

**ANALYZING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA  
INFLUENCERS IN SHAPING CUSTOMER PURCHASE  
INTENTIONS IN THE COSMETIC SECTOR IN  
DELHI,INDIA.**

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**Abstract**

The report titled “The Role of Influencer Marketing in Shaping Consumer Brand’s Perception” delves into the burgeoning (rapidly growing) field of influencer marketing and its profound impact on consumer brand perception. The research aims to explore how social media influencers and brands interact with each other. It delves into the mutually beneficial relationship that exists between them. It analyzes the relationship between social media influencers and Customer Purchase Intentions and how their collaboration is transforming traditional marketing. The study explores how influencers through their relatability and extensive reach engage with the consumer, foster brand image and brand trustworthiness, and drive their purchase decisions. It further explores how collaborations with influencers allow brands to engage with consumers in a more personalized and authentic manner. The study will underscore the importance of influencer marketing for businesses navigating consumer behavior

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in the digital age. The report will conclude by proposing areas for future research, underscoring the dynamic nature of this field and the necessity for ongoing exploration.

**Keywords:** *influencer marketing, social media influencers, brand image, brand trust, consumer behavior, collaborations*

## **INTRODUCTION**

In today's digital age, social media has become an integral part of our daily lives. People all around the world use social media platforms to connect, share, and gather information. With the rise of influencers, social media has also become a powerful marketing tool for businesses in various industries, including cosmetics. With platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn boasting billions of active users worldwide, social media marketing offers unparalleled access to diverse audiences spanning demographics, geographies, and interests. Social media platforms serve as online markets where customers look for validation, product recommendations, and inspiration. According to Forbes, 2017, influencers possess a substantial following and are deemed persuasive, which is why numerous firms aim to collaborate with them and control over what customers choose to purchase. They play a crucial role in influencing consumers' buy intentions because of their capacity to produce real, relatable content that connects with viewers. Furthermore, a survey was conducted in 7 industries in the year 2017 revealed that Approximately 85% of brand marketers favored influencer marketing in their campaigns in 2017, and social media influencer content was proven to be 7 times more effective than professional filmed content (Ki and Kim, 2019).

The cosmetic industry in India is rapidly expanding, spurred on by rising disposable incomes, escalating urbanization rates, and the burgeoning youth population. Simultaneously, the cosmetics sector in India has experienced a notable shift in customer behavior as a result of social media's explosive expansion. Consumer behavior is no longer only driven by traditional marketing methods. Rather, social media platforms have become influential and strong, having a big impact on how people see and use cosmetics by endorsing beauty items and businesses, social media

influencers have a significant impact on the purchasing intentions of their followers. Nonetheless, investigating the role of social media influencers in shaping customer purchase intentions within the Indian cosmetic sector has become a crucial topic of research.

### **Objectives of Research**

1. Investigate the impact of social media influencers on customer purchase intentions in the Indian cosmetic market.
2. Identify the key characteristics of effective influencers.
3. Explore the ethical considerations associated with influencer marketing.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Beauty firms were among the first to recognize social media's power and used it as a crucial component of their marketing strategy. This is primarily because influencer marketing is very effective in visual formats, and beauty greatly depends on visual appeal. The primary factors influencing customers' attitudes that affect their buy intentions were found to be product match-up, source attractiveness, and source legitimacy in a study on customer attitude as a mediating factor between social media influencers and customer purchase intention. (Lim et al., 2017)

Influencers have a big role in influencing consumer decisions, especially when it comes to services, apparel, shoes, and cosmetics. Influencers increase sales in addition to enhancing a brand's image and increasing awareness. Indian individuals consider a number of factors while making purchases, including Product Matchup, Perceived Authenticity, Trust, and Influencer Content Quality. (Tabassum and others, 2020).

Opinion leadership attributes are determined by the impact of influencers' Instagram accounts and their uniqueness, not by their quantity. electronic word-of-mouth, beauty vloggers, and celebrity endorsers. (E-WOM). (Pratiwi et al., 2019). The influence of brand image on buying decisions has been extensively studied. It is apparent, however, that influencers have an effect on the brand image, which determines the intention to buy.(Hermanda et al., 2019).Through influencer endorsements that affect customers' buying intentions, sales are fueled by the influencers' credibility, competence,

dependability, sponsored content, and physical awareness (Hermand et al., 2019). The credibility, expertise, and trustworthiness of influencers, along with sponsored content and physical awareness, contribute to driving sales through influencer endorsements that impact customers' purchase intentions. (Nagori et al., 2020). Factors such as celebrity credibility, reputation, and persuasive capabilities are crucial in influencing purchase decisions. (Widyanto et al., 2020). There hasn't been enough research done on how Instagram celebrities affect consumer purchasing behavior, particularly concerning Indian consumers and their propensity to buy based on the trustworthiness of the source through social media advertising. (Hermand et al., 2019). Buying decisions are heavily influenced by influencers, particularly when it comes to clothing, shoes, cosmetics, and services. Influencers raise revenue in addition to improving a brand's reputation and raising awareness. When making a purchase, Indian adults take into account various criteria such as Influencer Content Quality, Trust, Perceived Authenticity, and Product Matchup. (Tabassum et al., 2020).

Social media influencers (SMIs) have the power to change the attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions of those who follow them. This includes how they choose and reject goods and services that don't fulfill their needs and desires. In the study of influencer marketing, several scholars base their research on three essential characteristics that are critical for successful persuasion: authority, credibility, and social appeal. These characteristics are connected to compliance, internalization, and identification, respectively. A credible endorser usually positively influences consumers' perceptions. Influencers play a crucial role in establishing direct connections and strengthening brand loyalty, providing a more comprehensive feedback mechanism compared to conventional media. Contrary to conventional celebrity endorsements, brand endorsements within the personal lives of social media influencers (SMIs) are typically perceived by consumers as more pertinent. They foster a feeling of inclusion and communal assistance among their viewers, who possess akin principles and aspirations.

According to Ki and Kim, Social Media Influencers (SMIs) play a dual role as taste leaders and opinion leaders. This dual role plays a crucial role in influencing consumers to imitate these influencers, which ultimately leads to the purchase of

products, services, or brands that they endorse. The importance of specific qualities in the content produced by SMIs, such as visual appeal, prestige, and expertise, is emphasized as influential factors in shaping consumers' perceptions. Van Eldik et al. proposed that forming a bond with the audience is a crucial factor in determining the success of social media influencers. The establishment of perceived trustworthiness relies on the influencer's capacity to build emotional and interpersonal connections with their audience. Schouten et al. agree that simply using an endorser (influencer) in an advertisement does not automatically guarantee the advertisement's success. Their research, however, did not find any correlation between the fit of the product with the endorser and the type of endorser in terms of trustworthiness or expertise. The study indicates that the likability of the influencer could be a key factor in understanding the relationship between endorser type and the effectiveness of advertising.

In today's digital age, influencers hold immense power in shaping consumer behavior. Their ability to evoke positive emotions and drive purchases has been proven by a study conducted by Ki and Kim. The study reveals a strong correlation between the efforts of Social Media Influencers (SMIs) to influence and the response of consumers. It suggests that the influence of SMIs follows a sequential pattern, starting with the development of positive attitudes, leading to a desire to emulate their behaviors, and ultimately impacting consumers' social sharing and purchasing decisions. As consumers develop positive attitudes towards SMIs, they are inclined to imitate and mimic the behaviors and preferences promoted by these influencers. This mimicry, in turn, significantly influences both social Word-of-Mouth (sWOM) activities and consumers' intentions to make purchases.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Data can be collected using various research approaches. According to Creswell (2014), there are three main types of research approaches: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Qualitative research emphasizes understanding the "why" rather than the "what." This approach delves into real-life experiences, providing an in-depth understanding of the collected data. Moreover, quantitative research tests different theories (hypotheses) by looking at the relationship between different variables, the dependent variables and the independent variables. Furthermore, quantitative research

evaluates theories (hypotheses) by analyzing the connections between various variables, focusing on both dependent and independent variables.

A quantitative research approach was selected for this study as the method of data collection. The study necessitated both open-ended and close-end questions, which is gathered through online surveys. Participants were invited to take the survey through a link shared on social media platforms like facebook, Instagram and in various WhatsApp groups.

**Sample Size:** A Survey was conducted among 102 people who uses cosmetic product on usual basis in Delhi.

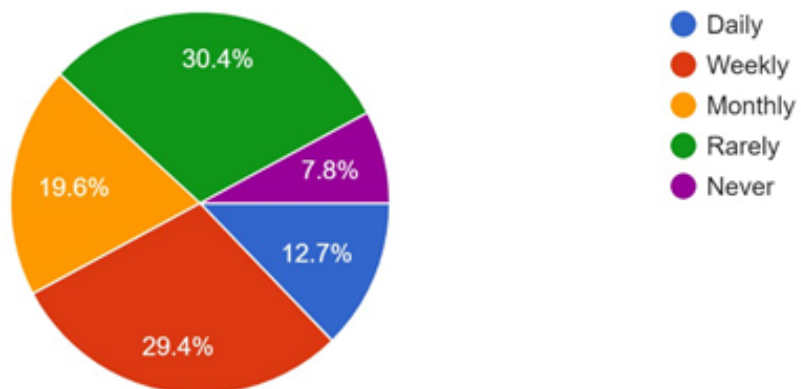
**Sample Area:** The people across Delhi

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Both Primary and secondary source is used to collect the data. The questionnaire is distributed among the people to gather the responses. The questionnaire included: Demographic Questions, Introductory Questions and Main Questions.

How often do you follow social media influencers in the cosmetic sector?

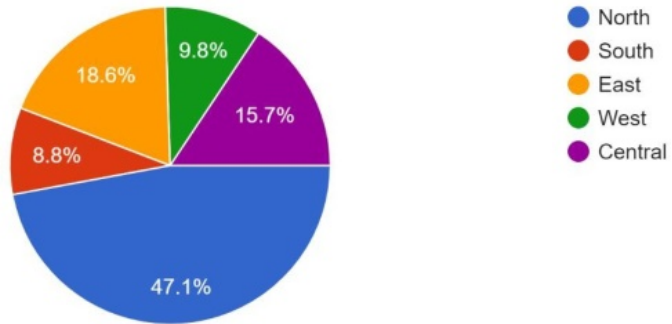
102 responses



## **Analysis**

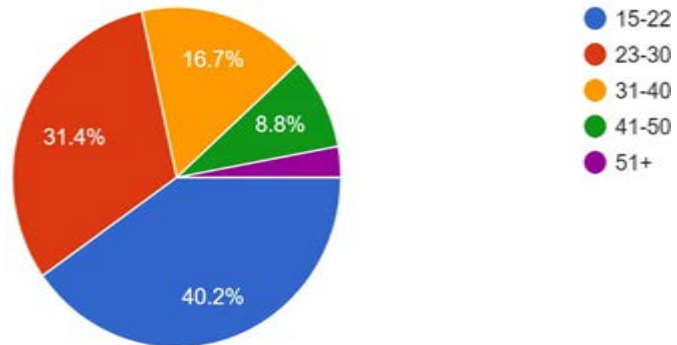
Which city or region of Delhi do you reside in?

102 responses



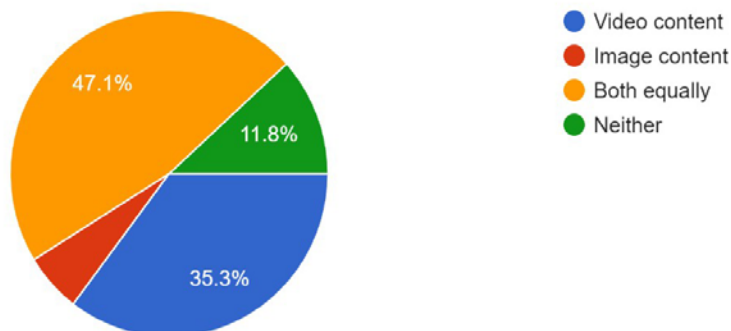
Age

102 responses



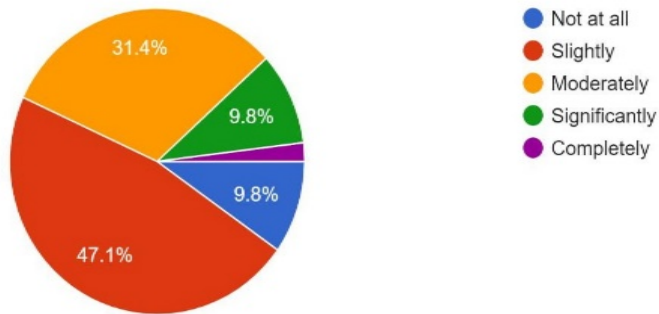
Do you prefer watching video content (e.g., tutorials, and reviews) or viewing images (e.g., Instagram posts) when influencers showcase cosmetic products?

102 responses



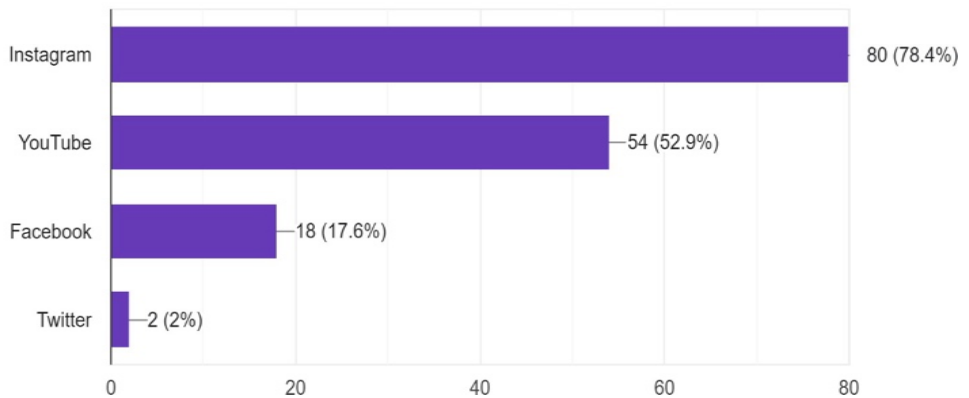
How much do social media influencers influence your decision to purchase cosmetic products?

102 responses



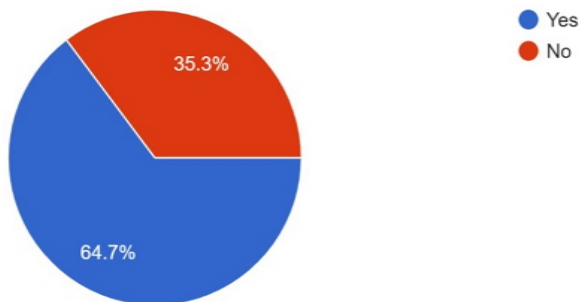
Which social media platforms do you primarily use for cosmetic-related content?

102 responses



Have you ever purchased a cosmetic product based on a recommendation from a social media influencer?

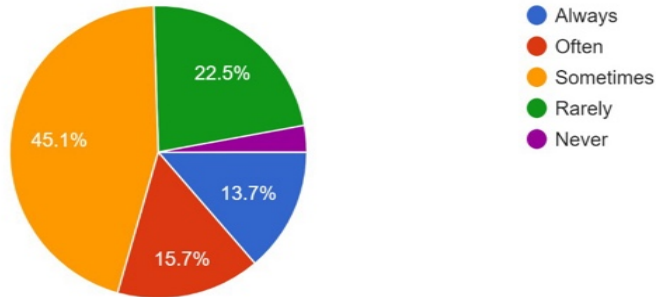
102 responses





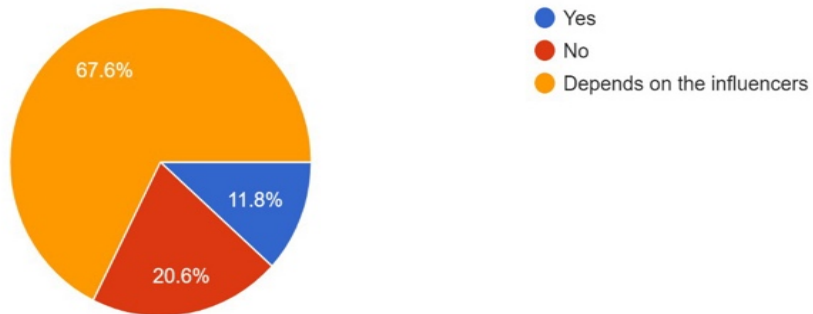
How often do you research a cosmetic product after seeing it recommended by a social media influencer?

102 responses



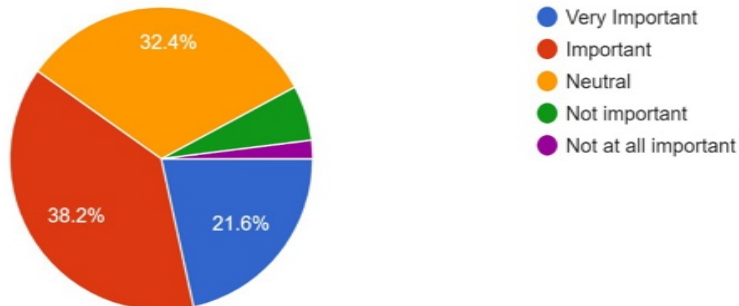
Would you be more inclined to purchase a cosmetic product if it is endorsed by multiple social media influencers?

102 responses



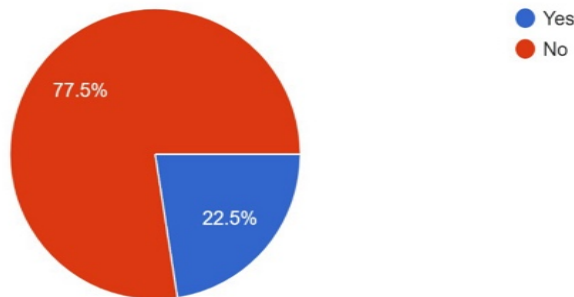
How important is it for social media influencers to have expertise or credibility in the cosmetic field?

102 responses



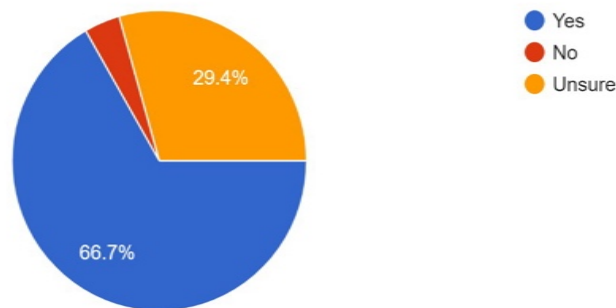
Have you ever tried a cosmetic product solely because it was promoted by a social media influencer, even if you were not initially interested in it?

102 responses



Do you think the involvement of social media influencers has positively impacted the cosmetic industry in India?

102 responses



The survey was conducted with both males and females. Since females use more cosmetic products compared to males, the proportion of female profiles is higher than that of male profiles. This research study contained 102 respondents, and out of these 75 respondents were females, and 27 were male. The survey data highlights distinct patterns across age groups regarding engagement with social media influencers and cosmetic content. Young adults aged 15-22 constitute 50% of respondents, showing strong affinity for platforms like Instagram and YouTube, particularly favoring video content. Those aged 25-30 make up about 30%, indicating a similar interest in influencer-driven cosmetic content. Participants aged 31-40 comprise 15%, demonstrating lower engagement. Older respondents (40+) show minimal interest in influencer content. Tailoring influencer marketing to these age-specific preferences is crucial for effective cosmetic campaigns. Based on the survey findings, it is evident

that social media influencers play a significant role in influencing consumer behavior towards cosmetic products. A substantial percentage of respondents engage with influencers regularly, with 12.9% following them daily and 29.7% weekly. Moreover, Instagram emerges as the dominant platform for cosmetic-related content, preferred by 78.2% of participants, followed by YouTube (53.5%) and Facebook (17.8%). Video content proves to be highly effective, preferred by 35.3% of individuals when influencers showcase cosmetic products, while 47.1% appreciate both video and image content equally. This data underscores the influential power of social media platforms and influencer marketing in shaping consumer preferences and purchasing decisions in the cosmetics industry. The survey reveals diverse consumer responses to influencer endorsements in the cosmetic industry. Approximately 29.4% of respondents consistently or frequently research products recommended by influencers, highlighting a proactive approach to purchasing decisions. However, 25.4% rarely or never conduct research, indicating varied trust levels in influencer recommendations. Regarding multiple endorsements, 11.8% are more inclined to purchase products endorsed by several influencers, emphasizing the impact of collective endorsements. Conversely, 20.6% are not swayed by multiple endorsements alone. A significant majority (67.6%) consider the specific influencer endorsing the product before making a purchase decision, underscoring the importance of influencer credibility and alignment with consumer values. A combined 59.8% of respondents find it very important for influencers to possess expertise or credibility in cosmetics, highlighting a significant consumer preference for knowledgeable endorsements. Conversely, a smaller percentage (7.9%) consider this factor unimportant or irrelevant. A significant majority, comprising 59.8%, considers it very important for influencers to possess expertise or credibility in cosmetics. This underscores the importance of credibility in influencing consumer trust and purchasing decisions. Conversely, 38.3% have a neutral or less stringent stance on influencer expertise, indicating a range of perspectives on this issue. Interestingly, 22.5% of respondents admitted trying a cosmetic product solely because it was promoted by an influencer, despite initial disinterest. This suggests the persuasive impact of influencer endorsements on consumer behavior. However, a substantial majority (77.5%) has not been swayed by influencer promotions when initially uninterested in the product. Regarding the broader impact, 66% of respondents believe that social media influencers have

positively influenced the cosmetic industry in India, highlighting their role in shaping consumer trends and brand perceptions. On the other hand, 29.4% hold the view that influencer involvement has not had a positive impact, suggesting varying perceptions of their influence. A small percentage (3.9%) remains unsure about the overall impact of influencers on the industry.

### **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:**

The survey findings highlight the nuanced ways in which consumers respond to influencer recommendations in the cosmetic industry. While influencer marketing holds considerable sway over consumer behavior, its impact varies depending on individual research habits and how influencers are perceived in terms of credibility. Brands can capitalize on these insights by strategically partnering with influencers who genuinely connect with their target audience and by delivering clear, informative content that empowers consumers during their decision-making process. This dynamic underscores the intricate relationship between influencer credibility, consumer behavior, and broader industry perceptions. It presents brands with opportunities to effectively harness the influence of credible influencers while navigating and responding to diverse consumer preferences and concerns. By understanding these dynamics, brands can refine their influencer strategies to not only drive engagement and sales but also foster deeper trust and loyalty among their consumer base.

### **LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY:**

One limitation of the study is the potential bias in participant responses, which may affect the authenticity and reliability of the gathered data. Another challenge lies in sample representativeness and self-selection bias, where participants who choose to respond may not accurately represent the broader population. This issue is particularly pronounced in research focusing on social media and influencers, as indicated by the demographics, which predominantly includes younger participants. This demographic skew makes it difficult to generalize findings to older age groups or to the population as a whole. Future research should aim for more diverse participant representation to enhance the validity and generalizability of findings across different age groups and demographic profiles. Furthermore, individuals who choose to participate in the survey may hold differing opinions and perspectives compared to those who do not

participate. Another potential limitation pertains to the scope of response options provided. Moreover, this study is its descriptive nature, which focuses on summarizing and presenting data without delving into causal relationships or deeper analyses. Future research could expand beyond descriptive methods to investigate causal relationships and conduct more in-depth analyses. Overall, there remain numerous aspects within the realm of social media influencers and influencer marketing that warrant further study. It is crucial for future research to address the aforementioned limitations to ensure the reliability and validity of findings.

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