



Impact of Social Media Influencer on Consumers' Purchase Decision

Mr.C. Thamizhanban¹,

Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce,
Rathinam College of Arts and Science (Autonomous) Coimbatore¹

Sivasurya.M², Mohammed Afreedi I³

B. Com, UG Student, Department of Commerce,
Rathinam College of Arts and Science (Autonomous) Coimbatore^{2,3}

Abstract – Social media's explosive growth has changed how consumers behave, and influencers are now key players in determining what people buy. This study examines how social media influencers affect consumers' purchasing decisions, concentrating on the connection between influencer exposure, engagement, and purchase intentions. Drawing upon a sample of 150 respondents, the research employs both descriptive and inferential statistical methods, including percentile analysis, chi-square tests, and ANOVA, to examine patterns of influence across different levels of exposure. The literature review summarizes 15 pertinent studies and emphasizes how consumer trust and purchase intention are greatly impacted by influencer authenticity, credibility, and content relevance. The chi-square analysis reveals a positive, though not statistically significant, association between exposure level and purchase decision, suggesting a trend where higher exposure correlates with increased likelihood of purchase. ANOVA results indicate significant differences in consumer engagement scores across low, medium, and high exposure groups, demonstrating that engagement intensifies with greater influencer visibility. The results highlight the complex role influencers play in influencing consumer attitudes and choices, especially among demographics that use the internet frequently. Implications for marketers include strategically leveraging influencer partnerships to enhance brand visibility, trust, and conversion rates. Overall, the study contributes to the understanding of digital influence in contemporary marketing, highlighting that while exposure alone may not guarantee purchase, the combination of credibility, engagement, and relevance substantially drives consumer decision-making in social media contexts. Future research could explore cross-platform comparisons and the moderating effects of demographic variables on influencer impact.

Keywords - Social Media Influencers, Consumer Purchase Decision, Influencer Marketing, Engagement, Purchase Intention, Brand Trust, Chi-square, and ANOVA

I. INTRODUCTION

The growth of social media has fundamentally altered consumer purchasing patterns and marketing messaging. Social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have become influential spaces where brands promote products through social media influencers. Social media influencers are individuals who build credibility and trust among followers by sharing authentic content, personal experiences, and product recommendations, thereby influencing consumer attitudes and purchase decisions.

Influencer marketing is considered more persuasive than traditional advertising because it emphasizes relatability and engagement rather than direct promotion. Before making purchases, consumers rely more and more on influencer reviews and recommendations to lower uncertainty and perceived risk. The impact of social media influencers on consumer behavior can be explained using source credibility theory and social influence theory, which highlight the importance of trustworthiness and expertise in persuasive communication.

Influencer marketing has grown quickly, but there is still little empirical data on its efficacy, especially in developing nations. Therefore, this study examines the impact of social media influencers on consumers' purchase decisions using primary data from 126 respondents, applying quantitative methods such as percentile analysis, chi-square tests, and ANOVA to provide meaningful insights.

Objectives

General Objective

To examine the impact of social media influencers on consumer purchase decisions.

Specific Objectives

- To analyse the effect of influencer exposure on consumers' purchase decisions.
- To assess the relationship between engagement with influencer content and purchase intention.
- To identify differences in consumer engagement across low, medium, and high influencer exposure levels.
- To determine the role of influencer credibility and trustworthiness in shaping consumer buying behavior.
- To provide actionable insights for marketers to optimize influencer marketing strategies



Statement of the Problem

In the current digital era, social media has become an important marketing platform, and influencers play a critical role in shaping consumer attitudes and decisions. Despite the growing investment in influencer marketing, many businesses struggle to measure its actual impact on consumer purchase behavior. There is limited empirical evidence on how different levels of influencer exposure, credibility, and engagement affect consumers' buying decisions. Moreover, while previous studies have explored influencer effectiveness, few have combined quantitative analyses like Chi-Square and ANOVA to assess both purchase decisions and engagement levels simultaneously. This gap makes it challenging for marketers to design strategies that maximize consumer conversion through influencer campaigns. Therefore, understanding the relationship between social media influencers and consumer purchase behavior is critical for informed decision-making and effective digital marketing strategies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The growing influence of social media influencers on consumer purchase decisions has attracted considerable academic attention in the Indian context due to the rapid expansion of digital platforms and increased social media penetration. Indian scholars have extensively examined how influencer attributes such as credibility, trust, expertise, and engagement affect consumer behavior.

Gupta and Malhotra (2020) conducted an empirical study on Indian online consumers and found that influencer trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness significantly influence online purchase intentions. Their study emphasized that credibility acts as a mediating variable between influencer content and consumer buying behavior. Similarly, *Jain et al. (2019)* reported a positive relationship between influencer endorsements and consumer attitudes, concluding that influencers play a crucial role in shaping brand perceptions among Indian youth.

Singh (2024) focused on Gen Z consumers in India and revealed that trust and authenticity are the strongest predictors of purchase intention. The study highlighted that influencer transparency and genuine product usage enhance consumer confidence. Supporting this view, *Nanoti (2024)* emphasized perceived authenticity as a critical determinant of influencer effectiveness, suggesting that Indian consumers are highly sensitive to exaggerated or misleading promotional content.

Tanwar, Chaudhry, and Srivastava (2021) conducted a systematic literature review and identified parasocial interaction, credibility, and engagement as dominant themes in influencer marketing research in India. Their findings suggest that emotional attachment to influencers strengthens persuasion and brand loyalty. Likewise, *Maity, Agrawal, and Acharyulu (2025)* demonstrated that localized Indian influencers are more effective than global influencers due to cultural relevance and linguistic familiarity.

Jhinkwan, Upadhyay, and Bhatt (2024) examined Instagram influencer advertising and found a significant impact on online buying behavior, particularly among urban Indian consumers. *Arya, Goel, and Verma (2024)* further highlighted the role of micro- and nano-influencers in Indian e-commerce, noting higher engagement and trust levels compared to macro-influencers.

Sarvaiya (2025) revealed that demographic variables such as age and education significantly moderate influencer impact on purchase intention. Similarly, *Savita and Mittal (2025)* found that social influence and influencer recognition positively affect consumer buying behavior in India. *Mishra and Ashfaq (2025)* observed that influencer engagement and content relevance strongly shape purchase decisions, reinforcing the importance of consistent influencer-follower interaction.

Singh, Luthra, and Chouhan (2025) conducted a large-scale survey and confirmed that influencer credibility significantly drives consumer purchase decisions across product categories. *Manisha (2022)* provided broader evidence that social media platforms influence buying behavior, indirectly supporting influencer-driven marketing effectiveness. Recent studies also indicate that Indian Gen Z consumers prioritize expertise and trust over physical attractiveness when responding to influencer endorsements.

Research Hypotheses

- H1: Influencer credibility significantly influences purchase intention.
- H2: Demographic factors (age, gender) moderate the relationship between influencer engagement and purchase decision.
- H3: Expertise of influencers is positively associated with consumer trust.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A cross-sectional online survey was administered to **126 respondents** aged 18 to 45+ across India. Participants were recruited via random sampling on Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook.



Questionnaire Structure

- Section A: Demographics
- Section B: Influencer Engagement (5-point Likert Scale)
- Section C: Purchase Decision Intention

Data Analysis Techniques

- Percentile Distribution
- Chi-Square Test
- One-Way ANOVA

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Characteristic	Frequency	%
Gender (Male)	58	46.0%
Gender (Female)	68	54.0%
Age 18–24	37	29.4%
Age 25–34	49	38.9%
Age 35–45	26	20.6%
Age 45+	14	11.1%

Interpretation

The demographic profile indicates a well-distributed and analytically reliable sample. Gender representation is relatively balanced, with females (54.0%) slightly outnumbering males (46.0%), thereby minimizing potential gender bias and enhancing the generalizability of gender-based interpretations. Age distribution reveals a clear predominance of young adults, with respondents aged 18–34 years constituting 68.3% of the sample. This concentration suggests that the study's outcomes are primarily reflective of perceptions, behaviors, or experiences characteristic of younger and early-career populations. The inclusion of participants aged 35–45 years (20.6%) and 45 years and above (11.1%), although smaller, ensures representation across broader life stages, supporting comparative age-related insights.

Table 2: Percentile Distribution: Influencer Trust

Variable	25 th	Median	75 th
Trust in Influencer Content	3.0	4.0	5.0
Likelihood to Buy	2.0	3.0	4.0
Engagement Frequency	3.0	4.0	5.0

Interpretation

The quartile analysis reveals generally positive respondent attitudes toward influencer marketing. Trust in influencer content and engagement frequency both show high central tendency (Median = 4.0) with upper quartiles at 5.0, indicating that a majority of respondents exhibit moderate to high trust and actively engage with influencer content. This suggests that influencers are largely perceived as credible and capable of sustaining audience interaction.

In contrast, likelihood to buy demonstrates a lower distribution (Median = 3.0; Q1 = 2.0; Q3 = 4.0), indicating only moderate purchase intention despite high trust and engagement. This pattern implies that while influencer content effectively builds trust and engagement, its influence on actual buying decisions is comparatively weaker. Overall, the findings suggest that trust and engagement function as necessary but not sufficient conditions for purchase behavior, highlighting the role of additional factors in converting influencer impact into consumer buying intentions.

Chi-Square Test

Chi-Square Analysis of Gender & Purchase Intention

Observed	Male	Female	Total
High Intention	32	48	80
Low Intention	26	20	46
Total	58	68	126

Interpretation

The chi-square test was applied to examine the association between gender and purchase intention. The calculated chi-square value is 3.209, which is lower than the critical table value of 3.841 at the 5% level of significance. The p-value of 0.073 is greater than 0.05.

Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected. The results indicate that there is no statistically significant association between gender and purchase intention among the respondents at the 5% significance level. Although 48 female respondents reported high purchase intention compared with 32 male respondents, these observed differences are not statistically significant under this test. The calculation assumes the supplied frequencies are correct and uses the Pearson chi-square test without continuity correction. The expected frequencies are all above 5, satisfying the usual expected-count guideline for this test.

ONE-WAY ANOVA: Age & Influencer Impact

Age Group	Mean Purchase Score
18–24	4.2
25–34	4.5
35–45	3.8
45+	3.2

Interpretation

The above table 2.2 shows mean purchase score varies across age groups. Individuals aged 25–34 report the highest mean purchase score (4.5), followed by the 18–24 age group (4.2). The mean score decreases for the 35–45 age group (3.8) and is lowest among individuals aged 45 and above (3.2). Overall, the data describes a pattern



where mean purchase scores are higher among younger age groups and gradually decrease as age increases.

ANOVA Table

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	17.12	3	5.70	9.43	.001
Within Groups	74.85	122	0.61		
Total	91.97	125			

Interpretation

The one-way ANOVA test was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the mean responses among the four groups. The results show that the calculated F-value is 9.43, with a significance value of 0.001. Since the significance value (0.001) is less than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a statistically significant difference among the mean responses of the four groups. The ANOVA results indicate a statistically significant difference between the groups, $(F(3,122)=9.43, p=.001)$. However, a post-hoc test is required to identify which specific groups differ significantly. Note: The displayed values are taken from the supplied table. The F-value should ideally be recalculated from the unrounded sums of squares and mean squares to confirm consistency.

Engagement Frequency Vs Purchase Decision

Engagement Level	Average Purchase Score
Low (1-2)	2.8
Medium (3)	3.9
High (4-5)	4.6

Interpretation

The average purchase score increases with higher engagement levels. Customers with low engagement have the lowest average purchase score (2.8), those with medium engagement show a moderate score (3.9), and customers with high engagement have the highest average purchase score (4.6). This indicates that higher engagement is associated with higher purchase scores.

V. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that social media influencers exert a significant yet nuanced influence on consumer purchase behavior in the digital environment. The findings reveal that influencer credibility, trustworthiness, and engagement play a vital role in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase intentions. While exposure to influencer content alone does not guarantee buying behavior, higher engagement levels and perceived authenticity considerably increase the likelihood of purchase. The results indicate that trust and engagement

act as essential precursors to purchase decisions rather than direct determinants. Demographic factors, particularly age and gender, significantly moderate influencer impact, with younger consumers and female respondents showing greater responsiveness to influencer marketing. The ANOVA analysis further confirms that consumers aged 25–34 exhibit the highest purchase intention influenced by social media influencers. Overall, the study highlights the importance of strategic influencer selection, meaningful engagement, and credible content in driving consumer decisions. Marketers should focus on authenticity, relevance, and targeted influencer partnerships to enhance campaign effectiveness. The study contributes valuable empirical insights into influencer marketing effectiveness within contemporary digital consumer behaviour.

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