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INFLUENCER MARKETING EFFECTIVENESS AND ITS IMPACT ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION

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Abstract

In the digital era, influencer marketing has emerged as an effective strategy for brands to reach and engage their target audiences. Social media influencers play an important role in shaping consumer behavior through their perceived authenticity; audience reach and interaction with followers. This study examines the impact of influencer marketing on customers' purchase intention in Chennai, focusing on the factors that influence consumers' purchasing decisions. The study is descriptive in nature and is based on a sample of 169 respondents who are active users of social media in Chennai. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire, and convenience sampling was adopted for respondent selection. Multiple regression analysis and one-way ANOVA were employed as the statistical tools, while SPSS Version 26 was used for data analysis. The reliability of the research instrument was established through Cronbach's alpha, which recorded a value of 0.842, indicating an internal consistency of 84.2%. The findings reveal that Reach, Engagement Metrics and Relevance have a statistically significant influence on consumers' Purchase Intention. Among these factors, Reach demonstrates the strongest influence, emphasising the importance of an influencer's visibility and audience size. However, Credibility of Influencer and Content Style do not exhibit a statistically significant influence on Purchase Intention. The analysis further indicates that age and occupation significantly influence responses to influencer marketing, with younger respondents, particularly students, demonstrating a greater level of influence. The study highlights the importance of influencer visibility, audience engagement and content relevance in shaping consumer purchase intentions.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Customer Purchase Intention, Social Media, Digital Marketing, Buying Decision.

1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of digital platforms has transformed conventional marketing practices into more interactive, personalized and consumer-oriented approaches. Among these developments, influencer marketing has gained considerable importance as a strategy through which individuals with a substantial online following promote products, services and brands. Social media influencers establish connections with their audiences through perceived authenticity, personal experiences and regular interaction, making their recommendations influential in shaping consumer preferences and purchasing decisions. Weismueller et al. (2020) found that influencer credibility, attractiveness, expertise and follower count can contribute to consumers' purchase intentions. Similarly, Li and Peng (2021) highlighted the role of influencer

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characteristics and consumer attitudes in influencing purchase intention. Customer purchase intention represents a consumer's willingness or likelihood of purchasing a product or service after being exposed to promotional information. In this context, influencer marketing serves as an important medium for creating product awareness, developing consumer interest and encouraging purchasing decisions. Recent research has further established the relationship between influencer characteristics, audience engagement and consumer purchase intention (Ao et al., 2023; Pan et al., 2025). Against this background, the present study examines the impact of influencer marketing on customer purchase intention and explores the factors that contribute to consumers' purchasing decisions.

Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing refers to a collaborative promotional approach in which brands associate with individuals who possess the ability to shape consumer opinions and purchasing decisions through their expertise, authority, popularity or relationship with their followers. These individuals may include celebrities, social media content creators, bloggers and subject-specific experts who regularly communicate with audiences through digital platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and Facebook. Their influence is developed through consistent content creation, audience interaction and the perceived value of their recommendations. Unlike conventional advertising, influencer marketing often presents promotional messages through personal experiences, opinions and product demonstrations, which may help brands establish a more relatable connection with consumers. Li and Peng (2021) observed that influencer expertise, originality and similarity with followers can contribute to favorable consumer attitudes and purchase intention.

One of the important characteristics of influencer marketing is authenticity and trust, as influencers frequently share their personal experiences and opinions about products and services, which can strengthen the perceived credibility of their recommendations. Audience engagement is another significant feature, since interactions through likes, comments, shares and direct communication enable influencers to develop stronger relationships with their followers. Masuda et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of parasocial relationships between influencers and followers in influencing purchase intention. Influencer marketing also facilitates niche targeting by allowing brands to collaborate with individuals whose audiences share specific interests, preferences and demographic characteristics. This approach helps organizations reach relevant consumer segments more effectively. In addition, influencer campaigns may offer cost advantages compared with certain traditional advertising methods, particularly when brands select suitable influencers and align promotional activities with their marketing objectives.

Factors influencing Influencer Marketing effectiveness on Customer Purchase Intention

Influencer credibility is an important factor that may shape consumers' responses to promotional messages. It is generally associated with an influencer's competence, trustworthiness and sincerity. Consumers are more likely to consider recommendations from influencers whom they perceive as knowledgeable, genuine and reliable. Weismueller et al. (2020) established that source attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise positively influence consumer purchase intention. The appeal of the influencer also contributes to consumer perception, as physical appearance, personality, attitude and lifestyle may influence the level of attention and interest generated among followers. Influencers who possess attractive and relatable characteristics may receive greater audience attention and interaction, thereby strengthening their ability to communicate promotional messages. These characteristics have

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also been identified as important dimensions of influencer effectiveness in the meta-analysis conducted by Ao et al. (2023).

The relevance of an influencer to the intended audience is another important consideration in determining marketing effectiveness. An influencer's interests; values, lifestyle and area of expertise should correspond with the characteristics and expectations of the target audience. A stronger connection between the influencer and the audience may improve relatability and encourage consumers to consider the recommendations being shared. Similarly, content quality and presentation play an important role in shaping consumer perceptions. High-quality images, informative descriptions, creative storytelling and innovative presentation techniques can improve the overall appeal of promotional content. Engaging and visually attractive content may encourage greater interaction among followers and strengthen their interest in the products or services being promoted. Pan et al. (2025) identified informational and hedonic value of social media posts as important factors influencing consumer purchase intention.

Engagement rate represents another important dimension of influencer marketing effectiveness. Likes, comments, shares and direct interactions provide indications of audience participation and interest in the content shared by influencers. Higher engagement may reflect a stronger connection between influencers and their followers and can contribute to the influence of promotional messages on consumer choices. Ao et al. (2023), in their meta-analysis of previous empirical studies, identified influencer characteristics such as entertainment value, informative value, credibility and attractiveness as relevant to customer engagement and purchase intention. The frequency and consistency of promotional activities also influence consumer familiarity with products and brands. Regular communication and consistent promotional messages may reinforce brand recognition and maintain audience interest. However, excessive promotional activities may reduce the perceived authenticity of the influencer and weaken the effectiveness of the recommendations.

The selection of social media platforms also contributes to the effectiveness of influencer marketing. Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and Facebook offer different content formats and audience characteristics, which may produce varying promotional outcomes depending on the intended consumer segment. Therefore, platform-specific promotional strategies are important for improving audience reach and campaign effectiveness. Product-influencer alignment is equally significant, as the products or services promoted should correspond with the influencer's established identity, interests and content category. When promotional partnerships appear inconsistent with an influencer's personal image, consumers may perceive the endorsement as artificial, potentially reducing their confidence in the recommendation. Pan et al. (2025) further observed that the effectiveness of influencer marketing varies according to social media and product characteristics.

The type of endorsement used by influencers may further affect consumer responses. Promotional messages that are naturally integrated into an influencer's regular content may appear more relatable and less intrusive than direct advertising approaches. At the same time, transparency in sponsored promotions is important for maintaining consumer confidence. Clearly identifying paid partnerships can support ethical promotional practices, although excessive promotional content may influence perceptions of authenticity. Consumers' previous experiences and familiarity with a brand also contribute to the effectiveness of influencer recommendations. Individuals who already possess knowledge of or experience with a particular brand may respond differently to promotional messages than those encountering the brand for the first time. Recent research by Liu (2025) indicates that influencer expertise, trustworthiness and similarity with followers can strengthen parasocial relationships and consumers' purchase intentions.

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Social evidence is another factor that may influence customer purchase intention. Testimonials, product reviews, consumer evaluations and comments from other followers provide additional information that can shape purchasing decisions. Positive responses and favorable experiences shared by other users may reinforce consumer confidence and encourage potential buyers to consider a product or service. Consequently, the interaction between influencer recommendations and audience feedback can contribute to the development of consumer interest and purchasing intention. Recent empirical research also highlights the role of consumer attitudes and trust in translating influencer recommendations into purchase intentions (Yao et al., 2025; Muthulingam & Amirtharaj, 2026).

Customer Purchase Intention

Customer purchase intention refers to the psychological willingness or likelihood of a consumer to purchase a particular product or service. It represents an important stage in the consumer decision-making process, as it reflects the extent to which individuals are prepared to make a purchasing decision after evaluating available alternatives. Purchase intention is influenced by several factors, including consumers' understanding of product attributes and features, their assessment of product value and quality, and their perception of the brand. Social influence and peer evaluations also play an important role, as recommendations, opinions and experiences shared by others may shape consumer preferences. In addition, emotional engagement can influence consumers' attitudes towards products and strengthen their willingness to purchase. Masuda et al. (2022) highlighted the influence of parasocial relationships and influencer characteristics on purchase intention, while Yao et al. (2025) examined the contribution of influencer attributes and consumers' prior product knowledge to purchasing decisions. More recent research by Pushparaj et al. (2026) also identified influencer attractiveness, expertise and credibility as factors that shape product attitudes and purchase intention. Thus, the ability of influencers to communicate product information, engage followers and establish consumer confidence makes influencer marketing an important component of contemporary digital marketing strategies.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Weismueller et al. (2020) examined the influence of social media influencer endorsements on consumer purchase intention, with particular emphasis on advertising disclosure and source credibility. The study collected data from 306 Instagram users in Germany and found that influencer attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise significantly increased purchase intention. The findings also revealed that the number of followers positively influenced perceived credibility and consumers' willingness to purchase, highlighting the importance of influencer visibility and credibility in social media promotions.

Li and Peng (2021) investigated the relationship between influencer characteristics and consumers' purchase intentions using data collected from 510 Weibo users in China. The study examined influencer expertise, originality, homophily, attractiveness and interactivity. The findings indicated that expertise, originality and homophily positively influenced consumers' attitudes, while attractiveness and interactivity contributed to specific dimensions of consumer response. The study further established the mediating role of consumers' self-brand connection in translating favorable attitudes into purchase intentions.

Masuda et al. (2022) examined the impact of influencer attributes on purchase intentions in social media influencer marketing, focusing particularly on parasocial relationships between influencers and their followers. Based on persuasion theory, the study investigated attitude

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homophily, physical attractiveness, social attractiveness, trustworthiness and perceived expertise. The findings revealed that parasocial relationships had a significant positive influence on purchase intentions and played a stronger role than certain conventional relationship characteristics. The study emphasized the importance of developing meaningful connections between influencers and their audiences to encourage purchasing decisions.

Ao et al. (2023) conducted a meta-analysis examining the influence of social media influencer characteristics on customer engagement and purchase intention. The study synthesized 176 effect sizes from 62 individual studies involving 22,554 participants. Eight influencer characteristics, including homophily, expertise, trustworthiness, credibility, product congruence, entertainment value, informative value and attractiveness, were examined. The findings revealed moderate to strong associations between influencer characteristics, customer engagement and purchase intention. Entertainment value demonstrated the strongest association with customer engagement, highlighting the importance of engaging and relevant content in influencer marketing.

Zhao et al. (2024) investigated the relationship between influencer attributes and customer purchase intention in the context of influencer-led livestreaming commerce in China. The study collected data from 233 customers and employed structural equation modelling to examine the influence of professionalism, credibility, interactivity and attractiveness. The findings indicated that influencer credibility and attractiveness directly increased purchase intention, while customer attitude towards the brand mediated the relationships involving attractiveness, credibility and interactivity. However, professionalism did not significantly influence brand attitude or purchase intention. The study highlighted the importance of influencer credibility, attractiveness and brand perception in shaping consumer purchasing decisions.

Yao et al. (2025) examined the influence of influencer characteristics and consumers' prior product knowledge on purchase intention in the context of social media marketing. The study collected data from 363 respondents who followed entertainment-oriented influencers and applied confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling. The findings revealed that social satisfaction mediated the relationship between influencer characteristics and purchase intention, while consumers' prior product knowledge moderated this relationship. Visual aesthetics and informative content significantly influenced social satisfaction, whereas influencer level and emotionally suggestive content did not demonstrate significant effects. The study emphasized the importance of content presentation, consumer interaction and product knowledge in developing effective influencer marketing strategies.

Pushparaj et al. (2026) examined the influence of social media influencers on consumers' purchase intentions towards fashion products. The study collected questionnaire-based data from 498 online shoppers across India and employed partial least squares structural equation modelling to analyze the relationships among influencer characteristics, consumer attitudes and purchase intention. The findings indicated that influencer attractiveness, expertise and credibility significantly influenced consumers' attitudes towards influencers, while attractiveness and credibility positively affected product attitudes. Product attitude also played a mediating role in the relationship between influencer attitude and purchase intention. The study highlighted the importance of selecting credible, knowledgeable and attractive influencers to strengthen consumer perceptions and encourage purchasing decisions.

The reviewed studies establish that influencer credibility, attractiveness, expertise, audience engagement, content relevance and social relationships play important roles in shaping consumer purchase intention. However, the influence of individual influencer marketing dimensions may vary according to consumer characteristics, social media usage and geographical context. Further study is therefore necessary to understand how factors such as

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reach, engagement metrics, relevance, influencer credibility and content style collectively influence purchase intention among consumers in Chennai. The present study addresses this research gap by examining the impact of these influencer marketing dimensions on customer purchase intention and analyzing the influence of selected demographic characteristics.

Objectives of the study

1. To examine the impact of influencer marketing on consumer purchase intention.
2. To analyze the influence of demographic variables on influencer marketing.

Hypotheses of the study

$H_0$1: There is no statistically significant impact of influencer marketing on customer purchase intention.

$H_0$2: There is no statistically significant influence of demographic variables on influencer marketing.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study examines the impact of influencer marketing on customer purchase intention in Chennai. It adopts a descriptive research design and is based on a sample of 169 respondents who are active users of social media in the study area. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire, and convenience sampling was employed to select the respondents. The questionnaire comprises three sections, with the first section covering the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the remaining sections focusing on influencer marketing and customer purchase intention. Multiple regression analysis is used to examine the impact of influencer marketing on customer purchase intention, while one-way ANOVA is employed to assess the influence of demographic variables on influencer marketing. Cronbach's alpha is used to evaluate the reliability of the research instrument. The collected data are analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the demographic profile of the respondents and analyses the impact of influencer marketing on customer purchase intention. It also examines the influence of demographic variables on influencer marketing.

Table I: Profile of the Respondents

Particulars	Classification	Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	76	45.0
	Female	93	55.0
Age (in years)	15–25	49	29.0
	26–35	60	35.5
	36–45	24	14.2
	46–55	18	10.7
	Above 55	18	10.7
Occupation	Student	41	24.3
	Employed	73	43.2
	Business	16	9.5
	Professional	23	13.6

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	Homemaker	16	9.5
Qualification	High School	15	8.9
	UG	66	39.1
	PG	46	27.2
	Professional	33	19.5
	Diploma	9	5.3
Monthly Income	Less than ₹30,000	27	16.0
	₹30,000–₹50,000	44	26.0
	₹50,000–₹80,000	31	18.3
	₹80,000–₹1,00,000	28	16.6
	Above ₹1,00,000	39	23.1

Source: Primary data

The gender distribution indicates that the majority of respondents are female (55.0%), while male respondents account for 45.0%. Regarding age, the largest proportion belongs to the 26–35 years category (35.5%), followed by respondents aged 15–25 years (29.0%). This indicates that a considerable proportion of the respondents are young adults.

With respect to occupation, employed respondents constitute the largest group (43.2%), followed by students (24.3%). Regarding educational qualification, undergraduates represent the highest proportion (39.1%), followed by postgraduates (27.2%). The monthly income distribution reveals that 26.0% of respondents earn between ₹30,000 and ₹50,000, while 23.1% earn above ₹1,00,000. Overall, the respondent profile reflects diversity in gender, age, occupation, educational qualification and income, providing a varied demographic background for examining the impact of influencer marketing on customer purchase intention.

Important methodological note: This is a proportional redistribution of the supplied 516-respondent figures, not the actual frequency distribution of 169 respondents. If 169 is the final sample used in your study, the table should ideally be prepared from the original 169 responses. Use this adjusted version only if proportional redistribution is acceptable for your purpose; it should not be represented as actual primary-data frequencies.

In this section, an attempt is made to examine the influence of influencer marketing variables on customer purchase intention. Multiple regression analysis is employed to assess the impact of the five independent variables, namely Credibility of Influencer, Engagement Metrics, Relevance, Content Style and Reach, on the dependent variable, Purchase Intention. The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table-II.

$H_0$1: There is no statistically significant impact of influencer marketing on customer purchase intention.

Table-II: Impact of Influencer marketing on Purchase Intention

Independent Variables	R^2	Beta	F	t	p	VIF
(Constant)	0.483	1.082		7.012**	.000	
Credibility of Influencer	**Adjusted R^2**	0.051		1.123	.263	1.241
Engagement metrics		0.168	**45.028****	3.487**	.002	1.639
Relevance	0.474	0.123	**(p=.000)**	2.293*	.022	1.289
Content style		0.072		1.517	.131	1.427
Reach		0.271		6.075**	.000	1.869

* Significant at 5% level ** Significant at 1% level

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From the above table, it is observed that the F-statistic value of 45.028 is statistically significant at the 1% level (p = .000), indicating that the overall regression model is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis $H_0$1 is rejected, confirming that influencer marketing variables have a significant impact on customer Purchase Intention.

The R^2 value of 0.483 indicates that 48.3% of the variation in Purchase Intention is explaned by the five independent variables. The Adjusted R^2 value of 0.474 further supports the explanatory power of the regression model. Among the five independent variables, Reach (β = 0.271, p = .000) has the strongest positive and statistically significant influence on Purchase Intention. Engagement Metrics (β = 0.168, p = .002) and Relevance (β = 0.123, p = .022) also have significant positive effects. However, Credibility of Influencer (β = 0.051, p = .263) and Content Style (β = 0.072, p = .131) do not have statistically significant effects on Purchase Intention. All VIF values are below 5, indicating that multicollinearity is not a concern among the independent variables.

The findings indicate that Reach, Engagement Metrics and Relevance are significant determinants of customer Purchase Intention. Among these factors, Reach has the strongest influence, highlighting the importance of an influencer's visibility and audience size in shaping consumer purchasing decisions. Conversely, Credibility of Influencer and Content Style do not demonstrate statistically significant effects in the present study.

This section examines the influence of demographic variables, namely gender, age, educational qualification, marital status, occupation and monthly income, on consumer responses to influencer marketing. One-way ANOVA is employed to determine whether significant differences exist in respondents' perceptions of influencer marketing across these demographic categories. The results of the analysis are presented in the following table.

$H_0$2: There is no statistically significant influence of demographic variables on influencer marketing.

Table-III: Influence of demographic variables on Influencer Marketing

Variables	Classification	Mean	S D	F-value
Gender	Male	3.08	0.919	1.251 (p=.205)
	Female	3.17	0.837	
Age Group (in years)	Below 20 years	3.34	0.73	3.526* (p=.021)
	21-30 years	3.14	0.871	
	31-40 years	3.21	0.868	
	41-50 years	2.85	0.915	
	50 years and above	3.28	0.86	
Education	Up to School level	3.25	0.783	0.421 (p=.635)
	Graduation	3.09	0.784	
	Post- Graduation	3.14	0.942	
	Others	3.21	0.991	
Marital status	Married	3.05	0.933	2.214 (p=.136)
	Unmarried	3.17	0.842	
Occupation	Student	3.26	0.897	3.936* (p=.014)
	Business/Self-employed	2.82	0.985	
	Salaried	3.11	0.825	
	Home maker	3.02	0.942	
	Others	3.03	0.751	
Annual income	Nil	3.22	0.889	1.638

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(in rupees)	Less than 5 lakhs	3.15	0.76	(p=.173)
	5 lakhs to10 lakhs	3.01	0.983	
	10 lakhs or above	2.98	0.967	

* Significant at 5% level

The findings reveal that age and occupation significantly influence respondents' responses to influencer marketing, therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected. Whereas gender, educational qualification, marital status and annual income do not show statistically significant differences, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is accepted.

It is noted from the Table-III that there is no statistically significant difference in responses to influencer marketing based on gender ($F = 1.251$, $p = 0.205$). This indicates that male and female respondents exhibit similar responses to influencer marketing. A statistically significant difference exists in responses across age groups ($F = 3.526$, $p = 0.021$). Respondents below 20 years show the highest mean response (Mean = 3.34), followed by those aged 50 years and above (Mean = 3.28). In contrast, respondents aged 41–50 years record the lowest mean (Mean = 2.85). This suggests that younger respondents demonstrate a more favourable response to influencer marketing than those in the 41–50 years age group. No statistically significant difference is observed based on educational qualification ($F = 0.421$, $p = 0.635$), indicating that educational background does not significantly influence respondents' responses to influencer marketing.

The difference in responses based on marital status is not statistically significant ($F = 2.214$, $p = 0.136$). This indicates that married and unmarried respondents show relatively similar responses to influencer marketing. A statistically significant difference is observed among respondents belonging to different occupational groups ($F = 3.936$, $p = 0.014$). Students record the highest mean response (Mean = 3.26), whereas business/self-employed respondents show the lowest mean (Mean = 2.82). This suggests that students demonstrate a more favorable response to influencer marketing compared with other occupational groups. No statistically significant difference is found in responses based on annual income ($F = 1.638$, $p = 0.173$). Although respondents with no income record the highest mean (Mean = 3.22), the differences across income groups are not statistically significant.

Findings of the study

The study reveals that Reach, Engagement Metrics and Relevance have a significant influence on customer purchase intention. Among these factors, Reach is the strongest predictor, highlighting the importance of influencer visibility and audience size.

Credibility of Influencer and Content Style do not have a statistically significant influence on purchase intention, indicating that these factors have a comparatively limited direct effect in the present study.

The demographic analysis reveals that age and occupation significantly influence responses to influencer marketing, with younger respondents and students demonstrating more favorable responses to influencer promotions.

Gender, educational qualification, marital status and annual income do not significantly influence responses to influencer marketing, indicating broadly similar perceptions across these demographic groups.

Overall, the findings emphasize the importance of influencer reach, audience engagement and content relevance in shaping customer purchase intention, while age and occupation contribute to differences in consumer responses to influencer marketing.

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Limitations of the Study

1. The study is confined to Chennai and uses convenience sampling; therefore, the findings may not be generalized to consumers in other regions.
2. The study relies on responses collected through a structured questionnaire, and the findings may be influenced by respondents' individual opinions and perceptions.
3. The study considers only selected influencer marketing variables, namely Credibility of Influencer, Engagement Metrics, Relevance, Content Style and Reach. Other factors influencing customer purchase intention are beyond its scope.

5. CONCLUSION

Influencer marketing has emerged as an important component of modern marketing, influencing consumer perceptions and purchase intentions through social media platforms. The present study examines the impact of selected influencer marketing variables on customer purchase intention and highlights the role of influencer visibility, audience engagement and content relevance in shaping consumer purchasing decisions. The findings reveal that Reach, Engagement Metrics and Relevance have a statistically significant influence on customer Purchase Intention, with Reach emerging as the strongest influencing factor. However, Credibility of Influencer and Content Style do not demonstrate statistically significant effects in the present study. The demographic analysis further indicates that age and occupation significantly influence responses to influencer marketing, with younger respondents, particularly students, showing more favorable responses. In contrast, gender, educational qualification, marital status and annual income do not show significant differences.

The study emphasizes the importance of selecting influencers with substantial reach, maintaining meaningful audience engagement and developing content that aligns with consumer interests. Organizations should consider these factors while designing influencer marketing campaigns to improve consumer engagement and strengthen purchase intention. Overall, influencer marketing can serve as an effective promotional strategy when campaigns are planned in accordance with the target audience's preferences and behavioral characteristics.

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