

## THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON ONLINE PURCHASING DECISION

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### ABSTRACT

The growing importance of social media has transformed traditional marketing strategies, with social media influencers (SMIs) emerging as key drivers of online consumer behaviour. This study investigates the impact of SMIs on online purchasing decisions, focusing on factors such as influencer credibility, attractiveness, content relevance, and audience engagement. Grounded in the theories of consumer behaviour and social influence, the researchers employ a quantitative approach, collecting data through structured surveys targeting active social media users because that is the easy way to connect. The findings reveal a strong correlation between influencer attributes and consumers' trust, which significantly affects their intention to purchase endorsed products that is easy way to attract to consumers. Notably, the influence is more pronounced among younger consumers who exhibit high levels of social media usage where they deliver a super contents which is helpful for consumer. The study highlights the strategic importance of influencer marketing in the digital commerce ecosystem and provides insights for marketers aiming to leverage influencers to enhance consumer trust and drive sales.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The advantage of social media has change the way individuals communicate, consume information, and make purchasing decisions. With billions of users actively engaging on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Facebook, whatsapp, social media has become a dominant force in shaping modern consumer behaviour. Among the many phenomena that have emerged from this digital revolution is the rise of social media influencers (SMIs)—individuals who have built significant online followings and wield considerable persuasive power over their audiences through content creation and engagement.

Social media influencers, ranging from celebrities and industry experts to micro- and nano-influencers, have emerged as key opinion leaders in the digital space. Their ability to influence the attitudes, preferences, and behaviors of followers has attracted the attention of marketers worldwide. Unlike traditional advertising methods that rely on one-way communication, influencer marketing operates through perceived authenticity and interpersonal connections. This interactive and trust-based relationship between influencers and their followers enhances the potential for message credibility and consumer persuasion followers are inspiring with influencer.

Consumers today are increasingly skeptical of traditional advertising, seeking more relatable, trustworthy, and experience-based recommendations. SMIs fill this gap by offering personal narratives, product demonstrations, reviews, and lifestyle content that resonates with specific audience segments. As a result, brands have shifted significant portions of their marketing budgets toward influencer collaborations and paid promotion in an effort to increase brand awareness, consumer trust, and ultimately, sales conversions. Influencers are no longer seen as just trendsetters but also as important drivers of e-commerce growth, particularly among digital-native demographics such as Millennials and Generation Z.

Despite the growing investment in influencer marketing, there remains a need for empirical research to better understand how influencer attributes and content characteristics impact consumer decision-making processes. Key factors such as credibility, expertise, attractiveness, content quality, and engagement levels play a crucial role in shaping perceptions and purchase intentions. Moreover, psychological theories such as source credibility theory, parasocial interaction, and social proof provide a theoretical foundation for examining the influence mechanisms at play.

This study aims to explore the impact of social media influencers on online purchasing decisions by focusing on consumer perceptions and behavioral responses to influencer content. Specifically, it investigates how

influencer credibility, attractiveness, relatability, and interaction frequency affect consumer trust and influence the likelihood of making online purchases. A quantitative research design is employed to gather data from active social media users, allowing for a data-driven analysis of the relationship between influencer attributes and consumer behavior.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to provide actionable insights for marketers, brand strategists, and businesses seeking to optimize their influencer marketing strategies. As social media continues to evolve, understanding the dynamics of digital influence becomes essential for achieving competitive advantage in an increasingly crowded and consumer-driven online marketplace. By bridging the gap between theory and practice, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on digital marketing and consumer behavior, and offers guidance for more effective influencer engagement in the context of online commerce that inspires to the young youths.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In recent years, social media has emerged as a powerful platform for marketing communication, with social media influencers (SMIs) playing a pivotal role in shaping consumer behaviour. SMIs are individuals who have built a substantial following on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, and possess the ability to influence the opinions and purchasing behaviours of their audience (Freberg et al., 2011).

According to Abidin (2016), influencers operate as digital opinion leaders whose endorsements appear more authentic and relatable compared to traditional celebrity advertisements. This perceived authenticity leads to increased consumer trust, a key factor in influencing purchasing decisions (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Trust in influencers is often associated with perceived expertise, attractiveness, and the quality of the relationship (parasocial interaction) between influencer and follower (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

Several studies have highlighted the effectiveness of influencer marketing in converting interest into actual purchases. For example, Lou and Yuan (2019) found that influencer credibility and content quality significantly impact consumers' attitudes toward the endorsed product, which in turn affects their buying intention. Similarly, De Veirman, Cauberghe, and Hudders (2017) emphasized the importance of the influencer's follower count and perceived popularity in enhancing product visibility and credibility.

Moreover, consumer engagement with influencer content, such as likes, comments, and shares, is shown to mediate the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention (Jin & Phua, 2014). The emotional connection and community feeling fostered by influencers often create a favorable environment for marketing, especially among younger audiences like Millennials and Gen Z (Casaló, Flavián, & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2018).

Despite the positive effects, some scholars caution that excessive commercialization may reduce the perceived authenticity of influencers, leading to skepticism and reduced effectiveness (Campbell & Farrell, 2020). Hence, transparency in sponsored content disclosures is crucial to maintaining trust. In conclusion, existing literature consistently supports the idea that social media influencers significantly affect online purchasing behavior through trust, perceived authenticity, and emotional connection. However, evolving trends and user awareness of sponsored content necessitate ongoing research to understand the dynamics of influencer-consumer relationships.

## **III. OBJECTIVE**

1. Analyze the role of influencer credibility (expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness) in shaping consumer trust.
2. Investigate the impact of influencer content (type, quality, and frequency) on consumer engagement and buying behavior.
3. Assess the effect of parasocial relationships between influencers and followers on purchase intention.
4. Identify the moderating role of consumer demographics (e.g., age, gender) in the influencer-purchase decision relationship.

#### IV. RESEARCH METHEDODOLOGY

The research methodology outlines the process adopted to carry out the study on Customer Satisfaction and Market Perception.

##### 1. Research Design:

Descriptive research design was used to gather quantifiable data on customer satisfaction and perception.

##### 2. Research Type:

Quantitative research approach was employed to collect and analyze numerical data.

##### 3. Data Collection Methods:

**Primary Data:** Collected through structured questionnaires (Google Forms ) filled by 215 respondents.

**Secondary Data:** Sourced from journals, articles, company website, reports, and other online sources.

##### 4. Sampling Technique:

Convenience sampling method was used, targeting who were purchase online.

##### 5. Sample Size:

215 respondents

##### 6. Tools Used for Analysis:

The collected data was analysed using basic statistical tools (percentage analysis, pie charts, bar graphs) to interpret findings.

##### 7. Hypothesis:

Social media influencers have a significant impact on consumers' online purchasing decisions.

#### V. DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRIATATION

Table 1: Age Group

Age group	Percentage of respondent
18-25	14.00%
26-30	33.50%
31-40	40.90%
41-50	8.40%
Above 50	3.20%

##### Interpriatation:

The age distribution of 215 respondents reveals that the majority fall within the 31-40 age group (40.9%), followed by the 26-30 age group (33.5%). Younger respondents (18-25) constitute 14.0%, while older respondents (41-50 and above 50) make up smaller percentages (8.4% and 3.2% respectively), indicating a respondent pool concentrated in the late twenties to early forties.

Table 2: Gender

Gender	Percentage of Respondent
Male	61.90%
Female	38.10%

Table 3: Highest level of Education

Highest level of education	Percentage of Respondents
Highest school/ Secondary school	5.1%
Bechelor's degree	51.6%
Master degree	43.3%

### Interpretation:

The majority of the 215 respondents hold a Bachelor's degree (51.6%), closely followed by those with a Master's degree (43.3%). A small percentage (5.1%) reported their highest level of education as High school/Secondary school. This indicates a highly educated respondent pool, with the vast majority having attained a post-secondary degree.

**Table 4.** Which social media platform do you use regularly ?

Social Media Platform	Number of users	Percentage of Users
Instagram	68	31.6%
Facebook	58	27.0%
Youtube	68	31.6%
Twitter	63	29.3%
Snapchat	32	14.9%
Not applicable	1	0.5%

### Interpretation:

Among the 215 respondents, Instagram and YouTube are the most regularly used social media platforms, each with 31.6% of users. Facebook is also popular at 27.0%, followed by Twitter at 29.3%. Snapchat has a lower regular usage rate of 14.9%, and a very small fraction (0.5%) indicated that the question was not applicable to them. This suggests a strong preference for visual and video-based platforms among the respondents.

**Table 5.** How much time do you spend on social media per day on average?

Time Spent on Social Media per Day	Percentage of Respondents
Less than 30 minutes	5.6%
30 minutes- 1 hours	21.4%
1-2 hours	26.05
2-3 hours	43.3%
3+ hours	3.7%

### Interpretation:

The majority of the 215 respondents (43.3%) spend 2-3 hours on social media per day on average. A significant portion also spends 1-2 hours (26.0%). Around a fifth (21.4%) spend between 30 minutes and 1 hour, while a smaller percentage spends less than 30 minutes (5.6%). Only a small fraction (3.7%) reports spending 3 or more hours on social media daily. This indicates that most respondents engage with social media for a moderate amount of time each day, with a notable peak in the 2-3 hour range.

**Table 6.** Do you follow any social media influencer ?

Follow Social Media Influencers	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	85.1%
No	14.95

### Interpretation:

A large majority of the 215 respondents (85.1%) indicated that they follow social media influencers. Only a small fraction (14.9%) reported that they do not follow any influencers. This suggests that social media influencers have a significant reach and are followed by a substantial portion of this surveyed group.

**Table 7.** If , Yes approximately how many influncer do you follow?

Approximately How many influncer Do you Follow	Percentage of Respondents
1-5	16.3%
6-10	45.6%
11-20	31.2%
20+	6.0%

### Interpretation:

Among the respondents who follow influencers, the largest group (46.5%) follows approximately 6-10 influencers. A substantial portion (31.2%) follows 11-20 influencers. Fewer respondents follow only 1-5 influencers (16.3%), and a small percentage (6.0%) follows more than 20 influencers. This suggests that while many follow a moderate number of influencers, a significant segment also engages with a larger group.

**Table 8.** How often do you follow social media influncer?

How often Do you follow social Media Influncers?	Percentage of Respondents
Very frequently	16.7%
Frequently	34.0%
Occasionally	34.9%
Rarely	9.3%
Never	5.1%

### Interpretation:

The majority of the 215 respondents follow social media influencers either frequently (34.0%) or occasionally (34.9%). A smaller but still significant portion follows very frequently (16.7%). Only a minority rarely (9.3%) or never (5.1%) follow social media influencers. This indicates a consistent engagement with influencers for a substantial portion of the surveyed group.

**Table 9.** What topics or Niches are the you follow primarily focused on?

Topics or Niches of Influncer followed	Number of Respondent	Percentage of Respondent
Fashion/ Beauty	41	19.1%
Technology/Gaming	35	16.3%
Food/Travel	80	37.2%

Health/Fitness	71	33.0%
Finance/Business	54	25.1%
Lifestyle/Parenting	35	16.3%
Other	1	0.5%

#### Interpretation:

The most popular topics or niches of influencers followed by the 215 respondents are Food/Travel (37.2%) and Health/Fitness (33.0%). Finance/Business also attracts a significant portion (25.1%). Fashion/Beauty (19.1%) and Technology/Gaming & Lifestyle/Parenting (both 16.3%) have a similar level of interest. A very small fraction (0.5%) follows influencers in other, unspecified niches. This highlights a strong interest in lifestyle-related content, particularly around food, travel, and well-being.

**Table 10.** Have you ever purchased a product or services base on an influencer's recommendation or promotion?

Purchase Based on Recommendation?	Influncer	Percentage of Respondents
Yes		84.2%
No		15.8%

#### Interpretation:

A large majority of the 215 respondents (84.2%) have purchased a product or service based on a social media influencer's recommendation or promotion. Only a small percentage (15.8%) have never made such a purchase. This strongly indicates that influencer marketing has a significant impact on the purchasing decisions of this surveyed group.

**Table 11.** If Yes, How often make purchase based on influncer recommendation?

How often Do you make Purchase Based on Influncer Recommendation?	Percentage of Respondent
Rarely	9.8%
Sometimes	60.5%
Often	23.7%
Very often	6.0%

#### Interpretation:

Among the respondents who have made purchases based on influencer recommendations, the majority (60.5%) do so sometimes. A notable portion (23.7%) makes such purchases often, while a smaller percentage does so rarely (9.8%) or very often (6.0%). This suggests that while influencer recommendations do lead to purchases for most, it's not a consistently frequent occurrence for the majority of these respondents.

**Table 12.** If Yes, Did this experience affect your trust in influncers' recommendation in general?

Your trust in influncers' recommendation	Percentages of respondents
I appreciate it as a way to discover new products.	24.2%
I am netural about it.	13.0%
I am skeptical of it.	23.7%

I avoid sponsored content	36.3%
I feel it is misleading	2.8%

#### Interpretation:

The largest group of respondents (36.3%) reported avoiding sponsored content from social media influencers. While 24.2% appreciate it for discovering new products, a similar percentage (23.7%) are skeptical of it. A smaller portion are neutral (13.0%), and very few (2.8%) feel it is misleading. This indicates a mixed reception towards sponsored influencer content, with a significant segment expressing avoidance or skepticism.

**Table 13.** Do you think sponsored content is clearly labeled?

Do you Think Sponsored Content is Clearly Labeled?	Percentage of Respondents
Yes, always	13.0%
Usually yes	31.6%
Sometime	36.7%
Rarely	16.3%
Never	2.4%

#### Interpretation:

The largest group of respondents (36.7%) believes that sponsored content is only sometimes clearly labeled. While 31.6% think it is usually clear, only 13.0% feel it is always clearly labeled. A significant portion perceives it as rarely (16.3%) or never (2.4%) being clearly labeled. This suggests a considerable concern among respondents regarding the transparency and labeling of sponsored content by social media influencers.

**Table 14.** How often do you make online purchase?

How often Do You Make Purchases?	Online	Percentage of Respondents
Less than once a month		20.0%
1-3 times a month		46.0%
Weekly		30.2%
Multiple times a week		3.7%

#### Interpretation:

The majority of the 215 respondents (46.0%) make online purchases 1-3 times a month. A significant portion also makes purchases weekly (30.2%). Fewer respondents buy online less than once a month (20.0%), and only a small percentage shop online multiple times a week (3.7%). This indicates that online shopping is a regular but not extremely frequent activity for most of the surveyed individuals.

**Table 15.** What are your primary reasons for shopping online?

Primary Reasons for shopping online	Number of respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Conveniences	30	14.0%
Better price	76	35.5%



Wider selection	87	40.5%
Availability of unique products	70	32.6%
Other	1	0.5%

#### Interpretation:

The primary reasons for shopping online among the 215 respondents are better prices (40.5%) and wider selection (35.3%). The availability of unique products is also a significant motivator (32.6%). Convenience is a less frequently cited primary reason (14.0%), and a very small fraction (0.5%) indicated other reasons. This highlights that price and variety are the key drivers for online shopping for this group.

**Table 16.** What are you preferred methodes of paymet for online purchase?

Preferred Payment methods for Online purchases	Percentage of respondents
Credit /Debit card	46.0%
Mobile wallet / Google pay	52.6%
Cash on delivery	39.5%
Not appilicable	1.0%

#### Interpretation:

Mobile wallets/Google Pay are the most preferred method of payment for online purchases among the 215 respondents (52.6%). Credit/Debit cards are also widely used (46.0%). Cash on delivery is still preferred by a significant portion (39.5%), while very few (1.0%) indicated that this payment method is not applicable to them. This suggests a preference for digital payment methods, with mobile wallets gaining popularity over traditional credit/debit cards.

## VI. SUGGESTION

Brands should collaborate with influencers whose values align with their brand image for better authenticity.

Micro-influencers, despite having smaller followings, often create more engagement and trust; brands should consider them for niche marketing.

Influencers should maintain transparency through proper disclosure of sponsored content to build credibility.

Marketers should analyse engagement metrics (likes, comments, shares) instead of just follower count to assess influencer effectiveness.

Regular feedback from target audiences can help in selecting the right influencers and tailoring content strategy accordingly.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Showing the broader global trend, social media influencers exert a considerable impact on the online purchasing decisions of the surveyed Indian respondents. The high percentage of individuals following influencers and having made purchases based on their recommendations underscores their persuasive power within the Indian digital marketplace. This influence is likely amplified by the widespread adoption of visual social media platforms popular in India.

However, similar to global sentiments, Indian consumers also exhibit a degree of caution towards sponsored content, emphasizing the need for transparency and authenticity from influencers. bridging the gap between awareness and purchase.

Therefore, social media influencers represent a vital component of the online commerce ecosystem in India, capable of significantly shaping consumer behaviour. Businesses looking to engage with the Indian market



should strategically leverage influencer marketing, while prioritizing transparency to build and maintain consumer trust.

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