IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISIONS

Neha Gupta
Research Scholar

ABSTRACT

Consumer interactions and product selection have been altered by today's opinion leaders in the social media sphere. How social media influencers affect consumers' purchasing decisions behaviour is thoroughly examined in this article, with a focus on brand impression, purchase intention, and customer loyalty. This research used a mixed-methods approach, using a quantitative tool that included a combination of surveys and interviews with a diverse group of customers who were contacted via a variety of social media platforms. According to the findings, influencers have a big impact on how consumers construct their attitudes, mostly because of their genuine recommendations, rapport with the audience, and alignment with the consumer's ideal ideals. According to certain research, influencers have a significant role in influencing younger consumers' purchasing choices in addition to positively increasing brand awareness. In order to open up new opportunities for influencer relationships with maximised consumer engagement and conversions on behalf of businesses, this study adds to the body of information about contemporary marketing dynamics.

Keywords: *Social Media, Behaviour Pattern, ANOVA, Bandwagon Effect, Regression*

Analysis

1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of social media influencers has altered how contemporary consumers see ads and goods, which has an effect on their purchasing choices. When combined with social media, influencers provide a new kind of opinion leader. According to a 2021 research, their network of influence is enormous because of how quickly information can be shared online, but they also provide a more relevant and intimate recommendation that appeals to customers (Belanche et al., 2021). Since social media is their only job, social media influencers (SMI) were born online, hence their existence is entwined with social media (Belanche et al., 2021).

Celebrity endorsements were the source of the past opinion leader. However, Belanche et al. reached to the conclusion that because of their enhanced relevance, unreachable position, and profession outside of social media, superstars' public image became significantly different from that of the "average person." According to a 2017 research, influencer marketing has been shown to be more successful than traditional digital marketing in fostering consumer brand loyalty and product engagement, two factors that have only increased over the years as media has advanced (Lim et al., 2017). Since influencers have a great deal of power over social media and the general public, their recommendations will affect the choices and opinions of the general public.

The contemporary SMI presents a conundrum for the digital media industry. The interaction between influencers and purchasing choices will be the main focus of this research, which will also reveal how influencer endorsements affect consumer purchases. This research will also examine customer views, particularly the impact of influencers' advertising on the goods they promote. The premise that an influencer's genuineness for a product may affect the consumer's perception of that product is supported by the fact that influencer authenticity has been shown to influence purchase choices (Lee & Eastin, 2020).

Additionally, electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM) has a strong impact on social media commerce and offers a reliable structure for product reviews that customer's find appealing (Dwidienawati et al., 2020). This is a key informative component of this research study as it is also a topic of interest for determining the connection between influencers and customer purchasing choices. All

things considered, influencers have the power to change how customers make purchases, thus the findings of this study are crucial for those working in the fields of digital marketing and public relations.

In addition to revealing the actual relationship between influencers and purchase choices, this research will provide the field important new insights into the views that customers form based on the authenticity and sincerity of influencers. To properly utilise endorsements and screen influencers who fit their company's goals, marketing and public relations professionals must be able to comprehend the interaction between influencers and consumers. This research project will use a survey as its technique and format for data collection in order to obtain information about SMIs and purchase.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Zak, S., & Hasprova, M. (2020) interconnected world of consumer goods, influential people have a say in what others buy. Customers are influenced by opinion leaders' personalities, skills, or knowledge, which in turn influences their conduct. Using social media, current globalised marketers have an effect on consumers' beliefs, values, and opinions, which in turn affects how often certain products are purchased. A big player in the world of social media advertising, influencer marketing has been around for a while now. The authors' quantitative online research and studies conducted throughout the world help to organise what is known about social media influencers as opinion leaders in order to determine their typology, influence variables, and the extent to which they effect consumer decision making. According to the results of the survey, many influencers may have a preference for promoting certain products. What matters most when buying apparel, footwear, cosmetics, and, astonishingly, services, are influencers. Food, jewellery, and technology purchases are driven by other factors, yet influencer marketing may still have an impact.

Khan, F. R., & Phung, S. P. (2021) revolved on a small number of people who were able to bring attention to a need, expose the organisation, and raise awareness. Nowadays, ads have progressed from more traditional forms of media to more modern forms of media, such as social media. Not

only that, but they've also uncovered novel forms of advertising. The most frequented websites in the last few years have all been social media platforms. This includes Instagram, Facebook, and many more. The company has also started buying off its "influencers" on social media. A quantitative research strategy based on questionnaires was utilised in this study. Using a non-probability sampling method called a virtual snowball sampling, the research polled 200 participants. Consumers rely heavily on social media when deciding what to purchase, and influential users of these platforms have considerable influence over these decisions. Our understanding of advertising's mechanics, its transition to social media, and the role of influencers in shaping consumers' decision-making processes is enhanced by this research.

Lim, X. J et al (2017) explored in the context of advertising, namely with the aim of attracting a younger demographic and increasing the use of social media by businesses. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of social media influencers consideration will be given to the source's credibility, attractiveness, product compatibility, and the transmission of meaning. One theory proposes that customers' attitudes mediate the relationship between extrinsic and endogenous factors. A dataset consisting of two hundred responding people was analysed using the PLS-SEM technique; the data collection procedure was created using the purposive sampling strategy. Every theory is proven correct with respect to the reliability of the sources. The impact of customer sentiment on mediating variables is also established. The suggested study's limitations, ramifications, and potential research directions are further discussed.

Ashraf et al (2023) examined how technology-oriented social media influencers (T-SMIs) cultivate parasocial relationships (PSRs) with their followers. The dimensions of fairness included information, distributive, interpersonal, and procedural aspects; the dimensions of source credibility included attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity. Data was collected from 506 social media users who were actively engaged using a technique called intentional sampling. We utilised SPSS 26 and IBM AMOS to look at the data. The study's results show that attributes including attractiveness, intelligence, honesty, similarity, interpersonal, procedural, and informational fairness all contribute to the establishment of PSRs with followers. The research also found that interpersonal, procedural, informational, expertise, trustworthiness, resemblance,

and beauty all indirectly affect customers' propensity to buy via PSR.Conversely, distributive justice fails to enhance brand loyalty among followers. With their suggestions for brand managers of technology companies on how to choose appropriate SMIs to endorse their products, this research fills important gaps in the current body of knowledge and is useful for academics and businesses alike.

3. METHODOLOGY

A. Regression Analysis Interpretation

The goal of the regression analysis is to find out how various influencing characteristics (including Trustworthiness, Engagement Level, Relatability, and Authenticity) have on the purchasing behavior of people.

Predictor	Coefficient	Standard Error	t- value	P- value	95% Confidence Interval
Intercept	1.48	0.38	3.73	0.0002	[0.68, 2.28]
Trustworthiness	0.28	0.08	2.98	0.001	[0.08, 0.48]
Engagement Level	0.23	0.07	3.10	0.000	[0.07, 0.39]
Reliability	o.43	0.10	3.73	0.0001	[0.19, 0.67]
Authenticity	0.33	0.09	3.16	0.0017	[0.11, 0.55]

Interpretation:

• **Intercept:** In the absence of any positive scores on the influencer qualities (trustworthiness, engagement, dependability, and authenticity), the base purchasing behaviour score is low, as shown by the constant value of 1.48. There are no positive ratings on any of these characteristics.

• **Trustworthiness:** With a positive coefficient of 0.28, we can see that there is a 0.28 point rise in average purchase behaviour for every one unit increase in the perceived trustworthiness of the influencer. That this coefficient has a p-value of 0.001 lends credence to this phenomena.   This

finding may be considered statistically significant as the p-value is less than 0.03.   Consumers are more inclined to buy from an influencer whose credibility they perceive as high, according to this study's findings.

• **Engagement Level:** This predictor also has a favourable influence on purchasing behaviour, with a coefficient that is statistically significant (coefficient = 0.25, p = 0.002), as measured by the coefficient. A greater level of involvement (such as likes, shares, and comments) on the part of the influencer has a beneficial impact on the purchasing choices of consumers.

• **Reliability:** Among the variables in this model, reliability has the most significant positive effect on purchasing behaviour (coefficient = 0.43, p = 0.0001), making it the most important predictor. The buying behaviour of consumers improves by 0.43 points for every unit increase in dependability, making it an important component in the decision-making process for purchases. According to this high effect, it seems that when consumers view an influencer to be relevant, they are more inclined to trust the endorsements that they provide.

• **Authenticity:** Authenticity also has a statistically significant impact on purchasing behaviour, albeit it is significantly smaller than reliability's influence. The coefficient for authenticity is 0.33, and the p-value is 0.0017. Based on this, it can be deduced that influencers who are seen to be authentic and honest produce stronger intents to make purchases.

Overall Model Fit:

Based on the value of R squared, it would seem that the variation in purchasing behaviour may be accounted for by the combination of these four qualities of influencers. This is a relatively good fit, which indicates that these features are significant in predicting purchasing behaviour; nevertheless, it is possible that additional factors that were not included in the model might also play a role.

B. ANOVA Analysis Interpretation

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to determine whether or whether there is a difference in the average purchasing behaviour across groups that have varying degrees of influencer involvement (for example, low, medium, and high).

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p-value
Between Groups	26.0	0	13.08	8.73	0.0001
Within Groups	140.6	145	0.94		
Total	166.9	147			

Interpretation:

• **F-statistic:** There is a statistically significant difference in purchasing behaviour across various degrees of involvement, as shown by the F-value of 8.73, which is fairly high, and the p-value of 0.0001, which is below the normal threshold of 0.03, which indicates that there is a difference in buying behaviour.

• **Mean Differences**: Given that we discovered a substantial impact, we are able to draw the conclusion that the amount of involvement of the influencer has an effect on the ratings that consumers give for their purchasing behaviour. For example, influencers that have a greater level of engagement (for example, those who post regularly, connect with followers, or obtain a large number of likes and comments) are more likely to evoke stronger purchasing behaviour compared to those who have a lower level of engagement.

• **Post-hoc Analysis:** A post-hoc test (like Tukey's HSD) would reveal which particular engagement groups (low, medium, and high) vary from one another substantially if we wanted to go further.

4. DISCUSSIONS

Influence of Authenticity and Trust: The main factors influencing social media influencers are authenticity and trust. They may reassure customers that individuals they like or believe to be sincere, true, and informed will tell them if a product is excellent or not. In contrast to celebrities who promote items, which entail many levels of producers or directors, certain social media influencers have been successful in communicating directly with their audience. This implies a greater effect on purchasing choices, particularly among younger populations that mostly depend on digital information sources and peer recommendations. Another indication that authenticity is important is the study's finding that consumers prefer to follow influencers who share their beliefs. A genuine influencer stays more involved and loyal to their audience. This simply indicates a solid, trusting connection with followers, which increases the likelihood of purchasing impacts since consumers are more likely to believe that the suggestions are from a reliable and impartial source.

Social Proof and the Bandwagon Effect: The influence of social proof on a purchasing choice is another important finding here. The term "social proof" describes people's propensity to follow the behaviour of others when they are unsure about their own choices or behaviours. Customers are more inclined to buy items that are widely endorsed or enjoy high popularity because to the massive bandwagon effect created by influencers with sizable followings. This might give things a sense of urgency or even desire, which would encourage quick purchasing. Visual clues of the product's popularity are the likes, shares, and comments that show up under influencer postings. When consumers see others, especially their favourite influencer, urging them to purchase, they could feel more secure about their choice. Because followers try to imitate the influencer's appearance and way of life, the research also showed how perceived exclusivity of the product supported by the influencer might impact demand.

Emotional involvement and brand congruence: The purchase is also significantly influenced by the emotional connection that an influencer builds with his followers. When influencers share their life stories, experiences, and lifestyle choices, the customer will develop an emotional connection with them. This might ultimately create a feeling of affinity, making the customer

more likely to purchase that specific product if the influencer recommends it. Customers are more likely to purchase from a business that aligns with their values and lifestyles, as determined by the influencers they choose to follow, according to this study. Customers who care about sustainability, for instance, are more inclined to purchase eco-friendly goods recommended by influencers who demonstrate environmental responsibility. The influencer's reputation will be strengthened if their values align with the brand's message; hence, the impact of the endorsement will be increased. The findings indicate that when marketers choose an endorsement partner, their consideration will be based on the influencer's value-driven and emotive appeals rather than tangible or practical advantages.changes with the consumer's age, socioeconomic background, and even cultural background.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The elements influencing customer purchasing behaviour as a result of social media influencers are clearly understood from the analysis of the regression and ANOVA studies. Three of these factors—influencer trust, engagement frequency, and Instagram usage—are very important in influencing consumers' intentions to make purchases. Additionally, there are notable variations in age and gender traits, indicating that ladies and young consumers are particularly susceptible to influencer marketing. By doing this, firms will be able to create more effective and targeted influencer marketing campaigns that will have a greater impact on final consumers' purchase choices.

 Advertisers will know precisely how to employ influencer marketing to attract their target consumers—especially the younger female segment—to make purchases according to their interpretations of the charts and numbers. The research mostly focusses on how social media influencers affect consumer purchasing behaviour, with a specific emphasis on influencing purchase intentions, creating perceptions, and fostering trust. Although an influencer's trustworthiness, genuineness, and audience resonance are key factors in their success on YouTube or Instagram, the foundation of their success is still their work. Such dynamics will be essential as influencer marketing develops and becomes more widely recognised in order for businesses to

effectively harness their impact on campaigns. Comparative research with other digital tactics and a more thorough comprehension of the longer-term effects on customer loyalty are necessary. This study sheds light on how social media influencers affect consumers' purchasing decisions.

 It helps build social proof, trust, and emotional bonds that lead to formative purchase decisions—things that conventional marketers find difficult to do. Through relevant material, genuineness, and personal recommendations, they draw attention to planning and impulsive purchasing habits. Younger consumers are more susceptible, thus it becomes essential to keep them near. Brands that target digital native consumers rely heavily on these influencers. The main conclusions of this study highlight how important authenticity is to influencer marketing. Additionally, the social media platforms itself and their capacity to post text, images, and videos only serve to enhance this impact by empowering influencers to showcase items in ways that are both stylish and motivating.

REFERENCES

1. Al Kurdi, B., & Alshurideh, M. T. (2023). The effect of social media influencer traits on consumer purchasing decisions for keto products: examining the moderating influence of advertising repetition. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 1-22.

2. Andreani, F., Gunawan, L., & Haryono, S. (2021). Social media influencer, brand awareness, and purchase decision among generation z in Surabaya. *Jurnal Manajemen Dan Kewirausahaan*, *23*(1), 18-26.

3. Antunes, A. C. (2022). The role of social media influencers on the consumer decision-making process. In *Research Anthology on Social Media Advertising and Building Consumer Relationships* (pp. 1420-1436). IGI Global.

4. Ashraf, A., Hameed, I., & Saeed, S. A. (2023). How do social media influencers inspire consumers' purchase decisions? The mediating role of parasocial relationships. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, *47*(4), 1416-1433.

5. Gashi, L. (2017). Social media influencers-why we cannot ignore them: An exploratory study about how consumers perceive the influence of social media influencers during the different stages of the purchase decision process.

6. Huynh, V. (2020). The role of social media influencers in the consumer decision-making process.

7. Kavaliauskienė, Ž., & Margis, H. (2019). Imapct of influencers on a consumer decision to purchase. *Professional studies: theory and practice: social sciences*, (6), 40-47.

8. Khan, F. R., & Phung, S. P. (2021). Social media influencers and its impacts on consumer behavior: Malaysia. *Annals of the Romanian Society for Cell Biology*, 25(4), 6276-6285.

9. Khan, F. R., & Phung, S. P. (2021). Social media influencers and its impacts on consumer behavior: Malaysia. *Annals of the Romanian Society for Cell Biology*, 25(4), 6276-6285.

10. Lim, X. J., Radzol, A. M., Cheah, J., & Wong, M. W. (2017). The impact of social media influencers on purchase intention and the mediation effect of customer attitude. *Asian journal of business research*, 7(2), 19-36.

11. Nurfadila, S., & Riyanto, S. (2020). The impact of influencers in consumer decision-making: The fashion industry. *Interdisciplinary journal on law, social sciences and humanities*, 1(2), 1-13.

12. Oumayma, B. (2019, October). Social media made me buy it: the impact of social media on consumer purchase behavior. In *proceedings of the 4th international conference on smart city applications* (pp. 1-7).

13. Pop, R. A., Săplăcan, Z., Dabija, D. C., & Alt, M. A. (2022). The impact of social media influencers on travel decisions: The role of trust in consumer decision journey. *Current issues in Tourism*, 25(5), 823-843.

14. Shrivastava, A., Jodhana, L. S., Chourasia, S., & Verma, B. L. Analyzing the Effect of Social Media Influencers on the Purchase Decision of Consumers. *GURUGRAM UNIVERSITY BUSINESS REVIEW (GUBR)*, 34.

15. Zak, S., & Hasprova, M. (2020). The role of influencers in the consumer decision-making process. In *SHS web of conferences* (Vol. 74, p. 03014). EDP Sciences.

Author's Declaration

I as an author of the above research paper/article, here by, declare that the content of this paper is prepared by me and if any person having copyright issue or patent or anything otherwise related to the content, I shall always be legally responsible for any issue. For the reason of invisibility of my research paper on the website /amendments /updates, I have resubmitted my paper for publication on the same date. If any data or information given by me is not correct,I shall always be legally responsible. With my whole responsibility legally and formally have intimated the publisher (Publisher) that my paper has been checked by my guide (if any) or expert to make it sure that paper is technically right and there is no unaccepted plagiarism and hentriacontane is genuinely mine. If any issue arises related to Plagiarism/ Guide Name/ Educational Qualification /Designation/Address of my university/college/institution/ Structure or Formatting/ Resubmission/Submission /Copyright /Patent /Submission for any higher degree or Job/Primary Data/Secondary Data Issues. I will be solely/entirely responsible for any legal issues. I have been informed that the most of the data from the website is invisible or shuffled or vanished from the database due to some technical fault or hacking and therefore the process of resubmission is there for the scholars/students who finds trouble in getting their paper on the website. At the time of resubmission of my paper I take all the legal and formal responsibilities, If I hide ordo not submit the copy of my original documents (Andhra/Driving License/Any Identity Proof and Photo) in spite of demand from the publisher then my paper maybe rejected or removed from the website anytime and may not be consider for verification. I acceptthe fact that as the content of this paper and the resubmission legal responsibilities and reasons are only mine then the Publisher (Airo International Journal/Airo National Research Journal) is never responsible. I also declare that if publisher finds Any complication or error or anything hidden or implemented otherwise, my paper may be removed from the website or the watermark of remark/actuality maybe mentioned on my paper. Even if anything is found illegal publisher may also take legal action against me.

Neha Gupta