

The effect of Influencer Marketing on the Buying Behaviour of Consumers

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Abstract

This study looks at how influencers on social media effect consumers' purchase decisions and how influencer marketing affects consumer behaviour in the marketplace. Influencer marketing has been a powerful force in the advertising industry in recent years, as companies use influencers' credibility and reach to market goods and services. In order to better understand the relationship between influencer recommendations and customer behaviour, this article will examine a number of important variables, including social proof, trust, authenticity, and brand alignment.

In order to collect insights from a varied sample of customers, the research technique employs a mixed-method approach that combines quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews. While qualitative interviews offer deeper insights into the individual experiences and motives of customers influenced by social media celebrities, quantitative data is utilized to find trends and correlations between influencer activity and consumer purchase habits.

The findings show that consumer purchasing behaviour is significantly influenced by influencer marketing, and that developing strong relationships with audiences requires a combination of authenticity and trust. Customers are more inclined to interact with goods or services that influencers that they respect and believe to be sincere recommend. Additionally, the survey shows that younger populations, like Millennials and Generation Z, are particularly well-served by influencer marketing in terms of influencing their purchasing behaviour. The study does, however, also point out some possible dangers, such as the possibility of excessive commercialization and consumer scepticism of excessively promoted information. According to the research, influencers should be carefully chosen by brands to ensure that their values match those of their products. They should also make sure that promotional content and real storytelling are balanced.

Keywords: Influencer marketing; millennials; online purchase intentions, Buying behaviour, social media influencers.

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INTRODUCTION

The way brands interact with customers has completely changed as a result of social media and digital platforms' explosive growth. Influencer marketing, a tactic used by people with sizable internet followings to market goods and services to their audience, is at the core of this shift. This strategy makes use of the close relationships influencers have with their followers to increase brand recognition and influence consumer behaviour.

Because they successfully combine commercial endorsements with personal narrative to connect with their audience, influencers are frequently seen as reliable information sources. Consumers find a more relatable and genuine touchpoint with influencer marketing than with traditional advertising, which sometimes comes across as invasive and impersonal. Because of this particular dynamic, consumers' purchasing decisions are influenced not only by the qualities of the product but also by the influencer's perceived likeability and credibility.

Influencer marketing is becoming more and more popular, and companies in a wide range of sectors are using it to connect with their target audience. Industry reports indicate that influencer marketing spending has been steadily increasing, indicating that this strategy is successful in increasing customer engagement and sales. But these developments also raise a number of issues and difficulties. What impact do these virtual personalities have on real-world purchasing decisions? Why are influencers so successful at boosting sales? And what effect do elements like transparency, sincerity, and credibility have on customer trust?

Using a wide range of studies and theoretical frameworks, this overview of the literature seeks to investigate these concerns. It looks at the main elements that make influencer marketing successful, how it affects consumer purchasing decisions, and

any potential drawbacks or difficulties that may arise. This review, which identifies opportunities for future research, synthesizes existing data to provide a thorough picture of the state of influencer marketing today and its implications on consumer behaviour.

Social media has significantly and permanently altered the advertising landscape. Social media usage is expected to expand quickly by 2020. In 2020, there were 3.6 billion social media users globally. India makes a substantial contribution to them. By January 2021, there will be about 400 million social media users in India, growing by 25–30 million users annually. Although these numbers might be interpreted in several ways, one thing is certain: social media marketing in India has a lot of potential. Today's kids are accustomed to using technology, have shorter attention spans, and dislike being subjected to constant commercials. Businesses seek a scenario where both they and the customer benefit. The majority of organizations today focus their strategies on the needs of their customers, and the majority of advertising has shifted from overt to covert. Influencers are a variety of outside parties with the power to sway consumers' opinions without ever accepting ultimate decision-making responsibility. Their popularity, knowledge, and skill are only a few of the factors that contributed to their success. They have a unique social media following and are consistently regarded as authorities in their field.

They are sponsored, but they are also organic. Influencers have greater credibility with the public than standard commercial advertisements. Influencers produce their own content and are constantly available to advise followers on how to use products. The goal of the study is to examine how influencers affect gen z consumers' purchasing decisions in an urban environment like Delhi. Its goal is to analyze the conversion rate that can be achieved by using this marketing strategy and assess the strength of the relationship that exists between influencers and the broader public.

Objectives

- Examine the Influence of Social Media Influencers on Consumer Purchasing Decisions.
- Assess the Role of Trust and Authenticity in Influencer Marketing.
- To study the differential factor between the buying behaviour of both the generations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "influencer marketing" gained popularity starting in 2015. Prior to 2015, marketing through opinion leaders or reference marketing were the primary phrases used to describe influencer marketing. Many papers on the rising popularity of word-of-mouth marketing were published in the early 2000s. The 2003 paper "The one number you need to grow" by Fredrick Reichheld, which was published in the Harvard Business Review, is among the first to discuss the significance of influencers. It made a significant contribution to our understanding of the impact of influencers and elaborated on the significance of developing a brand image among consumers through the appropriate influencers. Later, in the early 2000s, a number of publications on marketing using well-known individuals were released.

As Influencer marketing evolved over time there were several papers published on the new development in influencer marketing (NOLAN, H. 2018) paper titled- "Brands Are Creating Virtual Influencers, Which Could Make the Kardashians a thing of the Past" is a very unique contribution that threw some light on the possible digitalization of influencers in the future. (Zdenka KÁDEKOVÁ – Mária HOLIENČINOVÁ 2018) & (Rahmah, Sarah & Ren, Dan. 2019) in their respective paper focus on investigating the appeal of influencers among specific groups (Millennials, Gen x) etc and the differential impact of influencer marketing on their buying behaviour this particular study is very essential in today's time as marketers what to cater to different needs of different segments.

Nonetheless, not much research has been done on

this subject, particularly in developing countries like India where there is a larger generational gap. The principles of consumer buying are included in the research. Social media influencers' actions and impact. I'll attempt to concentrate on and analyse both in my literature review. customer purchases the study of consumer behaviour with relation to what they buy, how they buy, when they buy, and where they buy—that is, the quantitative and qualitative considerations that go into a purchase—is known as behaviour.

This research is crucial for comprehending the target market and promoting the good or service to them. It is the cornerstone of every marketing plan. customer purchases The process of behaviour includes phases such as identifying needs, gathering information, assessing options, making a decision, preparing ahead before a purchase, making the buy, and acting after the purchase. At each point in the above-described process, variables including psychological, social, cultural, and personal ones have the potential to have an impact.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**1. Socialmedia Marketing**

Social media marketing has revolutionized the way businesses connect with their audience, build brand awareness, and drive sales. In today's digital age, social media platforms serve as powerful tools for businesses to reach their target demographics, engage with customers, and foster meaningful relationships. In this comprehensive guide, we'll delve into the intricacies of social media marketing, exploring its importance, strategies, best practices, and future trends.

2. Influencer marketing

Influencer marketing has become a prominent strategy in the digital age, leveraging individuals with significant online followings to promote products, services, or brands. It involves

collaborating with influencers—individuals who have built credibility, authority, and a large following in specific niches or industries—to reach and engage target audiences. The principles of influence underpin influencer marketing, guiding how influencers can effectively persuade and sway the opinions and behaviours of their followers.

Influencer marketing is a form of social media marketing that focuses on leveraging influencers to endorse and promote products or services to their audience. The primary goal of influencer marketing is to tap into the trust, credibility, and influence that influencers have built with their followers, ultimately driving brand awareness, engagement, and conversions.

Businesses collaborate with influencers across various platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, blogs, and podcasts to reach specific demographics and target markets. Influencers create content featuring the brand or product, sharing authentic experiences, reviews, or recommendations with their audience. This approach allows brands to leverage the influencer's reach and engagement to amplify their marketing message effectively.

3. Consumer purchase behaviour

Consumer purchase behaviour refers to the process individuals go through when deciding to buy a product or service. It involves various stages and factors that influence their decision-making.

Several factors can influence consumer purchase behaviour:

Psychological Factors: These include motivation, perception, attitudes, beliefs, and learning. For example, a consumer's perception of a product's quality can significantly impact their decision to purchase it.

Social Factors: Social influences such as family, friends, peers, and culture can play a significant role. For instance, individuals may be influenced by the preferences and recommendations of their social

circle.

Personal Factors: Personal characteristics such as age, gender, lifestyle, occupation, and income level can affect purchase behaviour. For example, a person's income level may determine their willingness to spend on certain products or brands.

Situational Factors: The circumstances surrounding the purchase, such as the time available, the urgency of the need, and the physical environment, can also influence consumer behaviour. For example, a consumer may be more likely to purchase a cold beverage on a hot day.

METHODOLOGY

The research is descriptive research as it analyses the existing facts. In this research, consumer Behaviour is a dependent variable and impact of social media influencers is the independent variable. Influences is measured in forms of intent to buy, buying decisions, frequency of buying, trust towards influencers and. The research conducted is quantitative and descriptive. Both primary and secondary data has been used. Secondary data has been collected from websites and other research papers. Primary data has been collected through a structured questionnaire; the sampling is done from aged 14-35 from Delhi city. Sample size of the data is 50.

For the study we collected Primary Data the study adopted a quantitative analysis method in which data were gathered from the respondents who were lying in the age group of millennials, Generation X, Generation Z, Alpha Generation in Delhi. The study primarily focused on collecting response from Urban population who are educated have easy accessibility to internet and active on social media as well as cities where there was sufficient population in both the respective generations required in the survey. Considering both these factors the city of Delhi was selected for study. For the survey, Respondents were ask to forwards the online survey to their relatives and friends who belonged to the respective age groups. Online questionnaires, in Google form, was

sent through email and other social media to first known respondents and requested them to distinguish further respondents, this method was chosen to ensure that equal number of responses were collected from both the generations.

Out of 50 respondents surveyed, 68.0 percent respondents were females, and 32.0 percent were

males. Almost equal number for responses were collected from both the genders to ensure there is no large difference between the gender which makes this study free of the bias gender opinion. The data was collected and coded in excel and then it was imported & analysed in IMB SPSS statistics 22 software.

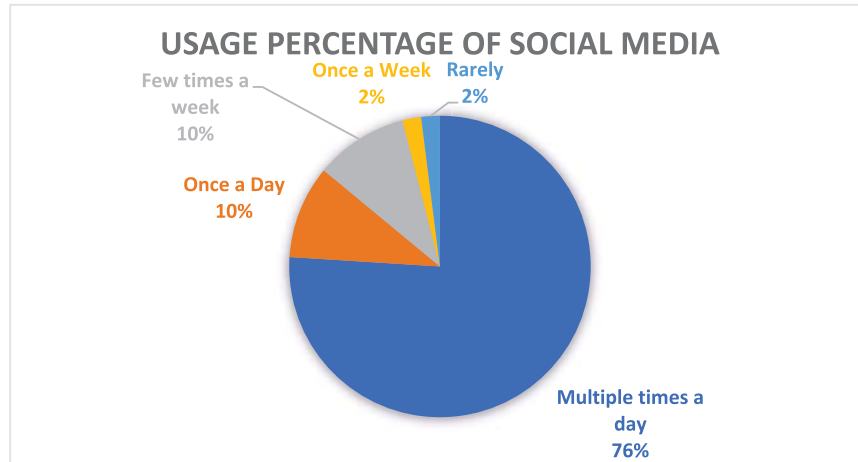
Demography of the Research

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	16	32.0%
Female	34	34.0%
Total	50	100%
Age Group		
Up to 60 years	39	78.0%
30 and above	11	22.0%
Total	50	100%

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: (Usage frequency of social media)

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Multiple times a day	38	76%
Once a Day	5	10%
Few times a week	5	10%
Once a Week	1	2%
Rarely	1	2%
Total	50	100%

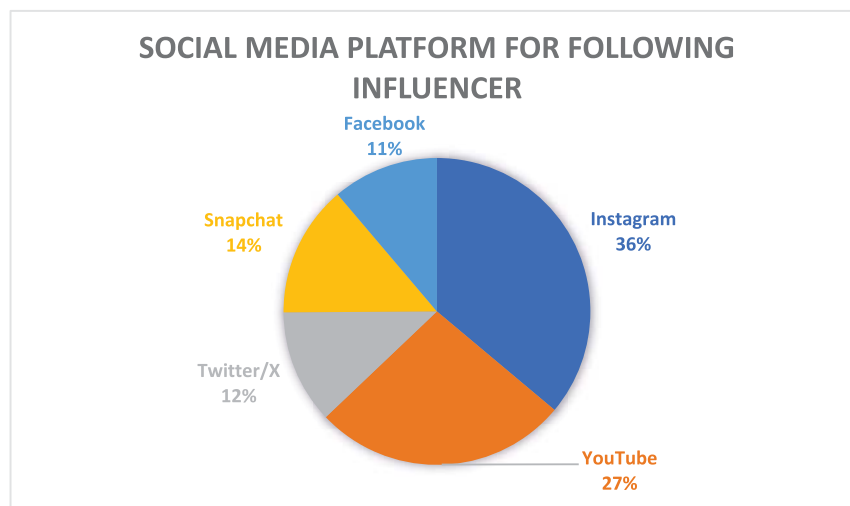


Interpretation:

From the above chart we found out that 76% of the population from the sample size of 50, uses social media platform multiple times a day, 10% once a day, 10% few times a week, 2% once a week and 2% rarely.

Table 2 : (Social media platform for following influencer)

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Instagram	39	36.1%
YouTube	29	26.8%
Twitter/X	13	12.0%
Snapchat	15	13.9%
Facebook	12	11.2%
Total	108	100%

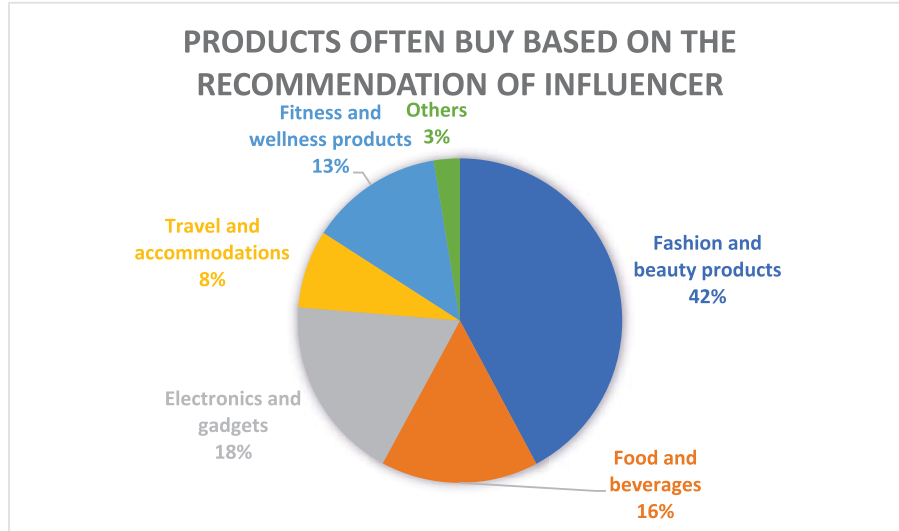


Interpretation:

Above chart shows that which platforms does consumers use to follow influencers. Through this we found that 36% of the population from the sample size of 50, follow influencers on Instagram, 27% on YouTube, 14% on Snapchat, 12% on Twitter/X, and 11% on Facebook. Frequency's total is 108 because the survey question was in the format of multiple choice.

Table 3 : (Products often buy based on the recommendation of influencer)

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Fashion and beauty products	32	42.2%
Food and beverages	12	15.7%
Electronics and gadgets	14	18.4%
Travel and accommodations	6	7.8%
Fitness and wellness products	10	13.3%
Others	2	2.6%
Total	76	100%

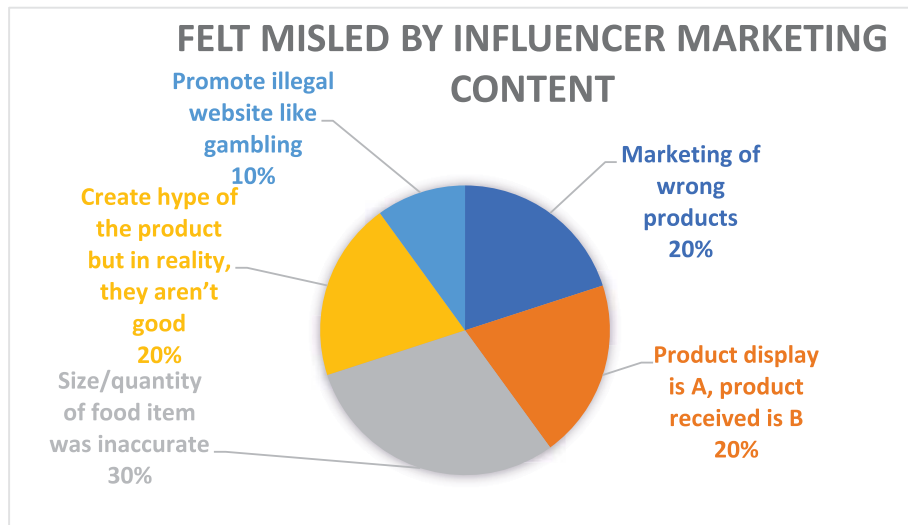


Interpretation:

Above chart shows products often buy by the consumers based on the recommendation of the influencers. 42% of the population from the sample size of 50, purchase fashion & beauty products, 16% purchases food & beverages, 18% purchases electronics and gadgets items, 8% travel and accommodations, 13% fitness & wellness products and 3% other products. Also, the frequency's total is showing 76 because the survey question was in the form of multiple choice.

Table 4 : (Felt misled by influencer marketing content)

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Marketing of wrong products	10	20%
Product display is A, product received is B	10	20%
Size/quantity of food item was inaccurate	15	30%
Create hype of the product but in reality, they aren't good	10	20%
Promote illegal website like gambling	5	10%
Total	50	100%

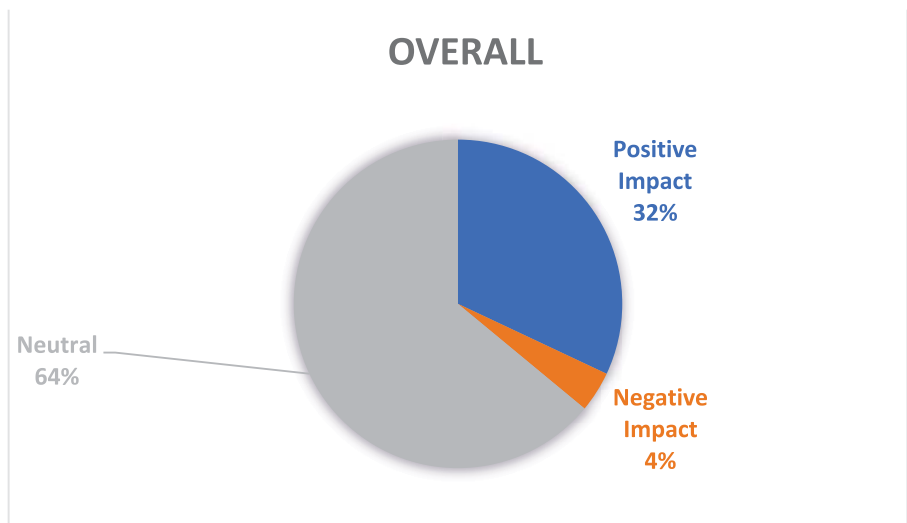


Interpretation:

Table 4. above shows how consumer's felt misled by influencer while buying the products recommended by the influencers.

Table 5. (Overall influencer marketing has a negative or a positive impact on consumer's buying behavior)

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Positive Impact	16	32.0%
Negative Impact	2	4.0%
Neutral	32	64.0%
Total	50	100



Interpretation:

Overall, we found out that influencer marketing was 32% positive for people's buying behavior, 4% was negative and 64% was neutral.

CONCLUSION

The conducted study aimed to analyse the impact of social media influencers on consumer behaviour, specifically focusing on the intent to buy, buying decisions, frequency of buying, and trust towards influencers. The research, descriptive and quantitative in nature, utilized both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to a sample of 50 respondents aged 14-35 from Delhi city. The survey was designed to capture responses from millennials, Generation X, Generation Z, and Alpha Generation within the urban, educated population with active social media engagement.

Key findings from the study include:

- 1. Demographic Distribution:** The sample comprised 68.0 percent females and 32.0 percent males, ensuring a balanced gender representation to avoid gender bias in the results.
- 2. Influencer Impact:** The study measured various dimensions of influencers' impact, including

intent to buy, buying decisions, frequency of buying, and trust towards influencers. These metrics provided a comprehensive understanding of how social media influencers affect consumer behaviour among different age groups in the urban population of Delhi.

- 3. Data Analysis:** The collected data was coded in Excel and analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics 22 software. This analysis provided insights into the correlation between social media influencers and consumer behaviour.

The conclusion drawn from this study is that social media influencers significantly impact consumer behaviour in the specified age group in Delhi. The urban, educated population with easy internet access shows a clear pattern of influence by social media personalities, affecting their purchasing decisions and trust in products promoted by influencers. The findings underscore the importance of social media influencers in shaping consumer behaviour, highlighting the need for businesses to strategically engage with influencers to reach and influence their target audience effectively.

The study's methodology ensured a balanced representation and robust data collection, thereby providing credible and valuable insights into the influence of social media on consumer behaviour.

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Appendix**The Effect of Influencer Marketing on the Buying Behaviour of Consumers**

I am doing a research on the effect of influences on the buying behavior of consumers. you are kindly requested to spare some time to fill this questionnaire.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information about the influence of social media influencers on the purchasing decisions of consumers like yourself. Your responses will contribute to understanding the impact of influencer

marketing on consumer behavior. This survey is anonymous, and your responses will be kept confidential.

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* Indicates required question

Email*

Your email address

1. Age(in years):*

Your answer

2. Gender*

Male

Female

3. Profession*

Student

Employee

Business

Other:

4. Family Income per annum*

Under 5 lakh

5 lakh-10 lakh

Over 10 lakh

5. How often do you use social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat)?*

Multiple times a day

Once a day

Few times a week

Once a week

Rarely

6. Do you follow any social media influencers?*

Yes

No

7. If No, then what's the reason?

Your answer

8. If yes, which platforms do you follow influencers on?*

Instagram

YouTube

Twitter

Snapchat

Facebook

Other

9. Have you ever purchased a product or service based on a recommendation from a social media

- influencer?*
- Yes
 - No
10. If Yes, How often do you make purchasing decisions based on influencer recommendations?*
- Always
 - Often
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely
 - Never
11. What products you often buy based on the recommendation of influencer (trust, celebs, fan following, trendy, etc.)*
- Fashion and beauty products
 - Food and beverages
 - Electronics and gadgets
 - Travel and accommodations
 - Fitness and wellness products
 - Other:
12. How likely are you to trust a product recommendation from an influencer you follow?*
- Very likely
 - Likely
 - Neutral
 - Unlikely
 - Very unlikely
13. What factors make influencer marketing effective in your opinion?***
- Authenticity of the influencer
 - Quality of the content
 - Relevance to my interests
 - Trustworthiness of the influencer
 - Frequency of posts
 - Offers or discounts promoted
14. Have you ever felt misled by influencer marketing content?*
- Yes
 - No
15. If yes, please explain how you felt misled.
Your answer
16. Do you think influencer marketing has a significant impact on your overall spending habits?*
- Yes, it greatly influences my spending habits
 - Yes, it somewhat influences my spending habits
 - No, it has little to no impact on my spending habits
 - I'm not sure
17. Overall, do you believe influencer marketing has a positive or negative impact on young consumers' buying behavior?*
- Positive Impact
 - Negative Impact
 - Neutral