

**The Impact Of Influencer Marketing On Consumer Decisions in
Gulf Cooperation Council Countries**

أثر تسويق المؤثرين على قرارات الشراء للمستهلك في دول مجلس التعاون
الخليجي

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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).

2. Research problem

The impact of influencer marketing on customer behavior and purchasing decisions has been the subject of numerous research. 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?

3. Significance of the study

3.1 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 strategies
- Influencers marketing become one of the important tools used by companies to affect the consumers decisions

3.2 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

4. 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

5. 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?

6. Literature reviews

- **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 (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 (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 (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 (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 (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 (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 examines 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.

- **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 explore 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 (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 use 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 (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 (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 intension 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 (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.

6.1 Comments on the literature reviews

The current and previous researches indicates 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.

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.

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 will be conducted online.

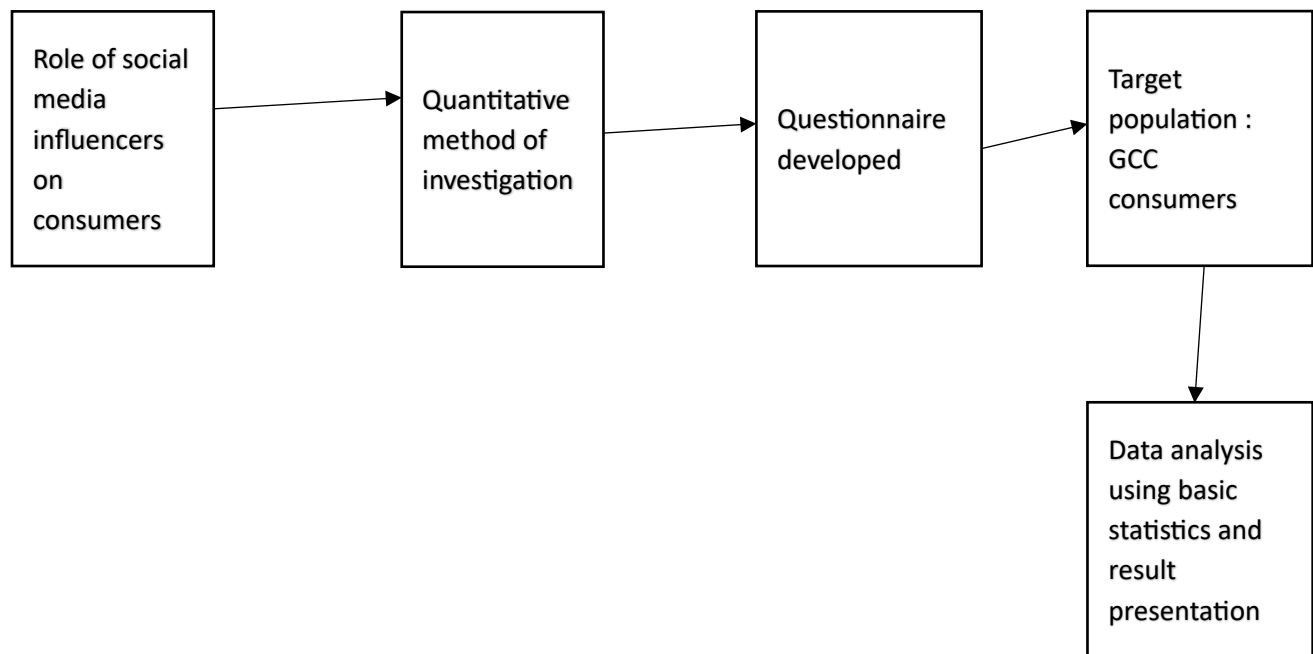
8.1 Research variables

Dependent variables on this research will be the consumers buying decisions and the independent variables will be the influencers marketing, region of the study, demographics factors, influencers credibility and reliability.

8.2 Study sample and data collection

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 the respondents.

Figure 1: Summarized workflow of this study



8.3 Scales and Measurement

The general question and demographic questions (gender, age, marital status, occupations and incomes) 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.

8.4 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 incomes)
- The influencers standers (credibility, reliability, attitude and popularity)
- Consumer Purchase dimensions (region, offers, sales, satisfaction and company image)

8.5 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

Research Study content

- First chapter: introduction of the research
- Second chapter: Theoretical framework
- Third chapter: Practical framework and field study
- Fourth chapter: Results
- References
- Appendices

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