

# A Study on Impact of Social Media Influencers on Indian Society with Special Reference to Bhopal City

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## ABSTRACT

Indian society has been deeply influenced by the rise of social media influencers. These individuals have shaped public opinion, cultural trends, and consumer behavior. This study gathers data from 30 respondents who use different social media platforms to explore how social media personalities affect various aspects of Indian society. The findings reveal that influencers have a strong impact on lifestyle choices, buying decisions, and even sociopolitical views. Respondents say that endorsements from influencers significantly sway their purchasing decisions, particularly in the tech, fashion, and beauty sectors. "Although issues of authenticity and misinformation profoundly persist, influencers also contribute to the dissemination of information and elevating the visibility of certain socio cultural issues. The study illustrates the bifocal nature of influencer culture—the promise of brand engagement and the myriad challenges with trust and ethical practice. The lessons from the findings are in instituting responsible digital influence and to require regulations on cautionary transparency, and authenticity, and establish influencer-agency/digital chaperone relationships."

**Keywords** - Social Media Influencers, Indian Society, Consumer Behaviour, Social Awareness, Purchasing Decisions, Influencer Marketing.

## INTRODUCTION

Social media influencers have become rather strong change agents in the digital era, influencing consumer behavior, brand impressions, and society values. With its fast growing digital terrain, India has seen a rise in influencer marketing—where content creators on sites including Instagram, YouTube, and TikHub significantly influence consumer decisions. With an eye toward consumer buying behavior and changing marketing trends, this paper investigates how influencers shape Indian society. Once mostly controlled by conventional advertising, consumer decision-making is now much influenced by social media personalities who build trust, dependability, and inspirational value among their followers. Companies use influencers to produce individualized, interesting material, so bridging the gap between peer recommendations and traditional advertising. This has so resulted in a shift in marketing strategies in commercial markets.

## REVIEW OF MATERIALS

Social media's emergence has changed consumer behavior, marketing, and communication all around. Sites including Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter have developed into potent weapons influencing attitudes, trends, and purchase choices. The present literature on the influence of social media, especially in relation to consumer behavior, influencer marketing, and societal impact, is reviewed in this part.

### 1. Consumer behaviour and social media

Studies imply that consumer decision-making is much influenced by social media. Solomon (2018) claims that social media offers an interactive space where consumers search for opinions, read reviews, and interact with companies prior to making decisions on purchases. According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen,

1991), consumer intention is affected by social influence, perceived credibility, and simplicity of access. Research by Mangold & Faulds (2009) underline that electronic On social media, word-of-mouth (eWOM) is quite important in influencing consumers; often, its credibility exceeds that of conventional advertising.

## 2. Social Media Influencers

The influencer, as a audiences of follower, or followers, has become a fundamental component of digital marketing. Brown & Hayes (2008) define influencers as opinion leaders who facilitate engagement with brands by influencing followers. Their endorsements create parasocial relationships (Horton & Wohl, 1956), which give the audience a feeling of trust and connection with the influencer, or brand, making their endorsement more impactful upon the consumer. In India, Gupta & Mahajan (2021) show that consumers, particularly millennials and Gen Z are significantly influenced by social media personalities, particularly in the fashion, beauty, and technology industries.

## 3. Social Media as a Tool for Marketing

Marketing strategies attract innovators by how digitally-enhanced marketing allows for more exploration. Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) argue social media marketing can be some of the most important marketing, strategically, for a business brand if they intend to fully immerse consumers in brand-loved experiences with interactive and user-generated content. Social media influencer marketing is a sub-strategy of digital marketing that has begun to extract attention because of how it allows businesses to create real stories about the brand's larger narrative. For example, a recent study from Arora & Sood (2020) found that Indian consumers view influencers as a more credible source than stereotypical advertisements and that by associating themselves with a product endorsed by an influencer they intend to purchase more frequently.

## 4. Psychological and Societal Implications

In addition to marketing, social media constitutes psychological and societal effects. Kuss & Griffiths (2017) have shown through studies that excessive engagement with influencer content can cause aspects such as consumerism, unrealistic expectations, and social comparison. Likewise, Indian researchers, Sharma & Verna (2022) specifically stated that influencer progressions vary from setting cultural fads, political opinion, and public health campaigns (e.g., around COVID-19).

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is using a descriptive and quantitative method, that will review existing facts in order to determine the relationship between a social media influencer and consumer behaviour. For the purpose of this study, the dependent variable will be consumer behaviour and the independent variable will be the influence of social media influencers. The influence of social media influencers will be measured by the key purchase intent, individual buying decisions, number of purchases, and trust of consumer. Data will be collected both through a structured questionnaire and through a Google form, both of which were collected as primary data. The sampling will be from youth of age 18 years to 35 years of city of Bhopal, use of appropriate sampling and sample size of data is 30. Data was collected and the data was edited and coded using MS Excel for a descriptive analysis in an organized manner. Descriptive statistics will be used to interpret the data. The Chi-Square test for independence will be used to test the hypothesis, so the relationship between social media influencers and consumer behaviour can be determined. All of the results will be represented as key findings.

## Objectives

1. To understand the impact of influencer marketing on consumer buying habit.
- 2 To understand the level of trust youth have on social media influencers.
- 3 To study which platform of social media influencers have the maximum audience.

## Analysis

which niches of influencers do you follow the most?

30 responses

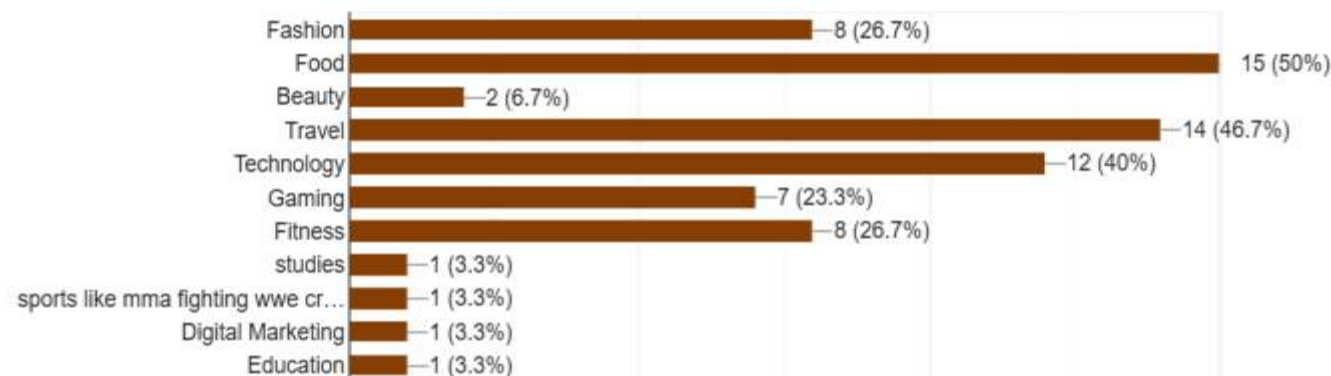


Diagram: Primary Source

The bar graph displays the responses of thirty respondents who were asked about the niches of the influencers that they most often follow. The most common niche is Food, followed by 15 respondents (50%), which exemplifies a large interest in food and cooking. The second and third most common niches, closely aligned with Food, are Travel and Technology (12 respondents (40%)). These three categories all represent strong preferences for lifestyle and technology related content. The remaining three niches, Fashion and Fitness, had 8 respondents, each who follow one of those niche influencers (26.7%); whereas Gaming attracted 7 respondents (23.3%). Following these categories are other niches such as Beauty (2 respondents (6.7%)), Studies, Sports (MMA, wrestling, cricket), Digital Marketing, and Education (1 respondent each (3.3%)). Therefore, more results indicate that food, travel, and technology influencers are most followed in this group of respondents, as well as illustrating the lifestyle and informational themes relatable to the newer influencers and preferences.

What Social media platforms do you mostly use?

30 responses

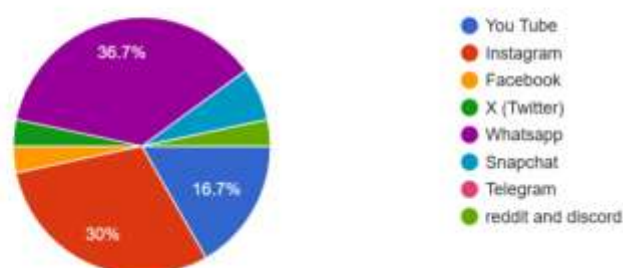


Diagram: Primary Source

The pie chart depicts the distribution of the preferred social media platforms of the 30 respondents, which will be indicative for this study titled "A Study on Impact of Social Media Influencers on Indian Society with Special Reference to Bhopal City." The primary takeaway is that Telegram is the most popular platforms, used as the primary platform by 36.7% of the respondents. This is a strong indication of an inclination toward private or group communicative tools, even if it is also necessary to have an option to view influencers' posts in communities that are not so niche. Instagram was used the second-most frequently with 30%, which makes sense given how Instagram plays an important role visually and among influencers in the under 35-year-old demographics. YouTube was used by 16.7% of respondents, which is still considered an important medium for

video content and long-form influencer engagement. Other platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), WhatsApp, Snapchat and Reddit/Discord have very low usage percentages indicating that these platforms may not be as prominent in terms of influencer reach, at least in this sample. Thus, for influencers to effectively impact audiences in Bhopal, either put more emphasis on engaging with them via Telegram and Instagram; and not necessarily reproduce their content.

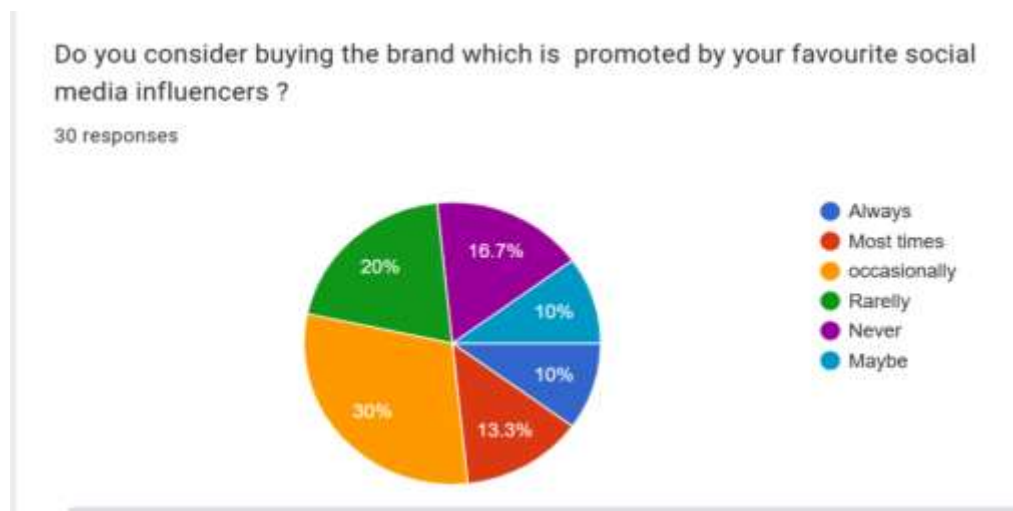


Diagram: Primary Source

The pie chart indicates consumer behavior around social media influencers and influence on brand purchases. Of the 30, 30% of respondents stated they sometimes think about purchasing brands at the behest of their favorite influencers, followed by 20% that said they rarely think about it, suggesting some degree of caution or reluctance to purchase anything an influencer recommends. It was interesting that 16.7% of respondents said they had never thought about purchasing anything on the recommendation of an influencer, suggesting some element of scepticism or even apathy toward influencer marketing. They also had 13.3% that claimed they think about it most of the time, 10% that claimed they think about it always, as well as 10% that responded with maybe. These results suggest that while promotions by influencers do have an impact, it is more moderate, situational, or circumstantial than absolute consideration. In sum, although we can see evidence of consideration, consumers appeared to place a higher value on authenticity and relevance as opposed to which influencer is promoting their favorite brand or product, and therefore trust and alignment become priorities for both influencers and brands looking to reach their target audience in Bhopal.



Diagram: Primary Source

The pie chart is examining the consumer purchasing behaviour in relation to social media influencers, based on the information provided by 30 different individuals. The analysis shows that as a significant proportion of respondents, 30%, occasionally think about purchasing brands endorsed by their favourite social media

influencers. This means that there is a moderate influence on purchasing behaviour. The 30% measured suggested that they considered doing this because 20% of respondents said rarely and 16.67%, said never, implying that there is a decent size of possibly sceptical or brand aware consumers who will consider the influencer promotions of brands. On the other hand, 13.3% of respondents said they considered making such purchases, most times. This brings us to the a second 10% who always think about it, and the other 10% who apply maybe when considering influencer promotions. It appears that there is part of the audience who are assiduous in being influenced by such endorsements, but by far an overwhelming majority still select their influencers and are selective with purchases as a result. Furthermore, the influencer factors of trust, relevance, and authenticity are reported as important for the acceptance or translation of influencer promotions to end consumer behaviour. taken together, it reflects an interesting model of contextual applicability to Bhopal.

#### Do you Trust reviews which are not sponsored?

30 responses

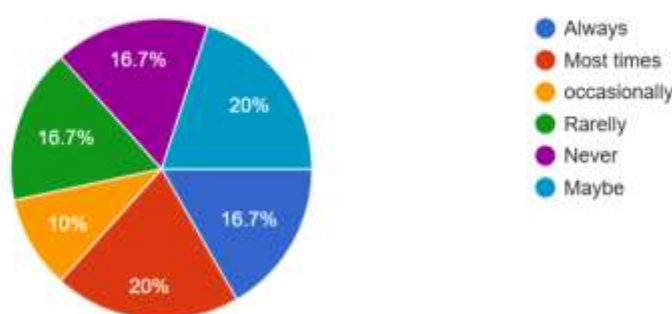


Diagram: Primary Source

The pie chart provides information about respondents' trust in non-sponsored reviews based on 30 responses. Twenty percent of respondents reported that they always trust reviews that are not sponsored, and another 20 percent trust them most of the time, which means that the total of respondents who are very confident that the unpaid reviews are trustworthy is 40%. Sixteen point seven percent indicated that they occasionally trust non-sponsored reviews, while another 16.7 percent reported that they rarely trust them. Another 20% selected never, indicating the remaining portion of the population is somewhat cautious. Despite that fact that 20% of participants selected maybe, there is still a potential for them to sometimes evaluate. Overall, data indicates that though a high percentage of the population in Bhopal thinks that non-sponsored reviews are more trustworthy, it does not mean that they trust them all of the time. The findings make it clear that while a good portion of the audience in Bhopal makes a greater effort into trusting the veracity of non-sponsored reviews, trust is still not guaranteed. They appear to methodically review authenticity and accuracy of information; which is a must

#### Do you believe Influencer Marketing is helpful in buying decision?

30 responses

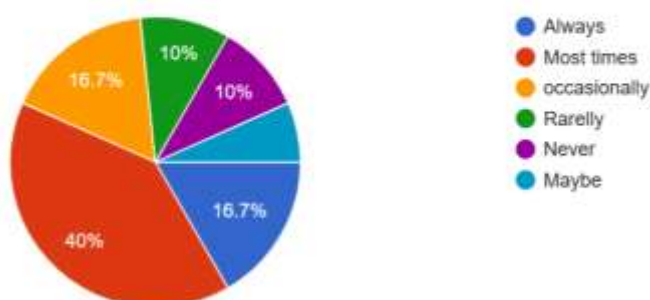


Diagram: Primary Source



The pie chart investigates responses to attitudes regarding the effectiveness of influencer marketing related to purchasing decisions based on 30 responses. The highest percentage, 40%, considers influencer marketing helpful in buying decisions most of the time, indicating some level of awareness of the persuasive power of influencers. Also, 16.7% of people support this position by responding with always and again, another 16.7% responded with occasionally. This means a considerable 73.4% of respondents accept at least some form of influence from influencer marketing. However, scepticism exists, as 10% each selected rarely and never to conclude, a considerably small portion of the population believe in the effectiveness of influencer marketing. Another 10% responded maybe, to suggest uncertainty or conditional acceptance of this perspective. These responses suggest that while influencer marketing plays a meaningful role in shaping buying behaviour in Bhopal, it is seen as a somewhat variable influence in part, depending on the credibility, content, and product relevance of the influencers, in defining its ultimate effectiveness.

**Objective:** To assess whether the frequency of social media usage impacts the trust in influencer-endorsed content.

- **H<sub>0</sub> (Null Hypothesis):** Frequency of social media usage has no significant impact on the trust in influencer-endorsed content.
- **H<sub>1</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):** Frequency of social media usage significantly impacts the trust in influencer-endorsed content.

### Hypothesis Testing

To test the hypothesis, Chi<sup>2</sup> test of independence is used. Expected observation is calculated from the actual observation. For calculation of chi value,

$$\text{Chi Value} = \sum (\text{Actual Observation} - \text{Expected Observation})^2$$

Testing of Hypothesis 1:

Actual Observation:

	Males	Female	Total
Always	05	01	06
Most times	10	04	14
Occasionally	01	05	06
Rarely	00	00	00
Never	02	00	02
Maybe	02	00	02
Total	20	10	30

Expected Observation:

	Males	Female
Always	4	2
Most times	9.333	4.667
Occasionally	4	2

Rarely	0	0
Never	1.333	0.667
Maybe	1.333	0.667
Total	20	10

Testing of Hypothesis 2:

**Objective:** To determine whether the level of trust in influencers affects consumer purchase intent.

- **H<sub>0</sub> (Null Hypothesis):** Trust in social media influencers does not significantly affect consumer purchase intent.
- **H<sub>1</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):** Trust in social media influencers significantly affects consumer purchase intent.

Actual Observation:

	Males	Female	Total
Always	04	01	05
Most times	06	06	12
Occasionally	04	01	05
Rarely	02	01	03
Never	03	00	03
Maybe	01	01	02
Total	20	10	30

Expected Observation:

	Males	Female
Always	3.333	1.667
Most times	8	4
Occasionally	3.333	1.667
Rarely	2	1
Never	2	1
Maybe	1.333	0.667

### Chi-square Points

	Males	Female
Always	0.133	0.267
Most times	0.5	1
Occasionally	0.133	0.267
Rarely	0	0
Never	0.5	1
Maybe	0.083	0.167

**Chi-square = 4.05**

The p-value is 0.0442. Not significant at  $p < 0.01$ .

## RESULTS

The findings highlight that social media has a strong influence on consumer behavior among youth in Bhopal particularly in areas of food, travel, and technology. An overwhelming number of respondents (36.7%) pointed out that the influence of social media was the greatest on Telegram and the second runner-up was Instagram (30%). Close to 30% of the youth said they occasionally consider purchasing an item as a result of the influence of social media, while 13.3% stated they purchase more than occasionally as a result, showing a moderate level of influence on purchasing decisions is present. Responses showed participants had a generally high level of trust in non-sponsored reviews because 40% of the experimented had a consistent level of trust in any user-generated content. Chi-square analysis suggests that social media use and trust of influencer generated content is statistically significant ( $p = 0.0442$ ) related to trust of digital content to purchase.

### Limitations

The available sample included only 30 respondents to solicit views from different diverse demographics in Bhopal. The focus on urban youth aged 18–35 excludes insight from older average age groups and rural populations and the generalisability of the results is reduced. Very little is mentioned about income levels, educational backgrounds, and influences of culture, which can have an effect on consumer behaviour, and attitudes and perceptions of influencers. Differences in self-reported data can introduce biases as well, and the use of a cross-sectional data design means that no comparisons across time periods were possible.

### Future Directions

Future research should include a broader and larger sample, which includes multiple age groups, socio-economic status, and geography that includes rural. Longitudinal studies would also further understand the long-term effects of influencer impact. There are potential examination of the psychological mechanisms that exist behind influencers' trust, such as the role of relationships and perceived authenticity. It could be also interesting to compare the differences across types of influencers (e.g., micro vs macro) and content presentations across different platforms for marketers to be more targeted.

## CONCLUSION

Social media influencers significantly impact on Bhopal's youth's behaviour, mainly when it comes to lifestyle-based products. Although Telegram and Instagram emerged as popular platforms for influencer diversions, to what extent influencers influence people varies from person-to-person. Moreover, influential variables



affecting trust in the influencer may include the authenticity of the content and the influencer's frequency of use of social media. Nevertheless, the limitations of the study identified important areas for research needed to adequately understand the dynamics at play. As influencer marketing grows, brands and policymakers must consider ethical practice and the variety.

## CITATIONS

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