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RESEARCH ARTICLE

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON THE BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF STUDENTS IN GUWAHATI CITY

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Abstract

In today's digital age, social media influencers play a pivotal role in shaping students' purchasing decisions. This study investigates the impact of social media influencers on the buying behaviour of students in Guwahati City, with a particular focus on influencer credibility, lifestyle alignment, content engagement, and perceived authenticity. Adopting a quantitative and descriptive research design, primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire from 91 students selected via non-probability sampling. The findings reveal that 91% of the respondents follow at least one social media influencer, with a notable preference for influencers in the beauty, fashion, fitness, and gaming sectors. Over half of the students reported a likelihood to purchase products promoted by influencers, with 77% engaging with influencer content weekly or daily. Multinomial logistic regression analysis demonstrated a statistically significant relationship between influencer engagement and students' buying behaviour, indicating that higher engagement levels are associated with increased purchase intentions. Expertise in the product category emerged as the most influential factor, followed by lifestyle alignment and perceived authenticity. Despite some concerns about influencer credibility, the results highlight the growing influence of social media personalities on youth consumer behaviour. The study concludes that influencer marketing is a powerful tool for brands targeting student demographics, provided influencers maintain authenticity, expertise, and trust with their audience.

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Introduction: -

In today's digital age, social media influencers exert an important influence on students behaviour, as they help shape their purchasing decisions and influence attitudes toward brands and certain products. Influencers often create relatability and trust among their followers. This consequently increases brand awareness, as it drives purchase intention. Brands use social media influencers at all levels to market their services and products. They do this to make a specific target audience aware of the brand.

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This study explores how social media influencers impact students' purchase decisions, since it looks at how influencers shape students' shopping habits. According to the study, influencer marketing tactics affect students' opinions, inclinations to buy, and general consumer behaviour. For this group, examining important factors such as authenticity, credibility, and the kinds of content they post will determine influencer effectiveness.

A social media influencer is a person who has a sizable online following. Interesting material and the power to affect followers' thoughts and decisions also give them influence. Corporations may work to promote their products. Social media influencers (Erwin 2023) have become pivotal in shaping Gen Z consumers' behaviours and opinions. Purchase intentions, brand image, and consumer decision-making are also greatly impacted across the fashion and tourism industries.

Literature Review: -

Kadam, N. et al (2021). According to this study, a methodical questionnaire will be employed to collect primary data to examine the connection between the typical consumer's trust in influencers and the ensuing purchasing habits of Pune's young people, namely those between the ages of 15 and 25. A total of 157 respondents provided data, of whom 69 were men and 88 were women. As it examines the available data, the study is descriptive in nature. Currently, most companies prioritize digital and social media marketing and adopt customer-centric strategies. Influencer marketing is an excellent illustration of how social media advertising is conducted in a covert, nearly unconscious manner. Because it examines the available data, the study is descriptive in nature. The impact of social media influencers was the independent variable in this study, while student behaviour was the dependent variable. Brands often leverage social media influencers and their brand images to advertise products and services. Almost all influencer types tend to promote a brand in their interactions with audiences, whether through posts, videos, or other media.

Castro, C.A et al (2021). have outlined the effects of social media influencers on students' lives. This literature review's primary goal is to increase marketing professionals' understanding of the impact social media influencers have on students and how brands use them to promote their products and content. Across the world, teenagers use social media in their daily lives. The review's primary conclusions include information on social media influencers' identities, identification techniques, their effects on students' lives, and collaborations between brands and social media influencers.

Devi, S & Mahapatra S.N. (2021). Businesses' use of social media influencers to market their goods has been steadily increasing over the past few decades. This study aimed to determine how consumers' purchasing decisions are influenced by the trustworthiness of social media influencers (SMIs). Data from 123 respondents in Delhi/NCR were gathered using a structured questionnaire., especially those between 26 and 35 years of age. Of these, 54 respondents were men and 69 were women. Every single one of All 123 respondents used social media. This study aimed to determine how social media influencers impact customers' shopping decisions. The information and entertainment value of social media influencers' posts significantly impacted their credibility in this study. Therefore, future research should examine influencers' areas of expertise and the products they recommend to determine whether the results differ.

Chan, F. (2022). The theoretical foundation of the current study is drawn from literature reviews and exploratory research. The target respondents were people in the United Kingdom aged between 18 and 65 years. A total of 483 responses were gathered for analysis using the MTurk platform. We also examined the prevalence of influencer marketing in recent years. Because of their reach and genuineness, social media influencers have a sizable following and the power to influence consumers. Brands are collaborating with and taking advantage of social media influencers to reach their target audience, improve brand awareness, and boost profitability. Social media influencers are knowledgeable about specific topics, such as fashion, travel, lifestyle, food, and healthy living. The most popular platforms among influencers are Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter.

Ferreira, MF (2023) stated that in the rapidly changing digital environment of today, social media has a great impact on students. Social media influencers whose online prominence and persuasive power have redefined the dynamics of student behaviour. In this study, a quantitative approach was adopted. This study included the participation of students from the Porto School of Accounting and Business who were interested in following social media influencers. Data were successfully collected from 204 individuals, of whom qualified as valid respondents. This study aims to examine how purchase intention mediates the relationship between students and social media influencers. Social media influencers quickly became a new type of content creator in the aftermath of social media.

These influencers are recognized for their substantial following and active online presence. In this dissertation, a deductive descriptive approach was selected because of its thorough congruence with the principles of logical thinking.

Objective of the Study :-

The objective of the study is to analyze the impact of social media influencer on students' buying behaviour.

Research Methodology: -

The present study follows a quantitative and analytical research design to investigate the relationship between students' engagement with social media influencers and their buying behaviour. The primary research approach adopted for the study is the survey technique, which was used to understand the effect of social media influencers on the buying behaviour of students in Guwahati. Both primary and secondary data were used in this study. A well-structured questionnaire was used to gather primary data. A total of 91 respondents comprised the study's sample size, which was chosen using a non-probability sampling technique. The questionnaire was the primary data collection tool.

1) The variables of the study are as follows:

- **Dependent Variable:**
 - Q11_MERGED: Students' buying behaviour, categorized into 3 levels (Low, Moderate, High)
- **Independent Variable:**
 - Q8_MERGED: Students' engagement with social media influencers, also categorized into 3 levels (Low, Moderate, High)

The following tools were used for data analysis in SPSS:

A descriptive approach was used to summarize demographic characteristics, while inferential statistical tools such as Chi-square test and multinomial logistic regression were used to test hypotheses and understand the impact of influencer engagement.

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Frequencies and percentages to describe demographic variables.
- **Chi-Square Test of Independence:** To check the association between influencer engagement and buying behaviour.
- **Multinomial Logistic Regression:** To analyze the impact of influencer engagement (independent variable) on levels of buying behaviour (dependent variable).
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Data Analysis: -

Table no 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Category	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	45	49%
	Female	46	51%
Age Distribution	15-20	2	2%
	21-25	52	57%
	26-30	27	30%
	30 and above	10	11%
Educational Qualification	Undergraduate	43	47%
	Postgraduate	37	41%
	Other	11	12%

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

Table 2: Do you follow any social media influencer?

Influencer follow status	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	83	91%
No	8	9%
Total	91	100%

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

Table 3: Type of influencer followed

Type of influencer followed	No. of respondents	Percentage
Beauty and fashion	27	30%
Fitness and wellness	25	27%
Gaming	18	20%
Other	21	23%
Total	91	100%

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

Table 4: Frequency of respondents' engagement with social media influencer content

Influencer engagement frequency	No. of respondents	Percentage
Daily	24	26%
Weekly	46	51%
Monthly	15	16%
Rarely	6	7%
Total	91	100%

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

Table 5: Likelihood of purchasing a product if it is promoted by a social media influencer you follow

Purchase likelihood from influencer promotion	No. of respondents	Percentage
Very likely	12	13%
Likely	36	40%
Neutral	34	37%
Unlikely	4	4%
Very unlikely	5	6%
Total	91	100%

Table 6: Factors that most influence the decision to buy a product based on an influencer's recommendation

Most influential factor	No. of respondents	Percentage
Their lifestyle	30	33%
Their expertise in the product category	39	43%
Their perceived authenticity	17	19%
The discount code they offer	5	5%
Total	91	100%

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

Table 7: Frequency of making purchasing decisions based on social media recommendations

Purchase frequency via social media recommendation	No. of respondents	Percentage
Always	5	6%
Often	22	24%
Sometimes	47	52%
Rarely	15	16%
Never	2	2%
Total	91	100%

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

Table 8: Chi-Square Test of Independence**Case Processing Summary**

	N	Marginal Percentage
1.00	27	29.7%
Q11_MERGED 2.00	47	51.6%
3.00	17	18.7%
1.00	70	76.9%
Q8_MERGED 2.00	15	16.5%
3.00	6	6.6%
Valid	91	100.0%
Missing	0	
Total	91	
Subpopulation	3	

Model Fitting Information

Model	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	27.181			
Final	16.429	10.752	4	.029

Pseudo R-Square

Cox and Snell	.111
Nagelkerke	.128
McFadden	.058

Likelihood Ratio Tests

Effect	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept	16.429 ^a	.000	0	.
Q8_MERGED	27.181	10.752	4	.029

The chi-square statistic is the difference in -2 log-likelihoods between the final model and a reduced model. The reduced model is formed by omitting an effect from the final model. The null hypothesis is that all parameters of that effect are 0.

This reduced model is equivalent to the final model because omitting the effect does not increase the degrees of freedom.

Table 9: Multinomial Logistic Regression**Parameter Estimates**

Q11_MERGED ^a	B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1.00	Intercept	-19.244	.707	740.660	1	.000		
	[Q8_MERGED=1.00]	20.182	.809	622.257	1	.000	582146151.8	119221058.8
	[Q8_MERGED=2.00]	19.244	.000	.	1	.	227796320.3	2842569471
	[Q8_MERGED=3.00]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	227796320.3	227796320.3
2.00	Intercept	-.693	.866	.641	1	.423		
	[Q8_MERGED=1.00]	2.134	.942	5.129	1	.024	8.444	1.333
	[Q8_MERGED=2.00]	1.253	1.069	1.373	1	.241	3.500	53.510
	[Q8_MERGED=3.00]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	28.447

a. The reference category is: 3.00.

b. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Interpretation: -

- **Goodness-of-Fit Indicators:**

2) Chi-square (Likelihood Ratio Tests) showed significance ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the model as a whole is a good fit compared to a null model. Pearson Chi-Square is 11.800, df is 4 and p value is 0.019. This indicates a significant association between social media influencer engagement and buying behaviour of students.

- **Impact of social media influencers on purchasing decisions**

Multinomial logistic regression was employed as the dependent variable (Q11_MERGED) representing different levels of students' buying behaviour is categorical with more than two categories (1.00, 2.00, 3.00). The independent variable (Q8_MERGED) represents the level of influence from social media influencers, also categorized (1.00, 2.00, 3.00).

The base (reference) category is Q11_MERGED = 1.00, representing students with the lowest level of buying behaviour influenced by social media. The regression results estimate the odds of being in categories 2.00 (moderate buying behaviour) and 3.00 (high buying behaviour) relative to the base category for each level of Q8_MERGED.

- Students with moderate influencer engagement are more likely to fall under moderate buying behaviour than low, but the significance level should be checked for $p < 0.05$.
- Students with high influencer engagement also show increased likelihood to have moderate or high buying behaviour but small counts and low expected frequencies in this category may reduce reliability.
- Students are significantly more likely to fall in the high buying behaviour category compared to those with low influencer engagement.
- This suggests a positive influence of social media influencers on purchasing decisions, especially for students who follow or engage heavily with such influencers.

Findings: -

- The findings of a study revealed that the majority of respondents were in the age group of 21-25, accounting for 52 out of 91 total participants. Followed by the 26-30 age group had 27 respondents, while 10 respondents were aged 30 and above and only 2 respondents belonged to the 15-20 age group.
- It also revealed that out of the total respondents, 49% were male and 51% were female, indicating a nearly balanced gender representation in the sample. No respondents selected prefer not to say. This suggests that all participants were comfortable disclosing their gender identity.
- The study found that most respondents had an undergraduate educational qualification (47%), followed by post-graduation and other qualifications.
- The study showed that the vast majority of respondents (96 %) reported that they did not consider themselves to have a disability, while only a small portion (4 %) indicated that they did.
- The results from multinomial logistic regression reveal a statistically significant relationship between social media influencer engagement and students' buying behaviour. Students with higher levels of influencer engagement are more likely to exhibit higher levels of buying behaviour, demonstrating that influencers play a measurable role in shaping consumer decisions in the student demographic.

These findings align with existing literature suggesting that Gen Z and student populations are particularly susceptible to influencer marketing due to their high exposure to digital media and emotional engagement with influencer personalities.

Suggestions: -

- Collaborate with experts: Given that 43% of respondents follow influencers based on their level of expertise, marketers ought to work with influencers who are regarded as subject matter experts in particular product categories.
- Increase influencer credibility to boost trust: It's critical to collaborate with influencers that uphold transparency because 80% of respondents said they had doubts about the influencer's legitimacy and 82% indicated a lack of trust influenced their decisions to buy.
- Use lifestyle-based storytelling: Since lifestyle alignment affects 33% of students, marketers should choose influencers whose values and way of life appeal to the target audience in order to establish relatability and an emotional bond.
- Strategically use discount codes: even if they only have a 5% influence, employing them in conjunction with reliable influencers might act as a last push to convert intent into action.

Conclusion: -

The study concludes that Students' purchasing habits in Guwahati City are greatly influenced by social media influencers. The majority of students actively follows and engages with influencers, especially those in the beauty, fashion, fitness, and gaming sectors. Influencer's expertise, lifestyle and perceived authenticity are key factors that shape students' purchasing decisions. Students particularly those between the ages of 21 to 25, are mostly active on social media platforms and also engage frequently with their content, which suggest that this group is especially receptive to digital marketing strategies.

However, trust plays critical role-many students have expressed doubts about influencer credibility, which directly affects their willingness to buy recommended products. Despite this, a considerable portion of students still make purchasing decisions based on influencer content, indicating the growing role of social media in shaping consumer preferences among youth. Overall, influencer marketing proves to be an effective tool, provided the influencer maintains authenticity and trust with their audience. Social media influencers are indeed powerful agents in shaping students' consumer behaviour in Guwahati, but their effectiveness relies heavily on sustained credibility, genuine engagement, and the capacity to establish an ethical and personal connection with the audience.

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