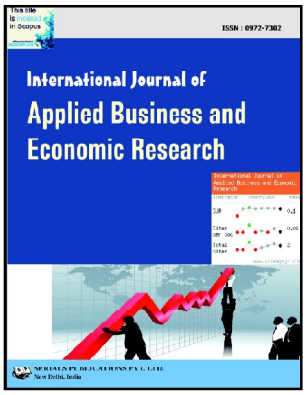

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The Influence of eWOM on Facebook on the Jordanian Consumers' Intentions Towards Restaurants

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Abstract: *Purpose* – The aim of this paper is to investigate how E- word of mouth via Facebook, combined with other factors such as: online presence, social closeness, and trust influence individuals' attitudes towards restaurants in Jordan. *Design/methodology/approach* – Data was collected using a close ended questions survey was developed to measure the variables included in this study**.** The sample was Facebook users from different ages. A total of 269 surveys were fully completed. *Findings* – Online presence, eWOM, E-trust and subjective norm proved to have a positive impact on customers attitudes towards restaurants, while social closeness influences trust and subjective norms positively. The research has also indicated that customer's intention to read the Facebook page content influences their intention to visit the restaurant which was promoted or reviewed on Facebook. *Originality/value/implications* – The paper demonstrates the importance of eWOM, online presence, social closeness, subjective norms, and trust among Facebook users, and how restaurants should get a fully-grasp to these concepts while preparing an online marketing strategy.

Keywords: electronic word of mouth, social closeness, online presence, subjective norms, trust, attitude, behavioral intention.

INTRODUCTION

Word of mouth(WOM) being known as a prominent resource of information transmission, individuals tend to talk about their experiences, emotions, needs, and feelings towards products and brands. WOM is defined as communication between people where the person receives non-commercial messages regarding to brands, products or services (Arndt, 1967; Litvin *et al.,* 2008), yet, customary WOM is operates only within traditional and limited social boundaries. Advancements in information technology and the existence of online social network sites have overcome the traditional limitations and changed the way in which information is transmitted. The impact of WOM has changed and it's role in businesses has changed,

These changes leveraged the power of word-of-mouth as a marketing tool. Currently, the internet has created new forms of communication platforms that empower the sellers and the buyers, allowing them to share information and opinions, this type of sharing sometime takes the form of electronic word of mouth (eWOM), or mouse WOM. This concept refers to any statement made by potential, actual, or former customer about a product or company being positive or negative, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the internet (Bickart and Schindler, 2001; Hennig-Thurau, 2004; Ye and Yushe,2009). The evolution of internet based social media has made it possible for one person to communicate with hundreds or even thousands of others about products and their providers (Mangold, and Faulds 2009). Therefore the impact of customer to customer communication has been amplified in the market place.

The online behavior of the social media platforms' users is a major concern for marketers as they need to understand how to deal with it, and how to leverage their usage of such platforms. Social media is becoming an integral part of people's lives. platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, snapchat or LinkedIn has a wide users base and keeps growing every day. Social media penetration worldwide is ever-increasing. In 2016, (68.3%) of internet users were social media users and these figures are expected to grow. Social networking is one of the most popular online activities with high user engagement rates and expanding mobile possibilities, the number of worldwide social media users is expected to reach some (2.95) billion by 2020, around a third of Earth's entire population (Statista, 2017). These social networking sites (SNS), allow individuals to build a profile within an enclosed system, formulate the list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and crisscross with others within the system. The type and jargon of these connections may vary from site to site" (Boyd and Ellison, 2010). User Generated Content (UGC) is considered as the essence of SNSs, any material that is designed and uploaded to the internet by a regular person, be it a comment or a vedio is considered an UGC(Interactive Advertising, Bureau, 2008).

Facebook has the largest margin of social media users and is considered the market leader and the first social network to exceed 1 billion registered accounts and currently enjoys (1.87) billion monthly active user (Statista, 2017). In the case of Jordan statistics indicate that the platforms most used are Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, and LinkedIn, respectively, among others, with 7.2 million internet users connected through social media out of 8 million internet users (Alghad, 2016). Facebook is the most popular social media site, with 79.9 per cent of Internet users in Jordan logging on, and 31.1 per cent using Facebook Messenger to make voice calls every day, according to Ipsos-Jordan (Ghazal, 2014) .people use social media in Jordan to share information, interests, reviews, and staying in contact with far off friends and family (Social Media Usage in the Middle East- Statistics and Trends, 2013), this type of information sharing via these platforms (eWOM) influences consumers' attitudes and intentions (Chen and Li, 2008; Chen, 2011; Ye et al. 2011; Abu-Shanab and Al-Tarawneh, 2013). This study utilizes the theory of reasoned action (TRA) that was developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1967), that aims to explain individuals' voluntary behavior, and why are they motivated to take a certain action. TRA indicates that behavioral intention precedes any behavior and comes as a result of believing that certain actions will lead to specific outcomes. The behavioral intention are usually based on attitudes and subjective norms which are considered as the influence of others (Ajzen, 1991).

This research sets out to investigate how *E- word of mouth via Facebook, combined with other factors such as: online presence, social closeness, and trust influence individuals' attitudes towards restaurants in Jordan.*

This being the study's main concern, it also sets out to investigate the follows:

i) What are the factors related to eWOM on Facebook that affects visiting a restaurant in Jordan?

ii) To what extent does attitude toward reading eWOM on Facebook influence the intention to read eWOM on Facebook?

iii) To what extent does the intention to read eWOM on Facebook influence the intention to visit a restaurant in Jordan?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media is considered as a relatively new media, its worldwide popularity is unquestionable. According to Statista.com the global average penetration rate of social networks was 31%, North America ranked first with a social media penetration rate of 59 %, followed by South America with 50 %, Western Europe with 48%, and in the tenth rank is the Middle East by 26% penetration rate as of January 2016 (Statista, 2017). In addition to traditional media, companies should utilize interactive media to attract, communicate and retain customers, and use it as a tool to enhance brand loyalty, maintain and develop relations with customers, and establish online distribution channels(Chan and Guillet, 2011). Online word of mouth (eWOM) has no doubt leaped forward and follows different rules to that of face to face word of mouth. It is evident from the research of (Chen and Li, 2008; Chen, 2011) that online word of mouth is becoming more and more prominent, and posts shared on different websites and social media pages are influencing online customers trust in the sites. Four different types of online word of mouth were mentioned and described by Kiecker and Cowles (2001) as follows:

1. Spontaneous word of mouth: is whereconsumers use their own web pages or e-mail as a communication channel to transfer information about products or service providers.
2. Quasi-Spontaneous word of mouth:is where consumers use virtual communities of shopping sites to transfer information and post comments, i.e. user generated content
3. Independent- or Third Party sponsored word of mouth; is where special interest groups transfer information about product and service from the Internet. They answer consumer's questions and help consumer search for information.
4. Corporate Sponsored word-of-mouth: is where the companies create websites and hire consumers to transfer information about products.

Earlier studies have concluded that consumption experiences are critical sources of human motivation (Westbrook, 1987) and it leads to post-consumption behavior, such as sharing these experiences via different platforms including eWOM platforms. Some industries are affected by what is shared more than the others; the telecommunication industry will be affected in different ways than the food industry.

Oliver (1980) mentioned that consumers' dissatisfaction basically exist when the delivered service failed to meet customers' expectation , (Hirschman, 1970) has also added_that unhappy service customer may select either to leave or to communicate dissatisfaction directly to the service provider or to others in the form of word-of-mouth (WOM)

Due to the tremendouse growth of social media platforms by the individuals and among them , more businesses are embracing this concept as part of their strategies, espcially in the domain of marketing

strategy. There are different definitions about social media and its classification; however, these definitions are mostly similar. (Kaplan and Heinlein, 2010) have defined social media as "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content". Based on their classification, social media include these certain groups: collaborative projects, blogs, content communities. Social media are changing the communication strategies of companies (Lai and Li, 2005; Mangold *et al.* 2009; Men and Tsai, 2013), because it facilitates a more vibrant and interactive method to communicate with a larger stakeholder base. (Avery *et al.,* 2010; Leung and Bai, 2015).

When it comes to the restaurants, "customers talk about restaurants, in relation to various aspects. For the meal experience quality of food appears to be the best significant aspect" (Clark and Wood, 1998) cleanliness-hygiene and ambiance, which are classified in order of importance by (Cousins *et al.,* 2002), indeed, people pay attention for those aspects and consider them highly credible on social networking sites. Thus, online presence would be useful for customers when it comes to decision to eat out, and for restaurants themselves in return by responding to customers, getting feedback, sharing hours, location, exclusive deals and info, quality photos, and much more. Bickert and Schlindler (2001) indicated that individuals tend to believe data that comes throughj un- commercialised sources, like customer reviews that are considered more reliable by people.

Livitin and others in (2007) has stressed the need for hospitality and tourism providers to utilize the emerging online technologies and different sources of eWOM (emails, instant messages, websites, blogs, virtual communities, news groups, chat rooms, product review sites, etc.)since they are playing an increasingly important role in the consumer decision-making process, esp. with all reviewers who add their comments to web pages and are rapidly becoming the travel opinion leaders of the electronic age, the researchers emphasis that marketers need to learn how to control, and not be controlled, by this new and powerful force. Moreover, the attitudes of consumers towards online forums is considered to have a profound eefct on purchase intentions. According to (Prendergast *et al.,* 2010) eWOM allows consumers to express their degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a product or service, the reserchers state that a major distinctive characteristic of online word of mouth is that information disseminates very quickly with a large number of people reading and spreading a message. In addition to that research shows that, online user-generated reviews are affecting business performance in tourism in China where travelers reviews have a significant impact on online sales, with a 10% increase in traveler review ratings boosting online bookings by more than 5% (Ye *et al.*, 2011).

In an attempt to investigate eWOM influence on the process of a tourism destination choice, Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012, that eWOM has significant impact on tourist's attitudes to visit Isfahan. Bunker, Rajendran and Corbin (2013) argued that online relationships must be carefully managed especially in the service industry where sites that allow discussions between customers and companies in a public forum are there for all possible customers to see. Their results show that if a customer likes the company's page on Facebook then he/she are more willing to engage in word of mouth beyond this medium when they are feeling satisfied. This satisfaction can be manifested in the simple updates via status or tweets. Güngör and Çadirci (2013) have also argued that electronic eWOM via social medis platforms may have a stronger impact on consumers because of the relationships built leading to a higher degree of trustworthiness.

As for online shopping, customers tend to pay more attention to online comments, in order to reduce transaction riks and for better utilization of products (Masoud, 2013). Other users comments tend to

influence customers more Consumers are more than any traditional advertising medium whereby they perceive products that get more comments as more reliable and therefore the impact is greater on the purchase intention (Masoud, 2013).

Bronner and deHoog argue that the more the properties of the product and service desired like : accessibility, relevance and experience, the higher the importance of the social media as a source of information for the customer. Which indicates that it is unlikely for customer to use social media information for the purchase of low involvement products; however when customers want to buy a high involvement product like booking for a holiday or vacation, more sources of information will be used -social media included-. The researchers indicate that customers usually refer to Facebook and Twitter when they need information about aspects that can be judged during using the product or service since these two mediums are considered domain-independent social media where there is a great opportunity for self-exposure (Bronner and deHoog, 2014). As for *user-generated content (UGC) it was found that the creation of (UGC) is derived by vengeance and economic motivations after an unconstructive service experience. Furthermore, motivations are found to correlate with the participation in a certain social media platform, customers usually create their own UGC to share their unconstructive and negative service experiences. Companies that provide the service need to check customers UGC and investigate into the motivation that spurred such a UGC, because motivations differ across the different platforms (Presi et al., 2014).*

(Vigila *et al.,* 2016) have indicated that online review score has the highest impact on hotel occupancy rates; a one point increase in the average review score across online platforms is associated with an increase in the occupancy rate of (7.5) percentage points. The researchers have also found that the number of online reviews has a positive effect but with decreasing returns which means that the more reviews we have the lower the beneficial effect on occupancy rates.

BUILDING RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS AND THEORETICAL MODEL

The model developed of this study was based on the theory of reasoned action (TRA) that was developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1967) as explained earlier. The aim of developing this model is to investigate how

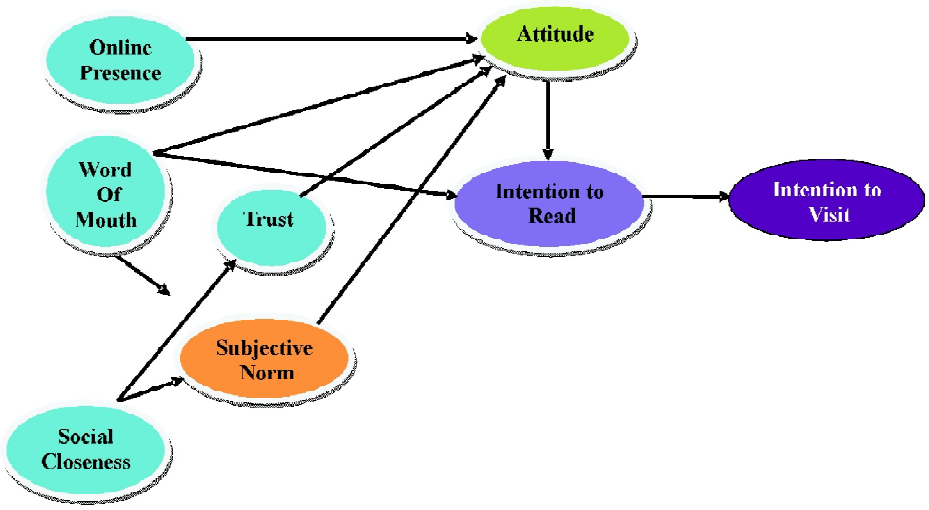

Figure 1: Research model

Source: Developed for the research

does electronic word of mouth on Facebook combined with: online presence, social closeness, and trust influence attitude and therefore intention to visit and actually try a certain restaurant.

Building the Hypothesis

Online presence

Online presence is defined as the intercommunication with others or with organizations over lengthy periods of time, where trust is built steadily through broad continuing interactions that allow individuals to create trustworthy assumptions of what other person or organization may offer or communicate (Luhmann, 1982).online presence is manifested in the degree to which users are aware of the existence of other human beings or intelligence when conducting interpersonal interactions(Biocca and Burgoon, 2011). Rajasekhar and Vijayasree (2012) verify that emotions and sociability plays a significant role in psychological perspectives, which influences the decision making process. (Meehan, 2000) discussed the theory of social presence which state that the extent of social existence is evaluated by the task and how much it's fitting to the social presence of the medium, in other words it represents how much communication and interaction can occur with the communication partners as they are psychologically reached. However, (Gefen and Straub, 1997) found that social presence has an impact on trust, as it may increase it through its impact in electronic communication. Research has found that media that are considered high in social presence, is preferred in communications settings where the task is vague and unclear" (Straub and Karahanna 1998). (Gunawardena, and Zittle, 1997) found that social presence has a positive influence on the socio-emotional experience while it compensates for the absence of nonverbal cues during written communication. Research has also indicated that social on line presence has an influence on online purchase intention (OPI) and online trust (Thuy *et al.,* 2013; Botha and Reyneke, 2016). Therefore and based on the arguments above the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: *Online presence* has a significant positive effect on the *attitude*

Electronic word of mouth

(East *et al.,* 2008) defined word of mouth as "informal advice passed between consumers, and it is usually interactive, swift, and lacking in commercial bias", and that gives it a powerful influence on consumer behavior in marketing. Moreover, Dichter (1966) indicated that WOM communication entails the passing of information from a non-paid communicator who will not be rewarded by giving this information and a receiver who is concerned about this information that allows more knowledge about the product or service.

Traditional word of mouth and its impact have been enhanced by technology that introduced new concept called (eWOM) (Brown *et al.,* 2007), and with (eWOM) more people are going to get exposed to different messages because of the ability to reach more with no time and effort.

According to (Feick and Price, 1987) consumers depend on word of mouth when they look for information related to making a purchase decision and that was justified by the fact that word of mouth is created and delivered by the consumers themselves which tells that they are more trustworthy than the company's ads and persuasive messages. (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006) found that the online reviews are becoming a major source of information to consumers that use also other forms of word of mouth communication. Customer reviews on line and via Facebook are considered one form of eWOM. Consumers that look for others opinion and seek their advice in general, tend to search for information and pursue

advice from others when it comes to making a purchase decision (Flynn *et al.,* 1996). Furthermore, individuals that tend to give their opinion to others who seek it are known as opinion leaders, those have a profound effect on others decisions and opinions at different levels including their attitudes and behaviors (Feick and Price, 1987). On the other hand, with the technology and the two way communication by web 2.0, word of mouth has been taken to another level and that gives it the ability to be dynamic and more interactive where individuals can seek, provide and transmit each other's opinions. Moreover, this can be very useful for companies in order to increase their brand engagement and relevance, since individuals are willing to create and share content and opinion with others. Empirical research indicate that eWOM had a significantly positive impact on product / brand image, product/brand attitudes and consumers' purchasing intention (Cheung and Thadani, 2012; Zarrad, and Debabi, 2015; Sharif *et al.,* 2016; Erkan,2016; Elseidi and El-Baz, 2016). Based on the literature discussed above the hence we say that:

H2: *E-Word of mouth* has a significant positive effect on the *attitude*

H3: *E-Word of mouth* has a significant positive impact on *intention to read*

H4: *E-Word of mouth* has a significant positive impact on trust

Social closeness

Purchasing decisions are often influenced by people whom the individual knows and trusts. Several online shoppers tend to wait for the opinions of early adopters before making a purchase decision to reduce the risk of buying a new product (Kim and Srivastava, 2007). Web-based social communities, permit consumers to share their personal experiences by writing reviews, rating others' reviews, and chatting among trusting members. This technique is considered as a starting point for online shoppers and enhances the volume of traffic on retail sites Sinha and Swearingen (2001), indicated that consumers tend to believe the advice of people whom they know and trust, like: friends, colleagues, and family-members, more than automated reviews on websites. Furthermore, communities online allow users to express their personal preferences and to share their recommendations by rating others' reviews and identifying trusting members. In addition to that (Guernsey, 2000) mentioned that consumers are paying more attention to opinions posted online when it comes to making several types of decisions ranging from buying a product to visiting a place.

Based on the literature discussed above the following hypothesis were proposed:

H5: *Social closeness* has a significant positive effect on *trust*

H6: *Social closeness* has a significant positive effect on *subjective norm*

Trust/e-trust

When it is impossible to control the actions of others or even fully understand their motivations, complexity of making a decision will definitely inhibit intentions to perform many behaviors (Gefen, 2000). Therefore people apply a variety of methods for reducing this complexity. Trust is one of these complexity reduction methods. It is in a broad sense, the confidence in a person's expectations of what other people will do, based on previous interactions (Luhmann, 1982). Trust is the fourth variable of our model, and it's a related construct that must be considered in the conceptualization of consumers' engagement in eWOM in Facebook. Although, "trust is an interpersonal determinant of behavior that deals with beliefs about the integrity, benevolence, ability, and predictability of other people" (Mayer *et al.,* 1995) (McKnight *et al.*

1998). According to (Gefen and Straub, 2004) Trust, indeed, is built through social interactions with other people and the surrounding environment. In addition, Trust in social contacts is an added element that influences information sharing. For example, (Dellarocas, 2003) examined that if buyers and sellers can meet through an online medium then this can influence and build trust that facilitates eWOM.

Based on the literature discussed above the following hypothesis was fomulated:

H7: *E-trust* has a significant positive effect on *attitude*

Subjective norm

Subjective norm is how individuals perceive social pressures to perform in a certain way

(Shin, 2009). It is considered a predictor of consumer's intention (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). People tend to comply with a particular behavior that is acceptable by their references (Tan *et al.,* 2012). Several studies have shown a positive relationship between subjective norm and consumer intention (Al Muala *et al.,* 2012; Kim, 2008; Prendergast *et al.,* 2008; Tan *et al.,* 2012; Alqasa *et al.,* 2014). (Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975) have also mentioned that normative influences affect attitudes, norms and values. Moreover, when we say that a consumer is susceptible to normative influence then this type of customer follow and do what others and especially those who matter to them expect them to do, as well as using products and brands that they can view as acceptable so they can seek approval through doing this(Chu & Kim, 2011). Then we can say that subjective norm may drive users' eWOM behaviors. Therefore the following hypothesis was generated:

H8: *Subjective norm* has a significant positive effect on *attitude*

Attitude toward reading WOM on Facebook

Hogg and Vaughan (2005) defined attitude as "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols". However, some sociologist and psychologists even defined attitudes simply to the showing of a certain behavior in a certain situation. Word of mouth is considered a powerful tool in influencing the attitudes and behaviors of consumers (Brown and Reingen, 1987), as it's also very useful application for sentiment analysis which can monitor and measure the attitudes and feeling that customers experience on the Web, as it can also be a reason for increasing loyalty to the brand (Ruiz-Mafe *et al.,* 2014). Empirical research implies that attitude has a strong influence on behavioral intention (Rigopoulos and Askounis, 2007; Md-Nor *et al.,* 2008; Abdel-Wahab, 2008; Al Muala *et al.,* 2009, 2012; Zolait, 2010). The connotation of attitude and intention is core in attitudinal research and the association between the two concepts has been confirmed in a huge variety of settings (Abdel-Wahab, 2008; Al Muala *et al.,* 2009, 2012; Zolait, 2010; Yang, 2012). Accordingly we have:

H9: *Attitude* has a significant positive effect on intention to read

Intention to read WOM on Facebook

(Mangold *et al.,* 1999) found that intention toward eating out have a significant positive relationship with positive recommendation, which means that individuals are more likely to eat out at a restaurant when they read positive word of mouth about it, and this shows how much word of mouth has an impact on visiting a restaurant.

Moreover, when customers are satisfied about a restaurant they write a positive comment (Pizam and Ellis, 1999).

When individuals express their opinion in social web site about a restaurant, the restaurant can use this information as it's very valuable for the marketing department and it can provide useful information about the intention of their costumer. (Liu and Zhang, 2012). Longart (2010) stated that satisfaction with food and drink affect PWOM significantly, as does an intangible aspect called "the power of context", he indicated that there are triggers of PWOM, like when surprises given before customers order have a significant impact on PWOM, but not if offered after the main course is served. eWOM makes possible for consumers to communicate their experiences and outlooks not only with people close to them and know personally but also with anonymous audience as well, which makes eWOM a valuable source of information (Jeong and Jang, 2011). Therefore the following hypothesis is generated:

H10: *Intention to read* has a significant positive effect on intention to visit

Intention to visit a restaurant

People always influence others decisions in their daily interactions through different ways (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). Restaurants depend mostly on positive word of mouth in order to increase their customer base because of their limited budget located for promotion (Mangold *et al.,* 1999), most restaurant on social network they post a digital picture because it's difficult on customer evaluate products before consumption(Zhang *et al.,* 2010).

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this study, the survey method was used to collect quantitative data to assist in the statistical analysis (Zikmund & Babin, 2007). Precise results, low cost and good statistical significance (Sincero, 2012) were the drive for using this technique in the current research, In order to gain accurate data on how intention to visit a restaurant is affected by electronic word of mouth, subjective norm, social closeness, online presence, attitude towards reading reviews, trust between contacts on Facebook, and finally, intention to read.

Measurement, Scaling and variables of the research

A close ended questions survey was developed to measure the variable included in this study based previous literature review 32 questions were generated Three of which were used to attain demographic information. six items were used to attain descriptive information about Facebook and restaurants, and twenty three Likert scale questions were presented to measure the relationships among the variables of the model. The five points Likert scale used, ranged from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree" in order to state the level of agreement or disagreement of the users.

The research was divided into eight variables based on the model of the study. A set of questions were adopted from previous researches then divided based on the variables for which they relate to. Three questions for the construct social closeness were adopted from (Inge M. Wetzer *et al,* 2007). Four questions for the construct of online presence and three questions for the contrast of the trustamong contacts on Facebook, were adopted from (David Gefen *et al,* 2004). Also, five questions for the contrast of word of mouth were adopted from (Shu-Chuan Chu, Yoojung Kim, 2011). Three questions for the contrast of subjective norm were adopted from (Shu-Chuan Chu, Yoojung Kim, 2011). Four questions for the contrast

of intention to read were adopted from (David Gefen *et al,* 2004). Three questions for the contrast of attitude towards reading were adopted from (Shieh-Neng Yen *et al,* 2008).

Data collection

In order to test the hypothesis generated for this research, data was collected via online surveys using Google Forms The sample our survey targeted was Facebook users from different ages. A total of 274 participants responded to the survey out of which 269 surveys were fully completed and usable and five were eliminated.

Data analysis

A multiple linear regression test was conducted to study the hypothesis generated using statistical program SmartPLS to find T-statistics (Beta) for the inner model in order to interpret the path coefficient. Additionally, correlation was used to examine the values of the outer model to check the construct's validity and reliability in addition to assess the internal consistency; Cronbac's Alpha measures were applied.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Preliminary Data Analysis

Preliminary data analysis encompasses investigating demographic variables and sample profile. Firstly, all participants confirmed having a Facebook account. Additionally, and as shown in Table 6.1, gender profile of the sample indicated that female respondents accounted for the majority in nearly two thirds of the sample (61.3%), whereas male participants contributed to only 38.7%. In terms of age, the dominant age range of the sampled respondents was(18-24) years old with a frequency percentage of (90.7%), followed by all other greater age categories which all together accounted for less than 10%. With regard to the educational level, 55% of the respondents were bachelor degree holders, while 41.6% of them completed high schools. Only around 3.5% of the respondents achieved higher studies. Further descriptive statistics about the sample is given in Table 2.

Table 2
Demographic profile of the sample

Demographic variable	*Categories/ Values*	*Response information (N=276)*
Gender	Male (104)	38.7%
	Female (165)	61.3%
Educational Level	High school (112)	41.6%
	Bachelor degree (148)	55.0%
	Master students (4)	0.4%
	Doctoral (5)	0.7%
Age	18-24 years old (244)	90.7%
	25-29 years old (11)	4.7%
	30-34 years old (4)	1.5%
	Above 35 years old (10)	3.7%

PLS Measurement (Outer) model results

The values of the outer loadings were examined in order to view the correlations between the latent variable and the reflective indicators in its outer model, all items were found above the acceptable level of (0.6), and thus demonstrating reliable items(Hair *et al.* 2013) .

For this research the pattern of item loadings across constructs were examined (cross loadings) for the sake of determining discriminate validity across the items as shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Items Loadings and Cross Loadings

	Attitude	*Intention to read*	*Intention to visit*	*Social closeness*	*Subjective norm*	*Online presence*	*Trust*	*Word of mouth*
ATT1	**0.77**	0.26	0.48	0.21	0.17	0.26	0.16	0.19
ATT2	**0.84**	0.34	0.38	0.22	0.10	0.26	0.19	0.22
ATT3	**0.87**	0.41	0.42	0.19	0.17	0.26	0.18	0.29
ITR1	0.39	**0.93**	0.33	0.30	0.27	0.55	0.64	0.46
ITR2	0.35	**0.92**	0.32	0.31	0.19	0.61	0.50	0.38
ITR3	0.42	**0.93**	0.39	0.35	0.27	0.53	0.56	0.46
ITV1	0.36	0.36	**0.90**	0.21	0.21	0.34	0.35	0.31
ITV2	0.49	0.34	**0.92**	0.22	0.24	0.36	0.31	0.34
ITV3	0.55	0.31	**0.90**	0.21	0.2	0.33	0.30	0.30
SC1	0.22	0.28	0.21	**0.80**	0.17	0.25	0.40	0.31
SC2	0.24	0.30	0.26	**0.85**	0.19	0.24	0.37	0.28
SC3	0.16	0.27	0.11	**0.80**	0.23	0.27	0.39	0.24
SN1	0.15	0.28	0.14	0.21	**0.81**	0.37	0.28	0.41
SN2	0.13	0.12	0.20	0.18	**0.82**	0.27	0.18	0.30
SN3	0.15	0.24	0.25	0.21	**0.84**	0.37	0.29	0.44
OP1	0.28	0.58	0.26	0.25	0.26	**0.85**	0.44	0.42
OP2	0.26	0.44	0.32	0.23	0.29	**0.78**	0.37	0.39
OP3	0.25	0.49	0.34	0.21	0.36	**0.84**	0.39	0.41
OP4	0.25	0.47	0.33	0.34	0.46	**0.83**	0.45	0.41
T1	0.01	0.18	0.28	0.39	0.24	0.27	**0.76**	0.25
T2	-0.0005	0.16	0.19	0.37	0.26	0.26	**0.76**	0.26
T3	0.36	0.83	0.29	0.31	0.30	0.50	**0.70**	0.44
WOM1	0.13	0.31	0.22	0.35	0.37	0.37	0.33	**0.72**
WOM2	0.19	0.34	0.25	0.29	0.35	0.31	0.33	**0.80**
WOM3	0.16	0.31	0.28	0.27	0.40	0.32	0.39	**0.77**
WOM4	0.29	0.39	0.25	0.20	0.31	0.40	0.34	**0.75**
WOM5	0.27	0.4	0.28	0.20	0.36	0.38	0.32	**0.75**
WOM6	0.22	0.39	0.28	0.25	0.33	0.40	0.34	**0.69**

Construct validity was established for the study, including both convergent and discriminate validity have also been assesed. As presented in Table 4, the AVE (Average Variance Explained) scores for all constructs in the model were more than 0.5, which meets the first requirement of achieving convergent validity.composite reliability is another method to assess convergent validity where constructs should exhibit acceptable to high scores exceeding the .70" threshold recommended by (Hair *et al.*, 2013; Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 4
Validity and Reliability Estimates of the Constructs

	AVE	*Composite Reliability*	*R Square*	*Cronbach's Alpha*
Attitude	0.6884	0.8686	0.1248	0.7748
Intention to read	0.8571	0.9473	0.3121	0.9169
Intention to visit	0.8242	0.9336	0.1414	0.8936
Online presence	0.6810	0.8950	-	0.8433
Social closeness	0.6687	0.8582	-	0.7521
Subjective norm	0.6764	0.8624	0.0595	0.7615
Trust	0.5502	0.8656	0.3269	0.7122
Word of mouth	0.5628	0.8851	-	0.8444

For the assesment of internal consistency Cronbach's alpha estimates should be greater than .70 (Field, 2005; Hair *et al.,* 2013). As presented in Table 4, nearly all scores exhibited acceptable to high reliabilities thereby, satisfying the second requirement of convergent validity

As for the model fit and the amount of variance which was explained by R^2. For instance, the R^2 value of 'Trust' was found moderate and equal to 32.6%, and for 'Intention to read' was about 31.2%, whereas 'Subjective norm' scored a very low percentage of 6%, which is unacceptable. Overall, nearly all mentioned R^2 values are greater than 0.10; therefore, it was appropriate to examine the significance of the paths associated with these variables, except for the path that links social closeness and subjective norm. The results in Table 5 indicate that all constructs in the research model have also achieved discriminate validity.

Table 5
Discriminate Validity (Correlation Matrix among Construct Scores)

	AVE	*Attitude*	*Intention to read*	*Intention to visit*	*Online presence*	*Social closeness*	*Subjective norm*	*Trust*	*Word of mouth*
Attitude	0.6884	**0.8297**							
Intention to read	0.8571	0.4214	**0.9257**						
Intention to visit	0.8242	0.5071	0.376	**0.9078**					
Online presence	0.681	0.3164	0.6041	0.3799	**0.8252**				
Social closeness	0.6687	0.2492	0.3466	0.2377	0.314	**0.8177**			
Subjective norm	0.6764	0.179	0.2627	0.2377	0.4127	0.244	**0.8224**		
Trust	0.5502	0.2136	0.6156	0.3561	0.4992	0.4817	0.3102	**0.7417**	
Word of mouth	0.5628	0.2904	0.4734	0.3482	0.4893	0.3418	0.4685	0.4541	**0.7501**

Note: The values in the diagonal are calculated through the equation SQRT(AVE)

6.3. PLS Structural (inner) model results

An assessment of the structural model was undertaken to determine the significance of the paths and the predictive power of the model through the PLS algorithm, then by considering a bootstrapping process that involved "random samples from the original data set to determine the significant levels of path coefficients" (Hair *et al.,* 2013). Table 6 highlights the hypotheses of the study, and shows the path coefficient between the latent variables and bootstrap critical ratios. The bootstrap T-Statistics determine the stability of the estimates; considered acceptable above 1.96 at 95% confidence interval (Chin *et al.,* 1998). As a result, 7 hypotheses were supported (H1, H2, H5-H8, and H10), whereas 3 hypotheses were not supported (H3, H4, and H9).

Table 6
Influence Paths and Hypotheses Results

	H#	*Path Coefficient (β)*	*T Statistics (|O/STERR|)*	*Sig*	*Result*
Social closeness → Trust	H1	0.3697	4.2493	0.000	Supported
Social closeness → Subjective norm	H2	0.244	2.6752	0.007	Supported
Subjective norm → Attitude	H3	0.003	0.0054	0.978	Not supported
Online presence → Attitude	H4	0.2196	1.6889	0.092	Not supported
Word of mouth → Attitude	H5	0.211	2.4996	0.008	Supported
Attitude → Intention to read	H6	0.3101	3.4185	0.001	Supported
Word of mouth → Intention to read	H7	0.3833	4.8667	0.000	Supported
Word of mouth → Trust	H8	0.3277	3.4774	0.001	Supported
Trust → Attitude	H9	0.0262	0.1931	0.847	Not supported
Intention to read → Intention to visit	H10	0.376	4.4679	0.001	Supported

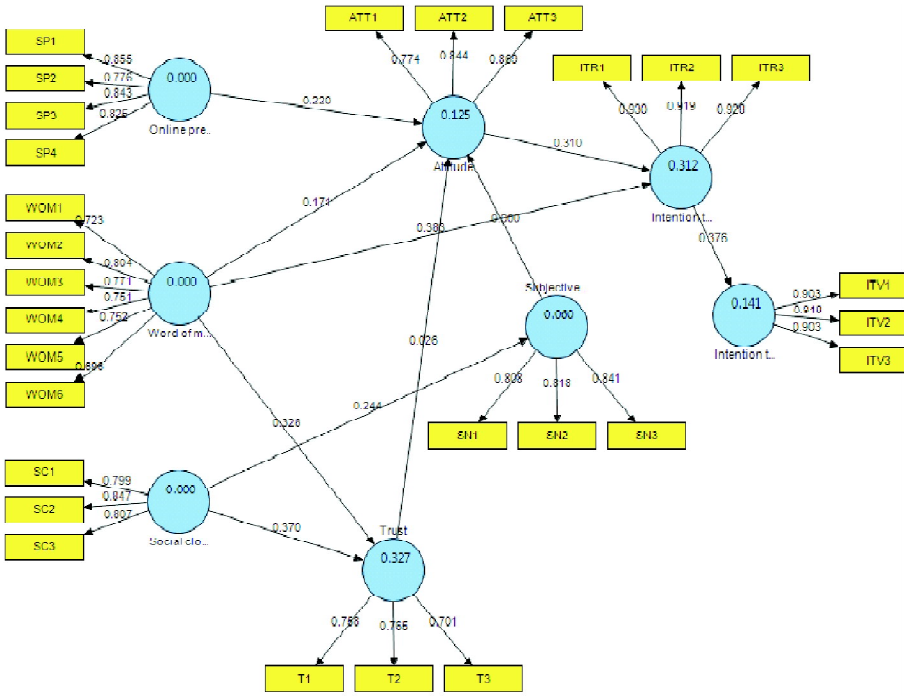

Figure 2: Tested research model

Practical Implications

The prowess of the research lies in its ability to be applied in practice. For that, the value of this research WOM in Facebook and its impact on intentions and attitudes toward vising restaurants in Jordan is that it extends our understanding of the importance of EWOM and reviews from consumer perspective by identifying the factors and results of consumer intention to visit a restaurant. The findings of the study will increase the understanding of how consumer considers EWOM when it comes to intention to visit a restaurant with a several factors affecting.

The findings will emphasize for practitioners how the constructs (online presence, online closeness, trust, subjective norm) will affect consumer attitude toward value of EWOM, which affect intention to read and finally intention visit a restaurant.

An important aspect was mentioned is the online presence, which is a crucial component of the marketing strategy, no matter what the size the business is or what industry it belongs to. Allowing customers or even potential ones to engage easily via a Facebook page that plays an vital role in their everyday lives and then the art of following up, ads, and contents writing, responding, communicating and tracking will play its role. Thus, practitioners should keep enhancing their online presence.

Resturant owners should activiate their presence online, and integrate online media tools within their marketing strategies. Resturants online presence should be managed carefully, following up on views, feedback and opinions of customers via review site and social media platforms is an essential element of the marketing effort. Each review and suggestion directs resturants towards the propoer path, and enhances positive customer experience.

Conclusion

Since it is becoming one of the fastest growing marketing tools that businesses can utilize, eWOM in social networks is a fascinating research topic due to the exceptional growth, power and popularity of social networks. Many organizations believe mistakenly that establishing a Facebook page and posting occasional content will result in an incremental increase in sales. However, this is far from the truth, as social media with it's different platforms must hold a vital part of the business's overall marketing communication strategy and activities in order for it to generate full aptitude.

This research has generated important insights about the influence of eWOM on Facebook on the Jordanian consumers' intentions towards restaurants, which is of benefit to organizations that employ or intend to use Facebook social media as a marketing communication platform. The study specifically provides valuable insights into the behavioral attitudes of Jordanians towards Facebook advertising, as well as variables that have a favorable influence on intention-to-purchase and purchase perceptions, which have received limited prior empirical investigation. Online presence, eWOM, E-trust and subjective norm proved to have a positive impact on customers attitudes towards restaurants, while social closeness influences trust and subjective norms positively. The research has also indicated that customers intention to read the Facebook page content a consequently influences their intention to visit the restaurant which was promoted or reviewed on Facebook. Facebook page content should be carefully created to be interactive, stimulating and informative in order to appeal to customers who are fickle and difficult to reach. Moreover, Hadija *et al.* (2012) projected that businesses and managers must understand what current and prospective customers

are doing on SNS such as Facebook; hence, should be prepared to alter or adapt their SNA (Social Network Analysis) strategies due to changes that occur in the environment and as a result of consumer feedback and academic research in order to increase the effectiveness.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This investigation has some limitations and also lends itself to additional research.

First, In order to conduct a thorough research, excessive amount of time is needed, unfortunately, the study suffered from the tight time constraints. Secondly, interviews could have been better method for data collection because people tend to collaborate more when asked personally Therefor the time factor should be extended in the future in order to conduct a more comprehensive reserach and use different, more eleborate data collection methods.. The third limitation was the lack of previous related studies in Jordan, or the Arab World and the Middle East Therefore this topic can be addresed from a different angle in Jordan particurarly and in the Middle East and the Arab world generarly. The reasersch was also limited to Facebook reviews,while there are many other sources for online reviews, future research can tackle the influnence of other social media platform reviews like Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat on customers intentions in the resturant industry or anyother industries At last**,** previous study shown a significant influence of subjective norm on perceived usefulness and behavioral intention to use (Schepers, 2007), this was inconsistent with our finding. this was unexpected but it gives us insights to work thoroughly on it and support the reasersch model in the future. Another suggestion for constructing future research including different constructs such us: brand familiarity, prior experience affect on consumer intention to visit a restaurant.

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