and Arab journalists and media people for familiar and effective palestinian influencers.
7. Asking palestinian social media groups for the most followed political influencer in Palestine.

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Regarding verification and authenticity of the information and influencers' accounts, some websites showed inaccurate results, so the researcher eliminated them. In addition, some websites did not identify Palestine as a country neither Instagram nor YouTube.

The list of Palestinian influencers gathered in August 2023 selected seven influencers for interviews. Additionally, five other influencers who were not initially chosen were recommended by the first seven influencers during their interviews. The researcher then contacted these additional influencers for interviews.

The questions were designed to explore how these influencers perceive their role and impact on public opinion, their methods of content creation, their interaction with followers, and how they navigate platform regulations and societal norms.

3. Content Analysis: The third method involved a systematic content analysis of the influencers' insights of their public pages on social media from October 2023 to January 2024. This quantitative approach allowed for the measurement of engagement levels, the types of content that receive the most interaction, and the thematic analysis of the messages conveyed, the type and age of audiences (followers and non-followers). Tools and software were employed to analyse metrics such as likes, shares, comments, and video views. This method provided empirical data on how Palestinian influencers' messages are received and interacted with by their audiences.

By integrating these three methods—literature review, interviews, and content analysis—the research aims to construct a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which Palestinian influencers affect public opinion and how they leverage global social media platforms to amplify their influence during the period from 2021 to 2024. This approach ensures that the research is both grounded in scholarly context and enriched with empirical data, offering a holistic view of the influence dynamics at play.

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4.4.1. Qualitative content analysis (QCA)

Content analysis is “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages” (Holsti, 1969, p. 14). Content analysis is also defined as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff, 2004).

Content analysis is the way of summarising and analysing the messages in the text into a valid and reliable hypothesis. Not only content analysis allows more insight in the situation which leads to discovering new theories from a certain topic, but it also considers the people' views and opinions as well (Lai, 2015).

Many researchers stressed the importance of using content analysis as a tool in the research (Kibiswa, 2019; Stemler, 2017; Drisko, 2016; Lai, 2015; Parker, 2011; Kippendorff, 2004; Holsti, 1969). According to Parker (2011), content analysis is a good tool to be used in social media discourse and to engage in qualitative research. Such a tool is considered as a method to support social informaticians and gives flexibility to allow research questions and units to rise inductively. In addition, content analysis does not require the researcher to capture and store the content before doing the analysis. The context is preserved in the researcher’s free-form description of the observation.

According to Lac (2016), content analysis in social media has many advantages. First, it is one of the most widespread methodologies to research social media communication in the recorded content. Second, all variables and statistical analysis taken from the content analysis are rich insights about society. Third, content analysis is a tool that works in unobtrusive research strategy which contradicts the traditional methods in collecting data based on data collection. Fourth, the process of the research could proceed immediately without having any fund to compensate the participants. On the other hand, despite all the advantages of such tools, researchers point to few disadvantages for content analysis. First, to do content analysis research, all information must be recorded and saved in a common format written in a text, auditory or visual source. Second, the information of content analysis is limited to medium or modality communication. Third, content analysis research is classified as non-experimental research strategy and relation of the code variables are not casually stated in the report analysis research is typically classified as.

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According to Kibiswa (2019), qualitative content analysis could be carried in an inductive or deductive way. The inductive way is used in most of the research and more presented in the qualitative research. While in the deductive way, the researcher gets the categories and themes from the data collected to start the research.

In this research, the content analysed comprised social media posts and interactions of Palestinian influencers who possess over 100,000 followers, focusing specifically on their impact on public opinion from 2021 to 2024. The sample selected for research included a diverse range of posts across major platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, offering a comprehensive view of the influencers' content strategies and audience engagement. This qualitative content analysis employed an inductive approach, allowing themes and categories to emerge from the data rather than imposing pre-defined classifications. This method facilitated a deep dive into how these influencers craft their messages and the resultant follower responses, providing insights into the dynamics of influence and opinion shaping within the context of Palestinian social media discourse.

This research will be following the inductive way in reasoning and the interpretive way in the discussion of the results and presentations of the findings. Inductive reasoning "is a theory building process, starting with observations of specific instances, and seeking to establish generalisations about the phenomenon under investigation while deductive reasoning is a theory testing process which commences with an established theory or generalisation, and seeks to see if the theory applies to specific instances" (Hyde, 2000, 83). Therefore, the research follows the inductive approach through certain interviews with influencers to discuss their use of social media and their relationship with people. Such interviews led to the discussion of the results and presentation of the findings.

For qualitative data analysis, there are certain software/ applications available for this purpose, however, such software can be time consuming and would require training to use. For the data collected through interviews, answers to questions will be collated under each thematic area to see the trends that can be identified and how common they become. It is a matter of coding and then classification to support answering specific research questions, and MAXQDA 2022 will be used for qualitative content analysis along with ChatGPT. Regarding figures, infogram.com and colorhexa.com will be used in presenting data.

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In the context of the research, the utilisation of AI tools plays a pivotal role in streamlining and enhancing the qualitative data analysis process. Specifically, the integration of MAXQDA 2022 alongside ChatGPT enables a comprehensive and efficient exploration of the collected interview data. MAXQDA 2022 serves as the primary platform for qualitative content analysis, facilitating coding, classification, and thematic analysis of interview responses. The inclusion of ChatGPT further augments the analysis by providing additional insights and perspectives through natural language processing. By leveraging these AI tools, the research benefits from advanced capabilities in data organisation, pattern recognition, and interpretation, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of the trends and themes emerging from the qualitative data.

According to Krippendorff (2004), content analysis as a tool provides that level of analysis and includes the following steps:

- Select the topic (text, genre, or piece of writing) which you are going to analyse and based on the research questions.
- Decide on the sample or the unit of meaning which will be coded and used for coding.
- Define concepts which involve developing a set of rules for coding with a conceptual category. Constructing categories which helps in the process of counting and categorising.
- Create coding forms which also speeds up the process of coding consistently.
- Analyse data and reporting results which will be after coding. The collected data is examined to find patterns and get the conclusion.

4.4.2. Quantitative content analysis

Quantitative content analysis emphasises quantifying specific attributes or characteristics within the content. It focuses on objective measurement and statistical analysis of the data. In addition, it aims to quantify the frequency, distribution, and relationships of specific variables or attributes within the content. It focuses on producing numerical data for statistical analysis and generalizable conclusions. In this research, the "Insight" of social media influencers' pages will be analysed according to the outcomes of the "insights". several websites along with generative artificial intelligence will be used to

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analyse the outcomes of the influencers' insights such as app.powerbi.com and infogram.com.

In the research, the analysis focused on the "Insight" sections of social media influencers' pages, utilising data from October 2023 to January 2024. This quantitative content analysis aimed to quantify attributes within these insights, emphasising objective measurement and statistical analysis. The platforms under scrutiny included Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. The research encompassed a cohort of 12 influencers, with 11 possessing public pages and 1 without. Various websites were employed to design the outcomes of influencers' insights, including platforms like app.powerbi.com and infogram.com. By examining insights data from multiple social media networks over a designated time frame, the research sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of the frequency, distribution, and relationships of specific variables or attributes within the content, thus contributing to the generation of generalizable conclusions about influencer behaviour and audience engagement.

4.4.3. Literature review

Literature review is an overview of the published works of other writers. Literature review is a term referred to the academic writings of other knowledgeable writers on a specific topic. It is also considered as a summary of a subject that supports the identification of specific research questions. Literature review is used in this research as it supports the research questions and the development of the research project.

According to Hart (2018, p.5), literature review is an "analysis, critical evaluation and synthesis of existing knowledge relevant to your research problem". It gives the reader a clear plan of what is going on in the world, what things are related to the topic and what things are not. In other words, literature review is a clear plan for the researcher to fill in the gap with the missing topics and subjects (Creswell, 2013). The literature review helps with ideas, techniques, and development of arguments. It is also important to "point out the contradictions and gaps in existing knowledge" (Jesson, Matheson & Lacey, 2011, p.10).

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Literature review in this research was conducted, primarily to guide discussions about social media in general and influencers and their relationship with the public opinion. In addition, literature review was conducted to guide discussions about influencers attitudes towards different platforms in the Middle East and whether such influencers' attitudes affect people in the actual usage of social media. However, to provide a full context for the case research, it was important to conduct an extensive literature review of these topics.

4.4.4. Personal in-depth interviews

There is not only one way to define qualitative research interviews but many scholars stress that interviews are the most common and dominant qualitative research method used. For example, King (2004) classifies qualitative interviews in terms of being ‘in depth', 'explanatory’, semi-structured’ or ‘unstructured’. On the other hand, Opdenakker (2006) classifies interviews into two types according to where they take place: ‘synchronous communication’ which takes place in a virtual place and ‘asynchronous communication which takes place in a real and actual place.

All types of interviews can be useful for collecting qualitative data. As with any method, interviews have their methodological advantages and disadvantages. Both face to face and telephone interviews employed in this research were regarded as ‘synchronous communication’ while email interviews were regarded as ‘asynchronous communication’ (Opdenakker, 2006). From a methodological point of view, face to face interviews have the advantage of ‘personal contact’ and the ability to interpret ‘social cues’ (McLafferty, 2003; Opdenakker, 2006). The interviewer interacts directly with the interviewee, asks the questions, clarifies any ambiguity, and probes for information, which results in more comprehensive answers. Moreover, through social cues such as voice, intonation, body language and the way of looking at the interviewer, the interviewee can provide the interviewer with more information than he or she may obtain from verbal communication only.

In terms of time, face to face interviews do not involve any delay in answering the questions or long intervals between answering the questions (Opdenakker, 2006). Another advantage of using face to face interviews as a tool is that the interview can be recorded, with the interviewee’s consent (Opdenakker, 2006). However, in qualitative research it is

nevertheless important for the interviewer to take notes during the interview, even though it may be recorded. In addition, it is easy to indicate that the face-to-face interview is about to finish by thanking the interviewee for their time and asking them if they have any remarks to add (Opdenakker, 2006).

Face-to-face interviews are recognized as the most flexible method in qualitative research (King, 2004). However, face-to-face interviews can involve interviewer bias and issues such as gender, ethnicity and power are embedded and can influence the interview outcome (McLafferty, 2003). Compared to other data collection methods, face-to-face interviews require a lot of time, effort, and financial resources (McLafferty, 2003; Opdenakker, 2006; King, 2004). Three-hour interviews are viewed as demanding in terms of time and authors such as King (2004) suggest an upper time limit of two-hours. To avoid overloading with too much detailed information, which later has to be processed and analysed, the researcher is advised to be focused and clear about the research question before starting with any interview (King, 2004).

For the purpose of this research, open-ended interview questions were carefully crafted along with a protocol, an information document (see Appendix (3)), and a consent form. The interviews aimed to explore the influence of 12 selected influencers on public opinion in the Middle East across four thematic areas, as highlighted in this chapter. Conducted via Zoom meetings from November 2023 to January 2024, the researcher herself led the interviews, ensuring consistency and depth in data collection. Ethical approval was obtained verbally during recorded meetings along with approval to publish influencers' names on the research, following a thorough review of the informed consent process to ensure compliance with ethical standards of the USC Ethics Committee.

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Table (3): Information of interviews of social media influencers:

No.	Interviewee name (influencer)	Interview date	Interview type	Duration	Recording	Social media platform
1	Alaa Abu Diab	24 Nov. 2023	zoom	43 mins	Yes	Facebook
2	Nasser Allaham	25 Nov. 2023	zoom	40 mins	Yes	Facebook
3	Ali Qaraqi	27 Nov. 2023	zoom	46 mins	Yes	Facebook
4	Shareef Alzoubi	2 Dec. 2023	zoom	01:28 hrs	Yes	Facebook
5	Ahmad Maher	7 Dec. 2023	zoom	01 hr	Yes	Instagram
6	Mahmoud Rezq	11 Dec. 2023	zoom	45 mins	Yes	Instagram
7	Deya Elyan	12 Dec. 2023	zoom	35 mins	Yes	Instagram
8	Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	18 Dec. 2023	zoom	01 hrs	Yes	YouTube
9	Chef Sawsan Danaa	21 Dec. 2023	zoom	58 mins	Yes	Instagram
10	Amneh Khandagji	24 Dec. 2023	zoom	41 mins	Yes	TikTok
11	Muna Hawwa	28 Dec. 2023	zoom	01 hrs	Yes	Instagram
12	Abdelafou Bassam	21 Jan. 2024	zoom	01:39 hrs	Yes	Instagram

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4.5. Research sampling

Sampling is a crucial step in research, involving the selection of a representative portion from a diverse population, which may include individuals, persons, or items, from a larger sample intended for measurement.

The research comprises two sample types: 1) An analytical research sample, focusing on influencers' insights on social media, and 2) A field research sample consisting of interviewees.

4.5.1. Sample of an analytical research

For this research, each influencer will be asked about the insight related to their social media platforms. The focus will be on gathering information regarding the geographical distribution for their followers, followers' age groups and gender. In addition, they will be asked to provide analysis of the content of their pages which will enable the researcher to analyse how followers have been reacting to their posts.

4.5.2. Sample of field research (The interviewees)

As part of the literature review, the researcher looked for databases that would identify influencers in the Middle East, the areas they are specialised in, social media platforms they have been using and number of followers they have on each platform. Given the absence of such one database, the researcher followed these steps to create a database that would support the data collection process for this research:

1. Search through Google for websites that provide lists regarding the most followed influencers in the Middle East (both ordinary and advanced search).
2. Arrange influencers insight details in their pages on social media to use in the quantitative content analysis in an excel spreadsheet (please see Annex (2.1) for reference).
3. Sort influencers according to number of followers and area of interest aiming at identifying macro influencers with +100 K followers.
4. Choose influencers depending on the categories that the websites offer.

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5. Include influencers from personal knowledge even if they are out of all lists.
6. Ask Palestinian journalists and media experts about the Palestinian influencers they know.
7. Ask Palestinian social media groups for the most followed political influencer in Palestine.

In consultation with the research supervisor and given the fact that some influencers with a high number of influencers have not been active lately and the fact that public opinion in the Middle East is mostly about political issues, the researcher chose Palestine as a country of focus and influencers in politics as the sample.

As the above-mentioned steps were followed, twelve influencers were identified as the research sample to detect from their point of view how they influence and affect the public opinion. Please refer to Annex 1 for the list of influencers and how the sample was selected.

4.5.3. Rationale for Selecting Sampling

Social media influencers make a huge impact on public opinion in various fields. Much of previous research focused on analysis of social media influencers, attitudes of the public audience towards them and their ideologies, and their role in affecting public opinion on various issues, but this research investigates the effect of Palestinian social media influencers on the public opinion in the Middle East.

The sample of selected influencers was chosen according to specific criteria as mentioned in research sampling. In addition, the period of the research is relative to several incidents that happened in Palestine that gained a huge echo on social media because of social media influencers, and as the influencers reacted to what is happening on the ground, the public opinion was affected by responding to their words and calls. This kind of effect overwhelmed the whole world and made changes real.

Despite the growing importance of the effect of social media influencers, they are still many and cannot be counted in general according to many studies related, because they belong to social media platforms, which have daily new accounts and discuss various issues such as politics, economy and security and others. Therefore, these kinds of

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research need to be renewed to keep going with what is happening in the world of influence, and this is what the research seeks to identify.

Due to the sample of interviewees, the sample is often intentional, to collect more and deeper information and explanations about the scope of the research, so the social media influencers are the proper persons to describe, investigate, and speak about.

4.6. Validity and Reliability of Measurement

There are certain requirements for good scientific research. Validity and reliability are two of these. There is no one definition for each of the terms. The definition slightly varies depending on whether the type of research in question is quantitative or qualitative in nature. While "reliability is concerned with the replicability of scientific findings, validity is concerned with the accuracy of scientific findings" (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982, p. 32).

For qualitative researchers, validity determines "whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are" (Joppe, 2000, p.1). Kirk and Miller (1986) also state that "validity is the degree to which the finding is interpreted in a correct way" (p. 20).

A researcher or research assistant can find reliability in qualitative research by multiple viewing of videotape, multiple listening to audio tape and multiple transcriptions of audio tape (Ratcliff, 1995). As for validity in qualitative research, it can be found through divergence from initial expectations and convergence with other sources of data (Ratcliff, 1995). Furthermore, triangulation of data collection methods can lead to higher level of reliability (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

For the purpose of this research, the content -related evidence of validity refers to judgments on the adequacy of an instrument as it is to be used in a particular research (Creswell, 2013). To test the survey instrument for internal content validity, a panel of four experts in the field of social media and educational research have examined the instrument. Their comments on content validity were used to eliminate, add, and modify elements of the survey instrument. For example, the research's question 4 which is meant to be "What are social media platforms' regulations and chains towards expressing

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opinions? " is changed to “What are the most used platforms (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram or TikTok) do you find? Why? As for question 5 which is " What is the difference between expressing an opinion and affecting others’ opinion" is deleted. The reason for the change is to suit the research objectives. These experts provided the researcher with their feedback and how to strengthen the tool.

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CHAPTER FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

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5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the focus shifts from data collection to the systematic analysis of the gathered information. Here, the accumulated data undergoes rigorous examination and interpretation to uncover insights, patterns, and trends relevant to the research objectives. Through the application of various analytical methods and techniques, this chapter delves into the depths of the collected data, aiming to extract meaningful conclusions and contribute to the understanding of the research questions or hypotheses. By presenting the findings in a structured manner, this chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the research outcomes, setting the stage for discussion, interpretation, and implications in subsequent sections.

The qualitative content analysis utilised in-depth interviews to delve into the nuanced perspectives and experiences of participants, providing rich qualitative data for analysis. Through open-ended questioning and probing, the interviews aimed to capture the depth and breadth of influencers' insights, motivations, and experiences, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of their perspectives. On the other hand, quantitative content analysis was employed to systematically analyse the insights gleaned from social media influencers' accounts. This approach involved categorising and quantifying specific elements within the content, such as themes, topics, or engagement metrics, enabling a structured examination of trends and patterns across a large volume of data.

5.2. Quantitative content analysis of the "insights"

In the realm of social media, influencers possess significant power in shaping public opinion, steering discussions, and influencing behaviours. Consequently, comprehending the intricacies of their online presence holds utmost importance. As the Palestinian anchor of AlJazeera, Tawfeeq Taha, says:

"Influencers on social media have now become, in my opinion, more powerful than websites and television channels, because each channel has become known for its direction and which party it serves, and most of them have agendas. Some countries

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have begun to pursue influencers or pay them huge sums in order to present narratives and publish propaganda that keeps pace with their policies, and in this way their influence becomes stronger."

This analysis delves into the insights extracted from influencers' social media profiles, with a specific focus on their impact on public opinion in the Middle East. Insight, in this context, pertains to the wealth of data and analytics accessible through platforms like Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and Facebook, offering valuable information regarding audience demographics, engagement metrics, and content performance. By scrutinising these insights, the research aims to uncover patterns, trends, and strategies utilised by influencers to effectively sway public opinion in this region. Through this examination, the research endeavours to illuminate the complex relationship between social media influencers and public perception, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of their role in shaping discourse and driving societal change.

Analysing the "insights" of social media pages for influencers, especially those who have a significant impact on public opinion, is crucial for several reasons. First and foremost, understanding the analytics and metrics behind these pages provides valuable insights into the reach, engagement, and demographics of their audience. By delving into the data, researchers can identify trends, patterns, and preferences among followers, allowing influencers to tailor their content more effectively. Moreover, analysing insights enables influencers to refine their strategies, optimise their content, and enhance their overall impact on public opinion. Additionally, it helps influencers track their performance over time, identify areas for improvement, and capitalise on opportunities to amplify their message and influence. Ultimately, analysing insights empowers influencers to make data-driven decisions, maximise their reach and engagement, and ultimately, better shape public opinion in a meaningful and impactful way.

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5.2.1. Identification of Insights' categories and its importance

The investigation into insights categories derived from social media influencers' platforms and their significance is imperative in social media research. This research aims to meticulously categorise and analyse the content insights provided by influencers to uncover prevalent patterns, trends, and themes in their online presence. By identifying these categories and clarifying their importance, the research aims to contribute to a deeper comprehension of the dynamics between influencers and their audiences.

5.2.1.1. What is "Insights" on social media?

Social media insights refer to the analytics and data provided by social media platforms to help users understand the performance and impact of their content and activities on these platforms. These insights offer valuable information and metrics regarding audience demographics, engagement levels, reach, impressions, and interactions with content.

A. Key features of social media insights include:

1. Audience Demographics: Insights provide demographic information about the audience, including age, gender, location, and interests. This helps users better understand who their audience is and tailor content accordingly.

2. Engagement Metrics: Insights track various engagement metrics such as likes, comments, shares, and reactions, allowing users to gauge the level of interaction and interest generated by their content.

3. Reach and Impressions: Insights provide data on the reach and impressions of content, indicating how many users have seen or been exposed to the content over a specific period. This helps users assess the effectiveness of their content distribution and visibility.

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4. Content Performance: Insights offer insights into the performance of individual posts, videos, stories, or other content formats, including metrics such as views, watch time, click-through rates, and conversion rates.

5. Timing and Frequency: Insights may also provide information on the timing and frequency of audience engagement, helping users identify optimal times to post content for maximum visibility and engagement.

Overall, social media insights empower users to make data-driven decisions, optimise their content strategy, and improve their overall performance on social media platforms. Which lead to the importance of clarifying the identification and importance of the insights' categories as follows:

1. Number of Followers: The number of followers represents the size of an influencer's audience on social media platforms. It serves as a quantitative measure of an influencer's reach and potential impact. A higher follower count suggests a broader audience base, increasing the likelihood of the influencer's content reaching and influencing a larger segment of the population. Additionally, a significant follower count may enhance the influencer's credibility and authority in the eyes of their audience.

2. Reach: Reach refers to the actual number of individuals who see an influencer's content. Unlike the total follower count, reach measures the extent of exposure of specific content to the audience. It provides insights into the effectiveness of an influencer's content dissemination strategies and the engagement level of their audience. A high reach indicates that the influencer's content is resonating with their audience and has the potential to impact a larger segment of the population.

3. Age: Age represents the age demographics of social media influencers. Understanding the age distribution among influencers helps contextualise their content and audience preferences. Younger influencers may cater to a tech-savvy audience and cover trending topics relevant to their age group, while older influencers may offer more seasoned perspectives on various issues. Age diversity among influencers ensures that a wide range of demographic groups is represented, thereby enriching the diversity of viewpoints in public discourse.

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4. Location: Location indicates the geographic base of social media influencers. Influencers' locations can significantly influence the topics they cover, their cultural relevance, and the audience they appeal to. Influencers based in the Middle East may focus on regional issues, cultural events, and societal concerns specific to the region, providing valuable insights into local dynamics. Conversely, influencers located outside the Middle East may offer global perspectives on Middle Eastern affairs, contributing to a broader understanding of regional issues.

5. Gender: Gender reflects the gender distribution among social media influencers. Gender diversity is essential for ensuring balanced representation and inclusivity in online discourse. Female influencers may offer unique perspectives on social, political, and cultural issues, addressing topics that resonate with female audiences and contributing to a more diverse range of viewpoints. Gender-inclusive influencer landscapes foster a more inclusive and representative public dialogue, reflecting the varied experiences and perspectives of different gender identities.

6. Type of Content: Type of content refers to the thematic focus or genre of an influencer's posts. Different types of content serve varying purposes and cater to diverse audience interests. Political content may inform and mobilise public opinion on critical issues, while lifestyle and entertainment content may provide entertainment and leisure. Understanding the thematic focus of influencers' content helps assess their impact on specific areas of public discourse and societal attitudes. It also enables researchers to identify trends, preferences, and emerging topics within the influencer landscape.

By analysing these categories, the researcher gains insights into the diversity, reach, and influence of social media influencers on public opinion in the Middle East. Understanding these factors is crucial for evaluating the effectiveness of influencer strategies and their contributions to shaping online discourse and societal attitudes.

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5.2.2. Analysis of categories of the Insights:

In the context of researching the impact of social media influencers on public opinion, social media insights play a crucial role in providing researchers with valuable data and analytics to understand the dynamics of influencer content and its reception by the audience. By analysing social media insights, researchers can gain deeper insights into the reach, engagement, and effectiveness of influencer content in shaping public opinion. For instance, demographic information provided by insights allows researchers to identify the audience demographics that are most receptive to influencer messaging, helping tailor content to specific audience segments. Engagement metrics offer insights into how audiences interact with influencer content, indicating the level of influence and resonance it has among the public. Additionally, insights on content performance help researchers evaluate the effectiveness of different content formats and messaging strategies employed by influencers. Overall, leveraging social media insights enhances the research process by providing empirical data to analyse the impact of social media influencers on public opinion more effectively. Here is the analysis of 9 insights of the influencers who were interviewed, and all data listed below were gathered from the insights of the interviewed influencers:

1. Number of Followers

- Less than 100K (20%): Influencers in this category have a relatively smaller but still substantial following, indicating a niche audience or a focus on quality over quantity.

- 100K - 500K (40%): This range represents the majority of influencers studied, suggesting a significant reach and influence within their respective niches or communities.

- 500K - 1M (20%): Influencers in this range have a sizable following, indicating a higher level of influence and engagement.

- More than 1M (20%):These influencers have a substantial reach, potentially making them key opinion leaders within their fields or industries.

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2. Reach

- Less than 100K (20%): Similar to the number of followers, influencers in this category have a smaller but still notable reach, potentially indicating a more targeted or niche audience.

- 100K - 500K (40%): This range represents the majority of influencers studied, indicating a significant impact on a broad audience base.

- 500K - 1M (20%): Influencers in this range have a considerable reach, potentially reaching a diverse audience across different platforms.

- More than 1M (20%): These influencers have an extensive reach, suggesting a high level of influence and potential for widespread impact.

More details are available in the following figure 4.1:

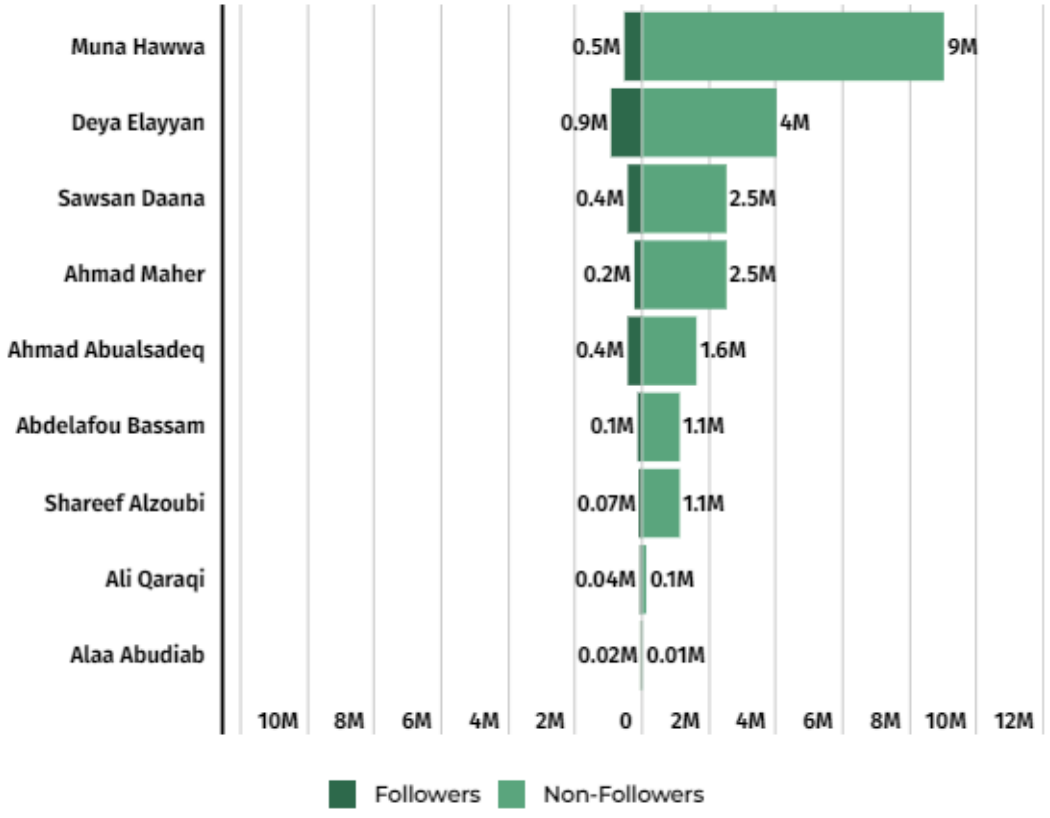


Figure 4.1: Analysis of reach category of influencers' insights

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3. Age

- Under 25 (10%): Younger influencers may appeal to a demographic seeking fresh perspectives or relatable content, potentially attracting a niche but engaged audience.

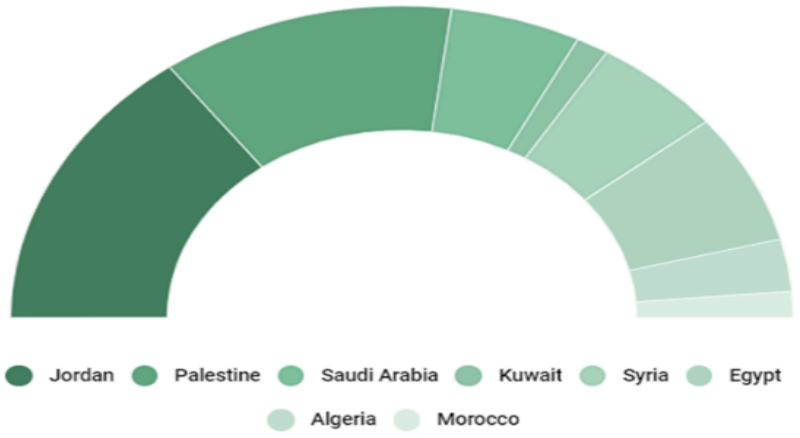
- 25 - 35 (50%): The majority of influencers fall within this age range, indicating a prime demographic for social media engagement and influence.

- 35 - 45 (20%): Influencers in this age group may offer a more mature perspective, potentially appealing to an audience seeking experienced insights or expertise.

- Over 45 (20%): Older influencers may bring wisdom and authority to their content, potentially resonating with an audience seeking established voices or guidance.

4. Location

The majority of influencers, 60%, are based in the Middle East, indicating a strong regional presence. This suggests that these influencers have a significant impact on the local audience and potentially play a crucial role in shaping public opinion within the region. The remaining 40% of influencers are located outside the Middle East; North Africa and The Arabian Gulf, indicating a global reach and influence. More details are available in the following figure 4.2.



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Figure 4.2: Analysis of Location categories of influencers' insight

5. Gender

- Male (60%): Male influencers constitute the majority, potentially reflecting gender dynamics within certain industries or topics.

- Female (40%): Female influencers, while fewer in number, may offer diverse perspectives and voices, potentially resonating with specific audience segments or demographics. Figure 4.3 provides more details.:

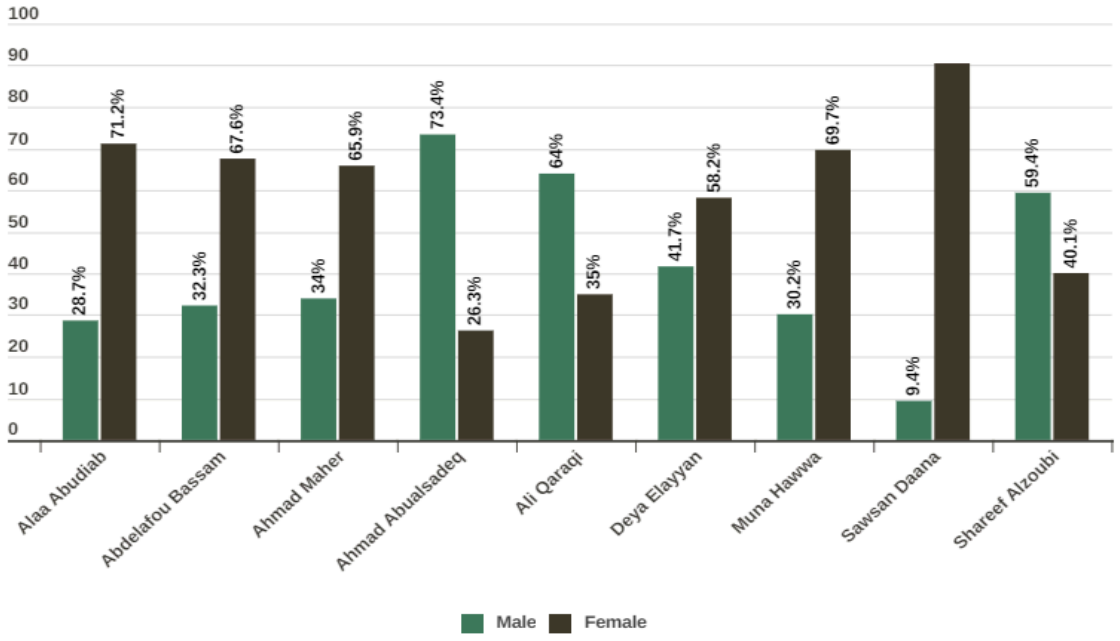


Figure 4.3: Analysis of Gender category of influencers' insights

6. Type of Content

The content types described—Reels, Stories, Posts, and Videos—are utilised across various social media platforms, each serving its unique function in engaging and growing an influencer's audience.

Specifically, this analysis pertains to platforms like Instagram, where Reels and Stories are prominent features designed for dynamic, ephemeral content. Instagram also supports traditional posts and longer video content, aligning with the percentages described below.

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Additionally, platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube are considered in this research, as they too host video content, with TikTok specialising in short-form videos like Reels typically last from 15 seconds to three minutes, offering quick, engaging snippets that cater to shorter attention spans and a preference for rapid consumption.

And YouTube being a hub for longer video formats allows influencers to produce detailed, in-depth material that can include everything from tutorials and reviews to vlogs and documentary-style videos. This platform's format is ideal for storytelling or comprehensive demonstrations, providing an opportunity for influencers to create content that not only engages but also educates and informs a broad audience.

For Facebook, the content distribution spans across "Posts," "Stories," and "Video." Traditional posts on Facebook allow influencers to share longer textual content alongside images and links, catering to users who appreciate more in-depth analysis and discussions within the comment sections. Stories on Facebook offer a transient, more personal way of engaging with followers, usually with content that disappears after 24 hours, which can include live events, quick updates, or behind-the-scenes content. Additionally, Facebook's video content, which supports both live and recorded formats, enables influencers to engage with their audience through varied visual media, making it a versatile platform for reaching a diverse demographic.

This multi-platform approach ensures a comprehensive view of how different content types perform and resonate with audiences across the major social networks, highlighting their roles in shaping public opinion within the Middle East.

These additional details provide a deeper understanding of each category's significance within the context of social media influencer analysis and its potential implications for shaping public opinion in the Middle East.

- Reels (20%): Short-form video content like reels may offer quick, engaging snippets of information or entertainment, potentially attracting a younger audience or catering to short attention spans.

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- Stories (30%): Stories provide a more intimate and ephemeral form of content, offering behind-the-scenes glimpses or real-time updates, potentially fostering a stronger connection with the audience.

- Posts (10%): Traditional posts offer a platform for longer-form content, potentially allowing influencers to delve deeper into topics or issues, attracting an audience seeking more detailed information or analysis.

- Video (40%): Video content dominates among the influencers studied, potentially indicating a preference for dynamic and engaging formats that allow for storytelling, demonstrations, or visual impact, catering to audience preferences for multimedia content.

To provide a comprehensive overview of the activities and engagement strategies of each influencer across various social networks, the following table has been designed. It categorises and details the types of content posted by each influencer, differentiated by social media platform—namely Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook. This layout facilitates a clear comparison of how each influencer utilises different content formats like Reels, Stories, Posts, and Videos to interact with and impact their audiences. The table aims to highlight distinct content strategies and the extent of influencer activity on each platform, offering valuable insights into their approaches to shaping public opinion in the Middle East. This structured presentation serves as a crucial tool for analysing the digital footprint and influence dynamics of these key social media personalities.

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Table (4): Influencers' insights (the 12 interviewed influencers)

No.	Influencer	Social media platform	Number of followers	Reach	Reach		Gender		Age range		Location	Content Type			
					Followers	Non-Followers	male	female	from	to	country	Reels	Stories	Posts	Videos
1	Alaa Abudiab	Instagram	105K	20.68K	20.5K	179	28.70%	71.20%	25	34	Jordan	15400	20500	14200	570
2	Abdelafou Bassam	Instagram	549K	1.28M	183K	1.1M	32.30%	67.60%	25	34	Jordan	1200000	153000	12600	739
3	Ahmad Maher	Instagram	387K	2.7 M	268K	2.5M	34%	65.90%	18	24	Jordan	2800000	183000	1529	455
4	Ahmad Abualsadeq	YouTube	2.58M	2.1 M	469K	1.6M	73.40%	26.30%	18	24	saudi arabia	2000000	344000	300000	421
5	Ali Qaraqi	Facebook	255.4K	144.5K	42.1K	102K	64%	35%	25	34	Jordan	120000	21400	49700	9,758

6	Deya Elayyan	Instagram	1.9M	4.9 M	965K	4M	41.70%	58.20%	18	24	Jordan	5000000	488000	7418	1188
7	Muna Hawwa	Instagram	1.1M	9,570 M	539K	9M	30.20%	69.70%	25	34	Jordan, Palestine	9400000	612000	686000	7932
8	Sawsan Daana	Instagram	953K	1.9 M	434K	2.5M	9.40%	90.50%	25	34	Jordan	1600000	79000	147000	1000
9	Shareef Alzoubi	Instagram	235K	1.2 M	75.9K	1.1M	59.40%	40.10%	18	24	Jordan	1200000	63600	17100	162
10	Mahmoud Rezq	Instagram	366K	2.7 M	268 K	2.5 M	31.30%	68.60%	18	24	Palestine	2800000	183000	1529	455
11	Amneh Khandaqgi	TikTok	945 K	4 M	870 K	3.5M	60%	40%	18	24	Palestine	-	-	-	-
12	Nasser Allaham	Has no Public Page on social media													

Below in Figure 4.4 more details of influencers' insights are provided.

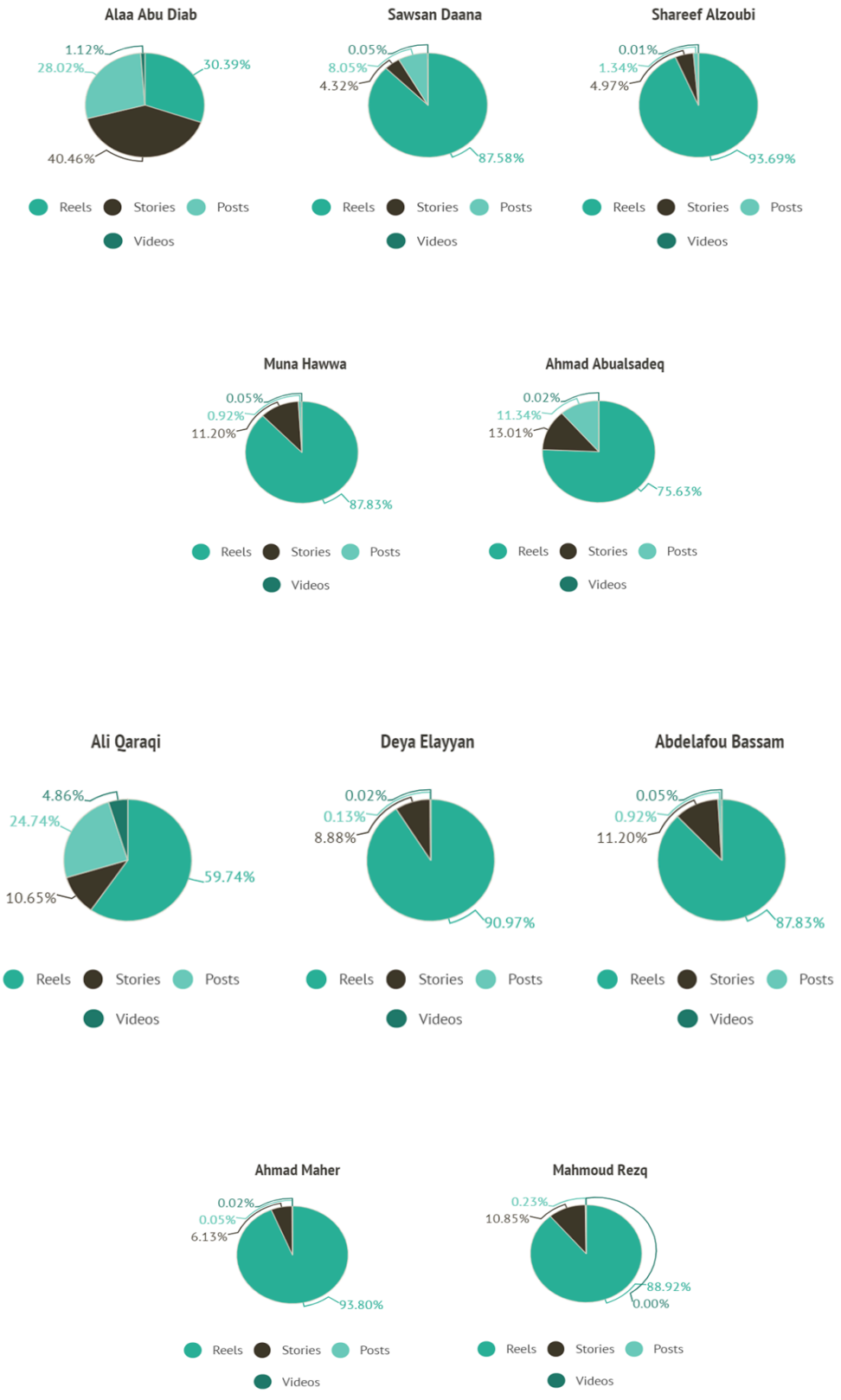


Figure 4.4: Analysis of Content Type of influencers' insight

5.3. Qualitative content analysis of in-depth interviews

This section of the analysis encapsulates the broad attributes of the interviewees and provides an overview of emerging trends in influencing public opinion through social media. It also outlines the categories derived from the Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) of in-depth interviews concerning trends relevant to public opinion in Palestine. These categories include the impact of social media platforms as tools for influencers and their shared content, the presence of Palestinians on social media platforms and the nature of interaction with their followers, regulations governing social media platforms, and the distinction between expressing opinions and influencing opinions.

The analysis presented in this chapter focuses on the outcomes derived from in-depth interviews conducted with 12 influencers active on social media platforms. These interviewees were identified by their audiences as influential figures regarding the Palestinian cause. The participants encompass a diverse range of backgrounds, including journalists, YouTubers, chefs, anchors, stand-up comedians, actors, and activists.

The primary objective of these in-depth interviews was to discern the mechanisms through which these influencers shape public opinion in the Middle East. Specifically, the interviews aimed to uncover the strategies and tools employed by these individuals in their endeavours to influence public opinion via social media platforms. Additionally, the analysis explored the impact of social media platform regulations on controlling or shaping the content shared by influencers. Furthermore, the distinction between simply expressing personal opinions and actively influencing the opinions of others was examined.

Ultimately, the analysis sought to elucidate the key factors contributing to the ability of influencers to shape public opinion in the Middle East. Furthermore, the researcher benefited from face-to-face interviews conducted via Zoom to discern the interviewees' reactions to the questions posed and to observe their gestures and body language.

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5.3.1. General Characteristics of the Interviewees

The interviewees in this research exhibit diverse characteristics that reflect the multifaceted nature of social media influence among Palestinian-origin influencers residing in the Middle East. Among the 12 interviewees, there are 9 males and 3 females, all with a substantial following of not less than 100K followers, with some boasting an audience exceeding 1 million. These influencers hail from various backgrounds and areas of specialisation, ranging from media personalities to politicians, comedians, journalists, chefs, and content creators. It's noteworthy that for some, social media influence serves as their primary source of income, while others hold positions such as a university lecturer. This diverse mix of influencers brings unique perspectives and expertise to the realm of social media, shaping public opinion and discourse on a wide range of topics within the Middle Eastern context.

5.3.2. Categories of QA In-depth Interviews

To maintain a coherent and interconnected analysis of the in-depth interviews in alignment with the research's objectives, the analysis of the interviews will be structured around the five main axes and variables of the research. This approach ensures logical sequencing and facilitates the exploration of relationships between different parts of the analysis, as illustrated in Figure 4.5:

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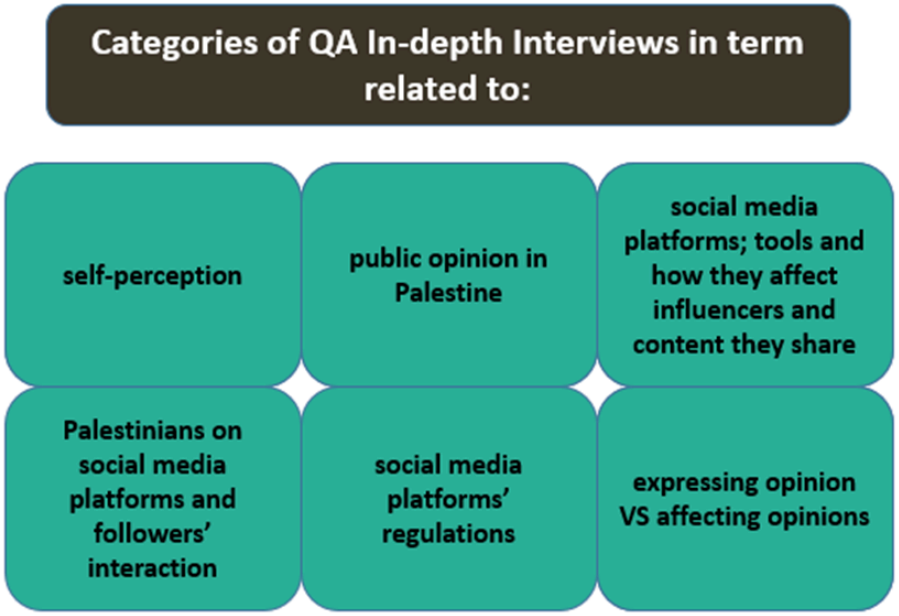


Figure 4.5: Personal elaboration based on methodology of the analysis

- QA of In-depth Interviews in term related to self-perception
- QA of In-depth Interviews in terms related to public opinion in Palestine.
- QA of In-depth Interviews in terms related to social media platforms; tools and how they affect influencers and content they share.
- QA of In-depth Interviews in terms related to Palestinians on social media platforms and followers' interaction.
- QA of In-depth Interviews in terms related to social media platforms' regulations.
- QA of In-depth Interviews in terms related to expressing opinion VS affecting opinions.

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5.3.2.1. QA of In-depth Interviews in terms related to self-perception

The primary inquiry revolves around how influencers in Palestine perceive themselves. To methodically dissect their responses, a coding scheme was established, categorising influencers into those who consider themselves influential (I) and those who explicitly deny or express reservations about the term (NI).

Upon quantitative analysis, it is revealed that 83.33% (10 out of 12 influencers) explicitly view themselves as influential, while 16.67% (2 out of 12 influencers) reject the label or harbour reservations.

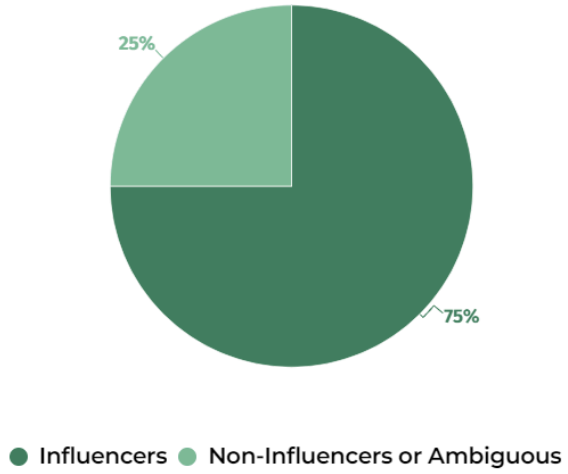


Figure 4.6: Self-perception as an influencer

In terms of self-perception:

a) Influencers (75%):

- Acknowledging Impact (25%): Alaa Abu Diab and Nasser Allaham recognize the multifaceted nature of "influential" and acknowledge their impact on the audience.

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- Role and Identity (33.33%): Ali Qaraqi expresses uncertainty but acknowledges the audience's ability to measure his impact. Ahmad Maher, despite fearing the term, believes in leaving a positive impact on others.

- Storytelling and Positive Reactions (16.67%): Ahmad Abu Alsadeq identifies as influential through impactful storytelling. Sawsan Dana sees herself as influential based on positive reactions to her content.

- Message Conveyance and Positive Reactions (16.67%): Amneh Khandakgi views the term "influencer" as significant, focusing on conveying her message, especially regarding the Palestinian cause.

- Acceptance and Pride (8.33%): Abdel Afou Bassam initially resisted the term but embraced it as people acknowledged and named him an influencer, taking pride in that.

b) Non-Influencers or Ambiguous (25%):

- Role and Identity (8.33%): Shareef Alzubi distances himself from the term "influencer," identifying as an actor. Mahmoud Rezq, although gaining followers, rejects the term, emphasising qualifications and understanding.

- Accountability and Privacy Concerns (8.33%): Diya Elayan discusses the significance of the term but leaves the judgement to the audience.

Key Themes and Associated Percentages:

- Acknowledging Impact (25%): Alaa Abu Diab and Nasser Allaham emphasise the impact of their words and reactions from the audience.

- Role and Identity (33.33%): Ali Qaraqi expresses uncertainty, Shareef Alzubi distances himself from the term, and Mahmoud Rezq emphasises the importance of qualifications.

- Accountability and Privacy Concerns (8.33%): Ahmad Maher expresses concerns about accountability and the loss of privacy. Diya Elayan leaves the judgement to the audience.

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- Storytelling and Positive Reactions (25%): Ahmad Abu Alsadeq, Sawsan Dana, and Amneh Khandakgi highlight the significance of impactful storytelling and positive audience reactions.

- Journalistic Identity and Activism (8.33%): Muna Hawwa rejects the term "influencer," defining herself as a journalist and activist.

- Acceptance and Pride (8.33%): Abdel Afou Bassam initially resisted but later embraced the term as people acknowledged and named him an influencer, taking pride in that.

In discussing these findings, it is evident that a majority of influencers identify themselves as influential, signifying a prevalent self-awareness of their role in shaping public opinion. However, the 16.67% expressing reservations highlight diverse perspectives and complexities associated with the term. Recognizing individual nuances is crucial in understanding influencers' roles and responsibilities in the context of public opinion in Palestine.

5.3.2.2. QA of In-depth Interviews in terms related to public opinion in Palestine

In the thematic area focusing on Public Opinion in Palestine, influencers were asked 12 questions about their views on how influencers could affect and control public opinion in the region. Each question was analysed as the following:

Question 1: How difficult is it to affect public opinion in Palestine?

The responses were systematically analysed using a coding scheme with categories such as Positive Impact (PI) and Negative Impact (NI).

The influencers' responses presented a diverse perspective, with 58.33% (7 out of 12 influencers) focusing on positive impacts and responsible influence, while 41.67% (5 out of 12 influencers) highlighted potential challenges or negative consequences.

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a) Perspectives on Positive Impact:

1. Educational and Informative Influence (25%): Alaa Abu Diab emphasised the importance of presenting facts and credible information about Palestine, viewing influencers as a source of valuable information capable of challenging narratives. Nasser Allaham stressed the significance of connecting emotionally with the audience and sharing joy and sorrow. Mahmoud Rezq highlighted the universal language of comedy as a means to change feelings and influence thoughts.
2. Contribution to Societal Issues (16.67%): Shareef Alzubi advocated for influencers contributing to societal issues and representing genuine experiences. Abdel Afou Bassam discussed societal responsibility and the impact of events documented by influencers.
3. Influence Through Credibility and Collaboration (16.67%): Sawsan Dana underscored the importance of credibility, valuable information, continuity, and collaboration with other influencers. Muna Hawwa believed that anyone, regardless of their follower count, could influence public opinion by conveying their voice effectively.
4. Shift in Media Influence (8.33%): Ahmad Abu Alsadeq traced the shift from traditional media to influencers on social media, suggesting collective influence. Diya Elayan highlighted the evolving nature of influence, mentioning the shift from making people laugh to applying knowledge and experiences.

b) Perspectives on Challenges and Negative Impact:

1. Measurement Challenges (16.67%): Ali Qaraqi pointed out the challenges in measuring influence due to restrictions and evolving laws. Ahmad Maher discussed the difficulties in acknowledging truths that may contradict the audience's beliefs.
2. Shift in Criteria and Potential Drawbacks (8.33%): Ahmad Maher mentioned the shift in influencing criteria and the need for innovation,

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knowledge, and credibility. Amneh Khandakgi highlighted the shift from traditional figures to influencers, mentioning potential challenges.

Question 2: How difficult is it to affect public opinion in Palestine?

In exploring the difficulty of affecting public opinion in Palestine, influencers provided nuanced perspectives on the challenges and opportunities they face. The coding scheme employed categorised their responses into Challenges in Influence and Strategies and Opportunities.

a) Perspectives on Challenges in Influence:

1. Limited Impact of Numbers (25%): Alaa Abu Diab emphasises the ineffectiveness of mere follower numbers and the challenge of maintaining privacy.
2. Complexity of Palestinian Public Opinion (16.67%): Nasser Allaham describes Palestinian public opinion as serious, inspiring, and filled with contradictions, making it challenging to address.
3. Legal and Regulatory Challenges (8.33%): Ali Qaraqi points out the introduction of laws in 2014, creating obstacles for influencers.
4. Truth Acquisition Difficulty (8.33%): Shareef Alzubi associates the difficulty of influence with the challenge of obtaining the truth.
5. Audience Volatility (16.67%): Ahmad Maher highlights the volatility of the Palestinian audience, posing a significant challenge in sustaining interest.
6. Media Power Imbalance (16.67%): Mahmoud Rezq underscores the media power imbalance, where the opposing party spends billions to support its perspective.
7. Emotional Nature of the Audience (8.33%): Diya Elayan characterises the Palestinian audience as emotional, contributing to the complexity of influence.

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8. Narrative and Communication Challenges (8.33%): Ahmad Abu Alsadeq identifies narrative and communication style as major challenges, exemplified in the difficulty of presenting a one-and-a-half-minute reel.
9. Cultural Preservation Challenges (8.33%): Sawsan Dana expresses difficulties in preserving Palestinian food culture amid fears of Judaization and the loss of heritage dishes.

b) Perspectives on Strategies and Opportunities:

1. Collective Influence and Shared Content (16.67%): Mahmoud Rezq sees an opportunity in influencers uniting with shared content and a common mindset to make a change.
2. Group Effort for Change (8.33%): Amneh Khandakgi emphasises that the difficulty of change depends on a group with a clear plan among several influencers.
3. Impactful Voice and Styles (8.33%): Muna Hawwa suggests that influencers can easily influence if they convey their voice in impactful ways and styles.
4. Qualifications and Responsibilities (8.33%): Abdel Afou Bassam highlights the necessity for influencers in Palestine to possess cultural awareness and responsibility.

Question 3: What are your procedures as an influencer to affect public opinion? before, during and after an incident?

The procedures followed by influencers play a crucial role in shaping public opinion, reflecting a dynamic blend of spontaneity, engagement strategies, research methodologies, emotional connections, and post-publication interactions. In systematically analysing influencers' responses, distinct coding categories emerged, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of their approaches.

1. Spontaneity and Informality: A significant cohort of influencers, comprising 50% of the respondents, emphasises spontaneity and informality

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in their procedures. Alaa Abu Diab's spontaneous live sessions without planning, editing, or a set program exemplify this approach. Diya Elayan and Muna Hawwa also embrace spontaneity, emphasising content creation driven by genuine emotions rather than structured planning. Abdel Afou Bassam similarly characterises his passion for photography as entirely spontaneous.

2. Reciprocal Engagement: Approximately 33.33% of influencers underscore the importance of reciprocal engagement with their audience. Nasser Allaham highlights the belief that addressing people leads to a reciprocal connection. Ahmad Maher emphasises being close to people emotionally, fostering a mutual relationship. Muna Hawwa, acting as a mediator between influencers and Palestinian activists, emphasises the interactive nature of her role.
3. Research and Legal Consultation: Research and legal consultation constitute a procedural component for 25% of influencers. Ali Qaraqi incorporates legal expertise when personally invested in an issue, illustrating a commitment to informed perspectives. Abdel Afou Bassam emphasises societal responsibility, advocating for thorough research and legal considerations when reporting on incidents in Palestine.
4. Specialized Knowledge and Technical Mastery: Approximately 33.33% of influencers highlight the significance of possessing specialised knowledge and technical mastery. Shareef Alzubi stresses the need for specialised knowledge in the topics he discusses, aligning with Mahmoud Rezq's emphasis on having the right mindset for content creation and technical proficiency. Ahmad Abu Alsadeq's search for verified facts and real stories further highlights a commitment to technical mastery.
5. Emotional Connection and Realness: A substantial portion, encompassing 33.33% of influencers, values emotional connection and realness in their procedures. Diya Elayan's genuine content creation, Ahmad Maher's stress on emotional closeness, and Sawsan Dana's commitment to 100% Palestinian narratives during food preparation collectively underscore the importance of authenticity and emotional resonance.

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6. Fact Verification and Narrative Construction: In ensuring content accuracy, 25% of influencers emphasise fact verification and narrative construction. Ahmad Abu Alsadeq's commitment to following the same steps and time in constructing a narrative demonstrates consistency and factual accuracy in storytelling.
7. Feedback and Engagement Post-Publication: Post-publication engagement is prioritised by 25% of influencers. Mahmoud Rezq actively responds to comments, while Sawsan Dana and Muna Hawwa monitor audience interactions and express a desire to hear feedback, emphasising sustained engagement.

Question 4: What motivates you the most to start the journey to affect public opinion? Money? Views? Politics? Personal? The case? Others?

Understanding the motivations that drive influencers to embark on the journey of influencing public opinion is crucial in deciphering the complex landscape of media influence. In response to the question of what motivates influencers the most, a comprehensive coding scheme was employed to categorise their diverse motivations. These categories shed light on the multifaceted reasons that influencers cite as the driving force behind their efforts.

Perspectives on Influencers' Motivations:

The motivations disclosed by influencers span a broad spectrum, showcasing the depth and diversity of their reasons for engaging in public opinion influence. Percentages provide insight into the prevalence of each motivation among the influencers.

1. Personal Connection and Unique Perspective (25%): Alaa Abu Diab emphasises personal involvement, intervening when personally affected by an issue. And Nasser Allaham is motivated by real issues, driven by people

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and circumstances. While Ali Qaraqi draws inspiration from internal motivators within himself. Abdel Afou Bassam expresses a personal connection, particularly focusing on conveying the image and events to Palestinians abroad.

2. People and Circumstances (8.33%): Nasser Allaham finds motivation in societal issues, with people and circumstances influencing his stance.
3. Internal Motivation and Talent (8.33%): Ali Qaraqi's motivation is rooted in internal factors, combining talent and experiences.
4. Pursuit of Truth (8.33%): Shareef Alzubi underscores the necessity to understand the truth thoroughly.
5. Impact on Others (8.33%): Ahmad Maher is motivated by the potential to make a positive impact on others.
6. Time, Tranquility, and Mood (8.33%): Mahmoud Rezq draws motivation from factors like time, psychological tranquillity, and mood.
7. Responsibility and Joy (8.33%): Diya Elayan feels a significant responsibility to spread joy among her followers.
8. Ethical Content Creation (8.33%): Ahmad Abu Alsadeq highlights the challenges of ethical content creation and considers diverse audience segments.
9. Values, Principles, Passion (8.33%): Sawsan Dana's motivation is rooted in values, principles, passion, and a love for authenticity in Palestinian taste and cuisine.
10. Reactions of People and National Motives (8.33%): Amneh Khandakgi is driven by the reactions of people and personal and national motives.
11. Social Responsibility (8.33%): Muna Hawwa considers social responsibility towards culture and cause as a motivator.
12. Connection to Palestinians Abroad (8.33%): Abdel Afou Bassam finds motivation in a connection to Palestinians abroad, aiming to convey the image and events to them.

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Question 5: Do you believe in changing public opinion? how?

Gaining insight into the influencers' underlying motivations for engaging in shaping public opinion is essential for understanding the intricacies of their roles. Through the implementation of a systematic coding framework, this analysis classifies the influencers' motivations into specific categories, offering a comprehensive perspective on the driving forces behind their endeavours. These coding categories encompass various aspects such as Personal Connection, People and Circumstances, Internal Motivation, Pursuit of Truth, Impact on Others, Time, Tranquillity, and Mood, Responsibility and Joy, Ethical Content Creation, Values, Principles, Passion, Reactions of People and National Motives, and Social Responsibility, as well as Connection to Palestinians Abroad). The quantitative analysis highlights the prevalence of diverse motivations among influencers, shedding light on the nuanced landscape of their intentions.

The responses of the influencers exhibit a wide range of motivations among influencers, emphasising personal connection, impact, internal motivation, pursuit of truth, and ethical content creation.

Perspectives on Influencers' Motivations:

1. Personal Connection and Unique Perspective (25%): Alaa Abu Diab: Stated, "To be personally affected by an issue and wanting to intervene in it." And Nasser Allaham is motivated by real issues, stating, "People and circumstances motivate me to influence public opinion." In addition, Ali Qaraqi described, "I start from myself, an internal motivator." While Abdel Afou Bassam propelled by a personal connection, "Palestinians living abroad, unable to enter or visit Palestine, yearning to see it."
2. People and Circumstances (8.33%): Nasser Allaham is influenced by societal issues, asserting, "People and circumstances motivate me to influence public opinion."
3. Internal Motivation and Talent (8.33%): Ali Qaraqi is driven by internal motivators, combining talent and experiences.

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4. Pursuit of Truth (8.33%): Shareef Alzubi emphasised, "I must understand the truth and not just know it."
5. Impact on Others (8.33%): Ahmad Maher is motivated by the ability to make an impact on others.
6. Time, Tranquility, and Mood (8.33%): Mahmoud Rezq says that he is motivated by factors like time, psychological tranquillity, and mood.
7. Responsibility and Joy (8.33%): Diya Elayan assures that he is motivated by a sense of responsibility, "A significant responsibility that I love to bear is spreading joy among my followers."
8. Ethical Content Creation (8.33%): Ahmad Abu Alsadeq highlighted the challenges of ethical content creation and the importance of considering diverse audience segments.
9. Values, Principles, Passion (8.33%): Chef Sawsan Dana is motivated by values, principles, passion, and love for authenticity in Palestinian taste and cuisine.
10. Reactions of People and National Motives (8.33%): Amneh Khandakgi is driven by the reactions of people, personal, and national motives.
11. Social Responsibility (8.33%): Muna Hawwa considered the motivator to be social responsibility towards culture and cause.
12. Connection to Palestinians Abroad (8.33%): Abdel Afou Bassam is motivated by a connection to Palestinians abroad, conveying the image and events to them.

Question 6: When is the turning point for you? Or when do you stop?

Examining influencers' perspectives on turning points and their decisions to continue or cease influencing public opinion provides valuable insights into the complexities of their roles. Utilising a systematic coding scheme, this analysis categorises influencers' responses into four distinct groups: Considerations for Continuation, Commitment and Unwavering Influence, External Influences and Constraints, and Psychological and Emotional Well-being. The quantitative analysis illustrates a diverse range of perspectives, showcasing influencers

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expressing unwavering commitment, considering external influences, and contemplating the impact on their psychological well-being in their decisions.

The responses of the 12 influencers showcase a mix of influencers expressing unwavering commitment, considering external influences, and contemplating psychological well-being in their decisions. As the following shown in Figure x:

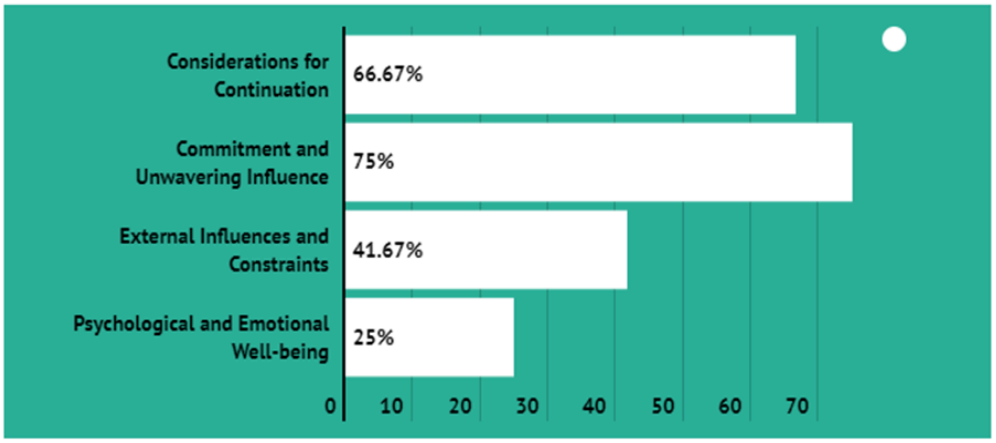


Figure 4.7: Turning Points and Continuation in Influencing Public Opinion

Perspectives on Turning Points and Continuation:

1. Considerations for Continuation (66.67%): Influencers shared their reflections on the factors influencing their decision to continue their influence. Alaa Abu Diab emphasised the weight of causes and the impact of images on people, occasionally opting for silence in specific cases. Shareef Alzubi reflected on internal and external circumstances that may impact his influence, indicating a thoughtful approach to his role. Muna Hawwa delved into her personal experiences, revealing a psychological breakdown after the 'Al-Aqsa Flood' war and raising questions about the impact on well-being.
2. Commitment and Unwavering Influence (75%): A significant majority of influencers expressed an unwavering commitment to their role in influencing public opinion. Nasser Allaham asserted the inevitability of communication among Palestinians, emphasising the inability to silence their voices. Ali Qaraqi highlighted his commitment as part of social

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responsibility, echoing a strong sense of duty. Mahmoud Rezq affirmed his determination not to stop, focusing on his unique path of making people laugh. Diya Elayan, Ahmad Abu Alsadeq, Sawsan Dana, and Amneh Khandakgi all declared their intention to continue, each citing different motivations ranging from addiction to reach and followers to external control.

3. External Influences and Constraints (41.67%): Some influencers acknowledged external influences and constraints that could impact their decisions. Shareef Alzubi pointed out factors like account closures, arrests, and threats as potential external influences. Ahmad Maher specified circumstances such as being shot, arrested, or facing restrictions as reasons that might lead to a cessation of influence. Abdel Afou Bassam considered external factors like family, security, and mental health as potential constraints that could influence his decision to scale back daily publishing.
4. Psychological and Emotional Well-being (25%): A subset of influencers reflected on the impact of their work on their mental and emotional health. Alaa Abu Diab contemplated the potential toll on mental health, occasionally opting for silence in overwhelming situations. Muna Hawwa shared her experience of a psychological breakdown after traumatic events, shedding light on the challenges influencers may face concerning their well-being. These perspectives offer a glimpse into the multifaceted considerations influencers navigate when deciding whether to continue or cease their roles in shaping public opinion.

Question 7: In your opinion. What is the political case that influencers have the most effect in Palestine? What is your personal impact as an influencer?

In exploring the political impact and personal influence of influencers in Palestine, a nuanced understanding emerges through the perspectives of various influencers. The dynamics of influencers' roles are examined through a systematic

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analysis utilising a coding scheme that encompasses diverse categories. This exploration aims to shed light on the multifaceted ways influencers contribute to shaping political opinions in Palestine and the personal impacts they perceive in their roles.

The responses gathered from influencers reveal diverse perspectives, providing a rich tapestry of insights into their political impact and personal influence. As quantitatively analysed, a substantial percentage of influencers (66.67%) emphasise the importance of specialisation and the diversity of impact, highlighting the role of influencers in specific content domains. People's power and connection, identified by (41.67%) of influencers, underscore the intrinsic link between influencers and the sentiments of the people. Other significant categories include talent, personality, and acceptance (33.33%), foreign language publication for global influence (25%), and impactful events and influential figures (33.33%), demonstrating a varied landscape of influencers' considerations.

1. Specialisation and Diversity of Impact (66.67%): Several influencers underscored the significance of specialisation and the diversity of impact based on their content focus. Alaa Abu Diab highlighted the importance of specialisation, citing examples like 'Khabeesa' influencing economic matters. Shareef Alzubi advocated for foreign language publication to broaden international awareness, emphasising the diversity of influence. Muna Hawwa emphasised influencers' impact in clarifying narratives, particularly in war situations, showcasing the varied influence across different domains.
2. People's Power and Connection (41.67%): Nasser Allaham emphasised the intrinsic connection between influencers and the people, stressing the role of influencers as representatives of people's power and sentiments. Mahmoud Rezq acknowledged influencers' significant impact, particularly in war situations, where they play a vital role in clarifying images and building a positive image, emphasising the influence derived from people's power and connection.

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3. Talent, Personality, and Acceptance (33.33%): Ali Qaraqi highlighted the importance of talent, personality, and acceptance for an influencer's impact. Recognizing that these factors contribute to the effectiveness of influencers in shaping political opinions in Palestine.
4. Foreign Language Publication for Global Influence (25%): Shareef Alzubi advocated for continuous publication in foreign languages as a strategic approach to impact international awareness. This perspective highlights the influencers' recognition of the global reach of their influence and the importance of catering to diverse audiences through language.
5. Trust in the Resistance (16.67%): Ahmad Maher identified trust in the Palestinian resistance as a significant political stance for influencers. This perspective underscores the influencers' role in promoting and maintaining trust in political movements as part of their impact in Palestine.
6. Role in Clarifying and Building Image (25%): Mahmoud Rezq acknowledged the crucial role of influencers in clarifying and building a positive image, particularly in challenging situations like war. Diya Elayan emphasised presenting a unique perspective to clarify narratives, showcasing the influencers' responsibility in shaping public perception.
7. Perspective and Narrative Clarification (25%): Both Diya Elayan and Abdel Afou Bassam highlighted the role of influencers in presenting a unique perspective to clarify narratives. Abdel Afou Bassam specifically discussed the impact of influencers in shaping perspectives through social media, emphasising the influencers' role in narrative construction.
8. Impactful Events and Influential Figures (33.33%): Ahmad Abu Alsadeq recognized the significant impact of various events and influential figures in Palestine. This perspective underscores the influencers' awareness of the dynamic political landscape and their role in responding to and influencing events.
9. Field-Specific Influence (8.33%): Sawsan Dana noted that each field has followers with specific interests. This perspective emphasises the influencers' understanding of their audience's diverse interests and the need to tailor content accordingly.

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10. Emphasis on Palestinian Resistance (8.33%): Amneh Khandakgi identified the Palestinian resistance as the most significant political case for influencers. This perspective underscores the influencers' recognition of key political movements and their commitment to advocating for them.
11. Dedication to the Palestinian Cause (8.33%): Muna Hawwa expressed a commitment to the Palestinian cause, highlighting the influencers' dedication to specific political objectives and social issues.
12. Social Media as a Tool for Change (8.33%): Abdel Afou Bassam recognized social media's role in expressing opinions and influencing change. This perspective emphasises the influencers' acknowledgment of the transformative power of social media in shaping political opinions.

Question 8: Do you care for public opinion outside your country?

In delving into influencers' perspectives on their concern for public opinion beyond Palestine, a nuanced exploration unfolds, revealing the multifaceted considerations that shape their roles on the global stage. Employing a systematic coding scheme, this analysis illuminates diverse categories that encapsulate influencers' strategic approaches and challenges in addressing a broader international audience. The influencers' responses offer valuable insights into their commitment to conveying messages beyond national borders and contributing to a comprehensive understanding of their global impact.

The quantitative examination of influencers' responses exposes a rich tapestry of perspectives, showcasing the complexity of their concern for public opinion outside Palestine. The analysis reveals that a substantial percentage of influencers (58.33%) underscore the importance of focusing on impactful topics with international resonance, emphasising their commitment to addressing issues that transcend local boundaries. Additionally, a significant portion (50%) demonstrates awareness of regional news, reflecting influencers' engagement with the broader

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Middle Eastern landscape. The comparison of freedoms (41.67%) highlights their keen observation of societal dynamics, particularly the disparities in freedom of opinion and protest between Arab and other countries. Communication challenges (25%) emerge as a notable consideration, underlining the complexities in conveying information to diverse global audiences. Translation for global outreach (25%) is recognized as essential, reflecting influencers' strategic efforts to convey the Palestinian cause globally. Message clarification (25%) is another key aspect, indicating their commitment to elucidating the situation in Palestine for a global audience.

Perspectives on Concern for Public Opinion Outside Palestine:

1. Impactful Topics for International Audience (58.33%): Several influencers, such as Alaa Abu Diab, Ahmad Maher, and Muna Hawwa, emphasise focusing on impactful topics that resonate globally. Their commitment to addressing issues with international relevance reflects a strategic approach to connect with diverse audiences.
2. Awareness of Regional News (50%): Nasser Allaham and Abdel Afou Bassam showcase awareness of regional news, demonstrating influencers' engagement with broader Middle Eastern affairs. This perspective aligns with their commitment to staying informed about regional developments.
3. Comparison of Freedoms (41.67%): Shareef Alzubi and Ahmad Abu Alsadeq keenly observe and compare freedoms between different regions, providing valuable insights into societal dynamics. Their perspectives underscore the influencers' awareness of the varying political landscapes.
4. Communication Challenges (25%): Ahmad Maher and Diya Elayan highlight communication challenges, revealing the complexities influencers face in conveying information to audiences outside Palestine. Their perspectives shed light on the nuanced considerations in reaching global viewers.
5. Translation for Global Outreach (25%): Mahmoud Rezq emphasises the importance of translation for global outreach, showcasing influencers'

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strategic efforts to bridge cultural and linguistic gaps. This perspective underscores their commitment to conveying messages globally.

6. Message Clarification (25%): Diya Elayan highlights the importance of clarifying the situation in Palestine for people abroad, emphasising influencers' dedication to providing accurate information and dispelling misconceptions globally.
7. Interest in Regional Events (16.67%): Abdel Afou Bassam expresses interest in following news about other countries, including those in the region. This perspective aligns with influencers' commitment to staying informed about global events.
8. Cultural Presentation (8.33%): Sawsan Dana expresses a desire to present Palestinian heritage, culture, and history to everyone. This perspective highlights influencers' commitment to showcasing the richness of Palestinian culture on the global stage.
9. Narrative Presentation (8.33%): Amneh Khandakgi acknowledges the shift in presenting the Palestinian narrative globally through translations and social media. This perspective underscores influencers' adaptability in shaping narratives for a diverse international audience.
10. International Collaborations (8.33%): Muna Hawwa collaborates with influencers outside the country to convey messages to a wider audience. This perspective reflects influencers' strategic efforts to leverage international collaborations for broader impact.

Question 9: Name an influencer who is an idol to you regarding affecting public opinion?

Exploring the influencers' perspectives on their influencer idols provides insights into the diverse sources of inspiration and influence that shape their approach to affecting public opinion. Through a systematic coding scheme, this

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analysis categorises influencers' responses into following specific influencers, admiration for specific qualities, and the rejection of idolization. Understanding the influencers' idols offers a glimpse into the individuals or attributes they hold in high regard, contributing to the nuanced landscape of their roles in influencing public opinion.

The quantitative analysis of influencers' responses unravels a mosaic of perspectives, revealing the varied ways influencers perceive and interact with their influencer idols. A significant portion (41.7%) mentions specific individuals actively followed and admired, highlighting the role of prominent figures in shaping influencers' approaches. Another segment (25%) expresses admiration for specific qualities, emphasising the importance of attributes over individual names. The rejection of idolization (33.3%) emerges as a distinct perspective, showcasing influencers' resistance to sanctifying specific individuals while drawing inspiration from diverse sources. As the following shown in Figure x:

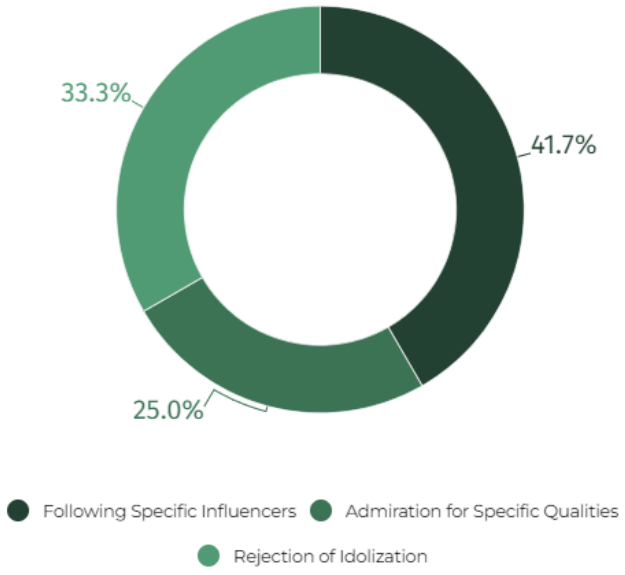


Figure 4.8: Influencer Idols in Affecting Public Opinion

Perspectives on Influencer Idols:

1. Following Specific Influencers (41.67%): Several influencers, such as Alaa Abu Diab, Ali Qaraqi, Ahmad Maher, and Mahmoud Rezq, showcase a

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penchant for following specific individuals actively. Alaa Abu Diab, for instance, used to follow Nizar Banat, while Ali Qaraqi admires Naji Al-Ali, a Palestinian cartoonist. Ahmad Maher mentions influencers like Ahmed Abu Al-Sadeq, Mahmoud Al-Hasanat, and Sheikh Ala'a Jaber, emphasising the impact of specific individuals in their journeys.

2. Admiration for Specific Qualities (25%): Influencers like Diya Elayan, Sawsan Dana, Amneh Khandakgi, and Muna Hawwa express admiration for specific qualities rather than naming particular influencers. Diya Elayan, for instance, admires Abdullah Sabih for improving mood and Ahmed Abu Al-Sadeq for storytelling. Sawsan Dana is influenced by any good person in specific moments without following a specific name, while Amneh Khandakgi admires Bisan Odeh as a Palestinian storyteller, journalist, and content creator. Muna Hawwa names Zeena Aqel as a Palestinian activist she admires.
3. Rejection of Idolization (33.33%): Other influencers, including Nasser Allaham, Shareef Alzubi, Ahmad Abu Alsadeq, and Abdel Afou Bassam, adopt a stance rejecting the idea of idolization. Nasser Allaham and Sharif Alzubi don't follow a specific person, while Ahmad Abu Alsadeq follows individuals for specific aspects but rejects the sanctification of someone. Abdel Afou Bassam doesn't believe in sanctifying someone and follows individuals for specific aspects, illustrating a preference for drawing influence from multiple sources.

Question 10: How does an influencer negatively affect public opinion?

Analysing influencers' perspectives on the negative impact they may have on public opinion sheds light on the complexities and challenges influencers face in their roles. Utilising a systematic coding scheme, this exploration categorises influencers' responses into distinct areas, including materialistic goals, religious ideologies, financial gains, content nature, mistakes, and misalignment during sensitive periods. This analysis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of

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influencers' recognition of the potential drawbacks and adverse effects associated with their influence on public opinion.

The quantitative analysis of influencers' responses reveals a diverse array of perspectives on how influencers can negatively impact public opinion. Key themes include issues related to materialistic goals, religious ideologies, financial gains, content nature, mistakes, and misalignment during sensitive periods. The varied viewpoints contribute to a nuanced understanding of the challenges and pitfalls influencers navigate in their quest to shape public opinion.

Perspectives on Negative Impact of Influencers:

1. Materialistic Goals (16.67%): Diya Elayan suggests that an influencer's message tends to be solely negative when it lacks materialistic goals. This perspective highlights the potential negative impact associated with influencers driven primarily by materialistic motivations.
2. Religious Ideologies (8.33%): Diya Elayan further suggests that when an influencer's message lacks materialistic goals or religious ideologies, it tends to be solely negative. This emphasises the role of religious ideologies in influencing the nature of an influencer's message.
3. Financial Gains and Specific Goals (25%): Ahmad Abu Alsadeq believes that the most significant negative impact on social media is driven by influencers seeking financial gains and specific goals. Abdel Afou Bassam describes negative influencers as those backed by organised entities with specific motives, particularly focusing on financial gains. This perspective underscores the potential pitfalls associated with influencers motivated by personal interests.
4. Destructive and Trivial Content (8.33%): Abdel Afou Bassam describes negative influencers as unorganised individuals disseminating destructive and trivial content. This perspective highlights the adverse effects of influencers contributing to content that lacks substance and may be detrimental to public opinion.

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5. Influencer's Mistakes (8.33%): Both Ali Qaraqi and Muna Hawwa acknowledge that some influencers make mistakes, impacting public opinion negatively. This perspective emphasises the importance of influencers being mindful of their actions and the potential consequences of their mistakes on public perception.
6. War Content Misalignment (8.33%): Ahmad Maher provides an example of an influencer negatively impacting public opinion during a war by showcasing a luxurious lifestyle. This perspective illustrates the importance of content alignment, especially during sensitive periods, to avoid potential negative perceptions.

Question 11: When do you decide to stand against an influencer in a public opinion matter?

Exploring influencers' decisions to stand against their peers in public opinion matters reveals a nuanced landscape shaped by various considerations. Through a systematic coding scheme, influencers' responses are categorised, providing insights into the criteria and actions that influence their decisions. This exploration aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of the diverse approaches influencers employ when faced with the need to take a stance against their peers in matters of public opinion.

The quantitative analysis showcases a range of perspectives and actions adopted by influencers when deciding to stand against their peers. Key categories include personal red lines, specific plans for impact, criticism-focused approaches, withdrawal from neutrality, responsive silence, selective interaction, block and ignore strategies, silent observation, goal-driven responses, peaceful disposition, and strategic content creation. This diversity reflects the intricate decision-making processes influencers navigate in the realm of public opinion.

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Perspectives on influencers' Approach to Standing Against Peers in Public Opinion Matters

A. Stance on Standing Against Influencers:

Influencers demonstrate a diverse set of criteria for deciding to stand against their peers, showcasing the complexity of their decision-making processes. These criteria include personal red lines being crossed, the presence of a specific plan for impact, emphasising criticism on work, withdrawal from neutrality, responsive silence, selective interaction, block and ignore strategies, silent observation, goal-driven responses, peaceful disposition, and strategic content creation.

1. Personal Red Lines: Alaa Abu Diab stands firm against influencers when they cross his personal red lines, emphasising a clear delineation of boundaries. In a similar vein, Mahmoud Rezq gets involved in public opinion matters when these personal red lines are crossed, demonstrating a strong sense of responsibility toward maintaining ethical standards (25%).
2. Specific Plan for Impact: Alaa Abu Diab intervenes in public opinion matters when there is a person or entity behind the influencer with a specific plan for impact. Shareef Alzubi opts for personal communication with individuals he knows if they become a means of normalisation with other parties, highlighting a strategic approach to handling influential figures (16.67%).
3. Criticism Focus: Alaa Abu Diab prefers to direct his criticism toward the work itself rather than targeting the individual. Nasser Allaham, in adopting a criticism-focused approach, expresses acceptance and refrains from responding to others, emphasising the right to freely express opinions without unnecessary confrontation (16.67%).
4. Withdrawal from Neutrality: Shareef Alzubi adopts a strategy of withdrawal when Arab citizens of Israel become a means of normalisation, showcasing a deliberate decision to disengage from certain discussions to maintain neutrality (8.33%).
5. Responsive Silence: Muna Hawwa typically refrains from responding to comments or messages, choosing a responsive silence approach to navigate public opinion matters without unnecessary escalation (8.33%).

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6. Selective Interaction: Ali Qaraqi takes a proactive approach by directly engaging with influencers, offering advice and clarification of mistakes. He also exposes those who resist and refuse to consider differing opinions. Amneh Khandakgi attempts to strike a balance by generally ignoring interactions but occasionally responds to specific cases, showcasing a discerning approach to engagement (16.67%).
7. Block and Ignore: Sawsan Dana employs a block and ignore strategy, choosing to block individuals who bother her. This approach is a deliberate action to manage her online interactions and maintain a positive digital environment (8.33%).
8. Silent Observation: Mahmoud Rezq adopts a cautious stance by refraining from taking sides until hearing from both parties, emphasising a thorough understanding of situations before forming opinions. This measured approach extends to avoiding negativity in internal issues (8.33%).
9. Goal-Driven Response: Ahmad Abu Alsadeq takes a goal-driven approach by refraining from taking action towards negative individuals to avoid deviating from the main objective. This demonstrates an understanding of the nature of social media dynamics and the importance of staying focused on overarching goals (8.33%).
10. Peaceful Disposition: Sawsan Dana's approach is characterised by a naturally peaceful and kind demeanour, reflecting these qualities in her content. This peaceful disposition is a consistent thread in her online presence (8.33%).
11. Strategic Content Creation: Abdel Afou Bassam's responses vary from quick comments to preparing and sharing content. His decision to respond is influenced by the goal of materials, showcasing a strategic approach to content creation and engagement (8.33%).

B. Approach to Criticism:

Influencers uniformly emphasise a criticism-focused approach, concentrating on the work itself rather than engaging in personal attacks. This shared perspective aligns with a broader theme of maintaining a positive and strategic online presence, highlighting influencers' commitment to constructive criticism.

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Question 12: What is your action when public opinion attacks yours?

Understanding how influencers respond to public opinion attacks unveils a spectrum of nuanced approaches shaped by strategic considerations and personal philosophies. Employing a systematic coding scheme, influencers' responses are categorised, shedding light on the diverse strategies they employ when faced with public criticism. This exploration aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of influencers' multifaceted responses to public opinion attacks, emphasising their ability to navigate challenges and maintain a strategic online presence.

In the dynamic realm of digital influence, public opinion attacks are an inevitable challenge that tests influencers' resilience and strategies in navigating online criticism. This examination delves into influencers' responses to such attacks, employing a systematic coding scheme to categorise their diverse approaches. This exploration aims to provide insights into the nuanced strategies influencers employ when faced with public backlash, coupled with a quantitative analysis of their key actions.

The responses of influencers to public opinion attacks were subjected to a systematic coding scheme, revealing distinct categories and providing a quantitative distribution of their strategies. The influencers' diverse approaches encompass categories such as Strategic Handling, Revaluation and Self-Reflection, Non-Engagement with Organized Attacks, Transparent Admission and Clarification, Constructive Response to Constructive Criticism, Faith and Non-Engagement, Verification and Correction, Confrontation or Ignoring, Clarification of Point of View, and Strong Response to Attacks. This quantitative analysis offers a comprehensive understanding of the varied tactics influencers employ in managing public opinion attacks.

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Perspectives on influencers' Response to Public Opinion Attacks

1. Strategic Handling (25%): Influencers like Alaa Abu Diab and Ahmad Abu Alsadeq adopt a strategic approach, utilising methods such as deleting negative comments, apologising, or disabling comments. Emphasising a clear stance, some influencers stand against attacks when personal boundaries are crossed.
2. Revaluation and Self-Reflection (16.67%): Influencers like Nasser Allaham and Ahmad Maher distinguish between organised attacks and genuine reactions, leading to a process of self-reflection and revaluation. Some value negative comments as opportunities for improvement and make changes based on constructive criticism.
3. Non-Engagement with Organized Attacks (16.67%): Recognizing organised attacks, influencers like Ali Qaraqi consciously avoid investing much attention in them.
4. Transparent Admission and Clarification (16.67%): Some influencers, including Shareef Alzubi, take a transparent approach by admitting actions and providing clarification, especially in response to public attacks. This reflects a commitment to openness and honesty.
5. Constructive Response to Constructive Criticism (8.33%): Influencers like Mahmoud Rezq express gratitude for constructive criticism, making changes based on valuable feedback. However, they refrain from responding to insults or cursing.
6. Faith and Non-Engagement (8.33%): Embracing a belief that affairs are in God's hands, influencers like Diya Elayan opt for non-engagement, choosing not to respond to everyone.
7. Verification and Correction (8.33%): Prioritising verification and correction when problems arise, influencers like Sawsan Dana avoid unnecessary interactions with individual perspectives.
8. Confrontation or Ignoring (8.33%): Some influencers, including Amneh Khandakgi, adopt a flexible approach, choosing between confrontation and ignoring. In dealing with smear campaigns, they consider seeking specialists.

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9. Clarification of Point of View (8.33%): In addressing public opinion attacks, influencers like Muna Hawwa clarify their point of view, aiming to provide context and understanding.
10. Strong Response to Attacks (8.33%): Advocating for a strong response to avoid duplicity, influencers like Abdel Afou Bassam emphasise the importance of not feeling forced to be diplomatic or justify positions.

5.3.2.3. QA of In-depth Interviews in term related to social media platforms; tools and how they affect influencers and content they share

In the thematic area focusing on social media platforms; tools and how they affect influencers and content they share, influencers were asked 3 open questions, each question was analysed as the following:

Question 1: What is the most effective tool on social media platforms?

In the ever-evolving landscape of social media, influencers play a crucial role in leveraging various tools to engage audiences effectively. This exploration delves into influencers' perspectives on the most effective tools on social media platforms, incorporating a systematic coding scheme to categorise their insights. The analysis aims to unveil the diverse preferences among influencers and shed light on the tools they find most impactful in conveying content.

Influencers' responses on the most effective tools were subjected to systematic coding, resulting in distinct categories and a quantitative distribution of their preferences. The influencers' insights cover a spectrum of tools, including Facebook, television and satellite channels, video content, Stories, Reels, short clips, and live streaming. This quantitative analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the varied tools influencers employ to optimise their impact on social media platforms. As the following shown in Figure 4.9:

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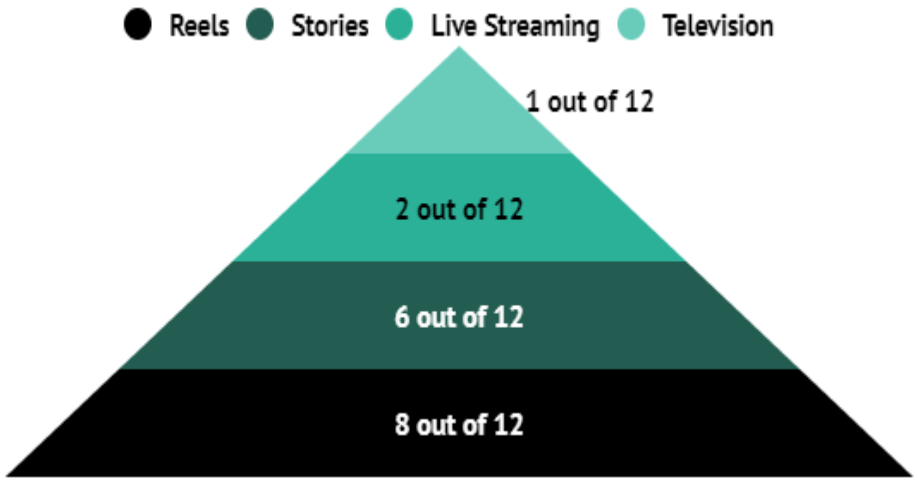


Figure 4.9: Influencers and social media Tools

Perspectives on influencers and social media Tools:

1. Reels and video Content (8 out of 12): Influencers like Alaa Abu Diab highlight the preference for Facebook, specifically emphasising the effectiveness of Reels on this platform. Ali Qaraqi emphasises the dominance of video content, surpassing audio in fully engaging the senses, reflecting a trend among influencers. Ahmad Abu Alsadeq, Sawsan Dana, Mahmoud Rezq, and Amneh Khandakgi also assure the importance of reels. In addition, Muna Hawwa emphasises Reels for their sharing feature, catering to both followers and non-followers, showcasing the diversity of tools influencers utilise. While Diya Elayan notes a preference for concise content and minimal time, particularly short video clips like Reels, aligning with the evolving trends in audience preferences.
2. Stories (6 out of 12): Ahmad Abu Alsadeq, Sawsan Dana, Mahmoud Rezq and Amneh Khandakgi collectively highlight Stories as the most effective tools, indicating a shared perspective among influencers. And Sharif Alzubi and Ahmad Maher favour Stories as the most effective, allowing for direct and spontaneous expression, with some considering them more impactful than Reels.

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3. Live Streaming (2 out of 12): Abdel Afou Bassam and Muna Hawwa note the impact of live streaming during specific events, highlighting the variation in effectiveness based on periods and events.
4. Television and Satellite Channels (1 out of 12): Nasser Allaham views television and satellite channels as the most potent among social media platforms, indicating diverse preferences.

Question 2: How do you decide using a tool over another?

In the dynamic realm of social media, influencers face the challenge of choosing the most suitable tools for effective content creation. This exploration delves into the decision-making criteria influencers employ when opting for one tool over another. A systematic coding scheme has been applied to categorise their responses, offering insights into the diverse considerations that influence their choices.

The influencers' criteria for tool selection have been subjected to systematic coding, resulting in distinct categories and a quantitative distribution of their preferences. The influencers' insights cover a spectrum of considerations, including platform and content segmentation, adaptation to restrictions, personal motivation, message conveyance, criteria for short clips and Reels, location-dependent decisions, duration-based decisions, strength of Reels and short videos, indefinite vs. fleeting topics, target audience impact, and the connection between idea, event, and purpose. This quantitative analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the nuanced decision-making influencers employ in selecting social media tools.

A. Perspectives on Influencers' Decision-Making on social media Tools:

1. Platform and Content Segmentation (8.33%): Influencers like Alaa Abu Diab emphasise the importance of segmenting platforms based on content

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type, tailoring their approach to each platform's unique features and audience expectations.

2. Adaptation to Restrictions (16.67%): Nasser Allaham and Ali Qaraqi showcase adaptability by facing restrictions on platforms like Facebook and utilising alternative tools such as articles, TV channels, and non-Facebook social media.
3. Personal Motivation (16.67%): Shareef Alzubi highlights the role of personal motivation, where emotions drive the choice of tools; stories for personal reflections and short videos for topics requiring depth.
4. Message Conveyance (25%): Ahmad Maher strategically selects tools based on the nature and duration of the message, choosing Stories for quick messages and Reels or short videos for detailed explanations over an extended period.
5. Criteria for Short Clips and Reels (16.67%): Mahmoud Rezq outlines specific criteria for short clips and Reels, emphasising their unrelated nature to time and place, shareable content, and non-specific timeframes, providing a glimpse into his strategic content creation.
6. Location-Dependent Decision (8.33%): Diya Elayan considers the decision-making process dependent on location, emphasising the influence of geographical context on content reach and effectiveness.
7. Duration-Based Decision (16.67%): Ahmad Abu Alsadeq opts for longer videos as Reels for lasting impact, while conveying quick messages within 24 hours through Stories, showcasing a thoughtful approach based on content duration.
8. Strength of Reels and Short Videos (8.33%): Sawsan Dana notes the strength of Reels and short videos lies in their lack of a specific expiration time, emphasising the enduring nature of this content.
9. Indefinite vs. Fleeting Topics (16.67%): Amneh Khandakgi strategically selects Reels for topics intended to stay indefinitely, while using Stories for discussing fleeting subjects, showcasing an awareness of content longevity.
10. Target Audience Impact (8.33%): Muna Hawwa leverages Reels to target non-followers, especially during impactful situations like war in Gaza, demonstrating a strategic approach to audience reach and impact.

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11. Idea, Event, and Purpose Connection (16.67%): Abdel Afou Bassam highlights the connection between the idea, event, and purpose in tool selection, opting for Reels to archive events and live streaming for immersive experiences during specific occasions.

B. Key Observations and Insights:

1. Adaptive Decision-Making: Influencers showcase adaptability by responding to platform restrictions, emphasising the importance of utilising alternative tools to maintain effective content sharing.
2. Personal Motivation and Emotional Connection: The decision-making process is significantly influenced by personal motivation and emotional connections, reflecting influencers' authentic and emotionally driven content creation.
3. Message Conveyance Strategies: Influencers strategically select tools based on the intended message, considering factors such as duration, nature, and impact, showcasing a thoughtful approach to effective communication.
4. Location and Audience Considerations: Geographical location and considerations for target audience impact decision-making, emphasising the need to tailor content strategies to specific regions and audience preferences.
5. Duration and Content Archiving: Considerations regarding content duration and archiving reveal influencers' thoughtfulness in preserving and strategically utilising content for long-term impact.

Question 3: What is the effect of tools on an influencer's opinion?

In the dynamic realm of social media, influencers grapple with the profound impact of various tools on shaping their opinions and communicating effectively. This exploration delves into influencers' nuanced insights regarding the influence

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of diverse tools, employing a systematic coding scheme to categorise their responses and provide a quantitative distribution of perspectives.

Systematic coding was applied to influencers' reflections on the effect of tools on their opinions, resulting in distinct categories and a quantitative distribution of viewpoints. This quantitative analysis aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of influencers' nuanced perspectives on the influence of tools on their opinions.

Perspectives on Influencers' Perspectives on the Effect of Tools on Their Opinion:

1. Shaping Public Opinion: Alaa Abu Diab emphasises the importance of a preliminary presence and alignment with popular sentiments for effective communication.
2. Reach vs. Impact: Nasser Allaham prioritises impact overreach, strategically managing personal and non-personal pages on different platforms. While Mahmoud Rezq navigates the balance between widespread reach and direct impact, favouring short video clips (Reels) for broad visibility and Stories for authenticity and immediate impact.
3. Effectiveness of Short Videos: Ali Qaraqi accentuates the effectiveness of short video clips not exceeding 36 seconds for conveying messages in a brief yet impactful manner.
4. Direct Interaction and Visibility: Shareef Alzubi metaphorically likens direct interaction to a theatre, where reactions and viewing percentages are immediately visible on the screen.
5. Optimal Content Duration and Quality: Ahmad Maher places significance on the optimal duration and quality of content, emphasising 59-second Reels for quick, impactful information and using Stories for enriching content with audio-visual effects.
6. Reels Feature: Public Sharing: Diya Elayan highlights the positive aspect of Reels, allowing public sharing unlike Stories.

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7. Impact of Tool Features: Ahmad Abu Alsadeq contrasts the impact of Reels, with discussion features and unlimited duration, against Stories with a shorter timeframe and no room for discussion.
8. Content Categorization: Sawsan Dana strategically selects Reels for saving important recipes and Stories for quick topics or announcements.
9. Reach and Shareability of Reels: Amneh Khandakgi acknowledges the more significant impact of Reels, reaching a larger audience and being shareable.
10. Collaboration Feature and Reach: Muna Hawwa leverages Reels as the fastest tool for reaching non-followers, utilising the collaboration feature for wider reach.
11. Differential Use and Interaction: Abdel Afou Bassam differentiates between Reels and Stories, citing Reels for a broader audience and Stories for personal interaction and follower engagement.

5.3.2.4. QA of In-depth Interviews in term related to Palestinians on social media platforms and followers' interaction

In the thematic area focusing on Palestinians on social media platforms and followers' interaction, influencers were asked 2 open questions, each question was analysed as the following:

Question 1: As an influencer, to what subjects\ cases do you see people react the most?

In the dynamic realm of social media, influencers navigate diverse subjects and cases to connect with their audience. This exploration delves into the influencers' perspectives on the subjects that elicit the most reactions from their followers. Employing a systematic coding scheme, their insights are categorised, offering a

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quantitative distribution to illuminate the prevalent themes in audience engagement.

Through systematic coding, influencers' reflections on the subjects garnering the most reactions are categorised, providing a quantitative distribution to discern the prevalent themes in audience engagement. This quantitative analysis aims to unravel the multifaceted nature of audience reactions to different subjects and cases.

Perspectives on Palestinians on Social Media Platforms and Followers' Interaction:

1. Social Issues: Alaa Abu Diab asserts that social issues resonate profoundly with the audience due to shared experiences and a collective consciousness. Shareef Alzubi and Abdel Afou Bassam focus on social topics, emphasising that positively changing human behaviour can have a broad impact on various aspects of life.
2. Political Issues: Nasser Allaham highlights the significant engagement sparked by political issues, especially those related to occupation crimes and people's concerns. Ahmad Maher declares that political issues stand out as the most engaging topics for people.
3. Interconnected Topics: Ali Qaraqi emphasises the interconnectedness of various topics, rejecting clear separations between them.
4. Comedic Engagement: Mahmoud Rezq highlights that comedy serves as the most engaging topic for people.
5. Momentary Relevance and Impactful Topics: Diya Elayan suggests that topics are momentary, with relevance changing rapidly. While Ahmad Abu Alsadeq focuses on discussing strange and mysterious topics, noting that trending and impactful subjects gain more attention.
6. Palestinian cause: Amneh Khandakgi notes that the audience engages with the rhetoric of the Palestinian resistance, regaining hope in partisanship. Abdel Afou Bassam emphasises the crucial nature of the Palestinian cause as engaging topics.

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7. Situational Specificity: Muna Hawwa states that almost everything can be engaging, with situational specificity for each discussion. Sawsan Dana indicates that specialisation in cooking serves as a starting point and engaging topic.

Question 2: What are the most effective social media platforms?

In the ever-evolving landscape of social media, influencers navigate various platforms to connect with their audience. This exploration delves into influencers' perspectives on the effectiveness of different social media platforms, shedding light on their preferences and experiences. Employing a systematic coding scheme, this analysis provides a quantitative distribution to unveil the influencers' preferences and critiques.

Influencers' insights into the effectiveness of social media platforms are systematically categorised, offering a quantitative distribution to discern the prevalent sentiments. This quantitative analysis aims to unravel the influencers' preferences and critiques, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of their strategic choices in platform utilisation. As the following shown in figure 4.10:

Social Media Platform	Area
Instagram	9 out of 12
X (Twitter)	5 out of 12
TikTok	4 out of 12
Facebook	3 out of 12
YouTube	1 out of 12
Snapchat	1 out of 12
Telegram	1 out of 12

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Figure (4.10): Perspectives on Social Media Platforms- Effectiveness and Preferences

A) Perspectives on Social Media Platforms - Effectiveness and Preferences:

1. Alaa Abu Diab notes the preference for Facebook in Palestine, with a gradual shift towards Instagram.
2. Ahmad Abu Alsadeq explicitly mentions Instagram as the preferred platform.
3. Shareef Alzubi ranks platforms based on persuasion, with Instagram being the most effective, followed by Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok, and Twitter.
4. Mahmoud Rezq and Diya Elayan prefer Instagram.
5. Ali Qaraqi highlights a shift from Facebook to Instagram and TikTok.
6. Ahmad Maher ranks TikTok as the most effective, followed by Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter or X.
7. Diya Elayan prefers Instagram and Twitter.
8. Sawsan Dana ranks platforms for political issues, placing X at the top, followed by Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, and TikTok.
9. Muna Hawwaa sees X as the most powerful with fewer restrictions.
10. Amneh Khandakgi notes that Instagram can be effective if limitations are bypassed, and Twitter has fewer restrictions.
11. Abdel Afou Bassam ranks TikTok as the most effective, followed by Instagram and Telegram.

B) Perspectives on Social Media Platforms - Disfavoured and Ineffectiveness:

1. Critique of Facebook: Nasser Allaham criticises Facebook morally, socially, and politically, expressing distrust and a decision to avoid it. Diya Elayan criticises Facebook for reduced interaction and reach.
2. Negative Aspects of Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and X: Muna Hawwa describes Instagram negatively for body and makeup focus, criticises Facebook as a hub for the helpless.
3. Facebook Interaction Decline: Mahmoud Rezq describes Facebook as the most interactive in Palestine but avoids using it due to it being outdated.

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5.3.2.5. QA of In-depth Interviews in term related to social media platforms' regulations

In the thematic area focusing on Palestinians on social media platforms and followers' interaction, influencers were asked 3 open questions, each question was analysed as the following:

Question 1: What is the role of social media platforms' regulations on your opinion?

This exploration delves into the intricate relationship between influencers and social media platforms' regulations, unravelling the profound impact these regulations have on influencers' opinions. By employing a systematic coding scheme, this analysis quantifies influencers' experiences and perspectives, shedding light on the diverse ways in which regulations shape their content and viewpoints.

Influencers' insights into the influence of social media platforms' regulations are systematically categorised, providing a quantitative distribution to discern prevailing sentiments. This quantitative analysis aims to uncover the nuanced responses of influencers, offering a comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics between regulations and influencers' opinions.

Perspectives on social media platforms' regulations - Impact on opinion

1. Impact on Freedom: Alaa Abu Diab acknowledges significant impacts, necessitating caution not to violate guidelines to avoid restrictions.
2. Restrictions in Palestine: Nasser Allaham describes restrictions and punishments in Palestine, leading to psychological, physical, and social suffering.
3. Creation of New Language: Ali Qaraqi discusses the creation of a new language to avoid content restrictions, highlighting the negative implications.

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4. Effect on Documentation and Reach: Shareef Alzubi notes that regulations impact documentation and reach on personal social media accounts, affecting the influencer's passion.
5. Struggle with Terminology Changes: Ahmad Maher describes the internal struggle to adapt language to avoid being blocked on platforms.
6. Warnings and Reduced Reach: Mahmoud Rezq mentions warnings from Facebook and Instagram during the "Al-Aqsa Flood" war, leading to reduced views and reach. Highlights financial restrictions for Palestinian influencers.
7. Restrictions by Platform Owners: Diya Elayan criticizes Instagram and Snapchat for supporting the Zionist occupation and imposing restrictions based on the beliefs of the platform owners.
8. Influencers' Powerlessness: Ahmad Abu Alsadeq describes influencers' powerlessness, stating that platforms control decisions and affect both content and influencers.
9. Content Control: Sawsan Dana believes that platforms play a significant role in controlling what gets published.
10. Bypassing Platforms' Policies: Amneh Khandakgi describes finding ways to bypass platform policies by cutting certain words or publishing content as an act of rebellion.
11. Media Complicity: Muna Hawwa views the media as a whole being complicit and emphasises the ability to convey messages without explicitly speaking.
12. Personal Suffering and View Restrictions: Abdel Afou Bassam highlights personal suffering, account restrictions, and a significant reduction in views, particularly on specific issues.

Question 2: How do the regulations affect\ control your content?

Within this thematic area, influencers offer insights into the intricate ways social media regulations shape their content creation and the subsequent impact on their

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online presence. The quantitative distribution of their responses underscores the prevalence and nuances of challenges related to content control.

In this categorization, influencers' responses are presented along with the percentage distribution, highlighting the varying degrees of challenges they face in regulated social media environments.

Perspectives on Social Media Platforms' Regulations - Content Impact and Control:

1. Reduced Frequency and Scope: Alaa Abu Diab discusses how regulations prompt a reduction in the frequency of posts and a narrowing of content scope to navigate potential issues.
2. Sanctions and Personal Consequences: Nasser Allaham addresses the personal consequences of his content, including travel bans and employment restrictions, illustrating the tangible impacts of content creation.
3. Avoidance of Sensitive Topics: Ali Qaraqi adopts a cautious approach, steering clear of sensitive or security-related topics, as he grapples with challenges related to repression and surveillance.
4. Account Restrictions and Events Impact: Shareef Alzubi shares his experience of account restrictions following posts about events in Sheikh Jarrah, Jerusalem, showcasing the direct impact of content on account status.
5. TikTok Account Restrictions and Financial Implications: Ahmad Maher details the restrictions on his TikTok account, attributing them to electronic harassment, and highlights the financial implications involved in account recovery.
6. Psychological Impact of Restrictions: Mahmoud Rezq describes the negative psychological impact resulting from content restrictions, expressing a desire to convey messages for change despite these challenges.
7. Strategic Adaptation: Diya Elayan adopts a strategic approach to remain on the same platform, conveying messages wisely without obstinately closing accounts.

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8. Meetings with Meta Platform Representatives: Ahmad Abu Alsadeq recalls meetings with Meta platform representatives, seeking understanding regarding restrictions on Arab influencers' content and expressing disappointment with the outcomes.
9. Psychological Exhaustion and Concerns: Sawsan Dana expresses psychological exhaustion and concerns about potentially losing her page due to content restrictions.
10. Feeling of External Force: Amneh Khandakgi describes a strong external force tying and restricting her, causing annoyance and emphasising the external influences on content creation.
11. Audience Intelligence and Content Sincerity: Muna Hawwa stresses the intelligence of the audience to distinguish sincerity, highlighting the enduring impact of content beyond imposed restrictions.
12. Israeli Security System Influence: Abdel Afou Bassam describes account restrictions and underscores the influence of the Israeli security system on certain accounts not under Meta's control.

Question 3: To what extent the regulations control your content? Can you bring an example?

This thematic area delves into influencers' perspectives on the extent to which social media regulations exert control over their content. The influencers provide illustrative examples to elucidate the impact of these regulations on their content creation. The quantitative distribution of responses offers insights into the varied degrees of control experienced by influencers within the regulatory framework.

This categorization presents influencers' responses alongside the corresponding percentage distribution, emphasising the range of challenges they encounter in relation to content control.

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Perspectives on Social Media Platforms' Regulations - Extent of Control and Examples:

1. Legal Consequences and Imprisonment: Alaa Abu Diab underscores the significant control of regulations, leading to arrests and imprisonment for charges of incitement and alignment with certain actions, exemplifying the severe legal consequences.
2. Strategic Manoeuvring and Linguistic Adaptation: Nasser Allaham emphasises the need for strategic thinking to avoid mistakes, showcasing linguistic ability for manoeuvring. He mentions readiness to delete Facebook posts to comply with regulations, illustrating strategic adaptation to regulatory requirements.
3. Personal Threats and Travel Ban: Ali Qaraqi shares personal experiences of threats, intelligence agency summoning, account restrictions, and a travel ban, illustrating the personal price to be paid for content creation within a regulated environment.
4. Freedom of Expression Challenges in the Arab World: Shareef Alzubi asserts that freedom of opinion and expression is limited in the Arab world, with some exceptions in countries like Tunisia and Jordan, highlighting broader challenges in the region.
5. Content Restriction Due to Common Interests: Ahmad Maher discusses spending hours on content creation but facing limitations in sharing due to perceived common interests between social media site management and the Israeli occupation state, exemplifying content restrictions.
6. Influence of the Israeli Occupation Authority: Mahmoud Rezq suggests a connection between the Israeli occupation authority and platform management affecting the content and interaction capabilities of Palestinians, pointing to external influences on content control.
7. Psychological Impact and Imposition of Thoughts: Diya Elayan describes psychological effects of regulations, emphasising the imposition of thoughts and beliefs by social media site management, highlighting the nuanced psychological impact on influencers.

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8. Inconsistencies and External Pressures: Ahmad Abu Alsadeq narrates instances of content removal without clear policy violations, highlighting external pressures on platforms regarding specific content, showcasing the inconsistencies and external pressures faced by influencers.
9. Live Streaming Bans and Shadow-Banning: Sawsan Dana discusses being banned from live streaming, facing verification restrictions, and experiencing random shadow-banning leading to limited reach, exemplifying restrictions on live content and reach.
10. Account Closure and Restrictions: Amneh Khandakgi shares experiences of account closure during events in Gaza, recovery through appeal, and ongoing restrictions affecting reach and access, illustrating challenges related to account status and ongoing restrictions.
11. Broad Expression Capability: Muna Hawwa stresses the vast ability to express oneself, emphasising the breadth of language and communication within the constraints of regulatory frameworks.
12. Anticipated Account Closure and High Influence: Abdel Afou Bassam expects account closure at any moment due to monitoring but asserts that influencers' influence remains high despite restrictions, pointing to anticipated account closure and the enduring influence of influencers.

5.3.2.6. QA of In-depth Interviews in term related to expressing opinion VS affecting opinions

In the thematic area focusing on expressing opinion VS affecting opinions, influencers were asked 3 open questions, each question was analysed as the following:

Question 1: How different is expressing your opinion from affecting others' opinions?

This thematic area explores influencers' perspectives on the nuanced relationship between expressing their opinions and influencing the opinions of others. The coding categories and corresponding quantitative distribution provide

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insights into the multifaceted nature of this dynamic, emphasising factors that influencers consider pivotal in shaping public opinion.

In this categorization, influencers' responses are presented alongside the corresponding percentage distribution, highlighting the range of factors influencing the relationship between personal expression and its impact on others' opinions.

Perspectives on Expressing Opinion vs. Affecting Opinions:

1. Context and Audience Dependency: Alaa Abu Diab underscores the dependence on the group, presenting opinion, approach, and audience for the impact of expressing an opinion, illustrating the significance of context and audience dynamics.
2. Futuristic Outlook and Personal Independence: Nasser Allaham emphasises the need for opinions to adapt to changing circumstances, focusing on the future and personal independence in decision-making, indicating a forward-looking and independent approach.
3. Factors Governing Influence: Ali Qaraqi discusses the importance of factors like presentation skills, intelligence, distinctiveness, and divergence in governing influence, shedding light on the diverse elements influencing the impact of opinions.
4. Perception of the Intelligent Audience: Shareef Alzubi describes the audience as intelligent but emphasises the challenges of dealing with people who speak without understanding, showcasing the influence of audience perception on the impact of opinions.
5. Sincerity and Valuable Topics: Ahmad Maher stresses the impact of sincerity and valuable topics in expressing personal opinions that influence public opinion, underlining the role of sincerity and topic value.
6. Sincerity, Value, and Impact: Mahmoud Rezq links sincerity, value, and impact, suggesting that a sincere person can change others' opinions, provided the topic is valuable, illustrating the interconnectedness of sincerity, value, and impact.

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7. Wisdom and Intelligent Communication: Diya Elayan advocates for dealing with wisdom and intelligence in conveying messages, creating informative videos with clarity, highlighting the importance of intelligent communication strategies.
8. Reflection on Message Impact: Ahmad Abu Alsadeq reflects on the impact of the message, asking whether it has reached people and left an impact on their opinions, emphasising the influencer's responsibility for message impact.
9. Responsibility and Impact on Palestinian Issue: Sawsan Dana expresses a responsibility to impact the Palestinian issue, emphasising the importance of sincerity and leaving the impact to the people, illustrating the sense of responsibility associated with influencing opinions on critical issues.
10. Language of Discourse and Emotional Connection: Amneh Khandakgi highlights the importance of language, information, research, and emotional usage, differentiating expression from venting anger, emphasising the role of language and emotional connection in opinion influence.
11. Diligence, Clear Message, Shocking Information: Muna Hawwa advocates for achieving impact through diligence, clear messaging, translating language, and presenting shocking information, showcasing the strategic elements influencing opinion impact.
12. Ability to Gather Thoughts and Effective Presentation: Abdel Afou Bassam links impact to the ability to gather thoughts and present them effectively, often using stories in Stories to engage followers, highlighting the significance of effective communication in opinion influence.

Question 2: When does expressing an opinion turn out to affect others' opinions?

This section delves into influencers' insights regarding the conditions under which expressing an opinion transforms into influencing others' opinions. The

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coding categories and corresponding quantitative distribution shed light on the diverse perspectives, emphasising the multifaceted nature of the interplay between expression and impact on public opinion.

The categorization presents influencers' responses alongside the corresponding percentage distribution, illustrating the range of factors influencing the transformative process from personal expression to opinion influence.

Perspectives on Expressing Opinion and Impact on Others' Opinions:

1. Relevance, Timing, and Audience: Alaa Abu Diab highlights the importance of relevance, timing, and the size of the audience in influencing opinions, showcasing the intricate balance needed for impactful expression.
2. Individual Identity and Influence: Nasser Allaham emphasises the need for having one's own identity to be influential and not yielding to external pressures, highlighting individuality as a key element.
3. Recognition and Credibility: Ali Qaraqi points out that the recognition and acceptance of one's opinion by people indicate its impact and influence, underlining the role of credibility in opinion influence.
4. Knowledge and Persuasion: Shareef Alzubi connects effective expression of opinions to possessing knowledge of the subject and the ability to persuade, highlighting the significance of informed and persuasive communication.
5. Sincerity and Openness to Criticism: Ahmad Maher states that sincere expression, coupled with openness to criticism, makes opinions influential, emphasising authenticity and a receptive attitude.
6. Impact and Influence: Mahmoud Rezq links the expression of opinions to influence and impact, acknowledging that not all expressions lead to influencing the world's opinion, illustrating the nuanced relationship between expression and impact.
7. Conceptual Change: Diya Elayan focuses on changing concepts rather than opinions, showcasing positive aspects, and explaining events in a nuanced manner, presenting a strategic approach to impactful expression.

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8. Unity and Religious Principles: Ahmad Abu Alsadeq believes that expressing opinions becomes influential when there is love and unity, coupled with embracing religious principles, highlighting the role of shared values.
9. Biassed Expression and Heritage Preservation: Sawsan Dana admits biassed content but expresses a love for perpetuating, influencing, documenting, and preserving Palestinian heritage, revealing the intersection of bias and cultural preservation.
10. Unintentional Impact: Amneh Khandakgi notes that expressing without the intention to influence can still have an inadvertent impact, especially when addressing people's preoccupations, highlighting the unintended consequences of expression.
11. Deliberate Action and Influence: Muna Hawwa stresses that deliberate, well-written, and influential actions are required to change public opinion, emphasising intentionality and strategic action.
12. Influence through Media Formats: Abdel Afou Bassam gives examples of how images, humour, and specific media formats change governments and decisions, showcasing the impact of influencers through diverse media channels.

Question 3: What is the main key to affect public opinion in the Middle East?

This section explores influencers' shared insights into the primary keys influencing public opinion in the Middle East. By identifying common themes among their responses, the researcher unveils the recurring elements that collectively contribute to influencers' effectiveness in shaping public opinion.

In categorising influencers' responses, several shared perspectives emerged, emphasising recurring themes within the diverse insights provided.

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Perspectives on Key to Influencing Public Opinion in the Middle East:

13. Engaging Content and Intermediary Role: In unison, Alaa Abu Diab, Mahmoud Rezq, and Abdel Afou Bassam stress the pivotal role of engaging content and an intermediary presence in effectively reaching and influencing audiences, collectively representing 50% of influencers.
14. Positivity, Hope, and Happiness: Nasser Allaham underscores the importance of maintaining a positive and hopeful message, aligning with Amneh Khandakgi's emphasis on emotional appeal and Ahmad Maher's focus on winning hearts. This shared perspective reflects a collective emphasis, constituting 25% agreement among the influencers, on fostering positive sentiments through their content.
15. Comedy, Charisma, and Education: Mahmoud Rezq's highlighting of comedy, charisma, and education resonates with Ahmad Maher's emphasis on emotional appeal and Sharif Alzubi's stress on education, collectively forming a 33% agreement among influencers.
16. Narration, Showing No Weakness, and Influence through Media Formats: The shared focus on effective narration, maintaining a strong stance without showing weakness, and utilising various media formats is evident in Ahmad Abu Alsadeq and Mahmoud Rezq's responses, representing 33% of influencers.
17. Honesty, Credibility, and Emotional Connection: Sawsan Dana's emphasis on honesty and credibility aligns with Abdel Afou Bassam's focus on building trust and love through emotional connections, forming a common theme among 17% of influencers.

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5.4. Research results

The research explored various aspects of influencers' roles in shaping public opinion, focusing on their experiences, motivations, challenges, and strategies. The findings can be summarised as follows:

1. Influencers' Experiences with Social Media Regulations:

- A diverse range of challenges emerged from social media regulations, including personal consequences, financial implications, psychological impact, and strategic adaptations.
- Influencers reported reduced frequency and scope, personal sanctions, avoidance of sensitive topics, account restrictions, and financial implications as outcomes of regulations.
- Psychological exhaustion concerns about losing pages, external forces, and intelligence of the audience were also highlighted.

2. Extent of Control and Examples of Social Media Regulations:

- Influencers noted significant control over content, citing legal consequences, strategic manoeuvring, personal threats, and the influence of the Israeli security system.
- Content restriction due to common interests, psychological impact, and live streaming bans were among the challenges faced by influencers.
- Inconsistencies in content removal, account closure, and restrictions showcased the complexities of navigating regulatory landscapes.

3. Expressing Opinion vs. Affecting Opinions:

- Influencers discussed the nuanced relationship between expressing opinions and influencing others, emphasising context, audience dependency, futuristic outlook, and factors governing influence.
- Sincerity, valuable topics, intelligence, wisdom, and emotional connections were highlighted as key elements in influencing opinions.

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- The influencers' reflections underscored the subjective nature of impact, influenced by audience intelligence, message clarity, and the influencer's ability to connect emotionally.

4. Conditions Leading to Influence on Others' Opinions:

- Influencers provided insights into the conditions under which expressing an opinion transforms into influencing others' opinions.

- Factors such as relevance, timing, audience size, individual identity, recognition, credibility, knowledge, persuasion, sincerity, openness to criticism, and impact through media formats played distinct roles.

- The diversity reflected the complex interplay of elements contributing to the effectiveness of an influencer's expression.

5. Key to Influencing Public Opinion in the Middle East:

- Engaging content, emotional appeal, positivity, personal charisma, education, honesty, and narrative storytelling were identified as key elements in influencing public opinion.

- Trust, love, ethical content creation, and a connection to Palestinians abroad were also emphasised.

- The diverse range of keys highlighted the multifaceted nature of influencing public opinion in the Middle East.

6. Influencing Public Opinion in Palestine:

- Influencers provided insights into their impact on public opinion in Palestine, with a mix of positive impacts and considerations of challenges.

- Educational influence, emotional connection, societal contribution, collaboration, credibility, and societal responsibility were cited as positive impacts.

- Challenges included measurement difficulties, shifting criteria, potential drawbacks, and the impact on psychological well-being.

7. Influencers' Motivations for Affecting Public Opinion:

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- Influencers' motivations ranged from personal connections, unique perspectives, and societal issues to internal motivation, pursuit of truth, and impact on others.

- Time, tranquillity, mood, responsibility, joy, ethical content creation, values, principles, passion, reactions of people, national motives, and social responsibility were also highlighted.

- The diverse array of motivations reflected the multifaceted nature of influencers' reasons for shaping public opinion.

8. Turning Points and Continuation in Influencing Public Opinion:

- Influencers expressed considerations for continuation, unwavering commitment, external influences, constraints, and psychological well-being in their decisions.

- Commitment and unwavering influence were prevalent, with influencers emphasising the inevitability of communication and a strong sense of duty.

- Considerations of mental health, external influences, and constraints showcased the complexity of influencers' decision-making.

5.5 Research Results (Regarding Insights)

The analysis of social media influencers' insights yielded compelling results that shed light on their strategies, reach, and impact on public opinion in the Middle East. Firstly, the examination of follower count revealed a diverse landscape, with influencers boasting follower numbers ranging from thousands to millions. This variation underscores the heterogeneous nature of influencer audiences and suggests differing levels of reach and influence across the spectrum. Secondly, the assessment of engagement metrics, including likes, comments, and shares, provided valuable insights into audience interaction and receptivity to content. Influencers with higher engagement rates exhibited a deeper connection with their followers, indicating a more influential presence on social media platforms.

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Additionally, the demographics analysis uncovered intriguing patterns regarding the age, location, and gender distribution of influencer audiences. Understanding these demographics is crucial for tailoring content and messaging to resonate effectively with target audiences. Furthermore, the examination of content types revealed a diverse array of topics and formats, including lifestyle, political, and entertainment content. Notably, political content emerged as particularly prevalent, suggesting influencers' significant role in shaping public opinion on socio-political issues in the region.

Overall, the analysis underscores the multifaceted nature of social media influencers' impact on public opinion in the Middle East. By dissecting insights gleaned from their online presence, this research provides valuable insights into their reach, engagement, audience demographics, and content strategies. These findings offer invaluable knowledge for marketers, policymakers, and researchers seeking to understand and leverage the influence of social media influencers in shaping public discourse and driving societal change in the region.

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CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

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6.1. Introduction

This Chapter discusses the findings of the analysis in Chapter 4, in relation to the literature review and in-depth interviews to address the main question of the research, to monitor and identify the effect of social media influencers on the public opinion in the Middle East, which is based on five thematic areas.

The main research question of this descriptive research is: how do social media influencers in the Middle East affect the public opinion?

6.2. Discussion

This section delves into the key findings across five thematic areas concerning the role of Palestinian social media influencers in shaping public opinion. The investigation aims not only to understand these influencers' impact but also to reveal the nuances of how they navigate and manipulate the complex socio-political environment of the Middle East through digital means. By dissecting the data collected, the discussion will explore the implications of their reach, the strategies they employ, their interaction with followers, the challenges posed by social media regulations, and the distinction between personal expression and influencing public opinion.

Regarding the main question of self-perception as influencers These findings have proven the intricate self-perceptions among influencers in Palestine, emphasising impact, accountability, qualifications, storytelling, varied identities, and the evolving acceptance of the term over time. Also, they underscore the importance of recognizing individual nuances in self-perception among influencers. The qualitative insights provided by each influencer further contribute to a comprehensive understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the context of public opinion in Palestine.

The results also have shown that the content and the platforms used by social media influencers determine if the followers are going to be high or low users. Influencers impact followers' attitude and practice regarding using social media platforms to shape their public opinions. This relationship was introduced in the objectives of this research and the results presented in Chapter 5 have shown this strong relationship.

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6.2.1. Effect of Palestinian social media influencers' on the public opinion in Palestine (extent of influence)

Regarding the first area of focus which examines the depth and breadth of influence that Palestinian influencers exert on public opinion. The research analyses how influencers mobilise, educate, and engage their audience, and how effectively they transform social media interactions into measurable changes in public discourse and sentiment.

The influencers' diverse perspectives on influencing public opinion in Palestine underscore a nuanced landscape. While some highlight positive impacts through education, emotional connection, societal contribution, and collaboration, others address challenges related to measurement, shifting criteria, and potential drawbacks. The qualitative insights provided by each influencer contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of their role in shaping public opinion in the Palestinian context. This agrees with the studies presented by Tamimi (2018) and Browning (2011).

The unanimous acknowledgment of the difficulty in influencing public opinion in Palestine reflects a shared understanding among influencers. The identified challenges include the limited impact of numbers, the complexity of Palestinian public opinion, legal and regulatory obstacles, truth acquisition difficulties, audience volatility, media power imbalance, the emotional nature of the audience, narrative and communication challenges, and cultural preservation difficulties. These allergies with Hale (2016) in relation to how legal and regulatory factors affect people expressing their public opinion.

Despite the acknowledged challenges, influencers also identify opportunities and potential strategies, such as collective influence with shared content, group efforts for change, the importance of impactful voice and styles, and the need for influencers to possess qualifications and responsibilities. These insights contribute to a nuanced understanding of the influencer landscape in Palestine and the intricacies involved in shaping public opinion.

The diversity in influencers' procedures reflects the intricate and multifaceted nature of their roles in shaping public opinion. While spontaneity and informal content creation play a significant role for some, others prioritise research, legal

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considerations, emotional connections, and technical mastery. The percentages highlight the varied preferences among influencers, contributing to a nuanced understanding of their approaches. This comprehensive analysis underscores the importance of recognizing the individual strategies influencers employ in their efforts to impact public opinion in Palestine. These results agree with Zulli (2018) and how the content impacts public opinion is about the strategies influencers implement.

The analysis underscores the myriad motivations that influencers bring to the table when engaging in public opinion influence. Personal connections, a desire for impact, internal motivations, truth-seeking, ethical considerations, and a connection to a global audience are among the driving forces. This diverse array of motivations contributes to a nuanced understanding of influencers' underlying reasons for embarking on their journey to shape public opinion in Palestine. Recognizing these motivations is pivotal in deciphering the complexity of their roles in media influence and public discourse. Such results agree with Zulli (2018) and how types of influencers were identified based on their connections and motivations.

The analysis highlights a multitude of motivations driving influencers to affect public opinion. Personal connection, impact, internal motivation, pursuit of truth, ethical content creation, values, social responsibility, and a connection to Palestinians abroad emerge as significant motivators. This diverse range of motivations contributes to a nuanced understanding of the influencers' underlying drives in their journey to shape public opinion in Palestine.

Influencers reveal diverse considerations in their decisions to continue or stop influencing public opinion. While many express an unwavering commitment, they also weigh factors such as the impact on mental health, the enormity of causes, external influences, and constraints. The nuanced perspectives offer insights into the complex decision-making process influencers navigate in their roles.

The nuanced perspectives provided by influencers offer a comprehensive understanding of their roles in shaping political opinions in Palestine. The emphasis on specialisation and diversity of impact reflects the influencers' recognition of the varied domains through which they exert influence. The acknowledgment of people's power and connection underscores the symbiotic relationship between influencers and their audience, emphasising the influencers' representative role. The significance placed on talent, personality, and acceptance highlights the personal attributes that influencers believe contribute to their impact.

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The advocacy for foreign language publication to influence global awareness indicates influencers' awareness of the importance of reaching diverse international audiences. The recognition of impactful events and influential figures further illustrates influencers' responsiveness to the dynamic political landscape. The discussion also delves into the influencers' role in clarifying narratives, building positive images, and presenting unique perspectives, emphasising their contribution to shaping public perception.

Overall, the influencers' diverse insights contribute to a nuanced understanding of their political impact and personal influence, providing valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of their roles in influencing public opinion in Palestine.

Influencers' concern for public opinion outside Palestine unfolds as a nuanced landscape of strategic considerations and challenges. The emphasis on impactful topics, awareness of regional news, and the comparison of freedoms showcases influencers' dedication to addressing global issues. Communication challenges underscore the complexities influencers navigate in conveying messages to diverse international audiences.

Translation for global outreach and message clarification highlight influencers' commitment to bridging cultural gaps and dispelling misconceptions on a global scale. The interest in regional events and cultural presentation demonstrates their multifaceted approach to engaging with a global audience. The discussion also delves into influencers' perspectives on presenting the Palestinian narrative globally and engaging in international collaborations, providing valuable insights into their adaptability and commitment to a broader impact. These aspects were considered in several studies, especially those highlighted by Slaha (2021), Lukose and Mathur (2019).

Influencers' diverse perspectives contribute to a nuanced understanding of their roles in shaping public opinion beyond Palestine. The intricacies revealed in their considerations offer valuable insights into the influencers' strategic approaches, challenges, and commitment to conveying messages on the global stage.

Influencers' perspectives on influencer idols reveal a spectrum of approaches, showcasing the multifaceted nature of their influences. While some influencers draw inspiration from specific individuals they actively follow, others emphasise the importance of qualities or attributes rather than specific names. The rejection of

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idolization underscores influencers' resistance to elevating individuals to a sanctified status, opting instead for a more diverse and nuanced approach to gaining insights and inspiration. This diversity in influencer idol perspectives contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the sources that shape their roles in affecting public opinion. Li (2020), Kaplan (2018) and Al-Emadi (2020) also highlighted that the different sources and contents shared by the influencers affects how their followers are evaluating the content and hence a change in public opinion might be created.

Influencers contribute diverse perspectives on the potential negative impact they may have on public opinion. The lack of materialistic goals or religious ideologies, pursuit of financial gains, dissemination of destructive and trivial content, influencers' mistakes, and misalignment of content during sensitive periods emerge as significant themes. The discussion underscores the complex responsibility influencers bear in shaping public opinion and the need for thoughtful and ethical approaches to mitigate potential negative consequences. These results align with the results presented in Kumar (2017) and Carr and Hayes (2015). Influencers should take that responsibility into account when producing content and try to influence their followers. In addition, Miller et al. (2017) indicated users of social media have changed according to life circumstances.

Influencers' diverse responses unveil the multifaceted decision-making processes they engage in when deciding to stand against their peers in public opinion matters. The considerations encompass personal boundaries, the existence of specific plans for impact, criticism-focused strategies, withdrawal from neutrality, responsive silence, selective interaction, block and ignore tactics, silent observation, goal-driven responses, peaceful disposition, and strategic content creation. These insights underscore the complexity influencers face in navigating challenges related to public opinion, showcasing their sense of responsibility and the strategic nature of their actions in shaping online discourse. These results agree with the recommendations highlighted in Marwick (2013) and Ugur (2017) in relation to influencer's identity and its role in maintaining a healthy relationship between the influencer and their followers.

These varied responses highlight the intricate nature of managing public opinion challenges. Influencers showcase adaptability and resilience, utilising a combination of strategic, reflective, and faith-based approaches to maintain a positive online presence amidst criticism.

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Linking these results to the conceptual framework, it is clear that the influencers' intention and the followers' attitudes towards social media usage to shape their public opinion are evident. These also determine the level of persuasion the influencers are able to deliver so as to positively or negatively impact followers' public opinions.

6.2.2. Tools of influence public opinion in Palestine

The second thematic area identifies the specific tools and strategies utilised by influencers to connect with and impact their followers. This involves a close look at the content strategies, engagement tactics, and overall communication techniques that are deemed most effective in the unique socio-political landscape of Palestine.

In exploring influencers' perspectives on effective social media tools, several key observations emerge. The dominance of video content, particularly the preference for Stories and Reels, showcases influencers' adaptability to changing audience preferences. Preferences for specific platforms, such as Facebook, highlight the nuanced strategies influencers employ based on their experiences and audience dynamics. Additionally, influencers exhibit adaptability by choosing tools based on content requirements and note changing patterns, emphasising the dynamic nature of social media impact. These results come in agreement with Goh (2012), Rossetti (2018) Woodcock (2021) as they highlighted Facebook and livestreaming being the most effective and widely used tools to change peoples' public opinions.

The diverse preferences among influencers regarding effective social media tools underscore the evolving landscape of influencer strategies. The adaptability to changing audience dynamics, preferences for specific tools based on content needs, and the recognition of the dynamic nature of social media impact collectively highlight the influencers' strategic approach to optimising their presence and impact on various platforms.

Influencers employ diverse and thoughtful criteria in selecting social media tools, reflecting a nuanced approach to content creation. The dynamic decision-making process, influenced by adaptability to restrictions, personal motivation, message conveyance strategies, location-dependent considerations, and audience impact, underscores the evolving nature of influencer strategies. This tailored approach is essential in meeting the diverse content and audience needs

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across various social media platforms. These results agree with how influencers would consider more formal tools depending on the content and its importance. These factors were highlighted by Berinsky (2017) and McGregor (2019).

Influencers, embodying a thoughtful and strategic approach, navigate the intricate landscape of social media tools. Considerations span content duration, audience engagement, and tool-specific features, reflecting a nuanced perspective on shaping public opinion. The dynamic interplay between reach, impact, and tool functionalities underscores influencers' adaptability and keen awareness of the evolving nature of effective communication on social media. These results also align with the selection of formal versus informal tools depending on the topic and the communication that suits, which was highlighted by Klasnja (2017) and Pew Research Centre (2016).

Linking these results to the research's conceptual framework vividly shows that the content social media influencers use and the ways they deliver it determine the low or high use of social media platforms. If the content that influencers share and the way they share it to influence followers' public opinion doesn't impress or persuade the users/ followers, they will not be using social media platforms for this purpose.

6.2.3. Audience reception and interaction in Palestine

The third area explores how followers receive and interact with the content produced by Palestinian influencers. The research aims to understand the patterns of behaviour and changes in attitude that occur in response to influencer communications, providing insights into the dynamics of influence and engagement on social media.

Influencers, attuned to the dynamic landscape of social media discussions, acknowledge the multifaceted nature of audience engagement. Themes such as social issues, politics, interconnected topics, behaviour change, comedy, momentary relevance, trending subjects, culinary content, the Palestinian cause, and social life emerge as pivotal. This diversity mirrors the dynamic interests and concerns of the audience. This agrees with the results highlighted in Carr and Hayes (2015).

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Influencers' preferences and critiques of social media platforms create a nuanced landscape, reflecting the dynamic nature of the digital sphere. While TikTok emerges as a dominant platform for several influencers, Facebook faces criticism for various reasons. Instagram remains widely preferred for its impact, and other platforms like X, Twitter, Snapchat, and Telegram also play significant roles based on influencers' objectives. This diversity underscores the importance of tailored strategies for each platform in influencer marketing and communication. While these results align with the results highlighted in previous studies, Slaha (2021), Lukose and Mathur (2019) believe that there can be many negative impacts upon the followers from excessive use of social media platforms.

Considering these results, it is apparent that regardless of what social media platforms the influencers use to make their points across, the followers will decide to use that particular social media platform if this changes their attitude towards a certain topic. This aligns with the research's conceptual framework that attitudes towards social media and how persuasive the influencers are would determine the follower's low or high use of social media.

6.2.4. Regulatory challenges and platform dynamics in Palestine

The fourth focus area investigates the regulatory environment of social media platforms, assessing how these regulations affect the visibility and distribution of content by Palestinian influencers. This analysis also covers the challenges that influencers face in expressing opinions freely under such constraints.

In relation to social media platforms' regulations, influencers vividly express the profound impact of social media platforms' regulations on their opinions and practices. The constraints range from the creation of a new language to struggles with terminology changes and warnings leading to reduced reach. The overarching theme is a sense of powerlessness against platform regulations, with influencers navigating a complex landscape influenced by geopolitical contexts and platform ownership beliefs. The discussion reveals the nuanced challenges influencers face, particularly in regions marked by political tension. These results show the importance of the

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recommendations highlighted by Duffy (2014) that more studies are needed to explore the effect of platform regulations on the influencers, the content they share and the interaction from the followers end.

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In terms of controlling the content, influencers' narratives unveil the multifaceted challenges stemming from social media regulations, including personal consequences, financial implications, and the psychological impact of content restrictions. The themes of strategic adaptation, concerns about audience intelligence, and meetings with platform representatives illustrate the complex dynamics influencers navigate to maintain their online presence and convey messages amid restrictive regulations. This analysis, including percentage distribution, provides valuable insights into the varied experiences of influencers within regulated social media landscapes.

In addition, influencers' narratives provide a nuanced understanding of the substantial impact of social media regulations on their content, offering diverse examples ranging from legal consequences and personal threats to strategic manoeuvring and psychological impacts. These examples shed light on the multifaceted challenges influencers face in navigating regulatory landscapes, balancing self-expression with compliance, and coping with external pressures and surveillance. The narratives presented underscore the complex dynamics of content creation in politically sensitive contexts, where influencers must navigate various constraints while striving to convey their messages effectively. Similar challenges were highlighted by McQuail (2010), DeNardis and Hackl (2015), Suzor (2018), and Jorgensen and Zulita (2020) who indicated that while these rules and regulations are meant to regulate the utilisation of social media platforms, they have put many constraints in front of their users.

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Considering the research's conceptual framework, the results show that social media regulations have limited and restricted the contents and the manners social media influencers can use in the Middle East, in Palestine in particular, and how this can affect their persuasion skills to impact upon public opinion. This will ultimately affect the extent to which the followers would use social media platforms for the intended subject matter.

6.2.5. Personal expression versus influencing opinion

Finally, the distinction between influencers expressing personal opinions and those strategically shaping public opinion is crucial for understanding the authenticity, ethical considerations, and the perceived credibility of influencers, which are pivotal in assessing their impact on public opinion.

In discussing expressing opinions VS affecting opinions, influencers' reflections underscore the complexities of their roles, blending self-expression with a conscious effort to shape public opinion in areas that matter to them, such as political issues or societal concerns. The diverse perspectives highlight the subjective nature of the impact, influenced by audience intelligence, message clarity, and the influencer's ability to connect emotionally and effectively present their thoughts. The influencers' insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics involved in the interplay between personal expression and the influence on public opinion. These aspects clearly align with Duffy (2019) and the visibility aspect that influencers focus on.

Influencers offer diverse perspectives on the conditions that lead to the transformation of expressing opinions into influencing others. Factors such as relevance, timing, audience size, individual identity, recognition, credibility, knowledge, persuasion, sincerity, openness to criticism, impact, changing concepts, unity, religious principles, biassed expression, unintentional impact, deliberate action, and influence through various media formats all play distinct roles. These agree with the results presented in Ding (2019). This diversity reflects the complex interplay of elements that contribute to the effectiveness of an influencer's expression and its impact on shaping public opinion. These results agree with these highlighted by Zakour (2004) and Pornsakulvanich (2017).

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These shared themes underscore the collaborative nature of influencers' insights, revealing a collective emphasis on engaging content, positivity, educational content, emotional appeal, effective narration, and building trust. These results agree with those highlighted by Dalbaere (2021). The recurrent elements emphasise the need for influencers to adopt a multifaceted and strategic approach to effectively shape public opinion in the Middle East. This emphasises the importance of more studies to be carried out in the Middle East with this focus.

These results clearly show that the followers' intention to use social media for the subject matter that is being discussed, their attitude towards that subject and the persuasion skills the influencers have will collectively help in shaping their public opinion towards that matter. This will then determine their low or high use of social media to shape their public opinion.

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6.3. Research limitations

While this research offers valuable information into the impact of social media influencers on public opinion in the Middle East, several limitations warrant acknowledgment. Firstly, the outbreak of the Gaza war in October 2023 may have influenced social media discourse and the behaviours of influencers during the data collection period, and completely prevented the researcher from contacting any influencer from Gaza due to loss in electricity and internet connection. Additionally, difficulties in reaching influencers and obtaining comprehensive insight details from some individuals posed challenges to the research process, potentially leading to gaps in the data.

Moreover, the refusal of certain influencers to give their opinions or insights due to security concerns underscores the sensitive nature of the topic and the complex socio-political landscape in the region. While some of the influencers were in Israeli prisons as prisoner of conscience or political prisoners, the researcher was unable to reach them. The researcher contacted and tried to contact more than 100 Middle Eastern influencers, only few were eligible to the characteristics needed. They agreed to be interviewed and some asked for their responses to be anonymously presented. These limitations may have implications for the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the findings, highlighting the need for cautious interpretation and further investigation into the role of social media influencers amidst such challenging circumstances.

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6.4. Research recommendations

Given the research findings, following are the researcher's recommendations:

1. There is a need for a comprehensive regulation assessment:
    a. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of social media regulations, considering their impact on influencers' freedom of expression, psychological well-being, and financial stability.
    b. Explore potential avenues for influencers to collaborate with regulatory bodies in shaping fair and effective guidelines that balance freedom of expression with responsible content creation.
2. Influencers needs support programmes:
    a. Establish support programs and resources for influencers facing legal consequences, personal threats, or psychological challenges due to their content.
    b. Collaborate with mental health professionals to develop initiatives that address the psychological impact of regulatory challenges and external pressures on influencers.
3. Influencers would benefit from some educational opportunities/ initiatives:
    a. Implement educational initiatives to raise awareness among influencers about legal consequences, evolving laws, and the importance of ethical content creation.
    b. Provide resources and training on strategic manoeuvring, adapting to changing circumstances, and navigating regulatory landscapes without compromising on the quality and authenticity of content.
4. It is recommended that influencers receive some training on diversifying content creation.
    a. Develop training programs to empower influencers in creating diverse and engaging content that adheres to regulations while maintaining authenticity.
    b. Include modules on storytelling, emotional connection, and effective communication to enhance the influencers' ability to connect with their audience.
5. There is a need for conducting research on public opinion dynamics:

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a. Conduct in-depth research on the dynamics of public opinion in the Middle East, particularly focusing on the factors that influence sentiment and the role of influencers.
b. Explore the impact of influencers on shaping public opinion and the ways in which cultural, political, and social factors contribute to the reception of influencer content.

6. It is recommended that various platforms collaborate to create more supportive environment for content creation:
    a. Encourage collaboration between social media platforms and influencers to create a more supportive environment that considers the unique challenges influencers face.
    b. Facilitate open dialogues between platforms and influencers to address issues of content removal, account restrictions, and communication on evolving guidelines.
7. There is a need to reflect cultural aspects in the development of ethical guidelines:
    a. Work towards the development of ethical guidelines for influencers, addressing issues of biassed expression, preserving cultural heritage, and balancing personal opinions with societal responsibility.
    b. Collaborate with influencers, scholars, and regulatory bodies to create guidelines that reflect cultural nuances and align with evolving societal norms.
8. It is important to conduct public awareness campaigns:
    a. Launch public awareness campaigns to inform the audience about the challenges influencers face, including regulatory constraints, personal threats, and the psychological toll of their work.
    b. Foster a more informed and empathetic audience that appreciates the complexities of influencers' roles in shaping public opinion.
9. Longitudinal studies on influencers' impact are needed:
    a. Conduct longitudinal studies to track the long-term impact of influencers on public opinion in Palestine and the broader Middle East.
    b. Explore changes in sentiment, attitudes, and societal perceptions influenced by influencers, considering the evolving landscape of political and social dynamics.

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10. Influencer need to be supported for more collaborative opportunities/ initiatives:
    a. Facilitate collaboration among influencers to share experiences, strategies, and support mechanisms for dealing with challenges.
    b. Establish a network or community where influencers can exchange ideas, collaborate on impactful initiatives, and collectively address common issues.

These research recommendations aim to enhance the understanding of influencers' experiences, foster a supportive ecosystem, and contribute to the development of strategies that empower influencers to navigate challenges while positively influencing public opinion.

As a researcher, several recommendations emerge from the analysis of social media influencers' insights and their impact on public opinion in the Middle East:

1. Audience understanding: it is crucial to continue deepening our understanding of influencer audiences, including their demographics, interests, and preferences. This understanding will enable more targeted and effective engagement strategies.
2. Content strategy: influencers should develop diverse content strategies that resonate with their audience while aligning with broader societal issues and concerns. Balancing entertainment with informative and thought-provoking content can enhance engagement and influence.
3. Collaboration opportunities: exploring opportunities for collaboration between influencers and other stakeholders, such as government agencies, NGOs, and businesses, can amplify the impact of influencer campaigns and initiatives.
4. Ethical considerations: given the influence wielded by social media influencers, it is essential to uphold ethical standards in content creation, disclosure, and engagement practices. Transparency and authenticity are key to maintaining trust with audiences.
5. Measurement and evaluation: continued investment in measurement and evaluation tools and methodologies will enable more robust assessment of influencer impact and ROI. This includes tracking key performance indicators (KPIs) such as reach, engagement, sentiment, and conversion.
6. Education and training: providing influencers with access to education and training resources can enhance their capacity to produce high-quality,

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impactful content while adhering to best practices in digital communication and media literacy.

7. Regulatory frameworks: policymakers should work collaboratively with industry stakeholders to develop clear regulatory frameworks that promote transparency, accountability, and responsible behaviour among social media influencers.
8. Long-term impact assessment: research efforts should focus on longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of influencer campaigns on public opinion, attitudes, and behaviours. This will provide valuable insights into the sustainability and effectiveness of influencer-led initiatives.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can leverage the power of social media influencers to drive positive change, foster informed public discourse, and contribute to the overall well-being and development of societies in the Middle East and beyond.

However, when considering the recommendations in the context of Palestinian influencers who affect public opinion regarding the Palestinian case, several key points emerge:

1. Audience understanding: Palestinian influencers should invest in a deeper understanding of their audience's demographics, preferences, and socio-political concerns. This understanding will enable them to tailor their content effectively to resonate with their audience and address pertinent issues related to the Palestinian cause.
2. Content strategy: influencers should develop content strategies that balance the need for informative, educational content on the Palestinian cause with engaging, relatable content that maintains audience interest. This may involve incorporating a mix of news updates, personal narratives, and calls to action that inspire solidarity and action.
3. Collaboration opportunities: palestinian influencers should explore opportunities for collaboration with local organisations, activists, and other influencers to amplify their impact and reach a wider audience. Collaborative efforts can strengthen advocacy campaigns, raise awareness, and mobilise support for Palestinian rights.
4. Ethical considerations: upholding ethical standards in content creation is paramount for Palestinian influencers. Transparency, accuracy, and

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authenticity are essential for maintaining trust with their audience, particularly when discussing sensitive political issues such as the Palestinian cause.

5. Measurement and evaluation: palestinian influencers should invest in tools and methodologies to measure the impact of their content and advocacy efforts. This includes tracking metrics such as audience engagement, sentiment analysis, and the reach of their messaging to gauge effectiveness and inform future strategies.
6. Education and training: providing Palestinian influencers with access to education and training resources on media literacy, digital communication, and advocacy tactics can enhance their capacity to produce impactful content and navigate complex political landscapes effectively.
7. Regulatory frameworks: palestinian policymakers and civil society organisations should work together to establish clear regulatory frameworks that govern social media content creation and advocacy activities. These frameworks should promote transparency, accountability, and responsible behaviour among influencers while safeguarding freedom of expression.
8. Long-term impact assessment: longitudinal studies should be conducted to assess the long-term impact of Palestinian influencers' advocacy efforts on public opinion, political discourse, and policy outcomes. Understanding the sustained effects of influencer-led initiatives will be crucial for shaping future advocacy strategies and mobilising support for the Palestinian cause.

By aligning with these recommendations, Palestinian influencers can leverage their platforms to elevate the Palestinian narrative, mobilise international solidarity, and advocate for justice, equality, and self-determination for the Palestinian people.

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CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

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7.1. Conclusion

This chapter discusses the conclusion reached by the researcher delved into the multifaceted landscape of influencers shaping public opinion in the Middle East, with a particular focus on Palestine through focusing on the research questions, objectives and hypotheses.

This research delves into the multifaceted role of Palestinian social media influencers in shaping public opinion. By examining the intricate dynamics between influencers and their audiences, the study aims to address a series of research questions and objectives, drawing upon established theoretical frameworks such as the Technology Acceptance Model 3 (TAM 3), Gratifications Theory, and Goffman's Theory. The conclusions drawn from this research not only provide answers to the primary and secondary research questions but also validate the proposed hypotheses, offering a comprehensive understanding of the influencers' impact on public discourse within the complex socio-political environment of the Middle East.

7.1.1. Conclusion: Research questions

This research explores the significant role of social media influencers in shaping public opinion in the Middle East. In a region marked by complex socio-political dynamics, influencers have emerged as pivotal figures, utilizing their platforms to engage, educate, and mobilize audiences. The study addresses key questions about the mechanisms and impacts of influencers' activities, shedding light on how they navigate and influence the public discourse. By examining their tools, the interaction with followers, and the regulatory environment, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of the influencers' multifaceted roles and their effects on public opinion. The conclusions drawn offer valuable insights into the power dynamics and communication strategies within the digital landscape of the Middle East.

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Regarding the main question which is; “how do social media influencers in the Middle East affect public opinion?”. The research finds that social media influencers

in the Middle East significantly shape public opinion by leveraging their platforms to address social, political, and cultural issues. Their ability to engage with a large audience allows them to influence discussions, perceptions, and attitudes, thereby playing a crucial role in the formation of public opinion. Influencers' strategic use of storytelling, personal branding, and interactive content creates a powerful dynamic where their followers are not just passive recipients but active participants in the dialogue.

As for the secondary questions of the research, the researcher reached the following conclusions:

1. "What is the most prominent impact of influencers' posts on forming public opinion in the Middle East?": the most prominent impact of influencers' posts is their ability to mobilize and educate the public on key issues. Influencers often highlight pressing socio-political matters, providing information and perspectives that may not be covered extensively by traditional media. This mobilization can lead to increased awareness, engagement, and even activism among their followers, thereby significantly shaping public discourse.
2. "What tools do influencers use to affect public opinion?": influencers utilize a variety of tools to affect public opinion, including high-quality visuals, compelling narratives, interactive features like polls and Q&A sessions, and strategic collaborations with other influencers or organizations. These tools help to amplify their messages, making them more engaging and persuasive. Additionally, the use of data analytics and insights allows influencers to tailor their content to the preferences and interests of their audience, thereby maximizing their impact.
3. "How do followers cope with influencers' messages and interact through social media?": followers engage with influencers' messages through likes, comments, shares, and direct messages, which fosters a sense of community and direct interaction. They often rely on influencers for information and perspective, especially on complex or contentious issues. Followers also exhibit varied responses, from active support and advocacy to critical engagement and debate, reflecting a dynamic interaction that goes beyond passive consumption.

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4. “What are social media platforms’ regulations and challenges toward expressing opinions?”: social media platforms have established regulations and algorithms that influence the visibility and dissemination of content. These regulations can both enable and restrict influencers' ability to express opinions. Challenges include content moderation policies that may limit freedom of expression, as well as the ever-changing algorithms that affect content reach and engagement. Influencers often navigate these challenges by staying informed about platform policies and adapting their content strategies accordingly.
5. “What is the difference between expressing an opinion and affecting others’ opinions?”: expressing an opinion involves sharing personal views and insights on various topics, whereas affecting others’ opinions entails actively shaping and influencing the perceptions and beliefs of the audience. Influencers often blend both, using their platforms to articulate their viewpoints while simultaneously engaging in tactics designed to persuade and mobilize their followers. This distinction highlights the dual role of influencers as both opinion leaders and active participants in public discourse.

7.1.2. Conclusion: Objectives

Given the context of the research on Palestinian social media influencers and their effect on public opinion, the researcher has been able to reach the following conclusions. These conclusions address the main and secondary objectives of the research, shedding light on the intricate dynamics between influencers and their audiences.

A. Main objective: determining the activity of Palestinian social media influencers and their effects on public opinion, the research has established that Palestinian social media influencers play a strong role in shaping public opinion. They actively engage their audience on a variety of social, political, and cultural topics, utilizing their platforms to influence discussions and perceptions. Their activities are characterized by strategic content creation and

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interaction that resonate with their followers, thereby significantly affecting public discourse within the Palestinian context.

B. Secondary objectives: the research set five secondary objectives that were discussed deeply in the discussion chapter, and here, the researcher clarifies the conclusions of each objective:

1. Assessing the extent of Palestinian influencers' effect on public opinion: regarding objective 1, it has been proven that Palestinian influencers have a substantial impact on public opinion. Their ability to mobilize, educate, and engage their audience on pertinent issues demonstrates their influence. This impact is evident in the way followers respond to and engage with their content, often reflecting shifts in perceptions and attitudes aligned with the influencers' messages.
2. Identifying the tools required to affect the mass, particularly influencers' followers: regarding objective 2, the research identifies several key tools that Palestinian influencers use to affect their followers. These include high-quality visuals, compelling storytelling, interactive features such as polls and Q&A sessions, and strategic collaborations. Additionally, the use of data analytics allows influencers to tailor their content to the preferences of their audience, enhancing their ability to influence public opinion effectively.
3. Understanding the way followers cope with Palestinian influencers' messages and interact through social media: regarding objective 3, it has been shown that followers engage with influencers' messages through various interactive methods, including likes, comments, shares, and direct messages. Followers are not merely passive consumers; they actively participate in dialogues, exhibit support, critique, and engage in meaningful discussions prompted by the influencers' content. This dynamic interaction underscores the significant role of followers in the broader discourse facilitated by influencers.
4. Evaluating social media platforms' regulations and challenges toward expressing opinions: regarding objective 4, the research highlights the regulatory environment of social media platforms, which poses both opportunities and challenges for Palestinian influencers. Platform policies and algorithms can restrict the expression of opinions and limit content reach. However, influencers navigate these challenges by staying informed about

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changes in platform regulations and adapting their content strategies to maintain visibility and engagement.

5. Distinguishing the difference between a Palestinian influencer expressing his/her opinion and an influencer affecting others' opinions: regarding objective 5, the research delineates a clear distinction between expressing an opinion and influencing others' opinions. While expressing an opinion involves sharing personal views, affecting others' opinions involves strategic efforts to shape and persuade the audience's perceptions and beliefs. Palestinian influencers often engage in both activities, using their platforms to articulate their viewpoints and simultaneously employ tactics designed to influence and mobilize their followers, thus playing a dual role in the digital public sphere.

7.1.3. Conclusion: Hypotheses

The research on Palestinian social media influencers and their effect on public opinion was guided by three key hypotheses, rooted in established theoretical frameworks: the Technology Acceptance Model 3 (TAM 3), Gratifications Theory, and Goffman's Theory. The findings of this study provide a nuanced understanding of how these theories manifest in the activities and impacts of influencers within the Palestinian context.

1. Hypothesis 1: technology acceptance model 3 (TAM 3), the main hypothesis posited that the acceptance and use of social media technology by Palestinian influencers are driven by perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and the influencers' experience with technology. The results support this hypothesis, demonstrating that influencers who perceive social media as easy to use and beneficial are more likely to adopt and effectively utilize these platforms. Influencers with greater experience showed higher levels of engagement and impact, aligning with TAM 3's assertion that experience moderates the relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness.
2. Hypothesis 2: gratifications theory, this theory suggested that Palestinian social media influencers use their platforms to fulfill specific psychological

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and social needs, thereby influencing their followers. The research confirms this hypothesis, revealing that influencers leverage social media to meet needs such as self-expression, social interaction, and information dissemination. Followers, in turn, engage with influencers' content to satisfy their own needs for entertainment, knowledge, and social connection, thereby reinforcing the influencers' impact on public opinion.

3. Hypothesis 3: Goffman's theory, the second secondary hypothesis proposed that Palestinian influencers manage their online personas strategically to influence public opinion, akin to actors performing on a stage. The findings validate this hypothesis, showing that influencers are acutely aware of their public image and actively curate their online presence to maintain credibility and influence. This self-presentation aligns with Goffman's concept of the "presentation of self," where influencers perform roles that resonate with their audience, thus shaping public discourse.

Overall, the research findings strongly connect to the proposed hypotheses. TAM 3 effectively explains the technological adoption and usage patterns among influencers, highlighting the importance of perceived ease of use and usefulness. Gratifications Theory underscores the motivations behind influencers' and followers' engagement with social media, illustrating the reciprocal nature of content creation and consumption. Goffman's Theory provides a lens through which the strategic self-presentation of influencers can be understood, emphasizing the performative aspects of their online interactions.

In conclusion, the study offers comprehensive insights into the dynamics of Palestinian social media influencers and their impact on public opinion. By integrating TAM 3, Gratifications Theory, and Goffman's Theory, the research elucidates the complex interplay of technology acceptance, psychological needs, and self-presentation strategies in shaping the digital landscape and influencing public discourse in Palestine.

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7.2. Further research

Based on the analysis conducted on the effect of social media influencers on public opinion in the Middle East, it is evident that this area of research presents a rich ground for further research. Future studies could explore several dimensions that were not fully addressed in the current research due to its scope, methodology, or available resources. For instance, a deeper investigation into the psychological mechanisms through which influencers' content affects audience attitudes and behaviours could offer valuable insights into the process of opinion formation.

Additionally, comparing the impact of influencers across different social media platforms would help in understanding if certain platforms are more influential than others in shaping public opinion. This could be particularly relevant given the diverse nature of content and audience engagement across platforms like Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok.

Exploring the long-term effects of influencers on public opinion would also be valuable. While the current research provides a snapshot, understanding how sustained exposure to influencers' content might reinforce or alter public opinion over time could offer critical insights into the power dynamics of social media.

Another fruitful area for future research could involve examining the role of influencers in crisis situations, such as conflicts or pandemics. Given the rapid spread of information and misinformation during crises, understanding how influencers contribute to public discourse, panic, or reassurance could be highly beneficial.

Lastly, a comparative analysis between the influences of local versus international influencers on public opinion in the Middle East could uncover nuances in how cultural familiarity and global perspectives intersect to shape public opinion. This could also extend to examining the impact of influencers who are directly involved in political and social activism compared to those primarily focused on entertainment or lifestyle content.

By addressing these areas, future research can build on the foundation laid by the current research, further unravelling the complex interplay between social media influencers and public opinion formation.

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APPENDIX

1. Influencers' interviews: the researcher posed 24 questions within 5 thematic areas to 12 Palestinian influencers.

Appendix (1): The transcript of the interviews of the 12 influencers

(main question)	**Do you consider yourself an influencer? How?**
Alaa Abudiab	The word "influential" has taken on various meanings. There are factors that contribute to influence. I don't like to consider myself influential, but I don't deny that when I speak, I have an impact. Yes, I am influential.
Nasser Allaham	Indeed, I consider myself influential in the popular forces. Firstly, as a viewer and recipient, I am pleased with what pleases people. I walk in the streets with the people, I perform my tasks myself, I frequent the same places they do, and I eat the same food. I feel as they feel. I don't categorise myself as influential, but I see in the streets people's reactions saying that I have articulated "what we, the people, wanted to say". An influential person doesn't proclaim themselves as such and live this role, but rather, they are a result. There is a difference between the influential and the star. I am against the star and with the leader. The star is a result of governments, elite classes, and satellite channels creating it to serve their own purposes and goals. The leader, on the other hand, is a result of reality and the product of events that affect people as they are affected by them.
Ali Qaraqi	I don't know, but to some extent, yes, people are the ones who have the ability to measure my impact. Influence today has become associated with work and commerce. I would prefer if the question were, "Do you like to influence?" I would answer yes.
Shareef	I am not influential; I am an actor. I studied acting before, and people loved my

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Alzoubi	character. Influence has certain criteria that I currently don't possess, and perhaps I will possess them later. Influence is divided into two categories: the political category, which includes individuals we consider role models throughout history, and the religious category, which consists of people we follow under the label of moderate Islam. I say that influencers, celebrities, and content creators share fame to some extent, but the concepts have become blurred, and social media has taken over everything.
Ahmad Maher	Every influencer carries both positive and negative meanings. I fear this word because there is a segment in society that holds me responsible for my content. They consider me a role model at the same time, as I have given up my privacy and become the property of my followers. I believe that if anyone decides to be a content creator, they are accountable, thus giving people the power to control them. Yes, I have the ability to leave an impact on others.
Mahmoud Rezq	I am an actor or a presenter. Due to my work, I have gained followers, and later, I started creating my own content on my social media accounts. I don't prefer the word "influencer," and I say not everyone with followers is an influencer. They must have understanding, knowledge, certification, education, and know what they are .doing
Diya Elayan	The word "influencer" is significant and doesn't apply to everyone with a certain number of followers. When you ask me if I am an influencer, people will answer, not me. If you stay within a certain scope, you can make an impact. Yes, I consider myself influential, and I hope to be influential.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	The word "influencer" is a significant term that depends on the message intended for the public and for whom. Recently, some people consider this word a form of praise, but the question is whether the message really reaches people and leaves an impact .or not I tell stories and consider myself influential in videos that have a story affecting the .listener, prompting them to react
Sawsan Danaa	After presenting the content of "Cooking with a Palestinian Story," I found a large number of comments, likes, reactions, and views. Yes, there is an impact, and I

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	consider myself influential. When a person is influenced, they make an effort by either liking, sharing, or commenting.
Amneh Khandagji	The word "influencer" is significant, but I try as much as possible to convey my message, especially regarding the Palestinian cause, and I receive very positive reactions from people as I am a video creator.
Muna Hawwa	I am a journalist, and I do not like to define myself as an "influencer." The money I earn does not come from advertisements or content promotion; it comes from journalistic work. I have been working at Al Jazeera in the digital sector since 2016, and I define myself as an "activist." I can balance the rigidity of journalistic work with the fluidity of the digital world, reaching a large audience in this way.
Abdalafou Bassam	This word, at its beginning, used to intimidate me because it carries significant" implications and greater responsibility for both the individual and the society. I resisted being influential as I considered myself a regular person, utilising my skills on social media, and, thankfully, gained acceptance and popularity. Previously, in 2021, this period was crucial for us as influencers from Jerusalem. The impact became positive, and I embraced this term as I was acknowledged and named an influencer by people, and I take pride in that".
Thematic area 1: Public opinion in Palestine	
Question 1	How do you consider an influencer could affect and control the public opinion in Palestine?
Alaa Abudiab	If the influencer's voice is heard, has a specific logic, especially on social media platforms like Nizar Banat (who was serious in clarifying and debunking ongoing claims, making further discussion impossible), it certainly grabs people's attention, especially if the influencer has a foreign language and presents facts about Palestine or the issue. In our current time, everyone communicates through platforms rather than traditional means. An influencer can do anything, whether paid or not. Initially, people listen, then like

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	you, and eventually, they engage with you, creating a human connection between the influencer and the audience. For example, today in the Gaza war, we trust Mutaz Azzayza because we lived what he's experiencing through his coverage.
Nasser Allaham	People can tell whether the influencer is sincere or not. Success lies not in being a star but in being a leader connected to people's issues. The influencer doesn't have to be stern or frowning; they can be kind and close to people's hearts. The influencer must empathise, share joy and sorrow with the audience. There are two types of influencers: the popular one who is like all of his people. For example, like someone living in Jabalia camp experiencing bombings, and the other one is the velvety one who is coached on how to shake hands, speak, and represent, living a luxurious life – I'm against the last one. I believe that the star's light fades, but the leader remains, even if their voice occasionally fades.
Ali Qaraqi	In the past, we measured influence through the reaction of the ruling system, people's response to what was presented to them, and statistics provided by websites. However, nowadays, measurement is challenging due to various restrictions and laws, such as those against cybercrime and repressive measures.
Shareef Alzoubi	In the past, influence was like a heroic act that made someone famous afterward. Nowadays, there are several criteria for influencing public opinion, including continuity in presentation, innovation, knowledge, and credibility in persuasion.
Ahmad Maher	With the presence of war, both young and old distinguish between right and wrong and between truth and lies. As an influencer, if you don't acknowledge the truth that your audience sees as true without contradicting their beliefs, you won't be able to influence them. I use emotion, reason, and all possibilities to reach people.
Mahmoud Rezq	In my opinion, comedy is a universal language, close to everyone, and it's challenging. But it is the most important type of content to deliver. I influence you by changing your feelings, making you laugh, and impacting your thoughts. Making people laugh is my most important message.
Diya Elayan	Before, I used to make people laugh and feel positive and improve their mood. Now, the situation has become wiser and more rational. I apply the knowledge I've done

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	and my experiences to become closer to myself first. Now, more than 2 or 3 million people follow me. I have a significant influence when I enter their homes and talk to .them about topics close to them
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	In the past, traditional tools like TV, press, and theatre had an impact on public opinion. Now, the major share, in terms of media, belongs to influencers. In my opinion, if multiple influencers address similar topics in the same interest and each in their way, they can collectively influence public opinion.
Sawsan Danaa	If I have 100% credibility, whether in content or advertising, valuable information capable of causing change, continuity, and commitment, and if I also collaborate with other influencers in my content, I can make an impact.
Amneh Khandagji	In the past, influencing public opinion was associated with politicians, rulers, and heads of states. Now, it has shifted to social media, as seen in the events of "Sheikh Jarrah," where ordinary citizens could convey their voices and messages through modern means, like Mona and Mohammed Kurd. In Gaza now, we see the same, with influencers like Hind Khadari, Mutaz Azzayza, and Bisan who are shaping public opinion, making the world search for the issue and investigate the Zionist narrative. In my view, we are at a turning point from organised plans and polished words to ordinary, natural, influential individuals with a sincere, straightforward, and clear message.
Muna Hawwa	In my opinion, anyone can change public opinion, whether they have five followers or five million, if they have the ability to convey their voice and cause in a good, convincing, simple, and direct way, they can influence people.
Abdalafou Bassam	When covering news in Jerusalem, specifically in Palestine in general, I carry a societal responsibility. Subsequently, I witness the results of what I have created, either cumulatively or collectively, such as when a group of individuals has the same impact or when the same event occurs. This is also evident when reporting on the incursions at Al-Aqsa Mosque. I don't anticipate specific reactions or provide directives to people, but the emotional connection of the people in Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque compels them to influence and translates into various manifestations, including online solidarity, internal and external protests, given the

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	presence of followers from outside Palestine, or clear political stances. In the events of Sheikh Jarrah in 2021, it started with ordinary individuals documenting daily events, and then the snowball effect occurred, reaching the 'Sword of Jerusalem' war, without any planning or anticipation of what would happen in the future. Some photos and videos captured from my mobile phone, while I was at the forefront, garnered millions of views.
Question 2	How difficult is it to affect public opinion in Palestine?
Alaa Abudiab	At first numbers are not essential; it does not reflect the true impact. Perhaps someone with 2 million followers may not have people interested in their content, while someone with 10 thousand followers may have a dedicated audience waiting for their opinion and being influenced by it. A video may garner thousands or a million views but may not have an impact. Numbers are irrelevant, especially with the decline in "Reach" to low levels. There's also difficulty in maintaining privacy. Nowadays, people are highly sensitive, and your words can be attacked for any reason. Frankly, I don't want to be the last person attacked on a martyr's page. There are people more skilled than me in different languages, and I share their content. Influence is like a shark entering a school of fish, scattering them and changing their course, and the shark here is the influencer.
Nasser Allaham	The Palestinian public opinion is serious, inspiring, and has a fighting spirit. It is not a piece of cake; it is intelligent and militant, filled with contradictions. It distinguishes between the true and the false, and dealing with it is not easy, despite .the diverse identities of Palestinians across all of Palestine Talking to the Palestinian people is very challenging, starting from the first uprising .period through Yasser Arafat's rule until now
Ali Qaraqi	There's evident difficulty and a significant degree of fear among people. In 2014, many laws were introduced, making influence difficult.
Shareef Alzoubi	The difficulty of influence is the difficulty of obtaining the truth.

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Ahmad Maher	The Palestinian audience is volatile; they saturate quickly with a topic and live the event and reality. When we present content about the same event, they quickly feel bored, posing a significant challenge. The difficulty is having the ability not to .contradict the opinion of the majority of society and understanding their tendencies
Mahmoud Rezq	It is very challenging because the other party has media power, spending billions to support its perspective and information. However, a union of influencers with shared content and a common mindset can make a change and have an impact; our cause is just, and the truth will prevail.
Diya Elayan	It is very difficult; we are an emotional people. I feel, cry, get sad, happy, and .sometimes, I need to talk to people to try to get some relief The audience is divided into sections, some making you feel frustrated, accusing you of having a personal interest or seeking high viewership numbers, which discourages everyone. Others do the opposite of what the majority does, in order to show .themselves, for example, standing against boycotting Israeli products
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	It is very difficult, and the degree of difficulty is considered a challenge for anyone who wants to influence society. Narrative and communication style are the two challenges in talking to people. For the past three days, I've been working on a reel that's a minute and a half long, addressing the whole world, connecting the words and actions of Netanyahu and Hitler with evidence. Every word can align you with one side against the other, making it very challenging to influence if you don't have a correct narrative.
Sawsan Danaa	After the events in Gaza, and as my field is "cooking and Palestinian cuisine," anticipation, anxiety, sadness, and destructive psychology overwhelm me. I am very affected, fearing the Judaization of our dishes and the loss of our food culture. The other side is actively promoting its narrative. Even the younger generation is moving away from traditional heritage dishes. All of this is fear and difficulties I experience, putting in significant effort to preserve this folk heritage in the food industry.
Amneh Khandagji	The difficulty of change does not depend on an individual but on a group with a clear plan among several influencers, in addition to continuity, patience, and the ability to persevere to achieve the goal and message.

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Muna Hawwa	If the influencer can convey their voice in ways and styles that have an impact, like the effect of a butterfly, they can easily influence.
Abdalafou Bassam	Defining an influencer outside Palestine, particularly one with a substantial following, involves an individual possessing a specific skill that captures people's attention, such as comedy or culinary expertise, coupled with charisma. On the other hand, defining influencers in Palestine, especially in Jerusalem, differs from the aforementioned. This underscores the difficulty of influencing in this context. An influencer here must possess a minimum level of culture, awareness, and responsibility that qualifies them to engage with people.
Question 3	What are your procedures as an influencer to affect public opinion? before, during and after an incident?
Alaa Abudiab	There are several aspects; no procedures are involved. It's spontaneous. I go live without a program, team, editing, or planning. It's just spontaneous, and perhaps this spontaneity is what makes influencers impact people simply and brings them closer. I don't have a team; it's all spontaneous. There's no one behind the camera feeding me what to say. Social media does not generate income for me, and "reach" doesn't matter to me; sometimes I close my account for three months. I am a product of serendipity, and sometimes I demand my right not to express an opinion or comment on anything
Nasser Allaham	If you believe in people, they believe in you. If you address people, they address you. The process is reciprocal. Silence does not create change, and a star does not accept criticism, but a popular leader accepts criticism. And beware of taking things personally.
Ali Qaraqi	Firstly, if the issue personally means something to me and affects me, I consult with some lawyers and legal experts, then I record the content and publish it or write about it.
Shareef Alzoubi	First, possessing specialised knowledge in the topic I want to talk about, such as social intelligence (quick wit, dealing with extended family and the community, and taking the initiative). Then mastering the montage of the theatrical scene,

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	considering techniques and cameras, and finally, addressing the audience, which is a fundamental element in influencing.
Ahmad Maher	Being close to people in their joys and sorrows. I say that the influencer or media person is a trustworthy and accredited representative for the people and by the people, not for a specific entity, government, institution, or company. The moment of expression begins when you feel the concerns of the followers. When I publish content, I specify several aspects of the topic, the followers' understanding of the topic itself, how positively it will impact the Palestinian cause, and whether the video's impact will be instant or enduring. It needs to be suitable for every time and place, containing news, emotions, numbers, statistics, along with my personal opinion. The final stage is feedback, whether negative or positive.
Mahmoud Rezq	Firstly, the thinking stage, then having the right mindset to create content and providing suitable conditions for shooting. I shoot using the phone with adjusted settings, then the follow-up stage after publishing, such as taking feedback from people's comments and caring about the topic's spread. Finally, I respond to everyone's comments and engage with them after publication.
Diya Elayan	No procedures; I live with people's emotions and feel them. I feel positive, and I publish a video with positivity. I don't seek praise or respond to comments. But my content is real.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	I search, along with my team, for verified facts and real stories, focusing on character names and all story elements. Then, I follow the same first steps with the same time and effort with the narrative. Thirdly, shooting and editing, then uploading to social media. Previously, I used to follow and respond to people's comments. Still, lately, it has become difficult due to the spam feature responding to people in an AI-driven way.
Sawsan Danaa	I search for the selected topic and gather information through internet sites. I try to condense it into seconds to fit a reel, although the story may be long and engaging with many stories, such as the story of olives, thyme, oranges, or traditional Palestinian attire. I try to make the dish 100% Palestinian while narrating the story during its preparation. My daughter and I do the shooting, then the editing, followed

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	by monitoring the comments and responses.
Amneh Khandagji	If I want to talk about a specific topic, I search for it and communicate with people who can influence public opinion with me to spread awareness. This is our main goal, such as the issue of cutting off electricity to Gaza. As for the procedures after publishing, I have a problem with that; I don't respond to comments, and I don't follow up after publication.
Muna Hawwa	Most of what I do for impact is without planning or preparation. It's spontaneous. I can connect with several influencers for the purpose of conveying a message or raising awareness. I go live, host them to talk about a specific issue, or act as a mediator between an influencer with many followers and an unknown Palestinian activist to tell their stories and let the shock play its role. This is done using platforms like Instagram, considered one of the most influential platforms after channels like Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya shifted to social media. I don't care about people's reactions after publishing, but I like to hear the feedback.
Abdalafou Bassam	I have a passion for photography, and my beginnings on social media were limited to publishing. Initially, I shared aesthetically pleasing images of Al-Aqsa Mosque captured with a small camera I purchased, signing each photo. Over time, I started documenting Jewish incursions to Al-Aqsa Mosque, evolving from images to videos using a mobile phone. As my followers increased, my work was eventually featured by multiple news agencies. Now, I work as a correspondent for Al Jazeera net. Having studied journalism, my hobby transformed into a profession, becoming a source of content on social media.
Question 4	What motivates you the most to start the journey to affect public opinion? Money? Views? Politics? Personal? The case? Others?
Alaa Abudiab	To be personally affected by an issue and wanting to intervene in it, I must have something to say, and it must be important. Firstly, I need to have a unique perspective or content that hasn't been discussed before. Secondly, overall, I use comedy for expression and impact, as people like to hear you and laugh. However, .sometimes, unconsciously, I start discussing it on social media

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Nasser Allaham	In 2002, I was summoned with journalists to meet the British Prime Minister to answer one question: How can we stop suicide operations in Tel Aviv? They turned to us because they lack ideas, and the roads are closed to them, so they ask. Now, politicians no longer ask; they've lost their compass. All European principles are fake, and the goal of human rights associations is to promote homosexuality among us. America fails all attempts at reconciliation between us and the Jews; it doesn't want that, and the same goes for the leaders sitting in palaces; it's authoritarian, knowing it won't succeed in elections. I don't address my words to leaders; I rarely criticise them. I address my words to the working class, the poor people, and the weak human. People and circumstances motivate me to influence public opinion.
Ali Qaraqi	I start from myself, an internal motivator, in addition to people's interaction with me and their encouragement despite the fact that people see my content as political, analytical, and dealing with sensitive topics. But I prefer to be a satirical comedian, combining my basic talent, experiences, and skills studied in my bachelor's and master's degrees as a media professional.
Shareef Alzoubi	I must understand the truth and not just know it.
Ahmad Maher	In my opinion, my ability to make an impact on the other party is what motivates me the most to influence public opinion, and to have a message that does not negatively affect religion or ethics, and to delve into people's concerns and talk about them.
Mahmoud Rezq	The factors of time, psychological tranquillity, and good mood are what most motivate me to create specific content.
Diya Elayan	A significant responsibility that I love to bear is spreading joy among my followers. Also, cases motivate me, and my belief and faith drive me to create such content. If I feel mood swings, I watch videos that motivate me to stay on my path.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	The journey of influencing public opinion differs from the reasons for content creation. Content creation is a job and a source of living, but it is under scrutiny. There can be no mistakes in it because an error means the end of your source of income. If you have an opposing opinion to a certain group, they won't understand

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	that it's just your opinion, but your criticism will be in a "follow the herd" manner. I have a segment of child followers, so ethically, the content should be suitable for them and everyone. The reason I choose one story over another is the events we are going through around us
Sawsan Danaa	My values, principles, passion, and love for authenticity in Palestinian taste and cuisine motivate me.
Amneh Khandagji	My motivation is the reactions of people, in addition to personal and national motives to convey my message and voice. Typically, my content is cultural heritage, stories, traditions, or songs. In times of war, I dedicate all my efforts to conveying content about the Palestinian cause, war, and aggression on Gaza.
Muna Hawwa	I consider the motivator to be social responsibility towards my culture and cause.
Abdalafou Bassam	The segment that propels and motivates me to persist and not stop are Palestinians living abroad, unable to enter or visit Palestine, yearning to see it. I love conveying the image and events to them; I touch the impact. This is what drives me forward.
Question 5	Do you believe in changing public opinion? how?
Alaa Abudiab	What is your influence? Events sometimes dictate. I am not Mohamed Salah in terms of followers. However, knowing what you're talking about and choosing wisely, here is where you can have an impact. Shedding light on a topic no one has seen. Here, you can influence. For example, in the case of theft in the Palestinian National Authority, you'll find me speaking. There are issues we can't influence, for instance, the issue of 'withdrawing the IDs of Palestinian residents inside the 48 lands' because they supported Gaza. Today, it's not appropriate to raise this issue because thousands are dying – there's no comparison.
Nasser Allaham	Yes, I believe the doors are open, and my words are heard. I sense the change on the streets and in public opinion. The article is influential, the word is heard, and change is present. Here, I say, 'The weakest ink is more potent than the strongest memory.'
Ali Qaraqi	Yes, certainly. I often publish on Facebook or video clips on Instagram.
Shareef	Yes, indeed. The evaluation standard on social media differs from that of television,

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Alzoubi	radio, or even theatre and cinema. Television implies content, whereas on social media, change is driven by charisma.
Ahmad Maher	Yes, I believe significantly. In the incident of the news about the beheading of 40 children, the U.S. government denied it. In a conference, Netanyahu mentioned losing control of the Israeli narrative, thanks to public opinion and its ability to bring about change. Regarding Egyptian aid, the Egyptian people learned that President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi did not provide assistance to the Palestinian people.
Mahmoud Rezq	Yes, I believe in changing public opinion, especially easily on social media and on various topics.
Diya Elayan	Yes, a lot. The Arab world deals with the Palestinian issue as a personal, international, and humanitarian matter, but not purely as an Islamic and religious issue.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	Unfortunately, no. Not because I've lost hope but due to the lack of change on the ground. At the beginning of the events in Gaza and the war there, we spoke in foreign languages to convey our message. Indeed, we influenced foreign influencers, and there were million-person protests worldwide, but still, nothing happens – no laws, no governments, and no individuals influencing public opinion.
Sawsan Danaa	Yes, I believe in that, and it matters to me, but I have more than one field, and I don't have sufficient time to fully engage in my page, which I manage alone. I like the number of followers to increase, and I like to gain the approval of a large part of public opinion.
Amneh Khandagji	Of course, public opinion is divided into two parts: the first part is popular and mass opinions that we have succeeded in changing as Palestinians, such as through protests and changing the views of the new generation of Jews. The second part is political opinion, which is the responsibility of leaders. It has not changed yet; perhaps we need some time until we can achieve that. However, in our role, we managed to change the Western public opinion, which, in turn, pressured its governments to change their views on the Palestinian issue.
Muna Hawwa	Yes, I believe. In 2009, I had a Facebook page talking about the history of

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	Andalusia, and I was networking between influencers and my cause on this page to convey my message. It talks about Spain's celebrations every year on the second of January, marking the expulsion of Muslims from there. However, each influencer has their own way. This is how I was and still believe in changing public opinion in my way.
Abdalafou Bassam	Undoubtedly, we bring about change and influence. As an individual, I can fight alone in Jerusalem when I share an image of an elderly woman whose home has been demolished by the Israeli occupation. As a result, international and humanitarian institutions move to address the issue of demolishing the homes of Jerusalemites. On the other hand, in events like those in Gaza, it is a widespread uprising with all influencers aligning in the same direction to support a just cause. For instance, the journalist Muath Azayzeh, a single individual capable of driving change and influencing public opinion. He is from Gaza, speaks English, and has an enormous following, reaching up to 18 million followers, surpassing the number of followers of U.S. President Joe Biden. Additionally, there is Mona Al Kurd, an activist addressing the 'Sheikh Jarrah' neighbourhood issue. While several names exist in Sheikh Jarrah, she has stood out more than others.
Question 6	When is the turning point for you? Or when do you stop?
Alaa Abudiab	Often, I contemplate between continuing and withdrawing. Mental health is crucial for the ability to sustain influence and engagement in dissemination. There are typically both critics and supporters. For example, when a cause is too immense, like the Gaza war 'Sword of Al-Aqsa,' I may opt for silence and remote observation. If images and events don't impact people, what can I possibly add? My followers are Arabs, and 99% are supporters of the Palestinian cause. What can I contribute to them? If a picture of a child, whose body is divided in half, doesn't stir them, what will?!
Nasser Allaham	We are living in a state of wartime emergency. My silence will be temporary because we are a people who can communicate with each other through any means, whether through gestures, allusions, drawings, or symbols. Even our interaction in silence and through folk proverbs cannot be silenced permanently. Israel replaced

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	the Ministry of Information with the Ministry of Execution. They have crossed all boundaries, but they cannot silence us forever.
Ali Qaraqi	I don't have the option to stop; I am incapable of it, and I cannot. I am part of the social responsibility as a Palestinian individual, and I must play my role. I was supposed to be a creator of comedic and satirical content, but I shifted in another .direction, a reality that I am obligated to follow
Shareef Alzoubi	There are external and internal circumstances that impact my turning points. Regarding internal circumstances, nothing will prevent me from influencing and embarking on the journey of persuasion. I am against losing passion, and no one can stand between me and the impact, unless there is an external influence such as account closures, arrests, and threats.
Ahmad Maher	I will stop when we are liberated. I will stop if I get shot at a checkpoint while being inspected by Israeli occupation soldiers, or if I am arrested, or if restrictions are imposed on my social media pages. As a content creator, I have a message, and I will not stop until liberation.
Mahmoud Rezq	I will not stop. I don't follow specific trends; I have my own path. I am not a journalist reporting the news; I am trying to make people laugh, improve their mood, and uplift their spirits, that's all.
Diya Elayan	I will not stop. I deal with intelligence and wisdom. I understand their limitations and rules as they are American entities. I know how to convey my message without having my accounts deleted or my posts blocked.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	I will not stop. It has become like an addiction, an addiction to reach, an addiction to the number of followers, their likes, and their reactions. If someone wants to stop, they may have actually become unable to influence others, or perhaps they stop as a way to increase visibility and create media drama around them.
Sawsan Danaa	If there is a reason beyond my control, I will stop publishing. However, at the moment, I am not considering stopping at all.
Amneh	I will not stop. I cannot do so unless an external force takes control of me. As long

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Khandagji	as I am capable, I will not stop.
Muna Hawwa	After the events of the 'Al-Aqsa Flood' war in Gaza, and seeing images of dead children and body parts, I experienced a psychological breakdown and went to the hospital. The doctor's orders were to stay away from social media for at least a week. Here, I began to wonder why I capture, publish, send, and share when nothing changes; instead, it affects my mental and physical well-being. However, as long as there is a message and a cause, I will continue and pursue my goal.
Abdalafou Bassam	Often, I feel tired and say I won't continue on this path, but responsibility is what" drives me to keep going. As Palestinians in every city, we were created to carry this message, and perhaps if we stop, there will be no alternative for us. If I stop publishing or fail to engage with the events around me, I will reach a feeling of betrayal. The responsibility is significant and challenging, and the price is high, such as arrest and persecution, but the result is worth it. I don't continue daily publishing .as I scale back for family, security, and mental health reasons I influence hundreds of thousands of people, and being outside of prison is much ".better than being inside. If I want to stop, I will stop for this reason
Question 7	In your opinion.. What is the political case that influencers have the most effect in Palestine? What is your personal impact as an influencer?
Alaa Abudiab	The events in Gaza's war, 'Sword of Al-Aqsa', are very significant, so you have to choose what you want to say, and the choice itself is a statement. Your silence is also a statement, just like your words. The matter is diverse; there is a political influencer named 'Khabeesa,' for example, when he speaks about banks and bank interest, he has a significant impact, and everyone reacts. Or, if there's an influencer who cares about beauty, makeup, or travel, they have their followers and their unique impact that is not concerned with the country's economy. It depends on specialisation.
Nasser Allaham	I am an influencer for the people's power, and I consider myself an observer and" receiver, not a sender. What pleases the people pleases me. I walk the streets with the people, perform my duties myself, visit the same places they do, eat the same food, and thus, I feel that I am one of them, and they are a part of me when I write about myself. I never attempted to live as an influencer, but people's reactions on the

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	'.street say, 'You spoke what we want to say An influencer is a result and a son of reality, and there is a difference between an influencer and a star. I am against being a star and with being a leader. I know the .extent of my influence on people because I live with them
Ali Qaraqi	The most important things are talent, personality, and acceptance from people, in addition to our need for skills, intelligence, and diverse opinions.
Shareef Alzoubi	I believe that the greatest impact of influence in Palestine lies in the continuous publication in foreign languages for one reason: when the American or European people learn the truth, governments will listen to them and initiate change. In the Arab world, public opinion has little influence on governmental decisions.
Ahmad Maher	We must trust in the resistance. I believe that this is the most significant political stance that an influencer can present content about.
Mahmoud Rezq	I am an actor or presenter, and later, I started creating my own content on my social media accounts. That is my influence. As for influencers in the Palestinian cause, they have the greatest impact, especially in the situations of war, such as Gaza war. Even though they may not have changed public opinion, they have clarified and built the image, focusing on it and creating good and impactful content
Diya Elayan	When journalists Saleh Al-Jaafari and Mutaz Azayza presented the war images in Gaza, they did not show us the other positive side and the imminent victory due to the circumstances they were placed in, which were beyond their control. I have another perspective through which I look at things and clarify them for the public.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	All the events happening in Palestine in their time and place have a significant impact, and they do not cancel each other out. These cases affect us and others, such as the Palestinian activist Ahed Tamimi, the influential figure from Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in Jerusalem, Mona Al Kurd, the Gazan journalist Wael Aldahdouh, and the Palestinian journalist Sheren Abu Akleh, including the story of the grandfather whose granddaughter was martyred by israeli bombing in Gaza war, and he called her 'the spirit of the spirit.
Sawsan Danaa	For each field, there are followers and fans with specific interests, whether it's

	politics, laughter, entertainment, or fun.
Amneh Khandagji	The Palestinian resistance.
Muna Hawwa	The Palestinian cause.
Abdalafou Bassam	I will say something true and serious, it's a charge directed at us, the influencers from Jerusalem. When I was arrested by the Israeli intelligence in the "Maskobiya" prison during the Gaza war in 2023, I spent six days of torture and abuse. They accused me of promoting people's thoughts and attitudes and influencing them towards the resistance movement, away from the peace stream followed by the Palestinian Authority. I respond and say that people sympathise more with the resistance because they know it works to restore dignity and rights to the people. In addition, social media platforms serve as a miniature referendum capable of dismantling systems that seemed indestructible, such as the ruling regime in Tunisia, Egypt and others during the Arab Spring. Social media in Palestine still maintains its impact in expressing opinions for or against the resistance.
Question 8	Do you care for public opinion outside your country?
Alaa Abudiab	I have some followers from abroad. If I raise a topic and know that it will have an impact, I shed light on it and spread it. However, the words of 'Um Yusuf,' the curly-haired child who was martyred in the Israeli bombardment in Gaza in 2023, have a greater impact than me. People see what is happening, and I will not become a page for news dissemination.
Nasser Allaham	Of course, I follow the news of the Middle East, and my articles are spread across all Arab countries and North Africa.
Ali Qaraqi	I left my country, Palestine, for the land of freedom, Europe, hoping to find more space and freedom, but it's all a big lie. There are no rights, no freedom, no space, just lies.
Shareef Alzoubi	Yes, they have more freedom of opinion and the ability to organize protests that the government listens to, unlike our protests in Arab countries.

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Ahmad Maher	When the war on Gaza, 'A'-Aqsa Flood,' started on the 7th october 2023, most of the videos were translated into English, and that informed us that our problem is not with the West but with the Arabs themselves. We must convey our cause to the Arabs first. However, there are difficulties, including the challenge of convincing Arabs that we live amid ineffective governments that do not support our cause. It's challenging to communicate information from Palestinians to anyone outside Palestine who doesn't experience their conditions and lives, especially during war. Also, it's difficult to convince Arabs that Palestine has been occupied for 75 years so that other Arab countries live in prosperity and independence.
Mahmoud Rezq	The Arab influencers have successfully conveyed a message to the Western society by translating messages, making them care about the Palestinian cause. Perhaps they haven't changed their opinions, but the message has become known and clear.
Diya Elayan	Yes, it matters to me. People abroad don't know the situation in Palestine because they don't live their conditions and lives. I would like to clarify for them how life is there.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	Yes, of course. Recently, I have been following the news about Egypt and its connection to the events in Gaza.
Sawsan Danaa	Yes, definitely. I live in Kuwait, and my nationality is Kuwaiti. I love to present the Palestinian heritage, culture, and history to everyone.
Amneh Khandagji	Previously, we had an issue with presenting the Zionist narrative, as it reached the entire world in a way that suited them, unlike our narrative due to the lack of our own media. Now the situation has changed with translations and social media platforms, but in reality, nothing has changed. Continuity is important, and we must convey our message everywhere to bring about change, and we can do that. The biggest evidence of this is the million-strong protests in Britain to support the Palestinian cause, despite Britain being the cause of the establishment of this Zionist entity in Palestine. Also, the interest of the new generation of Jews in the Palestinian issue and their support for it, unlike previous generations.
Muna Hawwa	Yes, I have been doing live broadcasts with several influencers outside the country

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	and collaborating with them to convey our message to as many of their followers as possible, whether in foreign languages or Arabic.
Abdalafou Bassam	I like to follow the news inside and outside Palestine, such as Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Syria, and all countries. I also have followers from several countries.
Question 9	Name an influencer who is an idol to you regarding affecting public opinion?
Alaa Abudiab	I don't have a real influencer, but I used to follow Nizar Banat before he passed away because he had logic.
Nasser Allaham	I don't follow a specific person
Ali Qaraqi	Naji Al-Ali was a Palestinian cartoonist, noted for the political criticism of the Arab regimes and Israel in his works.
Shareef Alzoubi	.I don't follow a specific person
Ahmad Maher	Ahmed Abu Al-Sadeq is a Palestinian influencer and YouTuber. Mahmoud Al-Hasanat is a preacher, speaker, and writer from Gaza, Palestine. Sheikh Ala'a Jaber is a former football player and preacher.
Mahmoud Rezq	Ahmed Abu Al-Sadeq is an influential Palestinian YouTuber who narrates and translates stories in a very beautiful way, and he is considered a school for me.
Diya Elayan	If I want to improve my mood, I follow Abdullah Sabih, a Jordanian influencer and comedian who addresses social issues in a funny and satirical way. For storytelling, I follow Ahmed Abu Al-Sadeq, an influential Palestinian YouTuber. Generally, I influence myself, and there isn't a specific person I follow and get influenced by.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	I like to follow Youssef Hussein, known as "Jo," who is an Egyptian presenter, comedian, and influencer providing a satirical take on how the media presents social, political, and economic issues in the Middle East. Also, Hassan Hashem is a Lebanese content creator and presenter who speaks standard Arabic. Among females, Mona Al Kurd is a Palestinian influencer and activist from Jerusalem.

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Sawsan Danaa	Any good person influences me in a specific moment, but there is no specific name that I follow and am influenced by.
Amneh Khandagji	Bisan Odeh is a Palestinian storyteller, journalist, and content creator from Gaza.
Muna Hawwa	Zeena Aqel is a Palestinian activist.
Abdalafou Bassam	It's a tough question. I don't believe in the idea of sanctifying someone. I follow individuals and take certain aspects from them, such as their media influence, while disagreeing with them on other aspects.
Question 10	How does an influencer negatively affect public opinion?
Alaa Abudiab	The influencer can negatively impact public opinion despite his positive influence. For example, if he is paid because he has the ability to bring about change, he will do what is required of him. Initially, people like the influencer and engage with him. Then, people form a personal relationship with him, enhancing his impact on public opinion in any way he desires, whether positively or negatively.
Nasser Allaham	I say that positive influence imposes itself on the negative, and it's not necessary to do something extraordinary to become great. Simple things can create a positive impact. I ask myself every morning, "Am I productive?" and I answer that if I smile at others, I am productive.
Ali Qaraqi	Certainly, some influencers make mistakes, and not everyone who gains popularity becomes influential. Some may take on more than they can handle, while others may resist.
Shareef Alzoubi	Yes, influencers can have a negative impact on public opinion because everyone has their own ideas and principles.
Ahmad Maher	For example, when an influencer, in the midst of a war, creates content showcasing a luxurious lifestyle, whether in terms of food, clothing, drinks, or entertainment, it has a negative impact on public opinion. The content does not align with the reality of the situation.

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Mahmoud Rezq	In my opinion, when you read the comments on a particular topic and notice that the majority of them are negative, especially in the first 15 comments, it will likely shape your perception that the content is negative. Conversely, if the comments are positive, it may influence you to see the content in a positive light. Therefore, comments have a significant impact on public opinion, and this can be a problem.
Diya Elayan	When the influencer's message lacks materialistic goals or religious ideologies, it tends to be solely negative.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	I believe that the public opinion has awareness, and the masses understand what is right. Therefore, they can distinguish between negative and positive influence.
Sawsan Danaa	The Palestinian cause has overshadowed various topics of expression, weakening the publishable cultural legacy and defining people's understanding. It is the primary issue, but it has also impacted other aspects, possibly contributing to the dissemination of Palestinian culture.
Amneh Khandagji	If we follow pages that portray negativity towards the Palestinian cause, we are inadvertently helping them achieve their goals by increasing their followers and profits.
Muna Hawwa	Absolutely, negative impact is possible, especially if it is fueled by hatred, revenge, or strange motives.
Abdalafou Bassam	I see that the most significant impact on social media is the negative influence, and the negative influencer is the one who gains financial gains and specific goals that serve him and his interests. The negative influencer is divided into an unorganized individual with destructive and trivial content that enters our children through their phones to destroy their morals, principles, and religion. The other type is like electronic flies, backed by large organized entities with specific motives.
Question 11	When do you decide to stand against an influencer in a public opinion matter?
Alaa Abudiab	If the red lines are crossed or if there is a person or entity behind the influencer with a specific plan for impact and dissemination, on a personal level, I prefer not to criticize anyone. I criticize the work itself and not the person. For example, the

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	singer Aziz Maraka held a concert with suspicions of normalization, but when he attacked BDS, he didn't become a hero; he became against the boycott, and that's when I intervene. In normal situations, I prefer not to interfere as the matter is not personal.
Nasser Allaham	I accept others and don't recall a time when I responded to someone on social media or in real life. Everyone has the right to express their opinion freely.
Ali Qaraqi	Some of them I communicate with directly, advise them, and clarify their mistakes. As for those who resist and refuse to hear my opinion, I expose them and share their content and mistakes.
Shareef Alzoubi	Regarding the Arab citizens of Israel, I understand and respect their perspective if they try in every way to preserve Palestinian, Arab, and Islamic identity within the occupied territories. However, if they become a means of normalization and dealing with other parties, I withdraw. I do not commit to neutrality; I do not attack on social media, but I communicate with those I know personally.
Ahmad Maher	I cannot remain silent. Recently, I expressed my opinion criticizing the Jordanian King Abdullah II, stating that he is the custodian of Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Islamic sanctities in Palestine, yet he failed to supply water to Gaza during the war. As a result, my family and I were banned from entering Jordan. I decide to stand against those who attack me or the public opinion. I respond in a video, addressing their lies and exposing hidden flaws. I start with constructive criticism and then move to a harsher critique.
Mahmoud Rezq	I don't follow the car; I need to hear from both sides before deciding. In terms of internal issues, I get involved out of responsibility, and I am usually not negative.
Diya Elayan	Everyone has personal freedom, either they make a mistake in influencing or do it intentionally.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	I don't take any action towards any negative person; I understand the nature of social media. If someone goes against the flow and wants to provoke a controversy, responding to them and engaging in debate would deviate from my main goal of conveying my message and changing my compass.

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Sawsan Danaa	I am naturally a peaceful and kind person, and this is reflected in my content on my page. I believe in freedom of thought and opinion, and I do not dictate to anyone. If someone bothers me, I simply block them.
Amneh Khandagji	I do not attack, but try to ignore and not interact with them. However, sometimes I have to respond to them, like pages such as the spokesperson for the IDF in Arabic, Avichay Adraee, or the page "Israel Speaks Arabic." I am against following them or even commenting on their content.
Muna Hawwa	I appeared in a live broadcast earlier and commented on a girl who worked with an Israeli company and abandoned her principles. Still, I usually don't respond to comments or messages. I never search for my name on Twitter; it's impossible for me to respond.
Abdalafou Bassam	The responses vary, from a comment that takes me five seconds to write on a post from the opposing party, to preparing and sharing content on my pages. Recently, I created content about goods supporting the occupation and their boycott. Sometimes, I don't respond if the goal of these materials is to provoke controversy, as I am against responding to pages like Avichay Adraee because their aim is to publish, provoke controversy, and profit.
Question 12	What is your action when public opinion attacks yours?
Alaa Abudiab	I'm not skilled in handling these matters; either I delete the negative comment, apologize, or disable comments and leave. Sometimes the attack is clearly organized, such as the palestinian government's attack against me after the death of the palestinian activist Nizar Banat, and they want me to respond, but I choose not to.
Nasser Allaham	There are two types of attacks: an organized attack from a political group or fellow journalists out of professional jealousy, and this attack doesn't concern me. The other type is a genuine reaction from people that I reconsider; I reevaluate myself and my content, thinking perhaps the people are right.
Ali Qaraqi	I know most of them are organized individuals with specific goals, and frankly, I don't pay them much attention.

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Shareef Alzoubi	I know most of them are organized individuals with specific goals, and frankly, I don't pay them much attention. When the public attacks me, I don't pretend; I admit my actions, clarify my perspective, as, in the end, I am the one who published the content and knows what I am doing.
Ahmad Maher	In my early days, I liked praise, but I discovered that negative comments on the content improve the content and the influencer's personality. In October 2023, I posted a video stating that the Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi did not open the Gaza crossing to help people during the war, and nearly 7 million Egyptians attacked me. I read and listened to their opinions, but I didn't engage in debates with them. I learned something that the Egyptian people didn't understand, so I created new content to use the negative feedback to my advantage.
Mahmoud Rezq	If the criticism is constructive, I thank the person for it and try to make a change. In the past, I responded to one person and regretted it. I say if you are a public figure advocating for freedom of opinion and expression, you have to deal with criticism. As for insults and cursing, this is a moral assassination of the person, and I don't care about it.
Diya Elayan	I believe that my affairs are in God's hands. On the other hand, it's impossible for me to respond to everyone.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	In a video I published earlier, some accused me of supporting one side and being biased, but my goal was more significant, not to stir up discord among people. I don't respond to them, and I don't increase interaction on their pages because they are either electronic flies, bots, or people speaking without awareness. If I interact with them, the situation will worsen, and it will reach more views and more opinions. Sometimes I have to intervene and confront this talk.
Sawsan Danaa	If there is a problem, I verify and correct it, but if it's an individual's thinking, I don't interact with it.
Amneh Khandagji	Either confrontation or ignoring. Most people like to launch a smear campaign against every famous person. Perhaps if I'm in such a situation, I will seek the help of specialists to help me get rid of these smear campaigns.

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Muna Hawwa	I clarify my point of view, but the relationship between commenters and the influencer is often one of anger. Either they want to respond to the content, criticize, or defame it.
Abdalafou Bassam	I don't recall being attacked by anyone, but I say if attacked, the response should be strong to avoid becoming two-faced and hypocritical. On the other hand, I'm not forced to be diplomatic or justify my position.
Thematic area 2: Social media platforms; tools and how they affect influencers and content they share	
Question 1	What is the most effective tool on social media platforms?
Alaa Abudiab	According to statistics, people in Palestine prefer Facebook, especially short video clips, known as Reels.
Nasser Allaham	My views on television and satellite channels are the highest among social media platforms.
Ali Qaraqi	Video content is the most crucial and impactful, with the visual impact surpassing audio as it engages the recipient's senses fully.
Shareef Alzoubi	Regarding tools, I believe that Stories are the most effective. Motivation is what drives me, and Stories are the primary tool for direct and spontaneous expression, while Reels require pre-planning before use.
Ahmad Maher	Stories are my first choice, and if they are not sufficient to explain a specific content, I create short Reels. If it doesn't yield results, I make a second or third part of it.
Mahmoud Rezq	Short clips, then Stories, then live streaming.
Diya Elayan	People prefer concise content and minimal time, as seen in short video clips like Reels.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	Reels and Stories.

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Sawsan Danaa	Reels and Stories.
Amneh Khandagji	Reels and Stories.
Muna Hawwa	Reels stand out for the feature of sharing them with both followers and non-followers.
Abdalafou Bassam	In the events of Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in Jerusalem in 2021, live streaming was the most impactful. In Gaza war 2023 and till now, short video clips ranging from 10 to 30 seconds were the most widespread and influential, but this is not a fixed pattern; it varies for each period.
Question 2	How to decide using a tool over another?
Alaa Abudiab	I work on separating platforms and methods of sharing content. For example, I post stand-up comedy clips on TikTok, stories and videos on Facebook, and I don't share any political topics on Instagram.
Nasser Allaham	My Facebook account was restricted, and I was ordered by the Israeli cabinet to refrain from speaking in all media. After 2014, my account was frozen after the Gaza war, prompting me to use other tools such as articles, TV channels, and non-Facebook social media.
Ali Qaraqi	My Facebook account was restricted, and only 10 days ago, it was reactivated. I will return to publishing soon.
Shareef Alzoubi	The primary motivation for using one tool over another is personal drive. My emotions lead me to record stories, and if the topic requires depth, I create short videos.
Ahmad Maher	If I want to convey a quick message to my followers, from my location, anywhere, I shoot Stories. If I want to explain specific points for an extended period, I record Reels or a short video.
Mahmoud Rezq	Short clips, Reels, have several criteria; they should be unrelated to time and place, contain shareable content, and not be confined to a specific timeframe. On the other

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	hand, I keep Stories in my account and cherish them. Live streaming is used when there's a topic I want to discuss with people directly.
Diya Elayan	It depends on my location, whether in Jordan or America because of the reach.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	If I want the video to remain long, I publish it as Reels. If I want to convey a quick message within 24 hours, I publish it as a Story.
Sawsan Danaa	The strength of Reels or short videos on the page lies in not having a specific expiration time.
Amneh Khandagji	If I want the clip to stay indefinitely, I choose Reels, especially for important topics. If I want to talk about something fleeting, I use Stories.
Muna Hawwa	I use Reels today because I target non-followers who have a significant impact, especially with the situations and war in Gaza.
Abdalafou Bassam	I try to connect the idea, the event, and the purpose. For example, a tour of the old town or Friday prayers with daily photos. If there's an event I want to keep in the archive, I make it Reels. I use live streaming, for example, during Tarawih prayers in Ramadan; some people like watching and feeling the atmosphere.
Question 3	What is the effect of tools on an influencer's opinion?
Alaa Abudiab	The tools shape public opinion, especially if there is a preliminary and presence for the presented opinion that people believe in and think about. For example, if I appear in a video calling for surrendering to the people of Gaza during the war, no one will listen. Similarly, if I speak in a Story about something popular that people like, such as mocking the president or refuting a powerful minister, about someone people can't talk about.
Nasser Allaham	The important thing is not just the reach; the constant and more crucial factor in the message is the extent of impact. I have a personal page on Instagram, and my other social media pages are non-personal, like Twitter, Telegram, and YouTube.
Ali Qaraqi	In the past, I used to shoot a video clip that did not exceed 36 seconds to clarify my message in this short time, and it proved to be effective.

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Shareef Alzoubi	Direct interaction is much like a theater; reactions and viewing percentages appear directly on my phone screen.
Ahmad Maher	Reels or short video clips should be 59 seconds, containing important information delivered quickly with a beautiful presentation, excellent image, and sound quality. On the other hand, Stories include enriching information for the influencer, either through images, information, or news using audio and visual effects that have a clear impact.
Mahmoud Rezq	Short video clips, Reels, are more widespread and extensive, while Stories have a direct impact on people and remain for 24 hours. They, Stories, are easier, faster, more authentic, and closer to people, and I prefer them.
Diya Elayan	In Reels, there is a feature for public sharing, while in Stories, sharing is not possible, which is a positive aspect for Reels.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	The impact of short video clips, Reels, is greater due to the presence of a place for discussion and their unlimited duration, while Stories have a short time frame, and there is no place for discussion.
Sawsan Danaa	If I want to save an important recipe, I save it as a short video, Reels. If I want to share content for a quick topic or announcement, I create a Story.
Amneh Khandagji	The impact of Reels is more significant because it reaches a larger number of followers and can be shared.
Muna Hawwa	Reels are the fastest for reaching non-followers, and today there is the collaboration feature on Instagram, that allows several participants for one content, and that reaches all their followers.
Abdalafou Bassam	The audience knows how to use each tool, and my audience knows the type of content I publish in my Stories. There are events that people like to interact with. The topic is subjective to me. There is a difference between Reels and Stories. Reels have a broader audience, not just followers, whereas Stories are only for followers. With both tools, I define the issue and convey my message, but in Stories, when I take a photo from Al-Aqsa Mosque, I give followers a chance to ask questions, and I

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	answer. Reels do not provide personal interaction with the issue that matters to me. Both tools are important, and I use them both.
Thematic area 3: Palestinians on social media platforms and followers' interaction	
Question 1	As an influencer, to what subjects\ cases do you see people react the most?
Alaa Abudiab	The most interactive, viewed, and accessible topics are social issues due to the collective consciousness among people and shared experiences. Political issues follow closely, as they leave a significant impact, although not always interactive, and they often involve topics where discussion is restricted.
Nasser Allaham	The issues that initially attract people are politics, occupation crimes, and people's concerns. Secondly, social security and thirdly, economic issues. An attempt was made during the "Deal of the Century" to use social distraction methods, but it did not succeed with the Palestinian society.
Ali Qaraqi	In my opinion, there is no clear separation between all these topics; they are interconnected.
Shareef Alzoubi	Social topics, if human behaviour and the street are improved, affect all areas of life. If you can positively change a person's behaviour through a video, you've gained something.
Ahmad Maher	Political issues are the most engaging topics with people.
Mahmoud Rezq	comedy is the most engaging topic with people.
Diya Elayan	All topics are momentary; what happened two days ago has no value today.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	My content and principle are to talk about everything strange and mysterious on planet Earth. However, the most trending and impactful topics are the most circulated trends.
Sawsan Danaa	There isn't a specific topic, but I specialise in cooking, and that's where I started.
Amneh	Currently, the audience engages with the rhetoric of the palestinian resistance.

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Khandagji	Previously, people lost hope in partisanship and factionalism, but recently, this hope has returned, both in the Arab world and in Palestine, with the speeches of the official media spokesperson of the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of the Palestinian resistance movement, Abu Ubaida.
Muna Hawwa	Almost everything, but each situation has its specificity. Today, the war on Gaza has its place in discussions on social media.
Abdalafou Bassam	The Palestinian cause and social life are crucial topics. Here in Palestine, influencers convey the issue and try to maintain professionalism.
Question 2	What are the most effective social media platforms?
Alaa Abudiab	In Palestine, people prefer Facebook, and are gradually transitioning to Instagram. In the Gulf, for example, Instagram is popular, while in Saudi Arabia, Snapchat is widely used. Until today, my most significant impact is on Facebook.
Nasser Allaham	I say that Facebook has fallen morally, socially, and politically; it is distinctly Zionist, and I do not trust it. I do not want to open an account on it, and I can live without it.
Ali Qaraqi	In the past, it was Facebook, but currently, Instagram and TikTok are the platforms of choice.
Shareef Alzoubi	In terms of persuasion, it's Instagram, then Facebook, followed by Snapchat, TikTok, and finally Twitter.
Ahmad Maher	TikTok, then Instagram, then Facebook, then YouTube, and finally Twitter or X.
Mahmoud Rezq	Unfortunately, in Palestine, the most interactive platform is Facebook, but I don't use it because it has become outdated. Then comes Instagram, my favourite.
Diya Elayan	Instagram and Twitter, as Facebook has killed interaction and reach.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	Instagram
Sawsan Danaa	For political issues, I believe X, then Twitter, then Snapchat, Instagram, and TikTok.

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Amneh Khandagji	Instagram can be used if we manage to bypass its limitations, and Twitter has fewer restrictions.
Muna Hawwa	Instagram is a platform for showcasing the body and makeup, considered one of the platforms that affect mental health due to followers comparing influencers' lifestyles. Facebook has been disabled by me before the events of October 7, 2023 in Gaza; it is a hub for the helpless. As for Twitter, X, it is the most powerful in influencing authority due to fewer restrictions.
Abdalafou Bassam	TikTok, then Instagram, then Telegram.
Thematic area 4: Social media platforms' regulations	
Question 1	What is the role of social media platforms' regulations on your opinion?
Alaa Abudiab	Controls have a significant impact. Previously, we used to talk about everything without restrictions, but now we have to be careful not to violate guidelines and prevent the account from being restricted and posts from being published.
Nasser Allaham	Controls play a major role. In all countries around the world, governments grant freedom to influencers except in Palestine, where there are restrictions and punishments from all sides. This leads to psychological, physical, and social suffering, as well as concerns for the influencer's family and children, turning them into a battle for survival, making the person wish not to be an influencer.
Ali Qaraqi	We, as publishers on social media, have created a new language to avoid restrictions on content, not just changing words. This is very bad. There are many measures, such as threats and restrictions. The number of posts that have been deleted for me in the past is much larger compared to today. Today, I am outside Palestine, in a liberal country that emphasises freedom of expression, but there are still restrictions.
Shareef Alzoubi	These laws and regulations have affected documentation and reach on my personal social media accounts. Controls eliminate the influencer's passion.
Ahmad Maher	I struggle with myself when changing terms from "resistors" to "masked" or from "occupation" to "enemy" or writing "hit" instead of "rocket." So, I rewrite the text

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	100 times to avoid being blocked on social media platforms.
Mahmoud Rezq	At the beginning of the "Al-Aqsa Flood" war in 2023, when we, influencers, published images and videos and general posts about the situation, Facebook and Instagram gave us warnings not to publish and display, which affected the number of views and reduced reach. The only state where the influencer does not benefit financially from their followers is Palestine. In other countries, the influencer earns money from views and followers. This restriction and injustice to us, and the profits I make are only from private advertisements.
Diya Elayan	The restrictions and guidelines are set by Instagram and Snapchat, which strongly support the Zionist occupation. These restrictions are based on the thinking and beliefs of the groups that own these companies. There must be sacrifices, either by closing accounts or on a personal level, and perhaps reaching the sources of livelihood. Social media platforms impose a policy of starving opinions and freedoms.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	We, influencers, are fighting on their field, and the decision is entirely in their hands. They not only affect us but also control the entire decision-making process. Every time I post content that is deleted, a message is sent to me stating that it is violent content and that I pose a danger.
Sawsan Danaa	I believe it has a significant role; they control what will be published.
Amneh Khandagji	Sometimes, I find ways to bypass publishing my content. I cut words like "resistance," "martyrdom," or "bombardment." In other cases, I publish them as a reason for anger and rebellion against the platforms' policies.
Muna Hawwa	I can say that the media as a whole is complicit, and I can speak without speaking to convey my message.
Abdalafou Bassam	In Palestine, no matter how professional and compliant we are with publishing and adhere to the set rules, one of our contents is restricted or our accounts are temporarily or permanently closed, or access is restricted. I have suffered and continue to suffer. A special block has been placed on my personal account. I have around half a million followers on Instagram, and it is natural for my story to reach

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	100,000 views. When I talk about specific issues, but now the views do not exceed 3,000 views, and this is a type of restriction.
Question 2	How do the regulations affect\ control your content?
Alaa Abudiab	It doesn't affect me much because I reduce the frequency of posts and avoid many publications. Before the emergence of these controls, I had dedicated my content to stand-up comedy only.
Nasser Allaham	Everything has a price. I have been banned from movement and travel for many years, as well as from having a job and employment. However, these sanctions did not change my position or beliefs.
Ali Qaraqi	I comment on events and do not address sensitive or security-related topics. I only report actual news. Due to severe repression, everything has become sensitive, and talking about it is prohibited. I hint, yet intelligence agencies monitor me. The Arabic language supports diversity, but sometimes there is a need for direct speech.
Shareef Alzoubi	My Instagram and Facebook accounts were restricted in 2021 after I posted about the events in Sheikh Jarrah, Jerusalem.
Ahmad Maher	My TikTok account, with half a million followers, was restricted due to what is called electronic harassment or electronic flies that make negative responses for my content, either in videos or stories, and they were not published. I received no prior warnings, although there are 10 warnings for each person who abuses content on TikTok. There are steps to recover the account, with each step, no matter how simple, costing $45 for the platform. First, I hold a meeting, then submit a recovery request, followed by approval, changing the password, and restoring previous data. Here, I learned that their goal is purely financial.
Mahmoud Rezq	After investing effort and time to gather a significant number of followers and facing restrictions that reduce views, I felt a negative impact on my psyche and mood. I love to convey my message to the world for them to see and interact with, hoping for change.

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Diya Elayan	I deal smartly, remain on the same platform, and convey the same message but wisely. I don't want to close my accounts stubbornly, but I can deliver the message in various ways.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	We had a meeting with representatives from Meta platform; they were Arabic-speaking Jews, and we were around 63 Arab influencers. The meeting aimed to understand the reasons behind the restrictions imposed on our content on social media. It took place in early October 2023, at the beginning of the "Al-Aqsa Flood" war, and our meeting with them did not yield any results. We also met with them during the events in Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in 2021.
Sawsan Danaa	These restrictions and controls bother me, and they exhaust me psychologically. I don't want to lose my page filled with followers and supporters due to them.
Amneh Khandagji	They have a significant impact, and I feel a strong external force tying and restricting me, which is very annoying and displeasing.
Muna Hawwa	The occupier is not necessarily someone carrying a weapon; it could be someone enjoying ice cream. I say that the audience is intelligent and can distinguish between an actor and someone sincere, regardless of restrictions.
Abdalafou Bassam	My account has been restricted twice, and it might be deleted later. I recently met with officials at Meta, and the meeting lasted for 30 minutes via Zoom. I found no results, and in the last minute of the interview, I was told that they are forced to operate according to the state security system of the country I am in, which is the Israeli security system. Some accounts are not under Meta's control and are managed by the Israeli security system.
Question 3	To what extent the regulations control your content? Can you bring an example?
Alaa Abudiab	regulations control a lot. In Palestine, it reaches arrests and imprisonment on charges of incitement and alignment with the act and the actor.
Nasser Allaham	In youth's age, one must think carefully to avoid mistakes. In my age, I have the linguistic ability to maneuver and navigate around these laws. I am ready to delete Facebook and not split the word "Palestine" into two parts to make my post spread,

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	as they say.
Ali Qaraqi	Laws control a lot. I have been threatened by my family, summoned by the intelligence agency, and had my accounts restricted, along with a travel ban. There is a price to be paid.
Shareef Alzoubi	Freedom of opinion and expression does not exist in the Arab world but is somewhat respected in some countries like Tunisia and Jordan.
Ahmad Maher	When I create a video, I spend hours on its content, but I cannot share it due to social media site management. I know there are common interests between the administration and the Israeli occupation state to preserve the lifespan of the sites.
Mahmoud Rezq	In my opinion, the Israeli occupation authority has relationships with platform management, leading to our restriction as Palestinians. In contrast, there is no connection between the Palestinian Authority and platform management on social media. This has affected our ability to publish content and interact with people.
Diya Elayan	Regulations on social media control us a lot; they control our thoughts and beliefs. I am psychologically affected by it; I don't like anyone to control me. I control myself, but social media site management controls us, imposes their thoughts and beliefs on us, but we have to coexist. Restrictions are placed on specific words and certain profile pictures.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	Content policies for any social media platform are clear; if violated, the punishment is clear—first and second warnings, then account closure. For example, I posted a video on Instagram that did not violate content policies, but a Meta employee entered my account and deleted the video. The video was also deleted again from the "recently deleted" section, along with the deletion of 157,000 messages from followers who shared the video. Upon checking my account settings on Instagram, I found no violations, but external pressures on the platform regarding this content were the reason. Again, I posted content that violated content policies, and I received an email that said: "We, Meta, have removed your content because it violates our community guidelines." As for YouTube, it controls and imposes restrictions to the extent of surpassing initial warnings and giving a final warning to

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	close the channel. TikTok follows a new policy of analyzing the video before posting. If it violates their policy, you receive a ban for violating the rules.
Sawsan Danaa	Regulations on social media control a lot. I have been banned from live streaming several times, restricted from verification, and my Instagram page is randomly shadow-banned, leading to limited reach.
Amneh Khandagji	Regulations on social media control a lot; my account was closed at the beginning of the events of October 7, 2023, the start of the aggression on Gaza. Still, I recovered it through appeal, but the access and interaction returned with little activity. Regarding my Instagram account, there are many restrictions, such as deleting posts or videos and the inability to access it except by typing the full name, and not reaching non-followers.
Muna Hawwa	The ability to express is broad, and the alphabet is vast; you can say anything.
Abdalafou Bassam	No matter how I try to cut words or align, it becomes scattered dust because they closely monitor me. Despite the significant restrictions and surveillance, our influence as influencers remains high, and they still fail to silence our voices. My account closure is always expected at any moment. These platforms do not offer more than what they provide today.
Thematic area 5: Expressing opinion VS affecting opinions	
Question 1	How different is expressing your opinion from affecting others' opinions?
Alaa Abudiab	It depends on the group you are expressing your opinion to and based on the presented opinion, approach, and audience.
Nasser Allaham	The opinion should change because the world around us is changing. I think about the future and invest more in it. I don't stand in front of closed doors, and I am not influenced by reactions. The equation is not about living poor and punished or rich and naive; we can manage it.
Ali Qaraqi	Everyone is supposed to have the right to express their opinion. However, there are factors that govern influence, such as presentation skills, intelligence, idea distinctiveness, and divergence. But divergence doesn't necessarily mean going

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	against the flow of people.
Shareef Alzoubi	Today, the audience is a very intelligent person who understands and speaks without understanding.
Ahmad Maher	When I express my personal opinion, I know that it has an impact on public opinion, I know that my opinion is sincere and not influenced by a specific direction. When military expert Fayez Al-Dweiri expressed his opinion on the Russian war, people disliked him. However, when he analyzed the war in Gaza, people liked it because he mentioned real-life events.
Mahmoud Rezq	If a person is sincere, he can express his opinion and change the opinions of others. The topic should also be valuable.
Diya Elayan	Differences and similarities exist; dealing with wisdom and intelligence is necessary to convey your message and clarify your concepts so informative videos can be created.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	I ask myself if the message has really reached people and left an impact or not. With this question, I understand the difference between my expression and its impact on the opinions of others.
Sawsan Danaa	In specific situations, I show and speak sincerely and spontaneously, then leave it to the people. I don't insist because I have what matters to me. Some are influenced, and some are not. Except for the Palestinian issue, I am very concerned about making an impact on it. I feel a responsibility to document the Palestinian kitchen from my position.
Amneh Khandagji	The language of discourse is crucial, as information, prior research, emotion usage, and if possible, using a real human story with evidence differentiate from expressing an opinion. Expression is a venting of anger. I am angry about human rights conventions and international treaties. Here, I speak and represent voices that cannot speak.
Muna Hawwa	The impact can be achieved through diligence, good speech, a clear message, and translated language, or simply by expressing an opinion, using complete sentences

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	with a subject, providing real numbers and shocking information, and working on the shock idea. Start correctly, and you will continue in the right direction.
Abdalafou Bassam	Impact can be through expressing your opinion to people who accept and love you, influencing them with just expressing your opinion. It is linked to the person's ability to gather his or her thoughts and present them in a good way. I often appear on stories to talk about an issue, and followers are aware of it, asking questions that I answer.
Question 2	When does expressing an opinion turn out to affect others' opinions?
Alaa Abudiab	If it falls within people's interests and is relevant to the time and place, in addition to the number of listeners you have.
Nasser Allaham	I believe you should have your own identity to be able to influence others. Don't just succumb to those who want it just because they want it.
Ali Qaraqi	When people cite your opinion and words, despite the many who speak, it's here that people judge; they accept and listen to you. Not everyone with an opinion can influence.
Shareef Alzoubi	Having knowledge of the subject and then persuading and influencing becomes effective in expressing opinions on others.
Ahmad Maher	If someone expresses their opinion sincerely and is open to criticism, then the expression of their opinion becomes influential.
Mahmoud Rezq	When I express my opinion, it doesn't necessarily mean I will influence and change the world's opinion. If I do have an impact and reach a stage of influence, that's when I express my opinion.
Diya Elayan	I don't try to change people's opinions; I try to change their concepts. For example, in English-language videos, there are many positive aspects that people don't see, and I highlight and explain them to people. I showcase victories, not massacres, because there are those who can show the massacres from the heart of the event.
Ahmad Abu	When love unites them and they embrace religious principles.

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Alsadeq	
Sawsan Danaa	I publish content in a biased way, but despite that, I love to perpetuate, influence, document, and preserve Palestinian heritage in all its aspects.
Amneh Khandagji	Sometimes, expressing without the intention to influence but has an impact. When I speak about what preoccupies people in my own words and feelings, I inadvertently influence.
Muna Hawwa	We don't sit in a café; what we do is conversations. If we want to change public opinion, any action must be deliberate, well-written, and influential.
Abdalafou Bassam	One image from influencers to the masses and then to the world has changed governments and decisions for events like the Bab al-Amoud Uprising, Bab al-Rahmah Uprising, or events in Sheikh Jarrah. For example, influencer Alaa Abu Diab, with his humorous style addressing corruption in the Palestinian Authority, has thousands of people aware of it in a fantastic way. If it were presented as a news item, it wouldn't have had the same impact. The same goes for cartoons; they have the same effect.
Question 3	What is the main key to affect public opinion in the Middle East?
Alaa Abudiab	The key to influencing public opinion is having an intermediary for people to hear your opinion and presenting content that is simple, indicating emotion, comedy, or storytelling with skill in conveying information is essential.
Nasser Allaham	The key to influencing public opinion is to be positive and provide hope and happiness. The Arabic language is great; there are 100 answers to the same question, but I will give you the answer that brings you joy and puts a smile on your face.
Ali Qaraqi	The key to influencing public opinion is my mom's prayers—I'm kidding, really! It's the person themselves, the event, the trend, and even the external appearance that affects, like the influencer Ahed Tamimi; her distinctive appearance, hair, and voice made an impact. People, especially in the Western world, saw something different in her. Charisma a person possesses makes them accepted by others.
Shareef	The key to influencing public opinion is education, education, education—paired

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Alzoubi	with the other party being educated and understanding my talks and content.
Ahmad Maher	The key to influencing public opinion is emotional appeal and winning hearts.
Mahmoud Rezq	The key to influencing public opinion is comedy is the simplest universal language worldwide, along with charisma and an educated, smart personality necessary for information delivery.
Diya Elayan	The key to influencing public opinion is that our cause is just, we are right, and victory will come. I speak with strength because I am right. so, it is speaking with strength and being supported with your beliefs and faith.
Ahmad Abu Alsadeq	The key to influencing public opinion is narration is something I rely on a lot, and I adopt the policy that as an Arab Muslim, I show no weakness. Any mistake in delivering the idea can turn the audience against me. As for the audience, I always bet on their love for each other and the religious and natural foundations.
Sawsan Danaa	The key to influencing public opinion is honesty and credibility.
Amneh Khandagji	The key to influencing public opinion is narrative storytelling and personality.
Muna Hawwa	The key to influencing public opinion is as I call it a spark burning inside me; it's an internal feeling that compels me to speak, to tell, pushing me to feel a sense of responsibility.
Abdalafou Bassam	I say in Jerusalem, things go on without planning or expectation; that's how it is. Our society's composition is complex.The key to influencing public opinion is people's trust and love for the influencers to push them to act and have an emotional connection to the published issue.

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2. List of palestinian influencers gathered in Aug 2023 according to specific procedures explained in the research methodology, data collection methods.

Appendix (2): List of Palestinian influencers. Names highlighted in green form some of the research sample.

Name	Verified	Facebook	Instagram	YouTube	TikTok	Field	Location	Source	Interview
Nizar Banat (dead)	No	103 k	666k	22.9k	18.6k	Political	Palestine	Personal Knowledge and Acquaintances	No
Imad Farajin	Yes	4.1m	776k	-	1.5m	Comic	Palestine	Social Media Groups	Yes
Mahmoud Elsaeid	Yes	32k	144 K	-	-	Chef	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Ahmad Maher	Yes	5k	177k	-	318.6 K	Journalist\ Political	Palestine	Social Media Groups	Yes
Dr Hisham Sharabati	No	1600	-	-	-	Political Analyst	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Yousef Makharzah	No	20.9 K	710	-	76.1 K	Religious Activist	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Dr. Said Bsharat	Yes	51k	4.5k	-	-	Political Analyst	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Azzam Abu Aladas	No	5k	986	-	74k	Political Analyst	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Dr. Iyad Qunibi	No	3.3m	70k	1.6m	22k	Religious Activist	Jordan	Social Media Groups	No
Tariq Abu Dawoud	No	2.5k	-	-	-	Political Analyst	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Abd Alafou Bassam	No	98k	429k	-	3k	Photographer	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Mohammad Elyan	No	30k	-	-	-	lawyer	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Sari Orabi	Yes	38k	965	-	-	Cultural	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Dr. Alaa' Allagta	Yes	142.2k	13.2k	-	-	Cartoonist	Palestine	Social Media Groups	Yes
Alaa Alrimawi	No	191k	1.4k	-	-	Journalist	Palestine	Social Media Groups	Yes
Dyala System	No	-	1.2m	69.1k	227k	Comic\ Personal	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No

Ali Qaraqe'	Yes	101.2k	78.1k	13.5k	-	Political Analyst	Palestine	Social Media Groups	Yes
Dr. Bilal Shobaki	No	3k	-	-	-	Lecturer\ Political	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Naser Allaham	Yes	1.4m	139k	47.8k		Journalist\ political	Palestine	Social Media Groups	Yes
Ameer Dandan	Yes	792k	691k	47.5k	18.9k	Singer	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Ahmed Hijazi	No	-	416k	-	21.6k	Fashion	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Shadi Alborini	Yes	1.6m	287k	39.3k	-	Singer	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Awad Tanos	Yes	333k	133k	31.7k	-	Singer	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Ahmad Shoman	No	-	371k	136k	127.2k	Comic	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Bilal Altaweel	No	22k	4.9k	-	-	Photographer	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Aseel Fanoun	No	916	26.8k	-	-	Artist\ Writer	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Amal Merkus	Yes	167k	16.4k	-	-	Singer	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Nayf Hammouri	No	4.8k	26.4k	-	-	Photographer	Palestine	influence.com	No
Mohamad Hussain	No	-	-	58	10.2k	Sport	Palestine	influence.com	No
Mohamed Assaf	Yes	12m	5.6m	312 K	425k	Singer	UAE	Personal Knowledge and Acquaintances	No
Majd Almadhoun	Yes	281k	41.2k	19.6k		Artist	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Kamal Alkhateb	Yes	375k	-	114k	17.4k	Social	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Nidal Siam	No	59k	1.4k	3.4k	6k	digital creator	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Mohamad Ayesh	No	5.7k	170	-	-	Engineer	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Mesh Hek	No	25k	156k	-	1050	Political	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Ayham Shraim	Yes	-	395k	-	-	Comic	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Wisam Nassar	Yes	5k	311k	-	-	Photographer	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No

Fatimah Misbeh	Yes	19k	302k	-	-	Social	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Asmaa Alayobi	Yes	-	327k	-	-	Photographer	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Yara Alagah	No	-	23k	-	-	Educational	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Osama Hussain	Yes	1.5k	585k	-	-	Actor	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Mira Albero	No	-	94k	-	-	Fashion	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Rafeq Alshareef	No	539	18k	-	-	Artist	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Bahaa Ahmad	Yes	624k	1m	-	-	Fashion	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Ahmad Talath	Yes	14k	31.7k	-	190	Journalist	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Hanadi Halwany	No	326 k	294 k	-	-	Political	Palestine	Social Media Groups	Yes
Ahmad Alkatawany	No	4.5 k				Cultural	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Arine Alrinawi	Yes	255.4k	283k	-	12.7k	Photographer\ Social	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Ibrahim Khaleel	No	74k	61.8k	-	270k	Behavioural therapy	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Sawsan Abdeen	No	3k	-	-	-	Educational	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Wala Sliman	No	-	115k	-	-	influential\ personal	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Khadeja Ikweis	No	4.8k	204k	-	1082	Journalist\ Political	Palestine	Social Media Groups	Yes
Fahmi Sharab	No	32.6k	-	-	7k	Educational	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Akil Awawdi	Yes	64k	355	-	1800	Journalist	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Amer Hamdan	No	24k	6k	1.5k	37k	Political	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Tarek Bakri	Yes	64k	116k	3.8k	-	Political analyst	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Moath Amarnih	Yes	22k	2.5k	108	-	Journalist	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No

Mahmoud Herbat	Yes	39k	-	533	3.9k	influential	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Rawia Natsheh	No	3.5m	6k	1.4k	10.5k	psychologist	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Mariam Albargothy	Yes	3k	55k	-	18	Journalist	Palestine	Personal Knowledge and Acquaintances	No
Raid Alshareef	No	29k	-	-	-	Journalist	Palestine	Personal Knowledge and Acquaintances	No
Loay Elsaeed	No	2.4k	7.2k	69	-	Journalist	Palestine	Personal Knowledge and Acquaintances	No
Omar Abusiam	No	-	11.1k	929	17.9k	Political	Palestine	Personal Knowledge and Acquaintances	No
Muna Alkurd	Yes	220k	1.5m	48.9k	135.2	Political	Palestine	Personal Knowledge and Acquaintances	Yes
Muna Hawa	Yes	300k	931k	-	11k	Political	Qatar	Personal Knowledge and Acquaintances	No
Alaa Abudiab	Yes	280k	103k	9.1k	9.8k	Comic\ Political	Palestine	Personal Knowledge and Acquaintances	Yes
Abd Araheem Haj Yahia	No	-	27.8k	-	44	Political	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Maram Algoul	No	99k	83k	300	24k	Blogger\ Personal	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Mohamed Alkurd	Yes	-	690k	-	-	Political	Palestine	Personal Knowledge and Acquaintances	Yes
Mahmoud Abbas	Yes	174k	77.4k	-	-	Cartoonist	Sweden	Personal Knowledge and Acquaintances	No

Omar Assi	No	33.5k	8.6k	-	-	engineer	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Adnan Barq	No	-	169k	-	3.4k	Political	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Saleh Zighari	Yes	208k	710k	588k	101.6k	Youtuber\ Political	Palestine	Social Media Groups	Yes
Mohamad Mahameed	No	31k	-	-	-	influential	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Alaa Kurdiy	No	2k	-	-	-	Cultural	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Rahaf Bro	No	154k	1m	2.6m	-	Comic\ personal	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Hamid Mansy	No	-	46k	1.1m	-	Comic\ personal	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Haya Swead	No	-	1m	2m	-	personal blogger	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Shady Ashi	Yes	-	1.1m	2.03m	368.3k	Actor	Palestine	starngage.com	No
Ola Idais	No	13k	2.7k	1k	-	psychologist	Palestine	Personal Knowledge and Acquaintances	No
Yaseen Ezaldeen	No	2.1k	-	-	-	Political	Palestine	Social Media Groups	No
Big Sam	No	238k	734k	1.4m	-	Singer	USA	Personal Knowledge and Acquaintances	No
Alaa Hathlin	No	-	6.5k	-	-	Journalist	Palestine	social Media Groups	No

3. **Information documents:** the information document was sent to all interviewed influencers in which they read it and approved on it verbally during recorded meetings via zoom.

Appendix (3): information document

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CONXUNTO DE IDENTIDADE
DA UNIDADE QUE CORRESPONDA

Código: _____
[Cód. de id. para
seudonimización, se procede]

INFORMATION DOCUMENT

Research Project: " Effects on public opinion of Palestinian influencers"
PI (Principal Investigator): José Sixto García, University of Santiago de Compostela"

Brief Project Description:

This research is conducted to fulfill the requirements of obtaining PhD in Contemporary Communication and Information from the University of Santiago de Compostela. The research aims at determining the activity of social media influencers in Palestine and their effects on the public opinion. The research will use semi structured interviews and content analysis as tools for data collection. The expected benefits of the research is mainly to understand how the influencers affect the public opinion.

Information on Interventions:

The participants will undergo a semi structured interview virtually or in person at the date that suits them in November 2023, and will be asked to provide the researcher with the insight for thier social media platforms. Primarily, statistics about follower's geographical distribution, age groups and gender. Influencers' names will be mentioned, and they will be identified during the research only. Further contacts might be asked if needed. Exposure to any kind of risk is excluded, the least of which is the use of little of the participants' time for interviews.

Information on Voluntariness and Right of Revocation:

It is informed that participation is voluntary, and refusal or subsequent withdrawal at any time does not entail any prejudice or measures against the participant; the person to contact for the revocation of consent is provided, along with the right to choose what to do with the data obtained until that moment (destruction or anonymization / retention). It is also informed that the research team may decide to exclude the participant from the study.

Information about the Altruistic Nature of Participation:

It is informed about the altruistic nature of participation and, if applicable, the existence of compensation for the time dedicated and the inconveniences caused (with indication of the type and

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amount of compensation that the participant demand).

Information about the fate of the data or samples once the research is completed:

At the conclusion of the research the data will be saved in the researcher's Drive, and the participant have the right to choose a different destination.

The participant has the right to access the general results, as this research in not related to an individual but to a group of influencers.

Information about the right to know the results:

The participant has the right to access the general results, as this research in not related to individual but to a group of influencers.

Information about data protection and confidentiality obligation:

The participant is informed about the duty and commitment to confidentiality of anyone who, due to their work or collaboration with the research, has access to them. The participant is informed about compliance with data protection legislation as per the accompanying information clause.

Information about Research Ethics Committee Approval:

The Bioethics Committee of USC or another relevant Research Ethics Committee informs you about the date of approval.

Identification of the Informing Person:

Name and surnames of the person providing the information and responding to the questions are filled in the box below.

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INFORMED CONSENT

Interviews for Research Project: "The effect of social media influencers on the public opinion in Palestine."

PI (Principal Investigator): José Sixto García, University of Santiago de Compostela.
Contact: jose.sixto@usc.es

☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the informative document preceding this form and that I had the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification.

☐ I confirm that I have received satisfactory answers and explanations to my questions.

☐ I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, without the need to explain the reasons for my withdrawal, and without any consequences for me.

☐ I understand that this study is not for diagnostic purposes, so I will not receive an individualized report of my test results.

☐ I consent to participate in the above-mentioned study.

☐ I consent to the information collected in this research being used, ensuring my anonymity, in future work within the same research field and in academic projects led by the research team.

☐ I consent to the information collected in this research being shared, ensuring my anonymity, with other teams through collaborative research networks or repositories, for non-profit research purposes.

☐ I consent to being contacted in the future to propose my participation in any potential continuation of this research.

☐ I receive a copy of this document.

The participant,	The researcher who collects consent,
Date:	**Date: 18 nov.-23**
Signature:	**Signature:** 
Name:	**Name: Wafa' Atieh Harb**

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DOCUMENTO INFORMATIVO[1,2]

Proxecto de investigación: "Efectos en la opinión pública de los influencers palestinos"

IP: José Sixto García, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela

Breve descrición do proxecto:

Esta investigación se lleva a cabo para cumplir con los requisitos para obtener un Doctorado en Comunicación e Información Contemporánea de la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela. El objetivo de la investigación es determinar la actividad de los influyentes en las redes sociales en Palestina y sus efectos en la opinión pública. La investigación utilizará entrevistas semiestructuradas y análisis de contenido como herramientas para la recopilación de datos. Los beneficios esperados de la investigación son principalmente comprender cómo los influyentes afectan a la opinión pública.

Información sobre as intervencións:

Los participantes serán sometidos a una entrevista semiestructurada de manera virtual o en persona en la fecha que les convenga en noviembre de 2023, y se les pedirá que proporcionen al investigador información sobre sus plataformas de redes sociales. Principalmente, se recopilarán estadísticas sobre la distribución geográfica de los seguidores, grupos de edad y género.

Los nombres de los influyentes serán mencionados y serán identificados solo durante la investigación. En caso necesario, se podrán realizar más contactos. Se excluye cualquier tipo de riesgo, siendo el menos significativo el uso de una pequeña parte del tiempo de los participantes para las entrevistas.

Información sobre voluntariedade e dereito de revogación:

Se informa que la participación es voluntaria, y la negativa o la retirada posterior en cualquier momento no conlleva ningún prejuicio ni medidas en contra del participante; se proporciona la persona de contacto para revocar el consentimiento, junto con el derecho a elegir qué hacer con los datos obtenidos

[1] Este documento ten unicamente valor orientativo: pode utilizarse calquera outro modelo ou formato que recolla toda a información necesaria para unha adecuada e completa información ao/á participante

[2] A linguaxe, vocabulario, estilo de comunicación... deben adaptarse ao perfil das persoas ás que vai dirixido para garantir a súa comprensión.

hasta ese momento (destrucción o anonimización / retención). También se informa que el equipo de investigación puede decidir excluir al participante del estudio.

Información sobre carácter altruísta da participación:

Se informa sobre la naturaleza altruista de la participación y, si corresponde, sobre la existencia de compensación por el tiempo dedicado y las molestias ocasionadas (con indicación del tipo y la cantidad de compensación que el participante puede solicitar).

Información sobre o sobre o destino dos datos ou mostras unha vez finalizada a investigación:

Al finalizar la investigación, los datos se guardarán en el disco del investigador, y el participante tiene derecho a elegir un destino diferente.

El participante tiene derecho a acceder a los resultados generales, ya que esta investigación no se relaciona con un individuo en particular, sino con un grupo de influyentes.

Información sobre o dereito a coñecer os resultados:

El participante tiene derecho a acceder a los resultados generales, ya que esta investigación no está relacionada con un individuo en particular, sino con un grupo de influyentes.

Información sobre protección de datos e deber de confidencialidade:

Se informa al participante sobre el deber y compromiso de confidencialidad de cualquier persona que, debido a su trabajo o colaboración en la investigación, tenga acceso a los datos. También se informa al participante sobre el cumplimiento de la legislación de protección de datos de acuerdo con la cláusula informativa adjunta.[3].

Información sobre aprobación Comité de Ética na Investigación:

El Comité de Bioética de la USC o cualquier otro Comité de Ética en Investigación relevante le informa sobre la fecha de aprobación.

Identificación da persoa que informa

El nombre y apellidos de la persona que proporciona la información y responde a las preguntas se completan en el recuadro a continuación.

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[3] A recomendación do Comité de Bioética é que o Consentimento Informado e a Cláusula de Protección de Datos se cumprimenten e asinen por separado.

CONXUNTO DE IDENTIDADE
DA UNIDADE QUE CORRESPONDA

Código: _____
[Cód. de id. para seudonimización, se procede]

CONSENTIMENTO INFORMADO[4]

TÍTULO INDICATIVO DO ESTUDO OU PARTICIPACIÓN REQUIRIDA

Proxecto de investigación: Denominación e referencia do proxecto de investigación

IP: Nome e apelidos do/a IP do proxecto, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela.

Contacto: enderezo de correo-e

☐ Confirmo que lin e entendín o documento informativo que precede a este formulario, e que tiven a oportunidade de formular preguntas e dúbidas relativas ao mesmo.

☐ Confirmo que recibín respostas e aclaracións satisfactorias ás miñas preguntas.

☐ Entendo que son libre de abandonar o estudo en calquera momento, sen necesidade de explicar as razóns do meu abandono e sen ningún tipo de consecuencias para min.

☐ Entendo que este estudo non ten finalidade diagnóstica, polo que non recibirei un informe individualizado dos meus resultados nas probas.

☐ Consinto en participar no estudo arriba indicado.

☐ Consinto que a información recollida nesta investigación poida ser empregada, con garantía do meu anonimato, en traballos futuros da mesma liña de investigación e en traballos académicos de estudantes dirixidos polos investigadores/as do equipo.

☐ Consinto que a información recollida nesta investigación poida ser compartida, con garantía do meu anonimato, con outros equipos a través de redes ou repositorios de investigación colaborativa, con fins de investigación sen ánimo de lucro.

[4] Dado que este documento contén datos de identificación, obxecto de protección, débese tratar conforme á lexislación de protección de datos, aínda no caso de que a información que se vaia recadar para a investigación se obteña de maneira anónima desde o seu inicio e/ou non sexa obxecto de dita protección.

☐ Consinto que se me poida contactar no futuro para propoñerme participar nunha eventual continuidade desta investigación

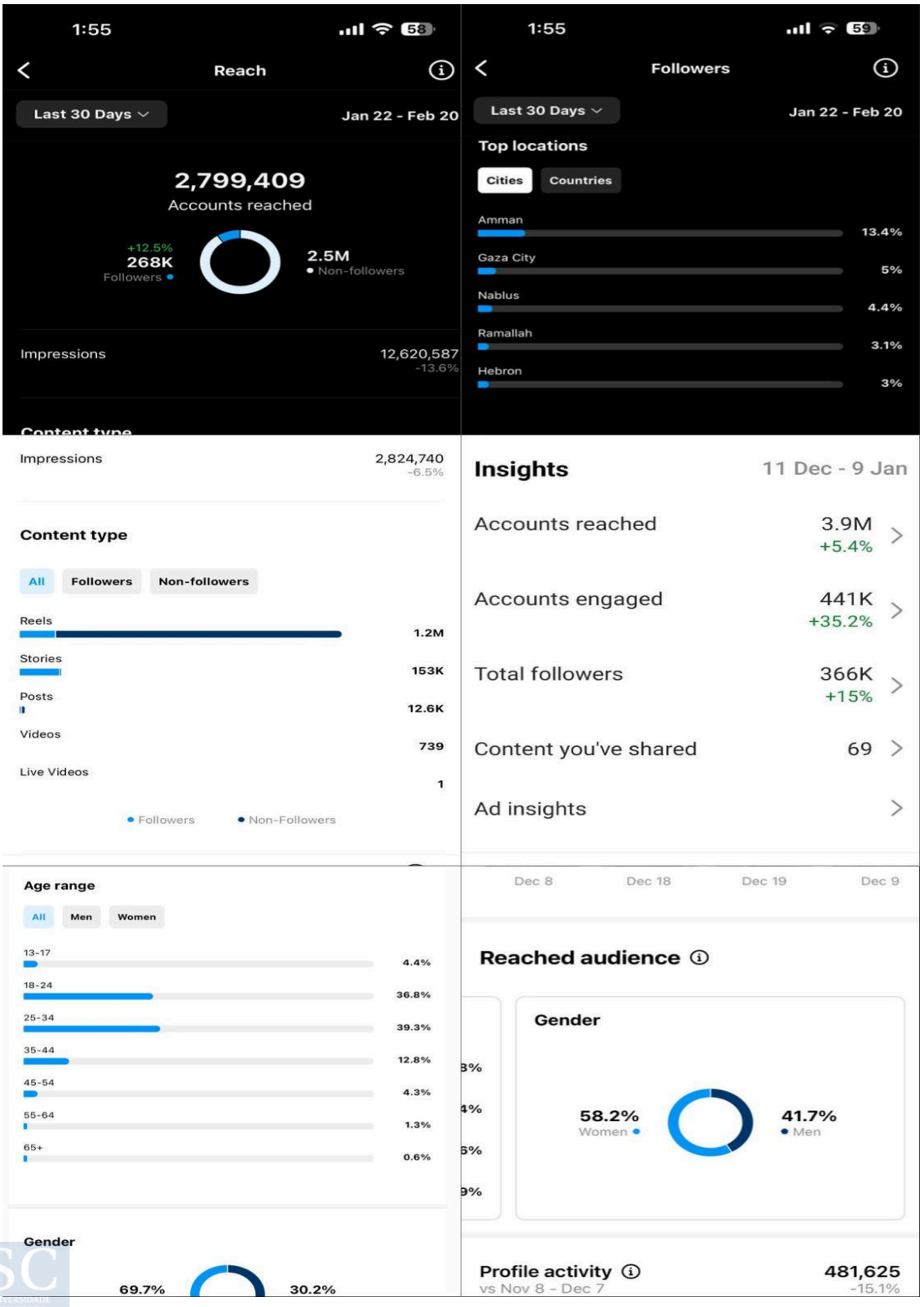
☐ Recibo unha copia deste documento.

O/A participante,	**O/A investigador/a que recada o consentimento,**
Data:	**Data: 18 nov.-23**
Sinatura:	**Sinatura:** 
Nome:	**Nome: Wafa' Atieh Harb**

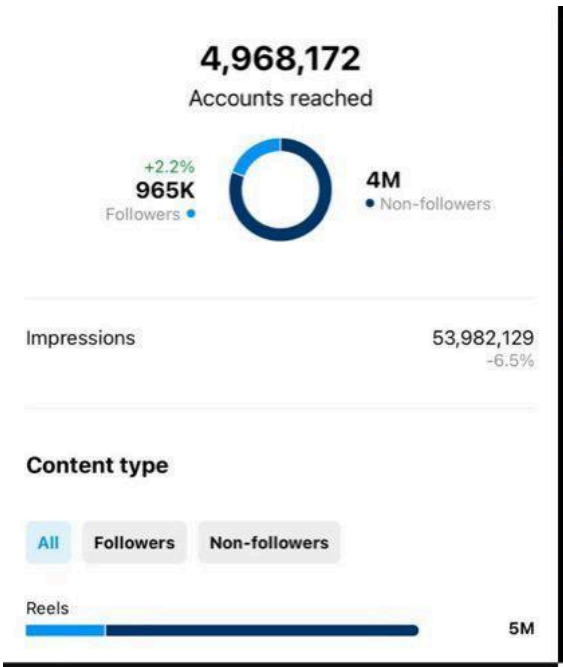
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4. **Sample of the insights** of the 12 palestinian social media influencers who were interviewed and their insights analysed.

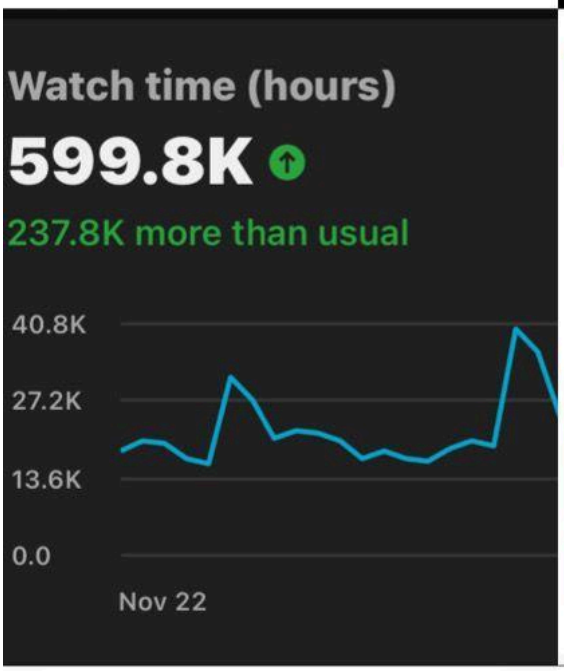
Appendix (4): Sample of influencers' insights (screen shots).

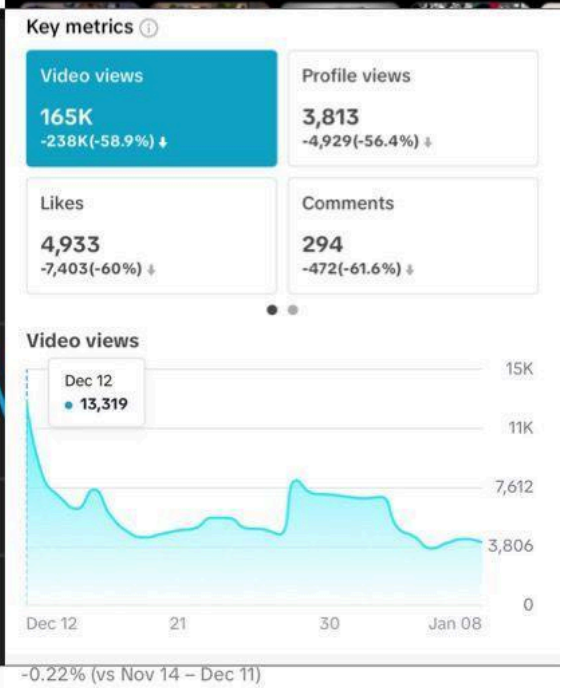


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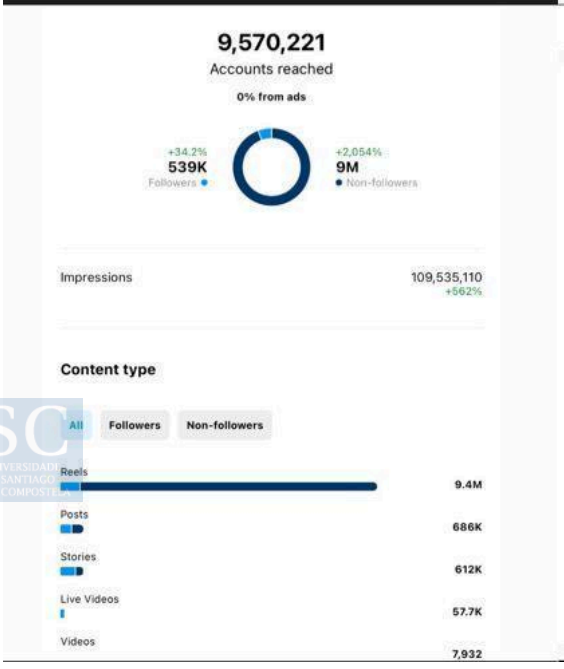


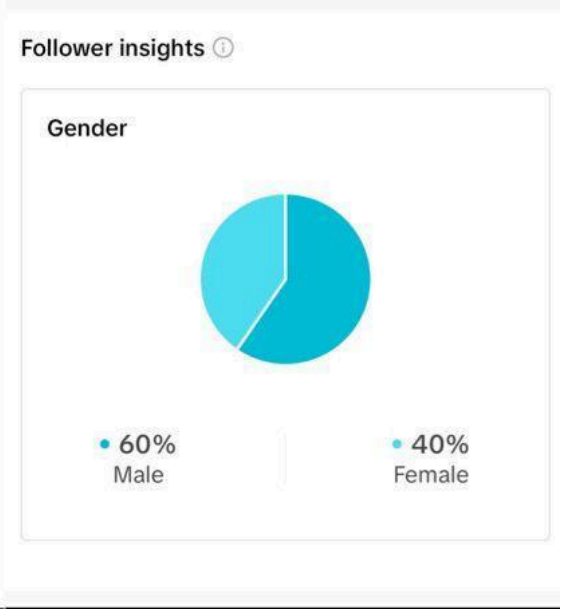






-0.22% (vs Nov 14 – Dec 11)





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This research investigates the profound influence of social media influencers on public opinion in the Middle East, focusing on insights gleaned from their online platforms, including their follower demographics,reach, and types of posts, this study uncovers patterns and trends shaping public discourse.
Twelve palestinian influencers, spanning various domains from politics to entertainment, were interviewed to gather insights into their strategies and motivations.
The findings highlight the role of influencers in shaping sociopolitical
narratives, disseminating information and shaping public sentiment.
The study concludes with recommendations for leveraging influencers'
platforms to foster informed public discourse and enhance social cohesion in the region.