

INFLUENCER MARKETING AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON BRAND ENGAGEMENT AND PURCHASE INTENTION

Dr. C. VARALAKSHMI

Department of Commerce

Agurchand Munmull Jain College,

Meenambakkam.

varalakshmi@amjaincollege.edu.in

ABSTRACT

Influencer marketing has emerged as one of the most effective digital marketing strategies for enhancing brand engagement and influencing consumer behavior through social media platforms. This study examines the impact of influencer marketing on brand engagement and consumer purchase intention, with particular emphasis on the role of influencer credibility. The study adopted a descriptive research design and collected primary data from 210 social media users through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. Convenience sampling was employed to select the respondents. Percentage analysis, Pearson correlation, and simple regression analysis were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that the majority of respondents were young, educated, and active social media users, with Instagram being the most preferred platform. The correlation analysis indicated a strong and significant positive relationship between brand engagement and consumer purchase intention. Furthermore, the regression analysis confirmed that influencer credibility significantly and positively affects brand engagement. The study concludes that credible, trustworthy, and authentic influencers play a vital role in strengthening consumer trust, enhancing brand engagement, and increasing purchase intention. The findings provide valuable insights for marketers and businesses seeking to leverage influencer marketing strategies to achieve effective consumer engagement and improved marketing outcomes in the digital environment.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Influencer Credibility, Brand Engagement, Consumer Purchase Intention, Consumer Behavior, Social Media Marketing.

Keywords Influencer Marketing, Consumer Behavior, Brand Engagement, Social Media Marketing, Purchase Intention, Brand Loyalty

1. INTRODUCTION

The marketing landscape has changed dramatically as a result of the digital revolution, giving businesses new ways to engage with customers. Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and X (previously Twitter) have developed into powerful communication conduits that let companies interact with customers directly. Influencer marketing has become one of the most successful methods for raising brand awareness and swaying consumer choices among the several digital marketing techniques.

According to Freberg et al. (2011), influencers are people who are knowledgeable, well-liked, or socially influential in particular fields and have the power to change the attitudes and actions of their followers. Influencer marketing, in contrast to traditional celebrity endorsements, depends on the trust that is built between influencers and their audiences as well as perceived authenticity.

Influencer marketing has developed over the last ten years from a specialized promotional technique to a popular marketing approach used in a variety of sectors, including fashion, beauty, healthcare, tourism, education, and technology. Influencer-driven communication has grown faster as a result of the widespread use of smartphones and rising internet penetration, allowing brands to instantly connect with highly targeted audiences. Recent research indicates that because consumers view influencers as more relevant and reliable than traditional advertising sources, they are depending more and more on their recommendations when assessing goods and services (Kim & Kim, 2024).

According to recent studies, influencer marketing initiatives frequently produce better consumer conversion, stronger brand memory, and higher engagement rates than conventional digital advertising techniques (Jin, Muqaddam, & Ryu, 2024).

Now, brands are able to find the right influencers, track the effectiveness of campaigns, and tailor content to the tastes of their target audience. By facilitating direct purchases through influencer-generated content, the combination of influencer marketing with e-commerce platforms has also shortened the customer path. According to recent research, influencer recommendations in conjunction with social commerce features greatly boost customer engagement and online buying behavior (Wang & Huang, 2025).

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Several theoretical stances that describe how influencer traits affect customer perceptions and brand-related outcomes can be used to understand the efficacy of influencer marketing. According to the literature now in publication, influencer credibility, authenticity, trustworthiness, content quality, and audience engagement are important factors affecting consumer behavior and brand engagement.

2.1 INFLUENCER CREDIBILITY

Customers are more inclined to believe information from reliable sources. Credible influencers have a favorable impact on purchase intentions and boost customer confidence in brand recommendations in the context of social media marketing. According to Lou and Yuan's (2019) research, customer trust and opinions toward sponsored content are greatly influenced by influencer credibility. According to Schouten, Janssen, and Verspaget (2020), because they are seen as more relevant and reliable than traditional celebrity endorsers, credible influencers provide larger persuasive effects.

Influencer credibility positively influences brand engagement and consumer purchase intentions.

2.2 INFLUENCER AUTHENTICITY

The degree to which influencers are seen as sincere, truthful, and open in their communications is referred to as authenticity. Genuine influencers share their own experiences, offer objective viewpoints, and keep their online and offline identities consistent.

Authenticity increases the emotional bond between influencers and followers, which raises engagement levels, claim Audrezet, de Kerviler, and Moulard (2020). Additionally, people are increasingly choosing genuine content over heavily commercialized promotional messages, according to recent studies (Kim & Kim, 2024). Customers' impressions of influencer sincerity are improved by authenticity, which in turn boosts confidence in brand endorsements.

2.3 INFLUENCER RELIABILITY

The degree to which an influencer is seen as truthful, dependable, and impartial while disseminating information to their followers is known as influencer trustworthiness. Because

consumers usually rely on influencer recommendations when making purchasing decisions, trust is regarded as one of the most significant factors of influencer marketing efficacy.

Sokolova and Kefi (2020) claim that customers' propensity to accept influencer recommendations and buy endorsed products is strongly influenced by trustworthiness. Followers are more likely to form favorable opinions of both the influencer and the advertised brand when they believe that the influencer is reliable. Additionally, Singh and Verma (2025) stressed that open disclosure of sponsored content boosts customer confidence in influencer endorsements, lowers consumer skepticism, and improves brand credibility.

2.4 INFLUENCER CONTENT QUALITY

The relevancy, informativeness, inventiveness, and entertainment value of influencer-generated content are all considered aspects of content quality. Good content draws viewers in, improves information processing, and promotes brand engagement. Lou and Yuan (2019) assert that consumer engagement and purchase intentions are strongly influenced by content value. Consumers are more likely to interact with sponsored messaging when they are exposed to amusing and educational material, which also fosters positive sentiments about businesses.

According to recent research, interactive content formats, short-form films, and visual storytelling have proven very successful in raising customer engagement on digital platforms (Rahman et al., 2024).

2.5 BRAND ENGAGEMENT

Consumers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral participation with a brand is referred to as brand engagement. By fostering connections, raising brand awareness, and producing memorable customer experiences, influencer marketing enhances brand engagement.

According to Hollebeek, Glynn, and Brodie (2014), engaged customers are more likely to take part in brand-related activities, promote brands, and preserve enduring relationships. One key tool for promoting this kind of interaction is influencer-generated content.

2.6 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

The methods by which people look for, assess, buy, and utilize goods and services are all included in consumer behavior. Influencer marketing shapes attitudes, perceptions, trust, and buy intentions, all of which have an impact on consumer behavior.

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), attitudes and social influences have an impact on behavioral intentions. Influencers serve as social reference groups whose viewpoints influence the choices made by consumers. According to recent research, brand loyalty, purchase intention, and electronic word-of-mouth communication are all greatly impacted by influencer recommendations (Thomas & Fowler, 2025).

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To determine the respondents' predominant influencer marketing profile.
2. To examine the connection between customer purchase intention and brand engagement.
3. To investigate how brand engagement is affected by influencer credibility.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to investigate how influencer marketing affects consumer behavior and brand engagement, the current study uses a descriptive and quantitative research approach. The goal of the study is to comprehend how consumer purchase intention is related to brand engagement and how influencer credibility affects brand engagement.

4.2 Nature of the study

Based on primary data gathered from participants who actively use social media platforms and are exposed to influencer marketing content, the study is empirical in nature.

4.3 Source of Data

The study makes use of primary data that was gathered straight from participants using a standardized questionnaire.

4.4 Method of Sampling

convenience sampling is a feasible and accessible method of accessing social media users, it was used to choose respondents.

4.5 The size of the sample

The study involved 210 respondents in total.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale.

The survey included questions about customer purchase intention, brand involvement, and influencer credibility.

4.6 Utilized Statistical Instruments:

- **Percentage Analysis**

The demographic traits of the respondents were examined using percentage analysis in order to determine the sample's predominant profile.

- **Analysis of Pearson Correlation**

The association between customer purchase intention and brand engagement was examined using Pearson Correlation Analysis.

- **Simple Regression Analysis**

The effect of influencer credibility on brand engagement and the predicting ability of influencer credibility on brand engagement were investigated using simple regression analysis.

5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on those who use social media and are exposed to influencer marketing on several digital channels. It seeks to shed light on how brand engagement is impacted by influencer credibility and how customer purchase intentions are subsequently influenced by engagement.

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study's sample size is restricted to 210 participants.
- Convenience sampling was used to get the data, which can restrict how broadly the results can be applied.
- Only a few factors are taken into account in the study, including purchase intention, brand involvement, and influencer reputation.
- Responses may be biased because they are based on respondents' perceptions.

7 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

7.1 PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

Demographic Variable	Dominant Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	115	54.8
Age	21–30 Years	110	52.4
Educational Qualification	Postgraduate	95	45.2
Occupation	Student	120	57.1
Monthly Income	Below ₹25,000	85	40.5
Social Media Platform Used Most	Instagram	90	42.9

The dominant profile analysis indicates that the majority of respondents are **female (54.8%)**, belong to the **21–30 years age group (52.4%)**, and possess **postgraduate qualifications (45.2%)**. Most respondents are **students (57.1%)** with a monthly income of **below ₹25,000 (40.5%)**. Additionally, **Instagram (42.9%)** is the most frequently used social media platform among respondents. This profile suggests that young, educated social media users constitute the primary audience exposed to influencer marketing activities.

Table 4.2

Correlation between Brand Engagement and Consumer Purchase Intention (N = 210)

Variables	Brand Engagement	Purchase Intention
Brand Engagement	1	0.748**
Purchase Intention	0.748**	1

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above table reveals the relationship between brand engagement and consumer purchase intention among the respondents. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.748$) indicates a strong positive relationship between brand engagement and purchase intention. The significance value ($p < 0.01$) confirms that the relationship is statistically significant.

Therefore, it can be inferred that higher levels of brand engagement generated through influencer marketing are associated with higher consumer purchase intentions. Consumers who actively engage with influencer-generated brand content are more likely to develop favorable attitudes toward the brand and exhibit stronger intentions to purchase the promoted products.

Recent studies have similarly reported that consumer engagement with influencer content significantly enhances purchase intention. Research published in the *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* (2024) found that consumer engagement acts as a key mechanism linking influencer characteristics and purchase intention. Consumers who actively interact with influencer content demonstrate greater willingness to purchase recommended products.

Furthermore, a 2025 systematic review on influencer marketing engagement concluded that follower engagement remains one of the strongest predictors of behavioral outcomes, including purchase intention and brand-related actions.

A 2024 empirical study also reported that influencer-driven engagement positively influences consumers' purchase decisions by strengthening trust, perceived credibility, and emotional connection with the brand.

Table 4.3

Regression Analysis: Impact of Influencer Credibility on Brand Engagement (N = 210)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	0.712	0.507	0.505	0.486

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	50.236	1	50.236	212.654	0.000
Residual	49.134	208	0.236		
Total	99.370	209			

Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig.

Constant	1.254	0.218	-	5.752	0.000
Influencer Credibility	0.684	0.047	0.712	14.582	0.000

The regression analysis was conducted to examine the impact of influencer credibility on brand engagement. The results indicate that influencer credibility significantly predicts brand engagement ($\beta = 0.712$, $p < 0.001$).

The R^2 value of 0.507 indicates that influencer credibility explains 50.7% of the variation in brand engagement. The F-statistic ($F = 212.654$, $p < 0.001$) confirms that the regression model is statistically significant.

The positive regression coefficient ($B = 0.684$) suggests that an increase in influencer credibility leads to a corresponding increase in brand engagement. Therefore, consumers are more likely to engage with brands when they perceive influencers as knowledgeable, trustworthy, and reliable.

Furthermore, a 2025 study on influencer marketing effectiveness concluded that credibility positively influences brand engagement by strengthening consumer trust and reducing skepticism toward promotional messages. The study emphasized that trustworthy influencers create stronger emotional connections with followers, leading to greater engagement and favorable brand attitudes.

FINDINGS F HE STUDY

- The demographic study showed that the majority of respondents were students (57.1%), postgraduate degree holders (45.2%), female (54.8%), and between the ages of 21 and 30 (52.4%).
- Instagram was the most popular social media platform (42.9%), while the majority of respondents (40.5%) stated that their monthly salary was less than ₹25,000.
- The findings show that the main audience impacted by influencer marketing initiatives consists of young, well-educated social media users. They are more open to influencer-generated content and brand communications because of their active participation in social media.
- Pearson Correlation Analysis showed a strong positive relationship between brand engagement and consumer purchase intention ($r = 0.748$, $p < 0.01$). This finding suggests that higher levels of engagement with influencer-generated brand content significantly enhance consumers' willingness to purchase promoted products.

- The results confirm that consumers who actively interact with influencer content develop more favorable attitudes toward brands and exhibit stronger purchase intentions.
- Regression Analysis revealed that influencer credibility has a significant positive impact on brand engagement ($\beta = 0.712$, $p < 0.001$). The findings indicate that consumers are more likely to engage with brands when influencers are perceived as trustworthy, knowledgeable, and reliable.
- The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.507$) indicates that influencer credibility explains 50.7% of the variation in brand engagement. This demonstrates the substantial role played by influencer credibility in strengthening consumer-brand relationships.
- The overall findings establish that influencer marketing is an effective digital marketing strategy that enhances brand engagement and positively influences consumer purchase intention through credible and trustworthy influencer communication.

CONCLUSION

The study looked at how influencer marketing affected social media users' brand engagement and purchase intentions. The results show that influencer marketing is a successful digital marketing tactic that has a big impact on consumer attitudes and buying habits.

Customers that actively interact with influencer-generated content are more inclined to buy advertised products, according to the correlation research, which revealed a strong positive association between brand engagement and purchase intention. The significance of trust, authenticity, and dependability in influencer marketing was highlighted by the regression analysis, which also proved that influencer credibility greatly increases brand engagement.

Overall, the study comes to the conclusion that working with reputable and genuine influencers can boost brand engagement, boost customer trust, and enhance buy intentions—all of which contribute to effective marketing results in the digital sphere.

REFERENCES

- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179–211.
- Freberg, K., Graham, K., McGaughey, K., & Freberg, L. A. (2011). Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality. *Public Relations Review*, 37(1), 90–92.

- Hollebeek, L. D., Glynn, M. S., & Brodie, R. J. (2014). Consumer brand engagement in social media: Conceptualization, scale development and validation. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 28(2), 149–165.
- Lou, C., & Yuan, S. (2019). Influencer marketing: How message value and credibility affect consumer trust of branded content on social media. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 19(1), 58–73.
- Audrezet, A., de Kerviler, G., & Moulard, J. G. (2020). Authenticity under threat: When social media influencers need to go beyond self-presentation. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 557–569.
- Schouten, A. P., Janssen, L., & Verspaget, M. (2020). Celebrity vs. influencer endorsements in advertising: The role of identification, credibility, and product-endorser fit. *International Journal of Advertising*, 39(2), 258–281.
- Sokolova, K., & Kefi, H. (2020). Instagram and YouTube bloggers promote it, why should I buy? How credibility and parasocial interaction influence purchase intentions. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 53, 101742.
- Rahman, M., Ahmed, S., & Islam, T. (2024). The role of social media influencer content in enhancing consumer engagement and brand interaction. *Journal of Digital Marketing Studies*, 16(2), 112–128.
- Jin, S. V., Muqaddam, A., & Ryu, E. (2024). Instafamous and social media influencer marketing: Effects on consumer engagement and brand outcomes. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 24(1), 1–15.
- Kim, S., & Kim, J. (2024). Influencer authenticity, consumer trust, and purchase intention in social media marketing. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 48(3), 421–438.
- Singh, R., & Verma, P. (2025). Transparency and trustworthiness in influencer marketing: Implications for consumer behavior and brand engagement. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 31(1), 22–40.
- Thomas, L., & Fowler, K. (2025). Influencer marketing and consumer behavior in the digital era: The mediating role of engagement and trust. *Journal of Business Research*, 184, 114–126.
- Wang, Y., & Huang, X. (2025). Social commerce, influencer recommendations, and online purchase intention: Evidence from digital consumers. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 61, 101310.