

Social Media Influencer Marketing: Understanding Perceived Popularity, Knowledge, and Trustworthiness in Consumer Behavior

Vaishali Panda

*School of Mass Communication
Chitkara University
Punjab, India*

Email Id- vaishalipanda.india@gmail.com

Ashutosh Mishra

*School of Mass Communication
Chitkara University
Punjab, India*

Abstract— Social media influencer marketing is a very important component as a source of advertising for brands, products, or services. The reason behind this is that consumer behavior is highly influenced by the perceived popularity, knowledge, and trustworthiness of the influencers. Thus, the study focuses on the complex interaction between a consumer and influencer on social media platforms and how it affects the purchasing behavior of the consumer. The study is based on a conceptual framework to understand the attitude of the consumer towards the content that is promoted through influencer marketing. It is anticipated that consumer behavior gets affected by the popularity of the influencer/celebrity endorsing the brand, and it also depends upon the frequency of the ads that consumers come across. It is also anticipated that the knowledge of the influence and trust a consumer has in the influencer also affects the purchase intent. A survey with 739 samples and a questionnaire based on influencer marketing and purchase intent was conducted, which was based on a 5-point scaling method. With the goal to gain insight into the effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies, the study aims at exploring how various influencer attributes as well as the kind of their promotional content influence consumer buying behaviour.

Keywords—Social Media, Influencers, Sponsor, Advertisement, Social Media Marketing

I. INTRODUCTION

Social Media Influencer marketing facilitates businesses to partner with individuals which hold a large followership, enhancing their brand exposure among the target consumers [1]. Businesses get involved with the influencers in order to post social media content endorsing their products or services [2]. Social media users typically follow influencers they trust, thus observing someone they follow endorsing business builds inherent trust, potentially elevating the conversion rate of the brand [2] [3].

An important aspect of any influencer on social media strategies involves identifying influencers suitable for endorsing the brand, product or service [3]. For instance, if the brand specializes in fitness, collaborating with an influencer famous for promoting health and fitness are most advisable [4]. In such a case, it is ideal to team up with influencers meeting this criteria who attain some knowledge, as their followers are likely interested in their recommendations.

A) Is Social Media influencer marketing effective?

There are many key benefits of social media influencer marketing in order to approach the target consumer and to influence their purchase intent.

- **Credibility and Trustworthiness:** Certain businesses find it hard to promote their products and services as consumers don't trust them [4] [12]. For those businesses, it becomes essential that they convey trustworthiness to new customers. A business may rapidly boost the trustworthiness and dependability of their brand by working with influencers who have followers who trust them [2] [5].
- **Practical Profitable worthwhile:** A major advantage of influencer marketing is its cost-effectiveness [3] [6]. If a brand/product. Service oriented companies opt for this strategy, they may yield a substantial return on investment by partnering with the right individuals.
- **Attracting Prospect Consumers:** with the help of influencer campaigns a brand can reach individuals who are likely interested in their products and services, potentially facilitating an increase in purchase intent [4].
- **Raising Brand Awareness:** Working with celebrities and influencers gets the products and services being sold in view of a wider audience immediately. Some celebrities possess millions of followers. Therefore, influencer marketing may improve awareness of brands in a number of ways [5] [7].

B) Kinds of Social Media Influencers

Social Media Influencers play a very important role in interacting with target consumer and advertising brand messages in the current social media marketing landscape. These influencers come in various shapes and sizes, and based on the objectives of the brand campaign and financial constraints, each one offers unique benefits [6].

i. Mega or Celebrity Influencers:

With more than a million followers, these influencers are at the top of the social media influencer hierarchy. Usually made up of well-known actors, musicians, sportsmen, and public personalities, they have a big impact on a wide range of people. Their celebrity status demands attention, making them perfect for brand efforts looking for broad exposure. However, working with mega influencers can be expensive, and their large following might lead to lower engagement rates than with specialised influencers [51].

Companies that stand to gain from partnerships with mega influencers include:

- Big businesses with lots of resources and flexible spending plans.
- companies who aim to reach a diverse range of consumers with a range of interests and demographics.
- Luxury brands that strive to project an air of distinction and exclusivity [52].

ii. Macro-Influencers

Having between 100,000 and 1 million followers, macro-influencers fall in between mega- and micro-influencers. These people have become thought leaders in their respective fields by producing and interacting with material consistently [9]. Although working with macro influencers might help a company reach a wider audience, depending on the specifics of the campaign, expenses could still be high [51].

Businesses that might find value in relationships with macro influencers include:

- Startups looking for quick recognition and respect in their industry.
- Non-profit groups working to increase awareness and financial support for their issues.
- Travel and hospitality brands aimed at a broad but well-defined audience segment [52].

iii. Micro-Influencers

Having between 10,000 and 100,000 followers, micro-influencers have become well-known figures in their local communities. Recognised for their genuine content and elevated rates of interaction, they present a reasonably priced option for businesses to establish a connection with a certain demographic [51].

Companies such as the following could gain from working with micro-influencers:

- Brands using real endorsements to boost conversions and meaningful interaction.
- Marketers want to increase return on investment by utilising the authenticity and trust that come with working with micro-influencers [52].

iv. Nano Influencers

At the lower echelons of the influencer marketing hierarchy are those known as "nano-influencers," who have less than 10,000 followers. Nano-influencers are useful partners for brands that target particular demographics or communities because, despite their limited reach, they cultivate genuine connection and trust within their communities [51].

Companies that stand to gain from working with nano-influencers include:

- Local businesses trying to foster a sense of brand loyalty in certain neighborhoods.
- Small companies looking for affordable marketing options.
- artisanal companies seeking to present distinctive goods to an open-minded public [5].

In conclusion, the influencer network offers marketers an endless number of methods to connect with audiences of all kinds and sizes. By recognising the advantages and benefits of each influencer tier, marketers may create beneficial partnerships that connect with their target audience and lead to provable results. [8][29].

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Celebrity integration into marketing campaigns is a tried-and-true tactic that has been shown to be consistently beneficial in drawing in customers and enhancing brand recognition [9]. Companies invest a lot of money on celebrity endorsements because they know that having a well-known public figure support their goods or services can increase their popularity. Celebrity endorsement, as it is generally called, is a frequently used approach that works on the basis of using celebrities' aspirational traits and influence to positively affect consumer views and behaviours, ultimately leading to favourable advertising outcomes [10][11].

But in recent years, another genre of influential people has come up and they are called as social media influencers, who have significantly changed the marketing scenarios [9]. These influencers have now become celebrity faces among the people and have become well-known by a variety of internet platforms to build huge fan bases and have considerable control over their viewers [13]. In contrast to the traditional celebrities, who became famous among the crowd via entertainment platforms like television or cinema, athletics, or other popular domains, social media influencers made out their credibility and trust in the market, which includes almost every domain from fitness and gaming to beauty and fashion [14].

Online celebrities, also referred to as social media influencers, have become popular through social media where they constantly create and disseminate useful original and fun content as per their knowledgeable domain. These influencers project authentic information which is in accordance with their followers interest and hence curate intimate relations with a large following, and thus wield a positive influence over their followers affecting their purchases and decision making intent. These influencers come under certain groups, such as mega, macro, and nano influencers, and also celebrity influencers. contrast with traditional celebrities, who usually gain fame by achievements in entertainment, athletics, or other famous fields, social media influencers build themselves their authority and trust in focused sectors, that involve everything from fitness and gaming to beauty and fashion. [16].

The emergence of influencer marketing has led to substantial investment in the sector, as companies allocate more funds to partnering with social media influencers in order to leverage their audience and power [15][17]. Forecasts show that spending on influencer marketing will increase exponentially, highlighting the strategy's proven ability to increase consumer engagement and brand affinity, especially with younger audiences who clearly prefer real, relatable content creators to traditional celebrities [14][17].

Alongside influencer marketing's widespread use, scholarly investigation into it has grown, with researchers attempting to understand the fundamental dynamics and mechanisms that underpin connections between influencers and followers [18]. Research delves into a number of aspects, such as the legitimacy of influencers, the significance of the material, and the nuances of audience interaction, illuminating the nuances of this emerging marketing paradigm [19].

Influencer-follower dynamics are marked by mutual connection and genuine involvement, as opposed to the one-sided nature of parasocial interactions that are common in traditional media consumption [23]. Influencers on social media actively build relationships with their followers by communicating in a personalized way, listening to their comments, and fostering a feeling of belonging [21]. Beyond the superficiality frequently connected to conventional celebrity endorsements, this reciprocal engagement cultivates a deeper degree of connection and resonance [28].

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

A) Popularity

The relationship between perceived popularity and sources is intricately linked to social norms. When it comes to successful advertising, a source's popularity mostly depends on how well it can connect with the audience through likeability,

familiarity, and resemblance [20]. Similarity measures how much the source and the recipient (such as social media followers) are thought to resemble one another, whereas familiarity measures how much the recipient has learned about the source from exposure[22]. On the other hand, likeability is derived from the source's demeanor and physical attributes[25].

The social media influencers are crucial in increasing the visibility of the advertisement, especially when the influencers have remarkable similarities with their target audience [24]. There are certain physical attributes, which include height, weight, beauty etc. which have a significant impact on how people see their influencers.

Popular influencer endorsement is a very essential tactic in order to raise consumer awareness and acceptance of advertised brand, product and service. [26][27]. According to research, consumers' purchase intentions are more likely to be supported by endorsers who are viewed as beautiful. As a result, leveraging a source's physical popularity can greatly increase the impact of advertising [28].

Through the observation the following theories are put forth in this study:

H1: The popularity of social media influencers gives positive attitudes toward the advertised content.

H2: The popularity of social media influencers gives positive attitudes toward the advertised brand.

H3: The popularity of social media influencers give positive purchase intentions for advertised products.

B) Knowledge

According to popular definitions, expertise is "the perceived capacity of a source to make credible statements." In this instance, the endorser is thought to be adequately informed to provide reliable facts or viewpoints on a certain subject. One can presume that an endorser with greater authority has a better level of experience and can therefore influence buying intentions more strongly [25][27].

Previous research has shown that customers' purchasing decisions and perceptions of a source's credibility can be influenced by its level of knowledge. When a source promotes high-end and useful brands, their influence becomes even more important [28]. Consequently, adopting traditional messaging or brand marketing is less effective than hiring an endorser with appropriate experience [28]. Furthermore, Chaovalit's study shows a strong relationship between knowledge and purchasing behaviour, highlighting the role that expertise plays in influencing customer choices [30].

In a similar vein, internet shoppers acknowledge that influencers' knowledge or familiarity with the product is essential to their endorsements being successful. Fit among the influencer and the product has an important effect on credibility, particularly for people who have proven themselves as experts in particular sectors like fitness, beauty, gaming, or fashion [31]. Influencers seem to be more real and trustworthy than typical celebrities since they often have direct knowledge of the products they endorse. This authenticity is most obvious when it comes to some things, such as food and drink, cosmetics, etc., because influencers usually consume and know about the products before promoting them to their followers. [32].

Celebrity endorsements, on the other hand, could not have the same authenticity because the celebrities endorsing the products don't necessarily use or comprehend them; instead, they rely more on their notoriety in the industry [33]. As a result, consumers can view celebrity endorsements as less credible and real than those from influencers. Therefore, improving consumer attitudes and buy intentions depends on the influencer and product aligning [34].

These observations lead to the following theories being put forth:

H4: Attitudes towards the promoted product are positively influenced by social media influencers' knowledge.

H5: Attitudes towards the endorsed brand are positively impacted by social media influencer knowledge.

H6: Purchase intentions for products are positively influenced by social media influencer knowledge.

C) Trustworthiness

The term "trustworthiness" describes how customers or followers view an influencer's sincerity in delivering truthful and accurate information about a product. It has to do with the influencer's ability to accurately communicate key points about how a product influences customers' opinions [35][54]. Other aspects of the influencer's personality are useless in influencing customers' opinions in the absence of trust. Credibility depends heavily on trust, which has also been shown to have an impact on customer engagement and attitude formation. Reputable endorsers are thought to be more trustworthy than regular people.

The efficacy of endorsements is increased and consumers' purchasing intentions are greatly impacted by the credibility of the source. Customers' impressions of the source have a positive impact on their assessment of the products' worth, which in turn influences their purchasing decisions. Arguments pertaining to the product, appeal, and trustworthiness are all clearly correlated [36][54]. For instance, the impact of trustworthiness may be less apparent than with weaker arguments when marketing literature has strong justifications about the product. As a result, the people selected as influencers ought to be people who the public finds approachable, objective, and genuine [54].

This study emphasises how crucial it is for customers to see social media influencers as approachable people with comparable interests and beliefs [37]. This view raises the influencer's legitimacy and makes people more receptive to product-related material published on social media [38].

These results lead to the following theories being put forth:

- H7: Perceptions of advertising are positively influenced by social media influencers' trustworthiness.
- H8: Attitudes towards the promoted brand are positively impacted by social media influencers' trustworthiness.
- H9: The intention to buy a product is positively influenced by social media influencers' trustworthiness.

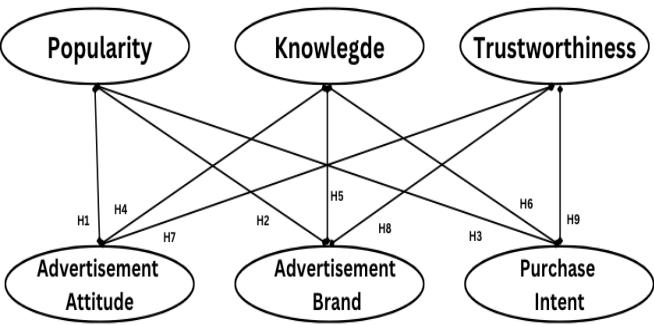
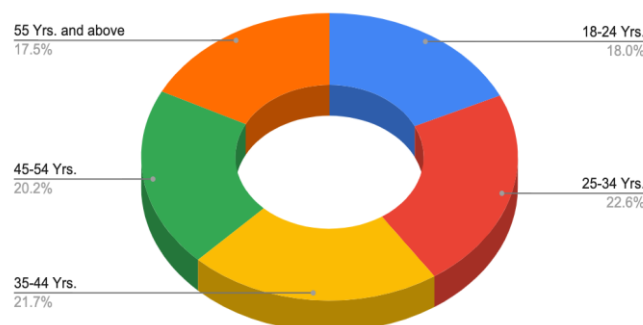


Figure 1: Consumer Behaviour Hypothesis based on Popularity, Knowledge and Trustworthiness

IV. METHODOLOGY STAGE 1

A) Sample Collection

The primary stage of methodology used in the study is basically designed to provide a indepth understanding of the of exposure of advertisements on the consumer through social media. A planned and carefully implemented survey was conducted in order to extract information from a diverse range of sample of 739 people, divided into age and demographic categories. The age group covered the major earning section of the people.



Graph 1: Sample Collection figures

B) Instrument for Gathering Data

A set of questionnaires designed specifically intended to understand the participants' exposure to the advertisements based on influencers on social media platform. The survey consisted of several sections that were carefully designed to encapsulate major aspects of the attitudes, preferences, and engagement of the consumer in reference to social media advertisements and to further understand their attitudes and behaviors towards purchase intent depending upon the advertisements on social media platforms.

C) Scale of Measurement

The scale of the measuring method was chosen carefully, which was a five-point Likert scale, that is basically used to systematically assess the responses of the participants'. With a wide range of response options based on the scaling method were "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neutral", "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree,". This kind of scale gave the sample participants the flexibility to express how much they agreed or disagreed with the claims and questionnaires they were asked.

D) Questionnaires

The major issue of the survey was to understand how frequently samples were exposed to influencers based advertisements on social media platforms. All the samples were specifically asked the following question:

Q.1: Frequently do you encounter advertisements in the form of paid promotions, sponsored content, reels endorsed by popular influencers on Social Media platforms.

Q.2: You place trust in products, services or brands that are advertised or endorsed by social media influencers or celebrities.

Q.3: Your purchasing decisions depend on recommendations/ expertise from social media influencers.

This carefully thought-out question sought to elicit participants' first-hand accounts and opinions about the prominence and frequency of adverts by influencers, trust on those and finally the purchase intent on different social media platforms.

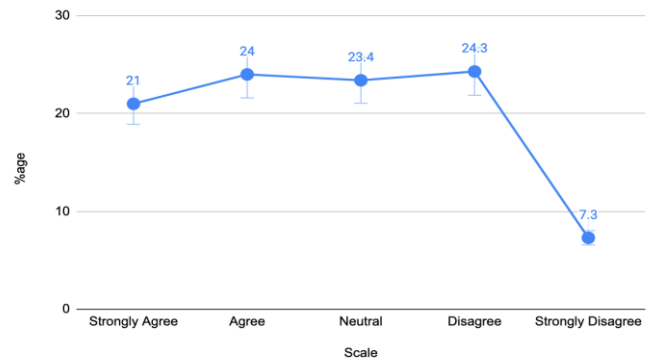
E) Data Collection

Equipped with the painstakingly crafted questionnaire, data gathering operations were painstakingly coordinated, guaranteeing rigorous compliance with accepted research ethics and procedural integrity. The questionnaire items were distributed to participants, who were asked to provide their answers. Particular attention was given to the question about

the frequency of exposure to social media advertisements. The well-documented and coded answers served as the basis for further analyses and interpretations, supporting the study project's scholarly importance and empirical resilience.

F) Result:

Q.1: Frequently do you encounter advertisements in the form of paid promotions, sponsored content, reels endorsed by popular influencers on Social Media platforms.

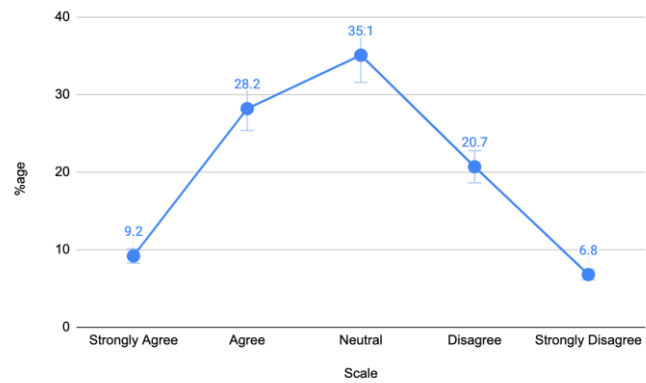


Graph 2: Data collections of samples on “frequently consumer comes across advertisements popular influencers endorsing products/services”

The Y-axis quantifies percentages, adding up to 100%, and the X-axis carefully demonstrates the data collection approach, with a focus on survey of 739 people using scaling methodologies. 21% of respondents absolutely agree the frequency of influencer-endorsed ads, and 24% more people agree. Remarkably, 23.4% take a neutral position, indicating a range of opinions or the need for more thought. On the other hand, 7.3% strongly disagree with the idea, and 24.3% disagree, adding contrasting viewpoints to the conversation. This thorough depiction reveals a complex story and highlights the nuances of public opinion around influencer-driven advertising. It highlights the range of opinions, from passionate support to unwavering opposition, among the sample population, offering priceless insights into the attitudes of modern consumers.

Q.2: You place trust in products, services or brands that are advertised or endorsed by social media influencers or celebrities.

Date collected:



Graph 3: Data collections of samples on “trust in products, services or brands that are advertised or endorsed by social media influencers”

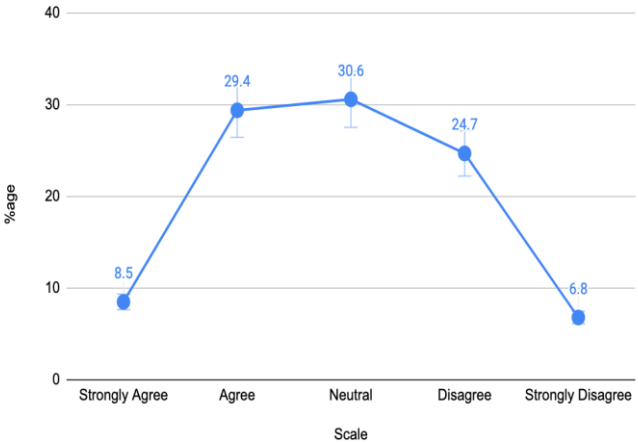
The graph is structured with the X-axis delineating the methodology employed for data collection from 739 people, particularly highlighting the scaling method utilized within surveys. Meanwhile, the Y-axis is dedicated to representing percentages, offering a comprehensive view of the distribution of responses. The total sum of percentages equates to 100, providing a holistic overview of the respondents' sentiments.

Among the participants, a nuanced spectrum of opinions emerges. A notable 9.2% express a strong inclination towards trusting advertisements endorsed by influencers and their expertise, indicating a robust level of confidence in such promotional content. Additionally, a significant portion, constituting 28% of the respondents, express agreement with the notion of trusting influencer-endorsed ads, further underlining a substantial level of endorsement within the sample group.

In contrast, a sizable contingent, comprising 35.1% of respondents, maintains a neutral stance on the matter, reflecting a degree of ambivalence or indecision regarding the trustworthiness of influencer-promoted content. Meanwhile, a notable segment, accounting for 20.7% of participants, expresses disagreement with such advertisements, suggesting a level of skepticism or lack of trust in their authenticity. Additionally, 6.8% of respondents strongly oppose the idea of trusting influencer-endorsed ads, signifying a particularly strong aversion or skepticism towards this form of advertising.

Q.3: Your purchasing decisions depend on knowledge from social media influencers.

Data collected:



Graph 4: Data collections of samples on “purchasing decisions of consumers depending on knowledge from social media influencers.”

100% is represented by the vertical axis, which shows percentages, while the horizontal axis shows the data collection process from 739 people, with a special emphasis on survey scaling approaches. Of those surveyed, 8.5% strongly indicate that they would like to buy things that influencers recommend, and 29.4% more people agree. Remarkably, 36% are neutral, indicating a range of opinions or a need for more thought. On the other hand, 6.8% strongly disagree, and 24.7% disagree as well, adding a variety of viewpoints to the discussion. This thorough representation reveals a complex story and illuminates the complex terrain of public opinion on purchase intent on influencer-driven advertising.

V. METHODOLOGY STAGE 2

The questions were arranged into three pairs once the survey's sample data was collected in order to look for correlations and validate the theories being investigated. Then, these paired surveys were analysed using the Pearson correlation method on SPSS [53].

One of the best statistical method used for determining the direction and strength of relationship between bivariate variables is Pearson's correlation coefficient, or Pearson's "r." This coefficient, goes from -1 to +1, which then provides important information about the relationship:

- A positive relationship is represented by a number of +1, which means that as one variable rises, the other variable increases in the same proportion.
- A value of -1, means a negative linear relationship that happens when one variable rises, the other falls in proportion.
- The absence of a linear relationship between the variables is shown with the value of 0, which suggests that changes in one variable do not correspond with changes in the other.

This method makes the understanding of the link between the variables possible, it also enables researchers to assess the direction and strength of interactions within the dataset collected.

$$r = \frac{\sum (x_i - \bar{x}) (y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})^2 \sum (y_i - \bar{y})^2}}$$

r = correlation coefficient
 x_i = values of the x-variable in a sample
 $\bar{x}$ = mean of the values of the x-variable
 y_i = values of the y-variable in a sample
 $\bar{y}$ = mean of the values of the y-variable

Image 2: Pearson Correlation Calculation Method

The Pearson Correlation method was applied on the questionnaires using the SPSS tool.

A) Assessing Exposure to Advertisements by Popular Influencers on Social Media and Consumer Trust in Endorsements:

Q.1: Frequently do you encounter advertisements in the form of paid promotions, sponsored content, reels endorsed by popular influencers on Social Media platforms.

Q.2: You place trust in products, services or brands that are advertised or endorsed by social media influencers or celebrities.

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Frequently do you encounter advertisements in the form of paid promotions, sponsored content, reels endorsed by popular influencers on Social Media platforms.	2.73	1.243	739
You place trust in products, services or brands that are advertised or endorsed by social media influencers or celebrities.	2.88	1.056	739

Table 1: Descriptive Stats for Q1 & Q2

Correlations			
		Frequently do you encounter advertisements in the form of paid promotions, sponsored content, reels endorsed by popular influencers on Social Media platforms.	You place trust in products, services or brands that are advertised or endorsed by social media influencers or celebrities.
Frequently do you encounter advertisements in the form of paid promotions, sponsored content, reels endorsed by popular influencers on Social Media platforms.	Pearson Correlation	1	.497**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	739	739
You place trust in products, services or brands that are advertised or endorsed by social media influencers or celebrities.	Pearson Correlation	.497**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	739	739
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 2: Correlation between Q1 & Q2

A Pearson Correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between Q1 and Q2 and found that there is positive correlation between them $r[n(739)] = .497, p < .001$.

Through using the method of executing a survey consisting of two primary questions, the objective is to examine any possible correlation between the frequency of exposure to social media advertising through influencers and the degree of trust attributed to items or businesses that influencers advocate. The replies from 739 participants were subjected to a Pearson correlation analysis. The findings of the study clearly indicates that there is a significant positive connection ($r = .497, p < .001$) between the influencer based advertisements consumers come across to and the degree of trust consumers place in the influencers advertising the brand/ product/ service on the social media platforms. These results provide an insight into how social media influencer based advertisement is influencing the purchase intent of the consumer behaviour.

Celebrities or influencers who use social media as an essential platform in order to advertise in recent years, are basically using their followers to spread the idea and knowledge about brands, products and services [45][46]. This phenomenon suggests that viewers frequently come across such advertisements on social media platforms and are more likely to believe in things that influencers or celebrities recommend because of the trust that the consumer has on the influencer leading to affect the purchase intent[47].

To summarize this study, a consumer that trusts and follows an influencer on Social Media will certainly trust the endorsed items that will frequently be shown on their social media page are positively correlated. Marketers may work on their advertising campaigns to take such advantage of the social media influencer endorsements' capacity to inbuilt trust on their consumers for their brand[47][48]. To investigate other elements that can affect customer trust in the context of social media advertising, more research is necessary.

B) From Frequency of Sponsored Promotions by Popular Influencers on Social Media to Purchasing Power

Q.1: Frequently do you encounter advertisements in the form of paid promotions, sponsored content, reels endorsed by popular influencers on Social Media platforms.

Q.3: Your purchasing decisions depend on recommendations/ expertise from social media influencers.

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Frequently do you encounter advertisements in the form of paid promotions, sponsored content, reels endorsed by popular influencers on Social Media platforms.	2.73	1.243	739
Your purchasing decisions depend on recommendations/ expertise from social media influencers.	2.92	1.071	739

Table 3: Descriptive Stats for Q1 & Q3

Correlations			
		Frequently do you encounter advertisements in the form of paid promotions, sponsored content, reels endorsed by popular influencers on Social Media platforms.	Your purchasing decisions depend on recommendations/ expertise from social media influencers.
Frequently do you encounter advertisements in the form of paid promotions, sponsored content, reels endorsed by popular influencers on Social Media platforms.	Pearson Correlation	1	.470**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	739	739
Your purchasing decisions depend on recommendations/ expertise from social media influencers.	Pearson Correlation	.470**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	739	739
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 4: Correlation between Q1 & Q2

A Pearson Correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between Q1 and Q3 and found that there is positive correlation between them $r[n(739)] = .470, p < .001$.

This aims to understand the relationship between variables: the frequency of influencer based advertisement exposure on social media and how much consumers rely on influencer expertise while making purchasing decisions. Pearson correlation method was adopted to examine the collected sample data from 739 individuals. The results of the method had revealed a significant positive correlation ($r = .470, p < .001$) between the questionnaire. Our understanding of the relationship between influencer impact on consumer behaviour and social media advertising is enhanced by these findings.

In the era when Social media has a great impact on people, influencers play a pivotal role to influence the preferences and behaviours of consumers and their purchase intent [39][40]. Influencer marketing is a very common way used these days by businesses to gain trust among people for their brand, product and service through social media platforms[43]. As a result, those who see these influencer based ads on social media sites more often are more likely to believe and follow suggestions from influencers when making judgements buying something [41].

This suggests that social media influencer based advertisement positively correlates with the recommendations/ knowledge from influencers when the consumer makes the purchase decision for a brand, product or service [49][50]. These findings provide insightful information for marketers navigating the digital landscape by highlighting the interconnectedness of influencer and social media advertising on consumer behaviour.

C) Influencer Impact: Trust in Expertise of Endorsements done by Influencers and the Influence on Purchasing Decisions

Q.2: You place trust in products, services or brands that are advertised or endorsed by social media influencers or celebrities.

Q.3: Your purchasing decisions depend on recommendations/ expertise from social media influencers.

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
You place trust in products, services or brands that are advertised or endorsed by social media influencers or celebrities.	2.88	1.056	739
Your purchasing decisions depend on recommendations/ expertise from social media influencers.	2.92	1.071	739

Table 5: Descriptive Stats for Q2 & Q3

Correlations			
		You place trust in products, services or brands that are advertised or endorsed by social media influencers or celebrities.	Your purchasing decisions depend on recommendations/ expertise from social media influencers.
You place trust in products, services or brands that are advertised or endorsed by social media influencers or celebrities.	Pearson Correlation	1	.700**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	739	739
Your purchasing decisions depend on recommendations/ expertise from social media influencers.	Pearson Correlation	.700**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	739	739

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6: Correlation between Q2 & Q3

A Pearson Correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between Q2 and Q3 and found that there is High positive correlation between them $r[n(739)] = .700, p<.001$.

To understand the complex relationships between two questions of the survey which were necessary to recognise the indicator of consumer behaviour in the relation to influencer marketing on Social Media Platforms a strong analytical framework was selected "Pearson Correlation". After the conduction of the test on SPSS the results provided a significant acknowledgement of the mutual relationship between the trust that a consumer has on their influencer they follow on social media platform and the purchase intent that is affected because of the knowledge shared by those influencers as they endorse brands, products or services on those platforms.

With the sample size of 739 participants, the analysis showed a highly positive correlation coefficient (r) of 0.700, stating a strong and significant relationship between the variables. Additionally, the p -value was less than 0.001, highlighting a positive correlation. Thus verifying the link between consumer trust on the social media influencer and their purchase intent.

This henceforth proves that there is a widespread effect of social media influencers or celebrities on the decisions made by consumers thus affecting their purchase intent[42][44]. It clearly shows the complex psychology of the consumer, and how they are emphasized by the recommendation/ knowledge given by the influencers they follow on social media.

IV. CONCLUSION

The results from the methodology Pearson Correlation Test that was conducted on the 739 collected samples showed positive correlations. That clearly shows that consumers' purchase intention is positively influenced by the endorsements

done by social media influencers for brands, goods and services. Customers these days buy products or services through online platforms just because they trust these influencer's knowledge and expertise.

The discussion of the conceptual framework and study hypotheses throws light on the complex connections that exist between observed popularity, knowledge, trustworthiness, and customer behaviour in the context of influencer marketing.

These results agree with the hypothesis H1, H2 and H3, which suggest that opinions regarding social media influencers' popularity show a positive impact on attitudes towards businesses, promoted content, and purchase intentions. Furthermore, attitudes towards suggested products and firms as well as purchase intentions are significantly influenced by influencer knowledge, which is stated in hypotheses H4, H5 and H6.

The impact of advertising is highly influenced by trustworthiness, an essential element of consumer perception. Hypotheses H7, H8 and H9 reflect the positive effects of influencers' trustworthiness on attitudes towards promoted businesses, and views on advertising, and purchase intentions.

In terms of methodology, exact data collection processes, a well-designed questionnaire, and reliable statistical analysis such as Pearson correlation have generated important findings about consumer attitudes and behaviours about influencer marketing.

As a result, this study reveals knowledge on the complicated processes behind influencer marketing and highlights the important part that factors like popularity, knowledge, and trustworthiness play in influencing consumer opinions and behaviour. Results indicate the need for more research aimed at more variables influencing consumer behaviour and trust in the constantly changing field of social media advertising while offering marketers with helpful suggestions as to how to make use of influencer endorsements.

REFERENCES

1. S. Yuan, C. Lou "How social media influencers foster relationships with followers: The Roles of source credibility and fairness in parasocial relationship and product interest", *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, Vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 133–47, 2020
2. B. W. Wojdynski, N. J. Evans, "Going native: Effects of disclosure position and language on the recognition and evaluation of online native advertising", *Journal of Advertising*, vol. 45, no. 2, pp.157–68, 2016
3. D. Weinswig, "Influencers are the new brands" *Forbes*, October, 2016.
4. E. A. Van Reijmersdal, E. Rozendaal, L. Hudders, I. Vanwesenbeeck, V. Cauberghe, and Z. M. van Berlo, "Effects of disclosing influencer marketing in videos: An eye tracking study among children in early adolescence" *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, vol. 49, no. 1, pp.94–106, 2020
5. E. A. Van Reijmersdal, S. van Dam, "How age and disclosures of sponsored influencer videos affect adolescents' knowledge of persuasion and persuasion", *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, vol. 49, no. 7, pp.1531–1544, 2020
6. S. van Dam, E. van Reijmersdal, "Insights in adolescents' advertising literacy, perceptions and responses regarding sponsored influencer videos and disclosures", *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, vol. 13 no. 2, 2019
7. W. H. S. Tsai, L. R. Men, "Motivations and antecedents of consumer engagement with brand pages on social networking sites", *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 76–87, 2013
8. M. Swant, "Twitter says users now trust influencers nearly as much as their friends" *Adweek*, May, 2016
9. K. Sokolova, H. Kefi, "Instagram and YouTube bloggers promote it. Why should I buy it? How credibility and parasocial interaction influence purchase intentions", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, vol. 53, pp.101742, 2020
10. K. Hwang, Q. Zhang, "Influence of parasocial relationship between digital celebrities and their followers on followers' purchase and electronic word-of-mouth intentions, and persuasion knowledge", *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 87, pp. 155-73, 2018

11. S. C. Boerman, L. M. Willemsen, E. P. Van Der Aa, "This Post Is Sponsored": Effects of Sponsorship Disclosure on Persuasion Knowledge and Electronic Word of Mouth in the Context of Facebook", *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, vol. 38, pp. 82-92, 2017
12. A. P. Schouten, L. Janssen, M. Verspaget, "Celebrity vs. influencer endorsements in advertising: The role of identification, credibility, and product endorser fit", *International Journal of Advertising*, vol. 39, no. 2, pp.258–81, 2020
13. J. King, "Guide to influencer marketing: Trends, tactics, and KPIs", *Emarketer*, 2024
14. C. A. Russell, B. B. Stern, "Consumers, characters, and products: A balance model of sitcom product placement effects", *Journal of Advertising*, vol. 35, no.1, pp.7–21, 2006
15. E. Poyry, M. Pelkonen, E. Naumanen, S. M. Laaksonen, "A call for authenticity: Audience responses to social media influencer endorsements in strategic communication", *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, vol. 13, no. 4 pp.336–51, 2006
16. P. B. O'Sullivan, C. T. Carr, "Mass Personal communication: A model bridging the mass-interpersonal divide" *New Media & Society*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp.1161–80, 2018
17. C. O'Neil-Hart, H. Blumenstein, "Why YouTube stars are more influential than traditional celebrities", *Google*, July, 2016.
18. M. Mohsin, "10 Instagram stats every marketer should know in 2020", *Oberlo*, February, 2020.
19. C. Lou, S. Yuan, "Influencer marketing: How Message value and credibility affect consumer trust of branded content on social media", *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, vol. 19, no.1, pp.58–73, 2019.
20. C. Lou, S.-S. Tan, and X. Chen, "Investigating consumer engagement with influencer vs. brand-promoted ads: The roles of source and disclosure", *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, vol.19, no. 3, pp. 169–86, 2019
21. C. Lou, H. K. Kim, "Fancying the new rich and famous? Explicating the roles of influencer content, credibility, and parental mediation in adolescents, a parasocial relationship, materialism, and purchase intentions", *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 10, pp.2567, 2019
22. Leskin, P, "I spent a day following an Instagram influencer around New York City to see what her job was really like" *Business Insider*, January, 2020
23. C.W. (C.) Ki, L. M. Cuevas, S. M. Chong, and H. Lim, "Influencer marketing: Social media influencers as human brands attaching to followers and yielding positive marketing results by fulfilling needs", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, vol. 55, pp.102133, 2020
24. K. Freberg, K. McGaughey, L. A. Freberg, "Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality", *Public Relations Review*, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 90-92, 2011
25. J. Ilicic, C. M. Webster, "Effects of multiple endorsements and consumer-celebrity attachment on attitude and purchase intention", *Australasian Marketing Journal (AMJ)*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 230-237, 2011
26. S. Kay, R. Mulcahy, J. Parkinson, "When less is more: The impact of macro and micro social media influencers disclosure", *Journal of Marketing Management* vol. 36 no. 3–4, pp. 248–78, 2020
27. J.G. Kaikati, 1987. "Celebrity advertising: A review and synthesis", *International Journal of Advertising*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp.93–105, 2020
28. A. R. Jung, J. Heo, "Ad disclosure vs. ad recognition: How persuasion knowledge influences native advertising evaluation", *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, vol.19, no. 1, pp.1–14, 2019
29. Influencer Marketing Hub, "80 influencer marketing statistics for 2020", 2020
30. K. Hwang, Q. Zhang, "Influence of parasocial relationship between digital celebrities and their followers on followers' purchase and electronic word-of-mouth intentions, and persuasion knowledge", *Computers In Human Behavior*, vol. 87, pp. 155–73, 2018
31. N. Akhtar, Z. Hameed, T. Islam, M. K. Pant, A. Sharma, R. A. Rather, A. Kuzior, "Avatars of influence: Understanding how virtual influencers trigger consumer engagement on online booking platforms", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, vol. 78, pp. 103742, 2024
32. J.-R. Fu (Fred), I-Wei Lu, J. H.F. Chen, C.-K. Farn, "Investigating consumers' online social shopping intention: An information processing perspective", *International Journal of Information Management*, vol. 54, pp. 102189, 2020
33. J. Chen, X.-L. Shen, "Consumers' decisions in social commerce context: An empirical investigation", *Decision Support Systems*, vol. 79, pp. 55-64, 2015

34. A. Chen, Y. Lu, B. Wang, "Customers' purchase decision-making process in social commerce: A social learning perspective", *International Journal of Information Management*, vol. 37, no. 6, pp. 627-638, 2017
35. B. Z. Erdogan, "Celebrity endorsement: A literature review", *Journal of Marketing Management*, vol. 15, no. 4, pp.291-314, 1999
36. E. Djafarova, C. Rushworth, "Exploring the credibility of online celebrities' Instagram profiles in influencing the purchase decisions of young female users", *Computers in Human Behavior* vol. 68, pp.1-7, 2017
37. C. Campbell, J. R. Farrell, "More than meets the eye: The functional components underlying influencer marketing", *Business Horizons*, vol. 63, no. 4, pp.469-79, 2020
38. S.C. Boerman, E. A. Van Reijmersdal, "Disclosing influencer marketing on YouTube to children: The moderating role of parasocial relationship", *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 10, pp.3042, 2020
39. M. De Veirman, L. Hudders, M. R. Nelson, "What is influencer marketing and how does it target children? A review and direction for future research", *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 10, pp.2685, 2019
40. M. De Veirman, V. Cauberghe, L. Hudders, "Marketing through Instagram influencers: The impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude", *International Journal of Advertising*, vol. 36, no. 5, pp. 798-828, 2017
41. N. J. Evans, B. W. Wojdyski, M. Grubbs Hoy, "How sponsorship transparency mitigates negative effects of advertising recognition", *International Journal of Advertising*, vol. 38, no. 3, pp.364-82, 2019
42. N. J. Evans, J. Phua, J. Lim, H. Jun, "Disclosing Instagram Influencer Advertising: The Effects of Disclosure Language on Advertising Recognition, Attitudes, and Behavioral Intent", *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 138-49, 2017
43. F. J. Martínez-López, R. Anaya-Sánchez, M. F. Giordano & D. Lopez-Lopez, "Behind influencer marketing: key marketing decisions and their effects on followers' responses", *Journal of Marketing Management* V. 36, no. 7-8, Pages 579-607, 2020
44. Y. Shan, K.-J. Chen, J.-S. (Elaine) Lin, "When social media influencers endorse brands: the effects of self-influencer congruence, parasocial identification, and perceived endorser motive", *International Journal of Advertising* , vol. 39, no. 5, pp. 590-610, 2020
45. Z. Săplăcan, D.C. Dabija, M. Anetta Alt, "The impact of social media influencers on travel decisions: the role of trust in consumer decision journey", *Current Issues in Tourism*, vol. 25, no. 5, pp. 823-843, 2022
46. N. J. Evans, J. Phua, J. Lim, H. Jun, "Disclosing Instagram influencer advertising: The effects of disclosure language on advertising recognition, attitudes, and behavioral intent", *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, vol 17, no. 2, pp.138-49, 2017
47. M. De Veirman, L. Hudders, "Disclosing sponsored Instagram posts: The role of material connection with the brand and message sidedness when disclosing covert advertising", *International Journal of Advertising*, vol. 39, no.1, pp.94-130, 2020
48. C. Lou, "Social Media Influencers and Followers: Theorization of a Trans-Parasocial Relation and Explication of Its Implications for Influencer Advertising", *Journal of Advertising*, vol. 51, no. 1, pp. 4-21, 2022
49. G. Brooks, J. Drenten, M. J. Piskorski, "Influencer Celebification: How Social Media Influencers Acquire Celebrity Capital", *Journal of Advertising*, vol. 50, no. 5, pp. 528-547, 2021
50. H. Masuda, S. H. Han, J. Lee, "Impacts of influencer attributes on purchase intentions in social media influencer marketing: Mediating roles of characterizations", *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, vol. 174, pp. 121246, 2020
51. "What is influencer marketing: How to develop your strategy", Sprout Social, 2023
52. W. Geyser, "What is Influencer Marketing? – The Ultimate Guide for 2024", Influencer Marketing Hub, 2024
53. N. Faizi, Y. Alvi, "Correlation", *Biostatistics Manual for Health Research*, pp. 109-126, 2023
54. B. Chekima, F. Z. Chekima, A.-Azizi A. Adis, "Social Media Influencer in Advertising: The Role of Attractiveness, Expertise and Trustworthiness", *Journal of Economics and Business*, vol.3, no.4, pp. 1507-1515, 2020