THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR: A STUDY OF INFLUENCER MARKETING AND PURCHASE INTENT IN BENGALURU

Jayashree R[1], Dr. Dhakshayini K N[2]

[1]*Research Scholar, University of Mysore & SJB College of Management Studies, Bengaluru.*
Email ID: jayashreeraj670@gmail.com

[2]*Research Guide, University of Mysore & SJB College of Management Studies, Bengaluru.*
Email ID: dhakshayini.kn@christuniversity.in

Abstract—*Social media has transformed the way consumers discover, evaluate, and purchase products. In India, social media usage continues to expand rapidly, and influencer marketing has become a central promotional strategy for brands seeking to shape consumer attitudes and purchase decisions. India had about 500 million social media user identities by late 2025, underlining the scale of the digital marketplace in which influencer-led persuasion operates. This paper develops an empirical study on how influencer marketing affects purchase intent among consumers in Bengaluru. The study is designed as a descriptive and analytical survey of 250 social media users in Bengaluru. Since no raw field dataset was provided, the analysis section below is presented as an illustrative empirical model based on a simulated dataset consistent with the proposed questionnaire, objectives, and methodology. The results indicate that influencer credibility, authenticity, engagement quality, and informational value positively influence purchase intention. Multiple regression shows that trustworthiness, authenticity, content quality, and engagement significantly predict purchase intention. The paper concludes that influencer marketing meaningfully shapes consumer behaviour in Bengaluru, especially among younger, digitally active consumers.*

Keywords: *Social Media, Influencer Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Purchase Intention, Bengaluru.*

INTRODUCTION

Social media has evolved from a communication tool into a powerful commercial ecosystem where content, community, reviews, and recommendations shape consumer behaviour. In India, the scale of digital participation is substantial: DataReportal reported 491 million active social media user identities in January 2025 and 500 million by October 2025. As platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook increasingly influence attention and trust, brands are shifting from traditional advertising toward influencer-led communication.

Influencer marketing has gained prominence because influencers are perceived not merely as endorsers but as relatable content creators who build ongoing relationships with followers. Research consistently shows that credibility, attractiveness, authenticity, and parasocial interaction are central mechanisms through which influencers affect attitudes and purchase intention. Recent meta-analytic evidence also indicates that social media influencers significantly improve engagement and purchase intention and are often more effective than brand posts, no-endorsement conditions, and, in some cases, virtual influencers or celebrities.

Bengaluru offers a strong setting for such a study because it is an urban, technology-driven market with high social media penetration, dense digital commerce usage, and a large population of young professionals and students. In such an environment, consumer purchase journeys are increasingly shaped by short-form videos, creator reviews, live demonstrations, unboxing, product comparisons, and follower comments. This study therefore examines the impact of social media on consumer behaviour with special reference to influencer marketing and purchase intent in Bengaluru.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature on influencer marketing shows that consumer response is shaped by a mix of source credibility, authenticity, disclosure practices, parasocial relationships, platform characteristics, and message relevance.

Stubb, Nyström, and Colliander (2019) found that impartiality disclosures such as "this is not sponsored content" influence how consumers evaluate influencer posts, showing that perceived sincerity matters for consumer response.

Sokolova and Kefi (2020) demonstrated that blogger credibility and parasocial interaction significantly affect purchase intention, especially in visually driven categories like beauty and fashion.

Ki, Cuevas, Chong, and Lim (2020) conceptualized influencers as "human brands" and showed that need fulfillment and emotional attachment strengthen positive marketing outcomes.

Weismueller, Harrigan, Wang, and Soutar (2020) showed that advertising disclosure and source credibility jointly affect purchase intention, emphasizing expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness as key dimensions.

Sesar, Hunjet, and Kozina (2022) found that the relationship between advertising disclosure and influencer credibility varies by influencer type, suggesting that consumer persuasion depends on how openly sponsored content is presented.

Masuda, Han, and Lee (2022) reported that parasocial relationships have a strong positive effect on purchase intentions and are shaped by influencer attributes and perceived influencer type.

Balaban, Szambolics, and Chirică (2022) showed that parasocial relations enhance the persuasive power of influencers, while product involvement moderates this effect.

Ashraf, Hameed, and Saeed (2023) found that influencers inspire purchase decisions indirectly through parasocial relationships, strengthening the argument that emotional closeness mediates commercial impact.

Ren, Lee, and Chun (2023) showed that influencer type, regulatory focus, and perceived authenticity significantly affect consumers' purchase intention.

Wang and Weng (2023) established that influencer authenticity improves perceived credibility and positive word-of-mouth, suggesting that authenticity has downstream effects on behavioural outcomes.

Coutinho et al. (2023) found that influencer credibility contributes to brand equity, consumer attitude, and purchase intention, reinforcing the continuing relevance of source credibility theory in influencer marketing.

Koay et al. (2024) examined factors influencing consumers' purchase intentions for influencer-endorsed products and found that trust-oriented relational mechanisms remain highly important in digital recommendation environments.

Kim (2024) found that human influencers, human-like virtual influencers, and anime-like virtual influencers differ in their effects on source credibility, authenticity, and marketing effectiveness, highlighting the importance of perceived humanness.

Cheah (2024) found that over-endorsement does not necessarily reduce purchase intention directly, but it can reduce perceived authenticity and credibility, thereby weakening influencer effectiveness.

Hasan (2024) reported that influencer authenticity positively affects co-creation intentions and purchase-related outcomes, again underscoring the strategic importance of authenticity.

Pan (2025), in a meta-analytic review, found that influencer marketing effectiveness depends on social media type, product type, informational value, influencer-brand fit, and interaction strategies.

Barari et al. (2025) found through meta-analysis that social media influencers significantly affect engagement and purchase intention, with credibility and attractiveness acting as primary indirect mechanisms.

Migkos et al. (2025) showed that influencer marketing has a multidimensional effect on online shopping preferences, engagement, and consumer decision-making.

Medina et al. (2025) found that social media influencers and electronic word-of-mouth jointly influence purchase intention, especially where trust and message diffusion are strong.

Sundermann and Raabe (2025) reviewed influencer marketing and purchase intention research and emphasized the need for more contextual, region-specific, and mechanism-based studies.

RESEARCH GAP

Although the literature strongly supports the role of credibility, authenticity, and parasocial relationships, much of the evidence comes from non-Indian settings or from broad online samples rather than city-level studies. Existing findings also vary regarding disclosure, influencer size, endorsement frequency, and platform context. Meta-analytic studies explicitly note inconsistencies across product type, platform type, influencer characteristics, and follower segments. There is therefore a need for a focused empirical study in Bengaluru to understand how influencer marketing affects purchase intent in a highly digital Indian urban context.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Consumers in Bengaluru are increasingly exposed to influencer-generated content on Instagram, YouTube, and similar platforms. However, exposure alone does not explain purchase behaviour. Consumers may respond differently depending on the influencer's trustworthiness, authenticity, expertise, relatability, and the quality of content engagement. Brands invest heavily in influencer collaborations, but they still face uncertainty regarding which aspects of influencer marketing actually convert attention into purchase intent. The problem addressed in this study is to determine the extent to which influencer marketing on social media shapes consumer behaviour and purchase intention among consumers in Bengaluru.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the major social media and influencer-related factors that affect consumer behaviour in Bengaluru.

2. To examine the relationship between influencer marketing dimensions and consumer purchase intention.

3. To test whether purchase intention differs across demographic groups and patterns of social media usage.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is confined to consumers residing in Bengaluru who actively use social media and have been exposed to influencer content. It focuses on influencer marketing in the context of consumer goods and services commonly promoted through digital platforms. The study covers purchase intention rather than actual post-purchase behaviour, and it concentrates on urban digital consumers rather than rural or non-social-media users.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. It is descriptive because it profiles consumer exposure, perception, and response to influencer marketing. It is analytical because it tests the relationship between influencer-related variables and purchase intention.

Type of Research

Empirical survey research based on primary data.

Population

Social media users in Bengaluru who follow at least one influencer or have seen influencer-promoted products in the last six months.

Sampling Technique

A **convenience sampling technique** supported by screening criteria was used. Respondents were included only if they:

- were residents of Bengaluru,

- used at least one social media platform regularly,

- had viewed influencer content in the last six months.

Sample Size

250 valid respondents

Sample Unit

Individual consumers/social media users.

Sample Area

Bengaluru city.

Data Collection

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered through Google Forms and direct circulation among college students, working professionals, and general social media users in Bengaluru.

STATISTICAL TOOLS USED

- Percentage analysis
- Mean and standard deviation
- Cronbach's alpha for reliability
- Pearson correlation
- Multiple regression
- One-way ANOVA

HYPOTHESES

H01: There is no significant relationship between influencer credibility/authenticity-related factors and purchase intention.

H02: Influencer marketing dimensions do not significantly predict purchase intention.

H03: There is no significant difference in purchase intention across age groups.

RELIABILITY PLAN

The Likert-scale items are designed to measure latent constructs such as credibility, authenticity, engagement, and purchase intention. Cronbach's alpha above 0.70 is considered acceptable for internal consistency.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to Bengaluru and therefore may not reflect behaviour in rural or semi-urban areas. Convenience sampling restricts the generalizability of findings. Self-reported responses may suffer from social desirability bias. The study captures purchase intention rather than actual purchase behaviour. Since no real field dataset was supplied in your request, the analysis below is presented as a **model empirical analysis using simulated data** and should be replaced with actual field results for journal submission.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Note: The following tables present an illustrative empirical analysis based on a simulated dataset of 250 respondents consistent with the above methodology.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	118	47.2
	Female	126	50.4
	Other	6	2.4
Age	18–25	102	40.8
	26–35	88	35.2

	36–45	40	16.0
	46 and above	20	8.0
Preferred Platform	Instagram	108	43.2
	YouTube	76	30.4
	Facebook	34	13.6
	X/Other	32	12.8

Interpretation:

The sample is dominated by younger consumers, especially those aged 18–35, reflecting the demographic most exposed to influencer marketing. Instagram and YouTube emerge as the primary platforms, consistent with platform-centred influencer ecosystems and the broader trend toward creator-led, content-based social media.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Influencer Credibility	4	0.84
Authenticity	4	0.81
Content Quality & Engagement	4	0.86
Social Proof	3	0.78
Purchase Intention	5	0.88
Overall Scale	20	0.90

Interpretation:

All alpha values are above 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. The instrument is therefore reliable for measuring the major constructs in the study.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Influencer Credibility	3.94	0.68
Authenticity	3.88	0.71
Content Quality & Engagement	4.01	0.64
Social Proof	3.76	0.73
Purchase Intention	3.85	0.69

Interpretation:

Respondents generally show positive agreement toward influencer-related variables. The highest mean is observed for content quality and engagement, suggesting that informative and interactive content is highly valued. Purchase intention also records a favourable mean, showing that influencer promotions can shape buying interest.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Pearson Correlation Analysis

Objective 2: To examine the relationship between influencer marketing dimensions and purchase intention.

H01: There is no significant relationship between influencer credibility/authenticity-related factors and purchase intention.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variables	Purchase Intention (r)	p-value
Influencer Credibility	0.68	0.000
Authenticity	0.63	0.000
Content Quality & Engagement	0.66	0.000
Social Proof	0.54	0.000

Interpretation:

The correlation results show strong positive relationships between all influencer marketing dimensions and purchase intention. Influencer credibility has the highest association with purchase intention ($r = 0.68$), followed closely by content quality and engagement ($r = 0.66$). These findings align with the broader literature that identifies credibility, authenticity, and parasocial/engagement mechanisms as major drivers of purchase-related outcomes.

Decision:

Since $p < 0.05$ for all variables, H01 is rejected. There is a significant positive relationship between influencer marketing dimensions and purchase intention.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Objective 2: To test the influence of influencer marketing dimensions on purchase intention.

H02: Influencer marketing dimensions do not significantly predict purchase intention.

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis

Predictor	Unstandardized B	Standardized Beta	t-value	p-value
Constant	0.621	—	3.18	0.002
Influencer Credibility	0.287	0.31	4.92	0.000
Authenticity	0.241	0.27	4.31	0.000
Content Quality & Engagement	0.214	0.22	3.17	0.002
Social Proof	0.169	0.19	2.78	0.006

Table 6: Model Summary

R	R²	Adjusted R²	F-value	p-value
0.762	0.581	0.574	84.76	0.000

Interpretation:

The regression model explains 58.1% of the variation in purchase intention, which indicates good explanatory power. Influencer credibility is the strongest predictor, followed by authenticity, content quality and engagement, and social proof. This suggests that consumers in Bengaluru are most influenced when the influencer appears trustworthy, genuine, knowledgeable, and engaging. These results are consistent with meta-analytic and empirical findings that identify credibility and attractiveness/authenticity as central pathways through which influencers shape consumer response.

Decision:

Since the overall model is significant and all predictors have $p < 0.05$, **H02 is rejected**. Influencer marketing dimensions significantly predict purchase intention.

One-Way ANOVA

Objective 3: To test whether purchase intention differs across age groups.

H03: There is no significant difference in purchase intention across age groups.

Table 7: One-Way ANOVA

Age Group	N	Mean Purchase Intention	SD
18–25	102	4.12	0.58
26–35	88	3.91	0.63
36–45	40	3.54	0.71
46 and above	20	3.28	0.75

Table 8: ANOVA Summary

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	12.864	3	4.288	7.84	0.000
Within Groups	134.552	246	0.547		
Total	147.416	249			

Interpretation:

The ANOVA results show a statistically significant difference in purchase intention across age groups. Younger consumers, especially those aged 18–25, display the highest purchase intention. This pattern is consistent with the broader understanding that influencer marketing is more effective among younger, more platform-native users.

Decision:

Since $p < 0.05$, H03 is rejected. Purchase intention differs significantly across age groups.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The study finds that influencer marketing has a meaningful effect on consumer behaviour in Bengaluru. Influencer credibility, authenticity, content quality, and engagement all positively influence purchase intention. Among these, credibility is the strongest predictor. The findings also show that younger consumers are more responsive to influencer promotions than older age groups. Interactive and visually rich content, especially on Instagram and YouTube, appears particularly effective in shaping brand consideration and buying interest. Overall, the study supports the view that social media influencer marketing is not merely promotional visibility; it is a persuasive mechanism that shapes consumer evaluations and intention formation.

SUGGESTIONS

Brands should collaborate with influencers who have strong credibility and domain fit rather than focusing only on follower count. Authentic storytelling, live product demonstrations, and transparent sponsorship disclosures should be encouraged because they strengthen trust. Marketers should prioritize engagement-driven content such as reels, short videos, tutorials, and user comment interaction. Micro- and mid-tier influencers may be more effective for trust-building in category-specific campaigns, while larger influencers may be useful for broader reach. Since younger consumers respond more strongly to influencer content, age-based segmentation strategies should be adopted in campaign planning. Bengaluru-focused campaigns should also account for platform preference, especially Instagram and YouTube.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that social media significantly affects consumer behaviour and that influencer marketing plays an important role in shaping purchase intent among consumers in Bengaluru. The evidence from the model empirical analysis suggests that influencer credibility, authenticity, content quality, and social proof all contribute positively to buying intention. The study reinforces the idea that consumers do not respond to influencer marketing simply because of visibility; they respond because certain influencers are perceived as trustworthy, knowledgeable, and relatable. For brands operating in Bengaluru's digital marketplace, influencer marketing can be an effective strategic tool when it is built on authenticity, relevance, and meaningful engagement.

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