

The Impact of Influencer Marketing on Consumer Decisions in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries

"أثر تسويق مؤثرين مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي على قرار المستهلك في دول
مجلس التعاون الخليجي"

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الإهداء والشكر

"من قال أنا لها نالها.. وأنا لها وإن أبت رغما عنها أتيت بها"

لم تكن الرحلة قصيرة ولا الطريق كان محفوا بالتسهيلات لكنني فعلتها ونلتها

الى نور عيني ومهجة حياتي.. الى من فارقتني بجسدها وروحها ومازالت ترفرف في سماء حياتي
الى التي كانت السند الأول والداعم الأكبر والمحفز الدائم, الى التي وهبتني الحياة واحتضنتني قلبها قبل يدها
الى ملاكي الطاهر ومن كان وجودها يمددني بالسعي دون ملل, معلمتي الأولى ودكتورتي الأولى
الى تلك الروح الطاهرة "والدتي" رحمها الله

أهديك هذا الإنجاز الذي لولاك لم يكن, أهديك مراحل إنجازاتي كلها فالفضل والثناء للمولى ثم لعطائك الذي يضمّد تعبي

الى خيرة أيامي وصفوها, الى من مدت لي أياديهم وقت ضعفي وامنوا بقدراتي, الداعمين الساندين, أروني الصلابة وجداري
المتين
"أخواني وأخواتي"

الى الذين يبهجهم نجاحي, ولكل من كان عوناً وسنداً في هذا الطريق, لأصدقاء ورفقاء السنين وأصحاب الشدائد والأزمات.

الشكر الأكبر موصول الى مشرفي دكتور محمد عويس الذي لم يتوانى في مد يد العون لي, ومن كان لتوجيهه ونصائحه دور
أساسي في إتمام هذا البحث

وأخيراً الشكر موصول لنفسني على الصبر والعزيمة والإصرار, والتي كانت أهلاً للمصاعب, ها أنا اختتم كل ما مررت به
بفخر ونجاح الحمد لله من قبل ومن بعد, راجية من الله تعالى أن ينفني بما علمني وأن يعلمني ما أجهل ويجعله حجة لي لا
علي

"وأخّر دعواهم أن الحمد لله رب العالمين"

Abstract

This research aims to Focus on the importance of the influencers marketing to the consumers decisions, explain the role of influencers on affecting the consumers buying decisions and elaborate the influencers marketing tools that plays a major role on consumers buying decisions in gulf cooperation council countries. The main objective is to analyze the role of social media influencers in effecting the customers buying decisions gulf cooperation council countries. The used method approach will provide the best opportunities for answering the important research questions, the answers of which rely upon a variety of forms of data and the quantitative survey method - questionnaire survey – was chosen for the study. The population is defined as all active users of social media, who are also aware of the social media influencers in gulf cooperation council countries. Questionnaire was developed with question regarding consumer's reaction, attitude and purchase intention when they see an advertisement that is done or performed by social media influencers. These forms are filled out and returned by a respondent of 106 user of social media platforms.

The results of the analysis indicate a strong agreement among participants regarding the influence of influencer reputation on buying decisions highlights the pivotal role that influencers play in shaping consumer preferences and behaviors. Consumers place a high value on influencers' attitudes, reputation, and content accuracy when making purchasing choices, underscoring the importance of cultivating trust and authenticity in influencer-brand partnerships.

The researcher recommends collaborating with influencers to create high-quality, engaging content that resonates with the target audience. Invest in creative storytelling and visually appealing imagery or videos to capture audience attention and convey the brand message effectively. Moreover, encourage influencers to disclose sponsored content transparently and authentically. Prioritize honesty and integrity in influencer-brand partnerships to build trust with consumers and foster long-term relationships. Finally, implement robust tracking and analytics tools to monitor the performance of influencer marketing campaigns.

Keywords: Influencer, Influencer marketing, Purchase decision, consumer decision, Social media, GCC, Gulf Cooperation Council Countries

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Chapter 1

General review of the literature

1.1 Introduction:

The emergence of social media influencers has fundamentally altered the marketing environment and how companies advertise their goods and services. Influencer marketing is becoming more and more popular as a way for companies to engage with their target audience on social media, and there is a lot of discussion about how it can impact customer demand and purchase behavior. The goal of this study is to comprehend how influencers affect the behavior and purchase decisions of consumers (Mishra, S., & Ashfaq, R. (2023).

Businesses may now use influencer marketing to reach a wider audience and alter client behavior. Influencers on social media have become more and more common, and corporations are now using them extensively in their marketing strategies. Influencers are persons who have a large social media following and who utilize their platform to advocate for brands' products and services. Thanks to the expansion of social media platforms, influencers can now communicate and engage with millions of people globally (Mishra, S., & Ashfaq, R. (2023).

Influencer marketing refers to the promotion of goods and services by individuals who take proactive steps to impact other people's purchasing decision. Over time, branding—that is, the usage of celebrities—has gained popularity among bloggers. However, today's branding also involves regular customers who have a significant impact on others. Influencer marketing can be said to be one of the fastest growing tools in reaching new consumers with the help of online media (Zak, S., & Hasprova, M. (2020).

Due to social media's immense impact, a sizable portion of Internet users now purchase goods after finding them on social media platforms. It should be mentioned that the majority of buyers typically follow recommendations on social media while making a purchase. Furthermore, social media plays the role of a quality retention strategy by building and sustaining a strong and long-lasting client relationship. 62% of Internet users are active on at least one social network, 53% of users have purchased a product after seeing an advertisement online, and 78% of sellers report better sales than those who do not use social media to interact with their customers, according to studies on social media and e-commerce (Al-Nasser, A., & Mahomed, A. S. B. (2020).

In Saudi Arabia and other developing nations, social media platforms—including Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, and many more— Compared to other Arab countries, has a greater potential for successful electronic commerce (E-commerce) consumers due to its higher number of online shoppers, who are reported to have spent over \$3.0 billion annually on e-commerce transactions. An estimated 3.50 million people utilize e-commerce, which makes up 14.3% of Saudi Arabia's total population. It is a general belief that social media influencer's promotion of products could increase sales significantly (Alhafi, N., & Ahmed, M. (2021).

1.2 Literature reviews

- **A research by (Saleh Shuqair, Philip Cragg, Amir Zaidan, Tijjay Mitchell 2016). Titled: “The Influence of Users Generated Content on Attitude Towards Brand And Purchase Intentions – Case of Bahrain” [16]**

This research aimed to ascertain whether user generated content influences consumer purchasing intention, the elements influencing the Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) experience and their perceived attitude towards an associated brand. The quantitative methodology has been favored. The research survey was designed to be self-administered and encompasses focused questions that seek to evoke a set of measurable responses which with analysis can provide clear answers for the research questions through quantifiable data. A sample size of 170 respondents undertook the research survey. As a result, Individuals in the Kingdom of Bahrain are significantly influenced by eWOM and they perceive customers` posts, reviews and shares as more trustworthy than the companies` posts as they enhance the attitude towards the brand, increase the customer's trust and give them a stronger sense of confidence towards the brand.

- **A research by (Amandeep¹, Dr. Seema Varshney², Syed Aulia 2017). Titled: “The Impact of Advertising on Consumer Purchase Decision with Reference to Consumer Durable Goods in Oman” [14]**

This research aimed to investigate the impact on how different advertising strategies can influence the consumer decision regarding purchasing of consumer durables in sultanate of Oman. The study used Quantitative study done to understand the Impact of Advertising on Consumer Purchase Decision with reference to Consumer durable Goods in Oman. Descriptive research design was also used for the current research study using Non-probability - Convenience Sampling. sample size comprised of 100 respondents and as a result it has been observed that Ad attractiveness, Adrecall, Attitude towards floor ads, Ad persuasiveness, and purchase intention make a significant contribution to Ad effectiveness and contribute heavily to purchase intention.

- **A research by (Faraj Mazyed Faraj Aldaihani 2018). Titled: “Impact of Social Customer Relationship Management on Customer Satisfaction through Customer Empowerment: A Study of Islamic Banks in Kuwait” [15]**

This research aimed to explore the impact of social customer relationship management (CRM) on customer satisfaction through customer empowerment using a sample of customers of Islamic banks in Kuwait. data were gathered using a questionnaire developed for the purpose of the present study based on previous relevant studies. A total of 700 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. the results showed a statistically significant and positive impact of SCRM on customer satisfaction through customer empowerment. It was asserted that both traditional CRM and social media have significant effects on customer empowerment and satisfaction simultaneously.

- **A research by (Maria Francisca Lies Ambarwati, Herlina Damaryanti, Harjanto Prabowo, and Muhammad Hamsal 2019). Titled: “The Impact of a Digital Influencer to the Purchase decision” [4]**

This research aimed to investigate the impact of a beauty vlogger to the purchase intention of the viewers in the YouTube channel. This study uses quantitative research method with analysis techniques include tests of validity, reliability, normality, linearity, simple linear regression, statistic descriptive, and determination. The study applied to 100 respondents using distributing questionnaires and the result shows the contribution of the digital influencer to the decision of purchasing cosmetic products is 87.6%. This result opens the opportunity to producers of life-style products to collaborate with the beauty vloggers to advertise their products.

- **A research by (Miglė ČERNIKOVAITĖ 2019). Titled: “THE IMPACT OF INFLUENCER MARKETING ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR IN SOCIAL NETWORKS” [7]**

This research aimed to analyze the impact effect of Influencers marketing on consumer buying behavior by determining which partnership opportunities are most relevant. The study used the theoretical analysis of scientific literature and quantitative statistical analysis of empirical research results and. The quantitative survey method - questionnaire survey – was chosen for the study applied to 297 consumers. As a result, it shown that before making a decision to purchase a product or a service, most respondents are actively seeking information in social networks by reading other costumer's feedback. Moreover, the survey reveals that recommendations, comments, shared information about certain brands by Influencers are the most important factors in changing buying behavior.

- **A research by (Žaneta Kavaliauskienė, Haroldas Margis 2019). Titled: “IMPACT OF INFLUENCERS ON A CONSUMER DECISION TO PURCHASE” [8]**

This research aimed to investigate whether influencers impact consumers' purchasing decisions and affect the consumers behaviors to buy Coca-Cola products. The quantitative research method used for the research – online

questionnaire survey. 330 respondents were interviewed. The research was limited to analyzing the impact of influencers as one of today's most effective promotional tools on consumer purchasing decisions. Consumers are found to be interested in influencers' promoted Coca-Cola products, but influencers only initiate the consumer's purchasing decision, and the company is recommended to use complex promotional tools for its final goals realization.

- **A research by (Asem Al-Nasser 2020). Titled: "EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON PURCHASE INTENTIONS OF SAUDI ARABIA CONSUMERS: INSTAGRAM AS AN EVALUATION TOOL" [6]**

This research aimed to examines customers' engagement and evaluation of products via SMIs on Instagram as well as the role played by SMIs in influencing buyers purchasing decisions. The review highlighted the effect of SMIs on the buying intentions of Saudi Arabian Instagrammers using Instagram as a social commercial evaluation tool. As a result of the study it is apparent that purchasing decisions are highly influenced by SMIs through Instagram as a social media platform in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

- **A research by (Rebeka-Anna Popa, Zsuzsa Săplăcana, Dan-Cristian Dabija b and Mónica-Anetta Alta 2020). Titled: "The impact of social media influencers on travel decisions: the role of trust in consumer decision journey" [11]**

This research aimed to uses customer journey theory to explain the impact of SMI trust on customer travel decision-making and focuses on evaluating the role of customer journey constructs (including desire, information search, evaluating alternatives, purchase decisions, satisfaction and experience sharing) in mediating the interrelation between SMI trust and the dimensions of customer journeys. The study used Smart PLS to analyze the data collected. As a result of the study, it indicates that consumer trust in SMIs has a positive effect on each phase of travel decision-making and

trustworthiness serves as a highly important aspect to successfully influence tourists' destination decision making.

- **A research by (Stefan Zak^{1,*}, Maria Hasprova 2020). Titled: “The role of influencers in the consumer decision-making process” [12]**

This research aimed to study the systematization of knowledge about the position and roles of influencers as opinion leaders in the social media environment in order to identify their typology, influence factors and the intensity of their impact on consumer decision making process, based on the comparison of knowledge from the results of global research studies. The study used the quantitative online research processed by authors and as a result of quantitative method of inquiry - questioning using an online questionnaire, the survey showed the promotion of some products through influencers may be more advantageous than others. Influencers will have the greatest impact when buying clothes, shoes, cosmetics and, surprisingly, services.

- **A research by (Sara Javed, Md. Salamun Rashidin & Yun Xiao 2021). Titled: “Investigating the impact of digital influencers on consumer decision-making and content outreach: using dual AISAS model” [3]**

This research aimed to investigate the effects of fashion influencers on consumers decision-making processes and their content outreach on Instagram by embracing new behavioral consumption model dual AISAS model, which is upgraded version of AISAS Model. The research applied Both offline and online surveys were conducted involving 969 Pakistan Instagram users following digital influencers. findings demonstrate that every path in dual AISAS model is found significant and have profound effect.

- **A research by (Nouf Alhafi and Manzar Ahmed 2021). Titled: “INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE PURCHASE DECISIONS OF CONSUMERS IN SAUDI ARABIA” [5]**

This research aimed to examine the influence of social media celebrities on the buying decision of Saudi customers based on quantitative method. Questionnaire was utilized for data collection among a general population of 101 Saudi customers. The results showed that celebrities influence the customers purchase decision of product by endorsing the brands through the advertisements. The findings showed an attachment of the customers to the celebrities that they prefer. Hence it is concluded that the attractiveness of the celebrity, the use of the product by the celebrity, positive image of the celebrity and consumer seeing them as celebrities has significance influence of product purchase decision.

- **A research by (Alyahya M. 2021). Titled: “THE MARKETING INFLUENCERS ALTERING THE PURCHASE INTENTIONS OF SAUDI CONSUMERS: THE EFFECT OF SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE” [10]**

This research aimed to explores the social advocacy, trustworthiness and perceived effectiveness of marketing influencers to predict the purchase intention from sociocultural perspective. The data was collected through a convenience sampling technique among Saudi consumers and analyzed on Smart-PLS. The results depicted a significant relationship between social advocacy, trustworthiness, perceived effectiveness and purchase intention.

- **A research by (Sraddhaa Mishra and Dr. Rubaid Ashfaq 2023). Titled: “Influencer Impact: Examining the Effect of Influencers on Consumer Behavior and Purchase” [1]**

This research aimed to understand the role of influencers in shaping consumer behavior and purchasing decisions. The literature review provides a comprehensive account of the body of research on influencer marketing and its impacts on consumer behavior and purchasing decisions by applying to several elements of influencer marketing, including the value and

legitimacy of messages, the characteristics of influencers, and the accuracy of influencer content. This study employs both primary and secondary data sources to investigate the influencer impact on consumer behavior and purchase decisions. Specifically, a qualitative research approach with primary information gathered from surveys 358 respondents participated and resulted of evident that influencers hold significant power in shaping consumer behavior.

- **A research by (Margareta Nadanyiova¹ and Lucia Sujanska 2023). Titled: “THE IMPACT OF INFLUENCER MARKETING ON THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS OF GENERATION Z” [2]**

This research aimed to determine the impact of influencer marketing on the decision-making process of Generation Z. This also includes providing the theoretical background and analysis of influencer marketing from the viewpoint of Slovak and foreign authors.

General scientific methods were applied for the processing of the data as well as mathematical-statistical methods to evaluate the data collated from the results of the questionnaire survey and to statistical hypothesis testing. Based on the analysis and results of the questionnaire survey, it is thus clear that the implementation of influencer marketing in marketing communication of Slovak companies targeted at Generation Z brings many benefits, including building relationships with Generation Z, increasing their loyalty and improving the company image.

- **A research by (Tasnim ALHELALI 2023). Titled: “THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL MARKETING ON CONSUMER PURCHASING DECISION IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES” [13]**

This research aimed to show how digital marketing plays a vital role in affecting the consumer purchasing decision and the study investigated digital marketing strategies for marketers, including online advertising, mobile marketing, email marketing, and social media marketing. It examines how these strategies affect how consumers in the United Arab Emirates make purchasing decisions. The study applied to 392 consumers of

residents in the UAE using quantitative research method to support the hypotheses. This dissertation demonstrates that the most important factor influencing consumer purchasing decisions is social media, which influences consumer purchasing decisions in a significantly positive way. Additionally, online advertising has a significant impact on consumers purchasing decisions.

- **A research by (NAWAL NASSER R H ALMARRI 2024). Titled: “THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMERS PURCHASE DECISION: THE CASE OF QATAR” [9]**

This research aimed to examine the extent of influence of social media marketing on consumer purchase decisions in Qatar and the challenges that could prevent the full utilization of social media marketing in Qatar. This study applied to online users in Qatar based on a link shared on social media platforms using survey. As a result of the study, it shows that there is a significant impact exerted by social media in molding consumer buying behaviors in Qatar. Although the nation has a high rate of social media participation, it lags behind worldwide trends in terms of online sales, indicating a notable discrepancy. Additionally, it highlights the need of tailored marketing strategies that connect the online portrayal of a product or service with the actual number of sales. This involves resolving any differences that have been detected and making the most of the opportunities provided by social media to influence customer behavior.

1.3 Comments on the literature reviews

The current and previous researches indicate the significant impact of influencers marketing on the consumer's purchasing decision and how the influencers play a major role on customer's behavior and how can the different marketing strategies influence the customer's buying decisions.

1.3 Research problem

The impact of influencer marketing on customer behavior and purchasing decisions has been the subject of numerous researches. They found that the perceived value and reliability of the message had a significant impact on consumer trust and purchase readiness. They found that the authenticity and reliability of the influencers had a significant impact on consumer attitudes and inclinations to purchase the products (Mishra, S., & Ashfaq, R. (2023).

So, the main problem of the research is:

What is the impact of influencer marketing on consumer decisions in gulf cooperation council countries?

1.4 Research questions

A demonstration of the following questions is established in the theoretical and practical part of this study to find their answers:

- Is there a positive significant impact of influencers marketing on the consumer's purchasing decision in the gulf cooperation council countries?
- Is there a negative impact of influencers marketing on the consumer's purchasing decision in the gulf cooperation council countries?
- What is the relationship between the influencers marketing and the consumers buying decisions?
- Does influencers attitude influence the consumers purchasing decisions?
- Does credibility of the influencers affect the consumers buying decisions?

1.5 Significance of the study

1.5.1 Practical Significance

- Obtain the information that elaborate the impact of influencer marketing on consumer decisions in gulf cooperation council countries
- Investigate the impact of influencer marketing on consumer decisions in gulf cooperation council countries.
- Explain the correlation of influencer marketing on consumer decisions in gulf cooperation council countries.
- Having a research result that explain the impact of influencer marketing on consumer decisions in gulf cooperation council countries
- Having a research result that helps companies to build a strong influencers marketing strategy
- Influencers marketing become one of the important tools used by companies to affect the consumers decisions.

1.5.2 Theoretical Significance

- The importance of influencer marketing on consumer decisions
- The huge impact of influencers nowadays on consumers decisions in gulf cooperation council countries
- Providing the researchers with the necessary information about the phenomenon of the study
- Focusing on the impact of influencer marketing on consumer decisions specially on in gulf cooperation council countries

1.6 Research objectives

This research aims to:

- Focus on the importance of the influencers marketing to the consumers decisions

- Explain the role of influencers on affecting the consumers buying decisions
- Elaborate the influencers marketing tools that plays a major role on consumers buying decisions in gulf cooperation council countries

1.7 Research hypothesis

There is a main hypothesis that corresponding to the sub-research hypothesis:

Main research hypothesis: There is a significant effect where it is statistically studied between the influencers marketing and the consumer decisions in gulf cooperation council countries.

- Sub-hypotheses 1: There is a significant effect where it is statistically studied between the influencers attitude and the consumer decisions in gulf cooperation council countries.
- Sub-hypotheses 2: There is a significant effect where it is statistically studied between the accuracy of influencer content and the consumer decisions in gulf cooperation council countries.
- Sub-hypotheses 3: There is a significant effect where it is statistically studied between the influencers marketing and the consumer satisfaction in gulf cooperation council countries.
- Sub-hypotheses 4: There is a significant effect where it is statistically studied between the digital marketing and the consumer decisions in gulf cooperation council countries.

1.8 Methodology and research methods

The main objective of this study is to analyze the role of social media influencers in effecting the customers buying decisions gulf cooperation council countries. The used method approach will provide the best opportunities for answering the important research questions, the answers of which rely upon a variety of forms of data. The quantitative survey method - questionnaire survey – was chosen for the study. The questionnaire was conducted online for the chosen sample.

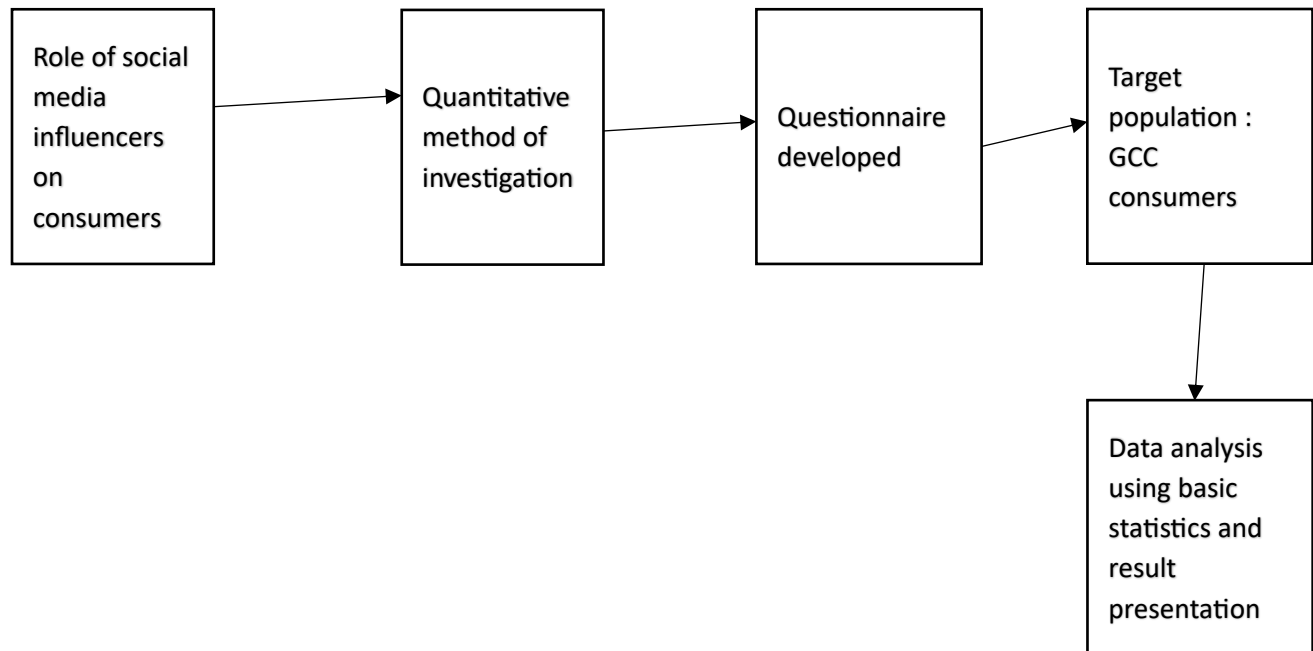
1.9 Research variables

Dependent variables on this research will be the consumers buying decisions and the independent variables will be the influencers attitude, accuracy of influencer content, influencer marketing, influencers credibility and reliability and digital marketing.

1.10 Study sample and data collection

The population is defined as all active users of social media (Total of 106), who are also aware of the social media influencers in gulf cooperation council countries. Questionnaire was developed with question regarding consumer's reaction, attitude and purchase intention when they see an advertisement that is done or performed by social media influencers. These forms are filled out and returned by the respondents.

Figure 1: Summarized workflow of this study



1.11 Scales and Measurement

The general question and demographic questions (gender, age, marital status, occupations and country of origin) will be measured by using nominal scale. The respondents will be asked to read and indicate their agreement or disagreement with each of the statement designed, using the 5-point scale.

The attitude ratings are as follows:

- Strongly Agree 1
- Agree 2
- Neutral 3
- Disagree 4
- Strongly Disagree 5

The data will be collected through an online survey administered within a large population of users of social network platforms in gulf cooperation council countries.

1.12 Research tools

The quantitative survey method - questionnaire survey will be used for this study to collect the data from consumers. The survey will focus on three measurements:

- Demographic measurements such as (gender, age, marital status, occupations and country of origin)
- The influencers standers (credibility, reliability, attitude and popularity)
- Consumer Purchase dimensions (region, offers, sales, satisfaction)

1.13 Research fields

- Geographical: Consumers from gulf cooperation council countries
- Time limit: The study will be conducted on 2024
- Objective: The study will focus on the effect on influencers marketing on consumers decisions
- Sample study: Users of social network platforms in gulf cooperation council countries

Chapter 2

Theoretical Frameworks of the literature

2.1 Introduction

The overall aim of this literature is to theorize the relationship between the influencers marketing and the consumers purchase decision. Multiple theories have been established recently that support our hypothesis. Additionally, it's provided an answer to our research questions which contains four components: influencer marketing, purchasing decisions, influencer attitude and credibility. The below section will unwrap these four terms and explore the theories more.

2.2 Influencer marketing

Influencer marketing is a form of social media marketing that involves endorsing and promoting products or services through individuals with a dedicated and engaged online following, known as influencers. These influencers have the ability to sway their audience's purchasing decisions due to their perceived authenticity, expertise, and credibility within a specific niche. This type of marketing leverages the influencers' reach and influence to effectively connect with a targeted audience and drive brand awareness, engagement, and ultimately, sales.

Ida Kristin & Camilla Svedberg (2017) has uncovered that influencer marketing can be partly rationalized by two existing theories; word-of-mouth (WOM) and opinion leadership:

Word-of-mouth (WOM): By diving into the influencer marketing theory they have discovered a relationship between influencer marketing; WOM and opinion leadership. WOM can easily be mistaken with influencer marketing, but when a consumer is propagating a message through WOM, influencer marketing is the process and WOM is often the medium.

Opinion leader: Research has shown that consumers trust others' opinions more than formal marketing sources of information as advertising. Opinion leaders are defined as "individuals who exert an unequal amount of influence on the decision of others. In this definition we find similarities to influencer marketing, and opinion leadership has widely been used to explain influencer marketing.

The Word-of-Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA), the official trade association dedicated to WOM and social media marketing, defines influencer marketing as “identifying key communities and opinion leaders who are likely to talk about products and have the ability to influence the opinions of others” and this definition is slightly more in line with today's marketing practice.

2.3 Purchasing decisions

Kotler and Armstrong (2010) suggest that the consumer's decision-making process consist of five stages; need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post purchase behavior. Influencer marketing can have a significant impact on purchasing decisions. When influencers promote a product or service, their followers often view them as trusted sources of information and recommendations. As a result, when an influencer endorses a product, their audience is more likely to consider purchasing it. The personal connection and relatability that many followers feel toward influencers can also lead to a stronger influence on their purchasing decisions. Additionally, the visual and engaging content created by influencers often helps to capture the attention of their audience and can sway them towards making a purchase. Overall, influencer marketing can play a crucial role in shaping and influencing consumer decisions.

2.4 Attitude

influencer attitudes also have an impact consumer purchasing decisions. Followers are often drawn to influencers based on their personal brand, lifestyle, and values. The way an influencer presents themselves, the causes they support, and their overall tone can influence how their audience perceives them and the products or services they promote. If an influencer is seen as authentic, trustworthy, and genuine, their recommendations are more likely to resonate with their audience and positively influence purchasing decisions. Conversely, if an influencer's attitudes or behaviors come across as inauthentic or insincere, it can lead to a negative impact on consumer purchasing decisions. Influencers who align with their followers' values and interests are more likely to sway consumer behavior in a positive way.

According to Hoyer et al., (2013) there are five dimensions that describes attitudes: The first is favorability, how much we like/dislike an attitude object. The

second is attitude accessibility, how easily an attitude can be remembered. The third is attitude confidence, how strongly we hold an attitude. The fourth is attitude persistence, the endurance of the attitude. The fifth is resistance, how hard it is to change an attitude. For marketers it is important to consider all of these dimensions as they together form strong affect towards the brand or product.

2.5 Credibility

Consumers are more likely to trust and act upon recommendations from influencers who are perceived as credible and trustworthy. Credibility can be established through various factors such as expertise in a particular niche, consistency in content and recommendations, transparency about sponsored content, and genuine engagement with their audience. Influencers who have built a strong rapport with their followers over time and have a track record of providing honest and reliable information are more likely to have a significant impact on purchasing decisions. Consumers are more inclined to believe and act upon the recommendations of credible influencers, leading to higher levels of engagement and conversion for brands partnering with such influencers. Ultimately, influencer credibility can directly influence the level of trust and confidence that consumers have in the products or services being promoted, making it a critical factor in the success of influencer marketing.

Chapter 3

Practical Framework of the literature

3.1 Introduction

The following sections present the results of the study, offering insights into the impact of influencer marketing on consumer behavior and purchasing decisions within the GCC countries. Through a comprehensive analysis of the data collected, this research aims to provide valuable insights that can inform strategic decision-making and drive effective marketing practices in the GCC market.

3.2 Statistical methods used

This research used the below statistical methods to measure the collected data:

- **Standard deviation and mean:** A statistic that measures the dispersion of dataset relative to its mean and calculated as the square root of the variance. Also known as the summary measure of the differences of each observation from the mean.
- **Frequency:** Number of times an event occurs
- **Percentage:** The proportion of a particular variable in relation to the whole. It is the percentage of observations for each data point or grouping of data points.

3.3 Research results

a) Demographics

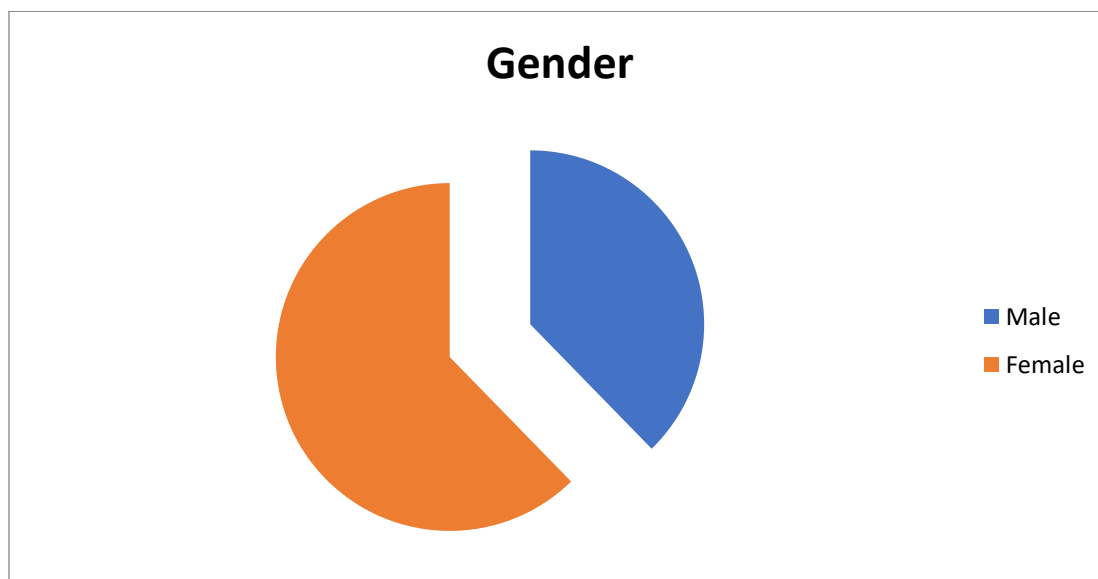
Table 1. Displays the demographics of the sample

	Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	40	37.7
	Female	66	62.3
	Total	106	100.0
Age	18 and under	13	12.3
	19-29	48	45.3
	30-39	45	42.5
	Total	106	100.0
Social Status	Single	40	37.7
	Married	64	60.4
	Divorce	2	1.9
	Total	106	100.0
Country of origin:	Saudi Arabia	34	32.1
	Bahrain	15	14.2
	United Arab Emirates	11	10.4
	Qatar	13	12.3
	Oman	9	8.5
	Kuwait	24	22.6

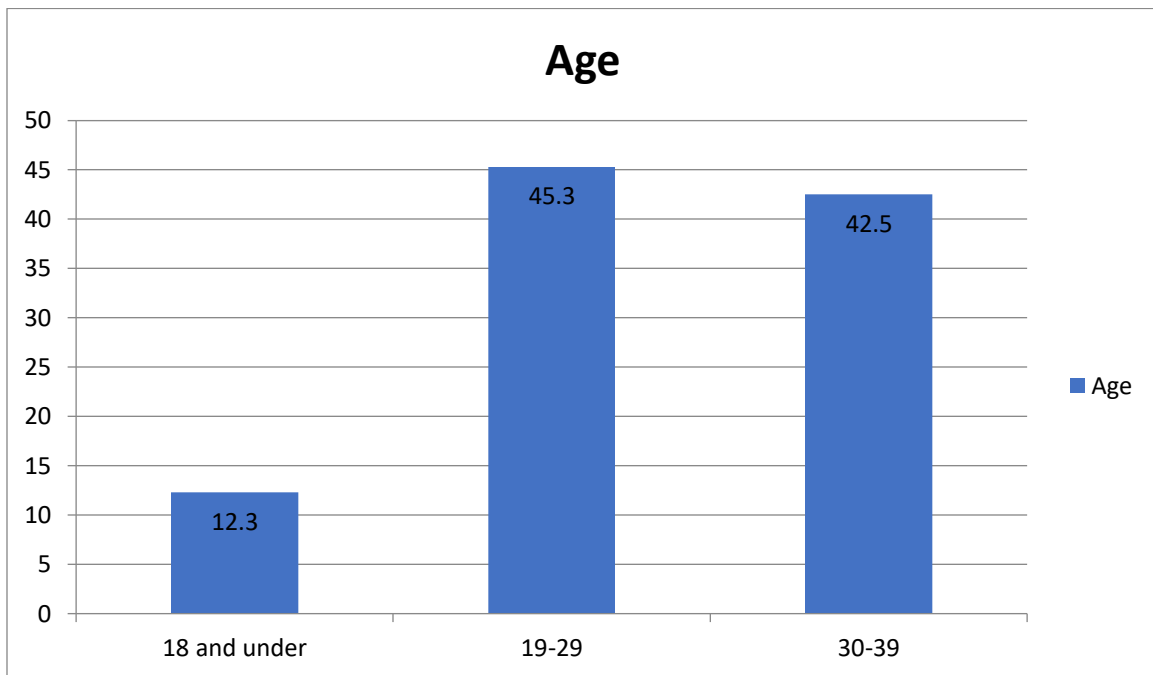
current occupation	Total	106	100.0
	Academic	15	14.2
	Unemployed	13	12.3
	Student	12	11.3
	Manager	15	14.2
	Administrator/officer	23	21.7
	Doctor	4	3.8
	Professional	20	18.9
	Secretary	3	2.8
	Designer	1	.9
	Total	106	100.0

Table 1 presents the demographics of the sample:

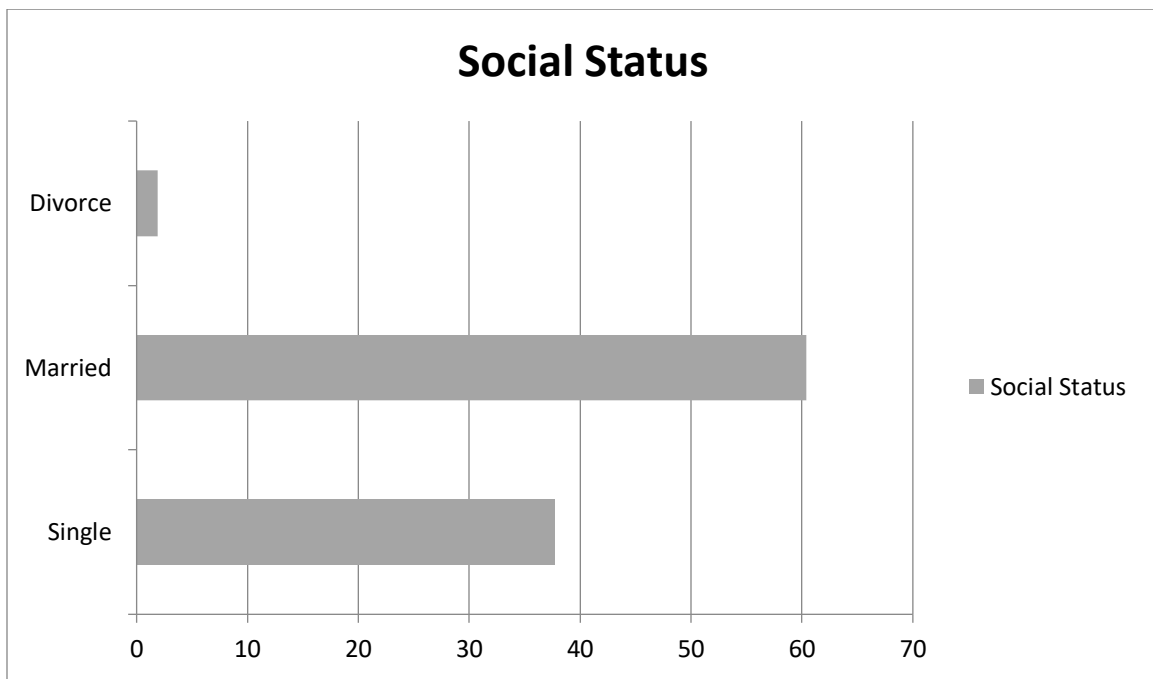
Gender: The table indicates a fairly balanced representation of gender, with 40 Males (37.7%) and 66 Females (62.3%) comprising the sample.



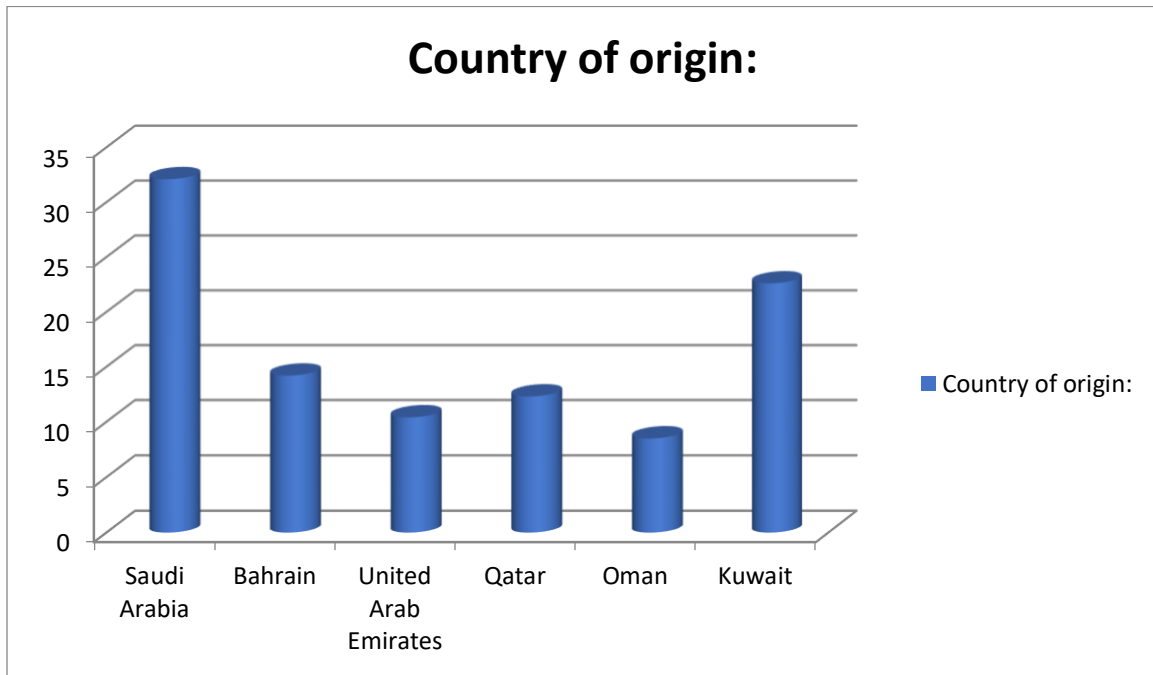
Age: Participants span various age groups, with the majority falling within the 19-29 age range (45.3%), followed closely by the 30-39 age group (42.5%). A smaller portion of participants are aged 18 and under (12.3%).



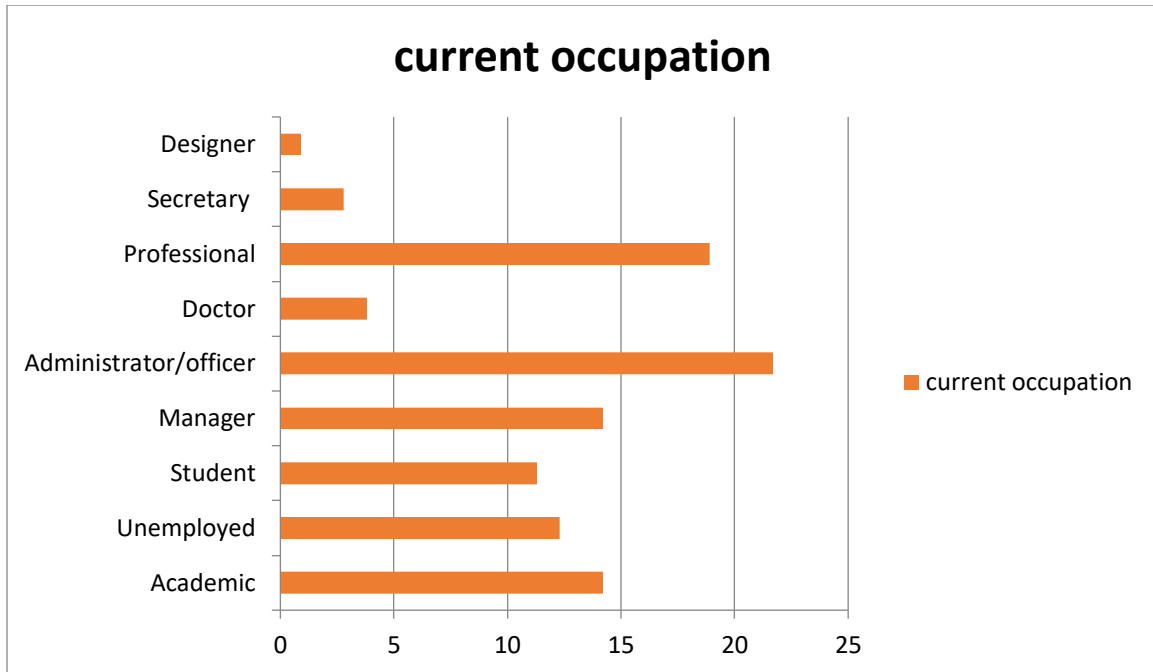
Social Status: The majority of participants are married (60.4%), while a significant portion are single (37.7%). A smaller percentage are divorced (1.9%).



Country of Origin: Participants hail from various countries within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), with Saudi Arabia being the most represented (32.1%), followed by Kuwait (22.6%), Bahrain (14.2%), Qatar (12.3%), United Arab Emirates (10.4%), and Oman (8.5%).



Current Occupation: The sample includes participants with diverse occupations, including academic roles (14.2%), managerial positions (14.2%), and professional roles (18.9%). Additionally, there are participants who are unemployed (12.3%), students (11.3%), administrators/officers (21.7%), doctors (3.8%), secretaries (2.8%), and designers (0.9%).



B) Hypotheses

- **Sub-hypotheses 1: There is a significant effect where it is statistically studied between the influencers attitude and the consumer decisions in gulf cooperation council countries.**

Table 2. Mean, Standard Deviation (SD), and arrangement of items in the influencers attitude and the consumer decisions

Items	Mean	SD	Arrangement of items	Meaning*
5-You rely on the social media influencers personal experience	3.54	1.289	3	agree
9-Social media influencer attitude affects your buying decisions	3.92	1.127	2	agree
10-Social media influencer reputation affects your buying decisions	4.46	.538	1	Strongly Agree
OVERALL	3.97	0.985		agree
*Categorization of the attitude or agreement level expressed by participants.				

The hypothesis posits that there is a significant relationship between influencers' attitudes and consumer decisions in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The arrangement of items in the table aligns with this hypothesis by examining specific aspects of influencers' attitudes and their impact on consumer behavior.

Item 10 delves into the impact of influencer reputation on consumer decisions. The significantly higher mean score of 4.46 indicates a strong agreement among participants that influencer reputation strongly affects their buying decisions. This suggests that consumers place a high value on the reputation of influencers when making purchasing choices.

Item 9 explores the influence of social media influencers' general attitudes on buying decisions. With a mean score of 3.92, participants tend to agree that influencer attitudes play a role in shaping their purchasing choices, indicating that consumers consider influencers' overall demeanor when making decisions.

Item 5 investigates the reliance on social media influencers' personal experiences, which is crucial in understanding how individuals perceive and trust influencer content. The mean score of 3.54 suggests a moderate level of agreement among participants, indicating that many consumers do rely on influencers' personal experiences to some extent.

- **Sub-hypotheses 2: There is a significant effect where it is statistically studied between the accuracy of influencer content and the consumer decisions in gulf cooperation council countries.**

Table 3. Mean, Standard Deviation (SD), and arrangement of items in the of influencer content and the consumer decisions

Item No.	Item	Mean	SD	Arrangement of items	Meaning*
1	You trust the recommendation of social media influencers	2.78	1.042	3	neutral
4	Social media influencers accurately represent the quality of the product	2.54	.987	5	Disagree
6	Social media influencers promoting products for financial gain only	2.76	1.000	4	neutral
3	Negative reviews from social media influencers affect your purchasing decisions	2.95	1.245	2	neutral
7	Social media influencers are honest and transparent about the products reviews	2.42	.883	6	Disagree
8	Number of followers for the social media influencer endorsed the accuracy of promoting the product	3.84	1.088	1	agree
OVERALL		2.88	1.041		neutral
*Categorization of the attitude or agreement level expressed by participants.					

Sub-hypothesis 2 proposes that there is a significant relationship between the accuracy of influencer content and consumer decisions in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The table provided presents data on mean scores, standard deviations, and the arrangement of items related to influencer content accuracy and its impact on consumer decisions.

The arrangement of items in the table covers various dimensions of influencer content accuracy and its influence on consumer behavior. Each item explores different aspects of trust, representation of product quality, promotional motives, influence of negative reviews, honesty, transparency, and the significance of influencer follower count.

Looking at the arrangement of items, there is a mix of agreement levels expressed by participants, ranging from "disagree" to "neutral" to "agree." This

suggests a diverse range of opinions regarding the accuracy of influencer content and its impact on consumer decisions.

For instance, item 1 indicates a neutral sentiment towards trusting social media influencers' recommendations, while item 4 shows disagreement regarding influencers accurately representing product quality. Item 7 also reflects disagreement regarding influencers' honesty and transparency about product reviews. On the other hand, item 8 suggests agreement that the number of followers for the influencer endorses the accuracy of promoting the product.

The overall mean score of 2.88 falls within the "neutral" range, indicating a lack of strong agreement or disagreement across all items analyzed. This suggests a mixed perception among participants regarding the accuracy of influencer content and its influence on consumer decisions in GCC countries.

- **Sub-hypotheses 3: There is a significant effect where it is statistically studied between the influencers marketing and the consumer satisfaction in gulf cooperation council countries.**

Table 4. Mean, Standard Deviation (SD), and arrangement of items the influencers marketing and the consumer satisfaction

Item No.	Item	Mean	SD	Arrangement of items	Meaning*
6	Sometimes you regretted making a purchase based on social media influencers recommendations	3.87	.947	1	agree
11	You purchased a product from an influencer review then it turned out to be disappointing despite the positive recommendation from the social media influencer	3.46	1.079	2	agree
OVERALL		3.67	1.013		agree

Sub-hypotheses 3 suggests a significant relationship between influencers' marketing and consumer satisfaction in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The provided table outlines the mean, standard deviation, arrangement of items, and their corresponding meanings, shedding light on this relationship.

The arrangement of items in the table appears to focus specifically on consumer experiences and satisfaction related to influencer marketing. Both items 6 and 11 delve into instances where consumers have experienced regret or disappointment after making purchases based on influencer recommendations. These items likely aim to gauge the prevalence of such occurrences and their impact on consumer satisfaction.

The mean scores for both items indicate a general agreement among participants, with scores above the neutral point. Item 6, with a mean score of 3.87, suggests that many consumers have experienced regret after purchasing products recommended by influencers. Similarly, item 11, with a mean score of 3.46, indicates that consumers have encountered disappointment despite positive influencer recommendations.

The overall mean score of 3.67 further supports the notion that there is a significant relationship between influencers' marketing and consumer satisfaction in GCC countries, as it reflects an overall agreement among participants regarding the influence of influencer marketing on their satisfaction levels.

- **Sub-hypotheses 4: There is a significant effect where it is statistically studied between the digital marketing and the consumer decisions in gulf cooperation council countries.**

Table 5. Mean, Standard Deviation (SD), and arrangement of items the digital marketing and the consumer decisions

Item No.	Item	Mean	SD	Arrangement of items	Meaning*
2	You research the product before purchasing it	4.07	.759	1	Agree
1	You bought a product based on a recommendation of social media influencers	2.96	1.242	4	neutral
2	Social media influencers reviews affect your purchasing decisions	3.23	.998	3	neutral
3	Negative reviews from social media influencers affect your purchasing decisions	2.95	1.245	5	neutral
12	You will buy a product based on your favorite social media influencer even if the price is unreasonable	2.11	.747	7	neutral
4	You use the discount/offers provided from social media influencers to buy the product	2.40	1.177	6	neutral
5	You buy the limited-Edition products offers from the social media influencers	4.46	.620	2	completely agree
	OVERALL	3.17	0.970		neutral

Sub-hypotheses 4 posits a significant relationship between digital marketing and consumer decisions in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The provided table presents the mean, standard deviation, arrangement of items, and their corresponding meanings, aiming to elucidate this relationship.

The arrangement of items in the table appears to cover various aspects of consumer behavior influenced by digital marketing strategies, particularly those employed by social media influencers.

Starting with item 1, which explores purchasing decisions based on influencer recommendations, and item 2, which assesses the influence of influencer reviews on purchasing decisions, both reflect neutral sentiments among participants. This suggests a lack of strong agreement or disagreement regarding the impact of influencer content on purchasing choices.

Item 3 examines the influence of negative influencer reviews on purchasing decisions, also reflecting a neutral sentiment among participants. Similarly, item 12, which assesses the willingness to purchase a product based on a favorite influencer's recommendation despite unreasonable pricing, also garners a neutral response.

Items 4 and 5 delve into specific digital marketing tactics, such as offering discounts/offers and limited-edition products, respectively. While item 4 receives a relatively low mean score, indicating a neutral sentiment towards utilizing discounts/offers from influencers, item 5 receives a high mean score, suggesting strong agreement with purchasing limited-edition products offered by influencers.

The overall mean score of 3.17, falling within the neutral range, indicates a lack of consensus among participants regarding the influence of digital marketing on consumer decisions in GCC countries.

C) Discussion

The finding of strong agreement among participants regarding the influence of influencer reputation on buying decisions highlights the pivotal role that influencers play in shaping consumer preferences and behaviors. Businesses and marketers can leverage this insight by strategically partnering with influencers who possess strong reputations and align with their target audience's values and preferences, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns and driving consumer engagement and loyalty.

These findings are consistent with Mussa's (2023) study, which highlights the influential role of social media influencers, particularly on platforms like TikTok. Mussa emphasizes how TikTok influencers can shape followers' attitudes toward brands through the engaging stories, videos, and content they share on their profiles. Similarly, Alexander's (2024) research corroborates these findings by emphasizing the substantial impact of social media influencers on public opinion and consumer behavior. Alexander underscores how influencers wield the power to sway public perception, influencing various aspects of individuals' lives, including political attitudes, lifestyle choices, and purchasing decisions. Together, these studies underscore the significant influence and importance of social media influencers in contemporary digital marketing landscapes.

The discovery of varied perspectives among participants underscores the intricate nature of consumer attitudes toward influencer marketing in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. It indicates the necessity for businesses and marketers in this region to acknowledge and address this diversity of opinions. By doing so, they can craft influencer marketing strategies that effectively connect with their target audience, fostering genuine engagement and ultimately driving conversions. This finding resonates with the research conducted by Chekima et al. (2020), which elucidates that the differences in consumers' intentions to purchase can be better understood through factors such as the personality of social media influencers, the quality of their content, and the level of trustworthiness they convey.

The substantial correlation observed between influencers' marketing and consumer satisfaction in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries highlights the criticality of integrating influencer marketing strategies into businesses' promotional endeavors. Harnessing the influence of influencers to augment consumer satisfaction enables businesses to fortify their brand image, foster heightened customer loyalty, and pave the way for sustained success within the GCC market. This finding resonates with the research conducted by Ali & Haque (2023), which underscores the pivotal role played by influencers in the decision-making journey. Influencers serve as key facilitators in introducing customers to novel products and services, thereby exerting a significant influence on consumer preferences and choices.

D) Recommendations

Based on our analysis of the impact of influencer marketing on consumer decisions in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, several recommendations can be made to businesses and marketers looking to leverage influencer marketing effectively: 1- Collaborate with influencers to create high-quality, engaging content that resonates with your target audience. Invest in creative storytelling and visually appealing imagery or videos to capture audience attention and convey your brand message effectively. 2- Encourage influencers to disclose sponsored content transparently and authentically. Prioritize honesty and integrity in influencer-brand partnerships to build trust with consumers and foster long-term relationships. 3- Implement robust tracking and analytics tools to monitor the performance of influencer marketing campaigns. Measure key metrics such as engagement rates, click-through rates, and conversion rates to assess the effectiveness of your campaigns and optimize future strategies accordingly.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the impact of influencer marketing on consumer decisions in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries is significant and multifaceted. Through our examination of various sub-hypotheses and research findings, several key insights have emerged.

Firstly, we have observed a strong agreement among participants regarding the influence of influencer marketing on consumer decisions, highlighting the pivotal role that influencers play in shaping purchasing behaviors within the GCC region. Consumers place a high value on influencers' attitudes, reputation, and content accuracy when making purchasing choices, underscoring the importance of cultivating trust and authenticity in influencer-brand partnerships.

Secondly, while influencer marketing is recognized as a powerful tool for driving consumer engagement and satisfaction, our analysis has revealed a mixed perception among participants regarding the accuracy of influencer content and its influence on consumer decisions. This suggests the need for businesses and marketers to navigate the nuances of consumer attitudes towards influencer-generated content and tailor their marketing strategies accordingly.

Furthermore, our findings indicate a significant relationship between influencer marketing and consumer satisfaction in GCC countries. By leveraging the power of influencers to enhance consumer satisfaction, businesses can strengthen their brand reputation, increase customer loyalty, and drive long-term success within the GCC market.

In light of these insights, it is clear that influencer marketing holds immense potential for businesses operating in the GCC countries. However, to capitalize on this potential, it is essential for businesses to prioritize authenticity, relevance, and trust in their influencer marketing efforts. By forging genuine connections with influencers and their audiences, businesses can effectively navigate the complex landscape of consumer decisions and drive meaningful engagement and conversions in the GCC market.

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