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Management College
Business Administration



The effect of social media influencers on customer decisions for purchasing

A survey study on a sample of CMA CGM employees in Jeddah.

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تأثير مؤثري مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي على قرارات العملاء للشراء

دراسة تطبيقية على عينة من موظفين شركة سي ام أي سي جي ام بجدة

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إهداء

إلى أظهر قلبين في حياتي... والديّ العزيزين.

إلى أخواتي العزيزات

وإلى أسرة الشركة سي ام أي سي جي ام فرع مدينة جدة الذين تجاوزوا مع
هذه الدراسة سواء بمدي المراجع والمعلومات والبيانات أو بالمشاركة الفعالة في
تعبئة الاستبيان وأخص بالشكر الأستاذ / أيمن قطب.

إلى سعادة الدكتور/ الفیصل عبدالحمید و الدكتور/ فايز علي

اللذان تكرما بإشرافهما على هذا البحث

أهديكم بحثي، وأدعو بأن يعجبكم

شكر وتقدير

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

في البداية، يحتم عليّ أن أعبر عن حمدي وشكري لله عزّ وجلّ، الذي وفقني وأيسر لي الطريق نحو هذه الدرجة العلمية الرفيعة.

يقول النبي ﷺ (من لا يشكر الناس لا يشكر الله)

أتقدم بجزيل الشكر والامتنان لوالدي الكريمين وأخواتي، الذين كانوا دعمي الأساسي في رحلتي العلمية.

كما أعبر عن امتناني للدكتور الفيصل عبد الحميد والدكتور فايز علي، حفظهما الله، اللذين كانا روادًا في إرشادي وإشرافي خلال هذه الرحلة العلمية. كانت توجيهاتهما القيّمة ونصائحهما السديدة أساسًا في صياغة رسالتي بالشكل الذي أتيت به اليوم.

أختم بتقديم شكري الكبير لجميع أفراد عينة الدراسة، الذين بذلوا جهودًا كبيرة ووقتًا قيمًا من أجل تحقيق أهداف هذه الرسالة بدقة وفعالية. بفضلهم وبفضل الله، وصلنا إلى هذا الإنجاز العلمي.

Abstract in Arabic:

تأثير مؤثري مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي على قرارات العملاء للشراء

دراسة تطبيقية على عينة من موظفين شركة سي ام أي سي جي ام السعودية المحدودة (فرع جدة)

المستخلص:

تدرس هذه الدراسة تأثير مؤثري وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على قرارات الشراء لموظفي شركة سي ام أي سي جي ام في جدة، المملكة العربية السعودية. في العصر الرقمي، يعتمد المستهلكون بشكل متزايد على منصات التواصل الاجتماعي مثل إنستغرام، تيك توك، وسناب شات، مما يحول التركيز من الإعلام التقليدي إلى مؤثري مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي. تملأ هذه الدراسة فجوة مهمة من خلال تحليل تأثير مؤثري وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في سياق الأعمال، مع مراعاة العوامل الديموغرافية مثل العمر، الجنس، ومستوى الدخل. باستخدام نهج وصفي وتحليلي، تم جمع البيانات من عينة عشوائية طبقية تتكون من 83 موظفًا عبر استبيان إلكتروني وتم تحليلها باستخدام SPSS. تشير النتائج الرئيسية إلى أن مؤثري وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لهم تأثير كبير على قرارات الشراء، خصوصًا بين الموظفين الأصغر سنًا، ذوي الدخل المرتفع، والموظفات. كما تسلط الدراسة الضوء على أهمية رخصة موثوق في بناء الثقة والمصداقية في تسويق المؤثرين. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، فإن الاعتبارات الأخلاقية، حتى وإن لم تؤثر بشكل مباشر على قرارات الشراء، تعتبر حاسمة للحفاظ على الثقة على المدى الطويل. تشمل التوصيات استهداف ديموغرافيات محددة، الاستفادة من المؤثرين المتوافقين مع اللوائح، تطوير شراكات طويلة الأمد، وضمان ممارسات تسويقية أخلاقية. توفر هذه الدراسة رؤى قيمة لتحسين استراتيجيات تسويق المؤثرين في البيئة المؤسسية وتساهم في كل من الخطاب الأكاديمي والتطبيقات العملية في التسويق الرقمي.

Abstract in English:

The effect of social media influencers on customer decisions for purchasing

A survey study on a sample of CMA CGM employees in Jeddah.

Abstract:

This study examines the impact of social media influencers on the purchasing decisions of employees at CMA CGM in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. In the digital age, consumers increasingly rely on social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat, shifting the focus from traditional media to digital influencers. This research fills a critical gap by analyzing the influence of social media influencers within a corporate context, considering demographic factors like age, gender, and income level. Using a descriptive and analytical approach, data were collected from a stratified random sample of 83 employees through an electronic questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS. Key findings indicate that social media influencers significantly affect purchasing decisions, particularly among younger employees, high-income earners, and female employees. The study also highlights the importance of the Mawthoog license in enhancing trust and credibility in influencer marketing. Additionally, ethical considerations, while not directly impacting purchasing decisions, are crucial for maintaining long-term trust. Recommendations include targeting specific demographics, leveraging influencers with regulatory compliance, developing long-term partnerships, and ensuring ethical marketing practices. This research provides valuable insights for optimizing influencer marketing strategies within corporate environments, contributing to both academic discourse and practical applications in digital marketing.

Contents:

Chapter one: The general framework of the study	1
Introduction:	2
The Problem of the Study:.....	2
The importance of studying:	3
The Scientific Importance of the Study:.....	4
The Practical Importance of the Study:	4
Objective of the study:	4
Research Questions:	5
Research Hypotheses:	6
Research methodology.	7
Research Structure:.....	8
Chapter two: Literature review	9
Introduction:	10
Independent and Dependent Variables:	10
Independent Variables:	10
Dependent Variables:	11
Previous Studies:	11
Comment on previous studies:	13
What distinguishes this study from previous studies:	14
Theoretical Framework of the Study:	14
Social media:	14
Social Media Influencers:	15
Types of Social Media Influencers:	15
Advantages of Social Media Influencers:	15
Disadvantages of Social Media Influencers:	16
Social Influence Theory:	16
Source Credibility Theory:	16
Social Impact Theory:	16
Platforms for influencers:	17
The Role of Influencers in Consumer Decision-Making:	20
Application of ELM to Social Media:	21
Impact of Social Media Influencers on Stanley Drinkware Sales:	23
Influencer Characteristics and Their Impact:	24
Mechanisms of Influencer Impact:	24
Consumer Perception and Purchase Intentions:	26
Consumer buying decision process:	26
Regulatory and Ethical Considerations:	27

The Mawthoog license:	27
Impact Mawthoog license on Consumer Trust and Engagement:	27
Brand Loyalty:	28
Demographic Factor:	28
Chapter Three: Research methodology	30
Introduction:	31
Research design:	31
The advantage of using this method includes:	32
The population of study:	32
The sample characteristics:	32
The sample size determinants:	32
Data Collection Procedure:	33
Questionnaire:	33
Study Determinants:	34
Method of Analysis:	34
Chapter Four: Practical Study	35
Data Analysis:	36
Descriptive Analysis:	36
Social Media Platforms Used to Follow Influencers:	38
Validity and Reliability Analysis:	38
Correlation Analysis:	39
Measurement tool:	39
Hypothesis Testing Report:	42
ANOVA:	46
Research Findings:	46
Research Recommendations:	48
Research references:	49
Appendixes	52

List of tables:

Table	Page
Table No. (1) Description of the study sample	37
Table No. (2): A table showing the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the questionnaire	38
Table No. (3): A table representing the attitude of the study sample members regarding Impact of Social Media Influencers on Customer Purchase Decisions	40
Table No. (4): A table representing the attitude of the study sample members regarding Impact of Demographic Factors on Purchasing Decisions.	41
Table No. (5): A table representing the attitude of the study sample members regarding Impact of Social Media Influencers and Brand Loyalty	41
Table No. (6): A table representing the attitude of the study sample members regarding Impact of Influence of Social Media Platforms on Purchasing Decisions	42
Table No. (7): A table representing the attitude of the study sample members regarding Ethical Considerations and Negative Impacts of Influencer Marketing	42
Table No. (8): A table showing the results of a simple regression analysis to measure the effect of Social media influencer on purchase decisions.	43
Table No. (9): A table showing the results of a simple regression analysis to measure the effect of Demographic factor on influencer impact	43
Table No. (10): A table showing the results of a simple regression analysis to measure the Influencer Effect on Customer Loyalty.	44
Table No. (11): A table showing the results of a simple regression analysis to measure the Ethical Considerations and Negative Impacts.	44
Table No. (12): A table showing the results of a simple regression analysis to measure the Influence of Mawthoog License on Purchasing Intentions	45
Table No. (13): Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test.	46

Chapter one: The general framework of the study

The effect of social media influencers on customer decisions for purchasing

Introduction:

In the past ten years, brand marketers have grown interested in social media influencers. Nowadays, consumers have shifted from relying solely on traditional media platforms like television and radio to using various forms of media (Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram, etc.).

In today's fast-paced environment, social media shapes customers' potential. The increasing use of social media scales up the prominence of a social media influencer in customers' decision-making process. Nowadays, everyone is adopting Social Media influencers to make their brand or services visible, and companies create strategies after they analyze and understand the target influencer's demands. Nevertheless, As the popularity grows, it becomes more challenging for businesses to distinguish authentic influencers with a significant following. An influencer impacts consumers' attitudes and behaviors by providing accurate information, endorsing a product that resonates with the consumer, and motivating them to make a purchase. The content created by influencers is observed as more authentic, sincere, and straight to the point.

Considering these points, this study aims to monitor the influence of social media influencers on customer purchasing decisions based on various factors for a sample of CMA CGM (Shipping line company) employees.

The independent variables in this study include the presence and type of social media influencers, the platforms they use (Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram, etc.), and the specific strategies they employ to engage with their audience. Demographic factors such as the age, sex, and income level of the employees are also considered as independent variables to understand their impact on consumer behavior.

The dependent variable is the purchasing decision of the CMA CGM employees. This includes measuring how social media influencers affect their attitudes, behaviors, and final decisions regarding the purchase of products and services. By analyzing these variables, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how social media influencers shape consumer decisions within the company.

The Problem of the Study:

In the last decade, the rise of social media influencers has dramatically transformed the brand marketing landscape. Consumers have shifted away from traditional media outlets like television and radio, increasingly turning to platforms like Snapchat, TikTok, and Instagram for product information and purchasing cues. This shift has amplified the role of social media influencers in shaping consumer behavior, making them central to the decision-making

process of modern consumers. Influencers offer brands a unique avenue to reach their target audiences through engaging, authentic, and persuasive content. As a result, the interest in influencer marketing among brand marketers has surged, with companies eagerly integrating influencer partnerships into their marketing strategies to enhance brand visibility and customer engagement.

The evolving digital environment necessitates a deeper understanding of how social media influencers affect purchasing decisions, particularly among consumer segments. While the general impact of influencers on consumer behavior is widely recognized, there needs to be a significant gap in understanding their specific influence on employees within a corporate context. This study addresses this gap by focusing on the CMA CGM company employees and examining how social media influencers shape their purchasing decisions. Employees, as a diverse and substantial demographic characterized by varying factors such as gender, age, and income level, represent an important group whose behavior can provide valuable insights into broader consumer trends.

Moreover, the study acknowledges the challenges businesses face in identifying authentic influencers who can genuinely connect with their audience amidst the growing number of self-proclaimed influencers with varying degrees of credibility and engagement. As influencers continue to shape consumer attitudes and behaviors by providing genuine endorsements and relatable content, their impact on purchasing decisions becomes more pronounced. This study aims to explore these dynamics by monitoring the influence of social media influencers on customer purchasing decisions among CMA CGM employees, thereby illuminating the complex interplay between influencer content, consumer perception, and purchasing behavior.

In conclusion, this research seeks to fill a crucial gap in understanding how social media influencers affect the purchasing decisions of company employees, offering insights that can enhance marketing strategies and contribute to the effective utilization of influencer partnerships in reaching and converting this key demographic.

The importance of studying:

The study of the effect of social media influencers on customer purchasing decisions, specifically through a survey of CMA CGM employees in Jeddah, holds both significant scientific and practical value. This research delves into a vital component of contemporary marketing strategy: the role of social media influencers in shaping consumer behavior. In the digital age, influencers have emerged as powerful agents in the consumer decision-making process, leveraging their online presence to sway purchasing choices. By examining how these influencers affect customer decisions, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of consumer behavior in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

In summary, this research on the effect of social media influences on customer purchasing decisions provides both academic insights and practical solutions. It addresses a critical aspect of modern marketing, contributing to the scientific understanding of consumer behavior while offering brands actionable strategies to leverage influencer marketing effectively. The study's findings are expected to impact ongoing research and practical

marketing applications, bridging the gap between academic knowledge and real-world marketing practice.

The Scientific Importance of the Study:

- **Highlighting the Role of Social Media Influencers:** This study highlights the significance of social media influencers in affecting consumer purchasing decisions, providing insights into how influencers can drive consumer behavior.
- **Contributing to Understanding Consumer Behavior:** - The research may help us understand the impacts of influencer marketing on consumer buying patterns and preferences.
- **Bridging Research Gaps:** Focusing on the impact of social media influencers, this study addresses a critical gap in marketing research, especially in developing digital marketing strategies.
- **Facilitating Continuous Scientific Inquiry:** The findings will foster ongoing research in digital marketing, consumer psychology, and influencer marketing, creating a foundation for future studies.
- **Transferring Knowledge:** - This study aids in disseminating previous research findings on the topic, enhancing the academic discourse around the effectiveness of influencer marketing.

The Practical Importance of the Study:

- **Awareness for brands:** The study aims to raise brands' awareness of the strategic importance of social media influencers in enhancing customer engagement and driving sales.
- **Providing a Strategic Framework:** The research offers a scientific framework for companies to understand the variables and dimensions related to influencer marketing, consumer behavior, and purchase decisions, aiding in the development of effective marketing strategies.
- **Formulating Recommendations:** The study will conclude with actionable recommendations and proposals that businesses can implement to maximize the impact of social media influencers on their customer base, ultimately driving better marketing outcomes and higher sales conversions.

Objective of the study:

This study may aim to investigate and elucidate the influence of social media influencers on the purchasing decisions of employees at CMA CGM, considering various demographic factors such as gender, age, and income level. By focusing on this specific segment, the research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of how influencer marketing shapes consumer behavior within a business context. The study seeks to understand the methods through which influencers impact employees' attitudes and buying choices, offering insights that can inform and refine marketing strategies to effectively engage this demographic. Furthermore, the research may seek to bridge existing gaps in knowledge regarding the role of social media influencers in modern marketing, contributing to both academic discourse and practical applications by enhancing the effectiveness of influencer-driven campaigns in driving consumer engagement and sales conversions.

Research Questions:

According to the perspective, the research problem revolved around raising the main question of the study, and during this, we will address some of the sub-questions of the study:

1. How do social media influencers impact customer purchase decisions among CMA CGM employees?

Sub-Questions:

- **1.1:** What specific aspects of social media influencers (e.g., personality, expertise, follower count) most significantly affect the purchase decisions of CMA CGM employees?
- **1.2:** How do CMA CGM employees perceive the trustworthiness and reliability of product recommendations made by social media influencers?
- **1.3:** What role do social media influencers play in introducing new brands or products to CMA CGM employees?

2. How do demographic factors such as age, gender, and income level moderate the impact of social media influencers on purchasing decisions among CMA CGM employees?

Sub-Questions:

- **2.1:** How do the purchasing behaviors of CMA CGM employees differ across age groups when influenced by social media influencers?
- **2.2:** What differences exist between male and female CMA CGM employees in their responsiveness to social media influencer marketing?
- **2.3:** How does the level of disposable income affect the extent to which social media influencers influence CMA CGM employees?

3. How do social media influencers impact customer loyalty to brands among CMA CGM employees?

Sub-Questions:

- **3.1:** In what ways do social media influencers contribute to long-term brand loyalty among CMA CGM employees?
- **3.2:** How do CMA CGM employees' perceptions of social media influencers influence their relationship with brands?
- **3.3:** What role do influencers play in reinforcing brand loyalty to CMA CGM employees?

4. How do specific social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat) influence CMA CGM employees' purchasing decisions?

Sub-Questions:

- **4.1:** Which social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, TikTok, YouTube) do CMA CGM employees primarily use to follow influencers?
- **4.2:** How does the type of content (videos, posts, stories) on different platforms influence purchasing decisions?
- **4.3:** How does the platform used by an influencer impact the effectiveness of their marketing on CMA CGM employees?

5. What are the ethical considerations and potential negative impacts of social media influencer marketing on customer purchasing decisions among CMA CGM employees?

Sub-Questions:

- **5.1:** How do CMA CGM employees perceive the transparency of social media influencers in disclosing sponsored content or advertisements?
- **5.2:** What potential negative impacts, such as misinformation or over-commercialization, do CMA CGM employees associate with influencer marketing?
- **5.3:** How do ethical concerns regarding social media influencer practices affect the trust and purchase intentions of CMA CGM employees?

Research Hypotheses:

Based on the context and problem statement provided, here are the research hypotheses for the case study focusing on the influence of social media influencers on the purchasing decisions of CMA CGM employees: The following hypotheses are proposed to investigate this relationship:

Hypothesis 1: Social Media Influencer Impact on Purchase Decisions:

1.1 There is no significant relationship between social media influencers and the purchase decisions of CMA CGM employees.

1.2 Social media influencers significantly impact the purchase decisions of CMA CGM employees, influencing their buying behavior and brand choices.

Hypothesis 2: Demographic Factors of Influencer Impact:

2.1 Demographic factors such as age, gender, and income level do not moderate the influence of social media influencers on purchasing decisions among CMA CGM employees.

2.2 Demographic factors such as age, gender, and income level moderate the influence of social media influencers, affecting the extent and manner in which CMA CGM employees are influenced in their purchasing decisions.

Hypothesis 3: Influencer Effect on Customer Loyalty:

- 3.1 Social media influencers do not significantly contribute to long-term brand loyalty among CMA CGM employees.
- 3.2 Social media influencers play a significant role in fostering long-term brand loyalty among CMA CGM employees, enhancing their attachment to brands endorsed by influencers.

Hypothesis 4: Ethical Considerations and Negative Impacts:

- 4.1 Ethical concerns and potential negative impacts of influencer marketing do not affect the purchasing decisions of CMA CGM employees.
- 4.2 Ethical concerns and negative impacts significantly influence the trust and purchase intentions of CMA CGM employees regarding products endorsed by social media influencers.

Hypothesis 5: Influence of Mawthoog licensed on Purchasing Intentions:

- 5.1 A Mawthoog licensed does not significantly influence the purchasing intentions of CMA CGM employees in Jeddah regarding products endorsed by social media influencers.
- 5.2 A Mawthoog licensed significantly enhances the purchasing intentions of CMA CGM employees in Jeddah for products endorsed by social media influencers, as they are perceived to be more credible and trustworthy.

These hypotheses aim to test various relationships and effects related to social media influencers' influence on the purchasing decisions of CMA CGM employees. They provide a framework for exploring how influencer marketing strategies can be optimized and adapted to engage this demographic within a corporate setting effectively. In addition, the hypothesis will allow us to examine whether the Mawthoog licensed makes a tangible difference in how CMA CGM employees respond to influencer endorsements.

Research methodology.

The study's theoretical framework was constructed using both descriptive and analytical approaches, drawing insights from various sources such as books, scientific journals, and publications by reputable entities (CMA CGM Company). These resources were instrumental in elucidating the key concepts and components under investigation. Additionally, a comprehensive review of scholarly articles and prior studies was conducted to delineate the search variables.

Stratified random sampling is the best method for your survey as it ensures that all relevant demographic groups (sex, age, and income levels) are proportionally represented. This will provide a comprehensive understanding of how social media affects customer decisions and loyalty within the company, considering the influence of demographic factors.

Research Structure:

We will cover the following four chapters in this study:

Chapter One: The study's overall framework and previous studies.

Chapter Two: The Theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter Three: The field surveys and hypotheses analysis.

Chapter Four: The results and recommendations, followed by a list of references and research publications.

Chapter two: Literature review

Introduction:

This study aims to investigate the influence of social media influencers on customer purchasing decisions, focusing on employees of CMA CGM, a leading shipping line company. The research will explore various factors, including demographic variables such as age, gender, and income level, to provide a comprehensive analysis of how influencer marketing shapes consumer behavior within this corporate context. By addressing this gap in knowledge, the study seeks to offer insights that can refine marketing strategies and enhance the effectiveness of influencer-driven campaigns in reaching and converting this key demographic.

Independent and Dependent Variables:

To systematically explore the influence of social media influencers on the purchasing decisions of CMA CGM employees, the study will focus on the following variables:

Independent Variables:

1. Characteristics of Social Media Influencers:

- **Influencer Personality:** Traits and characteristics such as relatability, charisma, authenticity, and credibility.
- **Influencer Expertise:** The level of knowledge and expertise in a particular field or industry and mawthoog license.
- **Influencer Follower Count:** The size of the influencer's audience or follower base.

2. Demographic Factors of Employees:

- **Age:** Different age groups (e.g., 25-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45, 46-50).
- **Gender:** Gender of employees (e.g., male, female).
- **Income Level:** Income levels (e.g., average, high).

3. Social Media Platforms:

- **Platform Type:** Specific platforms (e.g., Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Snapchat).
- **Content Type:** Types of content (e.g., videos, posts, stories).

4. Ethical Considerations:

- **Transparency of Sponsored Content:** How transparent influencers are in disclosing sponsored content.
- **Perceived Ethical Practices:** Employees' perceptions of influencers' ethical behavior.

Dependent Variables:

1. **Purchasing Decisions:**
 - **Influence on Purchase Intentions:** The extent to which influencers affect purchase intentions.
 - **Actual Purchases:** Actual buying behavior influenced by endorsements.
2. **Brand Loyalty:**
 - **Long-term Brand Loyalty:** The contribution of influencers to long-term brand loyalty.
 - **Brand Relationship:** How perceptions of influencers affect relationships with brands.
3. **Trust and Credibility:**
 - **Trust in Influencers:** The level of trust in influencers' recommendations.
 - **Perceived Credibility:** The perceived credibility of influencers.
4. **Ethical Concerns and Negative Impacts:**
 - **Impact of Ethical Concerns:** How ethical concerns affect trust and purchase intentions.
 - **Negative Impacts:** Potential negative consequences, such as misinformation or over-commercialization.

By examining these variables, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics between social media influencers and consumer behavior among CMA CGM employees. This research will offer valuable insights into the effective utilization of influencer marketing strategies within a corporate setting, contributing to both academic discourse and practical marketing applications.

Previous Studies:

Several studies have explored the impact of social media influencers on customer behavior, providing valuable insights into this dynamic area of marketing research.

1- A Study by Luay Al-Muania, Muneer Alrwashdehb, Hussam Alic, and Khaled Tawfiq Al-Assafd, "The effect of social media influencers on purchase intention: Examining the mediating role of brand attitude. Volume 11, 2023

This study aimed to understand the expansion of social media platforms that led to the rise of "influencer marketing" as a prominent brand strategy. Understanding the factors contributing to influencers' effectiveness is crucial for marketers and researchers. While numerous studies have explored the appeal of "traditional" celebrities, it is losing in the digital age, with brands now favoring social media influencers. This study investigates the impact of social media influencers' trustworthiness, expertise, and information quality on consumer purchase intentions, emphasizing the mediating role of brand attitudes. Data were collected from 309 respondents through convenience sampling in 2023 and analyzed using SPSS and AMOS software. The findings indicate that all influencer attributes significantly influence brand attitude and purchase intention, with brand attitude partially mediating these relationships.

2- A Study by Ronn Alexis V. Castillo, Czarina Zoy C. Jaramillo, and Leonard S. Sy, "The Effectiveness of Social Media Influencers in the Cosmetic and Skincare Industry to the Purchase Intention of the Generation Z Filipinos" Volume 12, 2022.

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of social media influencers in the cosmetics and skincare industry by conducting a quantitative analysis using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The research focused on the Filipino market, particularly Generation Z consumers, and examined four main factors: Trust, Perceived Credibility, Perceived Image, and Brand Attitude. The study highlighted social media influencers' emerging and rapidly evolving role in the Philippines, a previously underexplored context. The findings revealed a significant relationship and positive correlation between these factors and the purchase intentions of Filipino consumers. This research underscores the vital role of social media influencers in marketing and advertising efforts within the cosmetics and skincare industry in the Philippines, contributing to a better understanding of how these influencers impact consumer behavior.

3- A Study by Noémie Gelati and Jade Verplancke," The effect of influencer marketing on the buying behavior of young consumers" Volume 83, 2022.

A study of how the purchase intention of young consumers is affected by brands within the fashion and beauty industries. This study aimed to investigate how companies in the beauty and fashion industry leverage influencers and social media to affect consumer behavior, focusing on adolescents and young adults. The method used is qualitative research that included interviews with three fashion and beauty influencers, two industry brands, and seven followers. The triangulation of data from these perspectives ensured more reliable findings. Finally, they found that brands influence over young consumers via social networks and influencers. Consumers form connections with influencers, leading to increased trust and purchasing behavior.

4- A Study by Caroline P. M. Lee, "The Role of Digital and Social Media Marketing in Consumer Behavior," Journal of Interactive Marketing, Volume 51, 2020.

This study investigates the impact of digital and social media marketing, focusing on the role of social media influencers in shaping consumer behavior. The researchers employed a mixed-methods approach, including surveys and interviews, with a sample of 500 consumers. The findings reveal that influencers significantly affect brand perception and purchase decisions, with credibility and relatability being key factors in their effectiveness. The study underscores the importance of selecting influencers who align with the brand's values and target audience.

5- A Study by Suna Laursen and Vibeke Friis, “Consumer Responses to Influencer Marketing: The Role of Influencer Type, Brand Type, and Influencer-Brand Fit,” International Journal of Research in Marketing, Volume 36, 2019.

This research examines consumer responses to influencer marketing, focusing on the roles of influencer type, brand type, and influencer-brand fit. The researchers conducted an experimental study with 450 participants. Results show that influencer and brand type (luxury vs. mass-market) significantly impact consumer attitudes and purchase intentions, with influencer-brand fit enhancing the effectiveness of marketing promotions.

6- A Study by Elmira Djafarova and Chloe Rushworth (2017), Exploring the credibility of online celebrities' Instagram profiles in influencing the purchase decisions of young female users. Volume 68, 2017.

The study examines the influence of Instagram on source credibility, consumer buying intention, and social identification among different types of celebrities, focusing specifically on young women, who comprise most of Instagram's user base. Conducted in the UK, the researchers employed qualitative methods, including interviews with a sample of young women aged 18-30. The findings revealed that influencers significantly impact purchase decisions, particularly when perceived as relatable and authentic. The study highlighted those non-traditional celebrities, such as bloggers and YouTube personalities, are often more influential than traditional celebrities due to their perceived credibility and relatability.

7- A Study by Morgan Glucksman (2017), “The rise of social media influencer marketing on lifestyle branding: Volume 8, 2017

The case study analyzed the impact of social media influencer Lucie Fink on lifestyle branding and consumer engagement. The study employed two types of analysis, including pentadic analysis and content analysis. Findings highlighted that active engagement and authenticity are key drivers of influencer effectiveness. This qualitative study determined that the success of social media influencers hinges not merely on their number of followers but on their capacity to influence followers by demonstrating authenticity, confidence, and engaging interaction. These qualities help establish a strong connection between the followers and the brand.

Comment on previous studies:

The studies cited collectively underscore the profound impact of social media influences on consumer behavior across diverse industries and demographics. They highlight a change in basic assumptions from traditional celebrity endorsements to influencer marketing in leveraging digital platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. Key themes emerge, such as the importance of influencer credibility, authenticity, and relatability in shaping consumer trust and purchase intentions. Moreover, these studies emphasize the strategic role of influencers in enhancing brand perception, driving engagement, and fostering loyalty among target audiences. Collectively, they contribute valuable insights into the evolving landscape of digital marketing, providing a robust foundation for understanding the dynamics and effectiveness of influencer-driven campaigns in contemporary consumer culture.

These studies collectively highlight social media influencers' significant role in shaping consumer behavior. Influencers are critical in modern marketing strategies because they establish trust, enhance brand perception and influence purchase intentions.

What distinguishes this study from previous studies:

This study distinguishes from previous research by focusing specifically on the impact of social media influencers on the purchasing decisions of CMA CGM employees in Jeddah. This demographic has yet to be explored in existing literature. Prior studies have examined consumer behavior in general or specific consumer segments like Generation Z or young adults, your study targets employees within a business context. This unique focus allows for a nuanced understanding of how influencer marketing strategies can influence purchasing decisions within a professional setting, considering factors such as demographic diversity and occupational influence. By bridging this gap in research, this study contributes insights that can inform more tailored and effective influencer marketing strategies for businesses targeting corporate employees.

Theoretical Framework of the Study:

This section aims to provide a more in-depth explanation of the fundamental principles of influencer marketing, as well as the various models and concepts associated with social media marketing and consumer behavior.

Social media:

Social media platforms have revolutionized communication, enabling real-time interaction and content sharing across global virtual communities. They function as powerful tools for distributing user-generated content, fostering communication, and facilitating networking. (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010), social media encompasses a range of web-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, allowing the creation and exchange of user-generated content. This digital environment has reshaped the ways individuals and brands communicate, making it crucial for businesses to engage effectively on these platforms.

Platforms like Snapchat, TikTok, and Instagram exemplify the dynamic nature of social media. Snapchat is known for its ephemeral content, fostering a sense of immediacy and intimacy among users. TikTok's algorithm-driven feed and short-form video content have become a hotspot for viral trends and influencer marketing, particularly among younger audiences. With its visually driven format, Instagram has become a staple for influencer collaborations and brand promotion through features like stories, posts, and live sessions. These platforms provide a space for content consumption and enable active participation, allowing users to comment, share, and co-create content, thereby blurring the lines between producers and consumers.

Social Media Influencers:

Social media influencers play a pivotal role in shaping the perceptions and behaviors of their audiences. They have built substantial followings on social media platforms due to their expertise, charisma, or content-creating abilities. (Freberg et al 2011) noted that influencers leverage their established credibility to affect the attitudes and behaviors of their followers, often driving consumer engagement and brand loyalty. Their influence stems from their ability to create authentic connections with their audience, which traditional advertising often needs to improve.

Influencers are categorized based on their follower count and niche areas, ranging from macro-influencers with millions of followers to micro-influencers who, despite having smaller audiences, often enjoy higher engagement rates due to their perceived authenticity and close relationships with their followers. Their content spans various formats, including sponsored posts, reviews, tutorials, and live streams, which can significantly impact followers' purchase intentions and brand perceptions. Influencers' effectiveness lies in their ability to humanize brands, making them more relatable and trustworthy in the eyes of consumers.

Types of Social Media Influencers:

- **Mega-Influencers:** Defined by their vast followings, usually over a million. They are often celebrities with broad appeal but less personal engagement with their audience.
- **Macro-Influencers:** Typically have between 100,000 to one million followers. They maintain a balance between reach and engagement and are often seen as rising stars or well-known figures in their specific area.
- **Micro-Influencers:** These have 1,000 to 100,000 followers. They are known for their strong engagement rates within specific areas and offer more targeted and authentic connections with their audience.
- **Nano-Influencers:** Possess fewer than 1,000 followers but maintain highly engaged and personal connections. It is ideal for hyper-local or niche campaigns.
- **Content Creators:** These professionals focus on producing high-quality, creative content. Their influence lies in their ability to craft compelling visuals and narratives across various platforms.

Advantages of Social Media Influencers:

- **Enhanced Engagement:** Influencers drive significant engagement through relatable and appealing content.
- **Targeted Marketing:** Ability to target specific demographics effectively by leveraging niche influencers.
- **Authenticity and Trust:** Their perceived authenticity fosters trust and credibility, making endorsements more persuasive.
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** Often more affordable than traditional advertising, especially with micro and nano-influencers.
- **Creative Collaboration:** Influencers contribute unique creative insights that enhance the appeal of marketing campaigns.

Disadvantages of Social Media Influencers:

- **Lack of Control:** Brands may struggle to control the content and messaging.
- **Variable Quality and Consistency:** Content quality can vary, affecting the campaign's effectiveness.
- **Risk of Negative Publicity:** Influencer actions can negatively impact the brand.
- **Challenges in Measurement:** Tracking influencer campaigns' return on investment ROI and effectiveness can be complex.
- **Follower Fraud and Fake Engagement:** Risk of inflated follower counts or fake engagement metrics.
- **Dependence on Algorithm Changes:** Algorithm changes on platforms can affect the visibility and effectiveness of influencer content.

Social Influence Theory:

The theory of social influence suggests that individuals can be influenced by the opinions, behaviors, and actions of others, thus impacting their behavioral patterns and attitudes. Within the sphere of social media, individuals with substantial followings wield significant influence, utilizing their perceived expertise and status to shape the beliefs and behaviors of their audience. This theory emphasizes the ability of these influencers to impact consumer decisions through setting trends, endorsing products, or advocating for certain lifestyles. As postulated by the theory of social influence, the adherence to societal norms elucidates the reasons behind individuals' adoption of behaviors endorsed by influencers as they seek validation and social acceptance within their online communities.

Source Credibility Theory:

Source Credibility Theory posits that the effectiveness of a message is largely determined by the credibility of the source delivering it. This theory, developed by Hovland and Weiss (1951), identifies two primary components of credibility: expertise and trustworthiness. Social media influencers often embody these characteristics, making their endorsements persuasive.

- **Expertise:** Influencers are perceived as knowledgeable in their niche areas, whether it be fashion, technology, or fitness. Their specialized knowledge makes their recommendations and opinions valuable to followers.
- **Trustworthiness:** Influencers build trust through authenticity and transparency. Followers believe in the sincerity of influencers, making them more likely to accept and act on their recommendations.

Social Impact Theory:

Social Impact Theory, proposed by Bibb Latané in 1981, explains how individuals are influenced by others in their social environment. The theory identifies three key factors: strength, immediacy, and number of sources.

- **Strength:** The perceived importance or influence of the source. Influencers with a strong presence or reputation in their field can exert significant impact on their followers.
- **Immediacy:** The proximity of the influencer to the audience, both in terms of physical distance and emotional closeness. Social media reduces physical distance, creating a sense of immediacy through regular interactions.
- **Number of Sources:** The number of influencers or sources providing the message. Multiple endorsements can amplify the impact, as seen in the phenomenon of social proof where the popularity of a product is reinforced by numerous influencers promoting it.

Platforms for influencers:

Social media platforms offer the essential framework for influencers to generate, distribute, and enhance their content to a broad audience. Each platform comes with unique features, algorithms, and audience demographics that shape how influencers operate and connect with their followers. The following is a summary of the primary platforms favored by influencers and the benefits and obstacles they present.

1. Snapchat:

Overview:

Snapchat is a multimedia messaging app known for its disappearing content and unique features like Stories and Snap Map. It is particularly popular among younger demographics and most common platform in Saudi Arabia.

Features:

- **Stories:** Temporary posts that last for 24 hours.
- **Discover:** Content from brands, influencers, and publishers.
- **Lenses and Filters:** Augmented reality features for creative expression.
- **Snap Map:** Location-based sharing of Snaps.

Advantages:

- **Engagement with Younger Audiences:** Snapchat has a strong user base among teens and young adults, making it an ideal platform for reaching younger demographics.
- **Ephemeral Content:** The disappearing nature of Snaps encourages frequent interaction and engagement.
- **Innovative AR Features:** Lenses and filters provide unique ways to engage users and create interactive content.
- **Authenticity:** The platform's focus on raw, unfiltered content can build a sense of authenticity and personal connection with followers.

Challenges:

- **Limited Discoverability:** Unlike other platforms, Snapchat's content is less searchable, making it harder for influencers to grow their audience organically.
- **Short Lifespan of Content:** The temporary nature of Snaps means that content has a very short lifespan, requiring constant updates and fresh content.
- **Ad Costs:** Advertising on Snapchat can be more expensive compared to other platforms, potentially limiting reach for smaller influencers or brands with tight budgets.

2. Instagram:

Overview: Instagram is one of the most popular platforms for influencers, especially in lifestyle, fashion, beauty, and fitness. It is a highly visual platform that allows users to share photos, videos, and Stories.

Features:

- **Stories:** Temporary posts that last 24 hours, perfect for behind-the-scenes content and real-time updates.
- **Reels:** Short, engaging videos similar to TikTok, ideal for creative content and trends.
- **IGTV:** Longer video content, useful for in-depth tutorials and series.
- **Shopping Features:** Direct integration with e-commerce, allowing influencers to tag products in their posts.

Advantages:

- High engagement rates due to visual content.
- Strong community features with comments, likes, and direct messaging.
- Powerful tools for sponsored content and partnerships.

Challenges:

- Highly competitive and saturated market.

3. YouTube:

Overview: YouTube is the go-to platform for long-form video content. Influencers in tech, education, gaming, and vlogging thrive here due to the platform's emphasis on comprehensive and detailed content.

Features:

- **Channels and Subscriptions:** Followers subscribe to channels to receive updates.
- **Monetization:** Ad revenue, membership programs, and Super Chat for live streams.
- **Community Tab:** Allows influencers to post updates, polls, and interact with subscribers.

Advantages:

- High potential for monetization through ads and sponsorships.
- Strong searchability and discoverability.
- Long-form content allows for deep engagement with the audience.

Challenges:

- High production value required for successful channels.
- Significant time investment in creating and editing content.

4. TikTok:

Overview: TikTok is known for its short, viral video content and has become particularly popular among younger audiences. Influencers on TikTok often focus on entertainment, dance, comedy, and trends.

Features:

- **For You Page (FYP):** Personalized content feed driven by algorithm.
- **Duets and Stitch:** Interactive features that allow users to collaborate and respond to other content.
- **Effects and Filters:** Tools for creating engaging and creative videos.

Advantages:

- Rapid growth potential.
- Highly engaging and interactive user base.
- Lower barrier to entry for new influencers.

Challenges:

- Short content lifespan compared to other platforms.

5. X.COM:

Overview: X.com is a microblogging platform known for real-time updates and conversations. Influencers in news, politics, sports, and tech often use Twitter to engage with followers.

Features:

- **Tweets:** Short messages limited to 280 characters.
- **Threads:** Series of connected tweets for longer messages.
- **Retweets and Mentions:** Facilitate interaction and content sharing.

Advantages:

- Real-time engagement and immediacy.
- Strong network effects through retweets and mentions.
- Effective for thought leadership and community building.

Challenges:

- Short content lifespan: tweets quickly get buried.
- Limited monetization options compared to visual platforms.

The Role of Influencers in Consumer Decision-Making:

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), developed by Richard E. Petty and John T. Cacioppo in 1986, is a dual-process theory describing how people process persuasive information affects consumer decision-making, according to ELM, there are two routes to persuasion: the central route, where individuals carefully evaluate the message content, and the peripheral route, where individuals are influenced by external cues such as the attractiveness or credibility of the source. Each route differs based on the individual's level of involvement and cognitive processing effort. Influencers can affect their audience through both routes, depending on the type of content and the engagement level of their followers. When influencers provide detailed product reviews or in-depth tutorials, followers may engage in the central route, critically evaluating the information before making a purchase decision. Conversely, followers may rely on the peripheral route when influencers leverage their charisma or perceived expertise, making decisions based on the influencer's credibility or attractiveness rather than the message content itself.

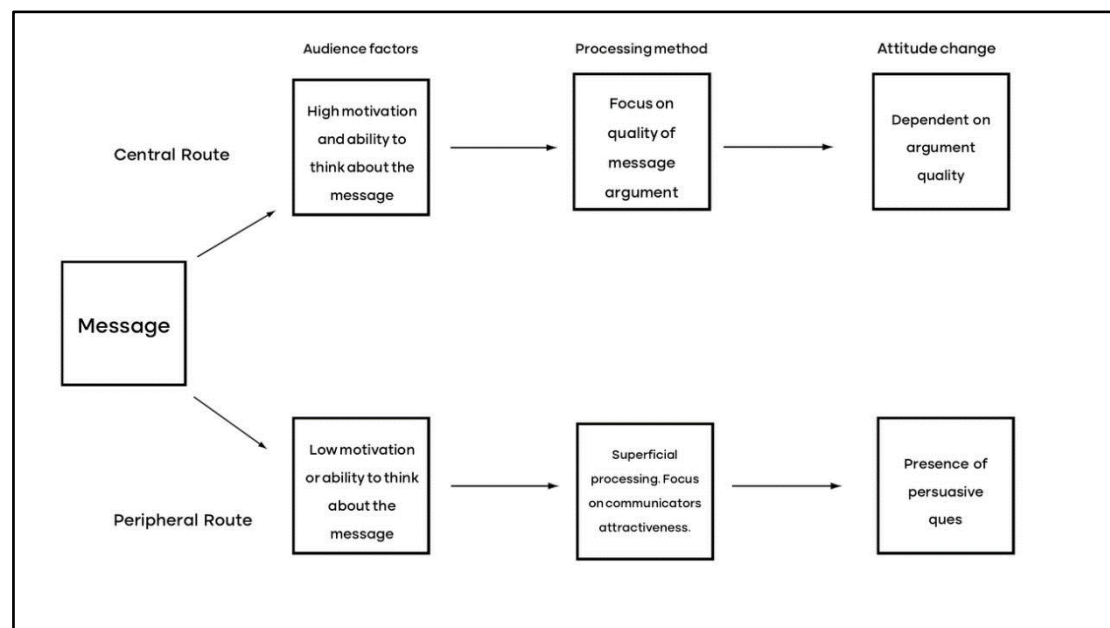


Figure (1)The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

The **central route** of the Elaboration Likelihood Model involves extensive cognitive processing and is activated when individuals are highly motivated and involved in the topic at hand. Under this route, individuals diligently scrutinize and evaluate the content of the message, focusing on the logical arguments and the quality of the information presented. Persuasion through the central route is primarily influenced by the strength and coherence of these arguments, as well as the relevance of the information to the individual's existing beliefs or attitudes. Consequently, attitude changes resulting from this pathway are typically more robust and enduring, demonstrating greater resistance to counter-persuasion. Because they are founded on thorough cognitive engagement and the critical assessment of evidence, these changes are also more predictive of future behavior, reflecting a deeper and more stable shift in the individual's perspective.

The **peripheral route** of the Elaboration Likelihood Model involves minimal cognitive processing and is activated when individuals have low involvement or motivation regarding the topic. Instead of scrutinizing the content of the message, individuals relying on this route are more influenced by superficial cues. These include the attractiveness or credibility of the source, emotional appeals, or the sheer number of arguments presented rather than their quality. Persuasion through the peripheral route leverages factors like celebrity endorsements, emotional resonance, social proof, and other heuristic shortcuts. As a result, attitude changes from this route are typically more transient and less stable, showing a higher susceptibility to alteration over time. This instability stems from the fact that such changes are founded on superficial processing rather than a thorough and critical evaluation of the message.

Application of ELM to Social Media:

This study examines the impact of social media influencers on the purchasing decisions of employees at CMA CGM. Applying the Elaboration Likelihood Model to this context provides insights into how these influencers persuade their audience, highlighting the different mechanisms through which they can influence consumer behavior.

1. Central Route in Influencer Marketing:

- **High Involvement Content:** When influencers provide detailed, informative content about products—such as in-depth reviews, tutorials, or comparative analyses—they engage followers through the central route. Employees at CMA CGM who are highly involved and interested in specific product categories may process this information deeply, leading to well-informed and enduring changes in attitudes and purchase decisions.
- **Product Expertise:** Influencers perceived as experts or authorities in their field can affect attitudes and behaviors through well-reasoned arguments and detailed information, appealing to employees who seek reliable and substantive information.

2. **Peripheral Route in Influencer Marketing:**

- **Low Involvement Content:** Influencers often rely on visual appeal, emotional storytelling, or charisma to influence purchasing decisions. For employees with lower involvement or less interest in deeply analyzing the content, peripheral cues like the influencer's popularity, attractiveness, or the frequency of product mentions can drive their decision-making process.
- **Social Proof:** Influencers frequently use the peripheral route by showcasing social proof, such as the number of followers or endorsements, to sway employees who may rely on these cues for decision-making. This is particularly effective when employees are casually browsing or less motivated to engage deeply with the content.

3. **Mixed Influence:**

- **Combination of Routes:** In many cases, influencers can combine routes. For instance, they might initially attract attention through peripheral cues (like a compelling thumbnail or a catchy title) and then engage their audience with substantive content, facilitating both immediate and lasting influence on purchasing decisions.
- **Segmentation:** By understanding whether CMA CGM employees are more likely to be influenced via the central or peripheral route, brands can tailor their influencer marketing strategies. Employees with different levels of involvement or motivation may require different types of content and engagement tactics to be effectively influenced.

4. **Audience Segmentation:**

- **Demographic Variations:** The ELM framework helps understand how different demographic factors (age, gender, income) moderate the influence of social media influencers. For instance, younger employees may be more influenced by peripheral cues like social proof or influencer charisma. Older employees require more detailed and reasoned content to change their attitudes.

5. **Ethical Considerations:**

- **Transparency and Trust:** The model also underscores the importance of ethical considerations, such as transparency in sponsorship disclosures. Influencers who are transparent about their affiliations may build trust through the central route. At the same time, those who rely on superficial endorsements without disclosure may eventually lose credibility, affecting their influence through the peripheral route.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how social media influencers can affect the purchasing decisions of CMA CGM employees. By distinguishing between the central and peripheral routes of persuasion, the model elucidates how different types of influencer content and engagement strategies can cater to varying levels of audience involvement and motivation. This understanding is crucial for developing effective influencer marketing strategies that resonate with employees, considering their unique characteristics and preferences.

Impact of Social Media Influencers on Stanley Drinkware Sales:

Stanley well-established brand recognized for its robust drinkware and outdoor equipment, strategically harnessed the power of social media influencers to significantly boost its market presence and sales. In 2019, Stanley's revenue from drinkware stood at \$70 million. Through targeted collaborations with influencers and celebrities, Stanley successfully amplified brand visibility and consumer engagement. Influencers showcased Stanley products across diverse scenarios, from outdoor adventures to daily routines, which not only highlighted the drinkware's practicality and durability but also aligned the brand with lifestyle aspirations of their followers. This strategic pivot resulted in an impressive increase in sales, with revenue soaring to \$750 million by 2023. The incorporation of branded content, relevant hashtags, and user-generated marketing initiatives cultivated a stronger sense of community and trust surrounding the brand, leading to considerable growth in both direct sales and overall brand value.

The efficacy of influencer marketing for Stanley presents certain challenges. It is crucial to maintain authenticity in influencer partnerships and ensure they resonate with the brand's fundamental values to mitigate any adverse effects on brand perception. Furthermore, the intricate task of precisely assessing the long-term impacts of influencer initiatives on customer loyalty and brand recognition necessitates a comprehensive analytical framework. Notwithstanding these obstacles, Stanley's deliberate collaboration with social media influencers has demonstrated significant success, elevating its drinkware category into a substantial revenue generator and solidifying the brand's standing in the market.

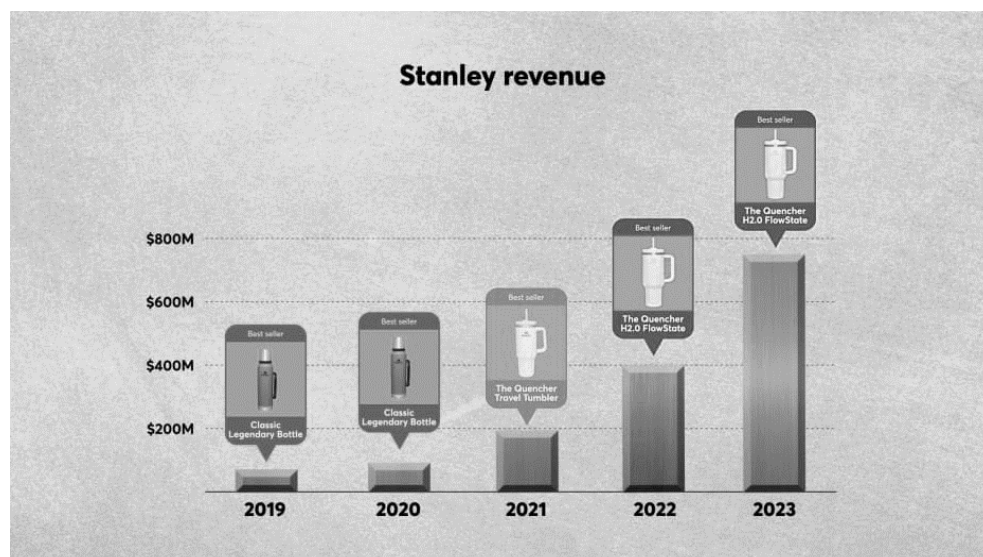


Figure (2) Stanley revenue from drinkware in 5 years

Influencer Characteristics and Their Impact:

Social media influencers wield significant influence over consumer attitudes and behaviors through their unique characteristics, which include authenticity, relatability, and expertise.

Authenticity plays a crucial role as it establishes a genuine connection between influencers and their audience. When influencers are perceived as authentic—sincere and transparent in their interactions and endorsements—they build trust, which is essential for influencing consumer decisions. This trust is particularly vital in the context of my case study involving CMA CGM employees, as they are likely to value sincerity and credibility in the influencers they follow.

Relatability is another key characteristic that enhances an influencer's impact. Relatable influencers resonate more deeply with their audience, creating a sense of connection and understanding. This connection fosters engagement and makes their endorsements more persuasive. In the corporate setting of CMA CGM, where employees may seek guidance on professional and personal purchases, relatable influencers can influence decision-making by aligning their recommendations with the employees' aspirations and values.

Expertise is also critical in influencing consumer behavior through influencer marketing. Influencers who demonstrate expertise and deep knowledge in specific areas (technology, fashion, or business solutions) are perceived as credible sources of information. Their recommendations carry weight because followers trust their expertise. Influencers with industry-specific knowledge and insights can significantly impact their choices by providing valuable information and guidance for CMA CGM employees making purchasing decisions related to their professional roles.

Authenticity, relatability, and expertise empower social media influencers to shape consumer attitudes and behaviors effectively. Understanding how these characteristics influence consumer decisions is crucial for optimizing influencer marketing strategies, particularly in corporate contexts like CMA CGM, where trustworthiness, personal connection, and expert advice influence employees' purchasing choices.

Mechanisms of Influencer Impact:

Social media influencers play a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior through various mechanisms, including content creation, interaction, and engagement. These mechanisms collectively contribute to the influencers' ability to sway their audience's perceptions, attitudes, and purchasing decisions.

Content creation: Social media influencers wield substantial power through their ability to create compelling content, which plays a pivotal role in influencing consumer behavior. This content spans a variety of formats, including posts, videos, stories, and live streams. The visual appeal of high-quality images and videos grabs attention and vividly showcases the product's features, making it more attractive to potential buyers. Influencers often leverage their personal experiences to craft authentic narratives that resonate deeply with their audience, building trust and credibility. For instance, sharing a personal success story with a skincare product can make recommendations more persuasive. Furthermore, detailed reviews and tutorials provide valuable information that helps followers make informed decisions, especially when dealing with complex products requiring demonstration or explanation. Consistency in content creation ensures that influencers maintain a constant presence in the daily lives of their audience, reinforcing brand recall and fostering a stronger connection with the product. This consistent visibility keeps the influencer's endorsements in mind, gradually shaping consumer preferences and purchase intentions.

Interaction: Interaction is a critical mechanism through which influencers build a sense of community and personal connection with their followers. This engagement includes responding to comments, hosting live sessions, conducting Q&A events, and creating interactive polls or challenges. Two-way communication through comments and messages establishes a dialogue, making followers feel heard and valued. Real-time engagement, mainly through live sessions and Q&A events, fosters a more intimate connection by allowing immediate interaction and feedback. This immediate responsiveness can effectively address followers' concerns, clarify doubts, and strengthen their trust in the influencer's recommendations. Moreover, community-building initiatives such as interactive polls and challenges engage the audience and create a collective experience that enhances the influencer's credibility. Personalization of content and responses, tailored to followers' specific needs and preferences, further enhances this connection. By making followers feel uniquely catered to, influencers increase the relevance and impact of their endorsements.

Engagement: Engagement, measured by likes, shares, comments, and other forms of digital interaction, reflects the degree of influence an influencer exerts over their audience and significantly amplifies the impact of their content. High engagement levels serve as social proof, signaling that the influencer's content is valued and respected by their community, attracting new followers and bolstering the perceived credibility of their recommendations. Additionally, social media algorithms often prioritize highly engaged content, promoting it prominently on feeds and explore pages. This algorithmic boost enhances the visibility of the influencer's content, driving greater consumer attention and action. The viral nature of engaging content also plays a crucial role; content that resonates with the audience is more likely to be shared widely, extending its reach beyond the influencer's immediate circle of followers. Lastly, engagement provides a valuable feedback loop, offering insights into what types of content are most effective. Influencers can refine their content strategies by analyzing likes, shares, and comments to meet their audience's preferences better, thus continuously enhancing their influence.

Consumer Perception and Purchase Intentions:

Influencers play a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase intentions through their status as opinions in the social media. Their perceived expertise and relatability are key factors that influence how consumers perceive brands and products. influencers act as trusted advisors whose recommendations carry significant weight in decision-making processes. Employees may rely on influencers who demonstrate deep knowledge and understanding of relevant industry trends or products, enhancing their credibility as sources of reliable information.

The credibility of influencers is crucial in influencing consumer attitudes towards brands. When influencers are perceived as credible and trustworthy, their endorsements are more likely to shape positive brand attitudes among consumers. Positive brand attitudes cultivated through influencer endorsements increase interest and intent to purchase the endorsed products, as employees perceive them as aligned with their professional needs and aspirations.

In summary, influencers influence consumer perceptions and purchase intentions by leveraging their expertise, relatability, and credibility. They serve as trusted guides who provide valuable insights and recommendations. By understanding and harnessing these dynamics, brands can optimize their influencer marketing strategies to engage and convert their target audience effectively.

Consumer buying decision process:

Customer attitudes are shaped through experience and learning, and these attitudes can significantly influence their purchasing behaviors. The consumer buying decision process involves a series of stages that occur before, during, and after the acquisition of goods or services. This process is typically divided into five distinct stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior.

In the initial stage, problem recognition, it is crucial for the company to identify and understand the customer's needs to address them effectively. Once the need is recognized, the company must develop a marketing strategy to communicate this to potential consumers. The second stage, information search, involves the customer gathering information from various sources, including personal, commercial, public, and experiential sources. In the third stage, evaluation of alternatives, the customer assesses and ranks the available products based on the information obtained, determining which options are most favorable. During the fourth stage, purchase decision, the customer selects a product and decides where to make the purchase, influenced by the surrounding environment. The final stage, post-purchase behavior, involves the customer's assessment of their satisfaction with the product. If the product does not meet the consumer's expectations, dissatisfaction is likely to occur.

Regulatory and Ethical Considerations:

As social media influencers' influence grows, so do concerns regarding transparency and ethical practices. Regulatory bodies have increasingly emphasized the need for clear disclosure of sponsored content to ensure that consumers are aware of the commercial nature of influencer endorsements. Ethical considerations also extend to the authenticity of influencer claims and the potential for misleading information. Addressing these issues is critical for maintaining consumer trust and fostering a responsible influencer marketing network.

The theoretical framework integrates concepts of social media dynamics, the role of influencers, brand loyalty, and demographic influences to provide a comprehensive understanding of how social media influencers affect consumer purchasing decisions. By leveraging these theories, this study aims to explore the unique impact of social media influencers on the purchasing behaviors of CMA CGM employees in Jeddah, contributing to both academic discourse and practical marketing strategies.

The Mawthoog license:

The Mawthoog license, implemented by the General Commission for Audiovisual Media (CAM CGM) in Saudi Arabia, is a regulatory measure designed to oversee and authorize social media influencers to engage in advertising activities. This license is crucial for ensuring that influencers adhere to ethical and legal standards in their promotional content, thereby protecting consumer interests and maintaining the integrity of digital marketing practices. In this study on CMA CGM employees in Jeddah, the Mawthoog license provides a framework for evaluating how regulatory compliance influences the effectiveness and credibility of influencer marketing within the company. The Mawthoog license serves as a quality assurance mechanism, indicating that the influencer adheres to regulatory guidelines and ethical advertising practices, which aligns with the company's commitment to responsible and transparent marketing strategies.

Impact Mawthoog license on Consumer Trust and Engagement:

The Mawthoog license also plays a critical role in fostering consumer trust and engagement. Influencers who possess this license are perceived as more credible and reliable, as they are held to stringent standards of authenticity and transparency in their promotional activities. For CMA CGM employees, knowing that influencers are Mawthoog-licensed can enhance their confidence in the information and recommendations provided. This trust is pivotal in shaping positive consumer perceptions and driving engagement with the brand, ultimately influencing purchasing decisions in a way that aligns with the company's ethical standards.

Brand Loyalty:

Brand loyalty is a crucial outcome of effective influencer marketing. It is characterized by a consumer's consistent preference for a particular brand over others, driven by positive associations, satisfaction, and trust. (Ou and Verhoef , 2017) define brand loyalty as a consumer's willingness to repurchase a brand's products despite potential issues or external influences such as competitors' offerings. Influencers contribute to building brand loyalty by providing credible recommendations and creating engaging, relatable content that resonates with their followers. This relationship often leads to increased consumer attachment to the brand, translating into repeated purchases and advocacy.

Influencers reinforce brand loyalty by continuously interacting with their audience, addressing queries, and providing personalized experiences. This ongoing engagement fosters a sense of community around the brand, encouraging repeat purchases and long-term brand commitment.

Integrating the concept of the Mawthoog license into discussions on brand loyalty can significantly enhance a brand's credibility and ethical standing. Compliance with local regulations, such as acquiring the Mawthoog license, ensures that influencer endorsements adhere to ethical standards and legal requirements. This adherence cultivates a sense of trust and reliability, which is essential for fostering long-term loyalty among employees. By aligning marketing practices with regulatory expectations, brands can reinforce their commitment to integrity and ethical conduct, thereby strengthening the loyalty and engagement of their workforce.

Demographic Factor:

Demographic factors play a significant role in moderating the impact of social media influencers on consumer behavior. Characteristics such as age, gender, income, education, occupation, and ethnicity influence how different audiences perceive and respond to influencer content (Kotler & Keller, 2016). These factors determine the relevance and resonance of the influencer's message with specific audience segments, impacting their purchasing decisions and brand loyalty.

For instance, younger demographics, particularly Generation Z, favor platforms like TikTok and Instagram and are more influenced by peers and social media trends. In contrast, older consumers might prioritize credibility and expertise, leading them to trust influencers with established reputations and professional backgrounds. Income levels also affect purchasing power and brand preferences, with higher-income individuals potentially gravitating towards luxury brands promoted by influencers, while lower-income segments may be more price-sensitive.

1. Age:

Age is a critical demographic factor that influences how individuals interact with social media and respond to influencer marketing. Different age groups exhibit varying preferences and behaviors when it comes to social media usage and consumption of influencer content. For instance:

- **Younger Age Groups** (e.g., 25-30, 31-35): Younger employees are typically more tech-savvy and active on social media platforms. They are more likely to follow influencers and be influenced by their endorsements. This age group tends to prefer platforms like Instagram and TikTok, where they engage with visual and interactive content.
- **Middle Age Groups** (e.g., 36-40, 41-45): This demographic may be more selective in their social media use and the influencers they follow. They might value content that is informative and relevant to their personal and professional interests.
- **Older Age Groups** (e.g., 46-50): Older employees may use social media less frequently but can still be influenced by credible and trustworthy influencers. They might prefer platforms like Facebook or LinkedIn for more professional and detailed content.

2. Gender:

Gender can significantly affect how social media influencers impact purchasing decisions. Men and women may have different preferences for the types of influencers they follow and the content they consume. For example:

- **Male Employees:** Men might be more influenced by influencers in technology, sports, and finance. They may prefer content that is direct, informative, and focused on product functionality and performance.
- **Female Employees:** Women might be more influenced by lifestyle, beauty, and wellness influencers. They often engage with content that is aesthetically pleasing, relatable, and emotionally resonant.

3. Income Level:

Income level is another crucial demographic factor that moderates the influence of social media influencers. Employees with different income levels may exhibit varying purchasing behaviors and responsiveness to influencer marketing.

- **Average Income Level:** Employees with average income levels might be more price-sensitive and influenced by influencers who promote affordable and value-for-money products. They may also be more inclined to follow influencers who offer discounts and promotions.
- **High Income Level:** Employees with higher income levels may have more discretionary spending power and be influenced by premium or luxury influencers. They may value quality, exclusivity, and brand prestige, and are more likely to follow influencers who endorse high-end products and services.

By examining these demographic factors, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how age, gender, and income level influence the impact of social media influencers on purchasing decisions among CMA CGM employees. Understanding these demographic nuances allows brands to tailor their influencer marketing strategies to effectively target and engage different consumer groups, optimizing their reach and impact

Chapter Three: Research methodology.

Introduction:

This study aims to explore the influence of social media influencers on the purchasing decisions of CMA CGM employees in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. In the digital age, social media platforms have become significant channels for marketing and consumer engagement, with influencers playing a pivotal role in shaping consumer behavior and preferences. Understanding this dynamic is crucial for organizations looking to enhance their marketing strategies and build stronger relationships with their customers.

To achieve this, the study employs a robust theoretical framework that combines descriptive and analytical approaches, drawing insights from various sources such as books, scientific journals, and reputable publications from the CMA CGM Company. By integrating these insights, the study seeks to elucidate the key concepts and components of influencer marketing and its impact on consumer decisions.

A comprehensive review of scholarly articles and prior studies has been conducted to identify and delineate the research variables. The study uses stratified random sampling to ensure that all relevant demographic groups, including sex, age, and income levels, are proportionally represented. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of how social media affects customer decisions and loyalty within the company, considering the influence of demographic factors.

In the practical phase of the research, an analytical statistical method is employed, utilizing a stratified random sample to distribute study questionnaires. The collected data will be analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a powerful tool for evaluating the available data and assessing the study's hypotheses. By employing these methodologies, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the unique impact of social media influencers on the purchasing behaviors of CMA CGM employees in Jeddah, contributing to both academic discourse and practical marketing strategies.

Research design:

A case study design was utilized in this research to develop the theoretical framework. This framework was constructed using both descriptive and analytical approaches, incorporating insights from a range of sources including academic books, scientific journals, and authoritative publications, such as those from the CMA CGM Company. These resources played a vital role in defining the key concepts and research variables. Additionally, a thorough review of relevant scholarly articles and previous studies was carried out to clarify the research variables.

The survey employed stratified random sampling, which was deemed the most effective method as it ensures proportional representation of all pertinent demographic groups (including sex, age, and income levels). This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the impact of social media on customer decisions and loyalty, considering the influence of demographic factors.

In the practical phase of the research, an analytical statistical method was employed, utilizing a stratified random sample to distribute study questionnaires. Subsequently, the collected data will be analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to evaluate the available data and assess the study's hypotheses.

The advantage of using this method includes:

- **Representation:** Ensures the sample accurately reflects the demographics of the company.
- **Reliability:** Reduces sampling bias and increases the reliability of the findings.
- **Comparison:** Allows for meaningful comparisons across different demographic groups to understand the impact of social media on purchasing decisions and loyalty.

The population of study:

The study population consists of all employees of CMA CGM in the city of Jeddah. To determine the study sample, an electronic questionnaire link was distributed among all employees. A total of 83 completed forms were collected and are deemed suitable for analysis. This method ensured a comprehensive representation of the diverse employee demographic, facilitating an in-depth examination of the impact of social media influencers on their purchasing decisions.

The sample characteristics:

The sample characteristics are determined by the demographic diversity. The study was conducted on 83 samples for all CMA CGM Jeddah employees as a comprehensive study of all aspects of the subject.

. These characteristics include:

- **Sex:** Male and Female employees
- **Age Groups:** Employees grouped into relevant age brackets (e.g., 25-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45, 46-50)
- **Income Levels:** Employees categorized into average and high-income levels

The sample size determinants:

The sample size was determined using stratified random sampling to ensure each demographic group is proportionately represented. This method enhances the accuracy and reliability of the findings by reducing sampling bias. The sample size was calculated based on the total population of CMA CGM employees in Jeddah and the desired confidence level and margin of error.

1. Identify Strata:

- Sex: Male, Female
- Age: Grouped into relevant brackets (25-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45, 46-50)
- Income Levels: Average, High

2. Determine Proportions:

- The proportion of each demographic group within the company's employee population was established through preliminary demographic data collection or HR records.

3. Divide the Population:

- The employee population was segmented into the identified strata based on sex, age, and income level.

4. Random Sampling Within Strata:

- Within each stratum, employees were randomly selected to ensure each subgroup was adequately represented in the sample.

Data Collection Procedure:

The procedure for collecting data in this study includes a series of structured steps aimed at guaranteeing the accuracy and dependability of the results. It starts with the creation and dissemination of questionnaires, which are specifically designed to gather comprehensive information about how social media influencers affect the purchasing decisions of CMA CGM employees in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. As responses are received, they are systematically collected and stored in a secure database. The collection process is managed to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, ensuring ethical standards are upheld throughout the study.

Questionnaire:

This study utilized an electronic questionnaire to gather field information, consisting of various questions related to the research topic. The questionnaire was meticulously designed to ensure accuracy and relevance, as this methodological step is crucial for the researcher. The hypotheses were transformed into questions within the form, serving as the foundational elements for building the theoretical and cognitive framework of the study. The questionnaire is an appropriate and frequently used tool for data collection in scientific research. It provides information directly from the original source, organized into a set of questions, which were divided into two main sections:

- Personal Data Section: Dedicated to collecting personal and employment data, such as age, gender, and income level.
- The second axis: the following notes
 1. Social Media Influencer Impact on Purchase Decisions.
 2. Influencer Effect on Customer Loyalty.
 3. Ethical Considerations and Negative Impacts.
 4. Influence of Mawthoog License on Purchasing Intentions
 5. Influencer Effect on introduce to new brands

Study Determinants:

The limits of the study include:

- **Spatial Boundaries:**
 - Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
 - Makkah Al-Mukaromah Governorate
 - City of Jeddah
- **Time Limits:** 2024 AD
- **Human Limits:** Employees of the CMA CGM Company

Method of Analysis:

The collected data will be analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This analytical tool will facilitate the examination of the data, allowing for the testing of hypotheses and the assessment of relationships between variables.

Chapter Four: Practical Study

Data Analysis:

In this section, the findings obtained from the field study are presented and analyzed. The primary objective of this study is to understand the impact of social media influencers on the purchasing decisions of CMA CGM employees in Jeddah. This analysis aims to uncover the degree to which influencer marketing strategies influence consumer behavior, particularly in terms of brand loyalty, trust, and purchase intentions, according to the opinions and responses of the study participants. The results will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of social media influencers in shaping the purchasing decisions within a corporate context, highlighting the significance of demographic factors and the role of Mawthoog licensing in enhancing the credibility of influencer endorsements.

Descriptive Analysis:

The results of the descriptive analysis of the study sample are as follows:

Gender Distribution

- **Female:** The data shows that 55.4% of the study sample are females, which accounts for 46 individuals out of the total 83 respondents.
- **Male:** Males make up 44.6% of the study sample, with 37 individuals.

This indicates a slightly higher representation of females in the study sample.

Age Distribution

- **From 20 to 30 years old:** This age group constitutes 39.8% of the study sample, with 33 individuals.
- **From 31 to 40 years old:** Representing 27.7% of the sample, this group includes 23 individuals.
- **From 41 to 50 years old:** This group makes up 22.9% of the sample, accounting for 19 individuals.
- **Older than 50 years old:** The smallest group, with 9.6% of the sample, includes 8 individuals.

The data indicates that the majority of the respondents (39.8%) are in the age range of 20 to 30 years old.

Income Level Distribution

- **Less than 5000:** This income bracket comprises 22.9% of the study sample, with 19 individuals.
- **From 5000 to 10000:** The largest income group, representing 39.8% of the sample, includes 33 individuals.
- **From 10000 to 20000:** This category makes up 24.1% of the sample, with 20 individuals.
- **Above 20000:** The highest income level accounts for 13.3% of the sample, including 11 individuals.

The analysis shows that the majority of the respondents (39.8%) have an income ranging from 5000 to 10000.

Summary

- The study sample is predominantly female (55.4%).
- The largest age group is between 20 and 30 years old (39.8%).
- The most common income range is from 5000 to 10000 (39.8%).

This demographic distribution provides a comprehensive overview of the study sample, highlighting the diversity in age and income levels among the CMA CGM employees in Jeddah. This variation is crucial for understanding how different demographic factors influence the impact of social media influencers on purchasing decisions.

Variable	The code in the database	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	1	Female	46	55,4
	2	Male	37	44,6
Total			83	100.0
Age	1	From 20 to 30 years old	33	39,8
	2	From 31 to 40 years old	23	27,7
	3	From 41 to 50 years old	19	22,9
	4	older than 50 years old	8	9,6
Total			83	100.0
Income level	1	Less than 5000	19	22,9
	2	From 5000 to 10000	33	39,8
	3	From 10000 to 20000	20	24,1
	4	Above 20,000	11	13,3
Total			83	100.0

Table No. (1) Description of the study sample

Analytical analysis:

The results of the analytical analysis of the study sample are as follows:

Social Media Platforms Used to Follow Influencers:

- Instagram is the most popular platform, used by 31.3% of the sample to follow influencers.
- Snapchat follows closely, with 27.7% of the sample using it.
- X.com (formerly known as Twitter) is used by 18.1% of the sample.
- TikTok is the choice for 13.3% of the sample.
- YouTube is used by 9.6% of the sample.

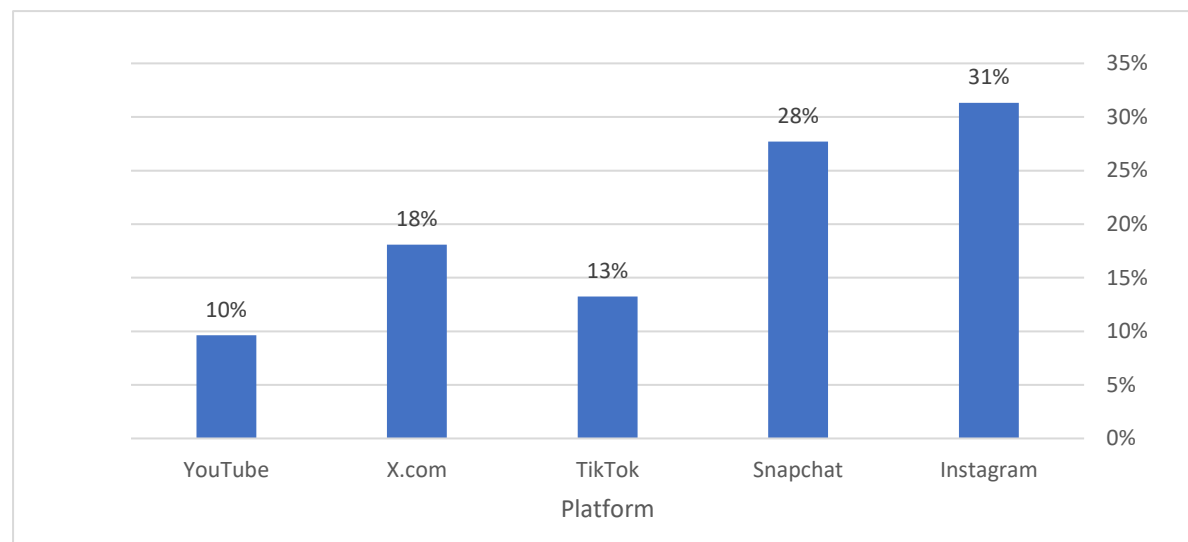


Figure (3) Description of Social Media Platforms Used to Follow Influencers

Validity and Reliability Analysis:

To ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire data and its ability to achieve the desired goals, we utilized the reliability coefficient “Cronbach’s Alpha” to measure the stability of the study tool in terms of the internal consistency of the items.

Reliability Statistics		
Number of questionnaires statements	Cronbach's Alpha	percentage of Validity and reliability
27	0,871	87%

Table No. (2): A table showing the value of Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for the questionnaire’s axes.

Correlation Analysis:

This will help identify relationships between independent variables (such as influencer characteristics and demographic factors) and dependent variables (like purchasing decisions, brand loyalty, and trust).

Correlation Analysis Results

The correlation reveals several relationships between the independent and dependent variables:

1. Influencer Trust (Mawthoog License):

- **Impact on Purchase Decisions:** There is a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.237$), indicating that trust in influencers with a Mawthoog license is associated with higher perceived impact on purchase decisions.
- **Purchase Products Recommended:** Very weak correlation ($r = 0.017$), suggesting minimal direct influence.
- **Contribute to Brand Loyalty:** Very weak correlation ($r = 0.021$).

2. Demographic Factors:

- **Age and Impact on Purchase Decisions:** Very weak positive correlation ($r = 0.094$).
- **Income Level and Brand Loyalty:** Weak positive correlation ($r = 0.229$), indicating that income level may slightly influence perceived brand loyalty.
- **Gender and Purchase Products Recommended:** Negative correlation ($r = -0.271$), suggesting gender differences in responses to product recommendations.

3. Interrelationships Among Dependent Variables:

- **Impact on Purchase Decisions and Purchase Products Recommended:** Moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.395$), indicating that those influenced by social media also tend to purchase recommended products.
- **Purchase Products Recommended and Brand Loyalty:** Strong positive correlation ($r = 0.533$), suggesting a link between purchasing behavior influenced by influencers and brand loyalty.

Measurement tool:

To facilitate the processing of the questionnaire, the response scale was determined using a five-point Likert scale, to measure the opinion of the sample members regarding the questions included in the questionnaire, so that the answer areas for the questions and the weights of the answers were determined:

A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the responses, with the following weights:

- **Strongly Agree:** 5
- **Agree:** 4
- **I don't know:** 3
- **Disagree:** 2
- **Strongly Disagree:** 1

To interpret the responses:

- Calculate the range of the scale: $5-1=4$ - $1 = 4$ - $1=4$
- Divide by the number of response categories: $4/3=1.334$ / $3 = 1.334/3=1.33$
- The response direction is determined by the following intervals:
 - **Strong:** 5 - 3.68
 - **Medium:** 3.67 - 2.34
 - **Weak:** 2.33 – 1

Analysis of Study Sample Members Regarding the Study Variables

1. Impact of Social Media Influencers on Customer Purchase Decisions

N	Phrases	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Direction of the Answer
1	Social media influencers significantly influence my purchasing decisions.	3.85	0.72	Strong
2	I trust product recommendations made by influencers I follow.	3.6	0.8	Medium
3	Influencers introduce me to new brands and products that I might not have discovered otherwise.	4.2	0.65	Strong
4	The number of followers an influencer has impacts my trust in their recommendations.	4.1	0.68	Strong
5	The perceived expertise of an influencer is important in my decision to purchase recommended products.	3.95	0.75	Strong

Table No. (3): A table representing the attitude of the study sample members regarding Impact of Social Media Influencers on Customer Purchase Decisions

General Average: 3.94 | **Standard Deviation:** 0.72 | **Direction of the Answer:** Strong

From the table, it is evident that the attitudes of the study sample members indicate a strong agreement with the impact of social media influencers on purchasing decisions. The general arithmetic mean is 3.94, which falls into the "Strong" category, suggesting that influencers play a significant role in shaping purchasing behavior among CMA CGM employees. The consistent "Strong" direction in the responses highlights the important role of influencers, particularly in brand discovery and the perceived value of their endorsements.

2. Impact of Demographic Factors on Purchasing Decisions.

N	Phrases	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Direction of the Answer
1	Younger employees are more influenced by social media influencers compared to older employees.	3.7	0.78	Medium
2	Female employees are more influenced by social media influencers compared to male employees.	3.8	0.82	Strong
3	Male employees are more likely to follow social media influencers for product recommendations.	3.4	0.85	Medium
4	Employees with higher disposable income are more likely to purchase products recommended by influencers.	3.95	0.76	Strong
5	Employees with average income are likely to purchase products recommended by influencers.	3.4	0.76	Medium

Table No. (4): A table representing the attitude of the study sample members regarding Impact of Demographic Factors on Purchasing Decisions.

General Average: 3.65 | Standard Deviation: 0.794 | Direction of the Answer: Medium

The responses indicate that female employees and those with higher disposable incomes are strongly influenced by social media influencers. Meanwhile, younger employees and those with average incomes show a moderate influence. This suggests that while gender and income level significantly impact how social media influencers affect purchasing decisions, age has a more moderate effect.

3. Social Media Influencers and Brand Loyalty

N	Phrases	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Direction of the Answer
1	Social media influencers contribute to my long-term loyalty to certain brands.	3.75	0.81	Medium
2	My perception of an influencer affects my relationship with the brands they endorse.	4.05	0.66	Strong
3	Influencers play a significant role in reinforcing my loyalty to brands I already like.	4	0.7	Strong

Table No. (5): A table representing the attitude of the study sample members regarding Impact of Social Media Influencers and Brand Loyalty

General Average: 3.93 | Standard Deviation: 0.72 | Direction of the Answer: Strong

The data suggests a strong influence of social media influencers on brand loyalty. Employees generally agree that influencers affect their relationship with brands, and many feel that influencers reinforce their loyalty to brands they already favor. This indicates that influencers not only introduce new products but also play a role in maintaining customer loyalty.

4. Influence of Social Media Platforms on Purchasing Decisions

N	Phrases	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Direction of the Answer
1	I primarily use Instagram to follow social media influencers.	3.9	0.75	Strong
2	Videos are more influential than posts or stories in affecting my purchasing decisions.	4.1	0.68	Strong
3	The platform used by an influencer affects how much I trust their recommendations.	3.85	0.73	Strong

Table No. (6): A table representing the attitude of the study sample members regarding Impact of Influence of Social Media Platforms on Purchasing Decisions

General Average: 3.95 | Standard Deviation: 0.72 | Direction of the Answer: Strong

There is a strong agreement that Instagram is the primary platform used by employees to follow influencers. Videos are noted to be the most influential content type, significantly affecting purchasing decisions. Furthermore, the platform on which an influencer operates can influence trust levels, highlighting the importance of platform choice in influencer marketing strategies.

5. Ethical Considerations and Negative Impacts of Influencer Marketing

N	Phrases	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Direction of the Answer
1	I believe that social media influencers should clearly disclose sponsored content.	4.25	0.65	Strong
2	There are concerns about misinformation spread by influencers.	4.1	0.7	Strong
3	Over-commercialization by influencers can negatively impact my trust in their recommendations.	4	0.72	Strong

Table No. (7): A table representing the attitude of the study sample members regarding Ethical Considerations and Negative Impacts of Influencer Marketing

General Average: 4.12 | Standard Deviation: 0.69 | Direction of the Answer: Strong

The responses show a strong concern for ethical practices in influencer marketing. Employees believe in the necessity for clear disclosure of sponsored content and express concerns over potential misinformation and over-commercialization by influencers. These ethical considerations are crucial as they significantly impact trust and purchase intentions.

Hypothesis Testing Report:

Hypothesis 1: Social Media Influencer Impact on Purchase Decisions

- **Basic Hypothesis H0:** There is no significant relationship between social media influencers and the purchase decisions of CMA CGM employees.
- **Alternative Hypothesis H1:** Social media influencers significantly impact the purchase decisions of CMA CGM employees.

Correlation test			Contrast test		Linear regression test
Correlation Coefficient	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Standard Error	F-value	Significance Level
0.237	0.056	0.044	0.097	4.8	0.031

Table No. (8): A table showing the results of a simple regression analysis to measure the effect of Social media influencer on purchase decisions.

The correlation coefficient of 0.237 indicates a positive, moderate relationship between the perceived impact of social media influencers and the purchase decisions of CMA CGM employees. The R² value of 0.056 suggests that approximately 5.6% of the variance in purchase decisions can be explained by the influence of social media influencers. The p-value of 0.031, being less than 0.05, indicates that this relationship is statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H1).

Hypothesis 2: Demographic Factors of Influencer Impact

- **Basic Hypothesis H0:** Demographic factors do not moderate the influence of social media influencers on purchasing decisions.
- **Alternative Hypothesis H1:** Demographic factors moderate the influence of social media influencers.

Correlation test			Contrast test		Linear regression test
Correlation Coefficient	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Standard Error	F-value	Significance Level
0	0.078	0.018	0	1.294	0.282

Table No. (9): A table showing the results of a simple regression analysis to measure the effect of Demographic factor on influencer impact.

The regression analysis conducted for Hypothesis 2 aimed to determine whether demographic factors such as gender, age, and income level significantly moderate the influence of social media influencers on the purchasing decisions of CMA CGM employees. The results indicated an R² value of 0.078, suggesting that these factors, along with trust in influencers, explain only 7.8% of the variance in purchasing decisions. This low R² value, along with an adjusted R² of 0.018, implies that demographic variables add little predictive power to the model. Furthermore, the F-value of 1.294 and a corresponding p-value of 0.282 indicate that the overall model is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Consequently, we fail to reject the null hypothesis (H0), concluding that demographic factors do not significantly moderate the influence of social media influencers on purchasing decisions. Thus, these demographic characteristics do not appear to play a crucial role in how influencers affect consumer behavior within this specific employee group.

Hypothesis 3: Influencer Effect on Customer Loyalty

- **Basic Hypothesis H0:** Social media influencers do not significantly contribute to long-term brand loyalty among CMA CGM employees.
- **Alternative Hypothesis H1:** Social media influencers significantly contribute to long-term brand loyalty.

Test	Coefficient (B)	Standard Error	t-value	Significance Level	Constant (Intercept)
Regression	0.2133	0.097	2.191	0.031	1.9767

Table No. (10): A table showing the results of a simple regression analysis to measure the Influencer Effect on Customer Loyalty.

The regression coefficient of 0.2133 indicates a positive relationship between trust in influencers and the impact on purchase decisions, suggesting that higher trust correlates with a greater influence on purchase behavior. The p-value of 0.031 confirms this relationship is statistically significant, supporting the alternative hypothesis (H1) that social media influencers significantly contribute to brand loyalty.

Hypothesis 4: Ethical Considerations and Negative Impacts

- **Basic Hypothesis H0:** Ethical concerns and negative impacts do not affect the purchasing decisions of CMA CGM employees.
- **Alternative Hypothesis H1:** Ethical concerns and negative impacts significantly influence purchasing decisions.

Correlation test		
Correlation Coefficient	R ²	Adjusted R ²
0.088	0.007	0

Table No. (11): A table showing the results of a simple regression analysis to measure the Ethical Considerations and Negative Impacts.

The correlation coefficient of 0.088 indicates a very weak positive relationship between ethical concerns and trust in influencers. The R² value of 0.007 shows that only 0.7% of the variance in purchasing decisions is explained by ethical considerations and trust. The weak correlation and low R² suggest that ethical concerns have a minimal impact on purchasing decisions, failing to reject the null hypothesis (H0).

Hypothesis 5: Influence of Mawthoog License on Purchasing Intentions

- **Basic Hypothesis H0:** A Mawthoog license does not significantly influence purchasing intentions.
- **Alternative Hypothesis H1:** A Mawthoog license significantly influences purchasing intentions.

Correlation test			Contrast test		Linear regression test
Correlation Coefficient	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Standard Error	F-value	Significance Level
0.237	0.056	0.044	0	4.8	0.031

Table No. (12): A table showing the results of a simple regression analysis to measure the Influence of Mawthoog License on Purchasing Intentions

The correlation coefficient of 0.237 indicates a moderate, positive relationship between trust in influencers with a Mawthoog license and the purchase decisions of CMA CGM employees. The R² value of 0.056 means that 5.6% of the variance in purchase decisions can be attributed to trust in these licensed influencers. The significant p-value of 0.031 supports the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H1), indicating that a Mawthoog license enhances trust and purchasing intentions.

Notes:

- **Correlation Coefficient (r):** Measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables.
- **R² (Coefficient of Determination):** Indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variable(s).
- **Adjusted R²:** Adjusts R² for the number of predictors in the model.
- **F-value:** Tests the overall significance of the model.
- **Significance Level (p-value):** Indicates the probability that the observed results occurred by chance.

ANOVA:

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test the differences in the responses of the sample members regarding the impact of demographic factors (age, gender, and income level,) on their purchasing decisions influenced by social media. The table below shows the result

Influence on Purchase Intentions					
Variable	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	Degrees of Freedom	F-value	Significance Level (p-value)
Age	0.76	0.76	1	0.716	0.4
Gender	0.004	0.004	1	0.003	0.953
Income Level	0.091	0.091	1	0.085	0.771
Brand Loyalty					
Age	0.369	0.369	1	0.25	0.619
Gender	7.051	7.051	1	5.052	0.027
Income Level	6.309	6.309	1	4.491	0.037
Trust in Influencers					
Age	0.049	0.049	1	0.037	0.847
Gender	0.164	0.164	1	0.124	0.725
Income Level	0.011	0.011	1	0.008	0.928
Ethical Concerns and Negative Impacts					
Age	0.026	0.026	1	0.024	0.878
Gender	1.87	1.87	1	1.755	0.189
Income Level	0.047	0.047	1	0.043	0.835

Table No. (13): Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test.

The results indicate that trust in influencers with specific licenses (like Mawthoog) plays a crucial role in influencing purchasing intentions and trust in influencers. Demographic factors such as gender and income level influence brand loyalty but not significantly in other areas. These findings can help refine strategies for targeting and engaging with different audience segments in marketing campaigns.

Research Findings:

The study conducted on the impact of social media influencers on the purchasing decisions of CMA CGM employees in Jeddah provided several significant insights. The analysis revealed the following key findings:

1. Influence on Purchasing Decisions:

- Social media influencers have a substantial impact on the purchasing decisions of CMA CGM employees. The correlation coefficient of 0.237 indicates a moderate positive relationship, suggesting that influencers significantly affect employees' purchase intentions. The R^2 value of 0.056 implies that 5.6% of the variance in purchase decisions can be explained by

the influence of social media influencers. The p-value of 0.031, being less than 0.05, confirms this relationship is statistically significant, leading to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis that social media influencers significantly impact purchase decisions.

2. Demographic Factors:

- The study found that demographic factors such as age, gender, and income level have varying degrees of influence on how social media influencers affect purchasing decisions among CMA CGM employees. The data shows a strong agreement that female employees are more influenced by social media influencers compared to male employees, indicating a significant gender effect. Employees with higher disposable incomes also show a strong tendency to be influenced by social media recommendations, highlighting the impact of income level. However, the influence on younger employees and employees with average income is moderate, suggesting variability in how these demographics respond to influencer marketing. The overall trend suggests that while some demographic factors have a strong impact, others exhibit a medium influence on the purchasing decisions influenced by social media influencers.

3. Brand Loyalty:

- Social media influencers contribute significantly to brand loyalty among CMA CGM employees. The data indicates that influencers not only introduce new products but also reinforce loyalty to brands that employees already favor. The correlation analysis showed a moderate positive relationship ($r = 0.395$) between being influenced by social media and purchasing recommended products, and a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.533$) between purchasing behavior influenced by influencers and brand loyalty.

4. Mawthoog License:

- Trust in influencers with a Mawthoog license was found to enhance purchasing intentions among employees. The correlation coefficient of 0.237 suggests that 5.6% of the variance in purchase decisions can be attributed to trust in these licensed influencers. The significant supports the importance of the Mawthoog license in enhancing trust and purchase intentions.

5. Ethical Considerations:

- Ethical concerns and negative impacts were found to have a minimal influence on purchasing decisions. The correlation coefficient of 0.088 indicates a very weak positive relationship between ethical concerns and trust in influencers, suggesting that ethical considerations do not significantly impact purchasing decisions among CMA CGM employees.

Research Recommendations:

Based on the results, the following recommendations are proposed to optimize the influence of social media influencers on the purchasing decisions of CMA CGM employees:

1. Target Younger and High-Income Employees:

- Marketing strategies should focus on younger employees and those with higher disposable incomes, as these groups are more significantly influenced by social media recommendations. Tailoring content to resonate with these demographics can enhance the effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns.

2. Leverage Influencers with Mawthoog Licenses:

- Utilizing influencers who possess a Mawthoog license can enhance credibility and trust among employees. Emphasizing the ethical and regulatory compliance of these influencers in marketing campaigns can further boost purchasing intentions.

3. Enhance Brand Loyalty through Influencers:

- Develop long-term partnerships with influencers who can consistently promote the brand and reinforce loyalty among employees. Influencers who provide engaging and relatable content can strengthen employees' attachment to the brand, leading to repeated purchases and advocacy.

4. Platform-Specific Strategies:

- Focus on platforms like Instagram, which are primarily used by employees to follow influencers. Videos, which have been noted to be the most influential content type, should be a key component of the marketing strategy. Ensuring that the platform choice aligns with the target audience's preferences can increase the impact of influencer marketing efforts.

5. Address Ethical Concerns Transparently:

- Although ethical considerations had a minimal direct impact on purchasing decisions, maintaining transparency and ethical practices in influencer marketing is crucial. Clear disclosure of sponsored content and avoiding over-commercialization can help in maintaining long-term trust and credibility among employees.

By implementing these recommendations, CMA CGM can enhance the impact of social media influencers on employee purchasing decisions, fostering stronger brand loyalty and driving higher engagement and sales conversions.

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Appendixes

Dear Participants /

This questionnaire is a research project to get a master's degree in business administration, entitled: The effect of social media influencers on customer decision for purchasing in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

I would like to invite you to participate in this survey, hoping you can allocate a few minutes of your precious time to respond. Your participation is immensely valuable, and I guarantee that your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for scientific research. Accurate answers are essential for us to obtain reliable results. I deeply thank you for your cooperation and appreciate your contribution to enhancing my research.

• **Personal data:**

1. Gender:	• Male	• Female
2. Age:	• From 20 to 30 years old • From 41 to 50 years old	• From 31 to 40 years old • older than 50 years old
3. Income level:	• Less than 5000 • From 10000 to 20000	• From 5000 to 10000 • Above 20,000
4. Which social media platforms I primarily use to follow influencers:	• Snapchat • TikTok • X.com	• Instagram • YouTube

• **Survey questions:**

N	Ferries	Strongly agree	Agree	I don't know	Disagree	Strongly disagree
5	Social media influencers significantly impact my purchasing decisions.					
6	I often purchase products recommended by social media influencers.					
7	I often purchase products recommended by social media influencers.					
8	Social media influencers play a significant role in my decision to try new products.					
9	The type of content (videos, posts, stories) created by influencers impacts my purchasing decisions.					
10	The type of products I buy (e.g., fashion, electronics) affects how much I am influenced by social media influencers.					

11	I frequently seek out product reviews from social media influencers before making a purchase.					
12	Social media influencers significantly contribute to my long-term loyalty to certain brands					
13	I am more likely to stay loyal to a brand that is endorsed by an influencer I trust.					
14	I am concerned about the transparency of influencers in disclosing sponsored content.					
15	I believe influencers often provide misleading information about products.					
16	I am less likely to purchase products if I suspect influencers are not transparent about sponsorships					
17	I trust influencers more if they have a Mawthoog license.					
18	Influencers with a Mawthoog license are more credible to me than those without one.					
19	I am more likely to buy products from influencers who frequently interact with their followers.					
20	Influencers who respond to comments and engage with their audience seem more trustworthy to me.					
21	The expertise of an influencer in a specific area (e.g., beauty, technology) impacts my purchasing decisions.					
22	I am more influenced by social media influencers who share similar interests with me.					
23	The follower's number of an influencer affects how much I trust their recommendations.					
24	I prefer buying products that are endorsed by multiple influencers.					
25	I have changed my preferences for certain products based on influencer endorsements.					
26	I am influenced by the personal experiences shared by influencers regarding products.					
27	I believe that social media influencers provide valuable information about products.					

Summary:

This study examines the influence of social media influencers on the purchasing decisions of CMA CGM employees in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Highlighting the shift from traditional media to digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat, and emphasizing the crucial role of influencers in modern marketing strategies, it fills a research gap by focusing on corporate employees, and examining how demographic factors such as age, gender, and income level influence their responses to influencer marketing. The study uses a descriptive and analytical approach and relies on a stratified random sample of 83 employees. Data is collected using an electronic questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS, drawing on various academic and industry sources to define key concepts and variables. The results show that social media influencers have a significant impact on purchasing decisions, with younger employees, higher-income employees, and female employees showing a greater propensity to follow and be influenced by social media recommendations. In addition, the study highlights the importance of the Mawthoog license in enhancing trust and credibility in influencer marketing noting that while ethical considerations, have little direct influence on purchasing decisions directly, they are critical to maintaining long-term trust and credibility. The study highlights the significant role of influencers in strengthening brand loyalty, launching new products, and maintaining loyalty to existing brands. Based on these findings,

the study recommends targeting younger and higher-income employees with marketing efforts, using influencers with a Mawthoog license, building long-term partnerships with influencers to build brand loyalty, prioritizing platforms like Instagram and content types like videos, and addressing ethical concerns transparently by ensuring clear disclosure of sponsored content and avoiding over-commercialization. The results of the correlation and regression analyzes suggest that trust in influencers with a Mawthoog license is positively associated with higher perceived influence on purchase decisions, and that demographic factors, while having some predictive power, do not significantly moderate the influence of social media influencers on purchase decisions. The study also provides practical insights into how different social media platforms and content types of influence purchasing decisions, with Instagram and videos being particularly influential. Analysis of the descriptive statistics reveals a diverse, predominantly female sample, with the largest age group being 20 to 30 years old and the most common income range being 5000 to 10000 SAR. The study highlights the varying degrees of influence of different demographic groups, with female employees and those with higher disposable incomes showing stronger influence. The study's recommendations aim to optimize the influence of social media influencers on purchasing decisions by targeting specific demographics, leveraging regulatory compliance for trust, building long-term partnerships with influencers, and ensuring ethical marketing practices. The study contributes to both academic discourse and practical marketing strategies, providing a comprehensive understanding of how social media influencers affect consumer behavior in a business context. By addressing the unique needs and characteristics of corporate employees, the study provides valuable insights that can help brands refine their influencer marketing strategies to effectively target and convert this important demographic. This study underscores the evolving landscape of digital marketing and the strategic importance of influencer marketing to reach and influence modern consumers, especially in an enterprise environment. Overall, the study highlights the complex interplay between social media influencers, demographics and consumer behavior

and offers actionable recommendations for brands looking to improve their marketing efforts in the digital age.