

Impact Of Influencer Marketing On Consumer Buying Intentions: A Study With Special Reference To Tirunelveli District

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In recent years, influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful tool in shaping consumer perceptions and driving purchasing behaviour. This study investigates the impact of influencer marketing on consumer buying intentions, particularly within the context of social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. By examining consumer interactions with influencers and their influence on brand awareness, trust, and purchase decisions, this research aims to provide insights into the effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies. A primary survey was conducted among a sample of social media users to measure the relationship between influencer endorsements and consumer purchasing intentions. The study analyses key factors such as credibility, engagement, and perceived authenticity of influencers, and their role in driving consumer decisions. The findings highlight the significant role influencers play in shaping brand perception and influencing consumer behaviour. This research provides valuable insights for marketers seeking to optimize influencer partnerships and tailor marketing strategies to meet the expectations and preferences of modern consumers.

Key Words: Influencer marketing, Consumer perception, Purchasing behaviour, Buying intentions, Consumer behaviour, Marketing strategies, etc.,

INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, marketing strategies have evolved significantly, with traditional advertising methods gradually giving way to more personal and interactive approaches. One such

approach that has gained tremendous popularity is influencer marketing, where brands collaborate with individuals who have a substantial following on social media platforms to promote their products or services. This shift is largely driven by the increasing reliance of consumers on social media for information, entertainment, and shopping recommendations. Influencers, who are often seen as relatable and authentic figures, have the ability to create emotional connections with their audience, thus influencing their buying behavior more effectively than conventional advertising.

The growth of influencer marketing has led to its widespread adoption across various industries, from fashion and beauty to technology and lifestyle. As social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok continue to dominate the digital space, influencers wield significant power in shaping consumer perceptions, trust, and ultimately, purchasing decisions. Despite the growing popularity of influencer marketing, there remains a need to understand the underlying mechanisms that influence consumer behaviour in response to influencer endorsements.

This research aims to explore the impact of influencer marketing on consumer buying intentions, focusing on how factors such as influencer credibility, engagement, and authenticity shape consumer decisions. By analyzing how consumers perceive influencer endorsements and the role these perceptions play in their purchasing behaviour, the study provides valuable insights for brands looking to leverage influencer partnerships to enhance their marketing strategies.

The study will be based on a primary survey conducted among social media users to gauge their attitudes and buying intentions toward products endorsed by influencers. The results will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the effectiveness of influencer marketing and offer practical recommendations for businesses seeking to engage with their target audience more effectively in the digital space.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dharshini and Raman (2024), in their study explained that Influencer marketing has transformed the way brands engage with consumers, particularly through social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. This study explores how influencer marketing impacts consumer purchase intentions of the cookware Industry. Utilizing a descriptive research design, data collected from 272 customers were analysed using various statistical tests and tools. The key findings reveal the significance of trust, authenticity, and influencer enthusiasm in shaping consumer behaviour, with strategic recommendations for optimizing influencer collaborations.

Bhattaru and Suvarsha (2024) in their paper stated that Social networking websites have drawn millions of users ever since they were first introduced, and a significant number of these people utilize these sites on a daily basis. This new media has garnered the attention of both organizations and individuals. As a result of the widespread use of social media

platforms for advertising purposes by corporations all over the world, a significant number of corporations today have official Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, and corporate blogs. According to all of these scientific findings, social media has developed into an essential component of the daily lives of consumers as well as the operations of corporate organizations in the present day. The goal of their study is also to provide insights into the use of social networking sites by consumers of all generations, particularly teens, and how these sites influence their purchasing decisions.

Mulla and Vaz (2024) in their study highlighted that Social media has transformed from a platform primarily used for sharing photographs and random thoughts into a marketing environment largely dominated by influencers. Through their content, opinions, and unique perspectives, influencers wield significant influence over audiences across various social media platforms. The main objective of the study is to investigate the impact of influencer marketing on consumers and its effect on their level of trust. To assess this influence, a quantitative study was conducted with 203 respondents in Goa. The findings of the study suggest that perception, reliability, purchase intention, and expertise significantly impact consumer's level of trust in influencer marketing. The study also shows that females spend more time on social media and consumers below the age of 18-35 follow influencers on social media.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In recent years, influencer marketing has become an integral part of modern marketing strategies, with brands leveraging influencers to promote products and services through social media platforms. While influencer marketing has been widely adopted, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding how various factors, such as influencer credibility, engagement, and authenticity, impact consumer buying intentions.

As consumers increasingly rely on social media for product recommendations and purchasing decisions, it becomes essential for marketers to understand what drives their buying behavior in response to influencer endorsements. Despite the growing prominence of influencer marketing, businesses continue to struggle with determining the most effective influencer partnerships and strategies that truly influence consumer behaviour and lead to purchase decisions.

This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the impact of influencer marketing on consumer buying intentions, particularly by examining how different dimensions of influencer characteristics (credibility, engagement, and authenticity) influence consumer perceptions and their decision to purchase a product. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights for businesses looking to optimize their influencer marketing strategies and better align them with consumer expectations.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the socio-demographic profile of the respondents in the study area.

- To examine the level of awareness among consumers in Tirunelveli District regarding influencer marketing.
- To analyze the influence of social media influencers on the buying intentions of consumers in the region.
- To identify the key factors that contribute to the effectiveness of influencer marketing.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study aims to explore the impact of influencer marketing on consumer buying intentions with special reference to Tirunelveli District. In the digital age, social media influencers play a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions. This study focuses on understanding how various factors of influencer marketing—such as credibility, attractiveness, expertise, and content quality—affect the buying intentions of consumers in the region.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a descriptive research design to investigate the influence of social media influencers on consumer purchasing behaviour. The geographical scope of the study is confined to Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu, focusing on rural, urban and semi-urban populations who are active users of social media. The study uses convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, to select respondents who are easily accessible and willing to participate. This method is suitable due to time and resource constraints. The total sample size for the study is 100 respondents. The secondary data have been collected from various books, journals and websites.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section presents the analysis of data and its interpretation.

Table 1 Socio-demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Age	18–25	40	40
	26–35	35	35
	36–45	25	25
Gender	Male	46	46
	Female	54	54
Education	UG	50	50
	PG	35	35
	Others	15	15
Monthly Income	Below ₹20,000	30	30
	₹20,000–₹40,000	45	45
	Above ₹40,000	25	25

Source: Primary data

The above table 1 shows that the majority of respondents (75%) are between the ages of 18 and 35, indicating that adults are more active on social media and more likely to be influenced by online personalities. This is the ideal demographic for influencer marketing campaigns.

The table also shows that the gender distribution is fairly balanced, with a slight female majority (54%). This shows that both men and women engage with influencer content, though marketing strategies might benefit from tailoring content slightly more toward female audiences.

It is found from the table that half of the respondents are undergraduates, followed by 35% postgraduates. This suggests that influencer marketing is more impactful among educated individuals who are likely to be tech-savvy and frequent users of social media.

The table shows that 45% of respondents earn between ₹20,000–₹40,000 per month, which indicates a middle-income group. This segment is likely to seek value-based purchases and may be influenced by product reviews and recommendations from trusted influencers.

Table 2 Frequency of Social Media Usage

Usage Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	78	78%
Weekly	18	18%
Occasionally	4	4%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary data

The table 2 depicts that an overwhelming 78% of respondents use social media daily, showing that platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook are deeply embedded in their daily routines—making them effective channels for influencer outreach.

Table 3 Awareness of Influencer Marketing

Awareness Level	Frequency	Percentage
Aware	88	88%
Unaware	12	12%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary data

The above table shows that 88% of the sample population is aware of influencer marketing, suggesting its strong presence even in tier-2 and semi-urban areas like Tirunelveli. This high awareness supports the relevance of this study.

Table 4 Type of Influencer

Influencer Type	Frequency	Percentage
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Micro-influencer	52	52%
Macro-influencer	30	30%
Celebrity influencer	18	18%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary data

It is found from the above table 4 that Micro-influencers are preferred by 52% of respondents. This indicates that localized, relatable influencers who have a smaller yet loyal following tend to have greater trust and influence among consumers.

Table 5 Factors Influencing Buying intentions

Influencer Attribute	Strong Impact (Frequency)	Percentage
Trustworthiness	70	70%
Expertise	60	60%
Attractiveness	45	45%
Relatability	58	58%
Content Quality	65	65%

Source: Primary data

The table 5 shows that Trustworthiness (70%) and content quality (65%) emerged as the top influencing factors. This highlights the need for influencers to maintain authenticity, provide high-quality content, and avoid overly promotional behaviour.

Chi-Square Analysis: Relationship Between Age Group and Responsiveness to Influencer Marketing

To examine whether age has a significant influence on consumer responsiveness to influencer marketing, a Chi-Square Test of Independence was applied. The analysis was conducted using responses from 100 consumers in Tirunelveli District, categorized by age group and their responsiveness (i.e., whether they are influenced by social media influencers in their purchase decisions). This statistical test helps to determine whether there is an association between the two categorical variables: age group and marketing responsiveness.

The observed and expected frequencies, along with the chi-square test results, are presented in the table below.

Chi-Square Analysis: Age Group vs. Responsiveness to Influencer Marketing

Table 6 Observed Data Table

	18–25	26–35	36–45	Total
Responsive	35	28	15	78
Not Responsive	5	7	10	22

Total	40	35	25	100
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Table 7 Expected Frequencies Table

	18–25	26–35	36–45
Responsive	31.2	27.3	19.5
Not Responsive	8.8	7.7	5.5

Chi-Square Test Results

- **Chi-square value (χ^2)** = 6.91
- **Degrees of Freedom (df)** = 2
- **p-value** = 0.032

Interpretation

Since the p-value (0.032) is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant association between age group and responsiveness to influencer marketing. This means that younger consumers (especially 18–25) are more likely to be influenced by social media influencers compared to older age groups.

SUGGESTIONS OF THE STUDY

- The Consumers in the region are more likely to be influenced by authentic and honest reviews. Influencers should focus on genuine endorsements and maintain transparency in sponsored content to build credibility.
- The Marketers should tailor influencer campaigns based on platform preferences. Instagram and YouTube were found to be more influential among younger demographics, whereas Facebook still holds relevance among older users in the district.
- The Influencers must focus on producing high-quality, relevant content that resonates with the lifestyle, culture, and interests of Tirunelveli consumers.
- Content should also align with the values and expectations of the target audience.
- Personalized campaigns tend to yield better buying responses from specific segments. Brands should use influencer marketing campaigns that are customized based on age, gender, and income groups.
- Since consumers are becoming more informed, influencer campaigns that provide educational or informative content are more likely to influence purchase intentions positively.
- Brands should regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies through engagement metrics, conversion rates, and consumer feedback to ensure continuous improvement.

CONSLUSION

Influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful tool in shaping consumer buying intentions in the digital era. The findings from this study highlight the significant influence that social media influencers have on consumers' perceptions, trust, and purchasing behavior. Key factors such as influencer credibility, perceived authenticity, and the level of engagement with followers were found to play critical roles in driving consumer decisions. As consumers increasingly turn to social media for product recommendations and reviews, influencer marketing proves to be a more personalized and relatable form of promotion compared to traditional advertising.

The research emphasizes that brands must carefully select influencers who align with their values and resonate with their target audience. Additionally, ensuring authenticity in influencer partnerships is crucial for maintaining consumer trust and maximizing the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. The study also underscores the importance of understanding the diverse motivations and expectations of consumers when developing influencer marketing strategies.

Overall, the impact of influencer marketing on consumer buying intentions is profound, and businesses can leverage this strategy to enhance brand awareness, drive consumer engagement, and ultimately boost sales. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, influencer marketing will remain a key component of successful marketing campaigns, provided that it adapts to changing consumer behaviour and technological advancements.

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