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VIRTUAL VOICES, REAL JOURNEYS: EXAMINING INFLUENCER POWER ON EUROPEAN DESTINATION CHOICES IN THE UAE

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the influence of social media influencers/fashionists on UAE visitors' intentions in Europe, including two research areas: Emirati tourists and how they are influenced by social media influencers. Though Arab tourists make up the bulk of visitors to Europe, they do so for a variety of reasons, including following and believing in fashion via Facebook, Snapchat, or Instagram, among others. According to early data, social media influencers have a significant impact on the number of European tourists visiting the UAE. As a result, the project aims to conduct a quantitative study to examine the impact of social media influencers on UAE travelers' intentions to visit Europe. The study outcome would contribute to the literature now existing on UAE outbound tourism, EU-UAE tourism relationship and social media influencers/fashionist toward UAE travelers to travel Europe.

KEYWORDS: Social Media, UAE, Europe, Tourism Industry, Fashionist, Social Media Influencers.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Background

The vast majority of us admit to having withdrawal symptoms and depression when forced to disengage from the Internet, mobile phones, or social networks for an extended period of time. According to statistics, the "Facebook" website ranks first among social media platforms, with over 500 million visits worldwide (Barnett & Benefield, 2017). Although 18- to 29-year-olds continue to make up the bulk of social media users, these numbers suggest that platforms like Twitter and Facebook are becoming more diverse and popular. Facebook is used by 93% of those with an online profile. MySpace's popularity continues to drop, with only 23% of those polled using it. Twitter users are increasing, although they still make up only 11% of internet profiles (Tosun & Kaşdarma, 2019). Social media influencers represent "a new form of independent third-party endorser who changes audience opinions through blogs, tweets, and the usage of other social media". As opinion leaders, they have the ability to improve the impact of the information they receive and deliver to others. Studies in domains other than tourism, such as culture and fashion, have highlighted the growing importance of digital influencers and the methods by which they impact the attitudes and decisions of their followers. This study note aims to expand tourist understanding on this topic (Depoux et al., 2020).

In the Middle East and Africa, the total number of users of Facebook has surpassed fifteen million. According to the "Dubai College of Government Administration," the UAE is the first Arab country in terms of the population use of Facebook, with 45.38% of Emirati residents having accounts on the most popular social network "Facebook," ranking the UAE ninth internationally. Outbound tourism to the Middle East has more than doubled from 8.2 million visitors in 1990 to 36.2 million in 2010. The GCC countries are significant travel source markets. Outbound tourism in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is growing rapidly (Abdel & Aljallad, Majed Zaki, 2018).

The Middle East, specifically UAE is one of the world's smallest, but fastest developing, tourism regions. However, most UAE has suffered, either directly or indirectly, from the region's recent social and political developments. Despite the upheaval, the UAE tourist outbound industry expanded by 4% in 2012, accounting for US\$ 55 billion in foreign tourism expenditure in 2010. Over three-quarters of outbound tourism is to Middle Eastern destinations. Since 2010, Europe has had a 46% market share of all

travel outside the area (Ahmad et al., 2019).

Furthermore, potential travellers from the UAE see Europe as a highly desirable destination, with Switzerland, France, Germany, and Italy as top vacation destinations. Indeed, Europe is regarded as a first-rate vacation destination due to its beautiful scenery, history, culture, entertainment, great tourist amenities, and infrastructure (Nuseir & Aljumah, 2020). Other key draw factors are the temperate weather (in comparison to the Middle East), ease of travel, and the possibility to visit many places in one trip (Abaido, 2019).

There has been a remarkable change in information sharing and communication on social media during the previous decade. The internet's fast expansion has created several new opportunities for businesses. Aside from the usage of information exchange and communication, the new development has enabled the expression of feelings and emotions via social media (Harrigan et al., 2017).

There are several social media influencers/fashionist provides various information, such as content communities, microblogs, and virtual worlds, and in each of them, people share information, insights, and experiences. With significant development since its inception, social media has surpassed traditional media as people's preferred medium. Social media has emerged as one of the fastest-growing communication platforms on the internet, as well as for destination marketing (Ahmad et al., 2018, Al-Jenaibi, 2017).

1.2. Research Problem

The tourist sector in Dubai and the UAE has been significantly impacted by the internet and social media. Before traveling anywhere, individuals try to learn more about the area. Previously, the best source of information was through respected travel companies and corporations (Ahmad et al., 2018). Online communication has become critical for tourism destinations. Traditional marketing channels are effective ways of communication, but they have lost traction as internet communication has grown in popularity. This new and evolving environment has caused destinations to evolve to readjust plans to meet clients' wants and habits. As a result, marketing today understands how to employ various methods of information exchange (Barnett & Benefield, 2017).

The Internet is a key source of destination information exchange. Travellers rely on prior reviews broadcast by social media influencers/fashionist. Online reviews can boost or decrease the number of visitors. They can also create expatriation around a certain region. The internet

allows passengers to exchange, edit, and submit information about a trip location. Today, social media influencers/fashionist is one of the most popular means of disseminating information. Social media influencers/fashionist may be strategically employed. Social media platforms should interact with their users. This was highlighted and hinted further, implying that social media influencers/fashionist provides an ideal platform for customer relationship management and marketing communications (Boediman et al., 2021).

The usage of social media in tourism and marketing is growing. Social media platforms are facilitating the sharing of photos, videos, and other tourism-related experiences through influencers. These factors impacted the intention of UAE tourists to visit Europe (Sakkthivel et al., 2020). Social media influencers/fashionist provide UAE tourists with useful information about cuisine, lodging, activities, fashions and cultures about the Europe (Prayag & Hosany, 2014).

So far, the basic factors that stimulate and direct travel behaviour have been identified. Tourism research has identified various motivating areas, including socio-psychological, prestige, cultural, social, educational, and utilitarian motivations. Prior research has mostly focused on the primary motives of leisure tourists from European nations (Al-Badi et al., 2017).

Recent research on the travel motivations of visitors from rising economies such as China and India is available. In contrast, the research on visitors' opinions of western destinations from emerging economies is very new. There is a paucity of studies on the impact of social media influencers/fashionist on the outbound market from the Middle East, namely Emirati tourists, and how the tourists are affected by social media influencers toward European nations (Vu et al., 2018). There has been little study on UAE tourists visiting European nations. To fill a vacuum in the research, this study looks into UAE visitors' impressions of visiting European countries.

1.3. Research Objectives

The primary goal of the study is to: 1. Determine the impact of social media influencers/fashionists on UAE visitors' intention to visit Europe. 2. To determine the impact of social media influencers/fashionists on building UAE visitor trust in Europe.

1.4. Research Questions

The main question of the study is;

1. How do social media influencers/fashionist impacted the intention of UAE tourists to visit European countries?

1.5. Hypothesis

H1. Social media influencers/fashionists have a considerable influence on UAE visitors' intentions to visit Europe. **H2.** Social media influencers and fashionistas improve UAE tourists' trust in visiting Europe.

1.6. Significance Of Research

The goal of this article is to add to the tourist literature on the outbound travel business in the UAE. The study will determine how social media influencers/fashionist Emiratis go to Europe and will profile the segments based on their perceived images of Europe utilizing social media platforms. Tourists from the UAE have numerous traits with those visiting Western countries and other rising markets, while the relevance of these incentives varies by group. Potential outbound visitors from the UAE prioritize socialization with family and friends, shopping, novelty, and prestige. The current study with push and pull theory intends to provide a clear vision of fashion and social media impact on UAE travellers' intention to visit Europe. Thus, the study has developed hypotheses and questionnaires that clearly describe the perspective of UAE travellers' intention and motivation to visit Europe. The study result will contribute to the literature gap by fulfilling the impact of fashion on UAE travellers' visit intention to Europe and social media's influence towards visiting Europe.

As the study focuses on UAE tourists in Europe, the outcome of the study will significantly contribute to the development of the UAE community and authority. Where both parties will understand the intrinsic and extrinsic drive for visiting Europe and how to sustain and enhance the tourism experience of UAE citizens even further.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Underpinning

The pushpull theoretical framework is a popular theory for understanding why tourists prefer one area over another, the type of experience they want, and the type of activity they desire. The push-pull paradigm is the most widely used in classification to handle tourists' motivations. While push factors impact the decision to visit a location or heritage site, pull factors influence the choice of which destination to visit (Said & Maryono, 2018). The concepts push and pull emerged in supply chain and logistics

management, but they are now frequently employed in marketing and tourism industry. Crompton in 1979 conducted motivational research of pleasure vacationers based on Dann's study and conceptualised seven push or socio-psychological motives, namely: escape from a perceived mundane environment, self-exploration and evaluation, relaxation, prestige, regression, and enhancement of kinship relationships (Chuvienco et al., 2018). Everett Lee methodically articulated the "push-pull" idea eight years later, assuming that migration occurred as a result of unpleasant circumstances in an area that drove the people to relocate to other regions with better conditions (Yang et al., 2021).

This study has adapted push-pull theory of tourism as the theory discusses that, people travel for intrinsic and extrinsic motivational reasons. As this study is intending to identify the impact of social media influencers on the intention of UAE travelers to visit Europe, the push-pull theory is crucial to implement. The theory is helping the study by understanding the travelers motives, that how travelers get motivation from social media influencers to visit certain countries (Chuvienco et al., 2018).

Motivation is a powerful impelling and compelling factor that drives tourist action. Motivation is an important factor in behavioural models of tourist consumption. Several ideas explain visitor motivations. Maslow's hierarchy of needs, allocentric-psychometric typology, expectancy-value theories, goal-directed behaviour, travel career ladder, and the push-pull framework are some examples (Dean & Suhartanto, 2019). The push and pull framework, on the other hand, is most commonly used to explain why visitors pick one location over another, the kind of experiences they seek, and the types of activities they desire. The theory argues that visitors are driven to meet their wants, which include resolving psychological disequilibrium and gaining social acceptance (Quintal et al., 2017).

Pull factors are destination characteristics that influence when, where, and how people travel. Tourist impressions and images of diverse destinations are formed from both organic and induced sources. Push factors, on the other hand, indicate visitors' general desire to travel. The causes for and the direction of conduct are referred to as push factors (Karamehmedović, 2018). The classification of travel reasons into push and pull variables is still the most generally used paradigm. The idea has mostly been critiqued for its traditional approach to assessing visitor influence to visit (Said & Maryono, 2018).

The significance of this theory is the motivational factors of the push-pull theory technique may be used to describe visitor behaviour. The push-pull theory is a prominent theory for explaining why visitors choose one location over another, the sort of experience they want to have, and the type of activity they want to perform. When discussing tourism behaviour, the approach with the framework is simple to adopt and highly successful (Quintal et al., 2021).

One of the push aspects is psychological encouragement, which includes social connection, the desire for escape, adventure, relaxation, and self-exploration. The push factor refers to the factors that underpin and direct someone's decision to travel. Previous studies have been conducted to determine the push-pull variables that people experience while they travel and tour. Every researcher attempts to discover the Push-pull force in tourism; however, they differ from the emphasis on identification (Arowosafe et al., 2021).

The methodologies used to find the Push-pull factor varied as well; some researchers employ qualitative ways such as personal interviews, while others use scale creation procedures and multivariate analyses of existing survey data. The luxury brand, modern fashion, personal and historical links, cultural and shopping services, and unusual and distant vacation spots are the factors. According to the research respondents, the first factor "local hospitality and services" is the most crucial feature that entices them to come (Yang et al., 2021).

Tourists prefer to categorise their alternative destination choices depending on numerous variables, such as self-motivation (push factor), visitor dominance perception from one place (pull element), and available time and money (situational constraints) (Sastre & Phakdee-Auksorn, 2017).

Environment or climate, leisure, adventure, and personal drive might all be considered as push factors. Visitor satisfaction components, on the other hand, might reveal perception as a draw factor. As a result, protected area managers, particularly national park managers, must strike a compromise between conserving the sustainability of national parks and pleasing visitor experiences (Preko et al., 2020).

In conceptualizations of the push-pull properties, two basic schools of thought prevail. The first school of thought regards the push and pull features as distinct elements that influence policymaking at various times. The second school of thought requires that the push and pull properties be nearly similar (Abernethy et al., 2022).

2.2. UAE And Europe Relationship

The EU and the UAE have developed diplomatic relations based on common political and geographical goals. In the second half of 2013, the EU created a Delegation in Abu Dhabi to demonstrate its commitment to strengthening bilateral relations. EU embassies are also located in the UAE. Relations with the EU were previously established through the 1988 EU Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Cooperation Agreement, which established a regional connection with the GCC members (AlSafar et al., 2021). The EU and the UAE share a common interest in safeguarding Middle Eastern stability. The UAE has become a more active regional and global player, proving to be a dependable and reliable partner for the EU in a variety of domains, including counterterrorism, energy, environmental, climate change, non-proliferation, and economic diversification (Miller & Verhoeven, 2019).

Cooperation between the EU and the UAE on energy and climate change has risen in recent years, with a greater emphasis on renewables and a post-oil sustainable future. Cooperation in areas like nationally defined contributions, hydrogen, and climate funding is expected to be strengthened if the UAE hosts COP28 (EU, 2021). In recent years, EU-UAE counterterrorism collaboration has advanced significantly, including within the ambit of the Cooperation Arrangement. In Abu Dhabi, the UAE also houses the Hedayah Countering Violent Extremism Centre. The EU is a member of the board (Chuvieco et al., 2018).

Furthermore, since June 2014, the UAE has hosted a regional secretariat of the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Threats (CBRN) Centres of Excellence for risk mitigation. This effort is supported by the European Instrument for Stability and aims to build national and regional institutional capacity to combat CBRN hazards (EU, 2021).

In terms of maritime security, the EU has led international efforts to limit and prevent piracy in the Indian Ocean, as well as a common interest in the Horn of Africa and the safety of shipping lines, which has resulted in tighter EU-UAE collaboration. EXPO2020 will be crucial in the coming future. EXPO aligns well with the EU's broader aims, which include climate change, sustainability/SDGs, digitalization/innovation, food production, multilateral cooperation, and women's empowerment (Telci & Horoz, 2018). Although the EU will not have its pavilion, it will actively engage and collaborate with EU Member States through their national pavilions, which will feature activities organised in collaboration with the EU (EU, 2021).

The UAE has one of the most powerful economies in the region. It is the European Union's largest investment partner in the GCC and the region's second-largest commercial partner. In 2020, total bilateral commerce between the two sides was AED 149 billion (EUR 34.7 billion), with EU exports being AED 111.7 billion (EUR 26 billion) and imports totalling AED 36.9 billion (EUR 8.6 billion) (Anagnosti et al., 2021).

Both sides' commerce has been consistent throughout the years, and UAE was determined to expand it further in light of the demand for high-quality European and GCC products (Bug & Haussmann, 2016).

Both the EU and the UAE, as global trade partners, have a vested interest in maintaining the multilateral commerce system running smoothly. In contrast to electrical machinery and mechanical devices, EU exports to the UAE were diverse and centred on industrial items including power plants, railway locomotives, and aircraft (Bug & Haussmann, 2016).

Another important piece of information, the UAE is the first Arab country to be awarded a Schengen visa waiver. Holders of UAE passports are free from visa rules to visit the Schengen Area for durations of up to 90 days under an EU-UAE agreement (within any 180 days). The residual visa restrictions for some EU residents visiting the UAE have been removed. This policy has increased tourism opportunities significantly (Kumail et al., 2021).

2.3. Social Media Influencer/Fashionist On Travellers

UAE travelers typically prefer European destinations for their travels. Switzerland, Austria, Greece, Italy, France, the Netherlands, and Spain are the countries that have been shortlisted. Tourism driven by media is not a novel concept; yet, tourism generated by social media appears to be more unexpected and significant (Oliveira et al., 2020). Initially, social media-induced tourism happened when unattractive sites that were not intended to become tourist hotspots became so. On the other hand, social media's unanticipated and overwhelming popularity of tourist places has led to over-tourism. Overtourism has resulted in new environmental, social, and economic issues such as environmental degradation, travellers being exposed to risk due to a lack of necessary infrastructure to handle the crowd, raising local taxes to fund new infrastructure development, and temporarily or permanently closing of attractions (Sedera et al., 2017).

Influencers on social media have long played an important part in platform tourism. They are the driving forces behind social media-induced tourism. Social media influencers are online personalities that influence their followers through one or more social networking sites (Pop et al., 2021). Celebrities and public figures are well-known figures in conventional media. Social media influencers, on the other hand, are "ordinary individuals" who have become "online celebrities" by generating and publishing content via social media. They usually specialise in one or two categories, including healthy living, travel, cuisine, life, beauty, or fashion. According to a new Twitter survey, followers trust influencers on social media the same way they trust their friends (Rinka & Pratt, 2018).

According to a recent poll, 40% of current young travellers choose a trip destination based on its "Instagrammability," or whether it will generate great photographs to share on social media (Liu et al., 2018). The term "modern young travellers" refers to the generation known as "millennials," who were born between 1981 and 1996. Instagram has 800 million daily activities globally, with 52 million photographs posted per day, and 59% of users aged 18 to 29 (Rashidi et al., 2017).

Social media influencer/fashionist allows visitors to engage in the creation and consumption of travel experiences as "prosumers," allowing for more active partnerships between the industry, destinations, and travellers. Social media platforms on the internet have enabled contact between thousands of individuals (Depoux et al., 2020). According to the same authors, social media is a hybrid of promotional tools since it allows firms and destinations to engage directly with their consumers as well as customers to communicate directly with one another. As a result, social media platforms enable visitors to digitise and share online knowledge, as well as capture and share feelings and experiences in real-time. As a result, social media provide new avenues for social engagement with people outside of one's family and normal circle of acquaintances (Gretzel, 2017).

Social media are now a part of our everyday lives, and so many individuals use them to search, share, and communicate with others; they have changed the nature of communication between people, particularly travellers. Claim that social media are becoming significant as part of tourist activities influencing locations and enterprises (Narangajavana Kaosiri et al., 2017).

Additionally, UGC impacts travellers' decision-making about where they want to vacation. The impact of social media on travel selections and

discovered that social media was the most widely utilised and reputable instrument for selecting countries to visit (Lu et al., 2017).

Since 2018, substantial investments have been made in the tourist and hospitality industries in the UAE and Saudi Arabia in preparation for Expo 2020 Dubai. New developments such as UAE Bluewater Island and Warner Brothers Theme Park are also enticing large hotel chains to invest in the region. Based on this information, the industry of tourism and hospitality in the UAE will confront strong competition from large commercial organisations. The main hotel chains will have to compete with one another to prosper in this market by drawing more clients. To compete, hotels would devote significant resources to advertising and promotion activities (Hurley, 2019).

The use of social media is fast rising, and internet issues are becoming increasingly sensitive in the Middle East area. The current study also takes into account the lack of empirical research on the UAE's digital marketing phenomena and seeks to identify the characteristics that influence digital marketing adoption. It has been shown that 60% of customers in the UAE modify their view of brands as a result of comments provided by other consumers on any social media site. On the other side, the survey discovered that 50% of respondents had negative opinions about brands as a result of social media application comments (Rovetta & Bhagavathula, 2020).

According to numerous research performed on the hotel business in the UAE, 46% of individuals who use social networking applications are from all age categories, demonstrating the significance. Another research found that the International Hotel at Dubai Festival City employed online digital tools to solve client concerns and reduce negative perceptions of terrible encounters. Furthermore, hotels have established an advertising strategy on social media platforms that give appropriate packages to their customers. The goal was to increase consumer knowledge and participation in the hotel's offerings (Sakkthivel et al., 2020).

Travel firms in the UAE have seen a big impact of digital marketing through a digital presence, such as a simple and cost-effective way of information transmission to potential clients on their websites. Travel agencies may reach out to potential clients by advertising their holiday packages, seminars, conferences, and various meal options, categories, and tour advice through effective communication via websites (Sastre & Phakdee-Auksorn, 2017).

2.4. Impact Of Fashionist/Social Media

Influencers (SMI) On UAE Tourists Intention

Today's technical advancements in communication mediums substantially aid people in developing their potential, particularly in self-presentation. The rise in social media users is attributable to technical advancements. Each social media platform has its own attraction based on how information providers position material and the audience they aim to reach. Monetization in the range has an impact on how SMIs manifest themselves. After seeing the information, social media influencers may be more convenient than traditional marketing, particularly in terms of customer behaviour. Influencers on social media are good for connecting out to hard-to-reach populations (Al-Jenaibi & AlKandari, 2021). People are watching and consuming fewer and fewer conventional media, such as television commercials or print advertisements. Furthermore, the SMI's or the brand they promote's celebrity has been demonstrated to affect an audience (Abaido, 2019).

The intention of visitors to visit a location has always been the focus of tourism research. In marketing research, intention refers to a circumstance in which a customer expresses a behavioural desire to acquire a product. Similarly, in tourism, visit intention is defined as the visitors' behavioural interest in returning to the place, suggesting the destination to colleagues and friends, and speaking positively about the destination. Visit intention, for example, might be defined as the likelihood that visitors will view the objective in the future (Algumzi, 2022).

In modern tourism marketing, the tourist destination is dependent not just on traditional marketing strategies, but also on internet marketing strategies. Influencers have an impact on consumer decisions and subconsciously urge potential tourists to visit the place. This method has been shown to be beneficial in increasing consumers' intentions to visit or even return to the objective. As an important destination characteristic, potential tourists' perceptions of the SMI may influence their attitudes and evaluations of the place (Tsetse et al., 2021).

According to the literature, customers' intentions to come can be influenced by factors such as brand identity and image reputation, and media platforms. For tourist sites, an accurate value demonstrated by the location through advertising boosts visitors' good ideas about the sites, promoting favorable word of mouth and creating an intention to visit the sites. Thus, social media is an emergent channel in tourism from digital marketing that stimulates cognitive responses that increase customers' emotive

responses. For example, a social media account of an influencer might be the source of intent to visit tourists. In those other words, SMIs influence client visit intent (Nuseir & Aljumah, 2020).

The impact of social media on European tourism is critical. Interactions with other users on social media platforms increased UAE vacationers' trust. Social media activities contribute to the development of a good relationship among tourists. Furthermore, little research has been undertaken to establish the UAE visitors visiting Europe research. As a result, the researchers plan to undertake a study to analyse the factors that impact UAE tourists' intention to visit Europe (Miller & Verhoeven, 2019).

Previous research has demonstrated that the informational value of SMI-generated material, trustworthiness, beauty, and perceived resemblance operate as predictors of influencers' confidence in sponsored postings. Furthermore, they discovered that followers' confidence in influencer-branded postings influences their desire to buy. Furthermore, trust predicts post credibility, which leads to increased attention in the influencers' posts. Furthermore, trust has a favourable influence on information credibility and may result in a good brand attitude. Positive prior experiences with the SMI led to increased trust, and trust appears to be a major predictor (Ahmad et al., 2019; Algumzi, 2022).

SMIs appear to be more trustworthy than celebrities in the eyes of UAE tourists, followers may identify more with them, and SMIs have a greater influence on customers' buy intentions. However, customers' perceptions of trust may be impacted from a variety of angles. Previous research has found that sponsorships might reduce customers' trust in influencers. Furthermore, using influencers as a strategy for adjusting the company's reputation during an organisational crisis may result in diminished brand trust and corporate credibility, which can impact customers' brand attitude (Boediman et al., 2021).

2.5. UAE And Europe Tourism

There is anecdotal evidence on the UAE's outward market tourist motivation to European countries in general. In their search for authentic experiences, UAE nationals frequently take excursions tailored to their interests. UAE tourists are frugal, yet they are willing to pay a premium for exceptional experiences (Ahmad et al., 2019). The top three reasons for travelling to Europe are rest & leisure, sightseeing, and discovering new areas. The major motivators for Arab tourists visiting Austria are the improvement of kinship and the facilitation of social interaction with

relatives. Similarly, socialising through family time is a key motivator for UAE residents visiting Europe (AlSafar et al., 2021).

Another important motivator for both male and female UAE inhabitants is their well-being and health. Tourists from the UAE also love seeing something fresh and distinct. They frequently engage in a voyage of self-discovery, seeking to escape difficulties and realities, spend time in a like-minded society, and travel to other nations to stay up with others.

The perceived status symbol is a crucial motivation for this market to vacation in Europe. Vacationing in Europe is considered 'in keeping' with their social standing. Young UAE visitors are astute, discriminating, and difficult to satisfy. They have a high-octane lifestyle, seeking expensive and fast-paced events. Overall, available research indicates that the most important push factors for UAE travellers are sociability and kinship with family/friends, novelty, learning about different cultures, shopping, rest and leisure, and status (Chuvieco et al., 2018; Nuseir & Aljumah, 2020).

Luxury vacations have always been linked with the image of rich couples over the age of forty. However, recent research has shown that younger customers are a rising market. Young consumers have a strong desire to see the world and see travel as an essential element of their lives. The luxury vacation industry is expanding, but it is underserved and little understood (Nuseir & Aljumah, 2020). The underlying psychological causes for luxury vacation consumption (social recognition, self-definition, inspiration, human needs, and individualism), and further divide the luxury vacation industry into nine divisions (EU, 2021).

The first section, Self-Fulfillment, is fueled by travellers' desire to better the quality and intensity of their lives by taking luxury vacations. Radical Chic embodies holidays with intellectually stimulating real experiences, whereas Expertise Consumerism symbolises morally acceptable leisure consumption. Leisure Consumption, on the other hand, concentrates on the enjoyable and hedonistic aspects of vacation experiences. Luxury consumers who artistically express their personalities via novel solutions suited to their demands are referred to as Personalized Premium (Nuseir & Aljumah, 2020).

Tourists in the Concierge Service category expect their every need to be met while on a luxury vacation. The following part, Sociability Consumption, emphasises the necessity of sharing unique experiences within a social network. Furthermore, Inclusivity includes luxury visitors from the

privileged within exclusive areas (Anagnosti et al., 2021).

All Social Consuming and Social equality want to be a part of a group that can soar above the crowd. Finally, Top of the World includes luxury travellers seeking the ultimate experience as a means of communicating social standing to the outside world. The UAE travellers prefer European main cities such as Paris, and Milan, which provide designer fashion brand shopping. UAE visitors spend the most money on tax-free purchasing in Germany (Young, 2017).

Furthermore, Arab visitors in general prefer Halal cuisine. For potential travellers to Europe, the impression that Halal cuisine may be difficult to find might be a barrier to travel. When picking a destination, Middle Eastern tourists place a great value on safety and reputation. When visiting Europe, Arab guests are well-educated, and language is not a problem (Patterson et al., 2020).

UAE travellers consider Western Europe as providing a stable, safe, and secure vacation atmosphere. Natural scenic beauty, beautiful weather, culture, and history entice outbound visitors from the Middle East to Europe. Shopping, outdoor activities, tourist sites, and spas are also strong pull factors. Arab guests also demand personalised attention and want to stay in luxurious accommodations (Hurley, 2019).

While little is known about the pull factors affecting UAE visitors' travel preferences, outbound travellers to France are drawn to the culture, history, art, museums, shopping, and cuisine, according to the Middle East market. Overall, the primary perceived barriers to visiting Europe are high expenses, visa procedures, the necessity for forethought and planning, and a perceived shortage of Halal cuisine (Liu et al., 2018; Lu et al., 2017; Miller & Verhoeven, 2019).

2.6. Summary Of Literature Review

The advancement of information technology via the internet has altered the accessible tourist information as well as the way individuals plan and make travel decisions. The continued spread of the internet has had an impact on the growth of social media platforms such as blogs, forums, wikis, social networks, and YouTube, which is on its way to becoming a medium that is extremely popular among tourists. In such websites, travellers upload and exchange comments, ideas, and experiences relevant to their trips, including during the trip, which acts as an information source for others.

At present, social media influencers/fashionist are seen as a significant aspect of the marketing of

Europe's destinations, where the emphasis is focused on a specific individual, a so-called "microcelebrity." A marketer can discover an individual who inspires potential purchasers through their social media followers and then focus their marketing efforts on the influencer's personal activities (Al-Jenaibi & Mansoori, 2022).

Social networking has altered how individuals plan their vacations, as well as how they purchase and consume tourist products. Furthermore, it has transformed the position of the intermediary, which now overlaps with the job of the influencer. Finally, social media influencers are increasingly being employed as important promotional tools to promote and develop a tourism destination's image. Positive online feedback, remarks, or reviews from social-media influencers might boost potential users' perceptions of travel items. Thus, online suggestions/comments made by other users concerning online sales of tourist items improve brand image and have a substantial impact on destination image and purchase intention.

Social media is now regarded to be one of the most popular online activities (Al-Jenaibi, 2014). There is little question that social media has significantly altered how individuals live their lives. It enables users to be both senders and receivers by allowing them to connect and share information with everyone on the planet at the same time.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Paradigm

This study has aimed to fill up the gap presented in the problem statement; there is a gap in identifying the impact of social media influencers/fashionist on the UAE travellers to travel to Europe. The objectives discussed earlier will be achieved through the analysis (Grasso & Landi, 2016).

In this research, paradigm refers to the approach taken to finish this study. The researcher can utilise a variety of paradigms in social scientific methods, such as exploratory, confirmatory, quantitative, qualitative, induction, deduction, positivism, and constructivism or interpretivism. The research design is a way of thinking about how to do research. A paradigm is a set of assumptions that provide a conceptual or philosophical framework for world opinion (Al-Jenaibi, 2020), allowing for the systematic examination of the world around us (Shah, 2021).

This study will use a positivist research design and a quantitative technique, with a cross-sectional survey. The cross-sectional survey is an observational study that involves collecting data

from a defined population or sample and then analysing the data using SPSS. This study will use simple random sampling technique to acquire data. Which are both time and cost-effective to carry out while yielding a variety of responses (Shah, 2021).

The statistical descriptive approach is combined with hypothesis testing and regression analysis in the quantitative method. Whereas, this study uses SPSS software versions to gather and analyse data from UAE tourist that travels to Europe to evaluate the hypothesis. The major goal of this study is to give empirical evidence on this specific matter.

A quantifiable data will be used to assist in characterising and investigating a particular area of interest while doing descriptive or explanatory research. Describing a relationship or network of causes and effects between independent (social media influencers/fashionist) and dependent variable (Intention to visit) is one of the intended outcomes of descriptive research. The final step in quantitative research is to validate or disprove hypotheses using statistical methods of data analysis (Shah, 2021).

The SPSS will be used for data analysis in this study. An online survey will be used to collect data for this research project. Surveys will be used to characterise the impact of human activity by evaluating the sample population's experiences, influence, views, and other features. The quantitative technique is connected to measurement and quantification, as well as the use of logical procedures to evaluate hypotheses.

3.2. Research Approach

For this research, a positivist research design was used and a quantitative technique was used to achieve it. There will be a cross-sectional study. Data from cross-sectional surveys may be used to conclude a population of interest (universe) at a point in time. They've been described as snapshots of the populations they're studying. The researchers use a technique called Simple Random Sampling to obtain data (Nespolo, 2016).

As a result of this investigation, a quantitative approach will be used. Use of statistical descriptive and hypothesis testing along with regression analysis in the quantifiable approach. Using IBM SPSS Statistics for the data obtained, this study will collect and analyze data from UAE tourists in Europe to evaluate the hypothesis.

Accordingly, this research will be a quantitative study with a descriptive and explanatory design. Its major goal is to offer empirical data on the impact of Social Media Influencers/fashionist in raising

Emirati tourists in Europe. Through the analyzed data, the study intends to provide in-depth information regarding social media influence and fashion influence on UAE travellers to visit Europe.

3.3. Quantitative Research

Using quantified objectivity, quantitative analysis is establishing or disproving a proposition. Quantitative analysis, as a research tool, requires huge samples that lack the closeness needed to catch subtleties that corroborate a researcher's conclusions, according to the authors. This study will survey tourists of UAE in Europe to perform a quantitative survey. A quantitative approach is suited for research that seeks to understand why and how human social interactions occur. A major part of this study's data collection came from a survey (Nespolo, 2016).

3.4. Target Population

This research will be conducted in a quantitative method to assess the impact of Social Media influencers/fashionist in raising Emirati tourists in Europe. There several Emiratis visit European countries every year. These entire UAE tourists in European countries are the target population for this study.

3.5. Sample Size and Procedure

The quality of research not only depends on the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation but also depends on the suitability of the sampling strategy used and the size of the sample. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) criteria which show the exact sample size of the population of 1,000,000 and above is 384 at alpha (α) = 0.05 level of significance. Thus current study intends to collect 384 and more responses for this study to make it more statistically significant.

3.6. Unit Of Analysis

The studies unit of analysis is an individual tourist from UAE national in Europe. Randomly the individual tourist will be selected to provide volunteer participation in this social study.

3.7. Instrumentation Of Questionnaires

The instruments used in this study are predicated on a set of items that are adopted from previous research. Based on the previous research and literature supports the questionnaires have been designed. These questionnaires are well studied by the researcher, and those results will help compare authenticity. This research will follow a specific

process to design the questionnaires. The research questions are;

The questions to measure Hypothesis 1 as Social Media Influencers/fashionist are given in the appendix with 5 questions. And the questions to measure Hypothesis 2 as Intention to Visit are also given in the appendix with 3 measurement questions.

3.8. Pilot Study

Researchers consider pilot studies to be extremely significant. Here you can find a list of probable flaws or weaknesses in the research. As a result, research can benefit from enhancements. It's a tiny study designed to evaluate data-collecting devices, sample recruitment strategies, research methodologies, and protocols in preparation for an extensive research project. Before gathering any research data, a pilot study allows the researcher to gather the necessary information. In the pilot research, the most important thing is to test the validity of the survey questions. Then, the results of the pilot study may be used to improve the research. For example, the pilot research may reveal uncertainties and problems in conducting the survey. Find out what people think about these issues by conducting a pilot study (Cameriere et al., 2011).

The pilot research identifies visual presentation, linguistic accuracy of questions, and time management, among other things. As part of a research project, a pilot study assists in the development of suitable sample selection. Test-retest reliability of a measuring device can be evaluated with a sample size of 35-40 in a proper pilot study. For this study, 35 to 40 UAE tourists will be analyzed from Europe. After collecting information, with the help of IBM SPSS, that information will be analyzed and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of reliability will be tested to identify internal reliability (Bell et al., 2018).

3.9. Validity

When a study's findings are validated, they are considered valid. Ensuring that survey questions are not unclear, confusing or cause any misunderstanding is of paramount importance to the researchers. A credible and dependable set of questions is required. A well-respected survey can be relied upon. For this reason, accurate and trustworthy research is dependent on the quality of the data. The validity of a test is the degree to which it accurately measures what it is intended to measure. According to the American Psychological Association, "validity is the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretation of test scores implied by suggested applications of tests" (Daoud,

2019).

Effective data collection requires the use of validated data collection methods. As the researcher, it's your job to make sure the questions don't mislead the respondent. You can't rely on it otherwise. When respondents are asked to answer valid and trustworthy measurement questions, only the results will be accurate and reliable. "Validation" is the process of collecting information to give "a strong scientific basis" for interpreting test scores. This means that the first step in validating an interpretation is to specify its scope and aspects (Hu & Paez, 2016).

This study relies heavily on survey questions to gather information. Due to the restricted range of replies, the scale will be applied to this survey form. To eliminate subjectivity, every stage of this study will be maintained by supplying information to the respondents.

3.10. Reliability

To be reliable, a test must be reliable or consistent

.9	≥	excellent.	.6	questionable
.8		good	.5	poor
.7		acceptable	.5	< unacceptable

This research will follow the reliability test by IBM SPSS to measure Cronbach's Alpha which defines internal reliability and bonding. Higher result means strong reliability. Where .7 to .9 and above is acceptable but .6 is questionable and below that is unacceptable (Taber, 2017).

3.11. Data Collection Method

An online survey using Google Form Questionnaire will be used for the survey of this quantitative sample. In addition to demographic data, the survey will be coded and kept secret by the researcher. These are some of the demographics of the tourist. Gender, age, and family status. The 7-point Likert scale ratings for each question allowed for categorization based on the obtained data. As a data collection instrument, the online Questionnaire has the benefit of being able to gather data from a focused population that matches the demographics of the research project. An online survey questions will be shown and provided to those tourists to provide their responses (Taherdoost, 2019).

3.12. Data Screening

The quality of data screening determines whether or not an analysis will be accepted. Preparing the

in how it assesses a particular trait. Reliability is defined as the degree of internal consistency in a quantification scheme. Stability over time may be seen in reliability tests. Measured by test-retest reliability, test or assessment consistency is evaluated. Score randomness is a measure of how much randomness is there in a test score collection. They are accurate, repeatable and consistent from one test to the next (Attia & Sinha, 2021).

According to Thomas and Ogilvy (2011), 1) Credibility, 2) Transferability, 3) Consistency, and 4) Conformability are the four dimensions of dependability research. Constituent reliability is the name given to these four components. Reliability tests are essential because they can offer consistent findings that are error-free. The measurement model's reliability in measuring latent constructs was described by reliability. The reliability measurement model can be described as;

To develop a proper reliability test-retest, the above table is the standard to follow the acceptance level.

data for further statistical analysis involves screening it to ensure it is clean and ready to go. Data screening is important for this, quantitative research and provides the basis for meaningful findings. There are several steps involved in screening and cleaning quantitative data (Tarter, 2011).

Data screening will be used to handle missing data issues. As, missing data is critical to the quality of data screening. It might result in a smaller number of samples available to be analysed. Research can be harmed by missing data. Because of this, it must prohibit accurate analysis. After entering all of the data into SPSS, the study will run a descriptive analysis to detect any missing (Tagarro et al., 2020).

3.13. Descriptive Analysis

Statistics that summarise the information are called descriptive statistics. The initial stage in quantitative research is descriptive statistics. That's what it's called when you're looking at study data. As opposed to gaining knowledge about the entire population, descriptive statistics focus on the sample.

As the name implies, descriptive statistics offer a quick overview of a population. Statistical data or graphics that are easy to grasp can be used. Descriptive statistics give a convenient overview of

data for the researcher. There will be a need for bivariate and multivariate analysis in this study due to the presence of more than one variable. For example, cross-tabulations and contingency tables, scatter plots, quantitative measurements of dependency, and descriptions of conditional distributions are all necessary to describe the connection between the impact of social media influencers and intention to visit Europe among UAE visitors. This study will use Bivariate analysis as it defines this study and shows the link between two separate variables, which is one of the most compelling reasons to use it. Thus, for this study, a descriptive analysis will be done (Loeb et al., 2017).

3.14. Correlation Analysis

It is used to determine the link between two random variables or bivariate data by doing a correlation analysis. In the range of -1 to +1, the greatest possible agreement is shown by 1 and the highest possible disagreement is indicated by 0. The correlation coefficient Pearson product-moment (also known as Pearson's R) measures the degree and direction of the linear relationship between two variables (Olilingo & Putra, 2020). If the result between social media influencers/fashionists and intention to visit near to 1, then there is positive correlation among the variables. If the result is 0, then there is no correlation, and -1 than, there is negative relationship among the social media influencers and intention to visit.

APPENDIX

Section 1: Basic Information

S/L	Questions
Q1	Do you intend to take this survey? Yes (1); No (0)
Q2	How many social media accounts do you have?
Q3	What social media do you use frequently every day? 1 = Facebook, 2 = Instagram, 3 = TikTok, 4 = Twitter, 5 = YouTube, 6 = Others
Q4	How much time do you spend on social media every day? 1 = <1 h, 2 = 1-2 h, 3 = 2-4 h, 4 = 4-6 h, 5 => 6 h
Q5	Do you know about Social Media Influencers/fashionist (SMIs)?
Q6	Do you follow SMIs on social media?
Q7	How many SMIs do you follow on social media?

Section 2: Likert Scale

1. Strongly Disagree; 2. Disagree; 3. Somehow Disagree; 4. Neutral; 5. Somehow Agree; 6. Agree; 7. Strongly Agree

Variable	Questions	Likert Scale						
Social Media influencers/fashionist	1. I found social media influencers/fashionist very attractive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	2. I found the information regarding Europe very dependable from the social media influencers channels.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	3. I trust the information regarding Europe provided by the social media influencers in their channels.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	4. The social media influencers/fashionists from Europe are very skilled	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	5. The social media influencers/fashionists that visits Europe and provides tricks and tips are very usefull.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Intention to Visit	1. When social media influencers/fashionists share tourist destination information on social media, I learn more about the place.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	2. I will consider visiting a tourist site if social media influencers/fashionists share information about it on social media.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	3. I will visit a tourism site if social media influencers/fashionists share information about it on social media.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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