

THE ROLE OF INFLUENCER MARKETING IN SHAPING CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISIONS IN COIMBATORE

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Abstract: This study examines the role of influencer marketing in shaping consumer purchase decisions in Coimbatore. Using a descriptive survey of 106 respondents, the research analyses how influencer credibility, content authenticity, and social media engagement influence consumer behaviour. The study employs statistical tools such as percentage analysis, Chi-Square testing, and rank analysis to evaluate relationships between variables and consumer responses. Findings indicate that influencer marketing significantly increases brand awareness and product visibility, particularly among the 18–25 age group. Social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube emerge as the most influential channels for promotional content. While 66.67% of respondents have made at least one purchase influenced by social media influencers, factors such as price sensitivity and moderate levels of trust limit the direct conversion impact. The results also reveal statistically significant associations between age group, time spent on social media, and purchase behaviour, highlighting the growing importance of influencer-driven marketing strategies in modern consumer markets.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Consumer Purchase Decisions, Social Media, Brand Awareness, Coimbatore.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Influencer Marketing

In today's digital world, social media has become an integral part of everyday life, influencing how people communicate, share opinions, and make purchasing decisions. Consumers no longer rely solely on traditional advertisements; they increasingly turn to social media influencers—individuals who share experiences, opinions, and product recommendations online—to guide their buying choices. This shift has made influencer marketing an important tool for businesses to connect with consumers in a personal and engaging way.

Influencer marketing refers to the practice where brands collaborate with social media influencers to promote products or services to their followers. These influencers are seen as trustworthy and relatable, communicating in a friendly and informal manner. When influencers recommend a product, consumers tend to perceive it as a genuine opinion rather than a direct advertisement, which plays a major role in shaping consumer trust and influencing their purchase decisions.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the growing popularity of influencer marketing, consumer reactions are not always consistent. Some trust recommendations, while others view such promotions as financially motivated rather than genuine. Limited research specifically examines how influencer marketing affects trust, perception, and purchase decisions in regional Indian markets such as Coimbatore. This study aims to understand whether influencer promotions directly drive purchases or primarily serve to increase awareness.

1.3 Purpose Statement

WHO: Social media users who actively follow influencers on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok across different age groups, genders, income levels, and educational backgrounds.

WHERE: Digital and social media environments, specifically focusing on influencer marketing and its impact on consumer purchase behaviour in Coimbatore.

WHAT: How influencer marketing affects consumer purchasing decisions — examining trust, credibility, authenticity, and perceived effectiveness of influencer promotions.

WHEN: The present digital era, reflecting current trends in social media usage, influencer collaborations, and online consumer behaviour.

HOW: Survey-based research with data analysed to interpret consumer attitudes, trust levels, and behavioural responses toward influencer marketing campaigns.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

General Objective: To examine the impact of influencer marketing on consumer purchase decisions and understand how it shapes consumer trust, perception, and buying behaviour in Coimbatore.

- To determine the determinants of consumer trust in influencer marketing: credibility, authenticity, and transparency.
- To evaluate how social media influencers affect consumer awareness, attitudes, and interests.
- To explore the relationship between influencer marketing and actual consumer purchase decisions.
- To examine how content format and engagement style affect purchase intentions.
- To determine how influencer marketing contributes to building brand loyalty among consumers.

1.5 Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations include reliance on self-reported questionnaire data (prone to respondent bias), the dynamic nature of consumer perceptions, limited sample size and geographic coverage, and time constraints restricting platform-specific analysis. The study is delimited to influencer marketing in Coimbatore, excluding traditional online advertising, email marketing, and non-social-media celebrity endorsements, and considers only age, gender, and social media usage as demographic variables.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 What We Know

It is widely established that influencer marketing has become a powerful digital marketing strategy that significantly affects consumer awareness, attitudes, and purchase behaviour. Consumers are more likely to trust recommendations from relatable social media personalities than traditional advertisements. Instagram and YouTube dominate influencer marketing due to their visual and interactive nature. Micro-influencers are often considered more credible and authentic compared to celebrity influencers because they maintain closer relationships with their followers. Repeated exposure to influencer content increases brand recall and consideration during the purchase decision process.

2.2 Research Gap

Despite rapid growth, limited empirical research focuses on how influencer marketing shapes consumer purchase decisions in smaller metropolitan cities like Coimbatore. Most studies concentrate on metropolitan areas or global markets. While many studies highlight effectiveness in increasing awareness, insufficient clarity exists regarding the actual impact on purchase frequency and long-term buying behaviour. Consumer trust in influencer promotions—especially for paid partnerships and sponsored content—requires deeper investigation in regional Indian contexts.

2.3 How This Study Fits the Research Gap

This study addresses these gaps by focusing specifically on consumers in Coimbatore, examining not only awareness and perception but also behavioural outcomes such as actual purchases, frequency of buying, and price sensitivity. By incorporating demographic variables, it provides localised insights into influencer marketing effectiveness, examining consumer trust and reactions to sponsored content for a comprehensive understanding of influencer impact in a regional Indian market.

2.4 Hypotheses

- H1: Influencer marketing significantly increases brand awareness among consumers in Coimbatore.
- H2: Consumers who spend more time on social media are more likely to purchase products based on influencer recommendations.
- H3: There is a significant relationship between age group and the level of influence of influencer marketing on purchase decisions.
- H4: Influencer credibility positively affects consumer trust and purchase intention.
- H5: Price sensitivity moderates the relationship between influencer recommendations and actual purchase behaviour.

2.5 Review of Literature

Sl.	Authors	Year	Objectives / Main Findings	Approach	Sample
1	AlAnsi et al.	2025	Strong positive effect of influencer marketing (IM) on purchase intention; consumer attitude partially mediates.	Quantitative; SEM	Online consumers
2	Chekima et al.	2023	Credibility and attractiveness are key predictors of purchase intention via influencer characteristics.	Quantitative; SEM	Social media users
3	Xin Zhao et al.	2024	Expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness positively affect brand attitude and purchase intention.	Online survey; SEM	Influencer followers
4	Vrontis et al.	2024	Informative value, authenticity and homophily increase purchase intention via brand credibility.	Survey; ELM	Influencer followers
5	Sudha et al.	2022	Higher trust in influencers significantly increases purchase intention.	Quantitative; SEM	Social media users
6	Prathap Kumar & Srikanthan	2025	Social attraction and attitude homophily positively influence trust and purchase intention in Tamil Nadu.	Online survey; SEM	1,190 respondents
7	Srivastava et al.	2025	Influencers significantly affect awareness, preference and purchase for youth.	Descriptive survey	Social media users
8	Alam et al.	2024	Significant positive correlation between Instagram influencer engagement and purchasing behavior.	Mixed methods; regression	Instagram users
9	Sharma et al.	2023	Significant influence on product awareness, brand preference and purchase decisions via Instagram.	Quantitative survey	Instagram followers
10	Gupta et al.	2020	Influencer marketing positively affects purchase decisions; perceived more persuasive than traditional ads.	Survey quantitative	Social media users
11	Rani et al.	2021	Influencer marketing more effective and impactful than traditional marketing for online products.	Questionnaire survey	Social media users

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Strategy

The study adopts a descriptive research design suitable for analysing consumer behaviour and perceptions related to influencer marketing. A survey-based strategy is employed using a structured questionnaire to collect data from a diverse group of consumers in Coimbatore.

3.2 Methods and Sample

Quantitative research methods are used. The structured questionnaire includes close-ended questions, Likert-scale statements to measure agreement on influencer credibility and impact, and multiple-choice questions about platforms used and actions taken after influencer exposure. The sample unit includes social media users, influencer followers, online shoppers, students, and working professionals in Coimbatore (urban and semi-urban areas). Total sample size: 106 respondents selected via convenience sampling.

3.3 Statistical Tools

Three analytical tools were applied:

(1) Percentage Analysis — to identify distribution and frequency of responses related to social media usage, influencer following behaviour, and purchase patterns;

(2) Chi-Square Test — to examine relationships between demographic variables and purchasing behaviour ($\chi^2 = \Sigma(O-E)^2/E$); and (3) Rank Analysis — to identify the priority of influencer-related factors based on respondent preferences.

(3) Rank Analysis — to determine the relative importance of various influencer-related factors affecting consumer purchase decisions based on respondent preferences. Respondents were asked to rank factors such as influencer credibility, content authenticity, product reviews, and promotional offers. Each rank was assigned a weight, and the total score for each factor was calculated to determine its priority among consumers.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of data collected from 106 respondents in Coimbatore. Results are organised into four sub-sections: demographic profile, social media behaviour, credibility and trust, and influence and purchase behaviour. Tables present frequency distributions; four key charts are included to illustrate the most significant findings.

4.2 Percentage Analysis – Demographic Profile

Table 4.1: Age Distribution

Category	Frequency	Percentage
18–25 years	53	50.48%
Below 18 years	24	22.86%
26–35 years	10	9.52%
36–49	9	8.57%
Above 50	9	8.57%

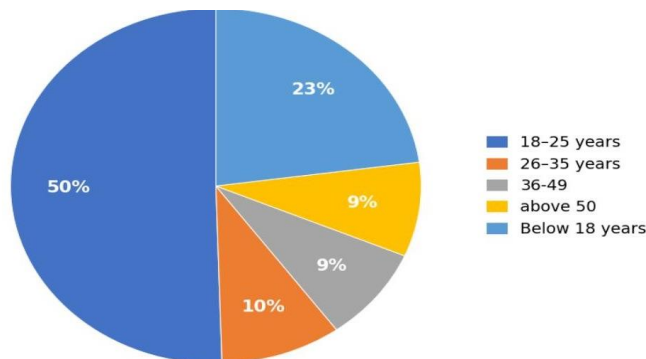


Chart 4.1: Age Distribution of Respondents

The majority of respondents (50.48%) fall within the 18–25 age group, indicating that young adults form the dominant segment. A considerable proportion (22.86%) are below 18 years, reflecting strong participation from teenagers. This concentration of younger respondents suggests that influencer marketing predominantly reaches and influences the youth demographic.

Table 4.2: Annual Income

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Below ₹1,20,000	48	45.71%
₹1,20,001–₹3,00,000	26	24.76%
₹3,00,001–₹6,00,000	18	12.38%
Above ₹6,00,000	13	17.14%

Table 4.3: Area of Residence

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Urban	91	77.14%
Semi-Urban	18	17.14%
Rural	6	5.71%

4.3 Percentage Analysis – Social Media Behaviour

Table 4.4: Primary Social Media Platform Used

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Instagram	51	48.57%
YouTube	34	32.38%
Facebook	19	18.10%
Others	1	0.95%

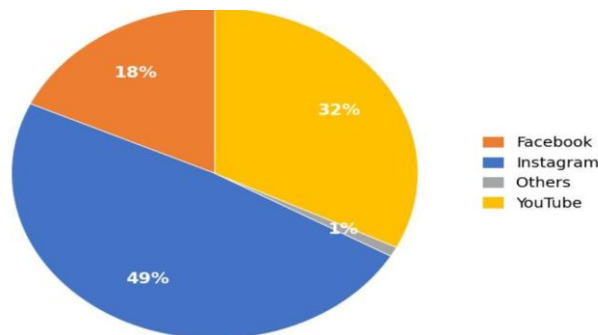


Chart 4.2: Primary Social Media Platform Used by Respondents

Instagram ranks first (48.57%) as the most used platform, followed by YouTube (32.38%) and Facebook (18.10%). This confirms that visual and video-based platforms dominate influencer marketing exposure and that brands should prioritise these channels for effective influencer campaigns.

Table 4.5: Do You Follow Social Media Influencers?

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	77	73.33%
No	28	26.67%

Table 4.6: Have You Purchased a Product Based on an Influencer's Recommendation?

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	70	66.67%
No	35	33.33%

A significant majority (73.33%) follow social media influencers, indicating high exposure to influencer content. Furthermore, 66.67% have made at least one purchase based on an influencer's recommendation, confirming that influencer marketing successfully converts awareness into buying action for a large proportion of respondents.

4.4 Percentage Analysis – Credibility and Trust

Table 4.7: I regularly follow content created by social media influencers.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	33	29.52%
Disagree	31	31.43%
Neutral	27	25.71%
Agree	8	7.62%
Strongly Agree	6	5.71%

Table 4.8: I believe most influencers are honest when sharing opinions about products.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	42	40.00%
Disagree	26	24.76%
Neutral	25	23.81%
Agree	9	8.57%
Strongly Agree	3	2.86%

The credibility analysis reveals a moderate-to-low trust in influencers. A majority of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that influencers are honest (64.76%) and that they are credible compared to traditional advertisements (57.14%). This suggests brands must emphasise authenticity and transparency in influencer partnerships to improve consumer trust.

4.5 Percentage Analysis – Influence and Purchase Behaviour

Table 4.9: Influencer content increases my awareness of new brands or products.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Moderately Influential	49	46.67%
Most Influential	42	40.00%
Less Influential	11	10.48%
Least Influential	3	2.86%

Table 4.10: After seeing an influencer promote a product, what do you usually do next?

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Search for basic product information	40	38.10%
Compare the product with alternatives	34	32.38%
Read reviews or watch more videos	16	15.24%
Ignore the promotion	12	11.43%
Consider purchasing the product	3	2.86%

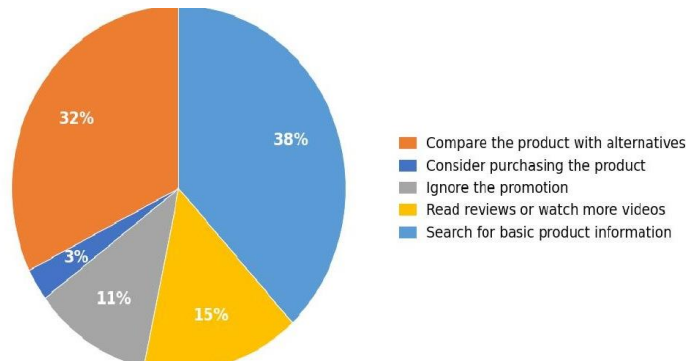


Chart 4.3: Action Taken After Seeing an Influencer Promote a Product

The most common action after seeing an influencer promotion is searching for product information (38.10%), followed by comparing with alternatives (32.38%). Only 2.86% directly consider purchasing the product, reinforcing that influencer marketing primarily functions as an awareness and consideration driver rather than a direct sales tool.

Table 4.11: What is your reaction to a trusted influencer recommending a higher-priced product?

Category	Frequency	Percentage
I consider it only if necessary	40	38.10%
I avoid high-priced products	28	26.67%
I compare it with cheaper alternatives	25	23.81%
I am open to trying it	9	8.57%
I am willing to buy it	3	2.86%

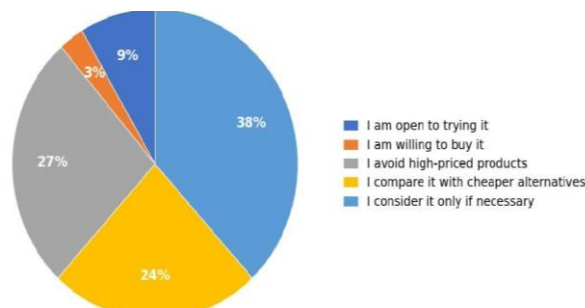


Chart 4.4: Price Sensitivity Toward Influencer-Promoted Higher-Priced Products

Strong price sensitivity is evident among respondents. The majority (38.10%) consider higher-priced influencer-promoted products only if necessary, while 26.67% avoid them altogether. Only 2.86% are willing to buy directly based on the recommendation alone. This indicates that while influencers can generate interest, price remains a critical barrier to conversion.

4.6 Rank Analysis

Table 4.12: Platform Preference Ranking

Platform	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Instagram	45	44.12%	1
YouTube	30	29.41%	2
Facebook	15	14.71%	3
Twitter (X)	8	7.84%	4
Others	4	3.92%	5

Table 4.13: Influence Level Ranking

Influence Level	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Most Influential	48	47.06%	1
Moderately Influential	36	35.29%	2
Less Influential	14	13.73%	3
Least Influential	4	3.92%	4

Table 4.14: Action Taken After Influencer Promotion – Ranking

Action Taken	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Notice but take no action	32	31.37%	1
Search for more details	30	29.41%	2
Ignore the recommendation	26	25.49%	3
Try the product once	10	9.80%	4
Repurchase the product	4	3.92%	5

Rank analysis confirms that Instagram dominates influencer platform preference, influencer content is rated most or moderately influential for brand awareness, but most respondents merely notice products without acting further—reinforcing that influencer marketing drives awareness rather than direct purchases.

4.7 Chi-Square Analysis

Chi-Square formula: $\chi^2 = \sum(O-E)^2/E$, where O = Observed frequency and E = Expected frequency. H_0 is rejected if p-value < 0.05.

Test 1: Gender vs. Purchase Based on Influencer Recommendation

Gender	Yes	No	Total
Male	32	22	54
Female	28	24	52
Total	60	46	106

p-value = 0.6482. Since $p > 0.05$, H_0 is accepted. There is no statistically significant association between gender and purchasing products based on influencer recommendations.

Test 2: Age Group vs. Level of Influence of Influencer Marketing

Age Group	Low Influence	Moderate Influence	High Influence
18–25	10	20	15
26–35	12	8	10
36 & Above	14	9	8

p-value = 0.0412. Since $p < 0.05$, H_0 is rejected. There is a statistically significant association between age group and the influence of influencer marketing. Different age groups respond differently to influencer marketing strategies.

Test 3: Time Spent on Social Media vs. Purchase Based on Influencer Recommendation

Time Spent	Yes	No
Less than 1 hour	3	9
1–3 hours	32	18
3–5 hours	20	8
More than 5 hours	9	7

p-value = 0.0438. Since $p < 0.05$, H_0 is rejected. There is a statistically significant association between time spent on social media and influencer-based purchases. Individuals who spend more time on social media are significantly more likely to purchase products based on influencer recommendations.

V. FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Findings

1. The majority of respondents (50.48%) belong to the 18–25 age group, with female respondents constituting 59.05% of the sample.
2. Most respondents are undergraduates (60%) and students (51.43%) with annual income below ₹1,20,000 (45.71%), indicating a price-sensitive demographic.
3. The majority (77.14%) reside in urban Coimbatore, with 60.95% spending 1–3 hours daily on social media.
4. Instagram leads as the most used platform (48.57%), followed by YouTube (32.38%), confirming their dominance in influencer marketing exposure.
5. About 73.33% follow social media influencers and 66.67% have purchased at least once based on a recommendation.
6. Influencer content is rated most or moderately influential in increasing brand awareness by 86.67% of respondents.
7. However, 37.14% only notice influencer promotions without acting, and 30.48% do not consider them in purchase decisions.
8. The most common post-exposure action is searching for product information (38.10%), and only 2.86% directly consider purchasing.
9. Strong price sensitivity is evident: 38.10% consider higher-priced products only if necessary and 26.67% avoid them altogether.
10. Gender does not significantly influence purchase behaviour ($p = 0.6482$).
11. Age group significantly influences influencer impact level ($p = 0.0412$).
12. Time spent on social media significantly influences influencer-based purchase behaviour ($p = 0.0438$).

5.2 Suggestions

1. Focus influencer marketing efforts on the 18–25 age group, as they are the most responsive segment.
2. Prioritise Instagram and YouTube for influencer collaborations due to their high engagement rates.
3. Use influencers primarily for awareness-building campaigns rather than expecting immediate sales conversions.
4. Collaborate with credible and transparent influencers; ensure clear disclosure of paid partnerships.
5. Since most consumers search for more information after seeing influencer content, ensure detailed product information is easily accessible online.
6. Adopt competitive pricing strategies, as consumers in Coimbatore show strong price sensitivity.
7. Combine repeated influencer promotions with discounts or value additions to convert awareness into purchases.
8. Tailor influencer marketing strategies for different age groups, as age significantly moderates influencer impact.
9. Target active social media users who spend more than 3 hours daily, as they are more likely to make influencer-based purchases.
10. Encourage long-term influencer partnerships to build brand credibility and sustained consumer trust.

5.3 Conclusion

This study examined the role of influencer marketing in shaping consumer purchase decisions in Coimbatore. Findings indicate that influencer marketing plays a significant role in creating brand awareness and influencing consumer perceptions, especially among younger audiences. Instagram and YouTube emerged as the most preferred channels for influencer engagement, and influencer content was rated most or moderately influential in increasing awareness by the overwhelming majority of respondents.

However, while influencer marketing effectively generates awareness and interest, its direct impact on regular purchasing behaviour is moderate. Many respondents search for more information or compare alternatives after seeing influencer promotions, indicating rational and price-conscious decision-making. The Chi-Square analysis confirmed that age group and time spent on social media are significant moderators of influencer-driven purchase behaviour, while gender shows no significant association.

Overall, influencer marketing in Coimbatore functions primarily as an awareness and engagement tool rather than a direct sales driver. When supported by competitive pricing, credibility, and transparency, it can positively shape consumer attitudes and contribute to purchase decisions. Businesses that strategically collaborate with authentic influencers and target active social media users can enhance brand visibility, strengthen consumer trust, and improve long-term marketing effectiveness.

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