

## Impact of Social Media Influencers on Consumer Buying Behavior: An Empirical Study

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### Abstract

Digitalization has significantly enhanced the influence of social media in shaping consumer behaviour. Social media influencers have emerged as an effective marketing mechanism that transforms how consumers perceive brands and make purchasing decisions. Influencer marketing acts as a catalyst in modern industries by connecting theoretical marketing concepts with practical business strategies. The present study aims to examine the impact of social media influencers on consumer buying behaviour, particularly focusing on factors such as trust, credibility, and purchase decision-making. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 63 respondents who actively use social media platforms, employing a convenience sampling technique. Percentage analysis and mean score ranking were applied for data interpretation. The findings indicate that influencers significantly enhance brand awareness, shape consumer preferences, and influence purchase intentions. Credibility and authenticity of influencers were identified as crucial determinants of consumer trust. The study suggests that marketers should collaborate with credible influencers and establish long-term partnerships to achieve sustainable marketing outcomes.

**Keywords:** *Consumer Buying Behaviour, Social Media Influencers, Digital Marketing, Brand Preference, Academic Synergy*

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### 1. Introduction

The rapid growth of social media platforms has significantly transformed marketing practices and consumer communication across industries. Traditional advertising approaches are gradually being replaced by digital marketing strategies that rely on interactive communication, personalization, and real-time engagement with consumers. Among these strategies, influencer marketing has gained remarkable importance as brands increasingly collaborate with social media personalities to promote products and services to targeted audiences (De Veirman et al., 2017). Social media influencers, through their perceived expertise, credibility, and extensive follower networks, are capable of shaping consumer attitudes and influencing purchase intentions. Their recommendations often function as electronic word-of-mouth communication, which is considered more trustworthy than conventional promotional messages. Consumer buying behaviour remains a central concept in marketing research because it enables businesses to understand how consumers identify needs, evaluate alternatives, and make purchasing decisions. Academic studies in consumer behaviour provide theoretical frameworks that assist industries in developing effective marketing strategies and improving customer engagement. Influencer marketing reflects the practical application of concepts such as persuasion, trust, and social

proof in digital environments (Lou & Yuan, 2019). This study examines the impact of social media influencers on consumer buying behaviour and highlights how academic insights can assist industries in optimizing influencer marketing strategies. It is possible to integrate the social media for automation, simplification, maximum reach with minimum expenses. The advances tools such as artificial intelligence can offer the competitive advantages for business growth (Gaikwad, 2024).

## **2. Background of Study**

The expansion of digital technologies and the widespread adoption of social media platforms have transformed the dynamics of marketing communication and consumer engagement. Businesses increasingly rely on digital channels to reach audiences who actively seek product information and peer recommendations online. In this environment, influencer marketing has emerged as a strategic promotional approach where individuals with strong social media presence shape consumer attitudes and purchase intentions through content creation and product endorsements (Ki et al., 2020). Influencers often function as opinion leaders whose recommendations carry greater credibility and reliability compared to traditional advertisements. As consumer trust shifts toward peer-generated content and authentic brand storytelling, companies are integrating influencer collaborations into their marketing strategies to improve brand visibility and consumer engagement.

## **3. Scope and Limitations of the Study**

3.1 Scope of the Study: The present study focuses on analyzing the impact of social media influencers on consumer buying behaviour within the context of modern digital marketing practices. Influencer marketing has become an integral component of contemporary promotional strategies as brands increasingly collaborate with individuals who possess strong online visibility and audience engagement. The conceptual framework of the study considers social media influencers as external stimuli that influence consumer decision-making processes through persuasive communication and social interaction. Influencer attributes such as credibility, expertise, and trustworthiness have been widely recognized as factors that shape consumer attitudes toward brands and affect purchase decisions in digital environments (Freberg et al., 2011). Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook enable influencers to interact directly with audiences and create personalized marketing messages that enhance consumer engagement and brand recall (Casaló et al., 2018).

3.2 Limitations of the Study: The study primarily examines variables such as influencer credibility, trust, brand preference, and purchase decision-making from the perspective of social media users. Another limitation of the study is that it focuses solely on consumer perceptions and behavioural responses while excluding the perspectives of influencers and brands. The conclusions drawn from the study are limited to the specific time period during which the data were collected and may not reflect future trends in digital marketing behaviour. The results of the study should be interpreted with caution and may require further validation through larger and more diverse samples in future research (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

## **4. Significance of the Study**

The study holds considerable significance for both academic research and industry practice, reinforcing the concept of academic synergy as a catalyst for modern industry development. From an academic perspective, the research contributes to the growing body of literature on consumer buying behaviour and digital marketing. It provides empirical insights into how theoretical concepts such as trust, credibility, persuasion, and social influence operate within the context of influencer marketing. By examining the behavioural responses of consumers toward influencer-driven promotions, the study

enhances the understanding of how digital communication channels shape consumer attitudes and purchase decisions (Ki et al., 2020).

## 5. Objectives of the Study.

- To study the role of social media influencers in shaping consumer buying behaviour
- To identify factors influencing consumer trust in social media influencers
- To analyze the impact of influencer endorsements on purchase decisions
- To examine the relationship between influencer credibility and brand preference
- To suggest strategies for marketers based on consumer responses

## 6. Research Methodology.

The present study is empirical in nature and is designed to examine the impact of social media influencers on consumer buying behaviour. A descriptive research design has been adopted, as it is appropriate for analyzing consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behavioural responses in the context of influencer marketing.

- **Sources of Data:** The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from respondents through a structured questionnaire specifically designed to capture information related to social media usage, influencer credibility, trust, and purchase decision-making. Secondary data were obtained from published books, peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, research articles, and relevant online sources.
- **Research Instrument:** A structured questionnaire was used as the research instrument for primary data collection. The questionnaire comprised multiple-choice questions, checklist questions, and Likert-scale statements to measure the level of influence of social media influencers on consumer buying behaviour. The questionnaire was administered through Google Forms to ensure reliability and convenience in data collection.
- **Sampling Design:** A non-probability convenience sampling method was employed due to accessibility and time constraints. A sample size of 63 respondents was considered adequate for the study.
- **Period of the Study:** The data were collected over a period of one month, which was deemed sufficient to obtain valid and reliable responses for analysis.
- **Tools for Data Analysis:** The collected data were coded, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Percentage analysis and mean score analysis were employed to interpret the data and draw meaningful inferences regarding consumer buying behaviour influenced by social media influencers.

## 7. Review of Literature

Research indicates that influencer marketing operates as a modern form of electronic word-of-mouth communication, where followers rely on influencers' opinions to evaluate products and services. Such marketing strategies enable brands to communicate with consumers in a more personalized and interactive manner, thereby increasing engagement and influencing purchasing decisions (De Veirman et al., 2017). Moreover, the growing popularity of platforms such as Instagram and YouTube has amplified the role of influencers as key intermediaries between brands and consumers, contributing to the transformation of contemporary marketing practices (Hudders et al., 2021).

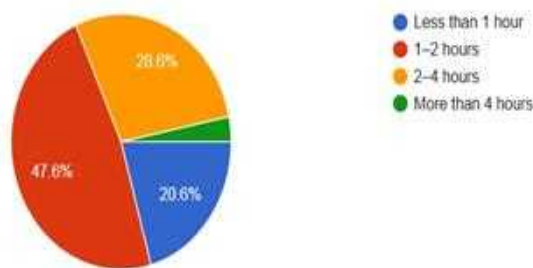
Several empirical studies have emphasized the importance of credibility and authenticity in determining the effectiveness of influencer marketing. It is found that the influencer-generated content provides informational and entertainment value, which strengthens consumer engagement and encourages purchase decisions. In addition, the emotional connection between influencers and followers often results in stronger brand loyalty and positive word-of-mouth behaviour (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Furthermore, influencer endorsements are often perceived as more authentic and relatable than traditional celebrity advertising, making them highly effective in influencing modern consumers. Research has demonstrated that influencer endorsements can significantly enhance brand awareness, brand perception, and purchase intention, particularly among younger digital consumers who actively engage with social media platforms (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). The excessive use of social media, over advertisement, lack of ethics lead to digital stress for the users as observed by Gaikwad and Bhattacharya (2024).

## 8. Discussion and Analysis

The present study is grounded in established theories of consumer buying behaviour and digital marketing communication. It explains the relationship between social media influencers and consumer buying behaviour by identifying the major variables that influence the consumer decision-making process. In this framework, social media influencers are considered the primary independent variable, while consumer buying behaviour is treated as the dependent variable. Influencer attributes such as credibility, trustworthiness, expertise, authenticity, and content quality act as persuasive stimuli that influence consumers' perceptions and attitudes toward brands. By incorporating theoretical perspectives such as Source Credibility Theory, Social Influence Theory, and the Consumer Decision-Making Model, the framework establishes a clear connection between academic theories and practical marketing strategies used in the digital marketplace.

Figure 1: Social Media Consumption Time



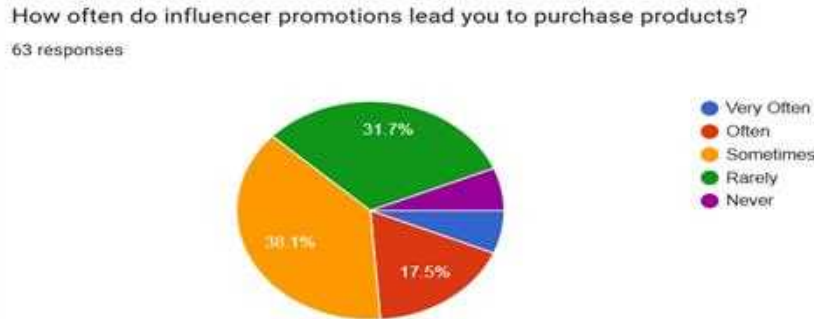
**Interpretation:** The figure illustrates the daily time spent on social media by the respondents (N = 63). The results show that the majority of respondents (47.6%) spend 1–2 hours per day on social media, indicating moderate but consistent engagement with digital platforms. A significant proportion of respondents (28.6%) spend 2–4 hours daily, suggesting a high level of exposure to online content, including influencer-generated promotions. Meanwhile, 20.6% of respondents spend less than one hour per day, reflecting relatively limited engagement with social media. Only a small percentage of respondents spend more than four hours daily, indicating that heavy social media usage is less common within the sample.

Figure 2: Social Media Influence on Buying Behaviour



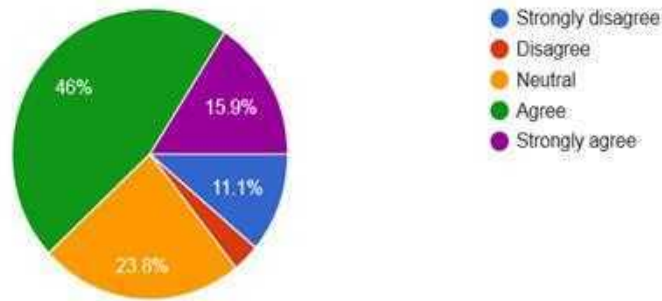
**Interpretation:** The results show that a large proportion of respondents agrees or strongly agree that social media influencers help them discover new products, indicating that influencers play a significant role in product awareness and information dissemination. Regarding trust in influencer recommendations, most respondents remain neutral or moderately trusting, suggesting that while influencers attract attention, consumers still evaluate product information before fully trusting recommendations. The chart also shows that influencer reviews significantly affect purchase decisions, as a considerable number of respondents agree that such reviews influence their buying choices. Additionally, many respondents prefer brands endorsed by influencers, although a notable proportion remain neutral.

Figure 3: Influencers leading to Purchase Decisions



**Interpretation:** The results indicate that the largest proportion of respondents (38.1%) stated that influencer promotions sometimes lead them to purchase products, suggesting that influencers have a moderate but noticeable impact on buying decisions. Additionally, 31.7% of respondents reported that influencer promotions rarely influence their purchases, indicating that while exposure exists, not every recommendation results in actual buying behaviour. About 17.5% of respondents indicated that influencer promotions often lead them to purchase products, demonstrating a strong influence for a segment of consumers. A smaller proportion reported very often or never, showing limited extremes in behaviour.

Figure 4: Influence Marketing Connecting with Consumers



The figure illustrates respondents' perceptions regarding whether influencer marketing helps brands connect better with consumers. The results show that a majority of respondents hold a positive view of influencer marketing as a communication tool. About 46% of respondents agree that influencer marketing helps brands establish better connections with consumers, while 15.9% strongly agree, indicating strong support for the effectiveness of influencer-based promotional strategies. Meanwhile, 23.8% of respondents remain neutral.

## 9. Finding of Study:

- The findings of the study indicate that influencer marketing significantly affects consumer buying behaviour, particularly among **young, educated, and digitally active consumers**. The dominance of the 21–30 age groups align with existing literature that identifies younger consumers as early adopters of digital marketing trends and influencer-led content.
- The study reveals that a large proportion of respondents spend 1–2 hours daily on social media (47.6%), while 28.6% spend 2–4 hours, indicating that most participants are moderately to highly active on digital platforms. This level of engagement increases their exposure to influencer-generated content and digital marketing messages.
- The prominence of Instagram and YouTube confirms the effectiveness of visually rich and interactive platforms in enhancing influencer credibility and engagement.
- The analysis shows that respondents exhibit a moderate level of trust in influencer recommendations. While many consumers consider influencer reviews before making purchase decisions, a noticeable proportion remains neutral, indicating that consumers still evaluate product information carefully before trusting influencer endorsements.
- The results reveal that 38.1% of respondents sometimes purchase products due to influencer promotions, while 17.5% often make purchases based on influencer recommendations. This indicates that influencer marketing contributes to consumer buying behaviour.
- The study further demonstrates that influencer endorsements positively influence brand preference and actual purchase behaviour. The importance placed on honesty, expertise, and genuine product usage emphasizes the growing consumer demand for transparency and authenticity in digital marketing communications.

## 10. Conclusion:

The study concludes that social media influencers play a significant role in shaping consumer buying behaviour in the digital marketing environment. Influencers contribute to product discovery, enhance brand awareness, and influence consumer attitudes toward brands through credible and engaging content. The findings indicate that young and digitally active consumers are particularly responsive

to influencer marketing, with platforms such as Instagram and YouTube serving as key channels for brand communication. Although influencer recommendations do not always lead to immediate purchases, they significantly affect consumer trust, brand preference, and purchase intentions.

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