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The Impact of Influencer Marketing on Sales and Consumer Purchasing Behavior: An Analytical Study on ElcOutlet Home Appliances Store

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INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, influencer marketing has become a significant tool for businesses to reach and engage with their target audience. Influencer marketing involves collaboration between companies and individuals who have a strong online presence, such as social media influencers. These influencers promote products or services through their platforms, sharing their honest opinions and experiences. Over recent years, influencer marketing has seen substantial growth as more companies recognize their ability to connect with consumers on a personal level.

In the past, consumers relied on traditional advertisements, like TV or magazine ads, to make purchasing decisions. However, nowadays, many consumers prefer influencers because they provide detailed and relatable information about products. Influencers are perceived as more trustworthy, as they often share personal stories and give insights into how the products fit into their daily lives.

There are several types of influencers, ranging from large influencers with millions of followers to micro and nano influencers with smaller, more dedicated audiences. Businesses often choose influencers based on the size and relevance of their audience, knowing that influencers have the power to affect the buying decisions of their followers. Because of this influence, companies increasingly turn to these individuals to market their services or products.

This research will focus on the factors that impact influencer marketing, its importance, and how it affects consumer purchasing behavior and sales. Understanding these dynamics can help businesses maximize their marketing strategies and better reach their target audiences.

Literature Review

Previous research plays an essential role as a valuable scientific resource for researchers exploring various topics. In this study, we have collected a selection of studies related to the research subject, particularly focusing on influencer marketing, as it is a key aspect of our research focus.

- In this study researchers explored the impact of influencer marketing on consumer buying behavior. The study involved 115 participants and found that 71.3% of them were influenced by recommendations from influencers when making purchases. The research also showed that product quality was the most crucial factor for 61.7% of the participants when deciding to buy a product recommended by an influencer. Additionally, 73.9% of the participants trusted the recommendations given by influencers, showing that trust plays a key role in how consumers make buying decisions (Bhagyashree & Pushpalatha, 2024)
- The researchers examined how influencer marketing affects consumer behavior, particularly in increasing brand awareness, improving brand perception, and driving sales. The study, based on a sample of 500 participants, found that influencer marketing exposure had a strong positive effect on brand awareness ($r=0.75$), brand perception ($r=0.68$), and purchase behavior ($r=0.45$). The findings show that influencer marketing is an effective tool for increasing sales and improving consumer engagement with brands, especially on platforms like Instagram, which was used by 80% of the respondents. (Hake, Nath, & Kumavat, 2023)
- Throughout this study, the researchers explored whether influencer marketing improves sustainable brand awareness and sales, particularly for start-up businesses. The study, which was conducted in Denpasar City using qualitative methods, found that influencer marketing does help in temporarily increasing brand awareness. However, the effects are often short-lived due to factors such as the high volume of influencer collaborations and the monotony of some promotional strategies. The researchers concluded that while influencer marketing is useful, it needs to be combined with other marketing strategies to achieve optimal, long-lasting results. (Agung, Darma, & Mahyuni, 2021)
- During this study researchers examined how the congruence between influencers and their followers affects purchase behavior. The study surveyed over 7,500 individuals to measure their perception of influencer credibility, usefulness of content, and congruence with the influencer. The results showed that when there is strong congruence between an influencer and their followers, the impact of the influencer's

content and experience on purchase behavior is significantly higher. However, factors like trustworthiness and attractiveness did not show a strong direct effect on purchase decisions in this study. (Venciūtė et al., 2023)

- This study explores how hedonic motivation (the desire for pleasure) influencer marketing, and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) affect online shopping decisions. It finds that both hedonic motivation and influencer marketing directly influence purchases, while FOMO plays a key role in indirectly affecting these decisions, especially with limited time offers. The research suggests that marketers can effectively use these insights to create strategies that appeal to consumers' emotions and sense of urgency, but they should also be mindful of the ethical implications of using FOMO in their marketing tactics. (Solaiman & Pangaribuan, 2023)
- Research shows that online opinion leaders, like influencers, play a crucial role in promoting products and services. Companies need to carefully select which opinion leaders to collaborate with and understand how to effectively work with them to highlight both the enjoyable (hedonic) and practical (utilitarian) aspects of their offerings. The article outlines a five-stage planning process for these partnerships, which includes setting campaign goals, identifying suitable influencers, aligning them with the right products, motivating them appropriately, and coordinating their efforts throughout the campaign. (Lin, Bruning, & Swarna, 2023)
- Research indicates that marketing through digital platforms achieves higher success rates compared to other platforms. However, simply conducting online marketing is not sufficient; consumer opinions must be considered, and products or services should be adjusted to meet the needs of a wide audience. Understanding consumer behavior and how it is influenced by influencer marketing is crucial information for companies aiming to grow and develop. The survey results show that there are still customers who do not fully trust influencers and what they promote, even though influencer marketing is a successful tool in today's generation. To build consumer trust, influencers should adopt new methods that assure customers of the trustworthiness of the products or services they promote, by offering guarantees to support purchasing decisions. (Govindan & Alotaibi, 2021)
- This study aims to understand how influencer marketing affects consumers through social media. It proposes an integrated model for the social media influencer value, showing that both the value of influencer-generated advertising and influencer credibility positively impact consumer trust in branded content, which subsequently increases brand awareness and purchase intentions. The results demonstrated that informational content value, trustworthiness, and similarity to influencers play a

significant role in building followers' trust in branded content, which in turn influences purchasing decisions. The research employed Partial Least Squares (PLS) path modeling and an online survey among social media users who followed at least one influencer. (Lou & Yuan, 2019)

- This research aims to assess the effectiveness of influencer marketing in enhancing sustainable brand awareness and sales, especially for start-up businesses. The study was conducted in Denpasar City using a qualitative methodology involving in-depth interviews with start-up business owners in various fields. The results indicated that influencer marketing positively affects brand awareness, but this effect is temporary. To achieve sustainable results, businesses need to adopt additional strategies alongside influencer marketing, such as improving product presentation and carefully selecting appropriate influencers. (Agung, Darma, & Mahyuni, 2021)
- Researchers in this paper explored the impact of influencer marketing on increasing brand awareness and sales for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the digital era. The study emphasized the significance of influencer marketing as a highly effective tool for reaching target audiences and enhancing brand visibility. Using qualitative literature analysis, the authors concluded that influencer marketing enables SMEs to access new markets, increase sales, and build strong customer relationships. The findings highlighted the importance of influencer credibility and the alignment of influencers' values with the brand to foster trust and drive purchase decisions. The study recommends that SMEs carefully select influencers to ensure that their audience resonates with the brand's values and objectives. Agustian et al. (2023)
- "In this study the researchers explored the effects of influencer marketing on Instagram on consumers' purchasing behavior. The results revealed a significant positive correlation between influencer marketing and purchasing behavior. (Khan, Iqbal, & Lodhi, 2021).
- During this study the researchers examined the effects of content marketing and influencer marketing on consumer purchasing decisions, particularly in the fashion industry. The study focused on the Erigo Company and involved 100 respondents selected through purposive sampling. Using path analysis, the results showed that both content marketing and influencer marketing have a significant positive impact on consumer behavior and purchasing decisions. Specifically, influencer marketing proved to have a direct influence on purchasing behavior, with 80.8% of the variance in consumer behavior explained by influencer activities on social media platforms like Instagram. Additionally, the study found that content marketing played a crucial role in

engaging consumers, affecting purchasing decisions through its ability to create value and build customer trust. (Yodi, Widyastuti, & Noor, 2020)

- This study explores the comparison between traditional celebrities and Instagram influencers (“Instafamous”) in terms of their impact on consumers’ purchase intentions. It examines how the type of celebrity affects trustworthiness, brand attitude, and envy among consumers. The findings reveal that Instagram influencers generate higher trust, envy, and social presence compared to traditional celebrities. Social presence mediates the effects on envy and brand attitude. (Jin et al., 2019)
- This research examines the role of social media influencers in shaping consumer behavior and purchase decisions. The research demonstrates that influencers positively affect consumer purchase intentions by enhancing trust and credibility in their messaging. Influencers’ personal traits, such as attractiveness and credibility, amplify their impact. Using primary data from a survey, the study reveals that a significant proportion of consumers rely on influencers’ opinions when making purchasing decisions. (Mishra & Ashfaq, 2023)
- This study examined the impact of influencer marketing on consumers’ purchase intentions using the Theory of Reasoned Action as a framework. The objective was to understand the effectiveness of influencer marketing compared to traditional online advertising through an online survey involving 180 participants. The findings showed that influencer marketing positively influences consumers’ “attitude toward the behavior” but does not have a direct effect on purchase intention, nor is influencer marketing more effective than traditional online advertising in increasing purchase intentions. The study encourages further research on the impact of influencer marketing to explore this field in more depth. (Johansen & Guldvik, 2017)
- This study explored the impact of influencer marketing on consumer attitudes, focusing on understanding the factors that affect Swedish millennials’ attitudes towards influencer marketing on platforms like Instagram and blogs. The researchers gathered data through focus groups with millennial participants, and the data were analyzed by categorizing response patterns and recurring discussion topics. The findings revealed that millennial attitudes are influenced by several factors, including the alignment of promotional messages with the influencer’s style and the level of credibility and trustworthiness of the messages. (Grafström, Jakobsson, & Wiede, 2018)

Analysis of Previous Studies and Their Application

The previous studies can be grouped into two main areas. The first set looks at how influencer marketing helps improve sales, showing how influencer campaigns can increase brand awareness and revenue.

The second set focuses on the factors that make influencer marketing successful, such as authenticity, audience interaction, and the influencer's credibility and reach. Although these studies offer useful insights into influencer marketing, there are still areas that haven't been fully explored. Many of the studies concentrate on short-term sales or individual factors, but there is less understanding of how these factors work together or their long-term effects on customer behavior. Additionally, not much has been studied about how influencer marketing might affect different industries in different ways .

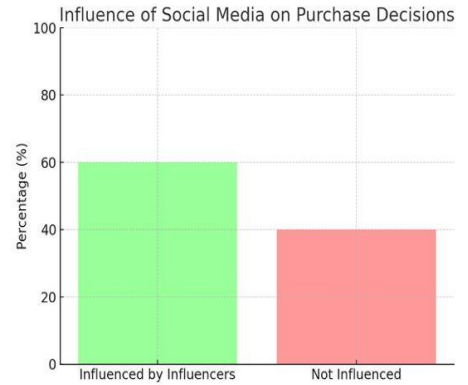
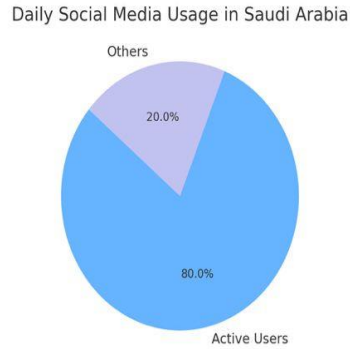
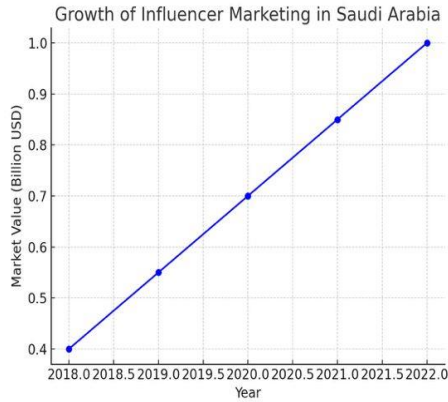
These gaps highlight the need for more research on influencer marketing, especially to better understand how brands can use influencers effectively for long-term growth. This was one of the main reasons we chose this topic, aiming to add to the current knowledge in this area.

Study problem

Influencer marketing has become a prominent strategy for driving sales and influencing consumer behavior, especially in Saudi Arabia, where the market value for influencer marketing surpassed \$1 billion in 2022, highlighting its role in reaching a wide audience (Meltwater, 2022). Additionally, over 80% of the Saudi population engages with social media daily, which enhances the effectiveness of influencer-driven marketing campaigns (Statista, 2023).

Despite its widespread use, there remains a knowledge gap regarding the direct impact of influencer marketing on local business sales performance. For example, Elcoutlet, a home appliances store based in Jeddah, has invested in influencer marketing campaigns on social media platforms, but the effectiveness of these campaigns on its sales remains unclear. A 2021 Ipsos study found that 60% of social media users in Saudi Arabia are influenced by recommendations from influencers, particularly when making purchasing decisions related to electronics and home products, emphasizing influencers' role as trusted decision guides.

This study aims to explore the direct impact of influencer marketing on Elcoutlet's sales performance by analyzing the types of influencers involved, the platforms used, and how these factors shape purchasing behavior. In doing so, the study seeks to bridge the knowledge gap by identifying the influencer strategies most effective in increasing sales for Elcoutlet, aligning with the growing role of influencer marketing in the Saudi market.



Research Questions

What is the impact of influencer marketing on sales and consumer purchasing behavior?

Sub-questions

1. What are the key factors in influencer marketing that contribute to increased sales?
2. How is the size of an influencer's audience (mega, mid-tier, or nano) affect sales?
3. How does consumer trust in influencers impact their purchasing decisions?

Importance Of the Study

1. Scientific Importance:

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on influencer marketing by providing empirical evidence on its impact on sales and consumer purchasing behavior. It explores the dynamics of different influencer types and their effectiveness, thereby enhancing academic understanding of the factors that drive successful marketing strategies. The findings will fill existing research gaps and can serve as a foundation for future studies in the field of marketing.

2. Practical Importance:

The insights gained from this study will be valuable for businesses looking to optimize their influencer marketing strategies. By identifying which types of influencers and platforms yield the highest sales conversions, companies can allocate their marketing resources more effectively. The research will provide actionable recommendations for enhancing influencer partnerships, leading to improved sales performance and a better understanding of consumer behavior in response to influencer marketing.

Study Objectives:

This study aims to investigate the impact of influencer marketing on increasing sales in local stores, specifically focusing on the sales performance of ElcOutlet. By understanding how several factors influence sales performance, the research seeks to provide insights that can help businesses leverage influencer marketing effectively. Among the objectives of the research are the following:

- To identify the key factors that directly contribute to increased sales through influencer marketing.
- To evaluate the impact of several types of influences (mega, mid-tier, and nano) on sales performance.
- To assess the role of consumer trust in influencers in product sales.
- To explore the influence of social media platforms on the effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns.
- To provide local stores like ElecOutlet with data-driven recommendations for optimizing influencer marketing strategies to increase sales.

Study Concepts: The concepts of this study include three main concepts that will be divided and explained in detail, along with their relevant sub-concepts. These concepts are:

1. **Influencer Marketing:** “Influencer marketing is a strategy that relies on collaboration with individuals who have considerable influence over their audience on social media. These influencers are known for their ability to impact their followers’ purchasing decisions through recommendations, reviews, and the content they share.” (Bin Salim, 2024, p. 3)

Marketing: Marketing has multiple definitions that vary according to the intellectual evolution of marketing, which may expand to include modern variables in this field.

Undoubtedly, one of the most debated definitions is the one provided by the Definition Committee of the American Marketing Association (AMA), which states: ‘Marketing is the set of functions that deal with the flow of goods and services from the producer to the final consumer’ (Al-Jaafari, 2019, p. 9).

Another definition is from the Marketing Society of the United Kingdom, which states: ‘Marketing is the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating, and satisfying consumer needs efficiently and profitably’ (Cannon, 1986, p. 2). I conclude with one of the most widely accepted definitions, that of Philip Kotler, one of today’s leading marketing scholars, who defined it as: ‘The efforts made by individuals and groups within a specific administrative and social framework to meet their needs and desires by generating, providing, and exchanging products with others’” (Talat Asaad, 2022).

Influencers:

1. **Definition According to Influence:**

Influencers are individuals who possess a unique ability to impact consumer behavior through their credibility and strong relationships with their audience, making them a bridge between brands and consumers.

2. Definition According to Function:

Influencers are people who use social media platforms to create content that includes recommendations, reviews, or firsthand experiences, which makes them an effective marketing tool for brands.

3. Definition According to Their Role in Marketing:

Influencers are a key component of digital marketing strategies, where marketers utilize them to promote products or services through advertising campaigns that leverage their credibility and influence over consumers.

4. Definition According to Type:

Influencers can be categorized into diverse types based on their follower count:

- Mega Influencers: Individuals with a large following, often exceeding one million, and are typically celebrities or public figures.
- Mid-tier Influencers: Those with a following between 100,000 and one million, often specializing in specific niches.
- Micro Influencers: Individuals with a smaller following (ranging from 1,000 to 100,000), who tend to have high engagement rates with their audience.
- Nano Influencers: Those with fewer than 1,000 followers often possess considerable influence within their local communities or specific niches.

Sales: Sales refer to the exchange of goods or services for money, which is a critical component for the financial success of any business. Understanding the factors that influence sales performance is vital for companies looking to optimize their marketing efforts.

Sales Performance: This involves measuring the effectiveness of sales strategies and tactics in generating revenue, including the analysis of sales data and metrics to assess outcomes.

Consumer Behavior: Consumer behavior is defined as the activities individuals engage in while selecting, purchasing, and using goods and services to satisfy their desires and meet their needs. Thus, consumer behavior is the collection of activities and actions that consumers undertake while searching for the goods and services they require to fulfill their needs and wants. This includes evaluating, acquiring, using, and disposing of these goods and services, along with the decision-making processes that accompany these actions (Al-Juraishi, K. 2006, p. 44)

Consumption

Consumption can be defined as the process of acquiring a product, using it, and then disposing of the surplus. Final consumption, therefore, refers to the use of production for final consumption, which involves the utilization or enjoyment of goods and services to satisfy consumption purposes. This kind of consumption leaves no remaining product that can fulfill any other need. (Al-Juraishi, K. 2006, p. 44)

Final Consumer:

The final consumer is the person who purchases a good or service with the aim of satisfying a need or desire for themselves or for members of their family.

Theoretical Framework

Based on a comprehensive review of existing literature on influencer marketing and its impact on sales and consumer behavior, this theoretical framework explores various dimensions of influencer marketing and its role in enhancing sales performance and shaping consumer behavior. Influencer marketing has been widely recognized as a powerful tool in digital marketing, especially in building brand awareness and enhancing consumer engagement (Abidin, 2016; De Veirman et al., 2017).

Influencer Marketing and Its Impact on Sales

Influencer marketing is rooted in the personal connection that influencers establish with their audience. This approach leverages individuals with substantial social media followings to endorse products or services. Research has shown that the success of influencer marketing is attributed to influencers' ability to foster trust through genuine and reliable content, which subsequently boosts brand credibility and drives sales (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Ki & Kim, 2019).

Influencer marketing campaigns generally fall into two categories: paid and unpaid. In paid campaigns, companies pay influencers to promote their products, while unpaid collaborations may involve product exchanges or brand partnerships without direct financial compensation (Evans et al., 2017). This flexibility allows businesses to select strategies that align with their marketing goals, offering a tailored approach to reach target audiences effectively (Glucksman, 2017).

The Social Influence Theory can explain the influence of social media figures on consumer purchasing decisions. This theory posits that people are influenced by individuals they consider credible sources of information. In this sense, influencers serve as "opinion leaders," providing guidance that helps shape consumer choices. This effect is often seen as a form of social proof, where consumers rely on influencer recommendations, often leading to stronger purchase intentions (Casaló et al., 2018; Weimann, 2019).

Consumer Behavior and Trust in Influencers

Consumer behavior is a crucial factor in the effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns. Studies highlight that influencer marketing influences consumer actions by nurturing relationships built on trust (Jin et al., 2019). When consumers perceive influencers as trustworthy, they are more inclined to make purchasing decisions based on these influencers' recommendations (Freberg et al., 2011; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

The decision-making process in this context is influenced by the continuous engagement between influencers and their followers. Influencers often share personal stories and

experiences with the products, presenting them in a manner that solidifies consumer trust, which in turn leads to higher conversion rates and increased sales (Lim et al., 2017; De Veirman et al., 2017).

The Role of Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms, including Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook, are central to the success of influencer marketing. These platforms allow influencers to create engaging multimedia content that resonates with their followers, thereby enhancing the reach and effectiveness of marketing efforts (Khamis et al., 2017). Social media also provides analytics tools that help brands monitor the success of influencer campaigns through key performance indicators (KPIs) such as engagement rates, views, and conversions (Stubb et al., 2019).

Long-term Impact of Influencer Marketing

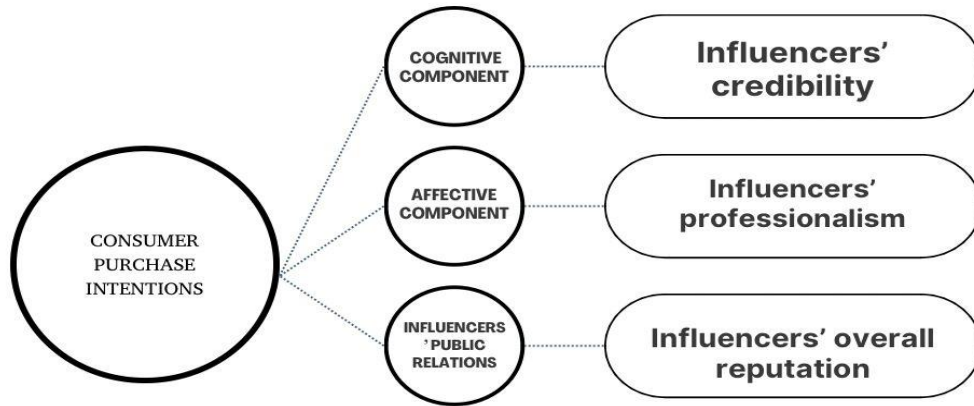
Beyond immediate sales impact, influencer marketing has long-term effects on consumer loyalty. Continuous engagement between influencers and their audience often results in strong, lasting relationships, increasing the likelihood that consumers will repeatedly choose the same brand over time (Schouten et al., 2020). This ongoing connection fosters brand loyalty, further solidifying the role of influencer marketing in sustainable brand growth.

Analyzing Campaign Data

Data analysis plays an essential role in the success of influencer marketing. Companies can utilize advanced analytics to track metrics such as reach, engagement rates, and conversions, allowing them to refine their strategies for improved results. Effective data analysis enables businesses to make data-driven decisions that maximize the return on investment in influencer marketing campaigns (Hudders et al., 2021).

(figure 1)

Representation of the influence of influencers on consumers' purchase intentions



Research Methodology

The objectives of the study are achieved by monitoring the change in sales for ElecOutlet with the launch of influencer marketing campaigns. Therefore, the quantitative analytical approach was chosen, and the field of the study is survey-based, relying on data collection and analysis through content analysis to gather sufficient information about the campaigns and their impact on increasing sales.

Study Hypotheses

The study has two variables: one independent and one dependent, and their relationship:

- Independent variable: Influencer marketing campaigns
- Dependent variable: Sales of local stores
- Relationship between the two variables: When the independent variable (influencer marketing campaigns) becomes more effective, the dependent variable (sales of local stores) increases in a direct relationship.

- The study assumes a positive and significant relationship between the increase in sales and the use of influencer marketing campaigns in local stores.
- The study assumes a positive and significant relationship between the increase in the number of visitors to both the online and physical stores when using influencer marketing campaigns.
- The study assumes a positive and significant relationship between changes in consumer behavior and the use of influencer marketing in local stores.

Data Collection Tools

Given the nature of this study, both primary and secondary sources will be utilized.

The primary sources will involve direct data collection related to the research objectives. Specifically, this will include:

- 1- Sales Data from the Physical Store: Analyzing the sales performance of the physical store during and after influencer marketing campaigns.
- 2- Data from the Online Store: Gathering website traffic, conversion rates, and online sales metrics from the store's backend, as well as analyzing user behavior.

To analyze the collected sales data, tools such as Excel and Power BI will be used. These tools will help in organizing, visualizing, and deriving insights from both in-store and online store sales data.

-The secondary sources will provide the theoretical framework. These will include:

- Previous studies and relevant literature in the field of influencer marketing and its impact on sales.
- Any scientifically recognized sources such as reference books, academic journals, and other credible publications that support the theoretical foundation of the study.

Study Scope

The study will cover the spatial and temporal scope, as well as the study population for the sample under investigation, which is Elcoutlet Home Appliances Store.

- Spatial Scope: The store is located in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and serves customers across all cities in the Kingdom through shipping and delivery companies.

- Temporal Scope: The study will monitor the performance of the store's digital influencer marketing campaigns from January 1, 2024, to October 31, 2024, totaling 300 days of digital campaign activity.

Study Population: The study population consists of all sales recorded by ElcOutlet Home Appliances Store during the influencer marketing campaign, whether from the physical store or through the online store. The primary focus of the study is to analyze the sales data generated during the campaign to assess the impact of influencer marketing on overall sales performance.

In this campaign, all three influencers exclusively used Snapchat to promote the store and its products. The influencers represent different levels of influence:

- Mega Influencer: Has a very large audience.
- Micro Influencer: Has a moderate number of followers.
- Nano Influencer: Has a smaller but highly engaged audience.

Sales data from the physical store will be gathered from the store's POS (Point of Sale) system, while online sales data will be collected from the store's e-commerce system. The analysis of this data will be conducted using Excel, focusing solely on the sales performance across both the physical and online stores.

Study Sample The study sample comprises the sales data collected during the influencer marketing campaign, sourced from both the physical store and the online store. The analysis will focus on the sales directly impacted by the promotion of products through Snapchat by the three influencers.

1. Physical Store Sales: Includes all sales made in the physical store during the campaign period. Data will be extracted from the store's POS system, and the analysis will focus on the daily sales and the specific products that were promoted by the influencers.
2. Online Store Sales: Includes all orders placed through the online store during the campaign period. The analysis will focus on the overall sales performance of the products that were actively promoted by the influencers.
3. Influencer Performance: the performance of the three influencers (Mega, Micro, Nano) will be evaluated based on the sales data in Excel, focusing on the products they promoted. This includes analyzing sales trends and identifying any noticeable increases in product sales related to the influencers' promotions.

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