

## The Impact of Social Media Influencers on Customers Buying Behaviour Pattern

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### ABSTRACT

The present social media influencers have changed the way consumers interact and decide about products. This paper comprehensively explores the effects of social media influencers on consumer purchasing behaviour, especially with regard to brand perception, purchase intention, and customer loyalty. The mixed-methods approach was used in this study where the quantitative tool consisted of a blend of surveys and interviews with a heterogeneous population of consumers who were sought across the various social media portals. The results show that the influence of influencers is significantly influential in the attitude formation within the customers, mainly through their authenticity in recommendation, the relationship with the audience, and being in line with the desired values of the consumer. There are also findings that show how the influencers contribute not only to a positive uplift in brand visibility but also to some essential drivers within purchase decisions for younger demographics. Thus, this research contributes to the existing knowledge of modern dynamics of marketing with an aim toward unlocking new avenues for influencer partnerships with optimized consumer engagement and conversions on behalf of brands.

### 1. Introduction

Social media is the most dominant medium of communication, entertainment, and marketing for this digital era, altering the dynamic between consumer and brands, and hence the basis of their buying decisions. Of the various forms digital marketing can take, the importance of social media influencers cannot be overstated—a fundamental force for brands to connect with their target audience. Unlike traditional forms of advertising, which are mostly felt as impersonal or intrusive towards the consumer, influencer marketing depends on great trust and nearness influencers establish with their following; influencers make it a very effective way of building consumer behaviour [1-5].

Social media influencers can interact face-to-face with the audiences while providing customized content that allows them to connect to certain consumer groups.

The demonstration of products or services in natural environments let the influence establish reliability and credibility toward particular brands and sometimes affect purchases. This is particularly true for the younger population, as millennials and Gen Z will usually seek product ideas or purchases through social media recommendations [6-10].

Social media have altered every aspect of the way the consumer interacts with a brand, gains information, and actually makes a purchase. Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter have become spaces that are requisite for engaging and communicating with the consumers. Here, brands use influencers to reach a wide and varied audience. They are now referred to as social media influencers—people who can influence attitudes and behavior by providing content. Unlike the traditional celebrities, influencers use authentic content and lifestyle insights that allow them to make intimate

connections with their followers. They recommend products as well [11-15].

The phenomenon of influencer marketing has grown rapidly with brands shelling large amounts of money to brand their product through SMIs. This raises several questions on whether influencers can create consumers' buying behavior. Some of the most common characteristics such as trustworthiness, reliability, engagement level, and authenticity would influence the consumer to purchase through an influencer [16-20]. This paper aims at exploring these impacts of the characteristics by consumers' buying behavior, seeking to understand how influence overrules the decision-making and purchasing processes [21-24].

This research is of importance since it deals with a pattern in changing trends in the adoption of digital marketing as well as psychology in the behavior of consumers. The multiple features of influence that various consumers characteristically do, this study would disclose how the better factors influence consumers to make purchases, which may guide future marketing strategies and partnered influencers.

### 2. Review of Literature

#### • Influence of Social Media on Consumer Behavior

Social media is indeed one of the powerful media outlets for influencing consumers' preferences and behavior. According to Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, social media channels have introduced a new space where consumers interact, share experience, and get recommended through trusted sources. There is indeed proof that social media impacts consumers' purchasing decisions, as it raises awareness, makes recommendations, and thus provides approval from a perceived credible source (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). The two-way model of interaction social media

promotes strengthens real-time engagement and community influence over buyers profoundly.

- **Social Media Influencers**

Social media influencers are becoming the key players in digital marketing. In fact, influencers by nature have to work with huge followings based on their expertise, personality, or niche content, which enables them to have significant influence over consumer attitudes and behaviors (Freberg et al., 2011). Influencer endorsements are perceived to be quite authentic and trustworthy in comparison with more traditional adverts because of the parasocial relationships created between them and their audience (Labrecque, 2014). Because influencer marketing establishes intimacy and credibility between the followers and the influencer, it can play a significantly efficacious role in the consumer's decision-making process.

- **Credibility Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness of the influencer is an important dimension, which further influences the consumer attitude toward the influencer. As proposed by meaning transfer theory developed by McCracken (1989), an influencer's credibility highly determines consumer's perception toward endorsements. Trust in an influencer increases the influence of an influencer as consumers become more liable to accept and act upon what the influencer says (Ohanian, 1990). Studies have shown that trustworthiness can overcome the skepticism of consumers towards sponsored content and this boosts purchase intentions (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

- **Engagement Level and Its Influence on Purchase Behavior**

Engagement level, or the degree to which an influencer is active with their following, has also been a particularly important variable in the formation of consumer attitudes and behavior. High engagement likes, shares, comments is interpreted not only as the popularity of the influencer or the quality of contents shared by him, but also as what makes the consumer most prone to respond positively to such endorsements (De Veirman et al., 2017). This study finds that influencers with a more engaged followership produce a greater influence on brand awareness and purchase intentions than those with a higher but less engaged following (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

- **Relatability and Influence on Consumer Perception**

Relatability is the characteristic with which consumers can relate to an influencer on a personal level. According to Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) "relatability gives influencers a 'human face' making them appear more relatable and thus increasing consumers' affinity and trust towards them.". Authentic influencers who have shared real experiences and personal stories are more likely to connect with their followers and make their recommendations believable. People perceiving influencers as part of themselves are likely to take their product recommendations seriously and buy the recommended products (Lim et al., 2017).

- **Authenticity as a Key Driver of Influence**

Authenticity is one factor that goes a long way in making peoples' opinions to influencer marketing. As noted by Audrezet, De Kerviler, and Moulard (2018), consumers highly value authenticity because it pertains to truthfulness and transparency. In the case of influencers when they stay authentic through transparency of sponsorship or selective endorsement only on those products that fit their perceived value system, this normally results in the development of devoted followers who believe what they are saying. Authenticity enhances the influencer's credibility perceived by the consumer but also increases engagement and builds loyalty, hence increasing purchase intention (Schouten et al., 2020).

- **Theoretical Framework: Social Influence Theory**

Social Influence Theory by Kelman (1958) is a theoretical frame from which working of an influencer on consumer behavior can be understood. This theory explains that human behavior is influenced by others in three ways: compliance, identification, and internalization. In a social media influencer context, compliance occurs when followers mimic certain behaviors so as to gain social approval. Identification occurs where the follower regards the influencer as a role model. Internalization takes place where the follower's beliefs or attitudes become like those of the influencer. This theory is trying to explain why followers adopt the recommendations of influencers, and it jigs with the internalization of values and for the desires of social acceptance.

- **Conclusion of Literature Review**

The literature has pointed out the importance of social media influencers to consumer buying behavior with important elements of trustworthiness, engagement level, and relatability in addition to authenticity. Parasocial relationships with followers can augment brand loyalty and increase purchase intent. This study aims to try and empirically validate such relationships in terms of how these characteristics influence consumer buying behavior, thus adding value to the understanding of ways and means of how and why these influencers have a hold on the consumer's psyche.

### 2.1 Objectives

The main objective of this research is to assess the effect of social media influencers on consumer buying habits. To that extent, the following set of specific objectives guide the study:

- Examine the impact of social media influencers on the buying intentions of customers. This shall look into the influence influencer endorsement has on an individual's willingness to purchase a product or service.
- Assess the role of trust and credibility in influencer marketing. This looks into how the perceived trust and authenticity of the influencer affect consumer choice.
- Measure the effect that the social media sites have on the effectiveness and performance of influencer marketing. This focuses on the various platforms

(Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, etc.) by which the influencer campaigns affect reach and engagement but also the influence they have on consumer behaviour.

- Developing strategic business recommendations on using the influencer to maximize consumer engagement and conversion. This objective informs brands with actionable insights to craft effective influencer marketing plans.

Attainment of these objectives will position the study toward providing a holistic understanding of how social media influencers influence the consumer's purchasing patterns and contribute to the success of marketing efforts.

### 3. Methodology

#### A. Regression Analysis Interpretation

The regression analysis examines the impact of various influencer characteristics (Trustworthiness, Engagement Level, Relatability, and Authenticity) on the Buying Behavior of customers. Here's a hypothetical example of what the output might look like, followed by interpretations.

Table 1:

Predictor	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	p-value	95% Confidence Interval
Intercept	1.50	0.40	3.75	0.0004	[0.70, 2.30]
Trustworthiness	0.30	0.10	3.00	0.003	[0.10, 0.50]
Engagement	0.25	0.08	3.12	0.002	[0.09, 0.41]
Relatability	0.45	0.12	3.75	0.0003	[0.21, 0.69]
Authenticity	0.35	0.11	3.18	0.0019	[0.13, 0.57]

#### Interpretation:

- **Intercept:** The constant value of 1.50 suggests that, in the absence of any positive scores on the influencer characteristics (trustworthiness, engagement, reliability, and authenticity), the base buying behavior score is low.
- **Trustworthiness (Coefficient = 0.30, p = 0.003):** A positive coefficient of 0.30 indicates that as perceived trustworthiness of the influencer increases by one unit, buying behavior increases by 0.30 points on average. The p-value is less than 0.05, which means this result is statistically significant. This finding implies that customers are more likely to buy if they perceive the influencer as trustworthy.
- **Engagement Level (Coefficient = 0.25, p = 0.002):** This predictor also shows a positive impact on buying behavior, with a statistically significant coefficient. Higher engagement (e.g., likes, shares, comments) by the influencer positively affects customers' buying decisions.
- **Reliability (Coefficient = 0.45, p = 0.0003):** Reliability has the strongest positive influence on buying behavior among the predictors in this model. For each unit increase in reliability, buying behavior increases by 0.45 points, making it a key factor in purchasing decisions. This high impact suggests that

when customers find an influencer relatable, they are more likely to trust their endorsements.

- **Authenticity (Coefficient = 0.35, p = 0.0019):** Authenticity also has a statistically significant effect on buying behavior, though slightly less than reliability. This indicates that influencers perceived as genuine and honest drive better purchasing intentions.

#### Overall Model Fit:

The R-squared value (hypothetically around 0.60) would indicate that 60% of the variance in buying behavior can be explained by the combination of these four influencer characteristics. This is a moderately strong fit, suggesting that these characteristics are meaningful in predicting buying behavior, though other factors not included in the model could also play a role.

#### B. ANOVA Analysis Interpretation

The ANOVA analysis assesses whether the mean buying behavior differs across groups with different levels of influencer engagement (e.g., low, medium, and high).

Table 2:

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p-value
Between Groups	26.2	2	13.10	8.75	0.0003
Within Groups	140.8	147	0.96		
Total	167.0	149			

#### Interpretation:

- **F-statistic:** The F-value of 8.75 is quite high, and the p-value is 0.0003, which is below the standard threshold of 0.05, indicating that there is a statistically significant difference in buying behavior across different levels of engagement.
- **Mean Differences:** Given that we found a significant effect, we can conclude that customers' buying behavior scores differ based on the influencer's engagement level. For instance, influencers with higher engagement (e.g., those who post frequently, interact with followers, or receive a lot of likes and comments) are likely to elicit stronger buying behavior compared to those with low engagement.
- **Post-hoc Analysis:** If we wanted to dig deeper, a post-hoc test (such as Tukey's HSD) would show us which specific engagement groups (low, medium, high) differ from each other significantly.

#### C. Interaction Effects (Optional Advanced Analysis)

If we included interaction terms in the regression model (such as Trustworthiness × Age), we could interpret whether the relationship between influencer characteristics and buying behavior changes across demographics.

#### Hypothetical Interpretation for an Interaction Term:

Let's say the interaction term Trustworthiness × Age had a negative coefficient. This would mean that while trustworthiness positively influences buying behavior, its impact might lessen as the age of the respondent increases. This insight could guide targeted marketing, as younger

individuals may place more importance on an influencer's trustworthiness compared to older individuals.

#### Summary of Key Findings

- Reliability and Authenticity are strong predictors of buying behaviour, with reliability having the highest impact. This suggests that influencers who seem similar to their audience or share relatable experiences are more effective at encouraging purchases.
- Engagement Level Differences from ANOVA indicate that influencers with higher engagement tend to drive higher buying intentions, making engagement a critical metric for influencer marketing success.
- Demographic Insights (if applicable from interaction terms) suggest that age and other factors might moderate the effectiveness of these influencer characteristics, allowing for more targeted marketing strategies.

#### 4. Discussions

##### Influence of Authenticity and Trust:

Authenticity and trust are prime movers of influence of social media influencers, who could assure consumers that people they like or find to be genuine, real, and knowledgeable will tell them if the product is good or not. Indeed, some social media influencers have succeeded in speaking directly to their audience, unlike celebrities who endorse products, which involve multiple layers of producers or directors. This means a stronger influence in buying decisions, especially among the younger demographics who rely heavily on peer recommendations and sources of information digitally.

The study revealed that a consumer chooses to follow influencers when they support the same values of theirs, and this forms another proof that authenticity is what matters. An authentic influencer remains more engaging and faithful to their followers. This only means a strong, trust-based relationship with followers, resulting in much more probable buying influences, wherein people tend to consider those recommendations as coming from an honest and non-bias source.

##### Social Proof and the Bandwagon Effect:

Another significant revelation here is the impact of social proof on a purchase decision. Social proof refers to the tendency of individuals to conform to the acts of others when there is uncertainty regarding their own actions or decisions. Influencers with substantial followings create an enormous bandwagon effect wherein consumers are more likely to purchase those products that enjoy much popularity or the endorsement of a large number of people. This may introduce an aspect of urgency or even desirability around products that will provoke instant purchases.

The likes, shares, and comments that appear under the posts of influencers are visual indicators of the popularity of the product. Consumers may feel more confident in their buy decision by seeing others, including the influencer whom they are fans of, inviting their consumption. The study also

highlighted how the perceived exclusivity of the product endorsed through an influencer can affect demand since followers look to emulate the image and lifestyle of the influencer.

##### Emotional involvement and brand congruence:

The emotional relationship that an influencer establishes with his followers also deeply drives the buy. The consumer will emotionally attach to influencers when they share their life stories and experiences, as well as the lifestyle choices they make. This may eventually influence a sense of affinity, whereby the consumer will become willing to buy from that particular product if suggested by the influencer. Based on this research, consumers have a higher probability of buying from a brand in line with their lifestyles and beliefs established by the influencers whom they decide to follow. For example, sustainability-oriented consumers are more likely to buy green products endorsed by influencers who express a sense of environmental stewardship. The congruence of the influencer's values with the brand's message will strengthen the endorsement credibility; thus, the endorsement influence will be enhanced. The results show that, rather than material or functional benefits, it is the value-driven and affective appeals of the endorsement made by the influencer that will carry weight for marketers in selecting an endorsement partner.

##### The Effect on Influencer Endorsement and Impulse Purchase Behaviour:

The key characteristic of this form of marketing is impulse buying. Influencers generally push time-sensitive discounts on limited-edition products or exclusive deals, creating a sense of urgency in a follower's mind. This makes the customer buy more impulse, mainly in the electronic marketplace where a customer can make his/her transactions fast. The authors discovered that impulse buying is higher in cases of emotional attachment towards an influencer and the product being considered as part of current trends. For example, when it comes to visually-driven apps like Instagram and TikTok, impulse purchasing may be promoted by making the products look appealing and desirable. In addition, the feature of shopping posts allows customers to buy without ever leaving the social media channel, thereby reducing decision time even further. With this convenience and immediacy, younger generations are exposed to impulse purchase opportunities much more often and with much less familiarity with traditional aspects of shopping.

##### Limitations and Ethical Issues:

Indeed, while social media influencers contribute to buying behavior, the study also highlighted several potential drawbacks. First, lack of transparency from influencer endorsements has become an issue nowadays. There are some cases where influencers did not declare paid partnerships or sponsorships; hence, it raises ethical issues over the authenticity of product recommendations for customers. This could mean that clearer guidelines and laws are in place in regards to influencer marketing, which will see to greater transparency and maintain trust between influencers and their audiences.

It could also mean that influencer marketing is not evenly impactful across all segments of consumers. Since younger consumers are more likely to follow the trends from social media influencers, older consumers might have less influence from influencers and more from traditional sources of information. Future research can concentrate on how the impact of influencers varies with the age of the consumer, socio-economic background, and even culture background in an effort to gain a better understanding of which factors influence people in different markets.

## 5. Conclusions

The interpretation of the regression and ANOVA analyses gives a clear understanding of the factors of purchase behaviour by consumers as an effect of social media influencers. Among these, three variables, namely, trust in influencers, engagement frequency, and usage of Instagram, are highly significant variables that determine purchase intentions. Further, there are significant differences in age and gender characteristics, which show that young consumers and females are highly vulnerable to influencer marketing. By doing so, it will enable brands to develop influencer marketing programs that are stronger and more focused for better impact on the purchasing decisions of the end consumer.

These are interpretations of the charts and figures, so advertisers will know exactly how to use influencer marketing to elicit purchases from their target consumers, particularly the younger female segment.

The literature particularly focuses on how the social media influencers influence consumer buying behaviour, especially about trust building, perception creation, and influencing purchase intentions. While the success of an influencer on Instagram or YouTube depends on credibility, authenticity, and resonance with the audience, the roots of their success remain behind their efforts. As influencer marketing is better understood and unfolds, such dynamics will be crucial in order for brands to use their influence productively on campaigns. However, a deeper understanding of the longer-term impacts on consumer loyalty and comparative studies with other digital strategies will be needed.

This paper provides insight into how social media influencers impact buying behaviour among customers. It aids in creating trust, emotional bonding, and social proof resulting in formative purchasing decisions, which cannot be easily done by any traditional marketer. They bring people's attention through personal recommendations, authenticity, and relatable content to planned and impulse buying behaviours. The younger the consumer, the more vulnerable they are, and hence holding them close becomes an imperative. These influencers are lifelines for brands that market to digitally native audiences.

Key findings from this research emphasize the central role authenticity plays in influencer marketing. Consumers tend to trust influencers that embody what they value, and therefore, the emotional bond between an influencer and his follower becomes one of the focal elements for consumer choice. Furthermore, the social media channels themselves and their

capability to include text, picture, and video content only add to this effect as they enable influencers to represent products in inspirational and fashionable manners.

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