

A STUDY OF EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON CONSUMERS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SHOE BRANDS

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Abstract

The rise of social media influencers has significantly impacted consumer behavior, particularly in the fashion and footwear industry. This study explores the effects of social media influencers on consumer purchasing decisions, with a special focus on shoe brands. By leveraging platforms such as Instagram, YouTube influencers create trends, enhance brand perception, and drive sales through authentic engagement and persuasive marketing strategies. The study examines how factors like influencer credibility, content engagement, and audience trust shape consumer preferences and purchasing intentions. Additionally, it analyzes the role of influencer marketing in comparison to traditional advertising methods. A mixed-method approach, incorporating surveys and case studies, is employed to assess consumer attitudes and behavior towards influencer-promoted shoe brands. The findings indicate that consumers, particularly younger demographics, are highly influenced by influencers' recommendations, product reviews, and endorsements. The study concludes with insights for brands to optimize their influencer marketing strategies for better consumer engagement and sales growth.

Keywords: *Social media influencers, consumer behavior, influencer marketing, digital marketing, purchasing decisions, brand perception.*

Introduction

The shoe industry is one of the most competitive and rapidly evolving sectors, driven by changing consumer preferences, cultural trends, and technological advancements. In this dynamic landscape, social media influencers have emerged as a powerful marketing tool, shaping brand perception, influencing purchasing decisions, and creating aspirational product narratives (Freberg et al., 2011). Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, enable influencers to connect with consumers through engaging content, making shoe brands more relatable and desirable (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017).

Unlike traditional advertising, influencer marketing relies on perceived authenticity and trust, as consumers view influencers' recommendations as personal and credible rather than purely commercial (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Studies suggest that influencer endorsements significantly impact consumer buying behavior, particularly among younger demographics who prioritize transparency and relatability (Evans, Phua, Lim, & Jun, 2017). It examines factors such as influencer credibility, audience engagement, and the role of demographic factors in shaping consumer responses.

Review of Literature

The study by Nirupama & D'mello Laveena (2024) explores how social media influencers impact youth shopping decisions. Platforms like Instagram and YouTube shape brand perception and purchase

intent through authenticity and engagement. Psychological factors like peer influence and FOMO further drive consumer behavior, making influencer marketing crucial for brands targeting young audiences.

Aman Kumar (2024) explores the impact of Instagram influencers on Nike's consumer behavior, emphasizing brand trust, engagement, and purchase decisions. The study highlights how authenticity, emotional connections, content quality, and collaborations shape consumer perception, concluding that influencers are crucial in driving buying behavior.

Dr. Parul Sharma et al. (2024) examine how social media influencers shape consumer behavior by building trust, shaping brand perception, and driving purchases. Credibility, relatability, and platform engagement are key factors, highlighting influencer marketing as a powerful brand strategy.

Seema Bhardwaj et al. (2024) conduct a systematic review on the impact of social media influencers on consumer behavior. The study identifies key factors like credibility, engagement, and trust in driving purchases, concluding that influencers are essential to digital marketing strategies.

Ms. Sraddha Mishra and Dr. Rubaid Ashfaq (2023) explore how influencers impact consumer behavior and purchase decisions. The study highlights the role of trust, credibility, emotional connections, content authenticity, engagement, and social validation in shaping buying patterns. It

concludes that influencer marketing is a key strategy for brands in the digital marketplace.

Research Problem and Objectives

The rise of social media influencers has significantly impacted consumer behavior, especially in the fashion and footwear industries. However, there is limited research on how influencer marketing specifically affects consumer purchasing decisions and brand loyalty within the shoe brand sector. This study aims to explore how social media influencers shape consumer perceptions, purchasing behavior, and brand loyalty towards shoe brands. Key areas of investigation include understanding the effectiveness of influencer endorsements, the role of authenticity in building trust, and how different social media

platforms contribute to influencing consumer choices. By addressing these gaps, this research will provide valuable insights for shoe brands on how to leverage influencer marketing to enhance consumer engagement, drive sales, and strengthen brand loyalty. The following are the objective of the present research:

- To study the consumer perception about social media influencer with respect to selected shoe brands.
- To study the characteristics of social media influencer which influence consumer trust and brand loyalty of selected shoe brands.
- To study the factors influencing the purchasing decisions of shoe brands highlighted by social media influencer.

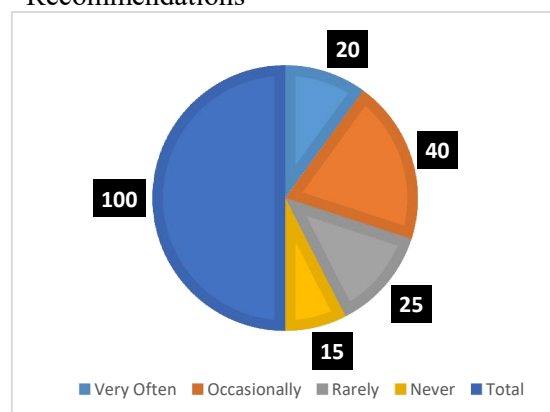
Data Analysis and Interpretation

1. Analysis of Consumer Purchase Behavior Based on Social Media Influencer Recommendations

Table No. 1 Frequency of Consumer Purchases Based on Social Media Influencer Recommendations

Frequency of Purchase	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Very Often	20	20%
Occasionally	40	40%
Rarely	25	25%
Never	15	15%
Total	100	100%

Graph No. 1 Frequency of Consumer Purchases Based on Social Media Influencer Recommendations



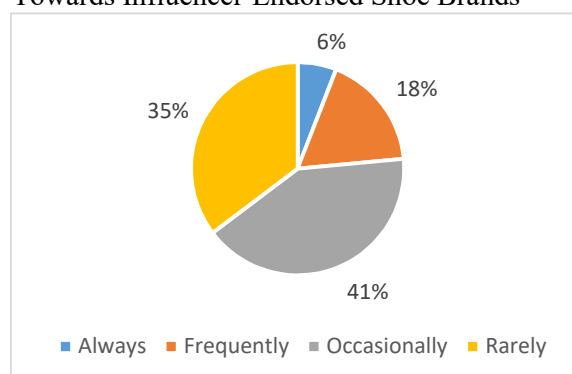
The study analyzed how often consumers purchase products recommended by social media influencers. Among 100 respondents, 20% purchase very often, 40% occasionally, 25% rarely, and 15% never. These findings suggest that while a majority of consumers are influenced by social media endorsements, a notable percentage remains skeptical.

2. Frequency of Purchasing Shoe Brands Recommended by Influencers

Table No. 2 Consumer Purchase Behavior Towards Influencer-Endorsed Shoe Brands

Frequency of Purchase	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Always	5	5%
Frequently	15	15%
Occasionally	35	35%
Rarely	30	30%
Never	15	15%
Total	100	100%

Graph No. 2 Consumer Purchase Behavior Towards Influencer-Endorsed Shoe Brands



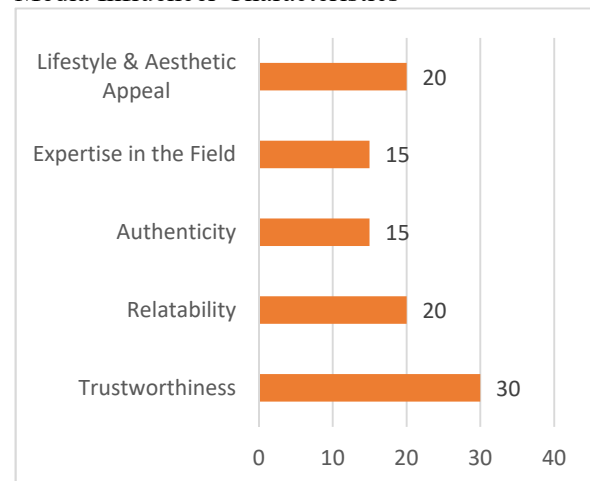
To determine the purchasing behavior of consumers concerning influencer-endorsed shoe brands, 35% of respondents stated they occasionally buy influencer-recommended shoes, whereas 30% admitted to rarely making such purchases. Furthermore, 15% frequently purchased shoes based on influencer recommendations, while 5% always followed influencer endorsements, and another 15% never considered them. This suggests that while influencer marketing is effective, its impact varies among consumers.

3. Key Characteristics of Social Media Influencers Valued by Consumers

Table No. 3 Consumer Preferences for Social Media Influencer Characteristics

Influencer Characteristic	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Trustworthiness	30	30%
Relatability	20	20%
Authenticity	15	15%
Expertise in the Field	15	15%
Lifestyle & Aesthetic Appeal	20	20%
Total	100	100%

Graph No. 3 Consumer Preferences for Social Media Influencer Characteristics



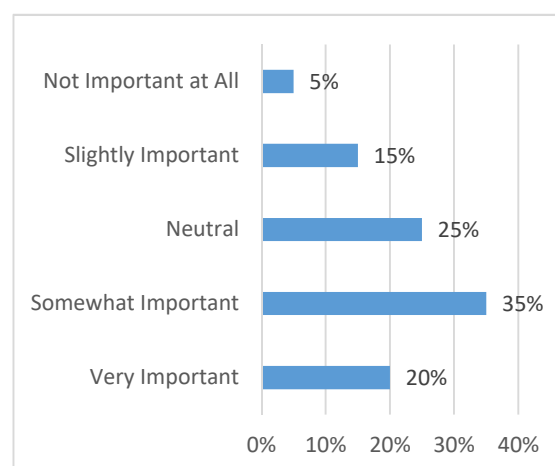
The study examined the characteristics that make an influencer credible in the eyes of consumers. 30% of respondents identified trustworthiness as the most valued characteristic, followed by 20% who emphasized relatability and lifestyle appeal. Additionally, 15% each selected authenticity and expertise in the field. These findings highlight the importance of building genuine connections and trust with audiences in influencer marketing.

4. Influence of Social Media Influencers on Shoe Brand Perception

Table No. 4 Influence of Social Media Influencers on Shoe Brand Perception

Level of Importance	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Very Important	20	20%
Somewhat Important	35	35%
Neutral	25	25%
Slightly Important	15	15%
Not Important at All	5	5%
Total	100	100%

Graph No. 4 Influence of Social Media Influencers on Shoe Brand Perception



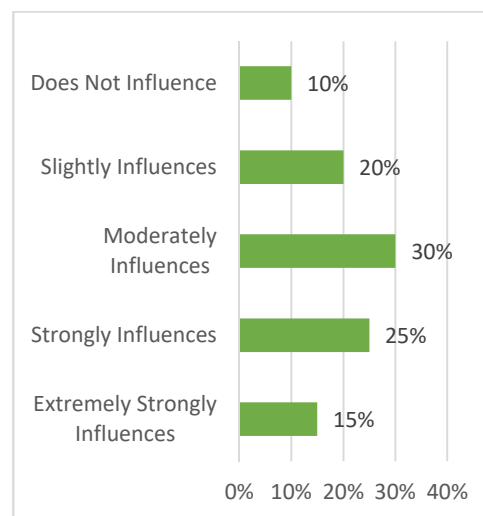
To assess the impact of social media influencers on shaping brand perception, respondents were asked about their level of importance. The results revealed that 35% of respondents found influencer marketing somewhat important, while 20% considered it very important. However, 25% maintained a neutral stance, and a smaller segment, 15% and 5% respectively, considered it slightly or not important at all. This data suggests that while influencers play a crucial role in marketing strategies, a segment of consumers still does not fully rely on their endorsements.

5. Impact of Online Reviews by Influencers on Purchase Decisions

Table No. 5 Influence of Online Reviews by Influencers on Consumer Purchase Decisions

Level of Influence	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Extremely Strongly Influences	15	15%
Strongly Influences	25	25%
Moderately Influences	30	30%
Slightly Influences	20	20%
Does Not Influence	10	10%
Total	100	100%

Graph No. 5 Influence of Online Reviews by Influencers on Consumer Purchase Decisions



The study also analyzed how much online reviews by influencers affect consumer decisions in purchasing shoe brands. The responses showed that 30% of consumers moderately rely on these reviews, followed by 25% who strongly consider them. Additionally, 20% stated that reviews slightly influence their choices, while 15% reported being extremely influenced, and 10% were not affected at all. These results suggest that influencer reviews significantly contribute to brand credibility and influence consumer buying behavior.

Finding and Suggestions

The study finds that while social media influencers play a role in brand awareness, consumer purchasing decisions for shoe brands are primarily driven by comfort and functionality (30%), brand reputation (25%), and design aesthetics (20%), with discounts and offers influencing 15% of buyers. Influencer credibility and peer recommendations have a relatively lower impact (7% and 3%, respectively), suggesting that consumers prioritize tangible product attributes over endorsements. To enhance marketing effectiveness, shoe brands should focus on improving product quality, strengthening brand reputation, and strategically collaborating with authentic influencers to maintain trust. Additionally, combining influencer promotions with discounts and visually appealing content can further drive engagement and conversions.

Conclusion

The study reveals that while social media influencers help in brand awareness, their direct influence on purchase decisions is limited

compared to factors like comfort, brand reputation, and product aesthetics. Consumers primarily focus on tangible product attributes rather than relying solely on influencer recommendations. However, influencer marketing remains an important tool in creating brand visibility and engagement.

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