A Study On The Relationship Between Social Media Influencers And Consumer Behaviour

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ABSTRACT:

Influencers on social media are ushering in a new era of marketing and advertising by significantly changing public consumer behavior.Although brand ambassadors, paid promotions, free trips, discounts, and other benefits come with endorsing products or services, how can individuals actually get affected by social media influencers with a simple post on their platforms?Before the advent of social media, goods and services were advertised on television, in newspapers, and in pamphlets. Today, we witness social media influencers travelling to different locations to publicise products and reap the rewards of doing so on websites like Instagram, Facebook, Youtube, and others. The goal of this study is to determine how social media influencers affect customer behavior.The objective of this study is to analyse the impact of consumer behaviour in influence marketing, to study the negative effects of social media influencers towards a product and to understand the legal stance about the guidelines of social media influencers marketing.The present research is based on an empirical study. The information was gathered from individuals in south India utilizing helpful examining techniques. The sample size is 200 and the sampling method was a convenient sampling method. The independent variables are Age, Gender, Occupation, Educational Qualification and Place of living.The suggestions of the study would be that the social media influencers should always provide content which is honest and real even if it is a paid promotion by the brands.Since the majority of people utilise social media, it can be concluded that individuals are greatly influenced by social media influencers. As a result, new rules regulating social media influencers must be developed in order to protect consumers and their behaviour.

KEYWORDS: Brands, Consumer Behaviour, Influencer marketing, Paid promotions, Social Media, Social media influencers.

INTRODUCTION:

Social media influencers are the new era of advertising and marketing by greatly increasing the Consumer behaviour of the public. Before the era of Social media , products and services were marketed through television , newspapers, pamphlets and now we see Social media influencers promoting a product and going to places just to reach it out to the public and getting a benefit out of that through Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Youtube etc.. The influencers are getting a great benefit by promoting a product or service like paid promotions, free stays, discounts, brand ambassadors but how people really get influenced by the Social media influencers by a mere post in their social media platforms? This research paper attempts to find out social media influencers and their impact on consumers behaviour. Social media influencers are now a major marketing strategy and are termed as Influencer marketing. Influencer marketing existed for social media but it wasn't termed. At first famous Fictional characters in the 1950's paved they to buy those products by getting influenced , then came celebrity endorsements, such as celebrity promoting and advocating for a product such as Nike and Puma promoted by Basketball players, then when television became more accessible the reality TV shows, serials and movies influenced consumers to buy viral products showed in TV. Then when social media came into existence, normal regular people using social media become famous and the products they use or the lifestyle they live in paved the pathway to influencer marketing, now every person who becomes viral or famous in Social media platforms are either known as influencers or content creators and every post they put are being influenced by people who follow those influencers. And now comparing influencer marketing with celebrity endorsements or the old type of influencer marketing, a normal public person is more valued and are likely to be influenced by the public rather than rich celebrities who are not normal or middle class living people.So the brand companies have invested majorly in influencer marketing and social media influencers as they have huge increase and reach in the consumer market of their products. The advantages the influencers have are that they are just regular people just as the normal people so they build an emotional bond with the influencers and get influenced by everything that they do. The concept of paid promotions and influencer events also came into existence when brands started investing into influencer marketing. Discussing the consumer behaviour of the public, the public are more likely to buy a product if it is told by a person who they follow in instagram or youtube than seeing it in Ads or on TV. Once Influencer marketing became a major marketing strategy the Government made sure there implementation of new laws regarding influencer marketing.In India, consumer protection laws are essential for protecting the rights and interests of consumers in influencer marketing. The Consumer Protection Act of 2019 is the major piece of law in this area. The Act delineates the entitlements of consumers and delineates the obligations of enterprises and advocates in guaranteeing equitable business practices.Influencers are subject to regulatory bodies' advertising standards in addition to

consumer protection legislation. Advertising practices in India are monitored and regulated by the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), a self-regulatory body. Influencers ought to follow the rules set forth by the ASCI, in particular giving honest reviews,the influencers on being clear with the public that it is a paid promotion etc… Even Though social media influencers are the gamechanger of marketing, there are many factors affecting influencer marketing. The factors which affect influencer marketing are Lack of authenticity , influencers being dishonest are a major disadvantage as the public believe in the genuinity of the influencers when they are promoting a product even if it is a paid promotion.The brands invest so much on influencers but if the products or services are not being promoted properly then the brand has a huge loss in the consumer product as the public rely on the influencers for a genuine review. The other factor affecting the influencer market is finding the right type of influencer , each type of product a person is interested in has a different type of influencer they follow waiting to get a review from them , so brands have a great difficulty to find the right type of influencer to promote their product and choosing the wrong influencers may lead the product market into less sales or less demand. The buyer's purchasing decision is based on the influencers review, so when every brand has a new product the brand has a necessity to ask the influencers to make a review about their products or places, and by doing this the social media influencers become exploited leading to negative publicity of the products and their brands.So if brands are able to tackle these type of factors then the influencer market becomes the largest and the most valued strategy of marketing. Currently 93% of the brands follow the system of influencer marketing and in 2020 there were about 68% of the companies that increased their budget in influencer marketing.According to our Influencer Marketing Benchmark Report, influencer marketing grew throughout the pandemic and has subsequently prospered. It was projected that the influencer marketing sector would reach $21.1 billion by 2023. According to Data Bridge industry Research, with a 32.50% CAGR over 2022, the influencer marketing platform industry is expected to reach $69.92 billion in value by 2029. Japan has one of the largest influencer markets. After Japan, India grew at the second-fastest rate in 2022.About 76% of total expenditure originated in the US, but PQ Media projects that percentage to drop to about 68% by 2027 as influencer marketing becomes more popular. In the USA, influencer marketing is very common, and in Canada, it's expanding rapidly. Getting together with well-known people in your field or company might help you expand your audience and establish credibility.The Canadian market for influencer advertising is expected to expand by 12.06% between 2023 and 2028, reaching a market size of US$894.70 million by that year. This research paper attempts to find out social media influencers and their impact on consumers behaviour.

OBJECTIVES:
- To analyse the impact of consumer behaviour in influence marketing.
- To study the negative effects of social media influencers towards a product.
- To understand the legal stance about the guidelines of social media influencers marketing.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

(Virtual Influencer Marketing and its impact on customer purchase Behaviour- Prof. Dr. Simon Fauser Et.al) This paper analyses the phenomenon of virtual influencers and their impact on consumer behaviour also explores the scope and impact of virtual marketing. It is concluded that virtual marketing is growing and needs more research in the field of virtual influence marketing. **(The Effect of Influencer Marketing on Consumers' Brand Admiration and Online Purchase Intentions: An Emerging Market Perspective-Jay Trivedi, R. Sama)** This paper compares the mediating role of brand admiration and brand attitude between the influence of celebrity influencers and consumers' online purchase intentions. The data was collected from 438 respondents and it is concluded that there is a great advantage of using expert influencers rather than celebrity influencers while considering the marketing of brands. **(Influencer marketing: purchase intention and its antecedents-Yi Li, Yan Peng- 2021)** This paper studies the path of social media influencers and how it affects the target consumers to purchase a certain brand posted in their contents. The sample size is 510 and it is concluded that the social media influencers positively affects two attitudes of consumers that is satisfaction and brand-connection. **(Impact of fashion influencers on consumers' purchase intentions: theory of planned behaviour and mediation of attitude-A. Tiwari, Audhesh Kumar -2023)** This paper studies the impact of fashion influencers on consumers' purchase intentions and also to understand the influencer marketing of the fashion industry. It is concluded that fashion influencers portray a positive influence by a perceived trust and behaviour control. **(Psychological ownership in social media influencer marketing- Mandy Pick)** This study analyses the influencers' evaluation impact on the consumer behaviour and how it is seen psychologically. It is concluded that consumers' behaviour towards the psychological aspect of social media influencers is seen positively. **(An exploratory study to assess the impact of social media influencers on consumer's buying behaviour for online apparel shopping-Prachi Dahiya, G. Syamala)**This study examines the factors of the social media influencers' content and how they influence the consumer behaviour. It is concluded that the factors which are arising through the content posted by the social media influencers are on a genuine approach. **(A study on social media marketing and its impact on consumer buying behaviour with special reference to youths-K. Prabhakar, Mohammed Umair)**This study shows the impact and the problems of social media marketing and how it affects the consumer and their behaviour during their purchase decisions concentrating on the youth. It is concluded that the youth are more interested in SMM as they are technologically advanced. **(Effect of Social Media Influencer Marketing on Consumers' Purchase Intention and the Mediating Role of Credibility-Saima, M. A. Khan -nov 2020)** This paper studies to identify the effect of the various attributes of social media influencers with reference to their credibility towards the consumers' purchase intention. It is concluded that trustworthiness, information quality and entertainment value have direct effects on the credibility of the influencers. **(Investigates the Impact of Social Media Influencers' Personality, Content, and Trustworthiness on Consumers' Purchase Intention and eWOM-Kholod Khalid Aggad, F. Ahmad -dec 2021)** This study examines the impact of social media influencers personality,

and trustworthiness compared with their influence on the consumers' purchase decisions in Saudi Arabia. It is concluded that the social media influencers support the key factors that could explain consumers purchase intention. **(Influencer Marketing: How Message Value and Credibility Affect Consumer Trust of Branded Content on Social Media-Chen Lou, Shupei Yuan- jan 2019)** This paper discusses the theoretical and practical mechanism of influencer marketing which affects the consumers and their purchasing behaviour via social media. It is concluded that influence brand awareness and purchase intentions are looked upon by the trustworthiness of the influencers by the consumers. **(Influencer Impact: Examining the Effect of Influencers on Consumer Behaviour and Purchase Decisions Ms. Sraddhaa Mishra, Dr. Rubaid Ashfaq -Sept 2023)** This paper studies the role of social media influencers and how they shape the consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions of consumers. It is concluded that the elements of influencer marketing including the value and legitimacy of the content is what the consumers approach for. **(The Use of social media and its impacts on consumer behaviour: the context of holiday travel.-J. Fotis -May 2015)** This paper attempts to show the impact of social media on consumer behaviour relating to travel process information. It is concluded that social media is used by consumers in all the stages when they are travelling to make decisions. **(Impact of Social Media on Consumer Buying Behavior-Sony Varghese, Mansi Agrawal- march 2021)** This paper identifies how there are different aspects of social media with its influencers and how it impacts the consumer buying behaviour. It is concluded that the content and the review posted but the social media influencers are getting viral and Andre influenced by the consumers on the purchasing decisions. **(Social Media Advertising: A Study of Consumer Demographics- Madhuri Yadav- May 2023)** This paper studies on influencers talk about social media advertising and how it influences the consumers and their trust in selected social media with their reliability on social media advertising. It is concluded numerous social media networks such as Facebook, Instagram , YouTube works well in Social media advertising through well-informed people on social media. **(Do social networking sites contribute to building brands? Evaluating the impact of users' participation on brand awareness and brand attitude- Daniela Langaro, P. Rita, Maria de Fátima Salgueiro- February 2018)** This study concentrates on brand pages in social media like Facebook which is one of the most used platforms for brand promotions. It is concluded that the impact of users are well aware of the brand awards created in social media and how well they are towards the brand's attitude and marketing. **(Influencer marketing: brand control, commercial orientation and post credibility - F. Martínez-López Et.Al- September 2020)** This paper studies the theoretical model to explain the perception of brand control over an influencer's post on a commercial orientation and how it affects the consumers trust in influence. It is concluded that the trust on the influencer is reduced when the influencers post on a commercial orientation than in a perceived way of brand control. **(Influencer Marketing: An Exploratory Study to Identify Antecedents of Consumer Behavior of Millennial-Anjali Chopra, Vrushali Avhad, and Sonali Jaju- June 2020)** This paper shows the various aspects of influencer marketing and how it drives the consumer behaviour by using the theory of planned behaviour and social learning theory. It is

concluded that successful influencer marketing involves identifying the right type of influencer based on the consumer's interest. **(Conceptualising influencer marketing: A literature review on the strategic use of Social Media influencers- Ravindra Vaidya, Tapasya Karnawat- March 2023)** This paper attempts to provide insights of the existing research work which explores the strategic use of social media influencers. It is concluded that most of the studies related to social media influencers addressed influencers as a part of commercial making strategy. **(Influencer marketing and purchase intentions : how does influencer marketing affect purchase intentions?- Ida Kristin Johansen, Camilla Sveberg Guldvik- 2017)** This paper studies how influencer marketing measures up against the regular online advertising in the fields of marketing strategy with consumer behaviour. It is concluded that influencer marketing actively and positively influences the consumers on their attitude towards consumer behaviour. **(Investigating Consumer Engagement with Influencer- vs. Brand-Promoted Ads: The Roles of Source and Disclosure- Chen Lou, Sang-Sang Tan, Xiaoyu Chen-September 2019)** This paper compares the roles between the sets of advertisements which are influencers and brand promoted ads which affects consumers more. It is concluded that consumers shows cult like appreciation for influencers sharing products and if they show high involvement in product promotions than normal brand advertisements.

METHODOLOGY:

The present research is an Empirical study. The information was gathered from individuals in south India utilizing helpful examining techniques. The sample size is 200.The sampling method was a convenient sampling method. The independent variables are Age, Gender, Occupation, Educational Qualification and Place of living. The dependent variables based on the questions: have the respondents bought any products by getting influenced by social media influencers, which of the following has the most negative effect of social media marketing etc…The statistical tools are clustered Bar graphs done through SPSS.
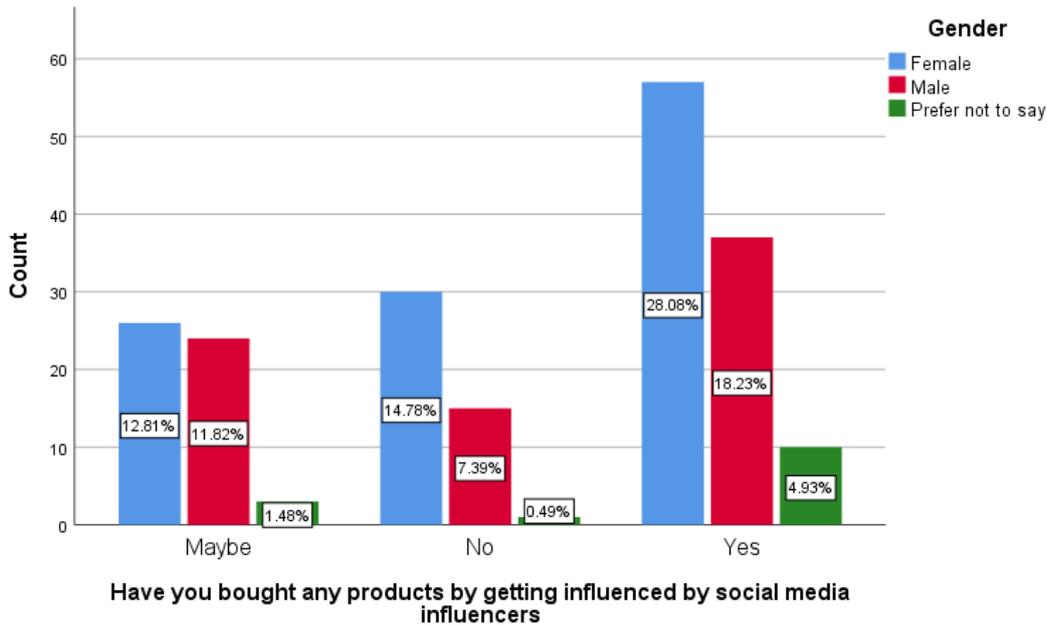
ANALYSIS:

FIGURE 1:

Clustered Bar Count of Have you bought any products by getting influenced by social media influencers by Age
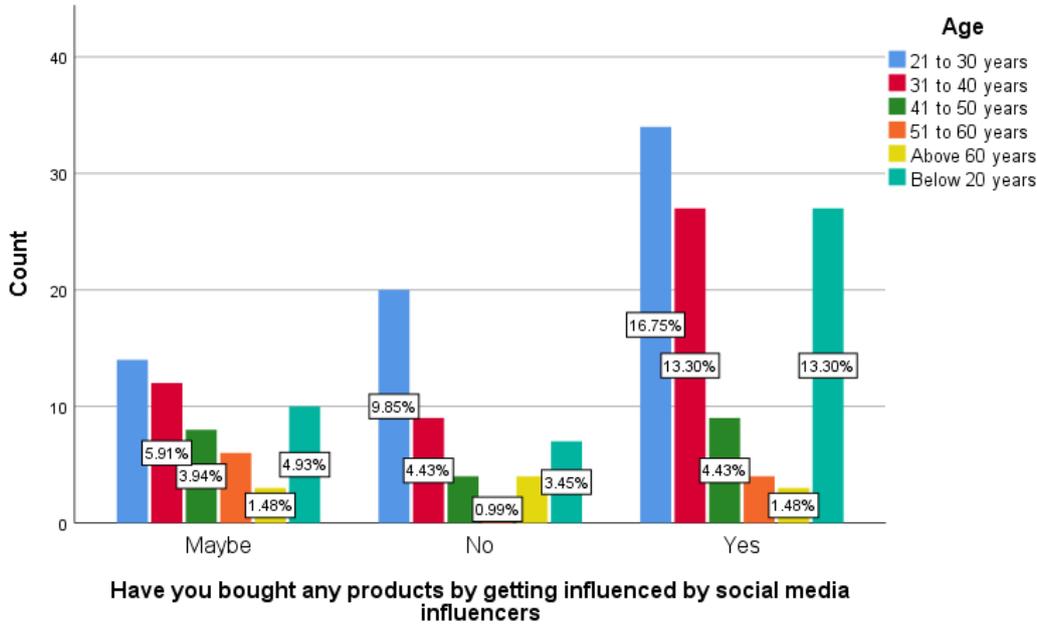
Legend: Fig 1 shows the age of the respondents with the question have they bought any products by getting influenced by social media influencers.

FIGURE 2:

Clustered Bar Count of Have you bought any products by getting influenced by social media influencers by Gender

Legend: Fig 2 shows the gender of the respondents and with the question where the respondents have bought any products by getting influenced by social media influencers.

FIGURE 3:

Clustered Bar Count of State your agree ability on this statement "promotion of products by social media influencers are more effective than usual marketing" by Educational Qualification
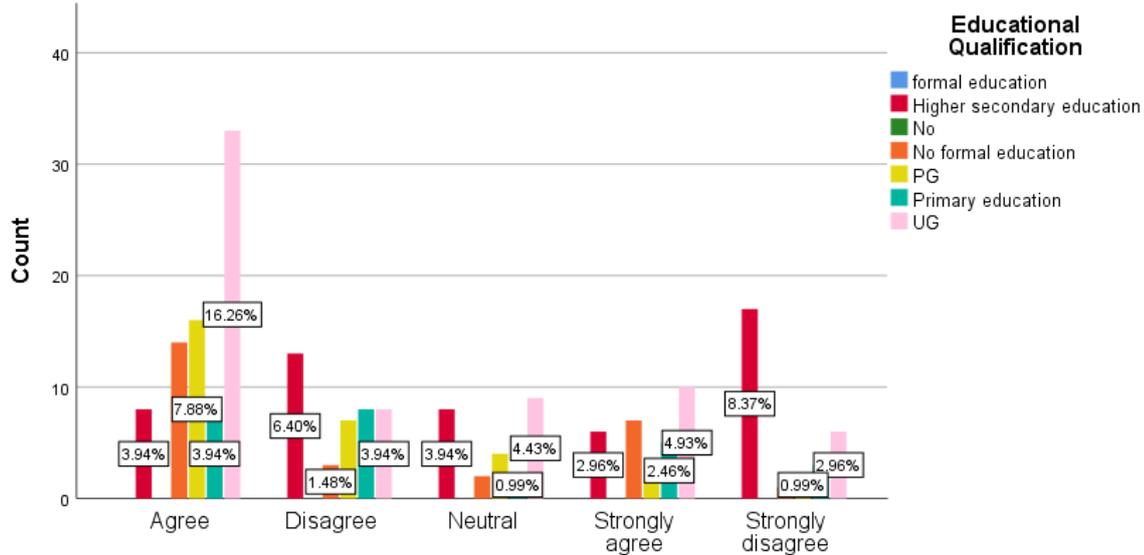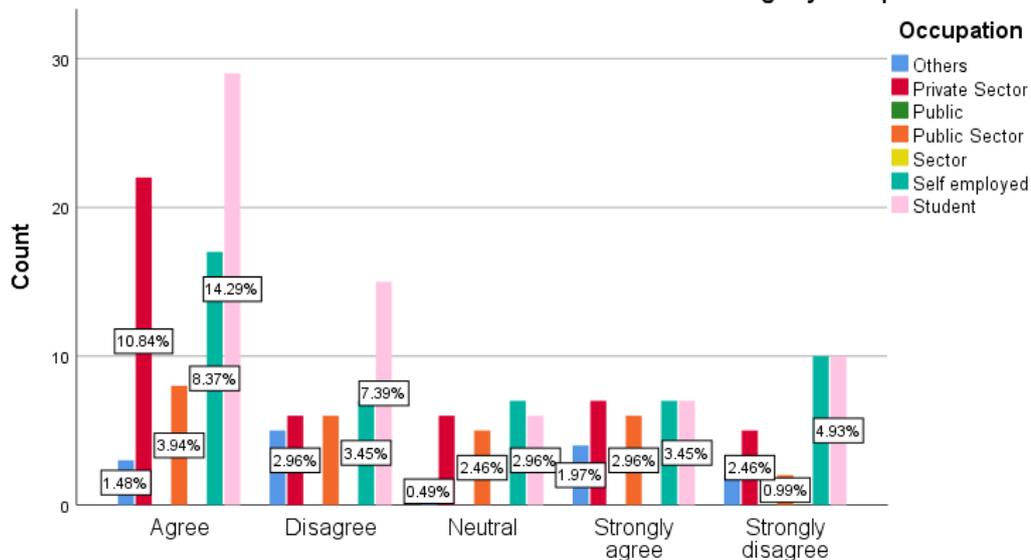
Legend: Fig 3 shows the Educational qualification of the respondents and the agreeability of the statement, "promotion of products by social media influencers are more effective than usual marketing"
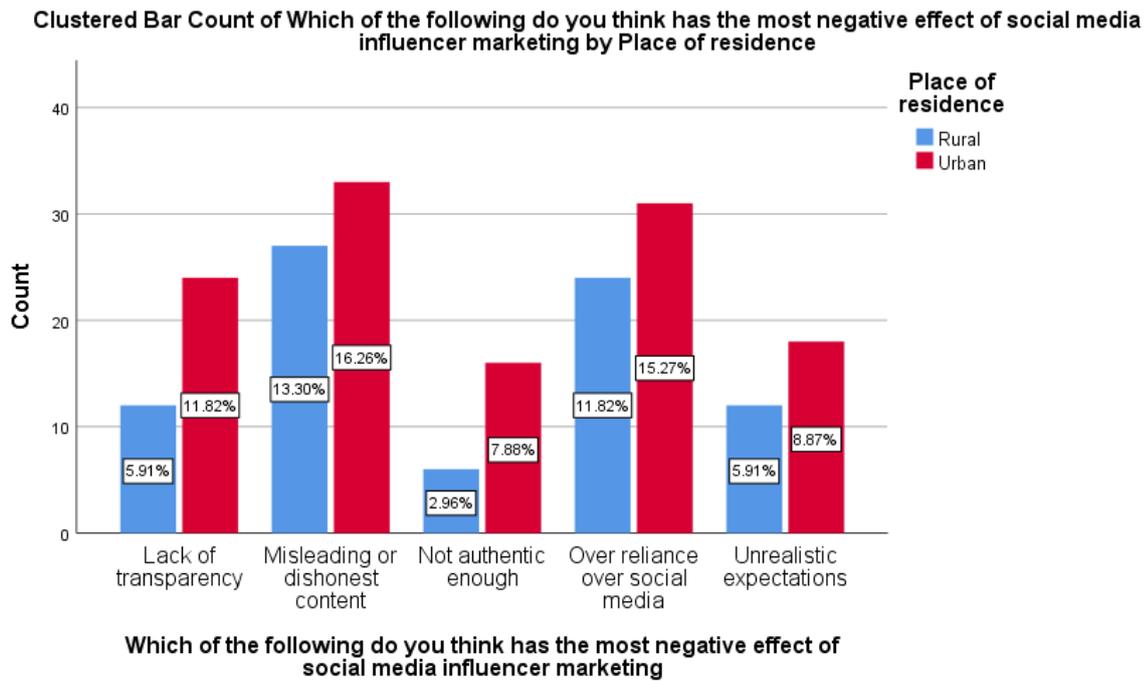
FIGURE 4:

Clustered Bar Count of State your agree ability on this statement "promotion of products by social media influencers are more effective than usual marketing" by Occupation

Legend: fig 4 shows the Occupation of the respondents with the agreeability of the statement, "promotion of products by social media influencers are more effective than usual marketing"

FIGURE 5:

Clustered Bar Count of Which of the following do you think has the most negative effect of social media influencer marketing by Place of residence
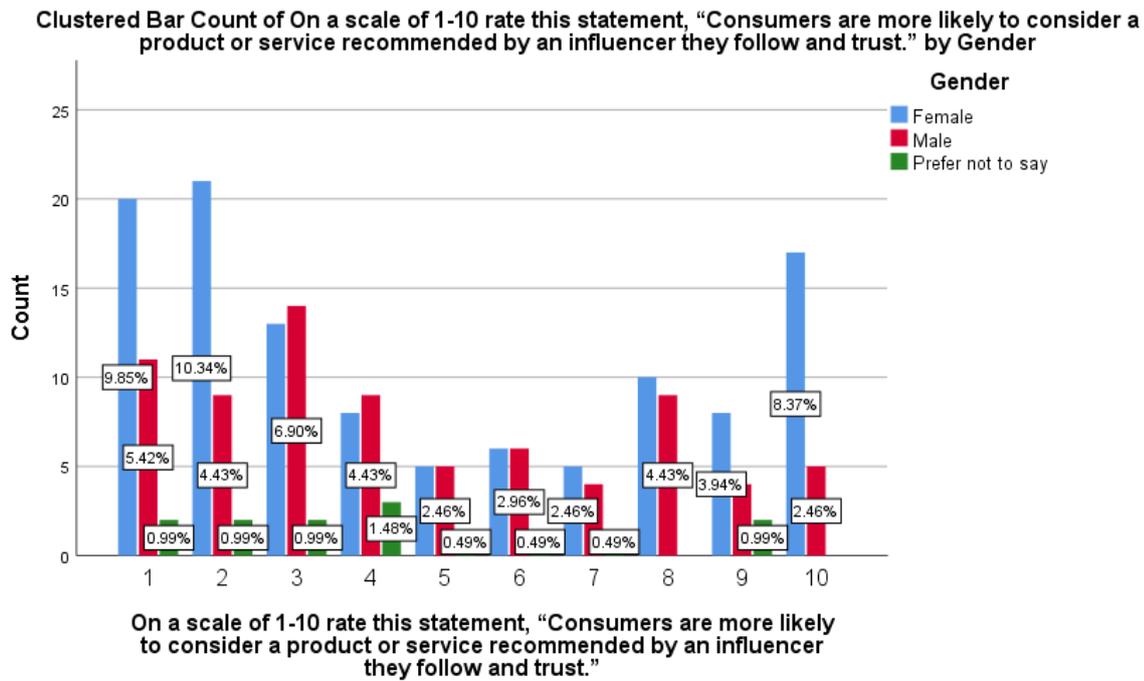
Legend: Figure 5 shows the place of residence of the respondents to the question which of the following do you think has the most negative effect of social media influencer marketing

FIGURE 6:

Clustered Bar Count of Which of the following do you think has the most negative effect of social media influencer marketing by Age
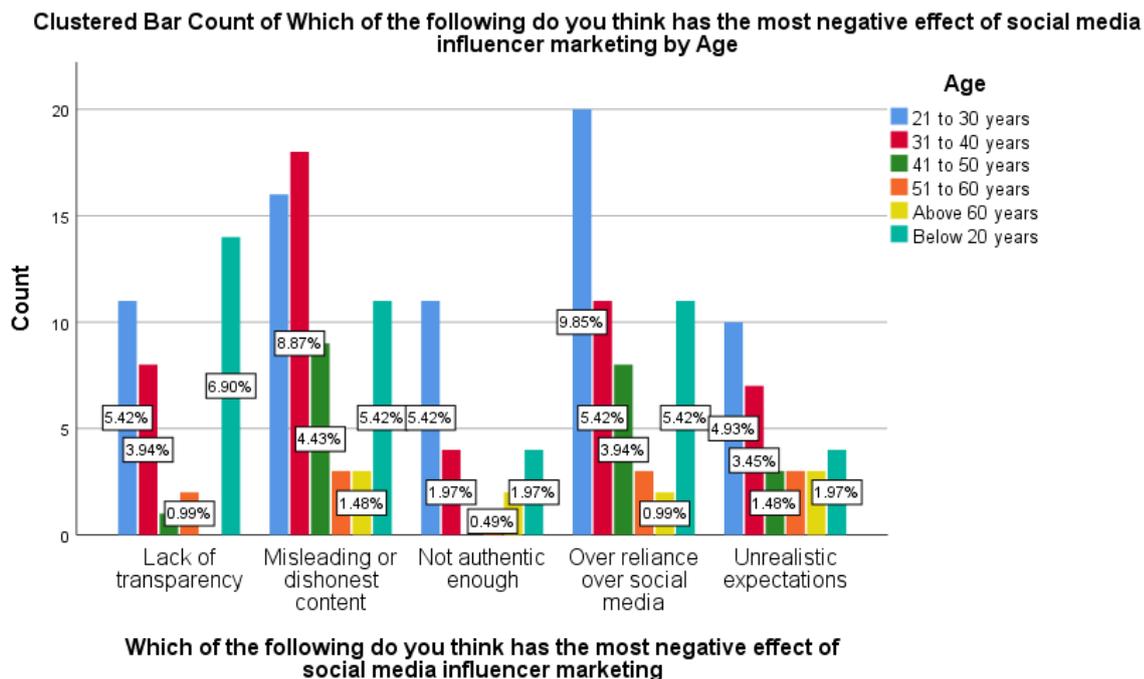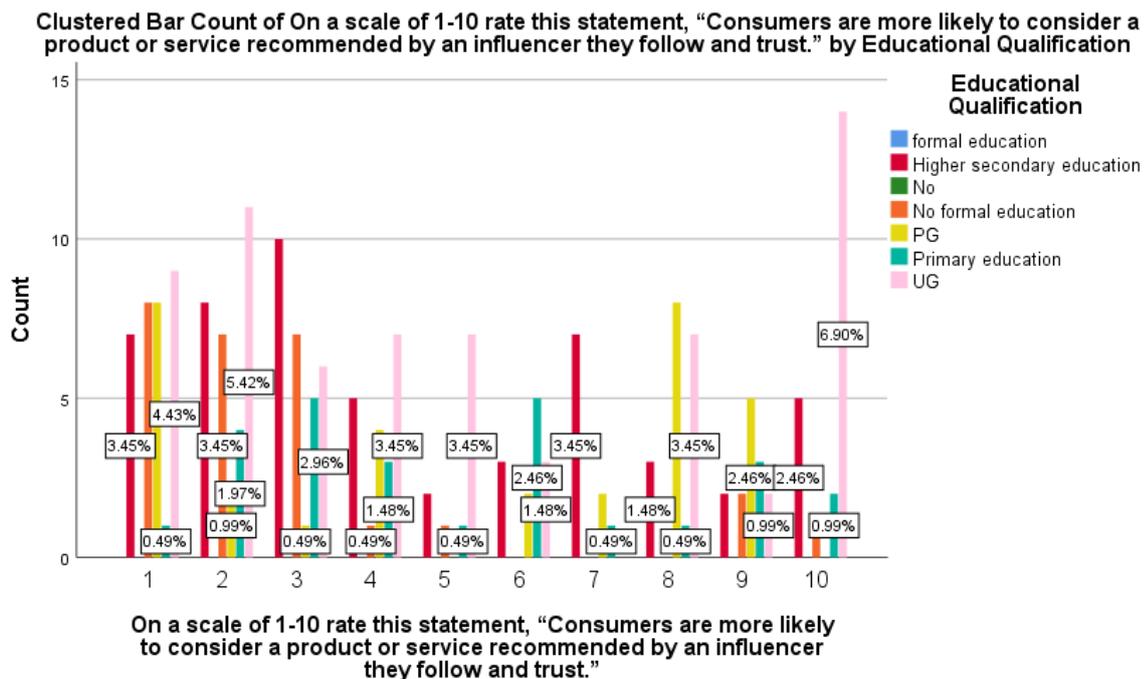
Legend: Fig 6 shows the age of the respondents to the question which of the following do you think has the most negative effect of social media influencer marketing.

FIGURE 7:

Clustered Bar Count of On a scale of 1-10 rate this statement, "Consumers are more likely to consider a product or service recommended by an influencer they follow and trust." by Gender

Legend: Fig 7 shows the gender of the respondents with their rating on the statement, "consumers are more likely to consider a product or service recommended by an influencer they follow and trust"

FIGURE 8:

Clustered Bar Count of On a scale of 1-10 rate this statement, "Consumers are more likely to consider a product or service recommended by an influencer they follow and trust." by Educational Qualification

Legend: Fig 8 shows the educational qualification of the respondents with their rating on the statement, "consumers are more likely to consider a product or service recommended by an influencer they follow and trust"
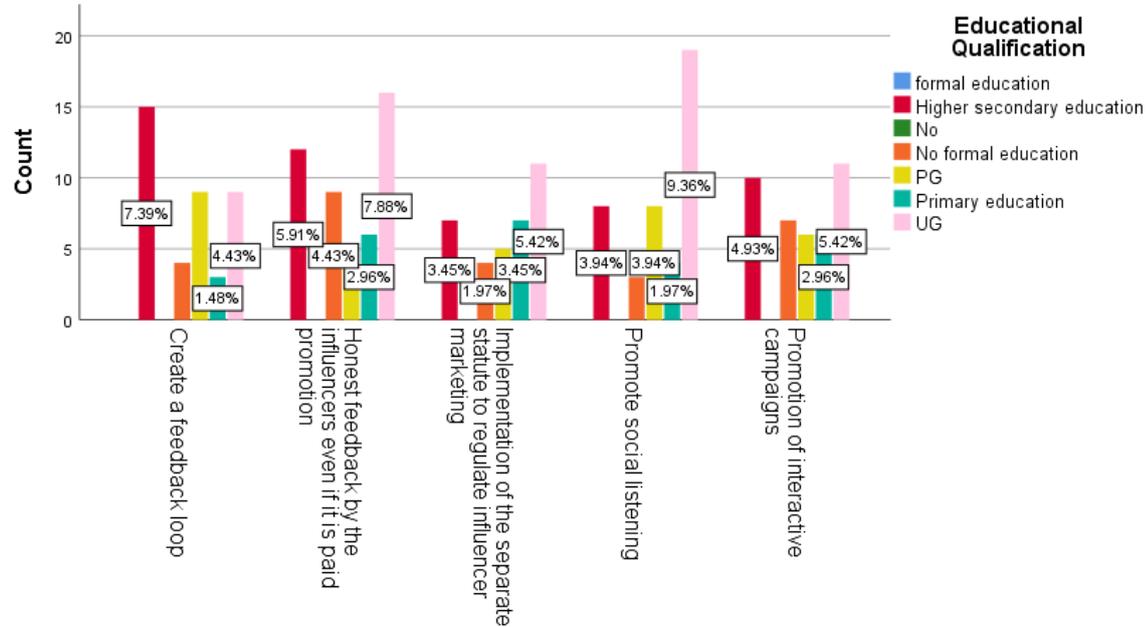
FIGURE 9:

Clustered Bar Count of Which of The following Guidelines have to be implemented by Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)to make the influencers marketing more effective by Educational Qualification

Legend:Fig 9 shows the educational qualification of the respondents with their opinion on which of the following guidelines have to be implemented by Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) to make influencer marketing more effective.
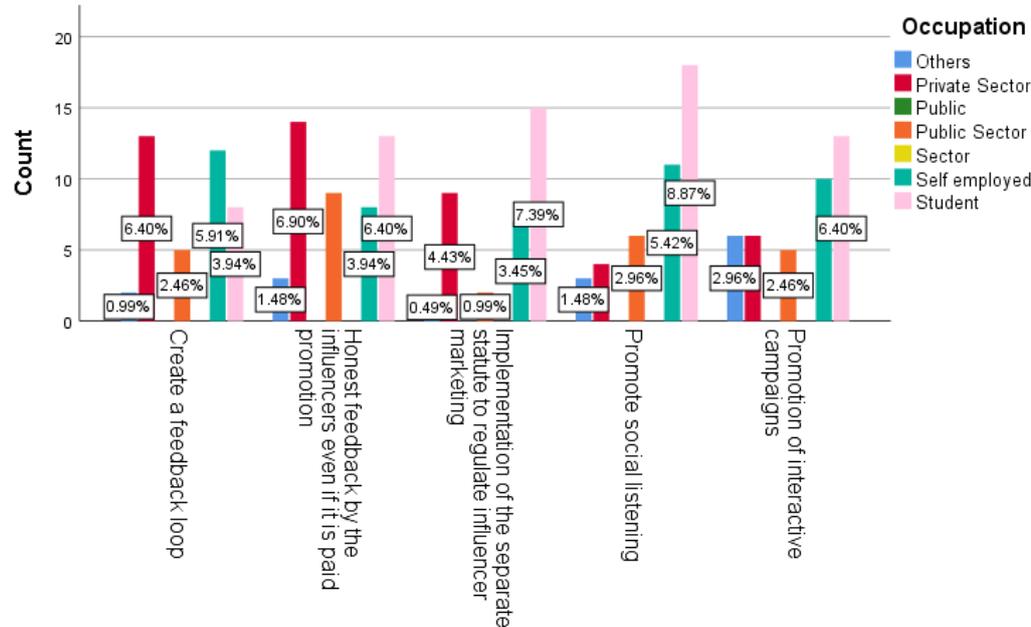
FIGURE 10:

Clustered Bar Count of Which of The following Guidelines have to be implemented by Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)to make the influencers marketing more effective by Occupation

Legend: Fig 10 shows the Occupation of the respondents with their opinion on which of the following guidelines have to be implemented by Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) to make influencer marketing more effective.
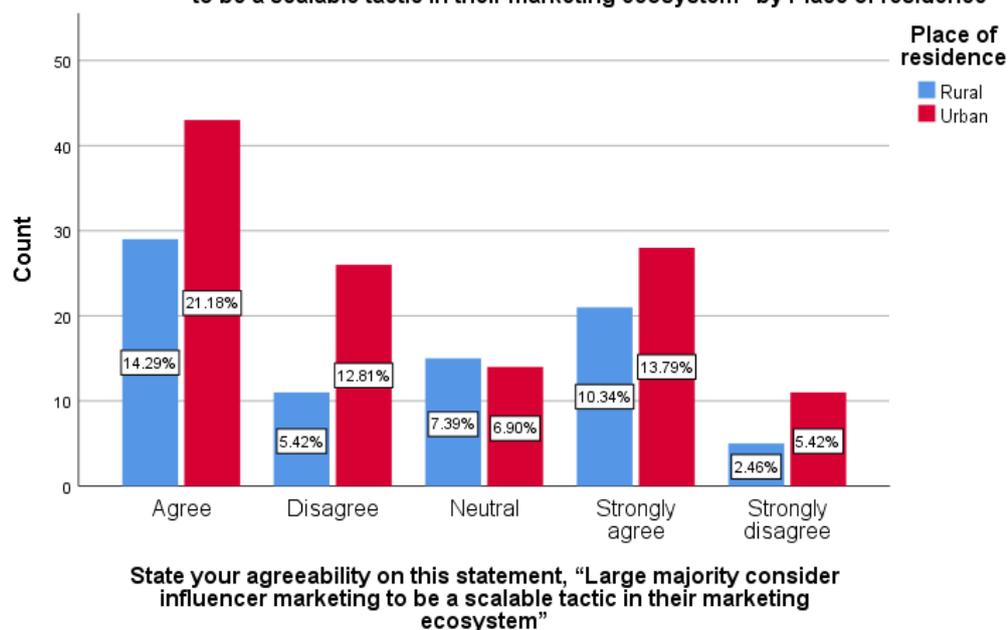
FIGURE 11:

Clustered Bar Count of State your agreeability on this statement, "Large majority consider influencer marketing to be a scalable tactic in their marketing ecosystem" by Place of residence

Legend: Fig 11 shows the place of the residence of the respondents with their agreeability on the statement, "large majority consider influencer marketing to be a scalable tactic in their marketing ecosystem"
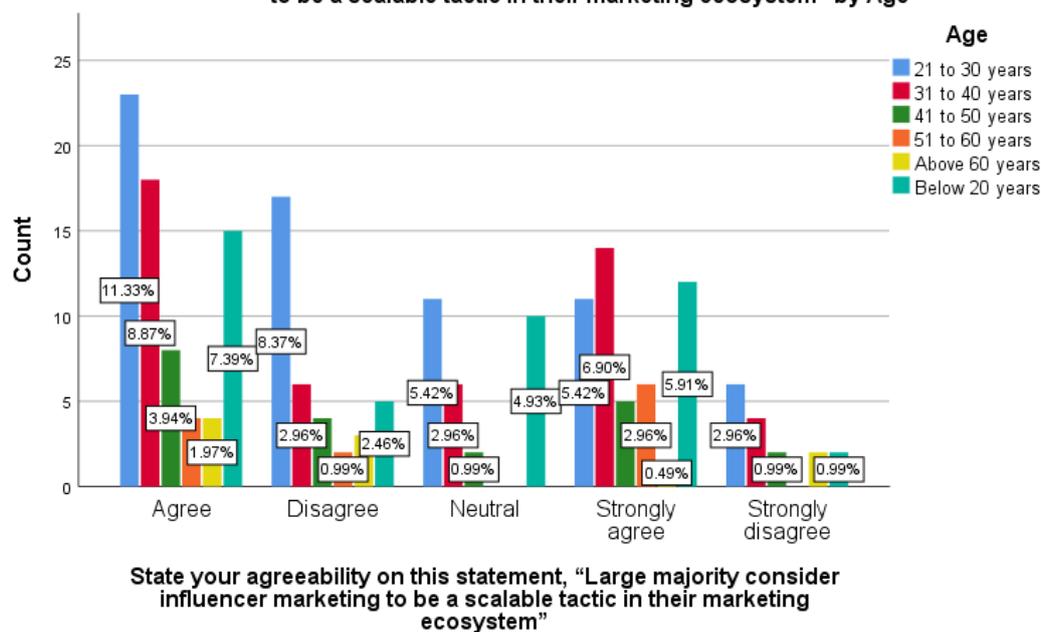
FIGURE 12:

Clustered Bar Count of State your agreeability on this statement, "Large majority consider influencer marketing to be a scalable tactic in their marketing ecosystem" by Age

Legend: Fig 12 shows the age of the respondents with their agreeability on the statement, "large majority consider influencer marketing to be a scalable tactic in their marketing ecosystem"

RESULTS:

In **Figure 1** the age category from 21 to 30 years have said yes which is 16.75% and those below 20 years age category have also voted yes has the highest which is 13.30% but 51 to 60 years have voted no as their lowest which is 0.99%. In **Figure 2** the female gender have said yes the highest which is 28.08% and the lowest at maybe 12.81% whereas the male have responded yes to the question which has 18.23% and the lowest by prefer not to say no which is 0.49%. In **Figure 3** the UG category of educational qualification had agreed to the question the highest which is 16.26% and lowest in the strongly disagree option which is 2.96% and the Higher secondary education has strongly disagreed to the question which is 8.37%. In **Figure 4** the respondents belonging to the private sector have agreed to the question which is 10.84% and the student category have also agreed the highest which is 14.29% whereas the public sector have strongly disagreed which is 0.99% . In **Figure 5** the rural living respondents have voted highly to the option "Misleading and dishonest content" which is 13.30% and have voted lowest in the option "not authentic enough" which is 2.96% whereas the urban respondents have voted highly to the option "Misleading and dishonest content" which is 16.26% and lowest to the option "not authentic enough which" is 2.96%. In **Figure 6** the age category of 21 to 30 years have highly voted to the option "Over reliance over social media" which is 9.85% and lowest to the option "unrealistic expectations" which is 4.93% and the below 20 years age category have voted to the option "not authentic enough" the lowest which is 1.97%. In **Figure 7** the female respondents have highly rated 2 which is 10.345 and lowest in 5 and 7 which is 2.46% whereas the male respondents have highly rated 3 which is 6.90% and the lowest to 7 which is 0.49%.In **Figure 8** the UG have highly rated to 10 which is 6.90% and the lowest in 3 which is 2.96% where as the primary education have highly rated to 3 and 6 which is 2.46% and lowest to 10 which is 0.99%.In **Figure 9** the UG have voted to the option "promote social listening" the highest which is 9.36% and the lowest to the option "create a feedback loop" which is 4.43% whereas the Higher secondary education category of respondents have highly voted to the option "create a feedback loop" which is 7.39% and lowest to the option "implementation of the separate statute to regulate influencer marketing" which is 3.45%. In **Figure 10** the student category of respondents have highly voted to the option "promote social listening" which is 8.875 and lowest to the option "create a feedback loop" which is 3.94% where as the self employed respondents have highly voted to the option "create a feedback loophole" which is 5.91% and the lowest in "honest feedback by the influencers" even if it is paid promotion which is 3.94%. In **Figure 11** the urban respondents have highly agreed to the question which is 21.18% and strongly disagreed the lowest which is 5.42% whereas the rural respondents have highly agreed to the question which is 14.29% and strongly disagreed to the lowest which is 2.46%.In **Figure 12** age category of 21 to 30 years have highly agreed to the question which is 11.33% and strongly disagreed the lowest which is 2.96% where as the age category of 31 to 40 years have highly agreed to the question which is 8.87% and have strongly disagreed the lowest which is 0.99%.

DISCUSSION:

Figure 1 The clustered bar graph shows that there is an active and surge levelled participation of the 21-30 years in the social media platforms, where they come across various influencers and purchase the products promoted by them. **Figure 2** The graph shows that female respondents as the major sample who purchased products by getting influenced by the social media influencer, in general this depicts the sale of the lifestyle oriented products being promoted. **Figure 3** The graph depicts UG people are found to be more influenced by social media marketing than the usual form of the marketing systems, this shows the vast influence by the influencer over the people. **Figure 4** The graph shows that the students are a category of people who are merely influenced over the media based representation on social media by influencers rather than the traditional form of the marketing or the promotion of the products. **Figure 5** the graph shows that the content though promoted by the influencer they are subjected to is misleading or sometimes found to be dishonest content. **Figure 6** people of the age 21-30 years found themselves to be over-reliant upon the social media rather than research upon the scientific or the proved source.**Figure 7** This graph shows both positive and the negative form of the responses by the female as they are found to be major consumers of the products from the social media. **Figure 8** the UG who belong to the youngster community found to hold trust over the influencer promotion besides the trustworthiness over the product. **Fig 9** the clustered bar graph shows there is a need for the honest feedback to be provided by the influencer rather than just promoting only the products with its pro and failing to explicitly mention the cons of the product they promote. **Figure 10** there is need for the implementation of the separate statute to regulate the influencer marketing as there is a chance for the offender to make a loophole by conceding the IT Act and Consumer protection Act. **Figure 11** the graph depicts that influencer marketing is just a form of tactic marketing that works on the principle of inspired lifestyle model. **Figure 12** the clustered bar chart shows that young aged people are found to be the active and surging participants of the influencer market.

SUGGESTIONS:

Social media influencers have a great advantage in their platforms as influencer marketing is the new era of marketing evolution and also in consumer behaviour.The suggestions of the study would be that the social media influencers should always provide content which is honest and real even if it is a paid promotion by the brands. The new amendment of the guidelines for the social media influencers by the ASCI should be followed and more new laws should be implemented to protect both the influencers and the consumers. The consumer behaviour and their purchasing decisions are based on their media algorithm and the influencers they follow so consumers should also be aware of how they are getting influenced and do their own research on each product before they purchase it and not buy merely by getting influenced by the social media influencers.

LIMITATION TO STUDY:

The major limitation of the study is the sample frame. The sample frame Collected through bus stands,malls,etc. where the respondents aren't devoted enough to answer the questions. The restrictive area of sample size is yet another drawback of the research.

CONCLUSION:

Social media influencers are the new era of advertising and marketing by greatly increasing the Consumer behaviour of the public. Before the era of Social media , products and services were marketed through television , newspapers, pamphlets and now we see Social media influencers promoting a product and going to places just to reach it out to the public and getting a benefit out of that through Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Youtube etc.. These influencers are getting a great benefit by promoting a product or service like paid promotions, free stays, discounts, brand ambassadors but how people really get influenced by the Social media influencers by a mere post in their social media platforms? This research paper attempts to find out social media influencers and their impact on consumers behaviour,To study the negative effects of social media influencers towards a product and To understand the legal stance about the guidelines of social media influencers marketing.The major findings of the study is that many of the respondents are aware of the effect or the impact of social media influencers in consumer behaviour, consumers are more likely to buy a product that is being reviewed by social media influencers than normal people reviewing it or promotion of the product by brands.The effectiveness of influencer marketing is contingent upon thoughtful collaboration, transparency, and adaptability to evolving trends, suggesting the necessity of a dynamic and ethical framework for sustainable success in this marketing realm. Moreover, the study underscores the need for standardized metrics to measure the effectiveness of influencer campaigns accurately. Establishing clear key performance indicators (KPIs) and refining measurement tools will contribute to a more data-driven and accountable influencer marketing ecosystem. As the industry continues to evolve, adaptability emerges as a recurring theme. Brands and influencers must remain attuned to shifting trends, platforms, and consumer preferences. Flexibility in strategies and a proactive approach to emerging challenges will be instrumental in navigating the dynamic landscape of influencer marketing. In conclusion, the study not only highlights the remarkable potential of influencer marketing but also emphasizes the imperative of ethical practices, transparency, and adaptability for sustained success in this ever-evolving domain.It is concluded that people are getting heavily influenced by the social media influencers since most of the people use social media , so there must be new laws implemented to regulate the social media influencers in order to protect the consumers and their behaviour. It is also concluded that the negative effects of influencer marketing can damage the system of influencer marketing, so the brands and the companies should be aware of the negative effects of influencer marketing and protect the influencer by giving them the liberty to promote their products honestly as it can be a scalable tactic in the marketing and consumer ecosystem.

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