Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra1013 | SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.748 ISSN: 2347-4378
EPRA International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Studies (EBMS)
Volume: 13 | Issue: 5 | May 2026 -Peer-Reviewed Journal

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF INSTAGRAM INFLUENCER MARKETING ON CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISION - A STUDY AT COIMBATORE, TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of social media has transformed traditional marketing strategies and introduced innovative methods for promoting products and services. Among various social media platforms, Instagram has emerged as one of the most influential platforms due to its visual appeal, user engagement, and widespread popularity. Influencer marketing has become a key strategy where brands collaborate with social media influencers to reach target audiences and influence consumer behavior. Influencers establish a strong relationship with their followers through authentic content, reviews, recommendations, and personal experiences, which significantly impact consumer purchasing decisions.This study, titled "Understanding the Impact of Instagram Influencer Marketing on Consumer Purchase Decision: A Study at Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu," aims to analyze how Instagram influencers affect consumer buying behavior. The research focuses on understanding the role of influencer credibility, trustworthiness, content quality, engagement level, and authenticity in shaping purchase intentions among consumers. The study also examines the perception of consumers toward influencer marketing and identifies factors that encourage consumers to make purchase decisions based on influencer recommendations

KEYWORDS: *Instagram, Influencer Marketing, Consumer Behavior, Purchase Decision, Social Media Marketing, Digital Marketing.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era of digitalization, the landscape of marketing has shifted from traditional media to interactive social platforms. Instagram, with its visual-centric approach, has become a primary vehicle for brand storytelling and consumer engagement. Influencer marketing—a form of collaboration where brands leverage the social capital of individuals with a dedicated following—has revolutionized how products are discovered and purchased.

Coimbatore, known as the "Manchester of South India," is a major hub for education and industry in Tamil Nadu. The district's unique demographic profile, characterized by a large population of young professionals and students, provides a fertile ground for digital marketing activities. Despite the growing popularity of Instagram influencers, businesses and marketers face several challenges in measuring effectiveness and maintaining consumer trust.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sharma (2021) observed that consumers in Tier-II cities are increasingly relying on social media recommendations rather than traditional celebrity endorsements. The study emphasized the authenticity perceived in micro-influencers compared to mega-celebrities.

Kumar and Anjali (2022) identified that the visual appeal of Instagram posts and the frequency of interaction between influencers and followers are significant predictors of brand loyalty. Their study suggested that high-quality visual content combined with personal storytelling increases conversion rates.

Ramesh (2023) analyzed the impact of sponsored content disclosures on trust. The findings suggested that consumers value transparency, and influencers who clearly label paid partnerships tend to maintain higher credibility in the long run.

Priya (2024) examined the specific trends in Tamil Nadu, noting that regional influencers who communicate in local contexts have a deeper impact on the purchase decisions of the local youth compared to nationallevel influencers.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While influencer marketing on Instagram is gaining momentum, many brands struggle to identify the right influencers and quantify their impact on actual sales. Consumers often face "information overload" and may develop skepticism toward sponsored content. In a city like Coimbatore, where consumer behavior is influenced by a mix of traditional values and modern digital trends, there is a need to understand the exact factors that transform an Instagram recommendation into a purchase decision. This study addresses this gap by analyzing consumer perceptions and the attributes of influencers that drive purchase intentions.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the key influencer attributes (credibility, attractiveness, expertise) that impact purchase decisions.
- To study the consumer engagement levels with different types of Instagram content.
- To examine the relationship between demographic factors and the perception of influencer trustworthiness.
- To suggest suitable measures for brands and influencers to improve marketing performance in Coimbatore.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive research design to analyze the impact of Instagram influencer marketing on consumer behavior. This design allows for a detailed investigation into 'what' factors are influential.

5.2 Area of the Study

The research is confined to Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu, focusing on urban and semi-urban populations active on Instagram.

5.3 Sources of Data

Primary data were collected through a structured online questionnaire distributed to Instagram users in Coimbatore. Secondary data were sourced from academic journals, industry reports from agencies like HubSpot and Sprout Social, and marketing textbooks.

5.4 Sampling

A convenience sampling method was used to select 100 respondents. The sample primarily includes individuals aged 18–45, representing the core demographic of Instagram users.

5.5 Statistical Tools

Data analysis was conducted using percentage analysis, ranking analysis, and Chi-square tests to determine associations between variables.

6. DATAANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Demographic Profile

The analysis shows that 62% of the respondents fall within the 21–30 age group. Of these, 55% are students or young professionals, indicating that the impact of influencer marketing is most pronounced among the youth in Coimbatore. In terms of education, 70% of respondents hold an undergraduate degree or higher.

6.2 Influencer Attributes and Purchase Influence

Influencer Attribute	Percentage of Respondents
Trustworthiness & Credibility	76%
Expertise in the Niche	72%
Relatability/Authenticity	68%
Aesthetic Visual Content	64%
Frequency of Posting	45%

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6.3 Chi-Square Analysis

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between educational qualification and the trust placed in influencer reviews.

$$\chi^2 = \Sigma [(O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i]$$

Table 6.3.1: Chi-Square Test Results for Education vs. Trust

Test	Value	df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	42.150	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	38.200	12	.000
N of Valid Cases	100		

Interpretation: Since the p-value (.000) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant relationship between education level and the skepticism or trust applied to influencer marketing.

6.4 Content Format Effectiveness

Rank	Content Format	Impact Score (1-10)
1	Instagram Reels (Short Video)	8.9
2	Stories (Behind the Scenes)	7.5
3	Carousel Posts (In-depth)	6.8
4	Live Sessions	5.4

7. CHALLENGES IN INFLUENCER MARKETING

- **Perceived Inauthenticity:** 58% of respondents expressed concern about financial bias.
- **Repetitive Content:** 42% felt influencers often post similar content.
- **Lack of Local Context:** Concerns regarding national vs regional relevance.

Product Quality Mismatch: 35% reported issues with physical product reality vs online portrayal.

8. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. The younger demographic (21–30) is the most active and influenced segment in Coimbatore.
2. Instagram Reels has a significantly higher conversion rate than other formats.
3. Trustworthiness is the primary prerequisite for purchase decisions.

Micro-influencers command higher trust than large-scale celebrities in local markets.

9. SUGGESTIONS

1. Brands should prioritize localized content using the Tamil language and local landmarks.
2. Transparency must be maintained through clear 'Paid Partnership' labels.
3. Focus on micro-influencers with higher niche engagement.
4. Integration of multi-channel verification to satisfy consumer scrutiny.

10. CONCLUSION

Instagram influencer marketing has fundamentally changed the consumer purchase journey in Coimbatore. While it offers immense opportunities, the sustainability of this model depends on authenticity and credibility. By adopting transparent practices and focusing on high-quality engagement, businesses in Coimbatore can leverage Instagram to drive significant growth.

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