

## **An Analytical Study on the Role of Social Media Influencers in Shaping Consumer Behavior: A Case Study of Thodupuzha City**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

In the present digital era, consumers increasingly rely on social media platforms for information, brand comparisons, and purchase guidance. Social media influencers have become major contributors to online marketing ecosystems by creating content that affects consumer attitudes. Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook allow influencers to build personal connections with followers, which in turn affects how consumers perceive brand value and product quality. This study investigates the psychological and social factors—such as trustworthiness, attractiveness, expertise, and perceived authenticity—that drive influencer effectiveness in Thodupuzha’s consumer market. It also explores ethical concerns related to paid promotions and transparency. To conduct the study Descriptive and ANOVA test is used. This study seeks to address that gap by examining how the abundance of new digital information sources shapes the decision-making process of consumers, particularly when making complex purchase decisions.

**Keywords:** Social media platforms, Influencers, ConsumerBehavior

### **INTRODUCTION**

Social media is a relatively recent phenomenon, yet over the past decade the World Wide Web has witnessed a rapid expansion of user-driven technologies such as blogs, social networks, and media-sharing platforms. Collectively referred to as social media, these technologies have enabled the rise of user-generated content, the creation of global online communities, and the widespread sharing of consumer opinions. This digital movement now dominates the way people interact with the internet and has given rise to major platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter, where individuals connect, create, and share content. Heinrichs and Lim (2011), states that the social networking sites have developed more than just being a communication channels used by individual consumers to create content, allot materials, share ideas, express views.

The social media revolution has transformed how consumers seek and access information about the wide range of products and services available in the market. It has made it easier for consumers to communicate, exchange experiences, and discuss brands in real time. Increasingly, consumer opinions are shaped by the reviews and recommendations of strangers in digital spaces, which often extend their influence into offline decision-making as well. Social media has shifted power toward consumers, as marketers have little control over the content, timing, or frequency of online discussions. Mlodkowska (2019), describes that the rapid growth of the internet and the widespread use of social media platforms like YouTube

and Instagram have transformed communication, brand engagement, and purchasing behavior.

Consumers now discuss products and services with both acquaintances and strangers, significantly affecting their buying choices and compelling businesses to adapt their marketing strategies. Social media influencers have become crucial in this landscape, with their recommendations highly valued across diverse audiences. Although marketers closely monitor consumer activity on social media, much remains unknown about how these platforms influence the consumer decision-making process. Existing research often focuses on online shopping behavior but tends to overlook how the internet affects the different stages of consumers' decision journeys.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The rapidly evolving nature of social media platforms and the dynamic relationship between influencers and their followers call for a deeper examination of how influencer-generated content shapes consumer perceptions and motivations in the digital marketplace. Despite the growing popularity of influencer marketing, its effectiveness in driving consumer engagement and ensuring brand success remains uncertain. This highlights the need for research that identifies the key factors influencing the success or failure of influencer-driven campaigns. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how social media influencers shape consumer attitudes, preferences, and purchasing decisions, while also identifying the elements that contribute to effective influencer marketing strategies. By exploring the intricate dynamics between influencers and their audiences, this research seeks to offer a comprehensive understanding of influencer impact on consumer behavior, ultimately supporting the development of more impactful and evidence-based marketing approaches.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

The objective of this study is to analyse the impact of social media in consumer's behavior;

1. To examine the influence of social media on consumer purchasing decisions.
2. To analyse the role of social media influencers in shaping consumer attitudes.

## **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study focuses on examining the impact of social media influencers on consumer behavior, with special reference to Thodupuzha city. It explores how different categories of influencers -macro, micro, and nano-influencers - affect consumer decision-making across key sectors such as fashion, beauty, electronics, and food. The research targets active social media users in Thodupuzha, assessing their levels of awareness, trust, purchase intention, brand perception, and loyalty shaped by influencer marketing.

Covering trends from the past 2–3 years, the study draws on surveys and secondary data analysis to understand how influencer-driven content influences purchasing decisions within the local market. By limiting the geographical scope to Thodupuzha, the research provides a focused evaluation of regional consumer behavior and offers insights into how influencer marketing strategies can be effectively tailored to this specific demographic.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary research in this project involved interacting with 100 individuals through a questionnaire to understand their preference for Traditional marketing and digital marketing. Secondary research is the background research done by the researcher on already existing information.

In this study random sampling method is used for study this method ensures a representative and diverse sample on the impact social media influencer on consumer behavior. The population will be divided into distinct strata based on key demographic factors such as age, gender, convenience, and field of study. Descriptive and ANOVA test is used for analysing the data.

## LIMITATIONS

The participants were not feeling encouraged to provide accurate, honest answers. The data collection is limited to Thodupuzha city and results might differ in other areas of the city.

## Demographic Profile

**Table 1. Age Group of Respondents**

| Age Group    | Number Of Respondents | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 18-25        | 90                    | 90%        |
| 26-35        | 8                     | 8%         |
| 36-50        | 1                     | 1%         |
| 50 and above | 1                     | 1%         |
| Total        | 100                   | 100%       |

Out of total respondents taken for study, almost all of the respondents belong to the age group of 18-25 years. 90% of the respondents belong to the age group of 26-35 years, 8% of the respondents belong to the age group of 36-50 year, 1% of the respondents are 50 years and above old is 1%. It is concluded that almost all of the respondents belong to the age group of 18-25 years.

**Table 2. Educational Qualification of the respondents**

| Educational Qualification | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Up to class 10            | 2                     | 2%         |
| +2                        | 39                    | 39%        |
| Graduate                  | 49                    | 49%        |
| Postgraduate              | 10                    | 10%        |
| Total                     | 100                   | 100%       |

The table shows that out of total respondents taken for study, 2% of the respondents have class 10 qualification, 39% of the respondents have +2 qualifications, 49% of them have graduate qualification and 10% of the respondents have postgraduate qualification. It is concluded that a maximum of respondents (49%) is qualified for Graduate level of education.

**Table 3. Family Monthly Income Status of the Respondents**

| Monthly Income Status (Rs) | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Below 50000                | 61                    | 61%        |
| 50000-150000               | 29                    | 29%        |
| 150000-300000              | 4                     | 4%         |
| Above 300000               | 6                     | 6%         |
| Total                      | 100                   | 100%       |

The tables show that out of total respondents taken for study, 61% of the respondents belong to category of Below Rs.50000, 29% of the respondents belong to 50000-150000 category, 4% of them engaged in Rs.150000-300000 , 6% of them above Rs.300000.

The data shows the monthly income distribution of 100 respondents, revealing that the majority earn relatively lower amounts. A significant portion, 61%, earn below Rs 50,000 per month, indicating a large group of lower-income earners.

**Table 4. Types Of Content Does Respondents Prefer From Influencers**

| Types of content | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Fashion          | 47                    | 47%        |
| Fitness          | 42                    | 42%        |
| Travel           | 64                    | 64%        |
| Food             | 61                    | 61%        |
| Lifestyle        | 52                    | 52%        |
| Other            | 12                    | 12%        |

The most preferred type of content among respondents is travel, with 64% of respondents indicating a preference for this category. Food content follows closely at 61%, while lifestyle content is favored by 52% of respondents. Fashion and fitness content are also popular, with 47% and 42% of respondents respectively, expressing interest in these types of content. Finally, a smaller proportion, 12%, prefer content categorized as "other," which could include various niche topics not specified in the table. These preferences provide valuable insights into the types of influencer content that resonate most with the respondents, which could be useful for brands and marketers targeting specific audiences.

**Table 5. Social Media Platform Has Most Influenced The Respondents To Purchasing Decisions**

| Social Media Platform | Number Of Respondents | Percentage |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Facebook              | 8                     | 8%         |
| Instagram             | 68                    | 68%        |
| Twitter               | 1                     | 1%         |
| YouTube               | 15                    | 15%        |
| Others                | 8                     | 8%         |
| Total                 | 100                   | 100%       |

The social media platform that most influenced respondents' purchasing decisions is Instagram, with a significant 68% of respondents selecting it as the most influential. YouTube follows at 15%, while Facebook and Twitter have much lower influence, with only 8% and 1% of respondents respectively, citing them as the most influential platforms. Additionally, 8% of respondents mentioned "Other" platforms. This data suggests that Instagram has a dominant role in influencing purchasing decisions among respondents, with YouTube also being a notable platform for this purpose.

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant difference between the age of the respondents on their level of Role of Social media influencers on consumer behaviour.

**Table 6. Relationship Between Age of The Respondents and Role of Social Media Influencers on Consumer Behaviour**

|                              | Roles          | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F     | Sig. |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|------|
| Opinion Leaders              | Between Groups | 331.335        | 3  | 110.445     | 3.774 | .013 |
|                              | Within Groups  | 2809.415       | 96 | 29.265      |       |      |
|                              | Total          | 3140.750       | 99 |             |       |      |
| Purchase Decision Drivers    | Between Groups | 9.221          | 3  | 3.074       | 2.489 | .065 |
|                              | Within Groups  | 118.569        | 96 | 1.235       |       |      |
|                              | Total          | 127.790        | 99 |             |       |      |
| Life style and Value Shapers | Between Groups | 63.237         | 3  | 21.079      | 1.163 | .328 |
|                              | Within Groups  | 1740.153       | 96 | 18.127      |       |      |
|                              | Total          | 1803.390       | 99 |             |       |      |
| Brand awareness Creators     | Between Groups | 14.381         | 3  | 4.794       | 3.712 | .014 |
|                              | Within Groups  | 123.979        | 96 | 1.291       |       |      |
|                              | Total          | 138.360        | 99 |             |       |      |

\*indicates significant at 5% level (p value<\_0.0.5), DF-Degrees of Freedom.

The mean differences in the customer satisfaction among the respondents of different age levels are examined using one way ANOVA. As shown in the table, F-value is significant at 5 percent significant level in various roles like opinion leaders and brand awareness creators and F-value is not significant in purchase decision creators and life style and value shapers. Based on the analysis, null hypothesis is accepted in two cases and rejected in two cases at 5%level.

## SUGGESTIONS

Analyse specific sectors or businesses that successfully use social media influencers to understand their strategies, influencer types, and impacts on consumer behaviour. Monitor and evaluate consumer conversations and opinions using sentiment analysis tools to identify patterns that reveal the effectiveness of influencer-generated content. To evaluate cross-platform strategies, learn how influencer marketing differs across platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok to identify platform-specific trends and best practices for maximizing engagement.

## CONCLUSION

According to the report, influencer marketing is likely to remain a significant factor in shaping customer behavior in the digital era. For businesses to properly leverage the power of influencers, their marketing strategies must adapt to the evolving social media landscape and shifting customer tastes. Through the comprehension and utilization of social media influencers, organizations can augment their marketing endeavors, cultivate more profound relationships with consumers, and eventually propel business expansion in a progressively cutthroat industry.

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