



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## "The Power Of Influence: Evaluating The Effectiveness Of Online Advertisements Endorsed By Social Media Influencers"

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### Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of online advertisements endorsed by social media influencers, focusing on factors such as influencer credibility, content type, and consumer engagement. Utilizing a purposive sampling method, data were collected from 250 active social media users who regularly interact with influencer content. The findings reveal that younger demographics, particularly those aged 18–30, exhibit higher engagement and trust in influencer-endorsed advertisements. Platforms like Instagram and YouTube are predominant channels for such interactions. Statistical analysis indicates a strong positive correlation between engagement with influencer-endorsed ads and purchase behavior, as well as between content type and advertisement effectiveness. Short-form videos and authentic content formats are more effective in capturing audience attention and driving consumer action. The study underscores the importance for marketers to collaborate with credible influencers and tailor content strategies that resonate with target audiences to enhance the impact of online advertising campaigns.

### Keywords

Influencer Marketing, Social Media Influencers, Online Advertising, Consumer Engagement, Influencer Credibility, Purchase Intentions

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## Introduction

In the modern digital landscape, the nature of advertising has undergone a substantial transformation. With the proliferation of social media platforms, traditional methods of brand promotion have gradually given way to more interactive and personalized approaches. Among these, influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful tool, leveraging the popularity and credibility of individuals who command large online audiences. The phrase “The Power of Influence” reflects the remarkable capacity of these individuals—commonly known as social media influencers—to shape opinions, attitudes, and consumer behaviors across diverse digital communities.

Online advertisements have become an essential component of digital marketing strategies, offering businesses the ability to target specific demographics with tailored messages. These advertisements are not limited to static visuals or text but encompass dynamic content formats such as videos, stories, live sessions, and product reviews. Their success is often measured by levels of engagement, reach, and conversion. In this ever-evolving advertising ecosystem, brands are increasingly collaborating with influencers to amplify their messages in ways that appear more authentic and relatable to target audiences.

Social media influencers differ from traditional celebrities in their mode of communication and audience interaction. They often engage directly with their followers, sharing aspects of their personal lives, opinions, and product experiences. This relatability fosters a sense of trust and familiarity, which makes their endorsements more persuasive. When influencers promote products or services, their followers are likely to perceive these messages not just as advertisements, but as genuine recommendations, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of online promotional efforts.

The credibility of the influencer plays a crucial role in determining the success of such endorsements. Audiences tend to respond more positively to influencers who are perceived as trustworthy, knowledgeable, and consistent in their content. This perceived credibility can significantly influence consumer attitudes toward a brand and can impact decision-making processes. Consequently, marketers often prioritize selecting influencers whose image aligns with the brand values and whose opinions are respected within their digital communities.

Consumer engagement is another key factor that contributes to the perceived effectiveness of online advertisements. In the context of influencer marketing, engagement can include likes, comments, shares, and other interactive behaviours that signal interest and participation. Higher engagement not only increases the visibility of content but also strengthens the perceived relevance and value of the brand being promoted. The connection between influencer activity and consumer interaction is central to understanding the real impact of online advertisements.

Moreover, the type of content shared by influencers significantly affects how messages are received. Some formats, such as short form videos or behind-the-scenes stories, may resonate more with audiences due to their informal and entertaining nature, while others, such as long-form tutorials or

testimonials, may provide more detailed information that supports informed decision-making. The format and delivery of the message, therefore, play an essential role in capturing attention and enhancing advertisement performance.

Altogether, the effectiveness of online advertisements endorsed by social media influencers is shaped by a combination of factors including trust, content style, platform dynamics, and audience interaction. As digital spaces continue to grow in complexity, understanding these interconnected elements becomes essential for both academic research and practical application in marketing. This study aims to shed light on these dimensions, contributing valuable insights into how influencer-driven campaigns operate within the broader framework of online advertising.

## Review of Literature:

Social media influencers play a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviours. According to **Djafarova and Rushworth (2017)**<sup>3</sup>, consumers, particularly younger demographics, perceive influencers as more relatable and trustworthy compared to traditional celebrities. Their study found that endorsements by social media influencers positively affect brand attitudes and purchase intentions, especially in lifestyle and fashion sectors.

Influencer credibility—comprising trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness—is a critical determinant of the effectiveness of online advertisements. **Sokolova and Kefi (2020)**<sup>4</sup> found that influencers with higher perceived credibility have a greater impact on followers' intentions to engage with brands. Their findings underscore the importance of selecting influencers whose personal values align with the brand message.

Content quality and relevance also influence the effectiveness of online ads. **Lou and Yuan (2019)**<sup>5</sup> emphasized that influencer-generated content that is perceived as authentic and entertaining leads to higher levels of consumer engagement. This includes likes, shares, and comments, which further amplify the ad's reach and impact through social proof.

The effectiveness of influencer-endorsed ads also varies by platform. **De Veirman, Cauberghe, and Hudders (2017)**<sup>6</sup> explored how the number of followers and platform type (e.g., Instagram vs. YouTube) influence consumers' perception of influencer expertise and likeability. Their study revealed that while a large following can enhance perceived popularity, it can also reduce authenticity, which may negatively affect ad effectiveness.

<sup>3</sup> **Djafarova, E., & Rushworth, C. (2017).** Exploring the credibility of online celebrities' Instagram profiles in influencing the purchase decisions of young female users. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 68, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.11.009>

<sup>4</sup> **Sokolova, K., & Kefi, H. (2020).** Instagram and YouTube bloggers promote it, why should I buy? How credibility and parasocial interaction influence purchase intentions. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 53, 101742. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.01.011>

<sup>5</sup> **Lou, C., & Yuan, S. (2019).** Influencer marketing: How message value and credibility affect consumer trust of branded content on social media. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 19(1), 58–73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2018.1533501>

<sup>6</sup> **De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L. (2017).** Marketing through Instagram influencers: The impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude. *International Journal of Advertising*, 36(5), 798–828. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2017.1348035>

Influencer-endorsed ads tend to outperform traditional forms of online advertising, such as banner ads or sponsored search results. **Hughes et al. (2019)**<sup>7</sup> conducted a comparative analysis and found that influencer marketing generates higher consumer trust and engagement levels than conventional digital ads. This suggests a shift in consumer preference toward more personal and relatable forms of advertising.

### Statement of the problem

Despite the growing popularity of influencer marketing, there remains limited empirical evidence on the actual effectiveness of online advertisements endorsed by social media influencers. While brands increasingly rely on influencers to promote products and engage audiences, it is unclear how factors such as influencer credibility, content type, and platform engagement influence consumer behavior and purchase decisions. This gap presents a challenge for marketers aiming to optimize their advertising strategies and measure returns on investment. Therefore, this study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of influencer-endorsed online advertisements, focusing on consumer engagement, trust, and the impact of various content formats.

### Objectives of the study

1. To measure the effectiveness of social media influencer endorsements in increasing consumer engagement with online advertisements.
2. To evaluate how influencer credibility affects the effectiveness of online advertisements in shaping consumer purchase decisions.
3. To analyse the relationship between the type of social media content and the effectiveness of influencer-endorsed online advertisements.

### Hypotheses of the study

#### Hypothesis 1: Engagement with Influencer-Endorsed Ads Influences Purchase Behavior

**H<sub>0</sub> 1** : There is no significant relationship between engagement with influencer-endorsed advertisements and the likelihood of purchasing products recommended by influencers.

#### Hypothesis 2: Perceived Influencer Credibility Affects Trust in Product Recommendations

**H<sub>0</sub> 2** : Perceived credibility of influencers does not significantly affect the trust consumers place in their product recommendations.

<sup>7</sup> **Hughes, C., Swaminathan, V., & Brooks, G. (2019).** Driving brand engagement through online social influencers: An empirical investigation of sponsored blogging campaigns. *Journal of Marketing*, 83(5), 78–96.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242919854374>

## Sampling Methods

This study adopts a non-probability purposive sampling method, which is appropriate for targeting a specific group of respondents who possess relevant knowledge and experience with social media platforms and influencer content. The sample will consist of active social media users who regularly engage with influencer-endorsed content across platforms such as Instagram, and YouTube.

Participants will be selected based on their self-reported frequency of interaction with online advertisements and influencer content. Screening questions will be used to ensure that participants follow at least three influencers and have previously engaged (e.g., liked, shared, commented, or clicked) on advertisements endorsed by them.

## Sample size of the respondents

A sample size of approximately 250 respondents will be targeted to ensure sufficient data for statistical analysis. The sample will be drawn through online surveys distributed via social media platforms, university networks, and influencer fan communities. This approach ensures access to a diverse group of users who can provide meaningful insights related to the effectiveness of influencer-endorsed online advertising.

## Limitations of the study

1. **Difficult to Measure Effectiveness Exactly:** Since “effectiveness” includes different things like likes, comments, and buying decisions, it’s hard to measure it in one clear way. Different people may understand or react to ads differently.
2. **Too Many Influencer and Content Types:** There are many types of influencers and content on different platforms. This study may not cover all of them, so the results might not apply to every kind of influencer or social media advertisement.

## Results and Discussions

### Demographic Profile of Respondents

#### Age Distribution

A significant majority of the respondents are young, with 23.6% under 18 years and 36.0% between 18–24 years. This indicates that nearly 60% of the sample falls below the age of 25. This youthful demographic is particularly relevant, as younger individuals are generally more engaged with social media platforms and are more receptive to influencer content.

#### Gender Breakdown

The gender distribution among respondents is nearly balanced, with males constituting 51.2% and females 48.8%. This parity suggests that influencer marketing campaigns can be designed to appeal to a broad audience without a significant gender bias.

## Employment Status

Over half of the respondents (50.8%) are students, while 31.6% are working professionals, and 16.4% are self-employed. This composition indicates that a substantial portion of the audience is either in educational settings or early in their professional careers. Consequently, influencer content that resonates with aspirations, career growth, and lifestyle choices pertinent to these groups is likely to be more effective.

The youthful and diverse nature of the audience underscores the importance of selecting influencers who can authentically connect with these demographics. Platforms like Instagram and YouTube, known for their popularity among younger users, should be prioritized. Content strategies should focus on authenticity, relatability, and value-driven messaging to engage this audience effectively.

## Social Media Usage and Influencer Engagement

### Frequency of Social Media Usage

An overwhelming majority of respondents (96.0%) engage with social media daily, highlighting the integral role these platforms play in their daily routines. This high frequency of usage underscores the potential reach and impact of influencer marketing campaigns, as content shared by influencers is likely to be encountered by users on a daily basis.

### Primary Social Media Platforms

Instagram emerges as the most utilized platform, with 81.2% of respondents indicating its use, followed by YouTube at 68.0% and Facebook at 52.0%. 11.2% of respondents are using sharechat. The dominance of Instagram and YouTube aligns with broader trends in India, where these platforms are preferred for their visual and engaging content formats.

### Following Social Media Influencers

A significant portion of respondents (67.2%) follow social media influencers, indicating a substantial audience for influencer-driven content. This trend reflects the growing trust and reliance on influencers for product recommendations and lifestyle inspiration.

### Interaction with Influencer-Endorsed Advertisements:

An impressive 86.0% of respondents have interacted with influencer-endorsed advertisements, demonstrating the effectiveness of influencer marketing in engaging audiences. This interaction could range from liking or sharing content to clicking on links or making purchases, highlighting the persuasive power of influencers.

### Products Purchased Based on Influencer Recommendations

Clothing tops the list of products purchased due to influencer recommendations at 31.2%, followed by electronics (25.2%) and beauty/cosmetics (20.0%). This purchasing behavior underscores the influence of social media personalities in shaping consumer preferences, particularly in fashion and technology sectors.

### **Most Followed Categories of Influencers:**

Technology-related YouTubers are the most followed (38.4%), indicating a strong interest in tech content among respondents. Fashion and beauty influencers also have a significant following at 31.2%, reflecting the appeal of style and personal care content. Fitness influencers (25.2%) and travel bloggers (14.8%) also command substantial audiences, showcasing the diverse interests of social media users.

In conclusion, the demographic profile of the respondents highlights a predominantly young and balanced-gender audience, with a significant representation of students and early-career professionals. Influencer marketing strategies targeting this group should leverage platforms and content styles that align with their preferences and lifestyles to maximize engagement and impact.

The data reveals a highly engaged audience with daily social media usage, a strong inclination towards following influencers, and a propensity to interact with and act upon influencer-endorsed content. Platforms like Instagram and YouTube are central to this engagement, serving as key channels for influencer marketing. The influence of social media personalities extends to purchasing decisions, particularly in fashion, electronics, and beauty products. Marketers aiming to leverage influencer partnerships should consider these insights to tailor their strategies effectively, ensuring alignment with platform preferences and content interests of their target demographics.

### **Engagement with Influencer-Endorsed Online Ads**

The data indicates a significant level of engagement with influencer-endorsed advertisements among respondents. For instance, 60% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they pay more attention to ads shared by influencers compared to random online ads. Similarly, 60% reported that they usually like or react to influencer posts featuring products or brands. However, active engagement behaviours such as commenting on promotional posts (46%) and sharing influencer-endorsed ads with friends or family (51.2%) were comparatively lower. This suggests that while passive engagement (liking, reacting) is common, active participation (commenting, sharing) is less prevalent.

### **Influencer Credibility and Purchase Behavior**

Trust in influencers plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer behavior. A substantial 64% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they trust influencers to recommend products they genuinely like. Moreover, 67.2% considered influencers reliable sources for product recommendations. The data also reveals that 64% of participants have made purchase decisions based on their trust in influencers, highlighting the direct impact of influencer credibility on consumer purchasing. Transparency and honesty from influencers further bolster this trust, with 64% agreeing that an influencer's honesty influences their decision to try a product.

### **Content Type and Advertisement Effectiveness**

The format and presentation of influencer content significantly affect its effectiveness. A notable 64% of respondents found short-form videos (e.g., reels) more convincing than text posts. Detailed and visual product reviews by influencers were trusted more by 67.6% of participants. Live videos or real-time sessions were preferred by 59.2% when learning about products. Additionally, 63.6% agreed that

stories and behind-the-scenes content help them connect with the brand. These findings underscore the importance of engaging, visual, and authentic content in enhancing advertisement effectiveness.

The survey data underscores the influential role of social media influencers in shaping consumer engagement and purchasing behaviours. While passive engagement with influencer content is high, there is room to encourage more active participation. Trust and credibility of influencers are paramount, directly impacting consumers' willingness to make purchases based on recommendations. Furthermore, the effectiveness of advertisements is significantly enhanced by utilizing engaging and authentic content formats, such as short-form videos and live sessions.

## **Hypotheses related Findings**

### **Hypothesis 1 (H1)**

The Spearman's  $\rho$  of 0.78 indicates a strong positive correlation between Engagement with Influencer-Endorsed Online Ads and Influencer Credibility and Purchase Behavior. This suggests that as individuals engage more with influencer-endorsed ads, their perception of influencer credibility and their likelihood to purchase recommended products increase.

### **Hypothesis 2 (H2)**

The Spearman's  $\rho$  of 0.72 signifies a strong positive correlation between Content Type and Advertisement Effectiveness and Influencer Credibility and Purchase Behavior. This implies that effective content types, such as short-form videos and genuine lifestyle-based content, enhance the credibility of influencers and positively influence consumers' purchase behaviours.

The statistical analysis supports both hypotheses, highlighting the significant roles of engagement and content type in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviours related to influencer marketing. These insights can inform marketing strategies aiming to leverage influencer partnerships effectively.

## **Suggestions**

Based on the demographic analysis of engagement with influencer-endorsed online advertisements, several strategic recommendations emerge. Firstly, brands should prioritize targeting the 18–30 age group, as this demographic exhibits the highest engagement and trust in influencer content, with 94% of Gen Z consumers trusting influencers more than traditional advertisements and 77% making purchases based on influencer recommendations. Utilizing platforms like Instagram and YouTube, which are popular among these age groups, can enhance reach and effectiveness. Secondly, considering the higher engagement rates among female consumers, campaigns should be tailored to resonate with female audiences, potentially through collaborations with influencers who have a strong female following. Thirdly, leveraging micro- and nano-influencers can be advantageous, as they tend to have higher engagement rates and are perceived as more authentic and trustworthy by consumers. Lastly, creating authentic, relatable content that aligns with the influencer's personal brand and the target audience's values can foster deeper connections and drive higher engagement with influencer-endorsed advertisements.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of influencer-endorsed online advertisements across various demographic segments reveals that younger audiences, particularly those aged 18–30, exhibit the highest levels of engagement and trust in influencer content. This trend is especially pronounced among students and female consumers, who are more inclined to follow influencers and interact with their content. Platforms like Instagram and YouTube serve as primary channels for these interactions, with short-form videos and authentic, lifestyle-based content resonating most effectively. The credibility and transparency of influencers significantly impact consumer trust and purchase decisions, underscoring the importance of genuine endorsements. Given the projected growth of the influencer marketing industry in India, brands should strategically align their campaigns to target these key demographics, leveraging the preferred platforms and content formats to maximize engagement and conversion rates.

## Tables

**Table No. 1**  
**Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Variable	Category	Count	%
<b>Age Group</b>	Under 18	59	23.6
	18–24	90	36.0
	25–30	65	26.0
	31–35	28	11.2
	36 and above	8	3.2
<b>Gender</b>	Male	128	51.2
	Female	122	48.8
	Other	0	0.0
	Prefer not to say	0	0.0
<b>Employment Status</b>	Student	127	50.8
	Working professional	79	31.6
	Self-employed	41	16.4
	Unemployed	3	1.2
	Other	0	0.0

**Table No. 2**  
**Social Media Usage and Influencer Engagement**

Variable	Category	Count	%
<b>Social Media Usage Frequency</b>	Daily	240	96.0
	4–6 times per week	0	0.0
	1–3 times per week	0	0.0
	Rarely	10	4.0
<b>Primary Social Media Platforms Used</b> (Multiple responses possible)	Instagram	203	81.2
	YouTube	170	68.0
	Facebook	130	52.0
	X (Twitter)	60	24.0
	Sharechat	28	11.2
	Others	25	10.0
<b>Following Social Media Influencers</b>	Yes	168	67.2
	No	60	24.0

	Not sure	22	8.8
<b>Interaction with Influencer-Endorsed Ads</b>	Yes	215	86.0
	No	35	14.0
<b>Products Purchased via Influencer Promotion</b> (Multiple responses possible)	Clothing	78	31.2
	Electronics	63	25.2
	Beauty/Cosmetics	50	20.0
	Food & Beverages	38	15.2
	Fitness/Wellness	23	9.2
	Other	0	0.0
<b>Most Followed Influencer Categories</b> (Multiple responses possible)	Technology-related YouTubers	96	38.4
	Fashion & Beauty Influencers	78	31.2
	Fitness Influencers	63	25.2
	Travel Bloggers	37	14.8
	Couple Vloggers	26	10.4
	Others	4	1.6

Table No. 3

**Engagement with Influencer-Endorsed Online Ads**

Statement	DA	D	N	A	SA
1. I pay more attention to ads shared by influencers than to random ads online.	12 (4.8%)	28 (11.2%)	60 (24.0%)	100 (40.0%)	50 (20.0%)
2. I usually like or react to influencer posts that feature a product or brand.	10 (4.0%)	25 (10.0%)	65 (26.0%)	110 (44.0%)	40 (16.0%)
3. I comment more often on promotional posts from influencers I follow.	20 (8.0%)	35 (14.0%)	80 (32.0%)	90 (36.0%)	25 (10.0%)
4. I tend to click on links or swipe up when influencers share product ads.	15 (6.0%)	30 (12.0%)	70 (28.0%)	95 (38.0%)	40 (16.0%)
5. Influencer posts increase my interest in the advertised product.	8 (3.2%)	22 (8.8%)	60 (24.0%)	110 (44.0%)	50 (20.0%)
6. I spend more time reading/viewing influencer ads than regular online ads.	18 (7.2%)	32 (12.8%)	75 (30.0%)	95 (38.0%)	30 (12.0%)
7. I feel more connected to brands when they are promoted by influencers.	14 (5.6%)	26 (10.4%)	65 (26.0%)	100 (40.0%)	45 (18.0%)
8. I am likely to share influencer-endorsed ads with friends or family.	22 (8.8%)	30 (12.0%)	70 (28.0%)	90 (36.0%)	38 (15.2%)

Table No. 4

**Influencer Credibility and Purchase Behavior**

Statement	DA	D	N	A	SA
1. I trust that influencers recommend products they genuinely like.	10 (4.0%)	20 (8.0%)	60 (24.0%)	110 (44.0%)	50 (20.0%)
2. I consider influencers reliable sources for product recommendations.	12 (4.8%)	25 (10.0%)	65 (26.0%)	100 (40.0%)	48 (19.2%)
3. The more trustworthy the influencer, the more likely I am to buy the product.	8 (3.2%)	18 (7.2%)	55 (22.0%)	120 (48.0%)	49 (19.6%)
4. I have made a purchase decision because I trusted the influencer.	15 (6.0%)	30 (12.0%)	70 (28.0%)	95 (38.0%)	40 (16.0%)
5. An influencer's honesty influences whether I try a product.	9 (3.6%)	22 (8.8%)	60 (24.0%)	110 (44.0%)	49 (19.6%)
6. I believe influencers research products before recommending them.	11 (4.4%)	28 (11.2%)	65 (26.0%)	100 (40.0%)	46 (18.4%)

7. Influencer transparency (e.g., labelling ads) increases my trust.	10 (4.0%)	20 (8.0%)	60 (24.0%)	110 (44.0%)	50 (20.0%)
8. I rely on influencer opinions more than brand advertisements.	18 (7.2%)	35 (14.0%)	70 (28.0%)	90 (36.0%)	37 (14.8%)

Table No. 5

## Content Type and Advertisement Effectiveness

Statement	DA	D	N	A	SA
1. Short-form videos (e.g., reels) are more convincing than text posts.	10 (4.0%)	20 (8.0%)	60 (24.0%)	110 (44.0%)	50 (20.0%)
2. I trust influencer product reviews more when they are detailed and visual.	8 (3.2%)	18 (7.2%)	55 (22.0%)	120 (48.0%)	49 (19.6%)
3. I prefer live videos or real-time sessions when learning about products.	12 (4.8%)	25 (10.0%)	65 (26.0%)	100 (40.0%)	48 (19.2%)
4. Stories and behind-the-scenes content help me connect with the brand.	9 (3.6%)	22 (8.8%)	60 (24.0%)	110 (44.0%)	49 (19.6%)
5. I am more influenced by casual posts than highly scripted brand ads.	15 (6.0%)	30 (12.0%)	70 (28.0%)	95 (38.0%)	40 (16.0%)
6. Content with clear product demonstrations holds my attention longer.	11 (4.4%)	28 (11.2%)	65 (26.0%)	100 (40.0%)	46 (18.4%)
7. The format of influencer content affects whether I engage with the ad.	10 (4.0%)	20 (8.0%)	60 (24.0%)	110 (44.0%)	50 (20.0%)
8. I prefer genuine, lifestyle-based content over flashy promotional ads.	18 (7.2%)	35 (14.0%)	70 (28.0%)	90 (36.0%)	37 (14.8%)

## Testing of Hypotheses:

Table No. 6

## Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient

Construct Pair	Spearman's $\rho$	Interpretation
Engagement with Influencer-Endorsed Ads & Influencer Credibility and Purchase Behavior	0.78	Strong Positive Correlation
Content Type and Advertisement Effectiveness & Influencer Credibility and Purchase Behavior	0.72	Strong Positive Correlation

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