مجلة الأصيل للبحوث الاقتصادية والإدارية
El - Acil Journal for Economic and Administrative Research
ISSN: 2571-9866
EISSN: 2661-7854
Volume:10 / N°2/October 2026, PP 261-280

Social Media Marketing and Brand Image in Emerging Markets: Evidence from Yassir's Platform in Algeria

التسويق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي وصورة العلامة التجارية في الأسواق الناشئة: دراسة تطبيقية على منصة يسير في الجزائر

*** NASRI Aboubakeur**
Abbes Laghrour University of Khenchela, Algeria
nasri.aboubakeur@univ-khenchela.dz

Received:16/09/2026 *Accepted:26/10/2026* *Published:31/10/2026*

Abstract :
Social media marketing research remains fragmented across sectors and cultural contexts, particularly within emerging digital mobility markets. This study examines how social media marketing dimensions (interactivity, entertainment, trendiness, customization, and eWOM) contribute to Yassir's brand image among Algerian consumers.
A quantitative study design was employed. Data from 180 Yassir users were collected and analyzed using SPSS 27. The findings show that eWOM, customization, interactivity, and entertainment contribute positively to brand image, whereas trendiness does not. The study extends the social media marketing framework to Algeria's on-demand mobility sector and highlights the contextual relevance of eWOM and customization.
Key words: Social Media Marketing; Brand Image, Yassir, Algerian Consumers.
JEL classification codes: M31; D12; M37

**Corresponding author*

1. Introduction

The digitalization of commercial practices in Algeria has transformed how firms communicate with consumers and build brand legitimacy. Social media have progressively altered the way consumers evaluate brands. Facebook and Instagram, in particular, are no longer used solely to access commercial information; they also provide spaces in which users form judgments about a firm's credibility, attractiveness, and reliability. This shift is especially relevant for technology-mediated services, where much of the relationship between the provider and the customer develops through digital interfaces.

1.1. Research Context

On-demand mobility services offer a particularly informative setting for examining this relationship. Their adoption involves a degree of uncertainty, since users must place trust in a service that is largely accessed and experienced through a digital platform. Yassir offers a pertinent case in this respect. Founded in Algeria and subsequently expanded across the Maghreb, the company has developed a strong presence on social media. Yet the extent to which this communication shapes consumers' perceptions of its brand remains insufficiently documented.

The theoretical framework adopted in this study draws on Kim and Ko's (2012) conceptualization of social media marketing, which distinguishes five dimensions: interactivity, entertainment, trendiness, customization, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Although subsequent research has applied these dimensions to various industries, their relevance to on-demand mobility services remain comparatively underexplored, particularly within Maghreb markets. This gap raises the question of whether relationships identified in other sectoral and cultural settings can be observed in the Algerian digital mobility context. This study therefore addresses both a sectoral gap and a geographical gap by examining SMM and brand image in the Algerian context.

1.2. Research Problem

The central research problem arises from the limited empirical understanding of whether substantial investment in social media communication actually translates into a more favorable brand

image among Algerian users of digital mobility services. Although technology companies in the Maghreb increasingly rely on social media to communicate with consumers, they often lack empirical evidence enabling them to determine which dimensions of SMM contribute most strongly to brand perceptions. In the specific case of Yassir, the question is therefore not simply whether the company is active on social media, but whether and to what extent the different dimensions of its social media marketing activities contribute to consumers' perceptions of the brand.

1.3. Research Questions

The study addresses the following research question: ***To what extent does social media marketing contribute to improving Yassir's brand image among Algerian consumers?***

This central question is further examined through the following sub-questions:

- What is the level of exposure of Algerian Yassir users to content disseminated through the brand's social media platforms?
- Among the five dimensions of social media marketing, which dimensions exert the strongest influence on Yassir's perceived brand image?
- Does electronic word-of-mouth play a comparable role in shaping the brand image of an Algerian mobility service, given its particular importance in markets characterized by strong interpersonal communication and word-of-mouth practices?

1.4. Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses are formulated in accordance with the hypothetico-deductive approach commonly used in management sciences. The main hypothesis examines the overall effect of social media marketing on Yassir’s brand image.

H (Main Hypothesis): Social media marketing, considered as an overall construct, has a positive and statistically significant effect on Yassir’s brand image.

H1: Perceived interactivity of Yassir’s social media marketing has a positive and statistically significant effect on Yassir’s brand image.

H2: Perceived entertainment of Yassir’s social media marketing has a positive and statistically significant effect on Yassir’s brand image.

H3: Perceived trendiness of Yassir’s social media marketing has a positive and statistically significant effect on Yassir’s brand image.

H4: Perceived customization of Yassir's social media marketing has a positive and statistically significant effect on Yassir's brand image.
H5: Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) generated through Yassir's social media marketing has a positive and statistically significant effect on Yassir's brand image.

1.5. Research Objectives

The research objectives are formulated in accordance with the overall purpose of the study and its theoretical and managerial contributions.

- To measure the effect of social media marketing on Yassir's brand image in Algeria.
- To identify which of the five dimensions of social media marketing exert the strongest influence on consumers' perceptions of Yassir's brand image.
- To formulate actionable marketing recommendations for Yassir's marketing teams based on the empirical findings of the study.

1.6. Research Methodology

To address these objectives, a quantitative, positivist research approach was adopted. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to a sample of 180 users of the Yassir application in Algeria and subsequently analyzed using SPSS 27 through a deliberately streamlined analytical sequence: scale reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and finally multiple linear regression to simultaneously assess the effects of the five SMM dimensions on brand image.

1.7. Research Contribution

This study makes both theoretical and managerial contributions. Theoretically, it extends the Kim and Ko (2012) social media marketing framework to the Algerian on-demand mobility sector, thereby contributing to its application in a Maghreb context characterized by distinctive patterns of digital consumption, interpersonal trust, and word-of-mouth communication. The study consequently enriches existing knowledge by examining the relevance of an established SMM framework beyond the Western and East Asian settings in which it has been predominantly investigated. Managerially, the research provides Yassir with

empirical insights into the contribution of different SMM dimensions to brand image, supporting more informed social media strategy development. It also offers transferable insights for other Maghreb technology platforms seeking to strengthen digital communication, consumer trust, and brand legitimacy.

1.8. Research Structure

The article is organized into five sections. Following this introduction, the literature review examines the theoretical foundations of SMM and brand image before specifying the conceptual model adopted. The methodology section details the sample, measurement instruments, and statistical analysis protocol. The results are then presented in a strictly descriptive manner, before the discussion places them in relation to previous research. Finally, the conclusion considers the contributions, limitations, and potential avenues for further research.

2.Literature Review

This section provides the theoretical foundation for the research problem introduced above. It draws on the conceptual frameworks underlying social media marketing (SMM) and brand image, brings these perspectives into dialogue with the available empirical evidence, identifies the limited attention given to the Maghreb ride-hailing context, and culminates in the development of the hypotheses and conceptual model tested in the methodological section.

2.1. Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing was not initially treated as an autonomous category within the promotional mix. Mangold and Faulds (2009) were among the first to formalize its distinctive characteristics. Unlike traditional channels, in which firms retain substantial control over the message, social media introduce two-way communication through which consumers themselves become producers of brand-related content. Rather than being merely an unpredictable consequence of digital communication, this loss of managerial control has progressively become a central concern in SMM research: understanding what brands can - and cannot-shape within the conversations surrounding them.

Building on this perspective, Kim and Ko (2012) developed one of the most widely adopted operational frameworks in the literature by decomposing perceived SMM into five measurable dimensions: interactivity, entertainment, trendiness, customization, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Initially tested among 845 consumers of five luxury brands across four countries, the model demonstrated positive and significant effects of each dimension on the drivers of brand equity. Its applicability, however, has not remained confined to the luxury sector. Godey et al. (2016) subsequently employed the framework and provided further evidence of its robustness using a comparable sample, while Seo and Park (2018) adapted it, with some qualifications, to the airline industry. This gradual extension across sectors suggests that the Kim and Ko framework may function less as a luxury-specific theory than as a generic framework for understanding SMM. Nevertheless, this proposition remains to be examined in contexts that differ substantially from those in which the model was initially developed, such as urban mobility services in Algeria.

2.2. Brand Image

If SMM constitutes the stimulus, brand image represents its cognitive trace. Keller (1993) conceptualizes brand image as the perceptions consumers associate with a brand and retain in memory. This perspective goes beyond a simple overall evaluation of the brand. Consumers construct brand image through a network of associations related to attributes, perceived benefits, and attitudes, which may differ in their strength, favorability, and distinctiveness from one individual to another. Consequently, reducing brand image to a single observable indicator would overlook the multidimensional nature of these mental associations and provide only a partial representation of consumers' perceptions. The Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model developed by Keller remains a major reference for researchers seeking to articulate brand awareness and brand image within a unified theoretical framework.

Aaker (1996) provides a more operational complement to this conceptualization. Rather than focusing exclusively on the perceptual dimension, he proposes a measurement system-the Brand Equity Ten-organized around ten indicators grouped into five categories: loyalty, perceived quality, associations, awareness, and

market behavior. For the present research, the value of this framework lies less in its comprehensiveness than in its capacity to translate an abstract construct such as brand image into variables that can be measured through a questionnaire, a prerequisite for quantitative analysis using SPSS. Taken together, Keller and Aaker provide complementary foundations: the former primarily supports the conceptual definition, while the latter contributes to its empirical operationalization.

2.3. The Social Media Marketing and Brand Image Relationship

The proposition that SMM affects brand image is not new, but empirical evidence remains concentrated in a relatively limited number of sectors. Kim and Ko (2012) provided an early contribution by showing that the five dimensions of SMM positively contribute to perceived brand value, brand relationships, and brand equity, with brand image incorporated as one component of overall brand equity rather than examined as an isolated dependent variable. Godey et al. (2016) subsequently confirmed this relationship in a broader setting, although the specific characteristics of the luxury sector remain a potential limitation, as brand image in luxury markets is strongly associated with social distinction and identity-related consumption in ways that may not readily translate to a mass-market mobility service.Seo and Park (2018) introduce a particularly relevant distinction for the present study. By explicitly treating brand awareness and brand image as separate dependent variables, they demonstrate that entertainment, customization, interaction, and eWOM significantly affect brand image, whereas trendiness has a stronger influence on brand awareness. In other words, the dimensions of SMM do not necessarily exert equivalent effects across dependent variables, a finding that warrants caution when assuming a uniform effect of all five dimensions on Yassir's brand image.

Jalilvand and Samiei (2012), for their part, isolate the eWOM dimension and demonstrate its significant influence on brand image and purchase intention in the automotive sector, where interpersonal trust plays a role that may be comparable to that expected in the Algerian context. Finally, Rais (2025) provides a useful methodological precedent. The study of the retail sector in Muscat, conducted using SPSS with a sample of similar size to that of the present research (n=150), demonstrates that a relatively straightforward quantitative design-without structural equation modeling-can generate useful evidence regarding the relationship between SMM and brand image.

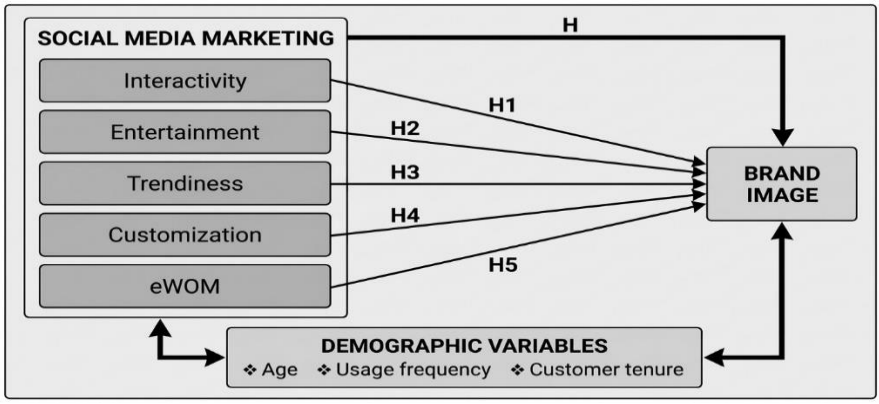
2.4. Identification of the Research Gap

The evidence summarized above points to a twofold gap. First, the relationship between SMM and brand image has predominantly been examined in sectors with strong symbolic dimensions-luxury, automotive, and air transportation-where consumption may involve identity-related considerations that are not readily comparable with those associated with an everyday urban mobility service. Second, none of the studies considered above examines a Maghreb setting, despite the possibility that local patterns of trust-including the importance of offline word-of-mouth and a relative degree of skepticism toward recently established digital platforms-may alter the relative contribution of the five SMM dimensions.Yassir, an Algerian unicorn operating in a sector that remains underrepresented in the existing literature, therefore provides a theoretically relevant and empirically novel setting in which to examine the generalizability of the Kim and Ko (2012) framework.

2.5. Conceptual Model of the Research

The model tested in this study therefore transfers the Kim and Ko (2012) framework to the present empirical setting without structurally modifying its underlying dimensions, while focusing on a single dependent variable-brand image-in line with Keller's (1993) conceptualization and, more specifically for its empirical assessment, the approach adopted by Seo and Park (2018). The resulting framework takes the form of a multiple regression model in which five independent variables converge on a common dependent variable (Figure 1):

Fig 1. Conceptual Model of the Research



Source: Author's.

3.Methodology

This section translates the hypotheses formulated in the literature review into an operational research protocol. It specifies how the conceptual model-comprising five dimensions of social media marketing acting on Yassir's brand image-will be empirically tested, the data on which the analysis is based, the population under investigation, and the statistical procedures through which the data will be processed.

3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a positivist epistemological position. It assumes that objectively observable causal relationships exist between social media marketing and brand image independently of the researcher's interpretation, and seeks to test these relationships rather than allow them to emerge inductively. This position naturally entails a hypothetico-deductive approach: hypotheses H1 to H5 were formulated a priori on the basis of the literature and subsequently subjected to empirical testing rather than constructed retrospectively from the data.The study adopts a quantitative cross-sectional design. Data are collected from respondents at a single point in time, making it possible to assess statistical associations between variables, although such a design does not, strictly speaking, permit causal inference. This limitation, inherent in cross-sectional research, will be revisited in the conclusion.

3.2. Sampling Procedure

The survey was conducted among 180 users of the Yassir application in Algeria. In the absence of an official sampling frame covering all active users of the platformYassir does not publish an accessible customer registrya non-probability convenience sampling method was adopted. Respondents were recruited through the distribution of the questionnaire on social media platforms and within groups of active users.The questionnaire was structured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Despite some rigidity in the granularity of responses, this format remains the prevailing standard in this type of research; Rais (2025), for example, employed the same scale in a research design directly comparable to the present study.

3.3. Measurement Instrument

Each of the six variables in the model was operationalized using scales previously validated in the literature and adapted to the context of the Yassir application rather than developed entirely from scratch. The five SMM dimensions were measured using the scale

developed by Kim and Ko (2012)-interactivity, entertainment, trendiness, customization, and electronic word-of-mouth-whose factor structure was subsequently confirmed by Godey et al. (2016) using an independent sample. Brand image, the dependent variable in the model, was measured using items derived from Keller's (1993) conceptual framework and operationalized according to the formulation adopted by Seo and Park (2018), supplemented by the associative dimension derived from Aaker (1996).

Table 1. Measurement of Study Variables.

Variable		Number of Items	Scale Source
Social Media Marketing	Interactivity	3	Kim & Ko (2012)
	Entertainment	3	
	Trendiness	3	
	Customization	3	
	eWOM	3	
Brand image		5	Seo & Park (2018)

Source: Author's adaptation.

All items will undergo preliminary linguistic verification during translation into Arabic and French, the languages in which the questionnaire will be administered. Although this stage is not statistical in nature, it directly conditions the face validity of the scales and should therefore be documented in the final version of the manuscript.

3.4. Data Processing and Analysis

Data processing relies exclusively on SPSS and follows a streamlined four-stage procedure. This choice warrants justification: given that the model remains reflective and includes neither a mediating nor a moderating variable to be examined simultaneously, multiple linear regression is sufficient to test the proposed hypotheses.Data were analysed in SPSS through five sequential steps. First, the sample profile was summarised using frequencies and percentages offering a descriptive portrait of the 180 respondents. Second, internal consistency was assessed through Cronbach's alpha for each social media marketing dimension and for brand image. Third, descriptive statistics were computed to capture central tendency and dispersion across the six constructs. Fourth, Pearson correlation coefficients were generated to inspect associations among construst and brand image, and to screen for multicollinearity. Finally, multiple linear regression was run with

brand image as the dependent variable and the five social media marketing dimensions as predictors.

4. Results

This section presents the results of the survey conducted among 180 users of the Yassir application in Algeria. All respondents satisfied the screening question by indicating that they followed Yassir on at least one social media platform (Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok). In accordance with the research protocol, the results are presented in a neutral and sequential manner, without interpretation. The analysis proceeds through six stages: sample profile, scale reliability, descriptive statistics, correlation matrix, multiple linear regression, and a summary table of hypothesis validation.

4.1. Sample Profile

Table 2 presents the distribution of respondents according to the five sociodemographic and behavioral variables included in the questionnaire.

Table 2. Sample Profile (n = 180)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender (Q1)	Male	94	52.2
	Female	86	47.8
Age (Q2)	Under 18 years	4	2.2
	18–25 years	67	37.2
	26–35 years	72	40.0
	36–45 years	30	16.7
	Over 45 years	7	3.9
Educational level (Q3)	Secondary education	32	17.8
	Bachelor's degree	78	43.3
	Master's degree	52	28.9
	Doctorate	12	6.7
	Other	6	3.3
Yassir usage frequency (Q4)	Several times per week	82	45.6
	Once a week	46	25.6
	Once or twice a month	34	18.9
	Less than once a month	18	10.0
Length of Yassir usage (Q5)	Less than 6 months	28	15.6
	6 months to 1 year	45	25.0
	1 to 2 years	67	37.2
	More than 2 years	40	22.2

Source: Author's based on SPSS outputs.

The table shows a relatively balanced distribution by gender, with men accounting for 52.2% of the sample and women for 47.8%. Respondents aged 26–35 years constitute the largest age group (40.0%), followed by those aged 18–25 years (37.2%). Participants holding a bachelor's degree represent the modal educational category (43.3%). Regarding Yassir usage, 45.6% of respondents use the application several times per week, while 37.2% have been using Yassir for 1 to 2 years.

4.2. Reliability and Validity of the Measurement Scales

The internal consistency of the six constructs was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Reliability of the Measurement Scales

Variable	Items	Cronba Alpha
SMM Interactivity	Sur les réseaux sociaux, il est facile d'échanger avec la marque.	0.842
	Sur les réseaux sociaux, je peux facilement partager mon opinion.	
	Sur les réseaux sociaux, je peux facilement échanger avec d'autres utilisateurs.	
SMM Entertainment	Sur les réseaux sociaux, le contenu publié par Yassir est divertissant.	0.817
	Sur les réseaux sociaux, suivre Yassir est une expérience agréable.	
	Sur les réseaux sociaux, le contenu de Yassir me procure du plaisir.	
SMM Trendiness	Sur les réseaux sociaux, le contenu publié par Yassir est actuel.	0.793
	Sur les réseaux sociaux, Yassir propose les dernières informations sur ses services.	
	Sur les réseaux sociaux, suivre Yassir me permet de connaître les nouveautés du secteur.	
SMM Customization	Sur les réseaux sociaux, Yassir propose un contenu adapté à mes besoins.	0.856
	Sur les réseaux sociaux, je trouve facilement les informations qui me concernent chez Yassir.	
	Sur les réseaux sociaux, Yassir m'offre un service personnalisé.	
SMM eWOM	Avant d'utiliser Yassir, je consulte les avis d'autres utilisateurs sur ses réseaux sociaux.	0.854
	Je partage volontiers du contenu sur Yassir avec mon entourage sur les réseaux sociaux.	
	L'avis des autres utilisateurs sur les réseaux	

	sociaux influence mon opinion sur Yassir.	
Brand image	Je fais confiance à la marque Yassir.	0.874
	Yassir se distingue positivement des autres applications de VTC/livraison.	
	Yassir véhicule une image moderne et innovante.	
	Je recommanderais Yassir à mon entourage.	
	J'ai une opinion favorable de Yassir.	

Source: Author's based on SPSS outputs.

All Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceed the 0.70 threshold. The highest value is observed for brand image (α = 0.874), followed by customization (α = 0.856) and eWOM (α = 0.854). The lowest, although still acceptable, is reported for trendiness (α = 0.793).

4.3. Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Table 4 reports the means, standard deviations, minimum values, and maximum values observed for each construct. Composite scores were calculated as the mean of the items constituting each scale, using a five-point Likert scale.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of the Variables (n = 180)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Interactivity	3.64	0.89	1.33	5.00
Entertainment	3.51	0.94	1.00	5.00
Trendiness	3.38	0.87	1.33	5.00
Customization	3.47	0.91	1.00	5.00
eWOM	3.72	0.83	1.67	5.00
Brand image	3.69	0.79	1.60	5.00

Source: Author's based on SPSS outputs.

With n = 180, perceptions sit modestly above the scale midpoint: means stretch from 3.38 for Trendiness to 3.72 for eWOM, with Brand image (3.69) and Interactivity (3.64) trailing closely. Standard deviations between 0.79 and 0.94 point to neither uniform enthusiasm nor sharp polarization respondents converge on a mildly favourable view while retaining individual variation.

4.4. Correlation Matrix

Table 5 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients between the five SMM dimensions and brand image.

Table 5. Pearson Correlation Matrix (n = 180)

Variable	INT	ENT	TRE	CUS	WOM	BI
INT	1					
ENT	0.487**	1				
TRE	0.412**	0.453**	1			
CUS	0.523**	0.498**	0.387**	1		
WOM	0.456**	0.472**	0.341**	0.509**	1	
BI	0.571**	0.542**	0.298**	0.583**	0.612**	1

Source: Author's based on SPSS outputs.

Every coefficient in the matrix is positive and significant at $p < .01$, with values stretching from .298 (Trendiness–Brand image) to .612 (eWOM–Brand image). Brand image is tied most closely to eWOM ($r = .612$), followed by customization (.583), interactivity (.571), and entertainment (.542)—hinting that peer exchanges, tailored content, and interactive encounters act as its nearest precursors. Trendiness lags. Its link to brand image is the weakest (.298), which could mean that novelty perception by itself does not convert into a favourable brand judgement. Correlations among the predictors span .341 to .523, all moderate and below the customary .80 cut-off; collinearity should therefore not bias the regression that follows. The pattern broadly fits the theoretical network, yet correlation says nothing about causal ordering. On balance, the matrix warrants moving to multiple regression, with the caveat that trendiness may add little explanatory power.

4.5. Multiple Linear Regression Results

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted using the simultaneous entry method to test the combined effect of the five SMM dimensions on brand image. Table 6 presents the model summary.

Table 6. Regression Model Summary

Indicator	Value
R	0.762
R^2	0.581
R^2 Adjusted	0.569
F	48.27
p-value	< 0.001

Source: Author's based on SPSS outputs.

With five predictors entered simultaneously, the model captures a substantial share of brand image variance: R = .762, and the adjusted R^2 of .569 indicates that roughly 57% of the outcome is accounted for once the number of predictors is penalised. The F-statistic (48.27) sits far beyond chance expectation ($p < .001$), so the regression as a whole performs better than a null model—rejecting the hypothesis that all slopes are jointly zero. A caveat nonetheless: R^2 of .581 leaves some 42% unexplained, meaning SMM dimensions, however influential, operate alongside factors the model omits. The small gap between R^2 and adjusted R^2 (.012) suggests little overfitting, a reassuring sign given the sample of 180.

Table 7 provides the standardized coefficients, t-statistics, significance levels, and VIF values for each predictor.

Table 7. Regression Coefficients by Hypothesis

Hs	**Effect**	**β**	**T**	**P**	**VIF**	**Conclusion**
H1	INT –> BI	0.218	3.42	0.001	1.58	Supported
H2	ENT–> BI	0.187	2.96	0.003	1.62	Supported
H3	TRE –> BI	0.042	0.71	0.479	1.41	Notsupported
H4	CUS–> BI	0.241	3.78	< 0.001	1.67	Supported
H5	WOM –> BI	0.312	5.14	< 0.001	1.52	Supported

Source: Author's based on SPSS outputs.

The results indicate that eWOM has the largest standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.312$; $p < 0.001$), followed by customization ($\beta = 0.241$; $p < 0.001$), interactivity ($\beta = 0.218$; $p = 0.001$), and entertainment ($\beta = 0.187$; $p = 0.003$). Trendiness has a non-significant coefficient ($\beta = 0.042$; $p = 0.479$). The VIF values, ranging from 1.41 to 1.67, remain below the critical threshold of 5.Four of the five sub-hypotheses are supported: H1, H2, H4, and H5. Hypothesis H3, concerning trendiness, is rejected. The general hypothesis H is supported by the significance of the overall F-test.

5. Discussion

This section confronts the empirical findings with previous research, seeking to confirm, qualify, or challenge established conclusions while considering the Algerian context as a possible explanation for observed differences. Managerial implications are discussed separately.

5.1. Interactivity and Entertainment

The effects of interactivity ($\beta = 0.218$; $p = 0.001$) and entertainment ($\beta = 0.187$; $p = 0.003$) corroborate Kim and Ko (2012) and Seo and Park (2018). Nevertheless, the predominance of interactivity over entertainment differs from Godey et al. (2016). In the utilitarian context of on-demand mobility, functional interaction-obtaining information, reporting problems, or receiving responses-may be more important than recreational content. This pattern may also reflect the predominance of regular users, whose relationship with the brand has become increasingly routinized.

5.2. Trendiness and Customization

The validation of H4 ($\beta = 0.241$; $p < 0.001$) is consistent with Kim and Ko (2012) and Rais (2025), suggesting that customization represents a broader digital consumer expectation rather than a sector-specific characteristic. Its second position among predictors, compared with the more moderate role reported by Godey et al. (2016), may reflect Yassir's service model, which depends on adapting continuously to users' locations and preferences. Customization therefore represents not merely an experiential feature but an important functional component of service use.The rejection of H3 ($\beta = 0.042$; $p = 0.479$) contrasts with Kim and Ko (2012) and Godey et al. (2016), but aligns with Seo and Park (2018), who distinguished trendiness' influence on brand awareness from its effect on brand image. The present findings reinforce this distinction: perceived trendiness may enhance brand visibility without substantially modifying evaluative brand associations. For Yassir, whose brand awareness is already established in Algeria, limited variability in perceived trendiness may further explain its weak explanatory contribution. This result also supports the study's initial positioning of H3 as the most uncertain hypothesis.

5.3. Electronic Word-Of-Mouth (eWOM)

The predominance of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) ($\beta = 0.312$; $p < 0.001$) is consistent with Jalilvand and Samiei (2012), who identified eWOM as the strongest predictor of brand image among Iranian consumers, and partially with Seo and Park (2018). However, it differs from Kim and Ko (2012), where interactivity and entertainment were dominant in the luxury sector. This divergence may reflect differences in service characteristics: unlike luxury

consumption, urban mobility primarily requires perceptions of reliability. In an environment where trust in emerging digital platforms may remain limited, peer recommendations can reduce perceived risk, explaining eWOM's leading role.

5.4. The Algerian Context and Findings

Beyond the hypothesis-by-hypothesis comparison, a broader observation emerges: the hierarchy of predictors identified in our model differs substantially from that established in Western and East Asian settings. Whereas Kim and Ko (2012) placed interactivity and entertainment at the forefront, our study identifies eWOM and customization as the predominant drivers. This divergence is unlikely to be incidental.Three characteristics specific to the Algerian context may help account for this pattern. First, the cultural weight of interpersonal recommendations: in an economy where institutional trust in digital platforms remains under development, the opinion of a relative or peer may function as a form of moral endorsement, or even as a substitute for formal guarantees. Second, the persistence of offline word-of-mouth, which extends and is amplified through social media.

6. Conclusion

This research started from a simple observation: Maghreb technology platforms are investing heavily in social media without having tools that objectively assess the effect of this investment on brand perceptions. The central research question “To what extent does social media marketing contribute to improving Yassir’s brand image among Algerian consumers?” therefore called for an empirical answer. This answer was provided by testing, on a sample of 180 users, a multiple regression model derived from the framework of Kim and Ko (2012), in which the five dimensions were related to brand image.

6.1. Answer to the Research Question

The data support the general hypothesis: social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on Yassir’s brand image, with the five dimensions jointly explaining 56.9% of the variance in this variable. This overall finding, however, conceals an internal hierarchy that constitutes the study’s principal contribution. Four of the five dimensions-eWOM, customization, interactivity,

and entertainment-exert significant effects, whereas trendiness is found to be non-significant.

The observed order of influence-eWOM (β = 0.312), customization (β = 0.241), interactivity (β = 0.218), and entertainment (β = 0.187)-differs from that reported in studies conducted in Western and East Asian settings, where interactivity and entertainment generally occupy the leading positions (Kim & Ko, 2012; Godey et al., 2016). This divergence suggests that the structure of SMM effects is not universal but varies according to both sectoral and cultural context.

6.2. Theoretical Contribution

The principal contribution of this research lies in extending the Kim and Ko (2012) model to a threefold setting in which it had not previously been tested: the on-demand mobility sector, the Maghreb context, and a population of digital platform users in Algeria. In doing so, the study highlights an important theoretical regularity: the predominance of eWOM in markets where interpersonal trust shapes adoption decisions.This observation is consistent with Jalilvand and Samiei (2012) and suggests that, in economies where institutional trust in newer platforms is still developing, electronic word-of-mouth may exert a more decisive influence than interactive or recreational dimensions. It therefore invites consideration of cultural context not merely as a secondary control variable, but as a potential moderator of the hierarchy among SMM dimensions-a line of inquiry opened, rather than resolved, by the present study.A second, more modest contribution concerns the distinction between brand awareness and brand image. The rejection of H3 provides empirical confirmation of the nuance introduced by Seo and Park (2018): trendiness affects brand visibility rather than the evaluative associations that constitute brand image. Observed in a setting distinct from that of the Korean study, this finding further strengthens the external validity of this distinction.

6.3. Limitations

Three limitations frame the scope of these conclusions. First, although the sample size (n = 180) meets the minimum threshold recommended by Hair et al. (2019), it remains modest compared with that of the foundational studies of the model (n = 845 in Kim

and Ko). This constrains the statistical power of the tests and limits the possibility of conducting fine-grained segmentations.Second, the non-probability convenience sampling method, necessitated by the absence of an accessible sampling frame, introduces a risk of selection bias. Respondents recruited through social media are likely to be more engaged in the digital sphere than the average user, which could lead to an overestimation of the effect of SMM on brand image.Finally, the sectoral scope of the study is limited to a single company. The observed results may reflect characteristics specific to Yassir-such as its established brand awareness and dominant position in the Algerian market-rather than patterns that can be generalized to the on-demand mobility sector as a whole.

6.4. Directions for Future Research

Three extensions appear particularly relevant. The first would be a multi-platform comparative study contrasting Yassir with Careem or Uber within the same Maghreb setting. Such a design would make it possible to distinguish effects attributable to the sector from those attributable to the individual company.

The second would involve a longitudinal approach measuring brand image before and after a large-scale social media campaign. Such a design would be necessary to permit causal inference, which the cross-sectional design adopted in the present study does not allow.The third, and more ambitious, extension would be to introduce a mediating variable-trust, satisfaction, or engagement-between the SMM dimensions and brand image. In particular, the mechanism through which eWOM shapes brand perceptions remain unresolved: does this effect operate through strengthened trust, reduced perceived risk, or simply repeated exposure to convergent evaluations?Answering this question would require a more demanding analytical design, such as structural equation modeling or an experimental study, which the present research deliberately avoided in the interest of replicability.

7. Bibliographie

- AAKER, David A. Measuring brand equity across products and markets. California Management Review, 1996, vol. 38, no 3, p. 102–120.
- GODEY, Bruno; MANTHIOU, Aikaterini; PEDERZOLI, Daniele; ROKKA, Joonas; AIELLO, Gaetano; DONVITO, Raffaele; SINGH, Rahul. Social media marketing efforts of luxury brands: Influence on brand equity and consumer behavior. Journal of Business Research, 2016, vol. 69, no 12, p. 5833–5841.
- HAIR, Joseph F.; BLACK, William C.; BABIN, Barry J.; ANDERSON, Rolph E. Multivariate Data Analysis. 8th ed. Andover: Cengage Learning EMEA, 2019.
- JALILVAND, Mohammad Reza; SAMIEI, Neda. The effect of electronic word of mouth on brand image and purchase intention: An empirical study in the automobile industry in Iran. Marketing Intelligence & Planning, 2012, vol. 30, no 4, p. 460–476.
- KELLER, Kevin Lane. Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. Journal of Marketing, 1993, vol. 57, no 1, p. 1–22.
- KIM, Angella J.; KO, Eunju. Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand. Journal of Business Research, 2012, vol. 65, no 10, p. 1480–1486.
- MANGOLD, W. Glynn; FAULDS, David J. Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix. Business Horizons, 2009, vol. 52, no 4, p. 357–365.
- RAIS, Mohd Irfan. Empirical study of social media marketing's impact on brand image and loyalty in retail, Muscat. Mercados y Negocios, 2025, vol. 26, no 54, p. 33–56.
- SEO, Eun-Ju; PARK, Jin-Woo. A study on the effects of social media marketing activities on brand equity and customer response in the airline industry. Journal of Air Transport Management, 2018, vol. 66, p. 36–41.