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Project Dissertation Report on

How Influencer Impact Your Shopping Choices

Submitted By

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled "How Influencer Impact Your Shopping Choices" has been completed by Lakshya Abhedhya, 24/DMBA/126 of Delhi School of Management, Delhi Technological University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Business Administration during the academic year 2025-2026.

Dr. Aarushi Jain

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the research project titled "How Influencer Impact Your Shopping Choices" is an original work carried out by me as part of my MBA program.

The study has been conducted for academic purposes, and all data collected has been used solely for research and educational purposes. The information presented in this report is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

I further declare that this project has not been submitted previously for the award of any degree or diploma in any institution.

Lakshya Abhedhya

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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I would like to extend my gratitude to all the respondents who participated in the survey and provided their valuable time and inputs. Their cooperation was essential for the completion of this research.

Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my family and friends for their constant encouragement, motivation, and support throughout the duration of this project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present research work aims to understand the effect of social media influencers on online shopping behavior and highlight the main determinants affecting consumer confidence and purchase decision-making. In the age of technology, social media has become one of the most powerful modes of communication and marketing due to the advent of smartphones and cheap internet availability in India in the last decade of the 20th century. Social networking sites like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have revolutionized the process of consumer engagement and purchase decisions. The use of influencers has become crucial in digital marketing as they endorse products or services in the form of reviews, tutorials, reels, videos, and personal recommendations. The objective of the research is to understand the perspective of the consumers towards influencers, their motive behind accepting influencer recommendations, the effects of influencer marketing on online purchase behavior, and whether they consider influencers more trustworthy and relatable than celebrities.

For the current study, descriptive research design and quantitative research methods were adopted. Data collection involved using an online questionnaire with closed-ended questions, multiple choices, and Likert scale questions. In total, 33 samples of responses were gathered from active social media users who are exposed to influencer marketing content. The sample of participants was identified using snowball sampling method where people actively engaging with the social media and influencer-generated content would respond to the survey questions. Secondary data was also analyzed to obtain theoretical knowledge.

According to the obtained results, the largest group of respondents were young adults aged between 22 and 24 years. Moreover, many respondents were students. These results confirm that younger people use digital devices more often and are actively engaged with influencer-generated content. At the same time, males made up a larger proportion of participants than females.

It is possible to conclude about high social media usage by respondents. According to survey results, the main platform that the sample of participants uses is Instagram, while YouTube also takes second place. This proves that both platforms are extremely effective for influencer marketing operations. On average, most of the respondents spend one to four hours each day using social media. Notwithstanding this high-level exposure to social media influencers, there was only limited engagement in terms of engaging with influencers since many respondents stated that they engage in influencer marketing occasionally. It should be noted that the results of the research showed that influencer marketing impacts consumer purchase behavior in mixed ways. Even though the overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that they have never bought any product due to an influencer's recommendation, the other considerable part of the respondents admitted that social media influencers influenced their purchasing behavior.

The research aimed at revealing the factors that influence consumers' trust in social media influencers. In line with the results obtained, the factors such as expertise and authenticity proved to be the main influencers that make consumers trust social media influencers. In other words, the respondents' level of trust increases when a person demonstrates his or her expertise, professionalism, and specialization in a certain area. Visual appeal was also mentioned among the most influential trust-builders. Engagement can also increase consumers' level of trust in influencers; however, the role of this factor turned out to be smaller than that of authenticity and expertise.

In addition, the findings reveal that the type of products that are mostly recommended and bought because of influencers includes technology products, followed by fashion and beauty products. Therefore, the use of influencers is highly effective in marketing and selling goods that are visually attractive and trendy since consumers usually look for opinions, demonstrations, and recommendations of other people before buying the products. Regarding intentions to purchase influencer-recommended products in the future, the majority of respondents revealed neutral attitudes towards such a purchase. Some participants revealed their willingness to buy such products whereas others showed scepticism regarding paid advertising of influencers and lack of transparency. Hence, even though influencers can impact the attitudes of customers, the importance of trust and reliability should be noted.The comparison of social media influencers with traditional celebrities was also performed within the research. It turned out that

respondents did not perceive influencers as necessarily more relatable and trustworthy compared to celebrities. Respondents thought that personal characteristics were responsible for relatability rather than being an influencer or a traditional celebrity. However, those respondents who considered influencers relatable tended to pay attention to recommendations provided by them.

The results from correlation analysis performed in the study indicated that there is no significant correlation between the time spend on social media and the influence that influencers hold on purchasing decisions. There is also no significant correlation between the use of different social media and the importance of influencers' suggestions in decision-making. This implies that the role played by influencer marketing in promoting consumer products and services does not necessarily depend on the time spent on social media but the authenticity and relevance of the content shared. Some of the implications of the research findings for various stakeholders are discussed in the recommendations. The business should work together with credible and expert influencers regardless of their number of followers. Brands need to emphasize authenticity and give more flexibility to influencers to create more authentic content. Considering that Instagram and YouTube are the popular social media platforms, marketers can employ platform-specific strategies such as reels, tutorials, product demonstration, and interactive video content.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Social media is a revolutionary disruption technology of today's era. The introduction of smartphones in the Indian market in 2010s has resulted in the rise of social media. Social media can be defined as a type of digital communication which is basically referring to sites and applications where individuals come together to make, share and interact with each other online. The affordability of smartphones in India and cost-effective internet services has contributed towards making social media an inseparable part of everyday lives. Different social media platforms are used by different categories of individuals. Platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram are some popular social media platforms used by different generations of people, particularly youths.

The advent of social media has also changed the dynamics of marketing practices. Marketing used to happen via television, magazines, newspaper, and radio advertisements; however, with the emergence of social media, things are now changing drastically. Marketing now takes place using digital marketing because of vast reachability to target audience via social media. An influencer is referred to as a person in the social media world who is popular amongst social media users and followers. Influencers create their massive following through their experience, creativity, and entertaining content to relate to the relatable audience. The influencers affect the opinion, attitude, and purchasing decisions of their followers. According to one of the BCG report titled "From Content to Commerce: Mapping India's Creator Economy," it was found that India influences over $350-$400 billion annually in consumer spending, which can reach up to $1 trillion by 2030. Currently, this ecosystem is generating $20-$25 billion in revenue1.

There is one economic theory given by George Akerlof in his paper in 1970 about the information asymmetry in "The Market for 'Lemons': Quality Uncertainty and the Market Mechanism." In this theory, he suggests that buyers do not possess enough knowledge of the products as compared to sellers. This theory can be utilized in the field of online shopping due to the fact that consumers often lack the necessary information related to the quality of the product. Due to the information problem, consumers try to find some indicators of product quality before purchasing any item.

In such a case, social media influencers play the role of information intermediaries who provide product review and experiences on social media platforms.

With the advent of influencers, a significant number of individuals following them in social media channels have made them credible and popular. This trend has led to emergence of influencer marketing being one of the top digital marketing tools. Firms partner with the influencers in order to reach their mass consumers through promotion of their products.

Consumer Behavior Theory states that consumers make purchase decisions based on taste and preferences, and in this case the influencer plays an important role in the process.

Social Proof theory explained by Dr. Robert Cialdini supports this research as consumers often take guidance and inspiration from other persons' views and behaviors while making purchase decisions, these influencers play important role in shaping the perception of the products in market.

The outbreak of coronavirus has dramatically changed consumer behavior and led to rise in social media influencer marketing. People during the period of lockdowns, spent more time at homes and depended heavily on Internet for all activities including communication, entertainment, information seeking, and online shopping purposes.

Due to the lockdown measures and store closure, consumers during this period of coronavirus switched to online shopping. This sudden increase in online shopping created greater opportunities for businesses to use digital marketing strategies to reach consumers.

On the other hand, social media influencers also gained prominence as means of advertising products and services. As consumers spent more time on social networking sites like Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok, there was an increase in content developed by influencers that engaged users. This content included live streaming, product review, tutorials, and unboxing, among others, which had a significant impact on consumer buying behavior amid the pandemic.

The pandemic altered the priorities and behaviors of consumers. More attention was directed at health-related products, exercise equipment, skin care, interior décor, e-learning applications, and entertainment goods. In the marketing of these products,

influencers played a key role. The development of influencer marketing has evolved significantly over the years with the appearance of micro- and nano-influencers. Unlike celebrities or macro-influencers, micro- and nano-influencers usually do not have an enormous audience but rather a smaller one consisting of engaged users. They are considered more relatable and approachable, making the relationship between the follower and creator much stronger. Now, engagement rates matter much more than follower counts since users tend to favor relatable content rather than heavily promoted one.

Algorithmic changes of various social media platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, have influenced the process of influencer marketing as well. Algorithms used by these apps promote content based on likes, watch time, and user interaction with it. This means that influencer content will be viewed regardless of whether a user follows the creator or not. Users, therefore, come into contact with marketing content unintentionally, which might lead them to make impulsive purchases.

Trust issues also became somewhat complex due to the development of influencer marketing. Trust was traditionally determined by the credibility or popularity of the influencer; however, nowadays, transparency has become equally crucial as well. Some users say that the openness concerning advertisements can raise their level of trust, yet at the same time, other customers are not convinced in something when they know that it is just an advertisement. Thus, we should admit that the degree of trust is situational and depends on many factors.

Other theories, such as ELM and SCT, also shed light on this phenomenon. In particular, there are people who try to thoroughly analyze the information and characteristics of products, while other customers rely on looks and lifestyles of influencers. What is more, many users learn different behaviors from influencers due to considering them as role models.

The concept of parasocial interaction is crucial in this regard. In this case, followers perceive influencers as acquaintances who make recommendations although there are no personal relationships. The level of trust in influencers' recommendations is considerably higher than when it comes to ordinary ads because of the existing emotional bond. However, it becomes weaker once influencers recommend various brands.

In addition to the above concerns, the concept of influencer fatigue arises as another matter of concern that appears from the literature review. Due to repetitive sponsored posts, users tend to lose their interest and faith towards the influencer and his/her activities. Content repetition and low authenticity further lower the effect. Thus, authenticity rather than popularity appears as an essential criterion nowadays.

The role of culture and demographic aspects also needs consideration. In countries such as India, for example, people rely heavily on the social sphere and recommendations. Youth in particular turns to influencers since young people spend much time on social networks and pay attention to modern trends. Older individuals and experienced buyers can check and validate information.

At the same time, some matters require consideration while talking about the literature overview. First of all, the majority of studies discuss only individual factors but do not take into account the relationship between all factors mentioned. Furthermore, the intention to purchase is under study in most cases while the actual behavior remains unknown. The lack of studies about rural users should be mentioned as well. AI-based influencers or virtual creators constitute another emerging domain in marketing that is gradually gaining traction. These influencers are basically virtual entities without a physical body and hence lead to different questions about credibility and authenticity since emotional bonds may not be established.

Social media platforms have emerged as one of the prominent digital platforms in India, having a significant impact on communication and marketing due to the emergence of smartphones and affordable internet. Influencer marketing has seen substantial growth where consumers' opinions and behavior have been influenced by influencers due to credible and authentic content created by them. Credibility, authenticity, parasocial interaction, and even algorithmic exposure play an important role in influencing consumer behavior. At the same time, factors like influencer fatigue, transparent promotion, and variable levels of trust could impact this marketing strategy.

1.2 Problem statement

The rapid development in social media platforms influences the dynamics of consumers purchasing decisions. Social media influencers promote their products through engaging media such as video clips, posts and reviews etc. As a result,

customers find themselves continuously subjected to the promotional media made by influencers while they are using the internet for various purposes. While purchasing from the Internet, consumers rely on the reviews of the product due to uncertainties about the quality and credibility of the product.

Not every consumer puts equal trust in social media influencers. For example, there are people who have great trust in recommendations made by influencers while some remain skeptical when it comes to promotional campaigns conducted by influencers. In this case, it raises questions as to what could be the most influential factors that motivate customers to put their trust in social media influencers.

There are numerous factors that can make consumers have greater trust in social media influencers. They include authenticity, expert knowledge, credibility, followers engagement etc. Influencers who provide authentic reviews, honest product use and create emotional connections gain consumers' trust whereas too much promotions and false reviews may decrease consumers' trust.

This highlights the importance of understanding factors that contribute to the online buying decision influenced by the role of influencers despite the growing popularity of social media marketing. Although the concept of social media marketing is becoming very popular among digital marketers, it is still unclear why consumers tend to place more trust on certain social media influencers and what effects their trust in these individuals have on their decision making process when shopping online. Various factors like integrity, expertise, relatability, quality of content and personal relationship may influence consumer trust on social media influencers. This information is important as trust on consumers can significantly influence their decision making process while purchasing goods recommended by social media influencers.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Main Objective

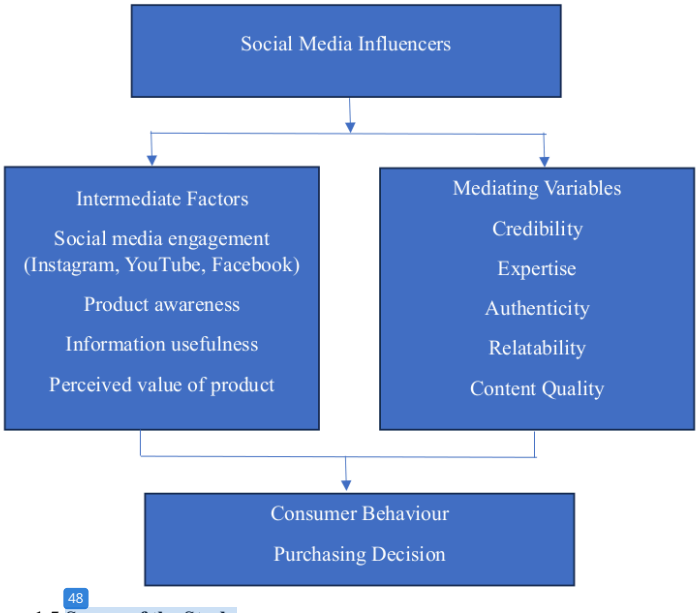
To study the impact of social media influencers on online shopping choice and to identify the key factors that influence consumer's purchasing decision.

Specific Objectives

- To analyse the effect of social media influencers on consumers' online purchasing decision
- To identify the factors which motivates most to trust social media influencers recommendations
- To explore how consumer see social media influencers in comparison to traditional celebrities and how this perception affects their purchasing decisions
- To determine the types of products most likely to be purchased based on influencer recommendations and assess future purchase intentions.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.1: Framework of the Study



1.5 Scope of the Study

This study seeks to investigate the effect of social media influencers on consumer's decision-making regarding online shopping behavior and influential factors in consumer buying decisions. The research is aimed at analyzing the degree to which

the sample of individuals uses social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) to search for information about goods, as well as reviews and recommendations.

Moreover, the research aims at identifying factors that affect consumers' decisions when they shop online. In this regard, the research will explore the level of consumer reliance on influencer opinions, trustworthiness of recommendations made by influencers, the number of purchases made due to recommendation made by influencers, and reasons that encourage people to rely on influencers.

In particular, the study will analyze the credibility and integrity of influencers, their level of competence, content quality, honesty of presentation. Furthermore, the research will assess products that consumers buy following influencers' recommendation. Specifically, it will consider fashion clothes, cosmetics, electronics, health and fitness, food, and lifestyle products. Finally, it will identify people's intentions to buy any product in the future due to influencer's recommendation, as well as the way consumers perceive influencers in comparison with celebrities. The study is limited to people who can be reached through online platforms, mainly those who actively use social media. Since the information is based on respondents' own answers, it reflects their personal opinions, experiences, and behavior related to influencer marketing in the online world.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The importance of this study is that it can help gain insight about the interaction between social media usage and influencer exposure to see how it affects the consumers' decisions when shopping on line, as well as identify the key factors influencing such consumer choices.

From a business and marketing perspective, it will help understand how often consumers visit the specific social media sites and how social media visits lead to influencer exposure. Additionally, this can help learn how social media use drives consumer motivation towards trusting influencers. This information can then be used to develop better marketing and digital marketing campaigns and choose the best method of promoting their products in various categories.

From the consumers' perspective, it will help identify factors affecting trust in social media influencers. Such knowledge will help consumers to make informed choices regarding their purchases in the future. As for the academic community and

researchers, this research adds to the literature on consumer behavior and digital marketing practices by incorporating behavioral variables, such as social media usage, influencer interactions, purchase intentions, among others.

Overall, this study is important because it explores real user behaviour on social media platform and how influencer impact online shopping decision in the era of digital environment.

1.7 Research Questions

- How do social media influencers impact online shopping decision?
- Which factors motivates most to trust social media influencer recommendation?
- How do consumers perceive social media influencers compared to traditional celebrities, and how does this perception affect their purchasing decisions?
- Which product categories are most influenced by social media influencer recommendations, and how likely are consumers to purchase these products in the future?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Papoutsis et al. investigated the multidimensional impact of influencer marketing through an analysis of the engagement metrics, effectiveness of marketing techniques, and customer decision-making amongst consumers in the Greek market. It was discovered that influencer marketing leads to increased brand engagement and sales; however, its effectiveness mostly depends on various aspects including content authenticity, transparency, and trustworthiness of both the marketing technique itself and of the consumer. Moreover, consumer buying decisions were found to be greatly affected by social visibility, personalization, and usability of marketing tools.

Aivin Chakola (2022) studied the perception of social media influencers by Generation Z, the main factors behind their following them, and the relationship between social media influencers and Gen Z customers on social media platforms. The research also focused on credibility attributes of influencers which impact Gen Z's reactions to recommendations about certain products and brands. According to the findings, the attributes including knowledge, relatability, articulation skills, confidence, and helpfulness greatly contribute to Gen Z's trust in social media influencers. Moreover, it was found that Gen Z's trust strongly influences their purchase decisions when it comes to products and brands recommended by influencers on social media platforms.

Influencers' social media characteristics' effects on the credibility and consequently consumers' purchasing intentions were analyzed by M. A. Khan and Saima (2021). As revealed by their findings, influencers' qualities such as trustworthiness, informativeness, and entertaining value affect positively the level of influencers' credibility and their impact on consumers' intentions to make a purchase. In addition, the research proved that consumers' buying decisions are also directly influenced by influencers' level of credibility and their perceived trustworthiness.

Exploring the role of social media influencers (SMIs) in consumer behavior from the point of view of their personalities and the features of their content and how SMIs' behavior results in choice imitation through customer loyalty is one of the research questions raised by Frad Chan (2022). It was discovered that SMIs mostly affect consumer behavior in terms of increasing customer loyalty and decreasing their persuasion resistance. At the same time, income level might influence the relationship slightly, but gender and education are irrelevant. In their paper, N. Sharma et al. (2026)

investigate the effect of social media influencers and celebrity personalities on the shopping behaviour of consumers within the apparel industry of India. The research focuses on various demographic characteristics such as age, income, profession, and social media consumption that determine consumers' reactions to influencers marketing. According to the results, young consumers, particularly students, are more easily influenced by relatable and aspirational content on social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. In addition, it is found that lower-income consumers are price sensitive compared to higher-income consumers who seek exclusivity. Hence, it is recommended to implement targeted strategies for effective marketing campaigns.

In their paper, R. Naveen Kumar et al. (2024) analyse the effect of the following social media influencer characteristics, namely niche expertise, authenticity, credibility, trustworthiness, and value on consumers' impulse buying behaviour on social commerce platforms in India. A sample of 429 valid responses from Bangalore residents was obtained via a Likert scale survey. The results demonstrate a significant influence of all social media influencer characteristics on the impulsive buying behaviour of consumers. Moreover, strong correlations between influencers' characteristics and impulsive buying were established.

Agnihotri, A., & Bhattacharya, S. (2021). investigates the comparative effectiveness of using mainstream celebrities vs. social media influencers for product endorsements in India and analyzes the impact of parasocial relationships on the same. The research concludes that celebrities tend to be more effective endorsers compared to influencers because of the higher degree of parasocial relationships formed owing to their higher perception of being powerful and prestigious. In addition, regulatory focus serves as an important moderator, where promotion-oriented consumers show no differences between celebrities and influencers, while prevention-oriented consumers favor celebrities.

N. Gupta et al. (2025) explore the relationship between social media influencers (SMIs)/internet celebrities and the level of consumer trust and impulsive purchasing behavior related to branded cosmetics in India. The findings indicate that consumer trust acts as a critical driver of impulsiveness in purchasing behavior, whereby influencer identification and high brand-influencer fit greatly increase the likelihood of buying cosmetics. Furthermore, popularity, adoration, and relatability contribute

significantly to trust, whereas social distance is a factor negatively impacting impulses to buy.

Sabina Sethi, Bharti Panwar, Nidhi Goyal, (2024) investigate how fashion blogs affect fashion consumption, preferences, and purchase behavior among young women in the largest metropolitan cities of India. This study indicates that fashion bloggers play an important role as trend setters and have an important influence on fashion adoption among young women who are active users of social media. Moreover, it establishes that fashion blogs greatly influence fashion purchase decisions related to apparel, accessories, and brands. Furthermore, bloggers also influence attitude formation through provision of information and inspiration and even fashion advice in some cases.

Khan, M. A., Alhathal, F., Alam, S., & Minhaj, S. M. (2023) evaluate how different influencer attributes on social networking sites affect credibility and brand image and consequently consumers' online purchase intentions in Delhi NCR, India. This study identifies that expertise, information, and trustworthiness contribute significantly to credibility and brand image. In contrast, entertainment, attractiveness, and likability do not contribute significantly towards brand image and credibility. In addition, credibility and brand image serve as mediators of relationship between influencer attributes and consumer's purchase intentions.

Monu Singh et al. (2025) seeks to explore the contribution of digital intelligence using influencer marketing and its effect on India's retail economy, especially in enhancing consumer interactions within retail outlets. The research concludes that an active online presence of a retailer can improve its performance and consumer interaction. The research further proves that digital intelligence facilitates enhanced consumer-retailer interactions and contacts. Generally, this study confirms that influencer-driven digital techniques lead to enhanced retail performance and sustainable growth within India's retail industry.

Agnihotri D, Chaturvedi P, Kulshreshtha K, Tripathi V (2023) intends to analyse the influence of social media influencers' authenticity on follower's purchase behaviour and the mediating role of parasocial interaction between authenticity and purchase behavior. The results indicate a positive impact of influencer's authenticity on buyers' purchasing behavior. Additionally, parasocial interaction acts as a mediator between

the attributes of authenticity, namely sincerity, truthful endorsement, and visibility, and purchase behavior, apart from expertise and uniqueness. On the other hand, Khan A, Khan Z, Nabi MK, Saleem I (2026), consider an elaborated Theory of Planned Behavior in order to explore the role played by the credibility of social media influencers, the use of social media, and social media marketing in affecting females' purchasing intentions towards cosmetic products online. The results indicate that all these variables have a positive effect on attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control, and therefore positively affect female online purchase intention for cosmetic products.

All in all, these papers suggest that the credibility of social media influencers and social media itself plays an important role in shaping consumer buying behaviour. Most research articles mention that credibility, trustworthiness, authenticity, expertise, relatability, and content quality are the most significant criteria which help consumers establish trust in social media influencers and follow their recommendations. If consumers develop emotional connections and build para-social relationships with influencers, they will be inclined to follow recommendations and even make purchases. Influencers also promote brand awareness, increase consumer engagement and improve the purchase intention, particularly among Generation Z and millennials. Social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, blogs have been found as potent methods of affecting buying decisions. Some recent studies have even established the fact that influencers can influence the buyers' decisions better than celebrities or traditional marketing methods simply because influencers seem more relatable.

However, some literature establishes the fact that not all features of the influencers are equally effective. The literature establishes that certain attributes such as entertainment and attractiveness have little impact on influencing buying decisions whereas attributes such as trustworthiness and information quality prove to be important. Certain demographic variables such as social media consumption rate, income level and age prove to be vital in affecting consumer responses.

In specific relation to India, there are studies which suggest that the role of influencers proves extremely influential in determining buying behavior especially in the categories of fashion, cosmetics, retail and lifestyle products. This even holds true for

the period of the pandemic as influencer marketing proved to be extremely powerful during the pandemic period due to the increase in online shopping.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology is the approach used to collect data, analyze and interpret those collected data to address the research question and objectives. This works as the clear framework for the study and ensure that the results are reliable, valid and meaningful.

This study focus is to understand the dynamics how social media influencers impact the consumers choice while shopping online and also the key factors that drive those decisions. By using a structured method this study examine the digital shopping behaviour, perceptions and preferences related to influencer marketing across the various social media platform.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive research design, to explore th trends, behaviours, and relationship between social media influencers interactions and online shopping behvaiour. Additionally quantitative approach is employed because numerical data is collected to be analyzed. This helps in understanding the influencer credibility, purchase intention and effect of social media influencers on purchasing decisions.

3.2 Population and sample

The population of this study are the active users of the social media platforms and who are exposed to influencer content. These are the study population because they are most likely to be influenced by online recommendations when making purchasing decisions.

In terms of sampling methods, snowball sampling has been used . Snowbball sampling is a type of sampling which involves starting with a small ground of respondents who meet study crietria and asking them to refer others who also are fit for the study. This method is useful because it helped identifying the participants via existing respondents who engaged with influencer content ensuring sample is relevant

3.3 Data Collection

Primary data:

Primary data has been collected via structured online questionnaire designed to capture information regarding demographics, social media usage, trust factors and influencer impact. 33 responses were collected for this study.

Secondary data:

Secondary data has also studied to provide context and theoretical support for the study. Academic papers, industry reports and articles are studied to support this study.

3.4 Research Instrument

Structured questionnaire has been used. It contains:

- Closed-ended questions
- Multi-choice questions
- Likert scale questions (1-5)

3.5 Variables of the Study

Table 3.1: Variables of the Study

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables
Social Media platform used	Purchase importance
Daily hours spent on social media	Past purchase behavior
Frequency of following/interacting with influencers	Likelihood of future purchases
Motivation for trusting influencers (credibility, authenticity, content quality)	Type of products purchased
Perception of influencers vs. traditional celebrities	Online shopping behavior

Source: Own Analysis

3.6 Data Analysis Methods

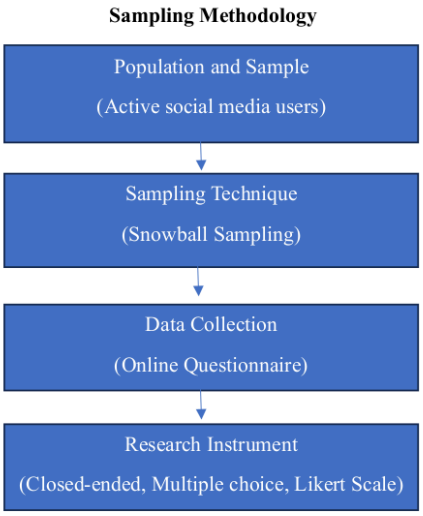
- Descriptive statistics: Summarized demographic information, social media usage, and influencer interaction patterns using percentages, averages, and frequency distributions.
- Correlations analysis: Examined relationships between influencer credibility, trust, engagement, and purchase intention.
- Graphical representation: Used charts, bar graphs, and tables to make the results more understandable.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

- There was voluntary participation and all respondents were fully aware about the purpose and objectives of the study.

- All repsondents were kept confidential and their identities remains anonymus.
- All the responses were solely collected for academic purpose and will not be shared outside the scope of this study.

Figure 3.1 : Sampling Methodology



4. DATA ANALYSIS

Based on the responses collected via structures questionnaire, this section explore the detailed analysis of real consumer responses by analyzing these patterns the study aims to highlight the dynamics between social media influencers and shopping choices.

4.1 Demographics of the respondents

4.1.1 Age

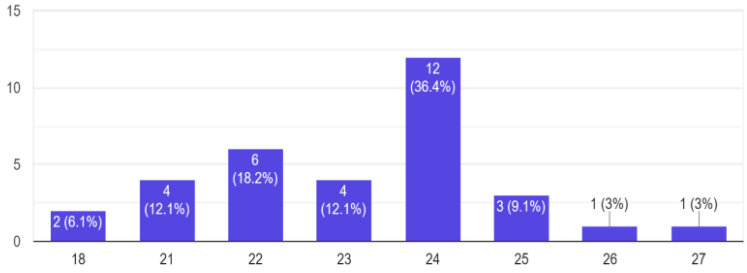
Table: 4.1: Age of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18	2	6.1
21	4	12.1
22	6	18.2
23	4	12.1
24	12	36.4
25	3	9.1
26	1	3
27	1	3

Source: Own Analysis

Majority of the respondents are 24 years old. 12 out of 33 respondents are 24 years old that is around 36.4% followed by 22 years old that is 6 out of 33 which comprises around 18.2%.

Figure 4.1: Age of the respondents



Source: Own Analysis

4.1.2 Gender

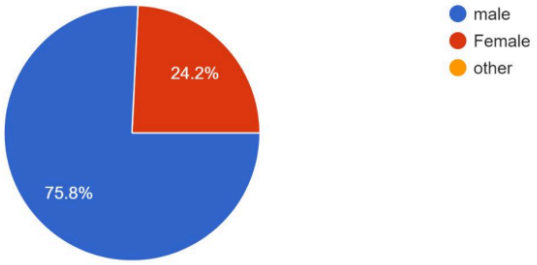
Table 4.2: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	25	75.8
Female	8	24.2

Source: Own Analysis

In terms of gender composition majority of the respondents are male that is around 75.8% followed by female that is 24.2%.

Figure 4.2: Gender of the Respondents



Source: Own Analysis

4.1.3 Current status

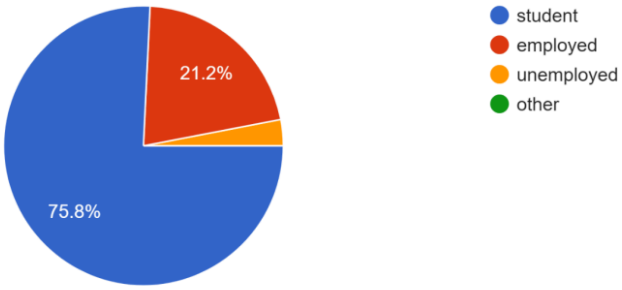
Table 4.3: Current Status of the Respondents

Current Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Student	25	75.8
Employed	7	21.2
Others	1	3

Source: Own Analysis

In terms of current status of the respondents, 75.8% of the respondent are students which is the majority followed by 21.2% which are employed somewhere.

Figure 4.3 : Gender of the Respondents



Source: Own Analysis

4.2 Use of Social media platform

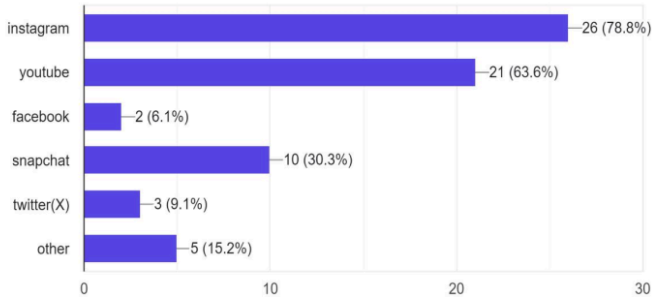
Table 4.4: Social Media Usage

Social Media Platform usage	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Instagram	26	78.8
Youtube	21	63.6
Facebook	2	6.1
Snapchat	10	30.3
Twitter (X)	3	9.1
Other	5	15.2

Source: Own Analysis

Out of 33 respondents, 26 respondents use Instagram regularly which comprises around 78.8% of the total respondents. While 21 respondents use youtube regularly that is around 63.6% of the total respondents. 10 out 33 respondents use snapchat on a regular basis which is around 30.3%.

Figure 4.4: Social Media Usage



Source: Own Analysis

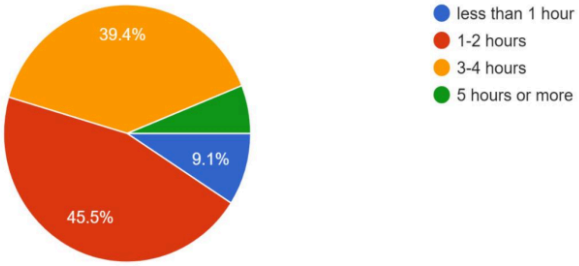
4.3 Daily Engagement on Social Media

Table 4.5 : Daily Engagement on Social Media

Daily Engagement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 hour	3	9.1
1-2 hours	15	45.5
3-4 hours	13	39.4
5 hours or more	2	6.1

Source: Own Analysis

Figure 4.5 : Daily Engagement on Social Media



Source: Own Analysis

Around 45.5% of total respondents (33), said they use social media for 1-2 hours daily while 39.4% of total respondents said they use it for 3-4 hours daily. Two of the extremes were less than one hour engagement; where 9.1% said they use it for less than hour a day and remaining 6.1 said they use it for 5 hours or more daily.

4.4 Interaction with social media influencers

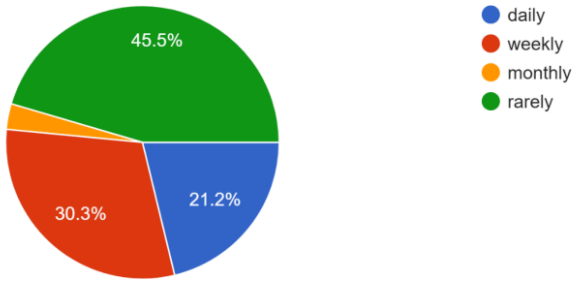
Table 4.6 : Interaction with Social media influencers

Interactions	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Daily	7	21.2
Weekly	10	30.3
Monthly	1	3
Rarely	15	45.5

Source: Own Analysis

Regarding interaction with social media influencers 45.5% of 33 respondents said that they rarely interact with or follow the social media influencers while 30.3% said they do it weekly. On the other hand around 21.2% of 33 respondents said that they follow have interact with the social media influencers on daily basis.

Figure 4.6 : Interaction with Social media influencers



Source: Own Analysis

4.5 Impact of opinions of social media influencers in purchasing decisions

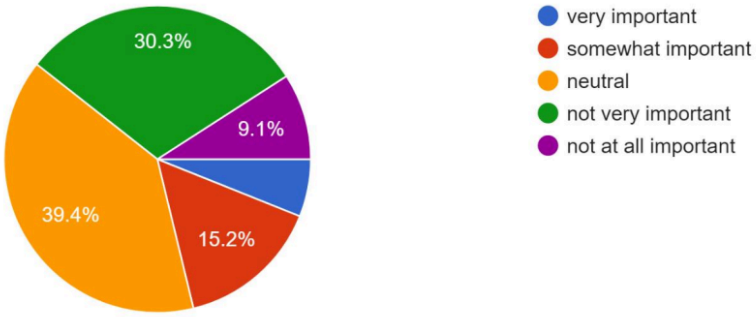
Table 4.7 : Impact of opinions of social media influencers in purchasing decisions

Opinions Importance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Important	2	6.1
Somewhat Important	5	15.2
Neutral	13	39.4
Not very Important	10	30.3
Not at all Important	3	9.1

Source: Own Analysis

When asked about the importance of opinions of social media influencers on purchasing decisions, 39.4% that is 13 out of 33 respondents were neutral on it. 30.3% that is 10 said its not very important for them. While 9.1% said its not at all important. On the other hand, around 15.2% that is 5 out of 33 said its somewhat important for them and 2 out of 33 said its very important for them.

Figure: 4.7 : Impact of opinions of social media influencers in purchasing decisions



Source: Own Analysis

4.6 Product Purchasing decision

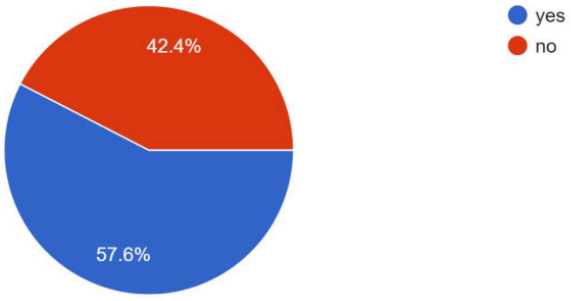
Table 4.8 : Product Purchasing decision

Product Purchased on not	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	19	57.6
No	14	42.4

Source: Own Analysis

Regarding product purchasing decision, 57.6% that is 19 out of 33 respondents never purchased a product or service based on the recommendation of social media influencer. While 14 out of 33 had purchased based on the recommendation of social media influencer.

Figure 4. 8: Product Purchasing decision



Source: Own Analysis

4.7 Motivation behind the trust

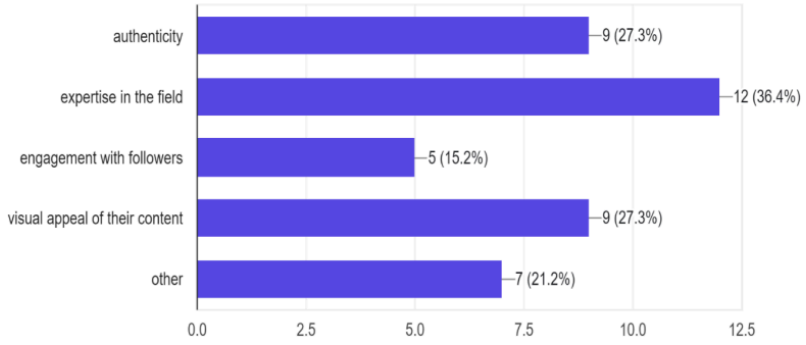
Table 4.9 : Motivation behind the trust

Motivation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Authenticity	9	27.3
Expertise in the Field	12	36.4
Engagement with the followers	5	15.2
Visual Appeal of their content	9	27.3
Other	7	21.2

Source: Own Analysis

Out of 33 respondnets, 12 said that they trust the social media influencer recommendation because of their expertise in the field. While 9 out of 33 said, they trust the social media influencer recommendation because of the visual appeal of their content. 9 out of 33 respondents said they trust the social media influencer recommendation because of the authenticity followed by 5 out 33 respondents saying they trust the social media influencer recommendation because of their engagement with the followers.

Figure: 4.9 : Motivation behind the trust



Source: Own Analysis

4.8 Product preference

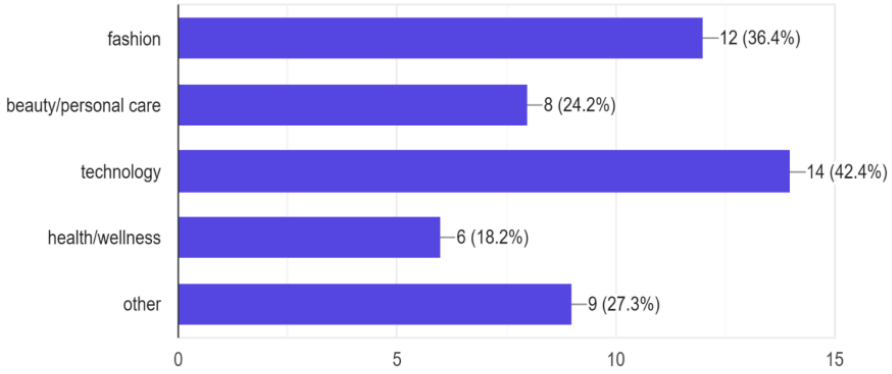
Table 4. 10: Product Preference

Motivation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Fashion	12	36.4
Beauty/ Personal Care	8	24.2
Technology	14	42.4
Health/Wellness	6	18.2
Other	9	27.3

Source: Own Analysis

Out of 33 respondents, 14 said that they are more likely to buy technology based product based on influencer recommendation while 12 said fashion products. 8 out of 33 said they are likely to buy beauty/personal care products based on influencer recommendation.

Figure 4.10 : Product Preference



Source: Own Analysis

4.9 Future purchasing decision

Table 4.11 : Future Purchasing Decision

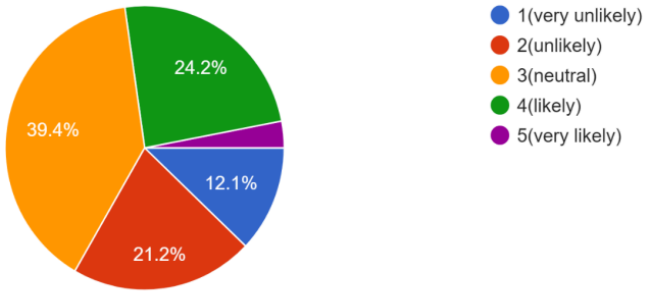
Future Purchase	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very unlikely	4	12.1
Unlikely	7	21.2
Neutral	13	39.4
Likely	8	24.2
Very Likely	1	3

Source: Own Analysis

Majority of the respondents that is 13 out of 33 respondnets said they are neutral about purchasing a product recommended by an influencer in the future. While 24.2% said they are very likely to purchase a product recommended by an influencer in the future.21.2% said they are unlikely to purchase a product recommended by an

influencer in the future. 12.1% that is 4 out 33 said they are very unlikely to purchase a product recommended by an influencer in the future.

Table 4.11: Future Purchasing Decision



Source: Own Analysis

4.10 Comparing Social media influencers to traditional celebrities

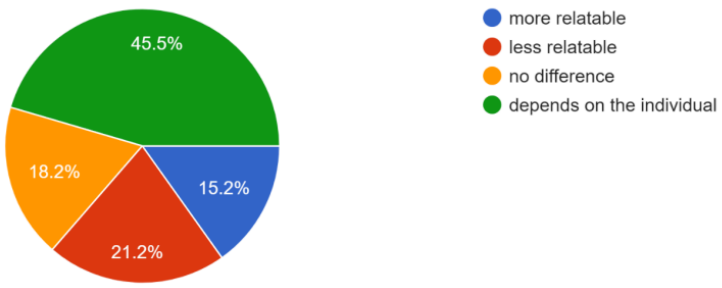
Table 4. 12: Comparing Social media influencers to traditional celebrities

Comparision	Frequency	Percentage (%)
More relatable	5	15.2
Less relatable	7	21.2
No difference	6	18.2
Depends on the individual	15	45.5

Source: Own Analysis

Out of 33 respondnets, majority that is around 45.5 % (15/33) said that it depends on individual to individual how they are in comparison to traditional celebrities. While 21.2% found social media less relatable to traditional celebrities.18.2% of total respondents said they find no difference between social media influencers and traditional celebrities while 15.2% said they find social media influencers more relatable than traditional celebrities.

Figure 4.12 :Comparing Social media influencers to traditional celebrities



Source: Own Analysis

4.11 Intersectional Correlation

No strong correlation between time spent on social media and importance of influencer opinions. Respondents who spend less than 1 hour generally don't consider influencer opinions important. Respondents spending 1-2 hours are slightly receptive but still no strong correlation. Respondents spending more than three hours are mostly neutral or think influencers' opinions are somewhat important.

No strong correlation between social media platform and importance of social media influencers in purchasing decisions. Platform usage mainly reflects exposure, but decision-making depends on influencer content, not the platform itself.

There is not a perfect correlation between opinion of social media influencers in purchasing decisions and perception about social media influencers compared to traditional celebrities. But there is a moderate positive relation, as if a respondent perceives influencers as more relatable than celebrities, they are more likely to consider their opinions important in purchasing decisions, while if a respondent perceives influencers as less relatable, they give lower importance to influencer recommendations. But at the same time, many respondents who are neutral about relatability also rate influencer opinions as neutral. In terms of motivation to trust a social media influencer, majority said that the influencers expertise the respective field motivates them to trust a social media influencer recommendation.

4.12 Findings

The present study investigated the impact of social media influencers on consumer purchasing behavior for 33 participants. Results revealed several significant trends about different demographics, patterns of social media usage, as well as involvement and engagement with social media influencers.

First, demographic characteristics and social media patterns demonstrated significant trends. The majority of the respondents were aged 24. Specifically, there were 12 people (or 36.4% of the sample) aged 24, and 6 respondents (18.2%) were 22 years old. These statistics indicate that the current research has focused predominantly on young consumers active on different social media platforms. Regarding gender distribution, males made up 75.8% of the sample size, whereas females constituted 24.2% of all respondents. Most participants (75.8%) were students, and 21.2% had full-time jobs.

Moreover, respondents exhibited high involvement and engagement with different social media platforms. As for the frequency, Instagram was used by the largest percentage (78.8%) of the sample population, followed by YouTube (63.6%). Finally, Snapchat attracted 30.3% of the respondents. The above results support the notion that Instagram and YouTube are the leading social networks used for influencer marketing and reaching younger customers. Analysis of social media consumption shows that most respondents spend medium hours interacting on social media. Approximately 45.5% use social media between one to two hours per day, whereas 39.4% spend three to four hours daily.

A smaller proportion spends less than an hour (9.1%) or more than five hours (6.1%) per day on social media. Such data shows that social media forms part of daily routine of most respondents providing continuous access to digital content created by influencers and brands. Concerning interaction on social media with influencers, most respondents displayed medium interaction. Specifically, 45.5% of respondents stated they rarely interact with or follow influencers, while 30.3% do so weekly. On the other hand, 21.2% interact with influencers daily. Such results show that respondents frequently consumed content from influencers but interaction remained low for most users. The study also considered the impact of influencer recommendations on consumer behaviour.

From the results, it can be concluded that influencer marketing can affect people differently. More than half of the participants (57.6%) have never purchased anything from an influencer recommendation. Yet, 14 out of 33 consumers bought goods that were recommended by social media influencers. As it could be seen, although influencer marketing does not necessarily convince all customers, it still influences a good number of them. The study also analyzed why consumers trusted influencer recommendations. The first and foremost determinant was expert knowledge in a particular sphere. 12 respondents considered expertise as a decisive criterion in trusting influencers' suggestions. Other factors included visual appeal and authenticity (9 consumers mentioned them separately). Finally, the respondents noted the role of influencer communication with their followers (5 people named it as the determinant of trust). The analysis above shows that credibility is valued higher than popularity when it comes to consumer decisions. When it comes to types of products, it can be claimed that technology products are most often purchased from influencer recommendations (14 participants chose them). Next come fashion products (12 participants) and beauty & personal care products (8 participants). In this case, therefore, it is clear that influencer marketing works effectively in visual-oriented industries such as the fashion and entertainment industry, whereby consumers have a desire for reviewing and demonstration prior to purchase. The attitudes toward future purchase based on influencer recommendations reveal neutral attitudes regarding their influence in consumer behavior. For example, most of the respondents (39.4%) had neutral attitudes towards making future purchases based on influencer recommendations. At the same time, 24.2% were very likely to make such purchases, while 21.2% were unlikely. Similarly, 12.1% were very unlikely to make such purchases in the future. In other words, although the recommendations made by the influencers influence the purchase behaviors of many individuals, there are those who are skeptical about their impact. The second question asked about comparisons between social media influencers and traditional celebrities. The majority of the respondents (45.5%) felt that relatability varies from one influencer to another or from one traditional celebrity to another. For instance, around 21.2% believed that influencers are less relatable compared to traditional celebrities. Meanwhile, 18.2% of the respondents indicated that there was little difference. On the contrary, only 15.2% felt that influencers are more relatable.

The correlation analysis revealed no significant association between social media usage duration and the level of importance attributed to influencer opinions. The participants who used social media for less than an hour per day were indifferent to influencer opinions. Those who spent more time online tended to be slightly more sensitive to influencers' opinions yet still remained neutral overall. As far as correlations between preferred social media and the importance attributed to influencer opinion, there was no evident link here. It means that consumers base their purchasing decision primarily on the relevance, quality, and reliability of the influencer's content. Finally, the results of correlation analysis reveal a statistically significant positive correlation between the degree of relatability to influencers among participants and importance attributed to influencer opinions. It means that consumers who found influencers relatable were more sensitive to their opinion. Yet a lot of participants had neutral attitude to influencers and their relatability. In summary, expertise, authenticity, and relatability can serve as the foundation for successful influencer campaigns. Spending time on social media alone is not sufficient to exert impact on consumers.

4.13 Recommendations

The following recommendations may be formulated based on the results of the research for businesspeople, marketers, social media influencers, and other parties interested in conducting research in the area.

First of all, companies should cooperate with credible influencers who know their field well. As it was shown above, most people considered the influence of the person to be one of the main reasons why they would trust an influencer. Thus, companies should pay attention to the knowledge, experience, and professionalism of influencers, and choose those who know what they are talking about when advertising the products of companies. For instance, technology brands need to work together with influencers who know a lot about different technologies and devices.

Secondly, authenticity should be the cornerstone of the marketing strategy of each influencer. As it was already mentioned above, many participants in the survey saw this aspect as the major reason behind their trust in social media personalities. Indeed, nowadays people know that influencers are usually compensated by brand owners, and that is why they should show their authentic feelings and thoughts concerning the product rather than advertise something in an artificial manner. One of the other key

recommendations would be for firms to use their Instagram and YouTube accounts more effectively, since these are the two channels that have been utilized the most. Given the fact that Instagram emerged as the channel of choice followed by YouTube, firms must leverage these social media channels through short reels, product tutorials, live interactions, and even videos that grab the attention of the audience.

Influencers may promote various types of goods ranging from technology products to fashion or personal care products. The results obtained reveal that respondents were quite willing to purchase such products recommended by influencers. Consequently, businesses operating in these industries can benefit substantially from working with influencers. They could demonstrate, unbox, explain, style, and compare these products to facilitate purchase decisions made by customers.

With majority of consumers hardly having any interaction with influencers, nor having any neutral stance towards purchases from influencers, marketers ought to strive for greater levels of involvement rather than using promotional messages alone. Methods such as Q&A interactions, polls, give-aways, personalized suggestions, and community interactions can be instrumental in improving the bond between influencers and their followers. Greater involvement can lead to increased levels of trust as well as gradual impact of recommendations on consumer purchasing.

From the findings of the study, excessive social media involvement does not necessarily translate into greater influence by social media influencers. Therefore, marketers should not assume that increased exposure equals consumer influence. On the contrary, the focus should be more on content than on mere exposure. Quality content will increase chances of creating engagement and making an impact on purchasing decisions. Also, companies should select influencers based on the similarity between audiences, not the number of followers only. Given that there were different opinions among participants about the similarities of influencers and traditional celebrities, brands need to work with influencers whose lifestyle, interests, and values are similar to those of the targeted customers. In some cases, micro and niche influencers may be more successful in comparison to extremely popular influencers.

4.14 Limitations of the study

Another constraint of this research is that there was a limited number of 33 respondents for this particular study; it may be that only such a small amount represents the bigger portion of the population. Another problem with the sampling strategy is that the respondents were from the younger population, and this study used the snowball sampling method, where a majority of respondents came from other respondents and through personal contacts, leading to a concentration of younger respondents aged between 22 and 24.

This study relied completely on respondents' answers, obtained through the questionnaire survey, which may be biased due to respondents' own interests, memories, or socially acceptable answers.

5. CONCLUSION

This research focused on the effects of social media influencers on the shopping behavior of consumers using 33 respondents. It was concerned with demographic information, social media usage, involvement with influencers, and purchase behaviors. Based on the results of this research, social media has a major role in the everyday activities of the youth generation, especially those who are between 22 and 24 years old students. Instagram and YouTube were identified as the main social media sites where consumers spend much time.

Moreover, it was revealed that there is continuous consumption of content provided by influencers, despite minimal involvement with them. While 52% of the respondents did not buy anything from an influencer recommendation, the majority acknowledged that influencers have influenced their purchasing behavior. Moreover, the research showed that experience, authenticity, and relatability are the factors that affect consumers' trust in influencers the most. Consumers would rather seek advice from an influencer, who seems like a person knowledgeable, authentic, and relatable compared to someone who just seems popular on social media. Products in technology, fashion, and beauty niches are especially affected by social media ads. Therefore, influencer marketing is especially efficient for visual products and those related to trends.

What is more, the researchers discovered that there is no correlation between the number of hours consumers spend on social media and the significance of influencer marketing for their shopping decisions. Moreover, the type of social network used by consumers does not affect their susceptibility to influencer marketing either. Thus, influencer content quality and relevance seem more influential than anything else.

Consumers can also be described as quite critical of influencer marketing. The respondents showed neutrality regarding potential future purchases based on influencer opinions, which means that they tend to doubt social media content. Also, consumers do not consider social media influencers to be more relatable and trustworthy compared to other celebrities.

In summary, the paper shows that social media influencers have the ability to influence consumer purchase decisions, particularly if they are seen as authentic and knowledgeable about their products. It is important to understand that influencer marketing campaigns may not be successful for all audiences, and consumer reactions

31
will differ based on trust levels, the nature of the products and the level of engagement with the influencer.

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