INFLUENCER's MARKETING AND ITS EFFECT ON PURCHASE INTENTION

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Peer Review Information	Abstract
	The use of influencers as a marketing strategy has arisen as an effective method for brands to communicate and interact with the customers they are trying to reach in this digital era. Due to the perception that they are genuine and the high level of engagement they have with their followers, social media influencers have a significant impact on consumer behavior (Freberg et al., 2011; Lou & Yuan, 2019). In this article, we examine the ways in which influencer marketing affects the purchasing intentions of consumers. As part of this analysis, we will explore the many approaches that influencers use to establish trust, increase engagement, and influence purchasing decisions (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Organizations are able to tailor their marketing tactics in order to efficiently transform followers into consumers if they have an understanding of this relationship (Casaló et al., 2020). This research is being conducted in Chennai in order to determine the extent to which influencer marketing affects consumers' intentions to buy products. The study, which is descriptive in nature, gathered a sample of 155 respondents who are actively involved with social media in Chennai. The questionnaire is used as the tool for gathering data, and a convenience sample method was used to select the people who would reply (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The statistical methods that were used in this investigation were multiple regression analysis and one-way ANOVA. The dependability of the study was confirmed at 83.9% by Cronbach's alpha, which had a value of 0.834 (George & Mallery, 2019). Data analysis is performed using SPSS version 25. The results of the study indicate that customers' intents to make a purchase are significantly impacted by reach, engagement metrics, and relevance, with reach having the most significant impact. This highlights the importance of an influencer's exposure and the size of their audience (Jin et al., 2019). On the other hand, the credibility of the influencer and the style of content do not have a statistically significant impact on purchase intention in this scenario. Furthermore, age and occupation have a significant impact on influencer marketing, with younger respondents, especially students, being more vulnerable to its impacts (De Veirman et al., 2017).

INTRODUCTION

The advent of digital platforms has revolutionized marketing by transitioning from conventional tactics to more interactive and personalized strategies (Kumar et al., 2020). Influencer marketing has emerged as a strategic method in which individuals with substantial internet followings endorse companies or services to their audiences (Freberg et al., 2011). Influencers frequently cultivate an image of trust and relatability, enhancing the persuasiveness and efficacy of their recommendations in influencing customer preferences (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019). Contemporary marketing success predominantly hinges on comprehending customers' purchase intentions, which signify the probability of a consumer acquiring a product following exposure to promotional material (Ajzen, 1991; Lim et al., 2017). This study analyzes the influence of marketing methods employed by influencers on consumer purchasing intentions and finds the psychological and behavioral aspects that facilitate conversions (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Casaló et al., 2020).

Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing denotes the partnership between businesses and individuals, termed influencers, who can influence consumer purchase decisions due to their authority, experience, position, or robust connections with their audiences (Freberg et al., 2011). Influencers may comprise celebrities, content creators, bloggers, or specialized specialists who regularly interact with their following on social media platforms, including Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and X (previously Twitter) (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Casaló et al., 2020). By utilizing these channels, influencers cultivate trust and authenticity, rendering their endorsements more compelling and successful in influencing customer attitudes and buy intentions (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019).

Key Features of Influencer Marketing

- Influencers often share personal experiences, which enhances the **credibility** of their recommendations and fosters consumer trust (Jin et al., 2019).
- The **bidirectional communication** facilitated through social media allows influencers to form deeper and more authentic connections with their audience (Casaló et al., 2020).
- Through **niche targeting**, brands can collaborate with relevant influencers to effectively connect with specific audience segments and maximise engagement (De Veirman et al., 2017).
- Influencer initiatives may offer greater cost-effectiveness compared to traditional advertising, yielding a higher return on investment. (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Purchase Intention and its importance

Customer purchase intention refers to the **likelihood of a consumer buying a product or service** based on attitudes, perceptions, and external influences (Ajzen, 1991). It is a key predictor of consumer behaviour and is shaped by several factors:

- **Attitude and Perceived Value** – Positive brand perception and higher values increase buying intentions (Spears & Singh, 2004; Zeithaml, 1988).
- **Trust and Credibility** – Trust in the brand and the source of information significantly impacts decisions (Gefen et al., 2003).
- **Social Influence** – Recommendations from influencers and peers strongly affect purchase decisions (Chetioui et al., 2020).
- **External Factors** – Price, product quality, brand image, and social media exposure also play crucial roles (Keller, 2003; Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019).

  In influencer marketing, **authenticity, expertise, and relatability** of influencers enhance consumers' willingness to buy. Measuring purchase intention helps brands **assess campaign effectiveness, forecast sales, and design targeted strategies** to convert awareness into purchases.

  Factors Shaping Influencer Marketing Effectiveness on Customer Purchase Intention

- Influencer marketing effectiveness in shaping **customer purchase intentions** is influenced by several interrelated factors, including **reach**, **engagement**, **credibility**, **content relevance**, and **authenticity**. These dimensions determine the extent to which influencers impact consumer decision-making.
- Reach refers to the size and diversity of an influencer's audience. A higher follower base increases content visibility and broadens the brand's exposure to potential customers (De Veirman et al., 2017). Studies indicate that influencers with large audiences generate **greater brand awareness**

and significantly influence purchasing intentions, especially among younger demographics (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019).

- Engagement encompasses metrics such as likes, shares, comments, and overall interaction levels between influencers and their audiences. High engagement suggests **active audience participation**, which enhances trust and strengthens the perceived authenticity of influencer recommendations (Casaló et al., 2020). Engaged audiences are more likely to **translate positive attitudes into purchase decisions** (Jin et al., 2019).

- The credibility of an influencer is a crucial determinant of marketing success. Influencers perceived as **trustworthy and knowledgeable** exert stronger persuasive power over consumers (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Consumers are more likely to accept product recommendations when influencers demonstrate **expertise and transparency** in their endorsements (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

- Content relevance refers to the **alignment between an influencer's content and the consumer's interests**. When influencers promote products that naturally fit within their niche, followers perceive endorsements as **authentic** rather than forced (Schouten et al., 2020). Relevant content fosters **stronger brand associations** and positively impacts purchase intentions (Hwang & Zhang, 2018).

- Influencers who share personal experiences and authentic narratives enhance **emotional connections** with audiences, which boosts trust and drives purchase intentions (Marwick, 2015). Personalised storytelling makes consumers feel **valued and understood**, thereby increasing their likelihood of purchasing recommended products (Ki et al., 2020).

- Demographic variables such as **age, occupation, and income levels** also shape the effectiveness of influencer marketing. Younger consumers, particularly **Gen Z and millennials**, demonstrate a higher susceptibility to influencer-driven promotions, while income levels influence the ability to act on purchase intentions (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021).

Review of Literature

The study by Akanksha Sham Jagtap (2024) investigated the effects of influencer marketing on consumer behavior, emphasizing that engagement and interaction with influencer content play a significant role in shaping purchasing decisions. The study demonstrated the efficacy of influencer marketing in enhancing brand loyalty and boosting sales, underscoring its growing strategic importance. Chu Chu (2024) highlighted the shift from traditional marketing to influencer-based strategies, identifying influencer marketing as an evolution shaped by prevailing trends. The essay analyzed the correlation between the increase in smartphone and internet usage and its effect on social media's influence on consumer purchase intentions, emphasizing the growing significance of digital influencers. Masuda et al. (2022) developed a model grounded in persuasion theory to evaluate the parasocial relationship (PSR) between influencers and their followers. A comparative analysis of PSR and traditional relationship marketing constructs indicates that PSR significantly enhances purchase intentions. Additionally, factors such as attitude homophily, physical attractiveness, and social attractiveness contributed to the development of parasocial relationships, which in turn influenced customer purchasing decisions. Lie Ao et al. (2023) conducted a meta-analysis that synthesized data from 62 studies with over 22,000 participants. The analysis identified eight characteristics of influencers: homophily, expertise, trustworthiness, credibility, product congruence, entertainment value, informative value, and attractiveness. These factors are critical in influencing customer engagement and purchase intention. The research findings demonstrate that entertainment value serves as the main driver of engagement, whereas credibility has a significant impact on purchase intention. Rakesh Kumar Pandey and Supriya Goutam (2023) investigated the moderating role of individual materialism traits in the relationship between attributes of social media influencers, including source reliability and product compatibility, and purchase intention. Sudha, M., and Sheena, K. (2017) examined the changing dynamics of clothing retail, emphasizing the substantial impact of social media on consumer product discovery and decision-making processes. The study emphasised that the fashion industry employs influencer marketing strategies to influence consumers' purchasing decisions, highlighting the importance of a robust online presence for brand competitiveness. Yuland, Besra, and Syafrizal (2023) investigated the impact of influencer viral marketing and online consumer reviews on purchase intention, revealing their combined positive effects. Xin Zhao et al. (2024) investigated the relationship between influencer attributes and consumer purchasing intentions, focusing on livestreaming e-commerce in China. The results demonstrate that credibility and attractiveness substantially improve purchase intentions, with brand attitude

acting as a mediator for the impact of influencer interactivity. Professionalism demonstrated no significant impact on brand attitude or purchase intention.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the impact of influencer marketing on consumer purchase intention
2. To assess the influence of demographic variables on Influencer marketing

Hypotheses of the Study

$H_0 1$: There is no significant impact of Influencer marketing on Purchase Intention

$H_0 2$: There is no significant influence of demographic variables on Influencer marketing

Research Methodology

This research examines the impact of influencer marketing on consumer purchase intentions in Chennai. A sample of 155 respondents active on social media in Chennai was selected for this descriptive study. The questionnaire functions as the instrument for data collection in the study. The research employs a convenience sampling method to identify participants. The questionnaire comprises three sections: the first section addresses demographic characteristics, whereas the second and third sections include scales related to influencer marketing and purchase intention. Multiple regression analysis is employed to assess the impact of influencer marketing on purchase intention. One-way ANOVA is utilized to assess the influence of demographic variables on purchase intention. Cronbach's alpha is employed to assess the reliability of the study. The analysis of data is performed utilizing SPSS version 25.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the profile of the respondents, analysis pertaining to the impact of influencer marketing on Purchase intention and influence of demographic variables on Influencer marketing. The findings indicate that 54.3% of participants are female, whereas 45.7% are male. The predominant demographic of respondents consists of young adults, who are typically engaged social media users and early adopters of emerging technologies such as electric vehicles and trends influenced by social media personalities. A significant proportion of respondents, 47.6%, have completed post-graduation, while 39.8% hold graduate degrees. A limited percentage has attained education up to the school level, whereas 6.7% falls under the 'Others' category. The distribution of marital status indicates that 66.1% of individuals are unmarried, whereas 33.9% are married. This suggests that the respondent pool predominantly consists of younger, technologically proficient individuals who exhibit higher activity levels on social media platforms. The respondents exhibit a diverse occupational background, with 40.9% employed in salaried positions and 39% identified as students. A smaller proportion consists of self-employed individuals or business owners at 8.3%, while homemakers and others represent 4.7% and 7.1%, respectively. The annual income distribution among respondents is varied, with 35.8% indicating an income of less than ₹5 lakhs and 35% reporting no income. There is a 14.2% decrease in the income bracket of ₹5–10 lakh, while 15% of individuals earn ₹10 lakh or more annually. The data indicate the presence of higher-income individuals, contributing to a varied economic profile for the-study.

This section examines the impact of influencer marketing variables on purchase intention. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the influence of the independent variables: Credibility of Influencer, Engagement Metrics, Relevance, Content Style, and Reach: on the dependent variable, Purchase Intention. Table I summarises the results from the regression analysis.

$H_0 1$: There is no significant impact of Influencer marketing on Purchase Intention

Table-I

Impact of Influencer marketing on Purchase Intention

Independent Variables	R^2	Beta	F-statistics	t- value
(Constant) Credibility of Influencer	0.481	1.096 0.052		7.005** 1.124
Engagement metrics Relevance	Adjusted R^2	0.169 0.124	45.988** (p=.000)	3.488** 2.292*
Content style Reach	0.471	0.071 0.274		1.518 6.076**

** Significant at 1% level

F-statistic value of 45.988 is significant at the 1% level (p = .000), indicating that the overall regression model is statistically significant. The null hypothesis ($H_0 1$) is rejected, indicating that Influencer marketing variables significantly affect Purchase Intention. The R^2 value of 0.481 indicates that 48.1% of the variance in Purchase Intention is accounted for by the independent variables. Of the five independent variables, Reach (β = 0.274, p = .000) exhibits the most substantial positive and statistically significant impact on Purchase Intention. Engagement Metrics (β = 0.169, p = .001) and Relevance (β = 0.124, p = .023) demonstrate a statistically significant impact. Credibility of Influencer (β = 0.052, p = .262) and Content Style (β = 0.071, p = .130) are not statistically significant, indicating a minimal direct effect on consumers' purchase decisions. The findings demonstrate that Reach, Engagement Metrics, and Relevance have a significant impact on consumers' Purchase Intention. Reach exerts the most significant influence, underscoring the critical role of an influencer's visibility and audience size. In contrast, the credibility of the influencer and the style of the content do not exhibit a statistically significant impact on purchase intention within this context.

Influence of demographic variables on Influencer Marketing

This section explores the influence of demographic variables (such as gender, age, education, marital status, occupation, and income) on influencer marketing, specifically how these factors affect the consumer's response to influencer promotions.

$H_0 2$: There is no significant influence of demographic variables on Influencer marketing.

Table-II

Influence of demographic variables on Influencer Marketing

	Classification	Mean	S D	F-value
Gender	Male	3.06	.705	**1.149 (p=.285)**
	Female	3.15	.623	
Age Group (in years)	Below 20 years	3.32	.516	**3.312* (p=.028)**
	21-30 years	3.12	.657	
	31-40 years	3.19	.654	
	41-50 years	2.83	.701	
	50 years and above	3.26	.646	
Education	Up to School level	3.23	.569	**0.400 (p=.753)**
	Graduation	3.07	.570	
	Post- Graduation	3.12	.728	
	Others	3.18	.777	
Marital status	Married	3.03	.719	**2.107 (p=.148)**
	Unmarried	3.15	.628	
Occupation	Student	3.24	.683	**3.514* (p=.016)**
	Business/Self-employed	2.80	.771	
	Salaried	3.08	.611	
	Home maker	3.00	.728	
	Others	3.01	.537	
Annual income (in rupees)	Nil	3.20	.675	**1.717 (p=.164)**
	Less than 5 lakhs	3.13	.546	

5 lakhs to10 lakhs	2.98	.769	
10 lakhs or above	2.96	.753	

* Significant at 5% level

From Table-II, it is observed that, gender reveals no significant difference in responses to influencer marketing (F = 1.149, p = 0.285), suggesting that male and female respondents exhibit comparable attitudes towards this marketing strategy. The age group under 20 years exhibits a greater response to influencer marketing (Mean = 3.32), with statistical significance (F = 3.312, p = 0.058). This indicates that younger individuals may be more susceptible to the influence of social media influencers, while those aged 41–50 show less influence from the same source. No significant difference in response based on education level (F = 0.400, p = 0.753) suggests that educational background does not influence individual engagement with influencer marketing. Marital status does not significantly influence responses to influencer marketing (F = 2.107, p = 0.148). Students (mean = 3.24) demonstrated a more favourable response to influencer marketing than individuals in other occupations, with the result being significant (F = 3.514, p = 0.058). However, individuals who are self-employed or engaged in business exhibit reduced influence. Income levels do not significantly influence responses to influencer marketing (F = 1.717, p = 0.164), suggesting that income is not a major factor in individuals' reactions to influencer promotions.

Conclusion

Influencer marketing has become an essential element of modern marketing, profoundly influencing consumer perceptions and purchasing behaviors (Jagtap, 2024). This article examines the influence of characteristics such as credibility, attractiveness, engagement, and content relevance on customer persuasion and purchasing decisions (Ao et al., 2023). Social media platforms have enhanced the visibility of influencers and transformed brand interactions with target audiences (Chu, 2024). Despite its acknowledged potential, challenges such as authenticity, market saturation, and the evaluation of return on investment continue to pose significant issues for marketers (Masuda et al., 2022). The results indicate that reach, engagement metrics, and relevance significantly influence consumers' purchase intentions (Zhao et al., 2024). Among these factors, reach has the most substantial impact, highlighting the significance of an influencer's visibility and audience size (Ao et al., 2023). The influencer's credibility and content style do not have a statistically significant impact on purchase intention in this context (Zhao et al., 2024). Moreover, age and occupation play a crucial role in influencer marketing, as younger individuals, especially students, demonstrate increased susceptibility to its effects (Sudha & Sheena, 2017). Organizations should strategically choose influencers whose values correspond with their brand identities and who can authentically engage with their audiences (Jagtap, 2024). Future research and practice must prioritize the enhancement of campaign strategies by taking into account platform dynamics, product categories, and the changing expectations of customers (Chu, 2024). Influencer marketing, when strategically implemented, can effectively enhance customer engagement and increase purchase intention (Ao et al., 2023).

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