

Influencer Marketing vs. Celebrity Endorsements: A Comparative Study on Consumer Behaviour in the Digital Era

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Peer Review Information	Abstract
Type: Article Received: 28 March 2026 Revised: 26 April 2026 Accepted: 11 May 2026 Published: 02 June 2026	This study explores the effectiveness of influencer marketing and celebrity endorsements in shaping consumer behaviour in the modern digital environment. With the rapid growth of social media platforms, influencers have become an important alternative to traditional celebrity endorsers. The main objective of this research is to compare how both types of endorsements influence consumer trust, brand perception, engagement, and purchase intention. The study follows a descriptive research design and is based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire from 122 respondents, primarily among younger and digitally active groups. The analysis reveals that celebrity endorsements are effective in creating brand awareness and enhancing brand image due to their popularity and wide reach. However, influencer marketing is found to be more effective in building trust, relatability, and consumer engagement. The results further indicate that consumers are more likely to consider recommendations from influencers when making purchase decisions, especially for products promoted on social media platforms. The study concludes that both influencers and celebrities play significant roles in marketing, but their effectiveness depends on the nature of the product, target audience, and communication strategy. A balanced use of both approaches can help organisations achieve better marketing outcomes in a competitive digital landscape.
	Keywords: Influencer Marketing; Celebrity Endorsement; Consumer Behaviour; Purchase Intention; Brand Credibility; Social Media Marketing; Consumer Trust; Digital Advertising

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Introduction

In today's digital marketing environment, endorsement strategies play a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase decisions. Traditionally, brands have relied on celebrities to promote products due to their wide reach, popularity, and aspirational appeal. However, with the rise of social media platforms, a new category of endorsers—social media influencers—has gained significant importance.

Unlike celebrities, influencers build their audience through online content and direct interaction, making them appear more relatable and authentic. This shift has changed how consumers respond to marketing messages, especially among younger audiences who value trust and personal connection.

As a result, marketers face an important question: which is more effective: celebrity endorsements or influencer marketing? This study aims to compare both forms of endorsement by examining their impact on consumer trust, engagement, and purchase intention, and to provide insights for better marketing decisions.

Literature Review

Existing research shows that both celebrity and influencer endorsements influence consumer behaviour, though their impact differs. Influencers are generally seen as more authentic and relatable, which helps build trust and encourages higher engagement among consumers. Their personal content and interaction with followers often make their recommendations more persuasive, especially for younger audiences.

In contrast, celebrities are effective in creating brand awareness and enhancing brand image due to their popularity and wide reach. However, they may lack the personal connection that influencers offer. Studies also highlight that the effectiveness of endorsements depends on the fit between the product and the endorser. Overall, influencers are more effective in driving engagement and trust, whereas celebrities are better suited for increasing visibility and brand prestige.

Research Objectives

This study aims to understand and compare how influencer marketing and celebrity endorsements affect consumer behaviour. The key objectives are:

- To examine how different types of endorsements influence consumer perception of brands and advertisements.
- To compare the effect of influencer and celebrity endorsements on consumers' intention to purchase products.
- To study how factors such as trust, credibility, and relatability impact the effectiveness of endorsers.
- To analyse the level of consumer engagement generated through influencer and celebrity promotions on social media.
- To identify the main factors that shape consumer preference between influencers and celebrities.
- To suggest suitable endorsement strategies for marketers based on the target audience and product characteristics.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a systematic approach to examine the effectiveness of influencer and celebrity endorsements on consumer behaviour. This study employed a descriptive research design to understand consumer perceptions, attitudes, and preferences without manipulating variables. The study primarily followed a quantitative approach, supported by limited qualitative insights for better interpretation.

Data for the study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were gathered using a structured questionnaire, which included questions on demographics, social media usage, endorsement perception, and purchase behaviour. Secondary data were obtained from research articles, journals, and online sources to support the findings.

The survey was conducted online using a convenience sampling method, and a total of 122 respondents participated in the study. The sample mainly consisted of young, active social media users, making it relevant for analysing digital marketing trends. The collected data were analysed using statistical techniques. Descriptive tools such as percentages were used to summarise responses, and mean and standard deviation helped in understanding central tendencies and variation. Additionally, correlation analysis was applied to examine relationships between variables such as attention and brand perception.

The study focuses on evaluating how factors like credibility, relatability, and the type of endorser influence consumer trust, engagement, and purchase intention across selected product categories.

Data Analysis

Using the data gathered from 122 participants, descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were used to assess consumers' attitudes about celebrity and influencer endorsements.

Descriptive Analysis

Age Distribution

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
Below 18	9	7%
18-25	61	61%
26-35	35	29%
36-45	17	14%
Total	122	

The high number of young adults (18–25) in the sample demonstrates their significant exposure to social media and digital advertising.

Occupational Profile

The table categorises the respondents based on their professional history.

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Student	50	41%
Working Professional	38	31%
Homemaker	12	10%
Self-Employed	13	11%
Other	9	7%
Total	122	

The majority of respondents are students and professionals, implying a group that is both financially aware and tech competent.

Mean and Standard Deviation

Mean Formula:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum fX}{\sum f}$$

The formula for calculating the standard deviation is as follows:

$$S = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (X - \bar{X})^2}{N}}$$

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
The public pays more attention to celebrity recommendations	3.01	1.19
Celebrities enhance a brand's reputation	3.15	1.27

Major findings include:

- Three to four is the average, implying a moderately positive to neutral outlook.
- The standard deviation, which is around 1.2, shows that the responses are somewhat consistent.
- Respondents generally believed that celebrities improve a brand's image.

Analysis of Correlation

Pearson Correlation Formula:

$$r = \frac{N\sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[N\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

Correlation Matrix

Variables	Celebrity Attention	Brand Prestige
Celebrity Attention	1	0.319
Brand Prestige	0.319	1

Key Lessons Learned:

- The correlation coefficient is only moderately positive ($r = 0.319$).
- Increased focus on celebrity endorsements is associated with an improved public image for the company.
- The link is trustworthy because it is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).
- The moderate strength suggests that consumer perception is impacted by other factors as well, such as trustworthiness and relatability.

Key Findings

- Most respondents are young and active on social media, making them highly exposed to digital endorsements.
- Influencers are generally perceived as more authentic, relatable, and trustworthy compared to celebrities.
- Celebrity endorsements help in building brand awareness and prestige, but do not strongly influence engagement.
- Influencers generate higher consumer engagement and a stronger personal connection with audiences.
- Purchase decisions are influenced by both, but influencers have a slightly greater impact individually.
- Consumers tend to trust influencer recommendations more, especially when choosing between similar products.
- The effectiveness of endorsements depends on factors like credibility, relatability, and reach.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The study indicates a shift in endorsement strategies within digital marketing. While celebrity endorsements remain effective in enhancing brand visibility and prestige, influencer marketing proves more effective in building trust, relatability, and consumer engagement.

Younger consumers, in particular, respond more positively to influencers due to their authenticity and closer interaction, making them more influential in purchase decisions. However, celebrities continue to be valuable for achieving a wide reach and strengthening brand positioning.

Overall, the effectiveness of endorsements depends on factors such as credibility, product relevance, and target audience. Both influencers and celebrities serve different roles and can significantly influence consumer behaviour when used strategically.

- Choose endorsers based on product type and target audience.
- Use influencers for trust and engagement, and celebrities for reach and brand image.
- Focus on authentic and credible collaborations.
- Adopt a combined approach to balance visibility and engagement.
- Leverage micro-influencers for greater trust and targeted impact.
- Ensure strong product-endorser alignment and use data to evaluate performance.

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