

**INFLUENCER MARKETING AND ITS EFFECT ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR- WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COCHIN CITY**

Dissertation

Submitted by

ALEENA MARIA ROSE (SM23COM004)

Under the guidance of

Ms. SANDRA SABU. T

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of

MASTER OF COMMERCE



ST. TERESA'S COLLEGE ESTD 1925

ST. TERESA'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), ERNAKULAM

COLLEGE WITH POTENTIAL FOR EXCELLENCE

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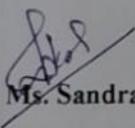
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project titled "**INFLUENCER BEHAVIOUR AND ITS EFFECT ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR- WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COCHIN CITY**" submitted to Mahatma Gandhi University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Degree of Master of Commerce is a record of the original work done by **Ms. ALEENA MARIA ROSE**, under my supervision and guidance during the academic year 2024-25.

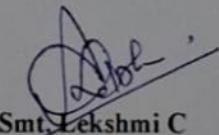
Project Guide



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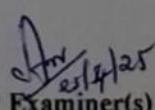


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Viva Voce Examination held on....



25/4/25

External Examiner(s)

DECLARATION

I, Ms. Aleena Maria Rose final year M.Com student, Department of Commerce (SF), St. Teresa's College (Autonomous) do hereby declare that the project report entitled "**INFLUENCER MARKETING AND ITS EFFECT ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR- WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COCHIN CITY**" submitted to Mahatma Gandhi University is a Bonafide record of the work done under the supervision and guidance of Mrs. Sandra Sabu T, Assistant Professor of Department of Commerce (SF), St. Teresa's College (Autonomous) and this work has not previously formed the basis for the award of any academic qualification, fellowship, or other similar title of any other university or board.

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First of all, I'm grateful to God Almighty for his blessings showered upon me for the successful completion of the project.

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ALEENA MARIA ROSE

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Influencer marketing involves collaborating with influencers, social media personalities or industry experts to create and share content that promotes a brand, product, or service. As consumers increasingly turn to social media for information, entertainment, and inspiration, influencer marketing has emerged as one of the most effective and widely adopted digital marketing strategies. By using the trust and loyalty that influencers build with their followers on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and X (formerly Twitter), brands are able to reach their target audiences in a more relatable and authentic manner compared to traditional advertising. Influencers often specialize in niche areas such as fashion, beauty, fitness, travel, technology, and gaming, allowing brands to gain highly engaged and demographically targeted communities.

The theory of social influence states that people are more prone to behave in a certain way if they believe it to be the standard or if they observe others behaving in that way. We are more likely to be affected by someone closer to us. Most people agree that the most effective way to influence consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions is through influencer marketing. Influencers and content creators, through their ability to create and impact trends, play a crucial role in influencing the buying choices of their audiences, contributing significantly to the growth and sales of brands.

Despite its rapid growth and widespread use, there is still a need to critically examine how influencer marketing truly impacts consumer behaviour. This study is motivated by the growing influence of digital platforms on consumer decision-making, and the observation that traditional advertising is losing its efficiency among younger, digitally- adept audiences. As influencer marketing continues to evolve, understanding its actual impact on consumer engagement, brand loyalty, and purchasing decisions becomes essential for marketers aiming to develop effective strategies.

This research specifically seeks to assess how social media platforms shape customer engagement with influencer content and their subsequent purchase decisions, evaluate the types of products or services consumers are most influenced to buy through influencers, and explore how the perceived authenticity of influencers affects consumer trust, behaviour, and brand loyalty. Finally, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the mechanisms of influence within the digital space, and to help brands build data-driven, ethically sound, and targeted influencer marketing campaigns that resonate with modern consumers.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In the rapidly evolving digital landscape, influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful strategy for brands to connect with consumers through authentic, engaging content. Influencers—individuals with significant followings on social media platforms—are often perceived as relatable and trustworthy, with the capacity to shape consumer preferences and behaviours. However, the actual impact of influencer marketing on consumer behaviour remains not completely understood, creating confusion for marketers aiming to enhance its effectiveness.

The primary concern lies in evaluating how influencer marketing affects consumer decision-making, particularly in relation to trust, authenticity, brand loyalty, and purchase intention. While influencers are valued for their perceived authenticity, the growing commercialization of their content blurs the line between genuine endorsements and paid promotions. This ambiguity may lead to consumer scepticism, thereby damaging the trust that influencer marketing is built upon.

Moreover, the effectiveness of influencer marketing varies across demographics or product categories. Strategies that yield success in industries such as fashion or beauty may not translate equally well to sectors like technology or services. As the marketing industry evolves with the rise of micro and nano influencers, it becomes increasingly important to understand how different consumer segments respond to influencer content.

This research therefore seeks to explore the effects of influencer marketing on consumer behaviour. It aims to assess the role of trust and authenticity in shaping consumer responses, evaluate its effectiveness across various product types and platforms, and determine whether influencer marketing represents a sustainable long-term strategy or risks decreasing consumer engagement due to over-commercialization.

1.3 Scope of the study

The study examines the methods, achievements, and difficulties of influencer marketing to see how it effects customer behaviour. Exploring multiple influencer marketing strategies, such as sponsored posts, product reviews, unboxings, giveaways, and brand partnerships, it analyses their many effects on customer view, trust, and engagement. At this time, the key focus will be on how consumers currently react to influencer endorsements, specifically with regard for loyalty overall, purchase intent for many, emotional connection certainly, brand recognition eventually, and trust also. In addition,

the research will closely explore the demographic variations in customer opinions, deeply focusing on how age, gender, and income greatly effect influencer content interaction.

The study additionally places a strong emphasis on a platform-specific analysis, with a purpose of assessing the degree to which several well-known channels foster customer connection. The study seeks to increase sales using multiple channels like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. It also explores the effect of influencer marketing in multiple industries, such as fashion, beauty, fitness, technology, and lifestyle, to determine which sectors obtain the greatest value and why. Focusing on the geography in the Indian market, the study looks into how culture, along with money matters as well as society, affect how people shop. Ethical issues, like transparency within sponsored content along with the risks from influencer fatigue, are addressed as well, bringing understandings into the building of trust and authenticity inside campaigns.

Finally, to find changing trends and patterns, the study will examine influencer marketing campaigns from the previous two to three years. By examining these aspects, the study offers an in-depth understanding of how influencer marketing affects customer behaviour, providing useful information that helps businesses and marketers develop effective strategies in an evolving market.

1.4 Objectives of the study

1. To analyse the relationship between influencer credibility and customers trust in marketing messages.
2. To assess the impact of social media platforms on customers engagement with influencer content and subsequent purchasing decisions.
3. To evaluate the types of products or services that customers are most influenced to purchase through influencer marketing.
4. To explore how the authenticity of influencers affects customers brand loyalty and consumers behaviour.

1.5 Research Methodology

The research methodology for this study outlines the approach used to collect, analyse, and interpret data regarding the effects of influencer marketing on consumer behaviour. This methodology will involve a combination of both quantitative and qualitative techniques to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

1.5.1 Research Design

The study follows a **descriptive and analytical research design**:

- **Descriptive Research:** Helps understand consumer views, attitudes, and behaviour toward influencer marketing.
- **Analytical Research:** Examines relationships between variables (e.g., influencer credibility and customer trust).

1.5.2 Sample Design and Size

The sampling technique used for the project is convenience sampling method. convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling method that releases data collection from population members who are available to participate in the study.

Sample size measures the number of individual samples measured used in a survey as sample size of 152 respondents was taken to conduct of study.

1.5.3 Collection of Data

The primary data was collected from 152 respondents using a structured questionnaire. Secondary data for his study was also collected through internet, and journals on related topic

1.5.4 Research Instruments for Data Collection and analysis

Research Instruments for Data Collection

Structured questionnaire (Survey Instrument): Distributed online through platform- Google Forms, ensuring easy accessibility for respondents.

Research Instruments for Data Analysis

(Excel):

Visualisation techniques

Variables measured:

- **Independent variables;**
 - Influencer credibility (e.g. Trustworthiness, expertise)
 - Social media platform (e.g. Instagram, YouTube)
 - Type of products/services (e.g. fashion, beauty, technology)

Influencer authenticity (e.g. genuine interaction, personal branding)

- **Depending variable;**

Consumers behaviour (measured through metrics like purchasing decisions, brand loyalty, and engagement rates).

1.6 Limitations of the study

- Sampling bias: The use of convenience sampling may not give a full presentation of the population.
- Self-reported Data: Surveys and interviews rely on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias or misstatements
- Geographical Limitation: The study may concentrate on a specific region, limiting its relevance to other markets.
- Time constraints: This may restrict the ability to conduct longitudinal studies, that turn aside the study from capturing the long-term effect of influencer marketing on consumer perception.
- Fast-paced changes in social media sphere: As platforms, algorithm and user behaviour change in time, social media trends and influencer marketing strategies may become less significant.

1.7 Chapter outline

We have segregated our project into 5 chapters. Each part of the study has a significant role in the completion of the study. Here are the chapter segregation followed for the study.

1.7.1 Introduction

1.7.2 Literature Review

1.7.3 Theoretical Framework

1.7.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

1.7.5 Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chee Wei Cheah et al. (2024)- The rapid rise of social media has elevated the role of social media influencers (SMI's) in marketing. This study investigates how SMI over-endorsement impacts consumer purchase intentions, with influencer authenticity and credibility as mediating factors and product interest as a moderator. Using a moderated-mediation model with partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) and survey data from 303 users, findings reveal that excessive endorsements by SMIs do not directly boost purchase intentions. Instead, over-endorsement harms consumer perceptions of influencer credibility, although strong product interest can help counteract this effect. Rather than reducing endorsement frequency, brands and SMIs should focus on enhancing product interest and engagement to preserve influencer credibility and campaign effectiveness. This study offers new insights into managing the negative effects of over-endorsement in influencer marketing.

J Vidani, S Das (2023)- In recent years, the use of influencers in marketing has surged, enhancing word-of-mouth campaigns as consumers increasingly rely on social media. This study explores how influencer marketing affects consumer behaviour through the lens of the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) and Bandura and Walters' social learning theory. Key findings indicate that consumers' attitudes toward influencers and their perceived control over behaviour positively influence their purchasing decisions, while peer influence had no effect. Additional factors like personal relevance, inspiration, and trust also foster positive behaviour, whereas perceived risk did not. The study highlights that aligning influencer with specific products is crucial, as consumers follow particular influencers for different categories. Influencers impact consumers on four levels: brand awareness, expertise, brand preference, and loyalty. Effective influencer marketing requires identifying the right influencers to engage audiences with tailored content. Ultimately, influencer marketing proves to be a potent tool for brands, helping them connect with target audiences and enhance brand loyalty as social media continues to evolve.

Bandinee Pradhan, Kaushal Kishore (2023)- The rise of social media influencers (SMIs) has attracted significant interest from both academics and marketers. While academics seek to understand their impact on consumer behaviour, marketers use influencers to meet marketing goals. Despite substantial research, literature reviews on SMIs and consumer engagement are limited, with most studies treating these topics separately. This study conducts a systematic literature review to explore how SMIs impact consumer engagement, analysing articles published in ABDC, Scopus, and Web

of Science journals up to June 2021. The study identifies key factors driving consumer engagement with SMIs, theorizes the engagement process, and examines influencer-follower relationships across social platforms. An integrated framework is proposed to assess the impact of influencer marketing on consumer engagement, offering insights for marketers on effective influencer strategies. The review also summarizes the theories, methodologies, and contexts of previous research.

Eugene Cheng-xi (2023)- Marketing has been lauded as one of the most thriving marketing strategies within them contemporary marketing landscape- Nonetheless, numerous opportunities and challenges within the influencer marketing sphere remain to be probed, and its trajectory is somewhat ambiguous in lights of emerging technologies and changes in consumers' consumption patterns. This article delves into the subject matter through the prisms of influencer marketing effectiveness, ethical considerations, societal implications, and the future development of influencer marketing- Within each section, the article provides snapshot of the current state of understanding and delineates potential avenues for future research. In essence, the article offers a nuanced take on the influencer marketing phenomenon, examining its bright and dark sides to business and society, thereby serving as a springboard to spark scholarly and practical interests.

Yatish Joshi et al. (2023)- This study examines the rise and effectiveness of social media influencers in marketing, a subject of interest for academics and industry experts. By conducting a systematic literature review with bibliometric-content analysis, it maps research on consumer behaviour, social media, and influencer marketing. Using 214 articles from high-ranking journals (ABDC, CABS, WOS) published between 2008 and 2021, the study categorizes key themes and constructs in influencer marketing research, such as parasocial relationships, sponsorship, authenticity, engagement, and influence. Key findings emphasize factors like audience, brand, content, and technology that impact consumer responses. These insights guide scholars and marketers in identifying trends and advancing influencer-driven marketing strategies.

Kendra Fowler, Veronica L Thomas (2023)- The interdisciplinary nature and rapidly expanding literature stream devoted to influencer marketing makes it difficult to stay abreast of the current research while simultaneously moving the field of knowledge forward. The goal of this article then, is to take a look back, reviewing the disparate literature, in order to look ahead, guiding future research

towards fruitful underexplored avenues of discovery. Using a framework-based scoping review, a retrospective examination of 150 articles is provided with emphasis on identifying publication trends, theories, contexts, constructs/concepts, and methodological approaches. These findings allow for a thorough discussion of gaps in extant knowledge, emerging themes and trends, and directions for future research. As such, this review provides a sound theoretical and practical basis for continued development within the field.

A kanaveedu, JJ Kalapurackal (2022)- Influencer marketing is a growing field in marketing, attracting the interest of both academics and practitioners due to influencers' ability to shape consumer behaviour. To thoroughly understand this developing area, a systematic literature review is essential, offering a broad summary of existing studies. This review covers research from 2016 to 2021, analysing 65 articles from the ABDC journal to identify key themes, methodologies, theories, variables, influences, outcomes, and research gaps. Based on these insights, an integrative framework is proposed to illustrate how social media influencers impact consumer behaviour. The study also highlights future research directions, addressing gaps in theory, methodology, and context, and provides valuable implications for both theoretical and practical applications.

C Lou et al (2022)- Research on influencer marketing has surged recently, categorizing literature into three key areas: influencer sources, messages, and audiences. However, a gap remains in understanding how different social media platforms uniquely impact influencer advertising effectiveness. This study pioneers an examination of followers' motivations on various platforms and explores how these motivations and platform characteristics influence influencer-follower relationships and advertising outcomes. Findings reveal that platform-specific factors and follower gratifications both enhance parasocial relationships (PSR) with influencers, with PSR strength varying by platform. Significantly, stronger PSR predicts better advertising outcomes across platforms.

DC Hugh Wilkie et al. (2022)- This study addresses the need for a deeper understanding of influencer marketing effectiveness as brand-influencer partnerships grow. Drawing on the source credibility model and signalling theory, it aims to explore key mechanisms influencing marketing success. The study analyses influencer marketing effectiveness using partial least squares modelling

on data from 281 followers of social media influencers. Popularity and attractiveness of influencers serve as heuristic cues affecting perceptions of their effectiveness. Category involvement and altruistic collaboration motives moderate followers use of these cues. Sequential mediation shows the role of influencers and brands in boosting brand authenticity, engagement, and positive post attitudes. Future research should examine additional cues for assessing influencer effectiveness and focus more on the partner brand's impact. A visual framework is provided to guide marketers and influencers in forming more effective partnerships. The study introduces signalling theory as a unique approach to understanding influencer marketing effectiveness, expanding theoretical perspectives in this field.

L Janssen et al. (2022)- Social media influencers are increasingly recognized as effective product endorsers, yet further research is needed to identify the specific characteristics that drive this effectiveness. This study explores how product-influencer fit and follower count interact to influence advertising outcomes and influencer evaluations, while also examining the mediating roles of perceived credibility and identification with the influencer. Conducting a 2 (poor vs. good product-influencer fit) X 2 (moderate vs. high follower count) experiment with 432 Dutch Instagram users, we found that while influencers with more followers are generally favoured and lead to more positive attitudes and higher purchase intentions, these benefits only arise when the product fits the influencer's brand image. Perceived credibility and identification were crucial mediators of these effects. Overall, our findings deepen the understanding of audience responses to influencer marketing and offer practical insights for marketers.

Delia Balaban (2022)- This study examines how follower status influences parasocial relationships (PSRs) with social media influencers (SMIs), especially when moderated by interest in the product promoted. Working with an Instagram influencer with 12,000 followers, the study found that simply following an SMI does not guarantee a PSR. High product involvement strengthens PSRs, which, in turn, boosts the SMI's perceived credibility. This credibility positively impacts brand attitudes, purchase intentions, and content sharing. The findings highlight that product involvement is crucial for the effectiveness of SMI's social influence on consumer attitudes and behaviours.

Jung Ah Lee et al (2021)- Despite the ubiquity of social media influencers (SMIs) and the clear value they hold for marketers, little is understood about the sociopsychological motives that drive consumers to follow them. The current research identified unique consumer motivations for following SMIs on Instagram and examined its association with important consumer behaviour outcomes (i.e.

trust towards SMI's brand-related posts and frequency of purchasing SMI-recommended brands) as well as materialism. Based on survey data, findings revealed four motivations for following influencers on Instagram authenticity, consumerism, creative inspiration, and envy- which had varying effects on trust and purchase frequency. Additionally, materialism was a significant individual difference variable that was strongly associated with the four motives, some of which served as key mediators underlying materialism's impact on purchase behaviour. Managerial and theoretical implications for marketers and advertisers are discussed as well as suggestions for future research in this burgeoning area.

D vrontis, A Makrides (2021)- The popularity of social media influencers (SMIs) has surged in recent years, making influencer marketing (IM) a staple in business strategies. However, research on the topic remains fragmented and incomplete. Given SMIs' significant impact on consumer decisions, a comprehensive review of existing research is needed. This paper consolidates current knowledge on IM in social media, systematically reviewing 68 articles from 29 leading journals to identify key themes and concepts. The study develops a multidimensional framework that explores the factors influencing consumer behaviour, including antecedents, mediators, and moderators. Additionally, it highlights research gaps and suggests future directions in theory, context, and methodology, with implications for both academics and practitioners.

J Vidani, S G Das (2021)- Over the past five years, social networks and social media users have doubled in size, creating a marketing challenge: excessive "noise." This has reduced the effectiveness of paid ads, with 615 million users now using ad-blockers—a figure rising by 30% annually. Users desire authentic connections with brands, but the noise hinders this, prompting marketers to rethink their strategies. To cut through the noise, brands are turning to consumer-focused approaches like product placement, native ads, content marketing, and influencer marketing. Influencer marketing, which uses key individuals to promote brands to their followers, has emerged as a powerful way to build and engage audiences. This paper examines the growth of influencer marketing from traditional forms like word-of-mouth (WOM) and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) based on existing literature.

M Pick (2021)- Social-media, particularly influencer marketing, significantly impacts consumer decision-making. While research on influencer effects is growing, studies on the evaluation of influencers and their impact on consumer behaviour are limited. This online study investigates: 1) how perceived influencer credibility (IC) affects purchase intention, advertising attitudes, and product perception; 2) the role of psychological ownership (PO) in shaping consumer behaviour; and 3) the perceived connection between influencers and consumers. Results indicate that perceived IC is crucial in influencing purchase intention and attitudes toward advertising and products. It enhances the connection with influencers and fosters a sense of PO, positively impacting consumer behaviour. This study integrates source credibility and psychological ownership theories to create a framework that highlights the importance of IC in consumer perceptions of influencer-advertised products, enhancing understanding of influencer marketing dynamics.

H Masuda et al. (2021) - Social media influencer marketing has gained much attention, especially regarding the parasocial relationships (PSR) between influencers and followers. Unlike previous studies, this research evaluates PSR alongside other relationship marketing factors using a persuasion theory-based model. It examines how three personal traits (attitude similarity, physical, and social attractiveness) and three influencer characteristics (trustworthiness, expertise, and PSR) affect purchase intentions. Survey data from consumers who made purchases after viewing YouTube influencer ads reveal that PSR positively impacts purchase intent more than other factors and is influenced by the perceived influencer type. The findings suggest that influencer marketing strategies should align with specific personal traits, influencer characteristics, and types.

Singh Kamaldeep (2021) - Influencer marketing is increasingly adopted by companies to promote their brands. This study aims to understand how social media influencers affect consumers' buying behaviour, focusing on consumers' attitudes and confidence in this phenomenon. It also seeks to determine whether Word of Mouth (WoM) or social media influencers have a greater impact on purchasing decisions. The findings indicate that the influence of social media influencers on buying behaviour varies based on consumers' attitudes. Those with positive attitudes are more likely to make purchases, while those with negative attitudes tend to avoid buying. Factors that enhance trust in influencers include a sense of connection, honesty, and expertise in their marketing domain. Interestingly, respondents generally trust their social circles more than social media influencers. This study will employ a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews to gather and analyse data

from at least five participants. The aim is to explore influencer marketing from the consumer perspective.

Kian Yeik Koay et al (2021)- The rapid rise of social media has elevated the role of social media influencers (SMIs) in marketing. This study investigates how SMI over-endorsement impacts consumer purchase intentions, with influencer authenticity and credibility as mediating factors and product interest as a moderator. Using a moderated-mediation model with partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) and survey data from 303 users, findings reveal that excessive endorsements by SMIs do not directly boost purchase intentions. Instead, over-endorsement harms consumer perceptions of influencer credibility, although strong product interest can help counteract this effect. Rather than reducing endorsement frequency, brands and SMIs should focus on enhancing product interest and engagement to preserve influencer credibility and campaign effectiveness. This study offers new insights into managing the negative effects of over-endorsement in influencer marketing.

Jiwoon Park et al (2021)- Social media influencer (SMI) advertising is rapidly growing, yet little theory exists on what drives its effectiveness. This research examines how SMI type, based on follower count, impacts ad success. Four experimental studies reveal that micro-influencers (10,000 to 100,000 followers) are more persuasive than mega-influencers (over 1 million followers) because their endorsements are seen as more authentic, transferring this perception to the endorsed brand. However, this effect is stronger when the product is for hedonic (pleasure-oriented) use rather than utilitarian (practical) use. The findings expand existing knowledge by showing how SMI type and consumption context influence persuasion. Practically, these insights help managers optimize SMI ad strategies by selecting the right influencer type, product context, and messaging approach.

C Campbell, JR Farrell (2020)- Influencer marketing is the practice of compensating individuals for posting about a product or service on social media. Influencer marketing is on the rise, and many marketers now plan either to start using influencers or to increase their use of them in their media mixes. Despite such growth, relatively little strategic or academic insight exists that is specific to influencers. In this article, we describe the roots of influencer marketing and the many different types of influencers that now exist. We identify influencers' three functional components: the audience, the

endorser, and the social media manager. We then detail for each of these components the different sources of value influencers potentially offer marketers. We draw on relevant academic research to offer advice about how to leverage each component strategically. We close by describing how the interplay of these functional components makes influencers a potentially powerful—and undervalued—marketing tool.

Saima (2020)- Social media influencer marketing has become a key digital marketing tool, where influencers shape consumer perceptions of brands through posts on social media. This study examines how different influencer attributes impact their credibility and, in turn, affect consumers' purchase intentions in Delhi NCR, India. Using a sample of 76 respondents collected via an online questionnaire and analysed with SmartPLS 3, the research found that trustworthiness, information quality, and entertainment value significantly influence influencer credibility. These factors indirectly impact consumer purchase intentions, with trustworthiness and credibility also having a direct effect.

Mariah L Wellman et al (2020)- Media coverage of influencer marketing abounds with ethical questions about this emerging industry. Much of this coverage assumes influencers operate without an ethical framework and many social media personalities skirt around the edges of legal guidelines. Our study starts from the premise that influencer marketing is not inherently unethical but, rather, the ethical principles guiding production of sponsored content are not well understood. Through a case study of the travel and tourism media industry, our findings demonstrate that influencers use the concept of authenticity as an ethical framework when producing sponsored content. This ethics of authenticity is premised on two central tenets: being true to one's self and brand and being true to one's audience. This framework puts the influencers' brand identity and relationship with their audience at the forefront while simultaneously allowing them to profit from content designed to benefit brands and destinations.

S Yuan, C Lou (2020)- Through social media's unique interactivity, influencers can form strong, marketing-rich relationships with followers that attract brands. Drawing on source credibility and communication justice, this study examines factors that strengthen parasocial relationships between influencers and followers and their impact on interest in promoted products. An online survey reveals that followers' perceived attractiveness and similarity to influencers, along with procedural and

interpersonal fairness, all enhance parasocial bonds, which in turn boost followers' interest in advertised products. These insights clarify how influencers build relationships and offer strategies for effective influencer marketing campaigns.

SV Jin et al. (2019)- This paper investigates the effects of two types of celebrities—Instagram celebrities versus traditional celebrities—on source trustworthiness, brand attitude, envy, and social presence. The model positions celebrity type as the independent variable, social presence as the mediator, and self-discrepancy as the moderator. A two-group comparison experiment (n=104) was conducted. Results indicate that consumers exposed to Instagram celebrities view them as more trustworthy, have a more positive brand attitude, experience greater social presence, and feel more envy compared to traditional celebrities. Social presence mediates the effects of celebrity type on trustworthiness, brand attitude, and envy, with actual-ideal self-discrepancy moderating these relationships. The findings provide insights for social media marketing and influencer strategies, emphasizing the power of influencer marketing. This research adds to the marketing literature on celebrity endorsements.

P Gundova, K Cvoligova (2019)- Current marketing communication trends highlight influencer marketing as an emerging tactic within marketing strategies. This article examines the influence of influencer marketing on consumer behaviour. Its goal is to determine, through questionnaire survey results, whether a selected group of consumers views influencer marketing as a significant factor affecting their purchasing decisions. Based on our survey, we identified a group of women aged 19 to 25 from Generation Y who follow influencers. This generation is characterized by their technological skills, which aligns with the interests reflected in the survey results.

ZB Bognar et.al (2019)- The Internet's rise has led to major shifts in consumer behaviour, with businesses increasingly customizing products to stay competitive. Marketing has become crucial, adapting to advancements in communication technology. The growth of social networks has given rise to e-marketing, allowing individuals to create content and participate in brand conversations—a shift that companies now embrace. In this new landscape, influencers have a strong impact on consumers. This paper examines how consumers view influencers and whether they affect purchasing

decisions, aiming to reveal the influence of "influencers" on consumer behaviour and decision-making.

Chung-Wha 'Chloe' ki, Youn-Kyung Kim (2019)- This study examines how social media influencers (SMIs) persuade consumers to adopt brands, following a four-stage influence framework. First, SMIs influence consumers through specific post attributes—being attractive, prestigious, expert, informative, and interactive. Second, these qualities lead consumers to view SMIs as taste and opinion leaders. Third, this perception creates a desire to emulate the influencers, and finally, this desire results in positive behaviours, such as word-of-mouth sharing and purchase intentions. Using survey data from 395 respondents and structural equation modelling, we validated the proposed model and confirmed that consumers' desire to mimic SMIs plays a key role in driving positive outcomes. The findings offer valuable insights for researchers and practitioners aiming to understand and leverage influencer marketing.

Zdenka Kádeková, Mária Holienčinová (2018)- Social media influencers have become a powerful force online, especially influential among younger audiences. Their popularity has led to growing partnerships with marketing agencies, as brands seek mentions, reviews, and recommendations from these figures. Although influencer marketing is relatively new, it remains an effective strategy for marketers aiming to engage their target audiences creatively. This study examines the opportunities in influencer marketing and its impact on the buying behaviour of Generations Y and Z. By surveying 459 Slovak respondents from these generations, the study reveals significant generational differences in how influencers affect consumer behaviour, offering unique marketing insights. Statistical analyses included the Kruskal-Wallis, Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Fisher's Exact, and Dunn's Test.

IK Johansen, C S Gulsvik (2017)- Influencer marketing has surged in popularity and was expected to be a key strategy in 2017. However, it lacks a formal academic definition and a strong theoretical basis. Most prior research has focused on influencer identification and credibility, with limited exploration of the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention. This master's thesis investigates how influencer marketing influences purchase intentions using the Theory of Reasoned Action, bridging marketing strategy and consumer behaviour. An online questionnaire distributed via Facebook received responses from 180 participants. Results indicate that influencer

marketing positively affects consumers' attitudes but has no impact on their subjective norms or direct purchase intentions. Additionally, it is not more effective than traditional online advertising. The study calls for further research to better understand these findings.

J.E Lee, B Watkins (2016)- This study explores how vlogs shape consumer perceptions of luxury brands, applying para-social interaction (PSI) and social comparison theory. A proposed model assesses how vloggers' physical and social appeal, along with shared attitudes, influence PSI, which in turn affects brand luxury perceptions, brand value, brand-user fit, and purchase intentions. In Study 1, structural equation modelling confirmed the model. Study 2, using a within-subject design, found that luxury brand perceptions improved significantly after vlog exposure, moderated by PSI levels. Study 3, a between-subject design, showed that participants who watched luxury product vlogs had higher brand perceptions and purchase intentions than those who didn't. These findings underscore PSI's potential as a brand management tool, particularly on platforms like YouTube, for enhancing luxury brand perceptions.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing is a social media marketing method that includes partnering with individuals for endorsements. These individuals have devoted social followers and are seen as experts within their field.

Influencer marketing works because of the trust social influencers have built with their following over time. Recommendations and endorsements from these influencers serve as a form of online proof to your brand's potential customers.

Types of Influencers: By size and reach

An influencer with millions of followers might be a success but may not be the ideal fit for your brand. Several social media influencers have large, wide audiences spanning across several categories. Others claim smaller but more targeted and engaged communities knowing what each type of influencer can offer you in terms of reach, range, cost. Engagement is key to choosing the right social media influencer for your brand.

1. Mega or celebrity influencers

The influencers have a massive following over 1 million, including famous actors, singers, athletes, and others. This is best for significant brand marketing campaigns due to their celebrity status. Example: Cristiano Ronaldo.

Mega influencers can offer your brand unmatched exposure, although collaborating with them can be highly expensive. And since their audience is broad, their engagement rates may not be as high as influencers with smaller, more particular followings.

Here are some businesses that might benefit from working with mega influencers:

- Large enterprise corporations that have the budget and resources
- Brands targeting a broad audience with varying characteristics
- Luxury or high-end brands that want to create a sense of exclusivity

2. Macro-influencers

Macro-influencers are established personalities with a following that ranges from 1 lakh to 1 million within their respective fields.

These influencers have earned their reputation through consistent content creation and engagement throughout years, and are now leaders in their respective fields.

Macro-influencers, offers a more targeted approach compared to celebrities and their followers share common interests. Collaborating with macro-influencers can provide your brand with significant reach, but it may be somewhat costly depending on your budget.

Here are some examples of brands that might work with macro-influencers:

- Startups seeking rapid exposure, growth and credibility (e.g., Canva)
- Nonprofit organizations looking to raise funds and awareness
- Hotels and airlines targeting a specific but large audience

3. Micro-influencers

With 10,000 to 100,000 highly engaged followers, micro-influencers are the rising stars of influencer marketing. These influencers typically have a strong presence on specific platforms, like Instagram, YouTube and TikTok. Marketers love working with micro-influencers as they captivate a niche, passionate audience with their creative content, relatable recommendations and genuine interactions. They're also more affordable than larger influencers.

4. Nano-influencers

Nano-influencers have between 1,000 to 10,000 followers. These influencers often have a strong connection with their audience, thanks to the close-knit community they've built and their personable content. While they offer a smaller reach, nano-influencers can be excellent partners for businesses who want to target specific communities and demographics without breaking the bank. In fact, per the latest Influencer Marketing Hub data, 44% of brands prefer to partner with nano influencers in 2024, compared to 39% in 2023.

They are perfect for businesses such as:

- Local businesses targeting specific communities, cities or regions
- Small businesses with limited budgets that want to run cost-effective campaigns
- Artisan, home-based or speciality food businesses reaching a niche audience interested in their one-of-a-kind products

Key factors in effective influencer marketing

It's important for businesses to acknowledge the influence of content creators in their decision-making processes regarding products and services. To fully leverage the potential of influencer marketing, brands should adopt a strategy that integrates diverse marketing tactics in collaboration with influencers.

There are various factors impacting consumer purchase decisions in influencer marketing. Let's examine the importance of authenticity, relevance, and transparency for influencing consumer behaviour and purchasing choices.

- Transparency of influencers

Influencers must be transparent about their partnerships or sponsorships with brands to maintain credibility. They should endorse products or services they truly believe in, aligning with their personal brand and values. Consumers often can detect a lack of transparency, which affects their purchase decisions.

- Authentic endorsements

Authenticity is crucial as consumers can usually tell when an endorsement isn't genuine. Influencers and brands should seek collaborations where their audiences overlap. Working with influencers in specific niches is beneficial because they are likely to be more knowledgeable and passionate about certain product categories.

Authenticity in sponsored content comes from a real excitement about the brand or product, regardless of the setting of the content.

Authentic content that creates a real connection and offers value can enhance trust in the influencer and show the brand's integrity, which is appealing to followers. This approach can lead to more effective influencer marketing campaigns, benefiting both the influencer and the brand.

- Relevance and value to audience

Influencers should consider if the product or service is relevant to their audience and whether it adds value. Influencer impact on purchase decisions is less effective when the product is not relevant to their specific niche. While having a large following is important in influencer marketing, it's not the only factor brands should consider for effective partnerships. Key elements like an influencer's tone, messaging, and brand image alignment

are also crucial. Brands need to collaborate with influencers who share their values and aesthetics to create authentic and cohesive marketing campaigns. Such value-aligned partnerships allow for the creation of more impactful and meaningful marketing campaigns that deeply resonate with the target audience.

➤ Attitude towards relatable content

A significant shift is observed towards relatable content. According to a survey, 63% of marketers find relatable content most effective. This trend aligns with the consumer preference for influencers who are relatable and familiar, as shown in the Matter Communications study, where 61% of respondents favoured relatable personalities. The same study has revealed that expert influencers are preferred by 43% of respondents. This reflects a growing interest in content that offers expertise or specialized knowledge. At the same time there is a notable decline in the preference for celebrity influencers. Only 11% of respondents in the recent period favoured celebrity personalities, a decrease from 17-22% in the previous survey period (2020). This trend might be attributed to the perception that celebrity experiences are less relatable to the average person.

The Impact of Influencer Marketing on Consumer Behaviour

The psychology of influence is the study of how people's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours are affected by the actions, opinions, and messages of others. According to the theory of social influence, people are more likely to do something if they perceive it as being a social norm, or if they see that others are doing it. The closer someone is to us, the more likely we are to be influenced by them.

▪ Enhanced Brand Awareness and Reach

Influencers enable brands to reach a wider audience, often beyond what traditional media can offer. When influencers endorse or discuss products, they expose these to followers who might not have previously been aware of the brand, thereby increasing visibility. This is especially effective when targeting niche markets, as followers tend to share common interests or demographics with influencers.

- Trust and Credibility

Consumers are often sceptical of direct advertising from brands but tend to trust influencers whom they follow and engage with regularly. Influencers often come across as authentic and relatable, which makes their recommendations more credible in the eyes of their audience. This trust can make consumers more likely to try new products or services recommended by influencers, affecting their brand loyalty and purchase decisions.

- Influence on Purchase Intent

Influencers can significantly increase consumers' intent to purchase by demonstrating product use, providing reviews, and sharing personal experiences. This effect is enhanced when influencers use storytelling or "behind-the-scenes" content to showcase a product in a real-life context, which resonates more deeply with followers.

- Increased Engagement and Community Building

Unlike traditional advertising, influencer marketing is interactive, allowing consumers to comment, ask questions, and receive responses in real-time. This two-way interaction helps brands build a community around their products and fosters a sense of loyalty and belonging among consumers. Engaged followers are more likely to make repeat purchases and recommend the brand to others.

- Perception of Brand Image and Values

Consumers often associate influencers' personalities, values, and lifestyle with the brands they endorse. This means that influencer partnerships can shape a brand's image in the minds of consumers. If an influencer aligns well with a brand's values, it can positively impact consumer perception and brand positioning. Conversely, a mismatch can harm the brand's reputation.

- Social proof

The principle of social proof states that people tend to follow the behaviour of others, especially when they are uncertain or unsure. Influencers can use social proof to influence consumer behaviour, by showing that their followers or other

influencers are using, liking, or recommending their sponsored products or services, and by creating user-generated content, such as reviews, testimonials, or feedback.

- Accelerated Trends and FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)

Influencers can quickly popularize trends, encouraging consumers to adopt new products or styles to keep up with current fads. The concept of "FOMO" is especially relevant here, as consumers feel the need to participate in trends endorsed by influencers to feel connected with their peers. This urgency often accelerates the decision-making process, leading to impulsive purchases.

Influencer Marketing: Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities of Influencer Marketing

1. Wider Reach and Targeted Audience

Influencers often have large, highly engaged audiences that brands can tap into, allowing them to reach a broader demographic or a niche community. This enables brands to target specific consumer segments more accurately, making their marketing efforts more efficient and impactful.

2. Enhanced Brand Credibility and Trust

Influencers are seen as relatable and authentic by their followers, who often trust their recommendations more than traditional advertising. Partnering with influencers can help brands build credibility and establish a trustworthy image in the eyes of consumers, especially for new or lesser-known brands.

3. Improved Engagement and Interaction

Influencer marketing is more interactive than traditional advertising. Followers can engage by liking, commenting, and sharing, which fosters a sense of community around the brand. This direct interaction also provides brands with immediate feedback on their products or campaigns.

4. Higher Conversion Rates

Influencers can showcase products in a real-life context, using storytelling to illustrate their benefits. This has a direct impact on purchasing decisions, as followers are more likely to

buy a product recommended by an influencer they admire, often leading to higher conversion rates.

5. Creative Content Creation

Influencers are skilled content creators, and collaborations with them can result in high-quality, unique content that resonates with the audience. Brands can repurpose influencer-generated content across other marketing channels, which saves time and resources while diversifying their content strategy.

6. Increased Brand Loyalty and Advocacy

Influencers help build emotional connections between brands and their followers. This, in turn, cultivates brand loyalty as consumers feel a closer affinity to the brand through the influencer. Loyal followers may become brand advocates, sharing their experiences with their own network.

7. SEO and Online Presence Boost

Influencer marketing can indirectly improve a brand's online visibility. When influencers mention or link to a brand's products, it can improve the brand's SEO rankings and online presence, driving more organic traffic to the brand's website or social media pages.

Challenges of Influencer Marketing

1. Difficulty in Choosing the Right Influencer

Finding the perfect match between an influencer and a brand is crucial yet challenging. If there's a mismatch, the campaign may come across as inauthentic, potentially damaging the brand's image and wasting resources. Brands need to vet influencers carefully to ensure alignment with their values and audience.

2. Transparency and Trust Issues

Followers can become sceptical if they feel influencers are endorsing products solely for payment rather than genuine interest. Regulations now require influencers to disclose sponsored posts, which can sometimes diminish the perceived authenticity of the recommendation.

3. High Costs and Budget Allocation

Influencer marketing can be costly, especially for high-profile influencers. For brands with

limited budgets, it may be challenging to compete for influencer partnerships. This has led many brands to shift toward micro-influencers, but managing multiple micro-influencers can also require more time and coordination.

4. Potential for Negative Publicity

Influencers' personal actions and opinions are closely watched by the public. Any controversy or scandal involving an influencer can impact the brands they endorse. In some cases, brands have faced backlash due to associations with influencers who faced negative publicity.

5. Difficulty in Measuring ROI

Unlike traditional marketing, where ROI is often clear-cut, influencer marketing's effectiveness can be difficult to measure. Engagement metrics (likes, shares, and comments) don't always translate to actual conversions, making it challenging to evaluate the true impact on sales and brand growth.

6. Fake Followers and Engagement

Some influencers inflate their follower count or engagement metrics by purchasing fake followers or likes. This makes it harder for brands to assess the influencer's true impact and can lead to wasted marketing budgets. Brands must carefully vet influencers and consider using analytics tools to verify authenticity.

7. Content Control and Brand Consistency

While influencers bring creativity, brands may struggle to maintain consistency in how their brand is portrayed. Since influencers maintain creative control over their content, there's a risk that the message or presentation may not align with the brand's image.

8. Short Shelf Life of Content

Content shared by influencers on platforms like Instagram and TikTok has a short lifespan, as followers quickly move on to new posts. For long-lasting impact, brands need to have ongoing collaborations, which can be costly and resource-intensive.

Summary

Influencer marketing offers substantial benefits, including enhanced brand credibility, reach, and consumer engagement, making it an attractive strategy for brands looking to connect with their target audience in a personalized way. However, it also presents challenges related to authenticity, cost, and ROI measurement. To leverage influencer marketing effectively, brands need to carefully select influencers, ensure transparent partnerships, and focus on measuring results to refine their strategies over time. By balancing these opportunities and challenges, brands can create effective influencer marketing campaigns that resonate with consumers and drive growth.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Demographic factors

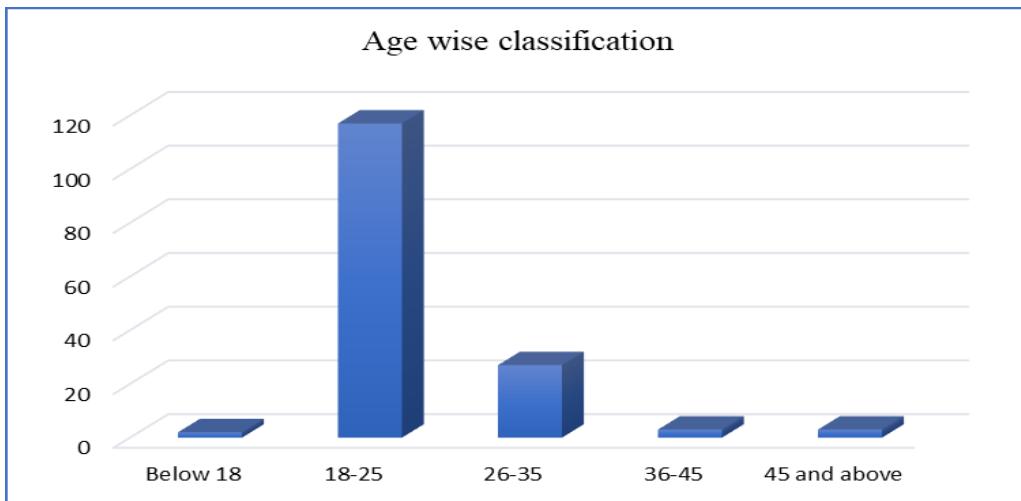
4.1 AGE-WISE CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS

Table 4.1 showing the age-wise classification of respondents

Attribute	Respondents	Percentage
Below 18	2	1.30
18-25	117	77
26-35	27	17.80
36-45	3	2
45 and above	3	2
Total	152	100

(Source: Primary data)

Figure 4.1 showing the age-wise classification of respondents



(Source: Primary data)

INTERPRETATION: According to the age-wise classification of respondents 77% of the sample is in the 18–25 age range. 17.8%, the 26–35 age group comes in second, indicating an average level of presence. There is little depiction of other age categories, such as those under 18 (1.3%), 36–45 (2%), and 45 and over (2%). This distribution shows that the majority of the responders were young.

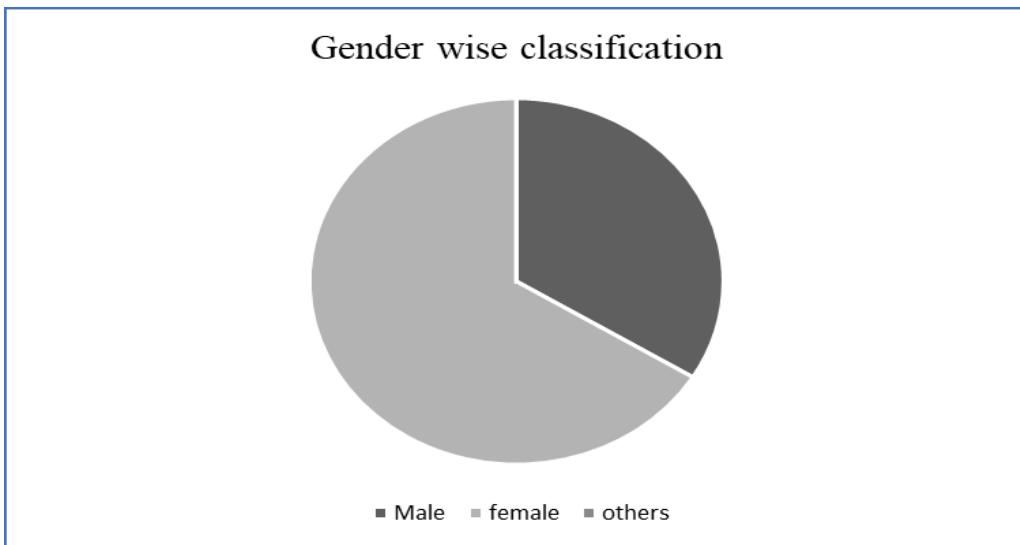
4.2 GENDER WISE CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS

Table 4.2 showing gender wise classification of respondents

Attribute	Respondents	Percentage
Male	50	32.9
female	102	67.1
others	0	0
Total	152	100

(Source: Primary data)

Figure 4.2 showing gender wise classification of respondents



(Source: Primary data)

INTERPRETATION: The study shows that out of 152 respondents, 67.1 (102 individuals) were female, while 32.9% (50 individuals) were male. No respondents were recognized as "others." This indicates a higher participation of females in the study compared to males. The gender distribution indicates that the findings may be more representative of the female viewpoint. This demographic pattern could affect the overall interpretation of the research findings.

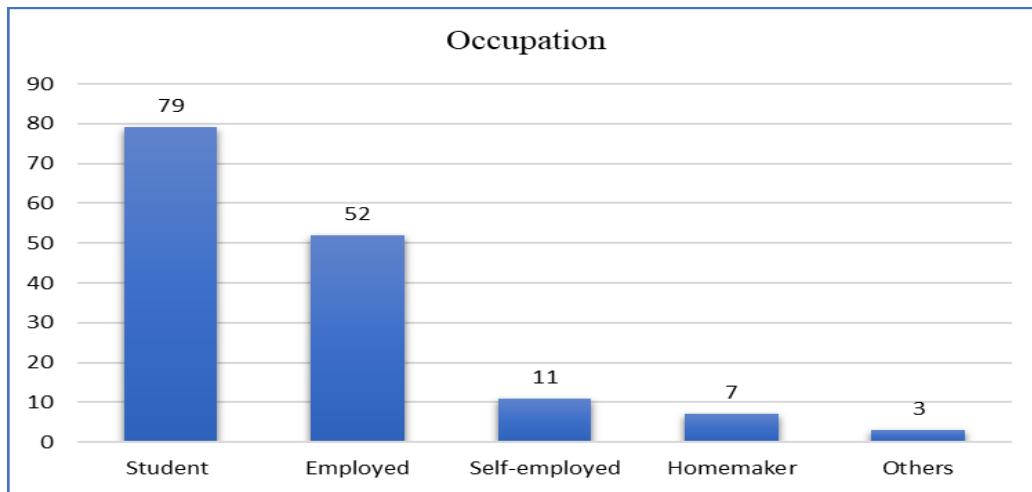
4.3 OCCUPATION OF RESPONDENTS

Table 4.3 showing the occupation of respondents

Attribute	Respondents	Percentage
Student	79	52
Employed	52	34.2
Self-employed	11	7.2
Homemaker	7	4.6
Others	3	2
Total	152	100

(Source: Primary data)

Figure 4.3 showing the occupation of respondents



(Source: Primary data)

INTERPRETATION: The study shows that students are the majority at 52% (79 people). Employed individuals at 34.2% (52 people), indicating a large number of working professionals. Self-employed individuals make up 7.2% (11 people), representing entrepreneurs and freelancers. Homemakers account for 4.6% (7 people). Lastly, 2% (3 people) fall under the "Others" category, which could include retirees or individuals with unique job roles. This mix of occupations ensures a well-rounded perspective in the study.

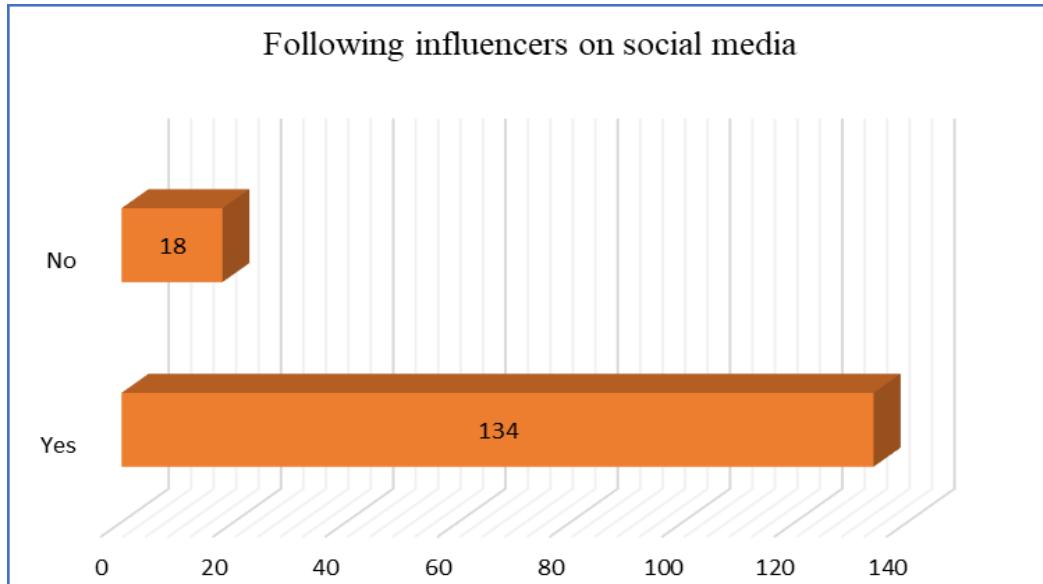
4.4 FOLLOWING INFLUENCERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Table 4.4 showing the following influencers on social media

Attributes	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	134	88.2
No	18	11.8
Total	152	100

(Source: Primary data)

Figure 4.4 showing the following influencers on social media



(Source: Primary data)

INTERPRETATION: The study reveals that 88.2% (134 respondents) answered "Yes," indicating strong agreement or preference toward the given attribute. On the other hand, only 11.8% (18 respondents) responded with "No," showing a small portion of the participants having a different view. The smaller percentage of "No" responses indicates that while there is some disagreement, it does not largely impact the overall outcome. These results show that people value this attribute, making it important to understand participant's views.

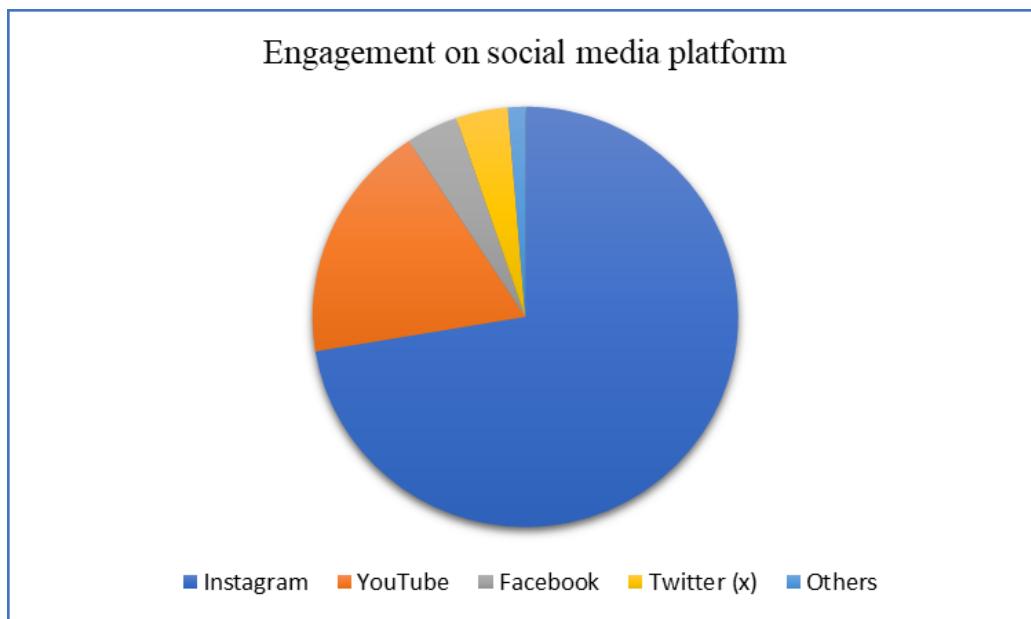
4.5 ENGAGEMENT OF RESPONDENTS WITH INFLUENCERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM

Table 4.5 showing the engagement of respondents with influencers on social media platform

Attributes	Respondents	Percentage
Instagram	110	72.4
YouTube	28	18.4
Facebook	6	3.9
Twitter (x)	6	3.9
Others	2	1.3
Total	152	100

(Source: Primary data)

Figure 4.5 Showing engagement of respondents with influencers on social media platform



(Source: Primary data)

INTERPRETATION: The study shows that Instagram is the most popular platform, with 72.4% (110 respondents). YouTube follows by 18.4% (28 respondents). Facebook and Twitter (X) are tied at 3.9% (6 respondents each), suggesting that these platforms are less preferred. Finally, 1.3% (2 respondents) fall into the "Others" category, which might include platforms like Snapchat or LinkedIn. These results reinforce Instagram's strong influence in digital engagement and content consumption.

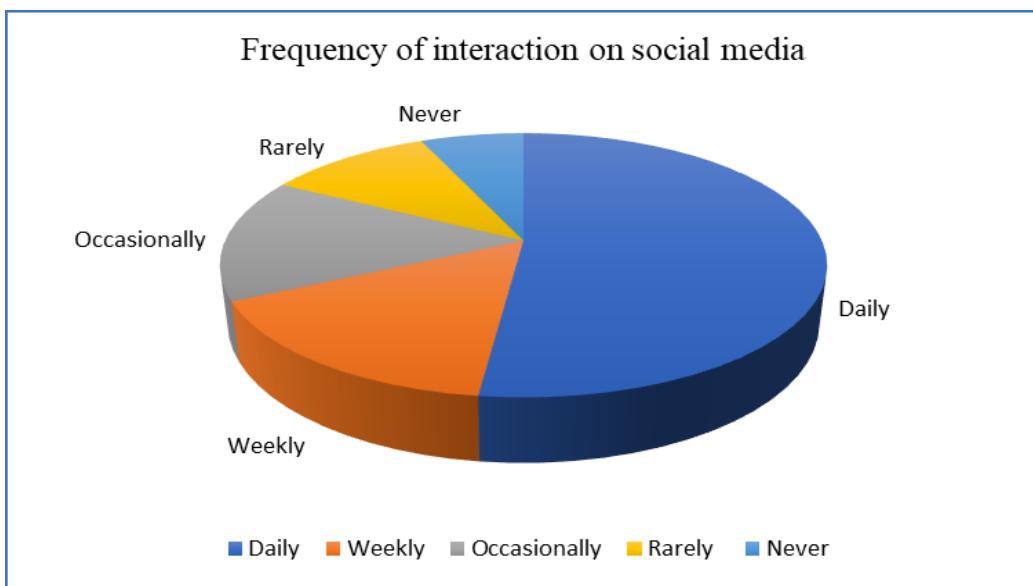
4.6 FREQUENCY OF INTERACTION WITH INFLUENCERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Table 4.6 showing the frequency of interaction with influencers on social media

Attributes	Respondents	Percentage
Daily	79	52
Weekly	24	15.8
Occasionally	23	15.1
Rarely	16	10.5
Never	10	6.6
Total	152	100

(Source: Primary data)

Figure 4.6 showing the frequency of interaction with influencers on social media



(Source: Primary data)

INTERPRETATION: The survey results indicate that 52% (79 respondents) engage daily, showing a high level of regular interaction. 15.8% (24 respondents) use it weekly, suggesting a moderate but consistent engagement. 15.1% (23 respondents) interact occasionally. 10.5% (16 respondents) rarely engage, while 6.6% (10 respondents) never use it at all. The dominance of daily users suggests that this attribute plays an important role in people's routines.

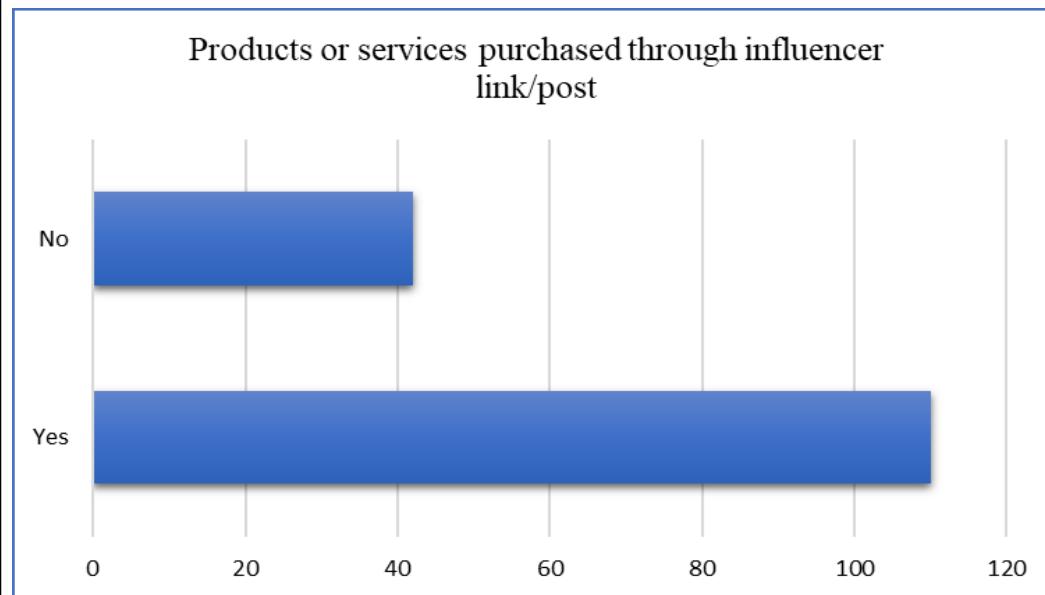
4.7 PRODUCT OR SERVICE PURCHASED THROUGH INFLUENCER POST/ LINK ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Table 4.7 showing products or service purchased through influencer post/link on social media

Attributes	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	110	72.4
No	42	27.6
Total	152	100

(Source: Primary data)

Figure 4.7 showing products or services purchased through influencer post/link on social media



(Source: Primary data)

INTERPRETATION: The study shows that 72.4% (110 respondents) have purchased a product or service through an influencer's post or link on social media. This indicates the effectiveness of influencer marketing in consumer purchases. On the other hand, 27.6% (42 respondents) have not made such purchases, showing that while influencer marketing is effective, some consumers remain unsure or prefer traditional shopping methods. The high percentage of buyers suggests that social media influencers play a major role in shaping purchasing decisions.

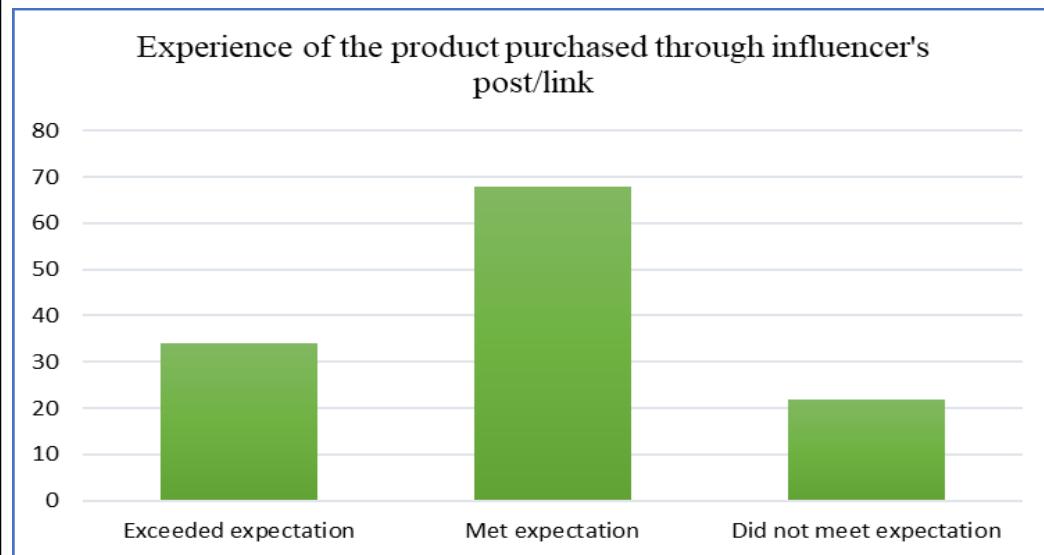
4.8 EXPERIENCE WITH THE PRODUCT OR SERVICE PURCHASED THROUGH INFLUENCERS POST/LINK

Table 4.8 showing experience with the product or service purchased through influencers post/link

Attributes	Respondents	Percentage
Exceeded expectation	34	27.4
Met expectation	68	54.8
Did not meet expectation	22	17.7
Total	124	100

(Source: Primary data)

Figure 4.8 showing experience with the product or service purchased through influencers post/link



(Source: Primary data)

INTERPRETATION: Most respondents (54.8%) felt that the product or service they purchased through an influencer met their expectations, while 27.4% of respondents received products that exceeded their expectation. However, 17.7% felt disappointed, showing that while influencer marketing can be effective, it doesn't always guarantee satisfaction.

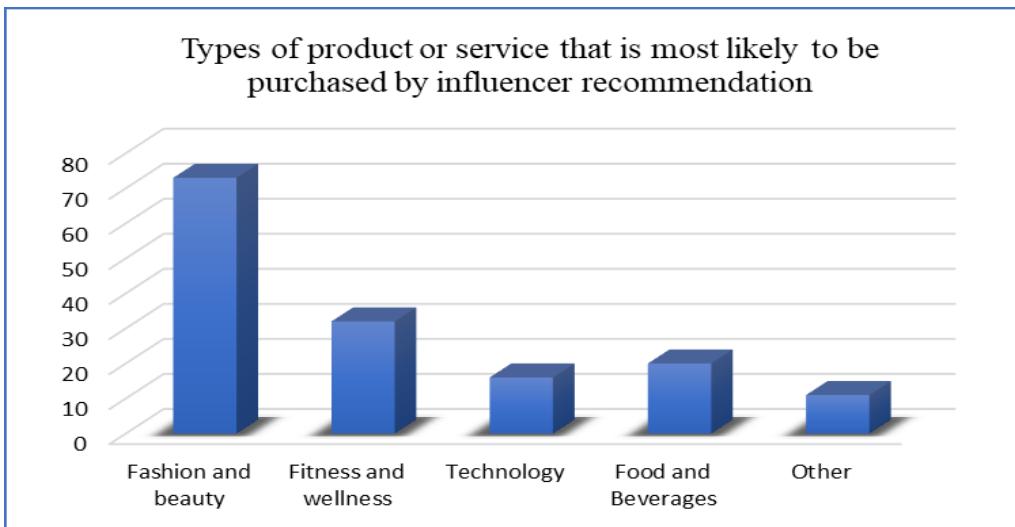
4.9 TYPES OF PRODUCTS OR SERVICE THAT ARE MOST LIKELY TO BE PURCHASED BASED ON INFLUENCER'S RECOMMENDATION

Table 4.9 showing the types of products or service that are most likely to be purchased based on influencer's recommendation

Attributes	Respondents	Percentages
Fashion and beauty	73	48
Fitness and wellness	32	21.1
Technology	16	10.5
Food and Beverages	20	13.2
Other	11	7.2
Total	152	100

(Source: Primary data)

Figure 4.9 showing the types of products or service that are most likely to be purchased based on influencer's recommendation



(Source: Primary data)

INTERPRETATION: Fashion and beauty products dominate influencer-driven purchases, with nearly 48% of respondents most likely to buy in this category. Fitness and wellness (21.1%) and food and beverages (13.2%) follow, while technology (10.5%) and other categories (7.2%) see comparatively lower influence.

4.10 ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INFLUENCER CREDIBILITY AND CUSTOMERS TRUST IN MARKETING MESSAGES.

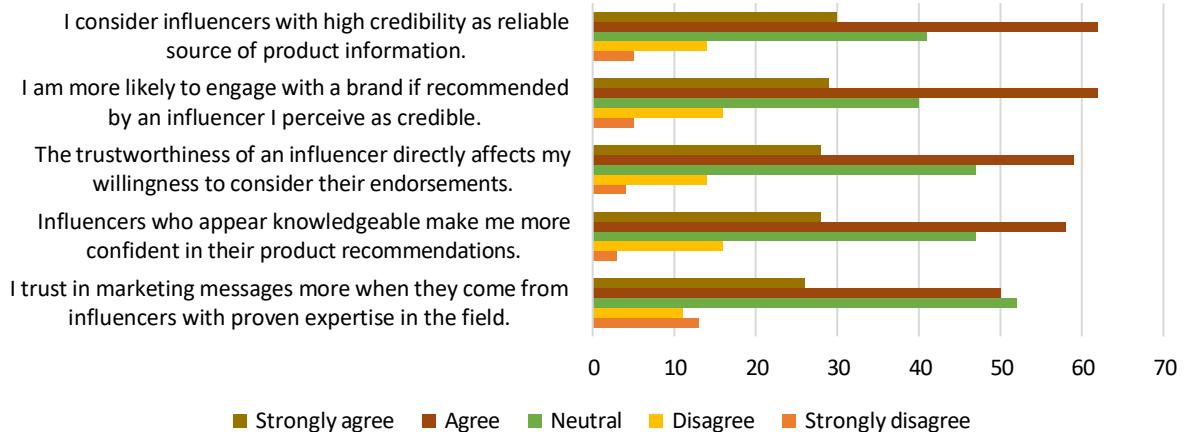
Table 4.10 showing the analysis of the relationship between influencer credibility and customers trust in marketing messages.

Attributes	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
I trust in marketing messages more when they come from influencers with proven expertise in the field.	13	11	52	50	26	152
Influencers who appear knowledgeable make me more confident in their product recommendations.	3	16	47	58	28	152
The trustworthiness of an influencer directly affects my willingness to consider their endorsements.	4	14	47	59	28	152
I am more likely to engage with a brand if recommended by an influencer I perceive as credible.	5	16	40	62	29	152
I consider influencers with high credibility as reliable source of product information.	5	14	41	62	30	152

(Source: Primary data)

Figure 4.10 showing the analysis of the relationship between influencer credibility and customers trust in marketing messages.

Relationship between influencers credibility and customers trust



(Source: Primary data)

INTERPRETATION: The study shows a clear link between influencer credibility and consumer trust in marketing messages. A majority of respondents agree that influencers with a proven expertise (32.9%) and knowledgeability (38.2%) increase confidence with their recommendations. Also, 38.8% agree that trustworthiness directly impacts their willingness to consider endorsements. Consumers are also more likely to engage with a brand (40.8% agree) and view credible influencers as reliable sources of product information (40.8% agree). This suggests that influencers who exhibit expertise and authenticity can significantly increase consumer trust and engagement with recommended products.

4.11 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ON CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT WITH INFLUENCER CONTENT AND PURCHASING DECISION.

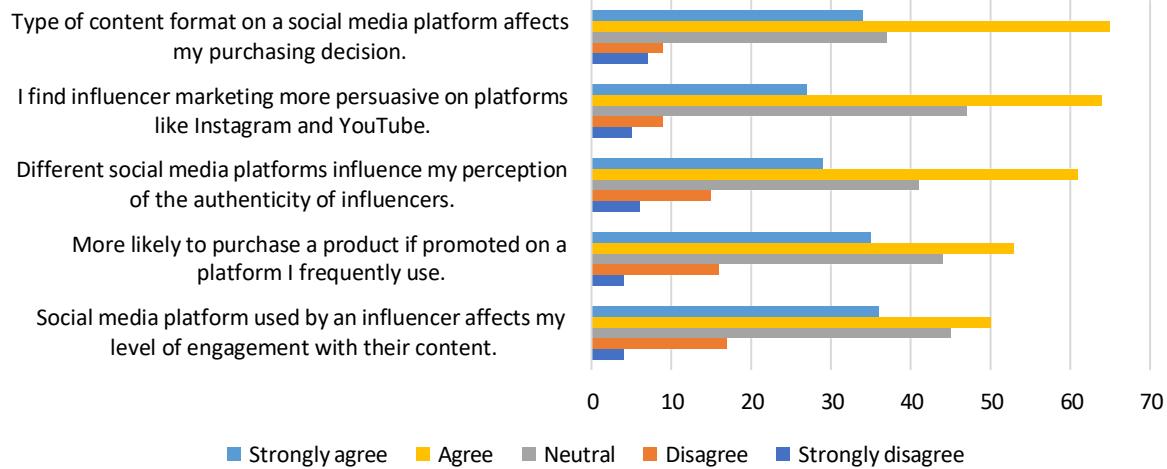
Table 4.11 showing the assessment of impact of social media platforms on customer engagement with influencer content and purchasing decision.

Attributes	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Social media platform used by an influencer affects my level of engagement with their content.	4	17	45	50	36	152
More likely to purchase a product if promoted on a platform I frequently use.	4	16	44	53	35	152
Different social media platforms influence my perception of the authenticity of influencers.	6	15	41	61	29	152
I find influencer marketing more persuasive on platforms like Instagram and YouTube.	5	9	47	64	27	152
Type of content format on a social media platform affects my purchasing decision.	7	9	37	65	34	152

(Source: Primary data)

Figure 4.11 showing the assessment of impact of social media platforms on customer engagement with influencer content and purchasing decision.

Impact of social media platforms on customer engagement



(Source: Primary data)

INTERPRETATION: The study shows that social media platforms play an important role in customer engagement with influencer content and purchasing decisions. A significant portion of respondents (32.9%) agree that the platform used by an influencer affects engagement level, while 34.9% are likely to purchase a product if promoted on a platform they frequently use. Also, 40.1% believe different platforms shape their perception of an influencer's authenticity. Platforms like Instagram and YouTube are seen as more persuasive (42.1% agree), and the content format also impacts purchasing decisions (42.8% agree). This indicates that both the choice of platform and content style influence consumer behaviour.

4.12 TYPES OF PRODUCTS OR SERVICE THAT ARE MOST INFLUENCED TO PURCHASE THROUGH INFLUENCER MARKETING.

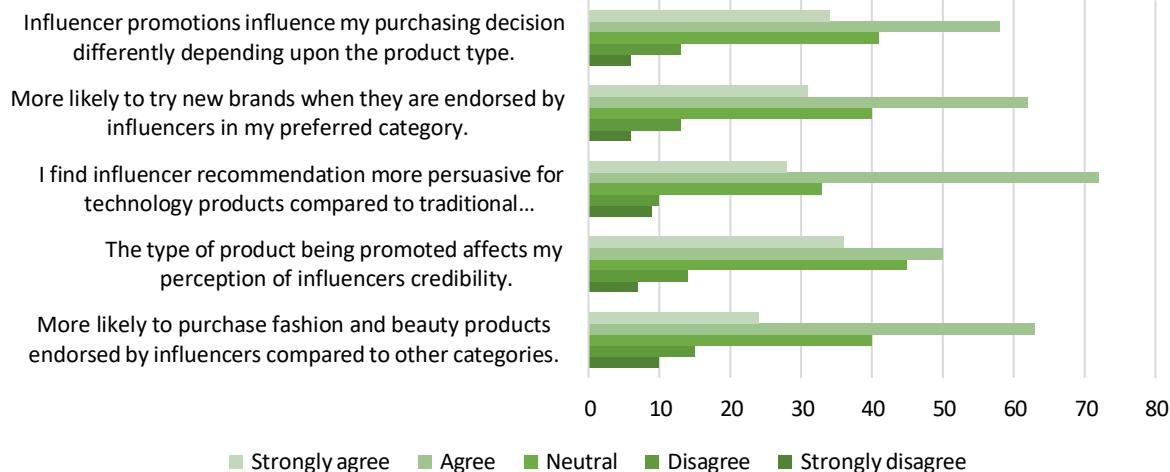
Table 4.12 showing the types of products or services that are most influenced to purchase through influencer marketing

Attributes	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
More likely to purchase fashion and beauty products endorsed by influencers compared to other categories.	10	15	40	63	24	152
The type of product being promoted affects my perception of influencers credibility.	7	14	45	50	36	152
I find influencer recommendation more persuasive for technology products compared to traditional advertisements.	9	10	33	72	28	152
More likely to try new brands when they are endorsed by influencers in my preferred category.	6	13	40	62	31	152
Influencer promotions influence my purchasing decision differently depending upon the product type.	6	13	41	58	34	152

(Source: Primary data)

Figure 4.12 showing the types of products or services that are most influenced to purchase through influencer marketing

Types of products or services that is most influenced



(Source: Primary data)

INTERPRETATION: The study indicates that influencer marketing is specifically effective for fashion, beauty, and technology products. A large portion of respondents (41.4%) agree that they are more likely to purchase fashion and beauty products recommended by influencers, while 47.4% find influencer recommendations for technology products more persuasive than traditional advertising. The credibility of an influencer is also influenced by the type of product they promote (32.9% agree). Also, 40.8% of respondents tend to try new brands in their preferred category if endorsed by an influencer. This highlights that product category plays an important role in shaping consumer trust and purchasing decisions.

4.13 AUTHENTICITY OF INFLUENCERS AFFECTS CUSTOMER BRAND LOYALTY AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR.

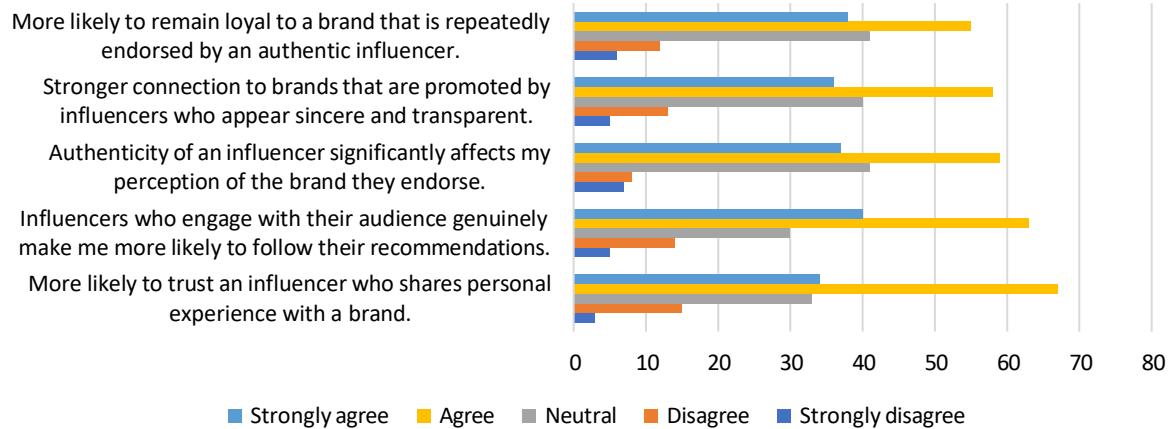
Table 4.13 showing the authenticity of influencers affects customer brand loyalty and consumer behaviour

Attributes	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
More likely to trust an influencer who shares personal experience with a brand.	3	15	33	67	34	152
Influencers who engage with their audience genuinely make me more likely to follow their recommendations.	5	14	30	63	40	152
Authenticity of an influencer significantly affects my perception of the brand they endorse.	7	8	41	59	37	152
Stronger connection to brands that are promoted by influencers who appear sincere and transparent.	5	13	40	58	36	152
More likely to remain loyal to a brand that is repeatedly endorsed by an authentic influencer.	6	12	41	55	38	152

(Source: Primary data)

Figure 4.13 showing the authenticity of influencers affects customer brand loyalty and consumer behaviour

Authenticity of an influencers affects customer brand loyalty and consumer behaviour



(Source: Primary data)

INTERPRETATION: The study indicates the strong connection between influencer authenticity and consumer trust, brand perception, and loyalty. A majority (44.1%) of respondents trust influencers more when they share personal experiences with a brand. Also, 41.4% are more likely to follow recommendations from influencers who engage with their audience. The authenticity of an influencer widely affects brand perception (38.8% agree), while 38.2% feel a stronger connection to brands promoted by transparent influencers. Finally, 36.2% of respondents are likely to remain loyal to a brand that is repeatedly endorsed by an authentic influencer, highlighting the power of genuine endorsements in shaping long-term consumer behaviour.

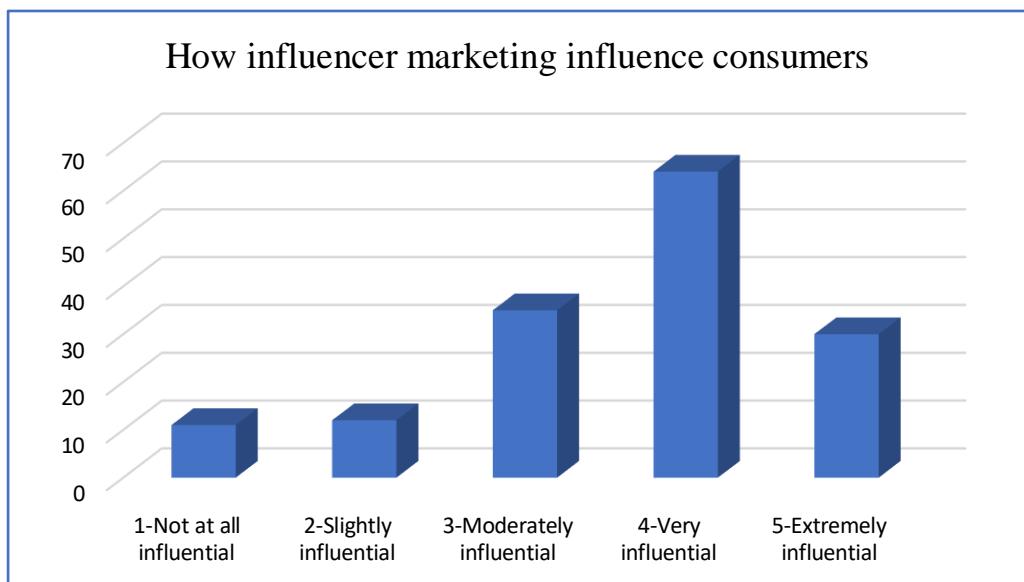
4.14 ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5, HOW INFLUENCER MARKETING INFLUENCES RESPONDENTS PURCHASING DECISION.

Table 4.14 showing the scale of how influencer marketing influences respondents purchasing decision

Attribute	Respondents	Percentage
1-Not at all influential	11	7.2
2-Slightly influential	12	7.8
3-Moderately influential	35	23
4-Very influential	64	42
5-Extremely influential	30	19.7
Total	152	100

(Source: Primary data)

Figure 4.14 showing the scale of how influencer marketing influences respondents purchasing decision



(Source: Primary data)

INTERPRETATION: The data shows that influencer marketing holds significant sway over consumers, with 42% of respondents rating it as "Very influential" and 19.7% as "Extremely influential." Only a small fraction (15%) found it to be slightly or not at all influential. This indicates that influencer content plays a powerful role in shaping purchasing decisions for the majority of the audience.

4.15 INFLUENCER MARKETING HELPS RESPONDENTS DISCOVER NEW PRODUCTS.

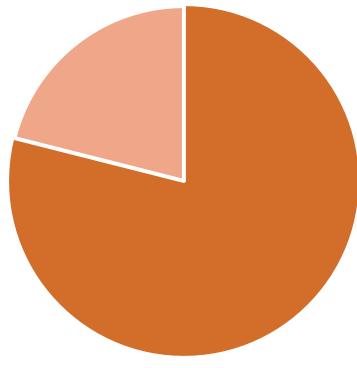
Table 4.15 showing influencer marketing helps respondents discover new products

Attribute	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	120	79
No	32	21
Total	152	100

(Source: Primary data)

Figure 4.15 showing influencer marketing helps respondents discover new products

Influencer marketing helps respondents discover new products



(Source: Primary data)

INTERPRETATION: A significant 79% of respondents agree that influencer marketing helps them discover new products. This highlights the influential role of content creators in expanding consumer awareness and driving product discovery through their platforms.

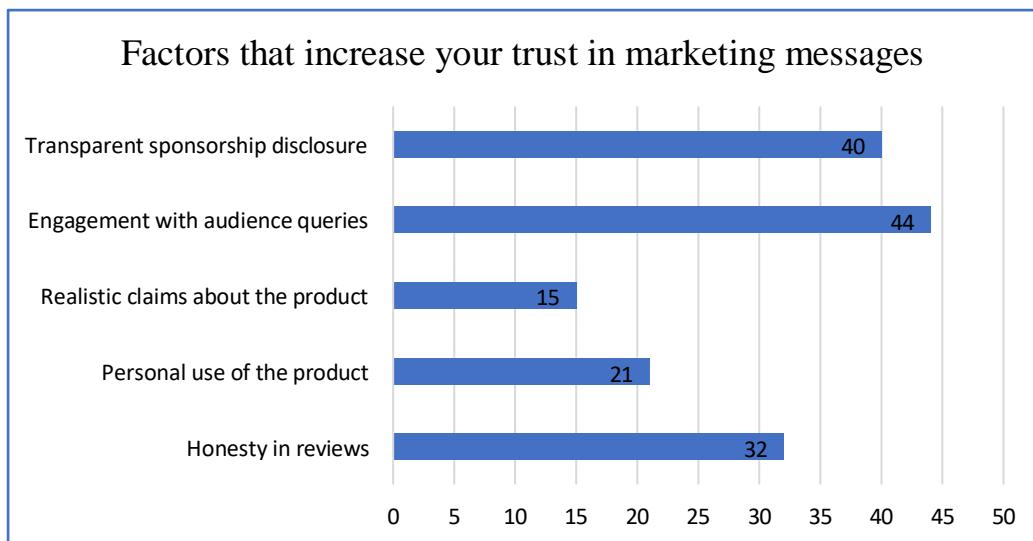
4.16 FACTORS THAT INCREASE YOUR TRUST IN MARKETING MESSAGES.

Table 4.16 showing the factors that increase your trust in marketing messages

Attributes	Respondents	Percentage
Honesty in reviews	32	21
Personal use of the product	21	14
Realistic claims about the product	15	10
Engagement with audience queries	44	29
Transparent sponsorship disclosure	40	26
Total	152	100

(Source: Primary data)

Figure 4.16 showing the factors that increase your trust in marketing message



(Source: Primary data)

INTERPRETATION: The top attribute that enhances the perception of influencer authenticity among respondents is engagement with audience queries (29%), followed closely by transparent sponsorship disclosure (26%) and honesty in reviews (21%). These findings suggest that consumers value open, honest, and interactive communication from influencers. Personal product use and realistic claims also contribute, but to a minor extent.

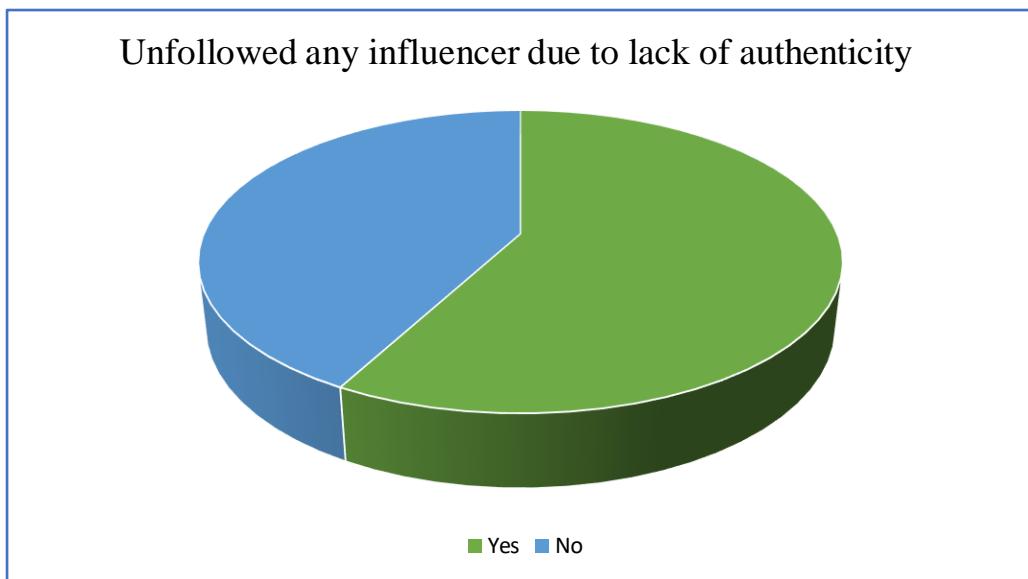
4.17 UNFOLLOWED ANY INFLUENCER DUE TO LACK OF AUTHENTICITY.

Table 4.17 showing the unfollowing of an influencer due to lack of authenticity

Attributes	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	88	57.8
No	64	42.1
Total	152	100

(Source: Primary data)

Figure 4.17 showing the unfollowing of an influencer due to lack of authenticity



(Source: Primary data)

INTERPRETATION: Over half of the respondents (57.8%) have unfollowed an influencer due to a perceived lack of authenticity. This shows that credibility and transparency are crucial in maintaining follower trust and long-term engagement.

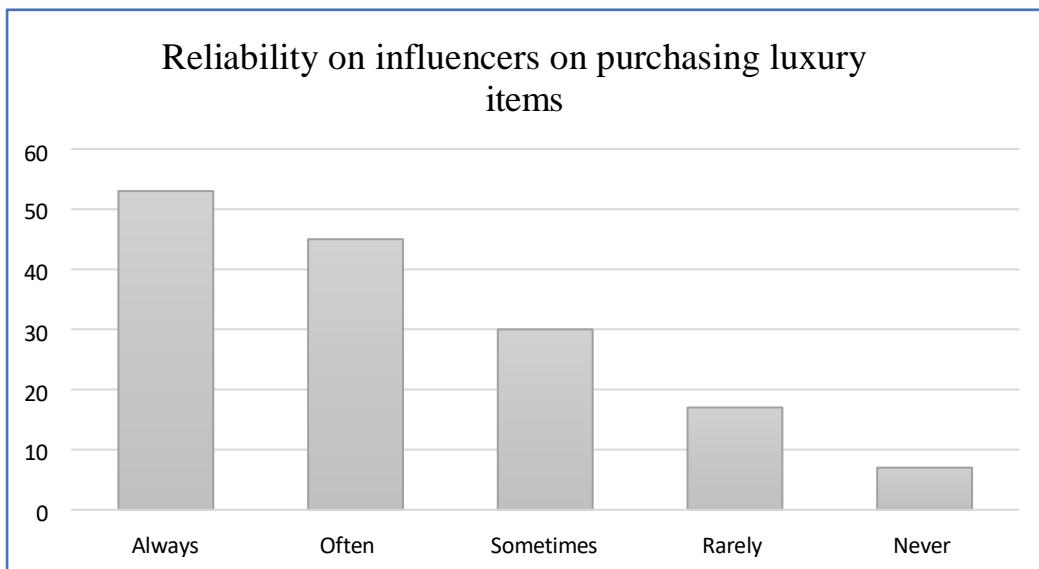
4.18 RELIABILITY ON INFLUENCERS FOR RECOMMENDATION WHEN PURCHASING LUXURY PRODUCTS.

Table 4.18 showing the reliability on influencers for recommendation when purchasing luxury products

Attributes	Respondents	Percentage
Always	53	34
Often	45	29.6
Sometimes	30	20
Rarely	17	11
Never	7	4.4
Total	152	100

(Source: Primary data)

Figure 4.18 showing the reliability on influencers for recommendation when purchasing luxury products



(Source: Primary data)

INTERPRETATION: A significant majority of respondents (83.6%) rely on influencers at least sometimes when purchasing luxury products, with 34% saying they always do. This suggests that influencers play a noteworthy role in shaping consumer decisions in the luxury segment, likely due to perceived expertise.

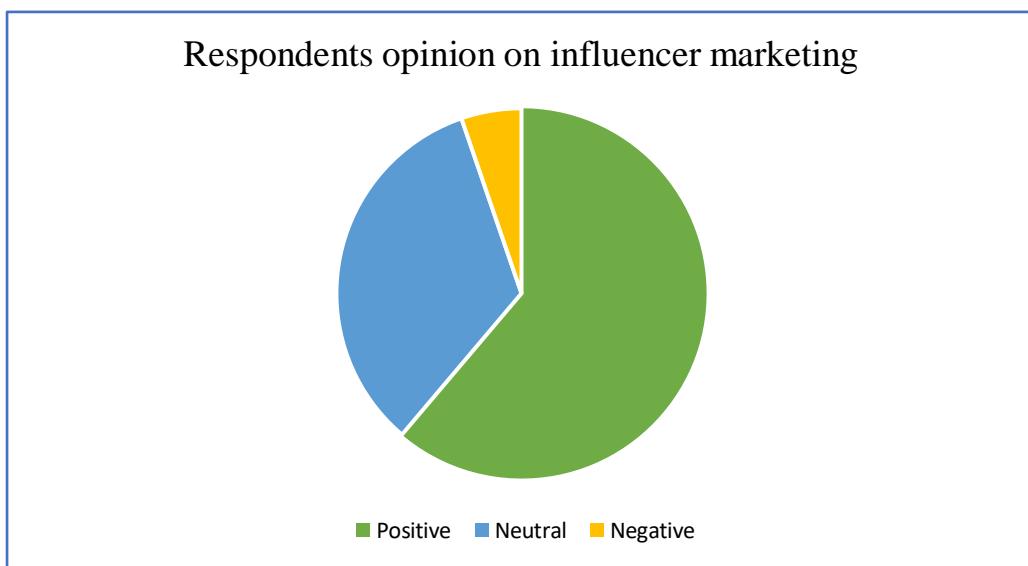
4.19 RESPONDENTS OPINION ABOUT INFLUENCER MARKETING AS A WHOLE

Table 4.19 showing the opinion about influencer marketing as a whole

Attributes	Respondents	Percentage
Positive	93	61
Neutral	51	33
Negative	8	6
Total	152	100

(Source: Primary data)

Figure 4.19 showing the opinion about influencer marketing as a whole



(Source: Primary data)

INTERPRETATION: The overall perception of influencer marketing among respondents is largely favourable, with 61% expressing a positive opinion. 33% remain neutral, indicating scope for influencers or brands to build stronger connections. Only a small 6% hold a negative view, showing general acceptance and effectiveness of influencer marketing in today's consumer landscape.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 FINDINGS

- In this study, a significant 77% of participants belong to the 18–25 age category, with 88.2% indicating they actively follow influencers, indicating influencer marketing's deep influence on younger audiences.
- Out of the total respondents, 67.1% are female, showing that women are more engaged in following and interacting with influencers.
- Students made up 52% of respondents, pointing to the fact that influencer marketing strongly connect with the student population.
- Instagram stood out as the most favoured platform, with 72.4% of participants interacting with influencers here, making it the key platform for influencer activity.
- Over half (52%) of the respondents mentioned daily interactions with influencers, showing how necessary the influencer content is in their daily social media habits.
- 72.4% of those surveyed have bought products or services based on influencer recommendations, indicating influencer content's direct impact on buying behaviour.
- 82.2% of consumers reported that purchases influenced by influencers either met or exceeded their expectations, reflecting positive consumer experiences.
- Nearly 48% of respondents are more inclined to purchase fashion and beauty products recommended by influencers, showing this sector's strong influence.
- Half of the respondents trust influencers with proven expertise, though a sizable portion remains neutral, showing a balanced trust level.
- 56.6% of respondents feel more confident in buying products when influencers seem knowledgeable about what they're promoting.
- Around 60% of respondents noted that the credibility of influencers plays a key role in whether they consider following brand endorsements.
- 56.6% of the sample agreed that the social media platform used by an influencer affects how they engage with content, with Instagram and YouTube leading the way.

- About 65.2% of participants confirmed that videos, posts, or stories shared by influencers influence their purchasing choices.
- 66.5% are more likely to trust influencers when they share genuine personal experiences with a brand.
- 61.2% of respondents said they would likely remain loyal to brands consistently endorsed by influencers they perceive as authentic.
- Influencer marketing significantly impacts consumer behaviour, with over 60% of respondents rating it as highly influential in their purchase decisions. Only a small portion (15%) found it to have little or no effect.
- A notable 79% of respondents agreed that influencer marketing helps them discover new products, showing its strong role in increasing consumer awareness and product visibility.
- Engaging with audience queries (29%), transparent sponsorship disclosure (26%), and honest reviews (21%) are the top factors that boost influencer authenticity, showing that consumers value clear, honest, and interactive communication.
- Over 57% of respondents have unfollowed influencers for lacking authenticity, highlighting the importance of credibility and transparency in retaining follower trust.
- A majority of respondents (83.6%) rely on influencers when buying luxury products, with 34% doing so consistently, indicating that influencer expertise significantly impacts luxury purchase decisions.
- Overall, 61% of respondents view influencer marketing positively, while only 6% hold a negative opinion, reflecting broad acceptance and effectiveness, with scope to strengthen engagement among the neutral 33%.

5.2 SUGGESTIONS

1. Since most respondents are active on these platforms, brands should focus their influencer collaborations primarily on Instagram and YouTube.
2. Collaborating with micro-influencers can bring more authenticity and target specific niche groups, often delivering better engagement at a lower cost.
3. Influencers should clearly disclose sponsorships to ensure their followers continue trusting their recommendations.
4. Given the high influence of influencers in the fashion and beauty sectors, brands in these industries should capitalise on influencer marketing.
5. Brands should motivate influencers to share real, personal experiences to build stronger connections with their audience.
6. A mix of content formats—whether videos, stories, or posts—should be used to cater to the preferences of different consumers.
7. Brands can leverage influencer marketing when introducing new products, particularly to tap into trend-driven, younger audiences.
8. It's crucial for brands to carefully select influencers whose personality and values align well with their brand image to maintain authenticity.
9. Campaigns with interactive elements like polls, Q&A sessions, and giveaways can help boost audience engagement and strengthen brand loyalty.
10. Brands should focus on continuously tracking and analysing influencer campaigns to ensure they deliver measurable outcomes.

5.3 CONCLUSION

This study shows that influencer marketing has a strong impact on consumer behaviour, especially among younger people, students, and female audiences. Social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube allow influencers to connect with their followers in a personal and relatable way, which makes their product recommendations more trusted and effective than traditional ads.

One of the key findings is that trust and authenticity are very important. People are more likely to follow an influencer's advice if they believe the influencer is honest, knowledgeable, and genuinely uses the product. Personal stories and real experiences shared by influencers help build trust and influence buying decisions.

The study also found that content type and platform matter. Videos, stories, and posts on platforms like Instagram and YouTube are more engaging and lead to higher consumer interest and purchases. These platforms work well because they are highly visual and interactive.

Product category also affects consumer behaviour. People are more influenced by influencer marketing when it comes to fashion, beauty, fitness, and lifestyle products. If the influencer's content matches the follower's interests, it has a greater impact.

However, the growing number of paid promotions can reduce trust if influencers are not transparent. Consumers may become sceptical if they feel the content is too commercial. So, clear disclosure of sponsorships is necessary to maintain trust.

In summary, influencer marketing is an effective strategy when it is done with honesty and authenticity. Brands that choose the right influencers and allow them to stay true to their voice can build stronger connections with consumers and drive better results.

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- <https://medium.com/@influnance/the-impact-of-influencer-marketing-on-consumer-behavior-how-influencers-shape-consumer-choices-and-c74da0df58ef>
- <https://farapaper.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Fardapaper-Instafamous-and-social-media-influencer-marketing.pdf>
- <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10796-018-9868-1>
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- <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explainers/what-is-influencer-marketing>

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

INFLUENCER MARKETING AND ITS EFFECT ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR- WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COCHIN CITY

Dear respondent, I am Aleena Maria Rose, a Post Graduate student at St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam. As part of my project, I am sharing the questionnaire below. I appreciate you for taking time and providing your honest and unbiased responses, as they will contribute to accurate results. I assure you that your responses will be kept safe and secure.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Questionnaire: A Study on the Influence of Influencer Marketing on Consumer Behaviour

Demographic Information

1. Age

- Under 18
- 18–25
- 26–35
- 36–45
- 45 and above

2. Gender

- Male
- Female
- Other

3. Occupation

- Student
- Employed
- Self-employed
- Homemaker
- Other

4. Do you follow influencers on social media?

Yes

No

5. Which social media platform do you engage with influencers the most?

Instagram

YouTube

Facebook

Twitter (X)

Other

6. How often do you interact (like, comment, share) with influencer content on social media?

Daily

Weekly

Occasionally

Rarely

Never

7. Have you ever purchased a product/service directly through an influencer's post or link on social media?

Yes

No

8. If yes, did the product or service meet your expectations?

Exceeded expectations

Met expectations

Did not meet expectations

9. What types of products or services are you most likely to purchase based on influencer recommendations?

Fashion and Beauty

Fitness and Wellness

Technology

- Food and Beverages
- Travel and Hospitality
- Other

(H1) Influencer Credibility and Customers' Trust in Marketing Messages

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Scale: Strongly Disagree / Disagree / Neutral / Agree / Strongly Agree

10. I trust marketing messages more when they come from influencers with proven expertise in their field.
11. Influencers who appear knowledgeable make me more confident in their product recommendations.
12. The trustworthiness of an influencer directly affects my willingness to consider their endorsements.
13. I am more likely to engage with a brand if recommended by an influencer I perceive as credible.
14. I consider influencers with high credibility as reliable sources of product information.

(H2) Impact of Social Media Platforms on Engagement and Purchasing Decisions

Scale: Strongly Disagree / Disagree / Neutral / Agree / Strongly Agree

15. The social media platform used by an influencer affects my level of engagement with their content.
16. I am more likely to purchase a product if promoted on a platform I frequently use.
17. Different social media platforms influence my perception of the authenticity of influencers.
18. I find influencer marketing more persuasive on visual-heavy platforms like Instagram and YouTube.
19. The type of content format (video, story, post) on a social media platform affects my purchasing decisions.

(H3) Effect of Product/Service Type on Purchasing Decisions

Scale: Strongly Disagree / Disagree / Neutral / Agree / Strongly Agree

20. I am more likely to purchase fashion and beauty products endorsed by influencers compared to other categories.
21. The type of product being promoted affects my perception of the influencer's credibility.
22. I find influencer recommendations more persuasive for technology products compared to traditional advertisements.
23. I am more likely to try new brands when they are endorsed by influencers in my preferred product category.
24. Influencer promotions influence my purchasing decisions differently depending on the product type.

(H4) Influencer Authenticity and Its Impact on Brand Loyalty & Consumer Behaviour

Scale: Strongly Disagree / Disagree / Neutral / Agree / Strongly Agree

25. I am more likely to trust an influencer who shares personal experiences with a brand.
26. Influencers who engage with their audience genuinely make me more likely to follow their recommendations.
27. The authenticity of an influencer significantly affects my perception of the brand they endorse.
28. I feel a stronger connection to brands that are promoted by influencers who appear sincere and transparent.
29. I am more likely to remain loyal to a brand that is repeatedly endorsed by an authentic influencer.
30. **On a scale of 1 to 5, how strongly do you believe that influencer marketing influences your purchasing decisions?**
 1 – Not at all influential
 2 – Slightly influential
 3 – Moderately influential

- 4 – Very influential
- 5 – Extremely influential

31. Do you feel that influencer marketing helps you discover new products?

- Yes
- No

32. What factors increase your trust in an influencer's marketing message? (Select all that apply)

- Honesty in reviews
- Personal use of the product by the influencer
- Realistic claims about the product
- Engagement with audience queries
- Transparent sponsorship disclosure

33. Have you ever stopped following an influencer because you felt they lacked authenticity?

- Yes
- No

34. How often do you rely on influencers for recommendations when purchasing luxury goods?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

35. What is your overall opinion about influencer marketing?

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

