# A Study on Impact of Social Media Influencers (SMI) on Buying Behavior of Consumers

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## Abstract

In today's digital era, Social Media Influencers (SMIs) have emerged as pivotal figures in moulding user behavior and fostering social interactions. With substantial followings on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, these influencers hold the power to sway opinions, dictate trends, and influence consumer behavior on a worldwide scale. The study focuses on the impact of these influencers on buying behaviour of the select consumers. The paper analyses the inputs collected from various sources that include respondents of all ages who are influenced by the social media influencers. The study takes up to address the various aspects of social media and its influencers who take up the responsibility of branding and promoting the products. The research article concludes as to which social media platform has more impact and how exactly the consumers are influenced by these social media influencers.

**Keywords:** Social media, influencers, consumer behavior, digital marketing, trust, engagement, branding, promotion

## 1. Introduction

Influencers have become more than just trendsetters or marketing tools; they are central figures in the digital world, influencing not only purchasing decisions but also setting social norms and building online cultures. Their reach and ability to generate trust make them pivotal in both commercial ventures and social conversations, affecting brand popularity and societal values alike. The study suggests the growing importance of influencers in shaping public discourse and digital identities, pointing to a need for deeper analysis of their role in reflecting and sometimes challenging societal trends.

As the digital environment evolves, so does the relationship between influencers and their audiences, moving towards more genuine and value-oriented interactions. This shift emphasizes the importance of digital literacy in understanding and navigating the influencer landscape. The research underscores the significant, multifaceted impact of social media influencers, marking them as key agents of change. Their influence presents both opportunities and challenges, requiring careful consideration to maximize their positive impact while navigating ethical considerations. As we move forward, the evolving role of influencers in digital society will undoubtedly demand continuous attention and reassessment.

## 2. Literature Review

The credibility , trustworthiness and expertise significantly influence the attitutes and actions of the influencers.**Jiseon Han, George Balabanis(2023)** points out that the context and characteristics of influencers, along with factors like shared interests (homophily), can affect these effects. The variations

in results are attributed to differences in research methods. In essence, these findings help us better grasp how influencers on social media shape what we think and do, guiding future research in this area.

The personal relevance, inspiration, and trust contribute positively, whereas perceived risk has no impact on influencers.**Anjali Chopra, Vrushali Avhad, and SonaliJaju ( 2021)** state that Product influencer fitment is crucial, and consumers follow specific influencers for different product categories. Successful influencer marketing involves choosing influencers who provide curated advice, stories, and suggestions, impacting consumers in terms of increased brand awareness, subject matter expertise, brand preference, and product preference.

Role of trustworthiness is pivotal in social media influencer advertising. **Delia C. Balaban, Meda Mucundorfeanu and Brigitte Naderer(2022)** in their study found out that the role of trustworthiness is pivotal in social media influencer advertising. The study delves into users' appreciation of advertising transparency and its consequential effects.

The structural relationships between social media influencer attributes, perceived friendship, psychological well-being, loyalty, and perceived social responsibility of influencers, focusing on the perspective of social media users is the key.**Jihye Kim and Minseong Kim (2022)** conceptually identified social media influencer attributes such as language similarity, interest similarity, interaction frequency, and self-disclosure and examined the respective effects of each dimension on perceived friendship and psychological well-being, consequently resulting in loyalty toward social media influencers.

The influential power of social media influencers by examining the role of emotional attachment and perceived information value is covered under the study.**Raquel Sánchez-Fernández, David Jiménez-Castillo (2020**) state that emotional attachment and perceived information value determine followers' perceived influence, mediating positive word-of-mouth (WOM) and purchase intention. The findings contribute insights into the persuasive nature of influencers, offering valuable implications for researchers and practitioners in brand communication strategies.

A theoretical framework is worked out to understand the nuanced dynamics of social media influencer impact on consumer attitudes. **Lubna Nafees, Christy M. Cook, James E. Stoddard (2020)** models the positive relationship between influencer source credibility and expertise, goodwill, and trustworthiness.

Following an SMI enhances users' social media engagement, boosts their perception of acquiring knowledge, and increases social self-efficacy.**Ben Wasik. (2023)** highlights that these effects positively influence both online and offline social interactions. This insight is crucial, especially in the context of concerns about misinformation on social media, given the widespread consumption of SMI content that often lacks vetting for accuracy and authenticity.

The impact of social media content on user engagement behavior, investigating the direct effects of format and platform on both passive and active engagement is visible among the influencers.**Hamidreza Shahbaznezhad, Rebecca Dolan and Mona Rashidirad (2021)**suggest that the effectiveness of social media content on user engagement is influenced by content context. These findings contribute to a better understanding of user engagement and experiences on social media platforms, presenting empirical insights into the interplay of content types and contexts.

Exploring the relationship between fans' preferences, para-social interaction, and word-of-mouth in the era of influencer marketing is the key to the social media influencing. **Yu-Hsi Yuan, Yi-Cheng Yeh, Chia-Huei Wu, Cheng-Yong Liu (2022)** explored that With influencers playing diverse roles in business, politics, and charity, the internet and social media have become crucial for their self-promotion

and online branding. The study emphasizes the innovative implementation of influencer marketing through various social media platforms, contributing to economic growth and increased competitiveness in this evolving landscape.

**Maslin Binti Masrom, Abdelsalam H.Busalim, Hassan Abuhassna&NikHasnaa Nik Mahmood (2021**) provided insights into the research focus, trends, and prevalent theories and research methods employed in understanding how students behave on these platforms. The findings contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the current state of research on student behaviors in OSNs across various disciplines.

Social media influencers establish themself as expert within a particular field and share their own knowledge with the listed audience and more social channels. **Sidak Singh Karla(2024)** studied that in recent times, social media influencers have turned into powerful forces within the world of brand promotion and marketing.Sidak singh Karla(2024)

## 3. Research gap:

There are many research articles on various components of social media influencers. To name some the research was conducted on marketing and branding of products by the influencers, its impact on consumers, the reach it has in influencing the buying behavior of the consumers. Most of the studies are based on countries other than India. India is a huge market for online marketing and branding. These influencers on social media has great impact on the Indian market too. The present study focuses on the Indian consumers, its problems and prospects, marketing and branding of products that are promoted on the various social media platforms.

## 4. Objectives of the Study:

- To analyze consumer engagement with influencer content by analyzing participants interactions such as likes, comments, and shares.
- To study the insights into participants expectations regarding the future influence and evolving role of social media influencers in society.
- To analyze the impact of influencers on participants purchasing decisions and assess trust levels in influencer recommendations.
- To evaluate how influencers affect online and offline consumer behavior.
- To predict the evolving role of influencers in future marketing landscapes.

Keeping in view the above objectives,a questionnaire has been prepared and collected the data with random sampling for 150 respondents and the analytics are deduced. These Analytics are explained under the research methodology section

### 4.1. Methodology

A quantitative survey approach was employed. Data were collected from 150 Indian consumers via Google Forms and personal interviews. The sample included a range of age groups and geographic locations. SPSS version 26 was used for analysis, including frequency distribution and chi-square tests to test relationships among variables.

## 5.Data Analysis
### 5.1 ANALYSIS - I
**Frequency Table**

| S.No | Parameter | Response | Frequency | percentage |
|------|-----------|----------|-----------|------------|
| | **Demographic Profile:** | | | |
| 1 | Age | Below 19 | 33 | 22 |
| | | 20-39 | 79 | 53 |
| | | 40-59 | 29 | 19 |
| | | 60 and above | 9 | 6 |
| | | | | |
| 2 | Gender | Male | 51 | 34 |
| | | Female | 99 | 66 |
| | | | | |
| 3 | Location | Urban | 102 | 68 |
| | | Suburban | 22 | 15 |
| | | Rural | 26 | 17 |
| | **Impact on purchase :** | | | |
| 1 | Time spent | Less than an hour | 29 | 19 |
| | | 1-5 hours | 106 | 70 |
| | | 5-10 hours | 15 | 1 |
| | | | | |
| 2 | Impact of influencers on purchase | yes | 80 | 53 |
| | | unsure | 70 | 47 |
| | | | | |
| 3 | Satisfaction with the purchase | Very satisfied | 24 | 16 |
| | | Satisfied | 48 | 32 |
| | | Unsure | 26 | 17 |
| | | Not satisfied | 52 | 35 |
| | | | | |
| 4 | likes shares and comments influence shopping decisions | Very much | 18 | 12 |
| | | Mostly | 28 | 19 |
| | | Neutral | 36 | 24 |
| | | A little | 27 | 18 |
| | | Doesn't much | 41 | 27 |
| | **Impact of content:** | | | |
| 1 | Discuss influencer related | Never | 33 | 22 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | content with friends and family | | | |
| | | Rarely | 45 | 30 |
| | | Occasionally | 51 | 34 |
| | | Frequently | 19 | 13 |
| | | Consistently | 2 | 1 |
| | | | | |
| 2 | Attended events or meet-ups organized by influencers | Regularly | 9 | 6 |
| | | Once a month | 9 | 6 |
| | | Less than a month | 19 | 13 |
| | | Never | 113 | 75 |
| | | | | |
| 3 | Engage with influencer content | Always | 11 | 8 |
| | | Most of the time | 29 | 19 |
| | | Sometimes | 63 | 42 |
| | | Never | 47 | 31 |
| | | | | |
| 4 | Impact on communication between consumers and business | Trust Building | 38 | 25 |
| | | Purchase Influence | 63 | 42 |
| | | Real-time feedback | 49 | 33 |
| | | | | |
| 5 | Connected to other followers of the same influencer | Yes | 53 | 35 |
| | | No | 97 | 65 |
| | **Role of Influencers:** | | | |
| 1 | Influencers pose challenges like mis information or biased reviews | Yes, encountered with misinformation | 20 | 13 |
| | | Yes, due to mudisclosed sponsorships | 11 | 8 |
| | | Yes, due to | 50 | 33 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | unrealistic expectations set by influencers | | |
| | | No, influencers did not affect dissatisfaction | 69 | 46 |
| | | | | |
| 2 | Social media influencers impact the overall behaviour and preferences of users | Positive Impact | 49 | 33 |
| | | Negative Impact | 14 | 9 |
| | | Diverse Preferences | 54 | 36 |
| | | Brand Loyalty | 19 | 13 |
| | | Impulse Buying | 14 | 9 |
| | | | | |
| 3 | Social media influencers impact social interactions among users | Strength and connections | 27 | 18 |
| | | Influence trends | 72 | 48 |
| | | Create divisions | 19 | 13 |
| | | No impact | 32 | 21 |
| | | | | |
| 4 | Influencer marketing will evolve in the next few years | Advanced technology integration | 71 | 48 |
| | | Micro-influencers dominance | 30 | 20 |
| | | Regulatory change | 23 | 15 |
| | | Ephemeral content dominance | 6 | 4 |
| | | Data-driven strategies | 20 | 13 |

| 5 | Future role of social media influencers in society | Supporting causes | 18 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Being authentic | 15 | 10 |
| | | Sharing knowledge | 60 | 40 |
| | | Global trendsetters | 16 | 11 |
| | | Innovative earnings | 41 | 27 |

**Interpretaion**

**1. Demographics**

- **Age Distribution**:
o Majority (49%) are between 20-39 years.
o 33% are under 19, showing a strong representation of young audiences.
o Only 9% are aged 60+, indicating limited engagement from older demographics.
- **Gender**:
o Female respondents dominate (66%), possibly indicating more engagement or interest from women in influencer-related content.
- **Location**:
o Urban respondents make up 68%, suggesting that influencer marketing is more prevalent in urban settings.
o Rural areas are less represented (17%).

**2. Digital Engagement**

- **Time Spent on Social Media**:
o 71% spend 1–5 hours daily—highlighting a key window for influencer content exposure.
- **Engagement with Influencer Content**:
o Only 11% always engage; majority (42%) engage "sometimes".
o 47 people (31%) never engage—indicating a notable passive audience.
- **Influence of Likes, Shares, Comments**:
o 28% say these affect their choices "mostly" or "very much".
o 41 respondents (27%) say it doesn't affect them much.

**3. Influence on Purchasing and Satisfaction**

- **Influence on Purchase**:
o 53% said influencers affect their purchases, a significant impact.
- **Satisfaction Post-Purchase**:
o 48% are "Satisfied", but 26% are "Not Satisfied"—a potential issue in influencer trust or product quality.

**4. Social Interactions and Trends**

- **Discussion with Friends/Family**:
o Majority (77%) do this rarely or occasionally, showing limited offline conversation about influencer

content.

- **Event Attendance**:
  o 113 respondents (76%) have never attended influencer events—suggesting digital-only interaction.
- **Impact on Communication**:
  o Most noted **Purchase Influence (42%)** and **Real-time Feedback (33%)**—underlining influencers' business impact.

## 5. Risks and Challenges

- **Concerns about Misinformation**:
  o 81(54%) respondents reported issues like unrealistic expectations, undisclosed sponsorships, and misinformation.
  o However, 69(46%) said influencers did not affect dissatisfaction, indicating divided opinions.

## 6. Behavioral Influence

- **Overall Behavior/Preferences**:
  o 36% cited **Diverse Preferences**, followed by **Positive Impact (33%)**.
  o Smaller numbers noted **Impulse Buying** and **Negative Impact (9% each)**.
- **Impact on Social Interactions**:
  o 72(48%) respondents say influencers **influence trends**, indicating cultural and fashion influence.
  o 21% see **no impact**, suggesting selective influence.

## 7. Future of Influencer Marketing

- **Predictions**:
  o **Advanced technology integration** is the top anticipated trend (48%).
  o **Micro-influencers** and **data-driven strategies** are also prominent (20% and 13%).
- **Future Roles**:
  o Most believe influencers will **share knowledge (40%)** and **innovate earnings (27%)**—pointing to educational and entrepreneurial opportunities.

## 5.2 ANALYSIS – II : CHI-SQUARE TESTS

| Hypothesis No. | Hypothesis Statement | p-value (Asy. Sig) | Result | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | No association between **age** and **change in social media usage patterns** | 0.079 | **Significant** | This result is marginal ($p < 0.1$); it implies **age may influence** changes in usage patterns. |
| 2 | No association between **age** and **time spent watching influencers** | 0.319 | Not Significant | Age does **not** significantly affect time spent watching influencers. |
| 3 | No association between **age** and **desire to become an influencer** | 0.675 | Not Significant | No link between age and aspiration to become an influencer. |
| 4 | No association between **age** and **purchase decision based on** | 0.609 | Not Significant | Age has **no significant influence** on purchase |

| Hypothesis No. | Hypothesis Statement | p-value (Asy. Sig) | Result | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **influencers** | | | decisions from influencers. |
| 5. | No association between **time spent on social media** and **change in usage patterns** | 0.042 | **Significant** | Time spent affects **how users change** their social media behavior. |
| 6 | No association between **purchase decision** and **trust in influencer recommendations** | 0.001 | **Highly Significant** | **Strong link** between purchasing decisions and **trust** in influencer endorsements. |
| 7 | No association between **age** and **purchase decision based on influencer** | 0.191 | Not Significant | Again confirms **age isn't a key factor** in such purchases. |
| 8 | No association between **location** and **frequency of engagement** with influencer content | 0.002 | **Significant** | **Location impacts** how often users engage with influencer content. |

## 6. Discussion

The findings support global research on the powerful role of influencers in consumer decision-making. However, unlike western studies, Indian consumers show a cautious optimism—engaging digitally but avoiding offline events. Trust remains a critical driver, while misinformation poses a challenge. The data also suggest a shift toward value-driven and educational influencer content.

## 7.Conclusion

The present study set out to understand the multifaceted impact of social media influencers (SMIs) on consumer behavior, particularly in the Indian context. Through the analysis of responses from 150 participants across varied demographics and geographies, the study offers several significant conclusions aligned with its stated objectives.

Firstly, **engagement with influencer content** is moderate, with most participants interacting "sometimes" or passively observing content. The data reveals that **engagement levels**such as likes, comments, and sharesplay a partial role in shaping buying decisions, indicating that while influencer content is visible, its ability to actively drive participation varies across user groups is minimal.

Secondly, the study establishes that **influencers significantly affect consumer trust and purchasing decisions**. Over 50% of respondents acknowledged that influencers impacted their purchase behavior. The **chi-square analysis** further confirmed a highly significant association between trust in influencer recommendations and purchase decisions, reinforcing the importance of credibility and authenticity in influencer marketing.

Thirdly, while influencers facilitate **social conversations and online engagement**, offline interactions, such as discussions with friends and attending influencer events, remain limited. This suggests that influencer impact is largely digital and may not deeply permeate real-world social environments for most users. Fourth, **demographic factors such as age and gender show limited association with**

**influencer-driven behavior**, whereas **location** significantly influences engagement frequency. This implies that urban audiences are more immersed in influencer ecosystems, possibly due to greater digital exposure and marketing saturation.

Fifth, the study found that **users hold mixed views about the ethical conduct and influence of SMIs**, with over half reporting concerns related to misinformation, unrealistic expectations, and undisclosed sponsorships. Despite this, the overall sentiment remains cautiously optimistic, with many respondents predicting influencers will play important roles in knowledge sharing and technological integration in the future.

Lastly, the research highlights that **the role of SMIs is expected to evolve** towards more authentic, cause-driven, and knowledge-based engagement, particularly through advanced digital strategies and micro-influencers. This aligns with growing expectations for transparency and social responsibility in digital marketing.

In conclusion, social media influencers are influential agents in shaping consumer behavior, trust, and trends especially within urban, digitally literate audiences. However, their long-term impact will depend on their ability to maintain authenticity, build trust, and adapt to the evolving expectations of consumers and regulatory frameworks.

## 8. Scope for further research:

The present study is more engaged in the select social media platforms like Youtube, Instagram, Twitter etc.There are several other platforms like Reddit, Telegram, Tiktok, Pinterest etc remained untouched. There are many users of these platforms in Indian market, which leaves the area open for exploring further research. Besides these platforms, there is scope to study corporate and non corporate groups opinion on influence of social media.

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