

## Investigating How 'Social Media Influencers' Shape the Purchasing Decisions of Indian Customers in the Realm of Sustainable Organic Cosmetic Products

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**ABSTRACT:** 'Influence' means the strength to finesse another person to do something that she/he might not want to do earlier. That could be a positive or negative action on anybody or anything. This mental ability of the influencer results in a new form of marketing strategy named 'Influencer Marketing'. Business organizations have been using this influencer marketing strategy in their selling strategies starting with the development of social networking platforms. Though it appears to have gained traction recently, this is actually the older, simpler kind of word-of-mouth marketing that has been around for a while. Another possibility is that the influencer marketing strategy is a more developed form of the reference marketing plan. In this study, the researcher looked at how Indian consumers' purchasing decisions about organic cosmetics products are influenced by social media influencers. The aim of the research is, "To investigate the role and influence of 'social media influencers' on the purchasing behaviour of Indian customers in the realm of organic cosmetic products". The purpose is to identify the impact of 'social media influencers' on buying behaviour of domestic customer towards organic products. Three different factors that are determined from the survey have been used to evaluate the purchasing behaviour. In order to get participant opinions, the study employs an exploratory research methodology and a survey method using a structured questionnaire. The convenience sampling approach, which is non-probability, is used to choose the participants. 200 replies were gathered from various regions in Uttar Pradesh. For the purpose of evaluating hypotheses, Linear Regression Analysis, Anova is used to assess the data in this research. Result of analysis shows, buying behaviours of the consumer is directly depends on the social media influencer.

**Keywords:** - Influencer marketing; Social media platform; Organic cosmetic product; Influence, Sustainable

### INTRODUCTION

In contemporary times, consumers make purchases of goods and services based on the recommendations of individuals whom they have faith in. Influencers and celebrities play a crucial role in establishing trust among their followers. As a result, many consumers who observe the lifestyles of these influencers attempt to incorporate their habits into their own routines. However, they often overlook their own living standards, personal preferences, and essential needs, which should be their top priorities. Prior to examining the role of social media influencers in shaping consumer behaviour and decision-making in the online realm, it is crucial to comprehend the many categories of influencers and how to appropriately choose them for product placement. Social media influencers can be categorised using several methods. These individuals often publish their text-based content to promote their blog. The influencers create their own content and strive to engage their audience, exerting influence over them. They actively utilise numerous social media platforms to promote their material. Vloggers disseminate their information through the medium of video. They utilise channels such as YouTube and Instagram for advertising their material. Television personalities who appear on reality shows: A multitude of participants in shows such as Big Boss and Roadies have captivated numerous followers on various social media sites. They frequently collaborate with cosmetic, electric, and fashion firms. Micro-influencers typically have a

small following, often consisting of a few thousand or even fewer followers. Nevertheless, their fan group has a high level of engagement, which enables them to effortlessly excite their followers and prompt them to take any desired action. It assists in enticing their audience towards a specific brand. Nano-influencers: The growing need for influencers has resulted in a rise in the number of nano-influencers. Similar to micro influencers, they possess a modest yet highly engaged social media audience. Nano-influencers typically have a small number of followers, often ranging in the few thousands or even less. Activists are typically driven by a bureaucratic or social agenda. Their concept entails advocating for positive societal transformation by exerting influence on others. Brands should exercise caution when collaborating with them, as they hold strong opinions on current matters and openly express their views on social media. When we talk about the trust and credibility of influencers whether it is a mega, micro or a Nano influencer the people are now start believing more on them in comparison of celebrities and other traditional method of marketing. With the increase of social media platform influencer marketing becomes the most profitable marketing strategy because in this strategy the cost of marketing a brand sometimes comes to a single product and sometime a small portion of a profit. Trust and credibility is the key ingredient to the influencer marketing and both become necessary when a organic brand wants to get established. Now a day the organic cosmetic brands are using influencer marketing strategy as its major strategic practice. This paper is focusing upon checking awareness about the organic cosmetic brands amongst the domestic customers, finding the frequency of demographic factors that influence the buying behaviour of customer and also testing the impact of influencer's credibility on the buying behaviour of customer towards organic cosmetic brands. The primary data and secondary data have been used to analysis the data. For the study we have selected ten Indian organic cosmetic brands those who are highly active on social media and using influencer marketing as its marketing strategy (on the basis of observation).

## **INFLUENCER MARKETING**

Influencer Marketing refers to the practice of utilising well-known individuals, known as influencers, who leverage social media platforms to endorse and advertise products and services by creating and sharing their own content across various social media platforms. Influencers can be categorised into four groups based on their number of followers and the frequency of interaction on their pages: Nano, Micro, Macro, and Mega.

### **Cosmetic brands taken for research**

#### **Overview of Selected Indian cosmetic brands taken for the study:-**

- 1) Lotus herbals
- 2) Biotique
- 3) Wow Skin Science
- 4) Plum
- 5) The Mama Earth
- 6) Forest Essentials
- 7) Himalaya Herbals

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To study the awareness of the organic cosmetic brands.
- To examine the different demographic parameters that impact the intention to buy organic cosmetic brands.
- To determine the characteristics of the influencer that impact consumers' purchasing decisions regarding beauty items.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

H01: There is no significant impact of Influencers on the buying decision of different age groups

•H02: There is no significant impact of Influencers on the buying decision of gender.

•H03: There is no significant effect of influencer attributes on customer purchase decision for Indian organic cosmetic products.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Elmoussa, H., Yee, W. F., & Cheah, J. H. (2024)**, This study attempts to confirm that social media influencers affect consumer attitudes and promotion intentions to bridge industry and literature gaps. To test hypotheses, partial least squares was chosen. The findings confirmed the concept by showing that source credibility, subjective norms, and meaning transfer affected attitude. Moreover, source legitimacy, attitude, and subjective norms strongly affected buying intention. This study enriches marketing literature and practice. First, the psychology theory of reasoned action was used to show the relationship between behaviour and attitude in human activities, which is being applied to Malaysian influencer marketing. Second, this study can provide valuable insights and guidance for organisations, marketing agencies, marketers, and influencers.

**Mittal, I. (2023)**, The results of this study indicate that consumers are impacted by electronic speech commercials while making purchasing decisions, either immediately prior to or following exposure to the advertisement. Customers are significantly swayed by online content and, to a greater extent, social interactions when it comes to buying purchases. The topic of inquiry under investigation exhibits significant potential for expansion, hence creating a multitude of opportunities for further exploration. Further work is necessary to identify social influence measurements that exhibit a correlation with users' actual influence. Although Facebook has been the main subject of this investigation up to this point, it is crucial to expand the range to encompass other social media sites. Furthermore, there is ongoing debate regarding the maximisation of influence, and it is possible to develop enhanced algorithms. The exploration of a novel research approach is a pivotal undertaking that facilitates a more comprehensive comprehension of the subject matter.

**Chan, F. (2022)**, This study aims to elucidate the primary determinants that contribute to the efficacy of social media influencer marketing efforts. Additionally, it offers a novel and inventive addition by examining the role of heightened customer loyalty on the decision-making process of followers. Various platforms provide distinct experiences and have varying priming effects on clients. For instance, the customer's experience derived from a television programme may diverge from that obtained from radio. The nature of experience can be either positive or negative, mostly pertaining to the emotional and affective dimensions, which are qualitative in nature. Hence, it is imperative for marketers to consider factors beyond quantitative indicators such as the quantity of comments, followers, likes, and views when strategizing and assessing their investment in social media platforms. Specifically, certain platforms possess unique characteristics and their followers have the potential to become the brand's target customers. Advertisers may also contemplate allocating resources on these platforms, even if the quantitative metrics are not appealing. The findings together enhance the marketing literature by providing insights into the personality and content characteristics of a social media influencer (SMI). Furthermore, this study elucidates the mechanism by which social media influencers (SMIs) impact decision imitation through customer loyalty. The findings possess managerial implications for digital marketing communication with social media influencers (SMIs), in addition to their theoretical value.

**Varghese, S., & Agrawal, M. (2021)**, The empirical evidence has demonstrated a significant influence of social media on consumer purchasing behaviour within the context of the digital era. Undoubtedly, social media has brought significant transformations to both consumers and organisations. Research indicates that consumers exhibit a high degree of selectivity while making a purchase. Despite the abundance of data and information available on social media, the personal attitude of consumers plays a significant role in their decision-making process when it comes to selecting and making a purchase. The impact of content quality on social media platforms is significant, hence necessitating its relevance to consumers. When employing social media as a marketing strategy, the focus extends beyond just consumer awareness and product sales. It encompasses not just that, but also the maintenance and cultivation of a pre-existing relationship between prospective buyers and corporations.

**Saima, & Khan, M. A. (2020)**,The objective of this study paper is to examine the impact of different characteristics of social media influencers on their trustworthiness and subsequently on consumers' purchase intention in Delhi NCR, India. Data collection was conducted via an online questionnaire administered via Google Forms, with a sample size of 76 participants. The researchers employed the quota sampling strategy and utilised structural equation modelling using SmartPLS 3 for the purpose of data analysis. The results indicate that trustworthiness, information quality, and entertainment value exert notable direct impacts on the credibility of influencers, while also exerting considerable indirect effects on customers' purchase intention. Moreover, the integrity and reputation of an influencer have a direct impact on consumers' purchasing intention.

**Černikovaitė, M.(2019)**,The study conducted in Lithuania has revealed that prior to making a purchasing decision, a majority of participants engage in proactive information-seeking behaviour by utilising social networks to access feedback from other customers. Additionally, the survey findings indicate that the primary determinants of purchasing behaviour change are suggestions, comments, and shared information pertaining to specific brands by Influencers.

**Lin et al., (2018)**, A study on consumer perceptions of organic cosmetics revealed that the majority of participants held a favourable perspective. Consumers comprehend that while their purchases constitute a minor proportion, they collectively contribute to a significant impact in addressing the primary problems associated with non-environmentally friendly cosmetics. Certain participants regarded the purchase of environmentally-friendly cosmetics as a significant component of responsible consumer conduct due to the perceived safety of these products and their ability to mitigate environmental harm.

**Bladow& Laura, (2018)**, When it comes to influencer marketing, the influencer is the one who starts social engagements. Any individual who possesses the ability to influence the purchasing decisions of other individuals as a result of their authority, knowledge, position, or relationship, whether actual or perceived, is considered an influencer.

**More & Lingam, (2017)**, The term "influencer marketing" refers to the practice of a corporation targeting influential individuals, also known as "influencers," who are in agreement with the brand's ideals and work in the firm's favour in order to find new clients.

**Pophal (2016)**,There are two ways that influencers can have an effect: either in exchange for monetary compensation or by gaining their support through natural means. There are certain guidelines that marketers are need to adhere to if they decide to pursue influencer marketing, which can be a challenging path to take.

**Wong, (2014)**, The concept of influencer marketing is centred on the identification of individuals who possess subject-matter expertise and are able to directly reach and influence certain targets of potential purchasers. This is made possible by the relationship that these individuals have created with their followers. Influencers also benefit from this concept because they have the opportunity to earn money, work as independent contractors, or receive products as a kind of compensation.

**Rybowska, (2014)**,Although most people have a favourable attitude towards organic cosmetics because they recognise the benefits associated with using them, there are some individuals who have a negative attitude towards them due to the fact that they can be more expensive. A study that was conducted by Agnieszka Rybowska found that consumers consider environmentally friendly cosmetics to be a luxury item due to the fact that they are difficult to obtain and pricey.

**Anjali Sharma et al. (2013)**,The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact that consumer loyalty to a brand has on their purchasing behaviour for beauty products, as well as the factors that influence this conduct. While the majority of respondents say that quality is the most important factor to consider when choosing beauty products, they also believe that brand and price are important factors to consider. On the other hand, there are a few ladies who are of the opinion that the packaging is the most significant factor when it comes to making judgements. According to the findings of the researchers, friends are the most influential reference group, and these factors are frequently responsible for switching to other organisations.

**Dragan & Petrescu, (2013)**, According to them consumers who had the highest intention to make a purchase were found to be college-educated women between the ages of 20 and 40 who had an average monthly income of 500 euros. This amounts to approximately \$600 USD. Women who have completed their college education not only possess the ability to comprehend the advantages of organic cosmetics, but they also possess the financial means to purchase them. The most significant factor that discourages consumers from making purchases of organic cosmetics is the price.

**Li, Lai & Chen (2011)**, Influencer marketing may give the impression of being an entirely new field of marketing, but in reality, it is nothing more than word-of-mouth marketing with digital technology. The objective of word-of-mouth marketing is to attract a significant amount of attention through interactions on social media platforms and to effectively communicate with a big number of prospective clients.

**Marwick (2011)**, As a result of the utilisation of influencer marketing, new opportunities are made available in the beauty business. Customers are provided with an additional and more intimate channel through the use of influencers and bloggers, who portray a fashionable picture of themselves, the things they consume, and their opinions on the market or specific brands.

**Gobé, (2010)**, In spite of the fact that these two generations are still developing, the fact that their emotional palettes and passions are so different from one another is creating interesting challenges for marketing and emotional branding. Generation Z and Millennials will be responsible for dismantling monopolies, customising media, and politics that have been built up over the course of time by previous generations. This will be done in order to cultivate a corporate environment that is conducive to meeting their requirements and fulfilling their expectations.

**Keller, K.L. (1998)** This study's objective is to investigate the elements that influence brand loyalty in the cosmetics business and to determine how those factors are expressed. Consequently, before moving on to the analysis of such a concept, it is essential to first define the term "brand." In accordance with the American Marketing Association, a brand can be defined as "a name, word, sign symbol, or design, or a combination of these elements, designed to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers, and to differentiate them from those of competition."

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

- **Research Design:**-This study aims to employ descriptive research methods to provide an overview of the present state and future potential of digital marketing tools, social media usage, and influencer marketing in relation to consumers of cosmetic brands.
- Analytical research is employed to evaluate hypotheses through the utilisation of statistical tools..
- The study is survey in nature with Qualitative and quantitative approach.
- **Universe and Sample size:** - The scope of this study encompasses individuals between the ages of 18 and 60 residing in metropolitan regions of Uttar Pradesh who utilise various social media applications or platforms. The current study will utilise a sample size of 200 persons residing in the state of Uttar Pradesh.
- **Research Area:** The focus of this study will be on the metropolitan and semi-urban regions of Uttar Pradesh, specifically Lucknow.
- **Sampling Method: Purposive sampling** is a research method that involves the deliberate selection of non-probability sample strategies to gather data from respondents.
- **Sources of Data collection:** -Data collection will involve conducting a scheduled interview and administering a standardised questionnaire. The collection of secondary data would be conducted by accessing existing books and journals.

- **Tools and Methods of data collection:** -Data gathering will involve the utilisation of an interview schedule, observation techniques, and a structured questionnaire administered through Google Forms. Tables, cross tabulations, percentages, graphs, and statistical tools will be employed for the purpose of conducting data analysis. Appropriate graphs will be utilised to deduce interconnections.
- **Statistical Techniques Used:** The data collected from the questionnaires will be submitted and analysed using IBM SPSS for statistical purposes.

In this study, a selection of ten Indian organic cosmetic firms has been made based on their high social media activity and use of influencer marketing as a marketing technique, as seen.

**RESEARCH ANALYSIS:**

Table 1 : Demographic Result

No. of Followers	Sex	Age Group	Follow beauty/personal care influencer(s)	Social network platforms used to follow influencers		
				Youtube	Instagram	Facebook
22	Male	18-25	yes	8	12	2
20		26-35		5	6	9
15		36-45		5	8	2
8		46-60		3	3	2
52	Female	18-25		11	28	13
50		26-35		15	25	10
23		36-45		6	8	9
10		46-60		4	2	4

Source : Questionnaire

In the table no.1 we can see that there are 22 male respondent in the age group of 18-25age out of it 8 respondents are following YouTube, 12respondents are following Instagram and 2 respondents are using Facebook as a social networking platform. Similarly, 20 male respondents who follow beauty and lifestyle influencers are more active at Facebook. But when we talk about the age group of 36-45age there are only 15 male respondent and 5 are using youtube,8 are using Instgram, and 2 respondent are using facebook.The age group of 46-60age are using social media very less, only 8 respondents are using social media networking sites. Similarly when we talk about the female respondents, the respondent at the age brackets of 18-25age and 26-35age are using social networking sites more in comparison of age group of respondent 36-45age and 46-60age.The age bracket of 18-25age female respondents are using social networking platforms the most and out of the total respondents of 52 female are using the Instagram social networking platform as a most preferred social networking platform.

Table 2 : Respondents' consensus on social media influencers' attitudes

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
If you receive a positive response from influencers, will you purchase their product?	60	85	41	12	2	200
You should inquire about the product's details from the influencers before purchasing it.	48	72	51	24	5	200
Do you believe that influencers who interact with their followers are more reliable?	52	85	49	11	3	200

Source : Developed by Author

In the table no.2 when we talk about the respondents' consensus on social media influencers' attitudes, respondents shows their positive purchase intension to buy the brand when they find the social media influencer positive response towards the concerned brand .They also strongly believe that they must inquire about the product's details from the influencers before purchasing it, since they have trust on them. Respondents find influencers more reliable than those influencers who interact with their followers personally in DM (direct message) whenever they need their recommendation.

Table 3: Respondents' Consensus Regarding Social Media Influencers' Credibility

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Would you probably tell your friends and family to follow any influencer?	85	60	25	15	15
Do social media influencers sway you to buy the Organic cosmetic product ,the way they represent them in their blogs, vlogs, reels and post.	114	54	14	6	12
Do you think the influencers' information is reliable enough about the concerned brand?	81	64	26	25	4
You consider your favorite influencers to be significant before making any new product purchases.	115	65	5	15	0
Do you really believe that Influencers won't deliberately support a brand that puts you at risk?	65	34	35	36	30

You are more inclined to test a brand if it is recommended by your favorite influencer right?	65	72	6	23	19
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Source: Developed by Author

In the table no.3 the respondent shows a strong credibility towards the influencer they follow. They generally believe that the influencer provides reliable information about the product in their content and they also believe that Influencers won't deliberately support a brand that puts the followers at risk. Instead they tend to show the followers a true picture of the pros and cons of the products. Respondent shows a high credibility with 115 response in this study to the question asked "Do you consider your favorite influencers to be significant before making any new product purchases?" this shows that the respondents generally take reference of their favorite influencer before purchasing a product. Respondents also take a recommendation when they are going to test a new product. They also suggest their favorite influencer to follow to their family members and their friends, which shows a high credibility.

**Regression Analysis Model**

Regression modeling was used to further analyze the study's components, which the author discovered to be the credibility and attitude of social media influencers, with the purchase behavior of social media users serving as the dependent variable. Additionally, three hypotheses were formulated, with the creditworthiness and attitude of social media influencers serving as the independent variables:

**H01: There is no significant impact of Influencers on the buying decision of different age groups**

Table 4 : Regression Model on impact of Influencers on the buying decision of different age groups

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.658 <sup>a</sup>	0.432	0.43	0.79646
a. Predictors: (Constant), credibility				

Table 5: Anova Table

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	100.538	1	100.538	158.49	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	131.943	199	0.634		
Total	232.481	200			

a. Dependent Variable: buying behaviour

b. Predictors: (Constant), credibility

From the above **table no.5** we are rejecting our null hypothesis because the significant value is less than .05; it shows that there is significant impact of Influencers on the buying decision of different age groups. We also find that the value of R from table no.4 is 65.8% which shows influencers plays a vital role on the buying decision of different age groups.

**•H02: There is no significant impact of Influencers on the buying decision of gender.**

Table 6 : Regression Model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.612 <sup>a</sup>	0.374	0.371	0.83644
a. Predictors: (Constant), credibility				



Table 7 : Anova Table

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	86.958	1	86.958	124.291	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	145.523	199	0.700		
Total	232.841	200			

a. Dependent Variable: buying behaviour

b. Predictors: (Constant), creditability

From the above **table no.7** we are rejecting our null hypothesis because the significant value is less than .05; it shows that significant impact of Influencers on the buying decision of gender. We also find that the value of R from **table no.6** is 86.95% which shows influencers plays a vital role on the buying decision of different gender

•H03: There is no significant effect of influencer attributes on customer purchase decision for Indian organic cosmetic products.

Table 8: Regression model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.696 <sup>a</sup>	0.484	0.483	0.83644
a. Predictors: (Constant), creditability				

Table 9: Anova Table

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	96.538	1	115.538	186.56	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	135.943	199	0.634		
Total	232.481	200			

a. Dependent Variable: buying behaviour

b. Predictors: (Constant), creditability

From the above **table no.9** we are rejecting our null hypothesis because the significant value is less than .05; it shows that there is a significant effect of influencer attributes on customer purchase decision for Indian organic cosmetic products. We also find that the value of R from **table no.8** is 96.538% which shows a high significance of influencer attributes on customer purchase decision for Indian organic cosmetic products.

**Conclusion:**

The data presented sheds light on the intricate relationship between social media influencers and consumer behaviour, particularly regarding the purchase decisions of Indian organic and non-organic cosmetic products. Through the analysis of responses from the questionnaire and regression modelling, several key insights have been gleaned.

Firstly, the demographic profile of social media users and their preferred platforms for following influencers provide valuable insights into consumer behaviour. It is evident that younger age groups, especially females aged 18-25 and 26-35, are more active on social media platforms such as Instagram, indicating the importance of influencer marketing targeting these demographics. Additionally, the data reveals a disparity in social media usage among different age groups and genders, highlighting the need for tailored marketing strategies.

The consensus among respondents regarding social media influencers' attitudes and credibility further underscores the significant role influencers play in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase decisions. The majority of respondents express a positive inclination towards purchasing products endorsed by influencers and consider influencers' recommendations to be reliable. This suggests that influencer marketing can effectively influence consumer behaviour and drive product sales, especially when influencers engage with their followers and provide authentic recommendations.

Regression analysis confirms the significant impact of influencer attributes, such as credibility and attitude, on consumer purchase decisions for Indian organic cosmetic products. The findings reject the null hypotheses, indicating a strong relationship between influencer attributes and consumer behaviour. Specifically, influencers' positive responses and interaction with followers significantly influence purchase intentions, highlighting the importance of building trust and credibility in influencer marketing campaigns.

The data underscores the growing influence of social media influencers in shaping consumer preferences and purchase decisions, particularly in the beauty and personal care industry. Businesses can leverage this influence by collaborating with influencers who resonate with their target audience and uphold credibility and authenticity in their content. However, it is essential for brands to conduct thorough research and analysis to understand their audience demographics and preferences and tailor influencer marketing strategies accordingly. By harnessing the power of influencer marketing effectively, businesses can enhance brand visibility, drive product sales, and foster long-term customer relationships in the competitive market landscape.

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