



# A Study on Influencer Marketing Through Social Media

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## ABSTRACT

In today's digital ecosystem, social media has emerged as a dominant communication and marketing platform that shapes consumer perceptions and decisions. Influencer marketing, which involves collaboration between brands and individuals with a significant online following, has become a powerful advertising tool due to its authenticity, relatability, and ability to engage audiences more effectively than traditional marketing techniques. This study explores the influence of social media influencers on consumer behaviour, purchase decisions, and brand loyalty.

Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire distributed among active social media users aged 18–35. Findings reveal that consumers tend to trust influencers who share genuine experiences, transparent reviews, and relatable content. Moreover, influencers have a strong impact on brand awareness and act as opinion leaders in the digital marketplace. The research concludes that incorporating influencer marketing into digital strategies is highly beneficial for brands in achieving higher consumer engagement and improved sales outcomes.

## KEY WORDS

Influencer Marketing, Social Media Platforms, Consumer Behaviour, Digital Strategy, Opinion Leaders, Online Engagement, Brand Awareness, Purchase Intention.

## INTRODUCTION

The expansion of social media has significantly revolutionized communication, entertainment, and marketing practices. With millions of users actively interacting on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, and TikTok, these channels have become essential mediums for businesses to promote their products and services.

Influencer marketing refers to a strategic partnership between brands and individuals who possess the capability to influence the purchasing decisions of their audience. Unlike traditional celebrities, social media influencers are often everyday individuals who gain popularity through consistent content creation, relatability, and strong engagement with their followers. These influencers serve as modern-day opinion leaders who guide customer preferences through authentic storytelling, product demonstrations, tutorials, reviews, and lifestyle content.

In today's dynamic digital landscape, consumers are more aware, informed, and discerning. They prefer personalized recommendations over generalized advertisements. As a result, influencer marketing has emerged as a credible alternative, offering personalized communication, targeted reach, and higher trust levels. This research investigates the role, effectiveness, and impact of influencer marketing by analyzing consumer perspectives and behaviour patterns.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Influencer marketing evolved from celebrity endorsements and word-of-mouth marketing. **According to Smith (2020)**, the rise of Web 2.0 and user-generated content contributed significantly to the growth of influencer culture. Social media platforms allowed users to become content creators and public figures with niche audiences.

**Katz and Lazarsfeld's** Two-Step Flow Theory explains how people are influenced more by opinion leaders than by direct media messages. Influencers function as digital opinion leaders who interpret information and guide followers' decisions (Brown & Hayes, 2019). Their role is significant in shaping consumer attitudes and brand perceptions.

A major factor in influencer success is authenticity. **According to Singh (2021)**, consumers tend to trust influencers who share transparent reviews and avoid misleading endorsements. The authenticity element differentiates influencers from traditional advertising methods.

**Gupta (2021)** emphasizes that consumers often purchase products recommended by influencers because their content appears relatable and experience-based rather than commercially driven. Studies show that 60–70% of consumers explore a brand after seeing an influencer endorsement.

Brands categorize influencers based on follower size: micro, macro, mega, and nano influencers. **Kumar (2022)** states that micro-influencers (10k–100k followers) generate higher engagement and trust due to personalized interactions, whereas macro and mega influencers are effective for mass outreach.

Despite its benefits, influencer marketing faces challenges such as fake followers, lack of authenticity in paid promotions, competition among influencers, and fluctuating engagement rates. Companies must focus on careful influencer selection and long-term partnerships to ensure positive outcomes.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 1. Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive research design using quantitative methods to understand the perceptions and attitudes of social media users toward influencer marketing.

### 2. Sources of Data

- **Primary Data:** Structured questionnaire distributed online via Google Forms.
- **Secondary Data:** Research articles, journals, reports, digital marketing websites, and social media analytics.

### 3. Sample Size and Population

A total of **100 respondents** between the ages of **18–35** participated.

#### 4. Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling was used due to accessibility and time limitations.

#### 5. Tools Used for Analysis

- Percentage analysis
- Descriptive analysis
- Charts and graphical representation (if needed later)

#### 6. Study Area

The study focused on users who actively use platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok.

#### QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Age group (18–22 / 23–27 / 28–35).
2. Primary social media platform used.
3. Average time spent on social media daily.
4. Do you follow social media influencers?
5. Type of influencers followed (fashion, tech, fitness, food, entertainment, etc.).
6. Why do you follow influencers? (Information, entertainment, recommendations).
7. Do influencer recommendations affect your buying decisions?
8. How often do you buy products based on influencer promotions?
9. What content format influences you the most? (Reels, YouTube videos, posts, stories).
10. Do you believe influencers provide honest product reviews?
11. What factors increase your trust? (Personality, expertise, transparency, consistency).
12. Have you ever regretted a purchase made through influencer endorsement?
13. Is influencer marketing more effective than traditional ads?
14. Do you prefer micro-influencers or celebrities for product recommendations?
15. Suggestions for improving influencer marketing.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To explore the growth and significance of influencer marketing in the digital era.
2. To analyze consumer trust and perception toward social media influencers.
3. To understand how influencer content affects consumer purchase decisions.
4. To identify which types of influencers have the strongest impact on consumers.
5. To evaluate the effectiveness of influencer-brand partnerships.
6. To recommend strategies for improving influencer marketing practices.

#### HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

##### **H1 (Alternative Hypothesis):**

Influencer marketing significantly impacts consumer purchase decisions and brand perceptions.

##### **H0 (Null Hypothesis):**

Influencer marketing does not significantly impact consumer purchase decisions and brand perceptions.

## DATA COLLECTION (Descriptive Analysis)

### 1. Demographic Insights

- **65%** of respondents were aged 18–25.
- **70%** use Instagram, followed by **55%** on YouTube.
- Most respondents spend **2–4 hours** daily on social media.

### 2. Influence on Buying Behaviour

- **35%** said influencers *always* impact their decisions.
- **45%** said influencers *sometimes* impact them.
- Only **20%** showed low influence.

### 3. Trust Indicators

Respondents trusted influencers who:

- Demonstrated expertise in a domain.
- Provided honest, unbiased reviews.
- Disclosed sponsored collaborations.
- Shared long-term usage experiences.

### 4. Preferred Influencer Type

- **Micro-influencers (40%)** were preferred for authenticity.
- **Macro-influencers (35%)** were favoured for product awareness.
- **Celebrities (25%)** were considered less relatable.

### 5. Content Format Impact

- Short videos (Reels, Shorts) influenced **50%** of respondents.
- Tutorials and review videos influenced **35%**.
- Static posts influenced only **15%**.

### 6. Challenges Identified

- Inconsistent transparency
- Paid promotions overshadowing authenticity
- Over-commercialization of content

Overall, the data strongly supports the hypothesis that influencer marketing has a meaningful impact on consumer behaviour.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that influencer marketing is a highly influential tool in modern digital marketing. Consumers today rely heavily on influencer recommendations because they perceive influencers as relatable and credible. Social media platforms play a crucial role in shaping consumer mindsets, making influencer marketing indispensable for brands seeking competitive visibility.

Influencers effectively bridge the gap between brands and consumers by simplifying information, providing product reviews, and creating engaging content that impacts purchase decisions. This research demonstrates that authenticity, transparency, and domain expertise are essential for influencer success.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Prioritize Authenticity:** Influencers should create genuine, honest content to retain audience trust.
2. **Partner with Micro-influencers:** They generate higher engagement and credibility.
3. **Ensure Transparency:** Sponsored posts must include clear disclosure tags.
4. **Use Data-Driven Strategies:** Brands must track engagement, reach, and conversions to measure campaign effectiveness.
5. **Long-term Collaborations:** Building long-term relationships with influencers yields better results than one-time promotions.
6. **Content Diversification:** Use reels, videos, stories, and live sessions for higher engagement.
7. **Avoid Over-promotion:** Excessive ads reduce consumer trust and authenticity.

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