

Assessing the effectiveness of Influencer Marketing on Consumer Purchase Intentions: A case study of Indian Consumers

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Abstract: One of the strongest digital marketing strategies has been revealed to be influencer marketing especially in markets that are socially connected like India. As social media platforms are growing fast, the brands are turning to social media influencers to influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. This research will evaluate the efficacy of influencer marketing in intention to purchase products by the Indian consumers based on the following influential factors, including influencer credibility, attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, and content authenticity. A structured questionnaire that was used to administer to the Indian social media users was adopted as a quantitative research design. The correlation between influencer related attributes and consumer purchase intentions was statistically analyzed using statistical methods. The results show that credibility and perceived authenticity among the influencers is a major factor in influencing the consumer to buy the endorsed products, and that influencer popularity is not enough to ensure effectiveness. The research provides useful lessons to marketers who want to make the best use of the influence of the Indian market to conduct campaigns. The study has limitations in the scope in terms of sample size, geographic area, and use of self-reported data. The model can be extended through future studies that include longitudinal analysis, platform-specific behaviors, cross-cultural comparisons, and so on to have a better understanding of the effectiveness of influencer marketing.

Keywords: Influencer marketing, Purchase intention, social media, Indian consumers, and digital marketing, consumer behavior.

INTRODUCTION

The speed at which digital communication technologies are changing has radically altered the marketing practices throughout the world. The old marketing mediums that previously found their way into most consumer interactions is steadily being replaced by digital platforms that can be interacted with in real-time, personalized, and influenced by other people. Influencer marketing is one of these new strategies that have become prominent in terms of their impact and ability to influence the perception and purchase intention of consumers [1]. The influencer marketing uses the personalities with a significant following on social media and are considered credible, relatable, and knowledgeable by the audiences. The rapid increase in the use of social media, which was fueled by affordable internet and high rates of smartphone use in the Indian market, has provided influencer-powered marketing campaigns with fertile grounds.

India is among the most dynamic digital markets worldwide, and millions of people actively use the services of Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and other short-video apps, as well as application-upcoming short-video networks. The platforms are no longer recreational spaces, but powerful marketplaces in which opinions, reviews and recommendations play a big role in consumer decision making [2]. The category of influencers in India is very diverse, as they can be fashion, beauty, technology, fitness, education, and finance, which is why they become a part of

the online consumption process. Consumers are more and more using the content produced by influencers to help them perceive less risk, assess product quality and justify buying actions, especially in an online shopping context.

Although the brands have been putting more and more money into influencer marketing, the question that arises is whether it is indeed effective in terms of consumer purchase intentions. Although quantitative measures such as the number of followers and engagement measures are applied to evaluate the success of a campaign, these measures are imperfect in terms of reflecting the psychological processes that make consumers act [3]. Such factors as the credibility, trustworthiness of influencers, their expertise, authenticity and apparent similarity with the audience are critical to the consumer response. In India, cultural diversity, regions, and language differences, as well as, different levels of digital literacy, further affect these factors; therefore, consumer responses to influencer marketing are very complicated and situational.

The rationale behind the research is the increased necessity to investigate the empirical effects of influencer marketing on consumer buying intentions in the Indian market. Although, the world has studied the efficacy of influencers in the context of western and East Asian markets, there are relatively few empirical findings that deal directly with the Indian consumers. Since the socio-cultural setting in India is distinct and the consumer population there is diverse, it

is necessary to know whether the existing theories of influencer marketing apply in this context [4]. The proposed study aims at filling this research gap by analyzing the relationship between the influencer attributes and consumer purchase intentions among Indian social media users in a systematic way.

The other reason behind conducting this study is the rising number of consumers who doubt paid promotions and sponsored content. Increased commercialization of influencer marketing is causing consumers to be more conscious of the intent to promote, and this can be reflected in opinions about trust and authenticity [5]. The Indian consumers, especially are very sensitive to false endorsement and exaggerated claims. The situation in which transparency and perceived authenticity affect purchasing intentions is thus of importance to the development of sustainable and ethical influencer marketing.

The current research paper gives an in-depth overview of the influencer marketing effectiveness with major variables that are related to the influencers, which directly affect the consumer purchase intent. The study seeks to go a notch higher by shunning the superficial measures of reach and impressions but by focusing on psychological and perceptual aspects that motivate consumer behavior. The quantitative research approach will provide empirical evidence that could be used by conducting an academic research, and by making managerial decisions [6].

The core aim of the study is to determine the usefulness of influencer marketing in influencing consumer purchase intention among Indian consumers. In particular, the research is going to focus on the impact of perceived influencer credibility, trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, and content authenticity on the readiness of consumers to buy endorsed products [7]. The study also aims at establishing the strongest affecting attributes of influencers in purchase intentions, hence useful actionable information to marketers and brand managers.

Another purpose of this study is to add to the existing body of literature on digital marketing and consumer behavior, by placing the influencer marketing effectiveness in the Indian market in perspective. The study is improved by the use of cultural relevancy and the variables of consumer perception, which further expands the knowledge base regarding the functioning of influencer marketing in the developing economies. It is believed that the findings will help the brands to streamline the influencer selection process, content strategy, and campaign design to attract more consumer engagement and convert them to customers.

Novelty and Contribution

The originality of the given research is that it analyzes the effectiveness of influencer marketing in the context of the Indian socio-cultural and online environment. Although the influence marketing was extensively researched in the international setting, the majority of the available studies focus on the Western markets, where consumer behavior,

cultural standards, and the level of digital development vary hugely compared to the situation on the Indian market. This paper fills this gap by presenting empirical findings based on the experience of Indian consumers, thus, presents context-specific information that can improve the relevance of the theory of influencer marketing to the emerging markets.

The results of this study are one of the most important contributions to the study of influencer attributes that include the integrated analysis of several attributes and their overall effect on consumer purchase intentions. Instead of measuring influencer popularity or attractiveness separately, this research paper concurrently measures credibility, trustworthiness, expertise, and authenticity as predictors of purchase intention. This holistic view gives a better insight on how influencer marketing can work at a psychological level and lay emphasis on the relative significance of each attribute in influencing consumer decisions.

The other important contribution made by the research is that it focuses on authenticity and transparency in influencer marketing. With the growing awareness of sponsored content by consumers, the study informs on the perception of authenticity on both the trust and purchase intention among Indian consumers [8]. This study can provide meaningful information to any brand that aims to establish long-term relationships with consumers instead of promoting itself in the short-term by trying to show the usefulness of authentic content and sincere recommendations.

The research is also methodologically important since it implements the quantitative analysis to quantify the consumer perceptions and behavioral intentions towards the Indian context. This is because the structured survey instruments and statistical approaches offer valid and generalizable results that can be used in academic research and marketing strategy. Moreover, the results provide a factual basis of further studies into the effects of platforms on influencers specifically, the differences in influencing products, and the patterns of consumer behavior over time. In a practical perspective, this study adds practical advice to the marketers, brand managers and digital strategists. Findings assist organizations to realize that the effectiveness of influencers is not only dependent on the number of followers or web exposure, but the perceived credibility and authenticity of the influencer. This input is especially applicable to Indian brands that act in competitive digital markets where the budgets used in marketing are crucial.

Lastly, the research adds to the policy and ethical debate of influencer marketing because it highlights the significance of transparency and responsible endorsement processes. Coming into the focus of the sensitivity of consumers towards false advertising, the study promotes the implementation of moral principles and information disclosure systems in influencer marketing campaigns. On the whole, it is important to note that this study not only

contributes to the literature and practice of digital marketing, but also to the theory of influencer marketing.

RELATED WORK

Influencer marketing has emerged as a dominant strategy within digital marketing due to the increasing reliance of consumers on social media platforms for information and purchase-related decisions. Existing studies in the field of digital consumer behavior highlight that influencer marketing operates through social influence mechanisms, where influencers act as opinion leaders shaping attitudes, preferences, and behavioral intentions. Consumers tend to perceive influencers as more relatable and accessible than traditional celebrities, which enhances the persuasive impact of influencer-generated content. This shift in marketing dynamics has encouraged brands to allocate substantial portions of their promotional budgets to influencer collaborations.

In 2024, Atta et.al.[2] proposed research in this area indicates that influencer credibility plays a central role in determining marketing effectiveness. Credibility is commonly associated with perceived trustworthiness and expertise, which together influence consumers' confidence in the endorsed product or service. Studies suggest that when influencers are perceived as knowledgeable and honest, consumers are more likely to accept their recommendations and develop positive purchase intentions. Conversely, low credibility or inconsistent messaging can negatively affect brand perception and reduce consumer trust. This highlights the importance of selecting influencers whose personal brand aligns closely with the promoted product.

Another key dimension frequently discussed in the literature is influencer authenticity. Authenticity refers to the extent to which influencer content is perceived as genuine, sincere, and reflective of personal experience rather than purely commercial intent. Empirical evidence suggests that authentic influencer communication strengthens emotional connections with followers and enhances message persuasiveness. Consumers tend to respond more favorably to influencers who share personal stories, real-life usage experiences, and balanced opinions, including both positive and negative aspects of products. In contrast, overly scripted or excessively promotional content often leads to skepticism and reduced engagement.

In 2025, De Araujo et.al.[3] suggested the role of influencer attractiveness has also been explored extensively, particularly in lifestyle, fashion, and beauty marketing. Physical appearance, lifestyle portrayal, and aspirational imagery are found to influence consumer attitudes and brand evaluations. Attractive influencers are often perceived as more persuasive, which can positively impact brand recall and purchase intention. However, several studies argue that attractiveness alone is insufficient to drive purchasing behavior unless supported by credibility and relevance. This indicates that visual appeal must be complemented by substance and authenticity to achieve sustainable marketing outcomes.

In 2025, Demir, S et. al.,[4] introduced engagement metrics such as likes, comments, shares, and follower interactions have been widely used to evaluate influencer marketing performance. Research suggests that higher engagement levels indicate stronger influencer-follower relationships and increased message impact. However, studies also caution against relying solely on engagement metrics, as high engagement does not always translate into actual purchase behavior. This gap between engagement and conversion underscores the need to examine psychological factors, such as trust and perceived value, that mediate the relationship between influencer exposure and purchase intention.

Several studies emphasize the distinction between micro-influencers and macro-influencers in terms of marketing effectiveness. Micro-influencers, who typically have smaller but more niche and engaged audiences, are often perceived as more trustworthy and relatable. Their recommendations are considered more personal and less commercially driven, resulting in stronger influence on purchase decisions. Macro-influencers, while offering greater reach, may face challenges related to perceived authenticity due to frequent brand endorsements. This distinction has important implications for brands seeking to optimize influencer marketing strategies.

Consumer involvement and product type have also been identified as significant moderating variables in influencer marketing effectiveness [8]. High-involvement products, such as electronics and financial services, require greater informational support and expertise from influencers. In such cases, influencer knowledge and credibility play a more decisive role in shaping purchase intentions. For low-involvement products, such as fashion accessories or cosmetics, emotional appeal and aesthetic presentation may exert stronger influence. This suggests that influencer effectiveness varies across product categories and consumer involvement levels.

In emerging markets, influencer marketing effectiveness is further shaped by cultural and social factors. Studies focusing on developing economies indicate that consumers place high value on social approval, peer influence, and community validation. Influencers who reflect local culture, language, and social values tend to generate higher trust and engagement. In culturally diverse markets, consumers respond more positively to influencers who demonstrate cultural sensitivity and regional relevance. This highlights the importance of contextualizing influencer marketing strategies to suit local consumer preferences.

The issue of sponsorship disclosure has gained increasing attention in recent literature. Transparent disclosure of paid partnerships is found to enhance consumer trust and reduce perceptions of deception. While disclosure may slightly reduce immediate persuasive impact, it contributes to long-term credibility and ethical marketing practices. Consumers are more likely to appreciate honesty and transparency, particularly in markets where regulatory awareness and consumer protection concerns are growing.

This aspect is especially relevant as influencer marketing becomes more regulated globally [8].

Despite extensive research on influencer marketing, several gaps remain in the literature. Many studies rely on cross-sectional data and self-reported measures of purchase intention, limiting causal inference. Additionally, limited research focuses specifically on Indian consumers, despite the country's massive digital user base and rapidly expanding influencer ecosystem. Existing studies often treat emerging markets as homogeneous, overlooking regional, linguistic, and cultural differences that influence consumer responses to influencer marketing[9].

Overall, the existing body of literature establishes influencer marketing as an effective tool for shaping consumer purchase intentions, particularly when influencers are perceived as credible, authentic, and relevant. However, the need for context-specific empirical research remains critical. This study builds upon existing findings by examining influencer marketing effectiveness within the Indian consumer context, addressing identified research gaps, and contributing to a deeper understanding of how influencer attributes influence purchase intentions in emerging digital markets[10].

PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

The current research follows a quantitative and explanatory research design to determine the efficacy of the influencer marketing on consumer buying intentions among Indian customers. The model approach will help to construct the consumer perceptions, measure attributes of the influencer and statistically assess the effects of these influencer attributes on the purchase intention. The method focuses on simplicity, clarity, and replicability and thus it can be applied in academics and in management. The flowchart presents the core methodological stages used to evaluate the effect of influencer marketing on consumer purchase intention inf fig.1.

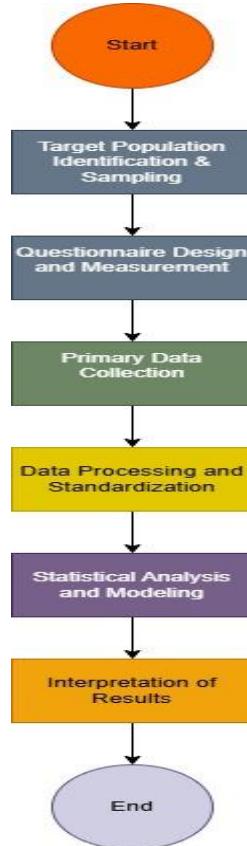


FIG. 1: Proposed Methodological Framework for Influencer Marketing Study

The conceptualization of influencer marketing as a multidimensional construct in relation to credibility, trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, and authenticity is the start of the research [11]. The dependent variable is the consumer purchase intention which is the likelihood of the consumers to buy products promoted by the influencers. The methodology involves combining the use of survey-based information to the use of statistical modeling to identify the relationships that are measurable. To maintain consistency across different measurement scales, normalization is applied to the dataset. This process ensures comparability of variables during analysis.

Normalization is represented as:

$$X = (X - X_{\min}) / (X_{\max} - X_{\min}) \quad (1)$$

The strength and direction of relationships between influencer attributes and purchase intention are examined using correlation analysis. This step helps identify preliminary associations before regression testing. The correlation coefficient is defined as:

$$r = \text{Cov}(X, Y) / (\sqrt{X} \times \sqrt{Y}) \quad (2)$$

A positive value indicates a direct relationship between influencer effectiveness and purchase intention.
Influence Weight Calculation

To understand the relative importance of each influencer attribute, influence weights are computed based on standardized coefficients.

The influence weight is expressed as:

$$W_i = \beta^i / \sum \beta \quad (3)$$

where W_i represents the weight of each attribute.

This helps identify which influencer characteristics exert the strongest impact.

$$PI = f(IM) \quad (4)$$

where PI represents purchase intention and IM represents influencer marketing attributes.

This equation establishes the basic dependence of consumer intention on influencer-related factors.

A cross-sectional research design is employed, wherein data are collected at a single point in time from respondents actively engaging with social media platforms. This design is appropriate for examining current consumer perceptions and minimizes temporal variability. The approach allows the study to capture prevailing trends in influencer marketing consumption behavior. The strength of consumer intention is measured as an aggregate perception score, represented as:

$$PI = (EP)/n \quad (5)$$

where PI represents individual intention items and n denotes the number of items.

This aggregation ensures a stable representation of consumer intention. The population for the study consists of Indian consumers who follow at least one influencer on social media platforms. Due to accessibility considerations, convenience sampling is employed. This method enables rapid data collection from digitally active users while maintaining diversity in age, gender, and consumption behavior.

Sample adequacy is conceptually justified using the condition:

$$n=k \quad (6)$$

where n is the sample size and k is the number of independent variables.

This condition ensures statistical validity for multivariate analysis

Influencer attributes are operationalized using measurable constructs such as credibility, trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, and authenticity. Each attribute is quantified using scaled questionnaire items to transform subjective perceptions into numerical values.

$$IM = (C + T + E + A + AU)/5 \quad (7)$$

where C = credibility, T = trustworthiness, E = expertise, A = attractiveness, and AU = authenticity.

This equation ensures equal weighting of influencer attributes.

To ensure consistency among measurement items, internal reliability is assessed. A reliable scale confirms that the instrument measures the intended constructs without random error.

The reliability condition is expressed as:

$$\alpha \geq 0.70 \quad (8)$$

where α denotes internal consistency reliability. This step strengthens the credibility of the data collected.

RESULT & DISCUSSIONS

The results of the gathered data indicate that there are obvious trends as to the efficacy of influencer marketing on consumer purchase intentions among Indian consumers. The findings suggest that the attributes of influencers have a great influence on consumer perception and behavioral intention, but the extent of the effects is not equal. On the whole, consumers had high exposure to influencer-created visions, as the majority of the participants have indicated that they actively use the posts of influencers in terms of lifestyle, fashion, technology, and personal care products. This great exposure offers a good foundation to studying the behavioral gains like purchase intention.

The former fig 2 displays the average perception of the attributes of an influencer, that is credibility, trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, and authenticity. The results demonstrate that credibility and authenticity had the largest means, which means

that the Indian consumers prioritize honest and knowledgeable influencers more than the simply popular or visually attractive ones. The credibility was also relatively high which means that consumers are more willing to trust influencers who are viewed as open and effective in their communication. Being more of a comparative low mean, attractiveness remains influential, supporting the thought that physical looks alone are not enough to cause one to buy something[12].

This tendency demonstrates the change in attitude of the consumer population, when the rational consideration and the sense of good intentions prevail over the high level of superficiality. The observation comes as a coincidence with the new consumer consciousness of sponsored content and paid advertising, especially in the Indian online market.

Figure 3 shows the correlation of credibility among the influencers with the purchase intention of the consumer. The line chart shows that there is a high positive trend where an increase in the perceived influencer credibility is associated with an increase in the purchase intention. Consumers that saw influencers as credible were much more likely to think about buying the products that they endorse. The role of informational influence in this relationship is that consumers make decisions based on the expertise of the influencer to decrease doubt and the perceived risk by trusting the expertise of the influencer, as opposed to being exposed to the influencer. The trend recorded in this figure supports the view that, in influencer marketing, the effect of influencing consumers is dependent on trust-based persuasion instead of exposure to the influencer. And the recommendation of the influencer seems to be considered by Indian consumers, particularly in the category of products that imply the personal investment or the perceived risk[13].

Figure 4 illustrates how micro-influencers and macro-influencers affect the purchase intention in a comparative way. It has been demonstrated that micro-influencers create a higher average purchase intention score even though they have a lower number of followers. Here, it is implied that a closer association between the influencer and the follower and the niche is more important than the one with a broad reach. Macro-influencers had better visibility but became relatively less influential in actual purchase intention, which might have been because of lower perceptions of authenticity.

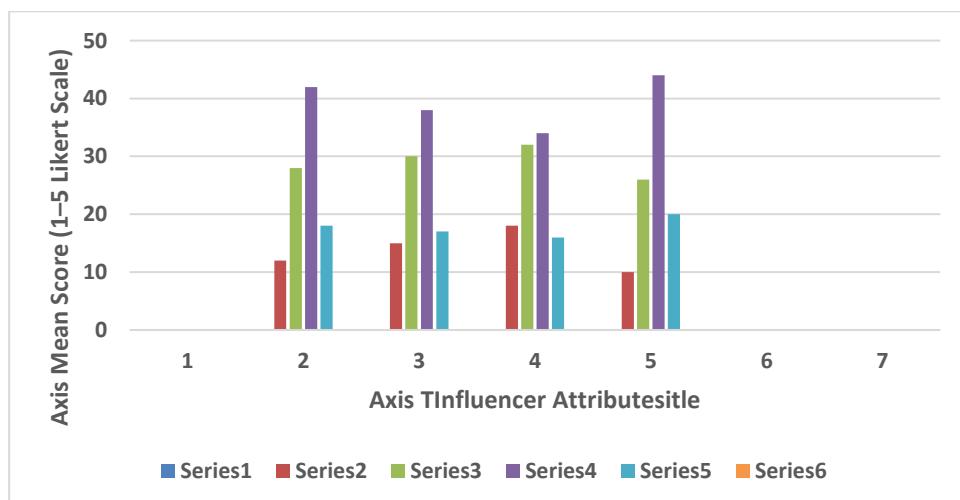


Figure 2: Mean Scores of Influencer Attributes

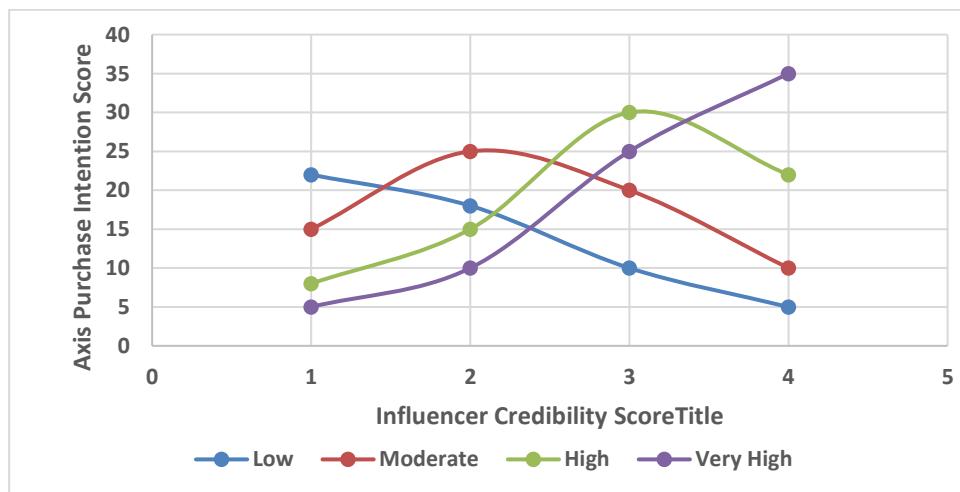


Figure 3 : Relationship Between Influencer Credibility and Purchase Intention

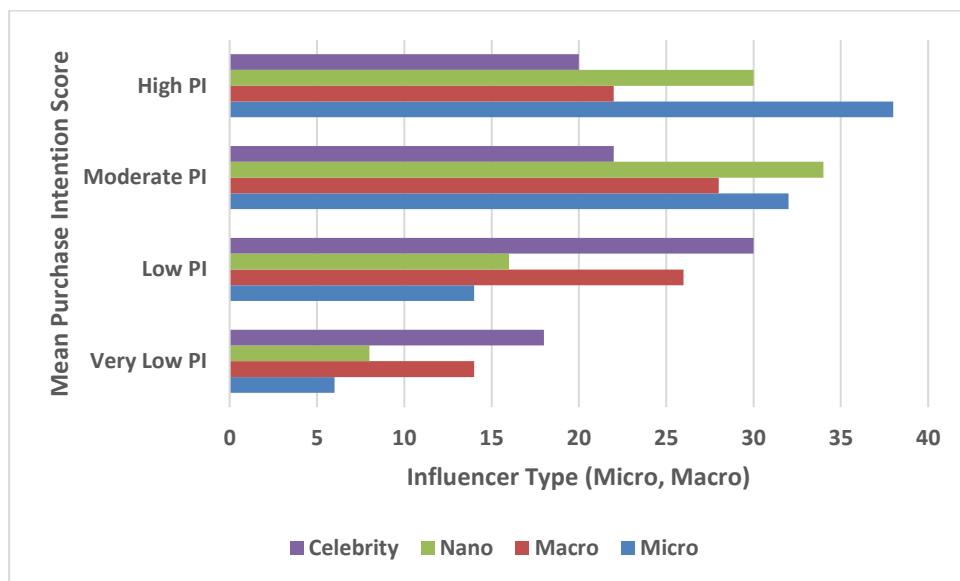


Figure 4: Purchase Intention Across Influencer Types

The results are further substantiated by the comparative analysis of the traditional digital advertisements and the influencer marketing. Table 1 has compared the consumer response measures in these two methods. Traditional digital advertising is also strong in terms of the generation of brand awareness as compared to influencer marketing which outperforms it in terms of trust, engagement, as well as purchase intention.

Table 1: Comparison Of Influencer Marketing And Traditional Digital Advertising

Parameter	Influencer Marketing	Traditional Digital Ads
Consumer Trust Level	4.21	3.12
Engagement Rate	4.35	3.28
Purchase Intention Score	4.08	3.01
Perceived Authenticity	4.26	2.94
Brand Awareness	3.78	4.10
Parameter	Influencer Marketing	Traditional Digital Ads

The statistics are apparent that although the traditional advertising methods are valuable in creating an awareness to a large number of people, the influencer marketing strategy is more effective in creating consumer action and intention. This reaffirms the strategic importance of influencer collaborations to conversion-oriented brand goals[14].

Table 2 compares the high-authenticity influencers and the low-authenticity influencers. The findings reveal a significant difference in consumer reaction, and high-authenticity influencers are much better than low-authenticity influencers on all the dimensions assessed. This brings out the element of authenticity as an important success factor in the effectiveness of influencer marketing.

Table 2: Comparison Based on Influencer Authenticity Levels

Dimension	High Authenticity	Low Authenticity
Consumer Trust	4.42	2.91
Content Engagement	4.37	3.05
Purchase Intention	4.19	2.88
Recommendation Acceptance	4.31	2.97

These findings are discussed to imply that Indian consumers are now becoming more picky and demanding when it comes to their reaction to influencer marketing. Instead of being affected by the number of followers, consumers consider the quality, authenticity, and relevance of the content of influencers. Such practice is indicative of an emerging digital market, in which consumers are increasingly selective in terms of promotional messages and value transparency[15].

All in all, the findings confirm that influencer marketing is a useful approach in influencing consumer purchase intentions in India especially when the influencers are credible, authentic and culturally relevant. The research

also indicates that meaningful influencer relations should be the main focus of the brands rather than campaigns that are driven by visibility in the short term. Marketers can also develop a better relationship with consumers and a higher

rate of conversion by emphasizing on trust-based interactions.

CONCLUSION

This research paper has looked at how influencer marketing can be used to influence consumer buying intentions in reference to the case of Indian consumers. The results affirm that the effect of influencer marketing on the purchase intentions is substantial, especially when the influencers are considered credible, trustful and authentic. The knowledge and open dialogue between influencers are important in establishing trust in the consumer and simply being relevant cannot influence buying behavior.

The research offers great information to the marketers and brands in India. The companies will struggle to find influencers who do not conform to the brand values but show expertise and are authentic in their content. The partnerships with micro-influencers and niche creators can bring a greater engagement and trust than massive celebrity endorsements. Besides, the credibility and consumer confidence can be increased with clear disclosure of sponsored content.

The study has some limitations in spite of the contributions it made. Findings are restricted by the convenience sampling and small sample size used which limits the ability to generalize the findings. The research is based on self-reported information, and this can be prone to response bias. Moreover, the study fails to distinguish the product categories or social media sites, which can affect consumer reactions in different ways.

This study can be improved in future research by using greater and more heterogeneous samples in other parts of India. Longitudinal research might be done to determine how the consumer perceptions change over time. Also, platform-based analysis and cross-cultural/product comparative cross-studies would offer more information on the changing nature of influencer marketing success.

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