



A STUDY ON IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS' ENDORSEMENTS ON THE CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR FOR LIFESTYLE AND ELECTRONICS PRODUCT CATEGORY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GORAKHPUR CITY

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ABSTRACT

Digital marketing and social media marketing are two different types of marketing. Influencers are a good example of how advertising on social media is done in a very subtle, almost subliminal manner. This form of marketing has a long-term effect on the general populace. If done well, it is interactive, engaging, and creates a bond with the customer rather than simply appealing to their reasoning side. Gorakhpur has one of India's greatest youth populations, thanks to its second-highest density of institutions, as well as its status as an IT centre and other factors. The lifestyle and electronic sectors have a significant impact on this generation's purchasing habits. Lifestyle is the latest trend and is good at creating images with the help of influencers for food, fitness, organic, products, and so on. Electronics appeal to the tech-savvy youth, and practically all influencers promote them on numerous channels. With the use of primary and secondary data, this research article seeks to connect all of these aspects. The goal is to investigate the relationship between the average consumer's faith in influencers and the ensuing consumer behaviour of Gorakhpur's youth aged 15 to 25. A systematic questionnaire will be used to obtain primary data. The observations will be investigated and given as findings.

Keywords: *social media, Youth, Consumer behaviour, Lifestyle, Electronics, Influencers.*

INTRODUCTION

Social media has fundamentally altered the advertising landscape. The number of people using social media is rapidly increasing—by 2020. In 2020, 3.6 billion individuals used social media on a global scale. India contributes a substantial number of them. In India, there are estimated 400 million social media users as of January 2021, with an annual increase of 25- 30 million members. These data might be interpreted in a variety of ways, but one thing is clear: social media marketing in India has enormous potential. Today's kids are well-versed in technology, have a shorter attention span, and do not want to be bombarded with commercials. Companies desire a win-win situation for both themselves and their customers. Most organisations now take a consumer-centric strategy, and most advertising has shifted away from "in your face" commercials toward more subtle ones. Influencers are a variety of third parties who have the ability to influence consumer behaviour but never assume responsibility for the decision. Expertise, experience, and popularity are just a few of the factors that have contributed to their success. They are always thought of as experts in their field and have a dedicated social media following.

They are both organic and sponsored. People trust influencers more than typical company advertisements. Influencers develop their own content and constantly provide their followers advice on how to use a product. The goal of this study is to look into the function of influencers in consumer behaviour in a city like Gorakhpur. It will assess the depth of the relationship between influencers and the general public, with the goal of determining the conversion rate that can be achieved using this marketing strategy. For our research, we chose the city of Gorakhpur. Gorakhpur has transformed from being regarded as the "Pensioner's City" to becoming one of India's fastest developing cities. It has also been named one of India's most liveable cities. All of this has a significant impact on the city's demography. It boasts one of the country's greatest youth populations.

The youth's purchasing habits are heavily influenced by the lifestyle and electronic sectors. These are the two industries in which the majority of young people invest their money. Lifestyle is adept at developing graphics for food, exercise, organic products, and other topics with the support of influencers. Almost all influencers use numerous platforms to promote electronic products.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The notions of consumer buying behaviour and the influence of social media influencers are explored in this study. The researcher will attempt to focus and analyse both areas during the literature review. Consumer purchases Behaviour refers to the study of consumer behaviour in terms of what people buy, how they buy, when and where they buy—in other words, both quantitative and qualitative judgments.

This research is critical for gaining a better understanding of the target market and selling the product or service to them. Any marketing strategy would be incomplete without it. Consumer buying behaviour is a process that includes phases such as recognising a need, searching for information, evaluating options, selecting, pre-purchasing planning, purchasing, and post-purchasing behaviour. Personal, social, cultural, and psychological factors all have the potential to impact the process at any point along the way.

According to Duangruthai Voramontri's research, social media can influence buying decisions during the information search, alternative appraisal, and purchase decision phases of the classic model. His research focuses on the extent to which social media influences decisions. According to the findings, social media habits have an impact on consumer happiness during the information search and alternative evaluation phase, with satisfaction improving as the consumer progresses toward a final purchase choice and post-purchase review.

Major types of social media include social networking sites, social news, media sharing, blogs, and microblogging. Social media marketing is a word that refers to the use of social media networks for marketing purposes. Social media has evolved into an interconnected grid with material that can be shared across numerous platforms. There has also been an increase in the forms of utility and ease of marketing as a result of this.

According to McKinsey & Company's studies in India, digital influencers can have a huge impact. According to their findings, 80 percent of consumers will consider a new company based on a significant influencer's suggestion. Every day, millions of items are advertised, with an equal number of influencers behind each one. They aim to maintain a relationship with their followers on several levels of interaction, including trust-building, awareness of their industry, and advertising.

A fit between a platform's engagement dimensions and its integrated advertising, according to Hide A and et al, is more likely to transfer into advertising that responds to consumers' demands when experiencing a platform, at least if an ad is not ignored or avoided. Instagram, for example, provides consumers with a creative visual outlet; therefore, advertising must be aesthetically appealing and engaging in order to make an impression. Twitter, on the other hand, is intended to be a more informative medium.

In their study on Consumer, Janusz Wielki (2020) found that the most crucial factor affecting the success of digital influencers' actions was trust in a particular person as an authority, the legitimacy of the message expressed, and the link between the message and a certain person. According to McKinsey's research, Consumer values online communities because they allow people from all walks of life to interact and mobilise around common issues and interests.

With a growing awareness of making better choices to improve one's quality of life, India's lifestyle industry is fast expanding. The electronics industry is expected to increase at a rate of 7.3 trillion dollars by 2025, making it one of the fastest growing in the world. [Manik Abbott, 2020] The Indian market is predicted to be second only to China's.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive in nature because it examines current data. Consumer behaviour is a dependent variable in this study, whereas the impact of social media influencers is an independent variable. Intent to buy, buying decisions, frequency of buying, and trust in influencers are all ways to assess influence.

The study is both quantitative and descriptive. The researcher has employed both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was gathered from periodicals, marketing white books, websites, and other research publications. A systematic questionnaire was used to obtain primary data, and youngsters aged 14 to 25 from Gorakhpur were sampled. The data sample size is 156. Samples are collected using the convenience sampling approach.

MS-Excel is used to edit and code the obtained data. The data is analysed using a differential statistic. Data analysis is used to prove the hypothesis, and the Chi-Square test is used as an independence test. Findings are presented as observations.

OBJECTIVES

1. To determine the influence of social media influencers and their endorsements on customer purchase intent.
2. To determine the level of trust that consumer members of various genders place in social media influencers.
3. To determine which social media influencers have the most following.

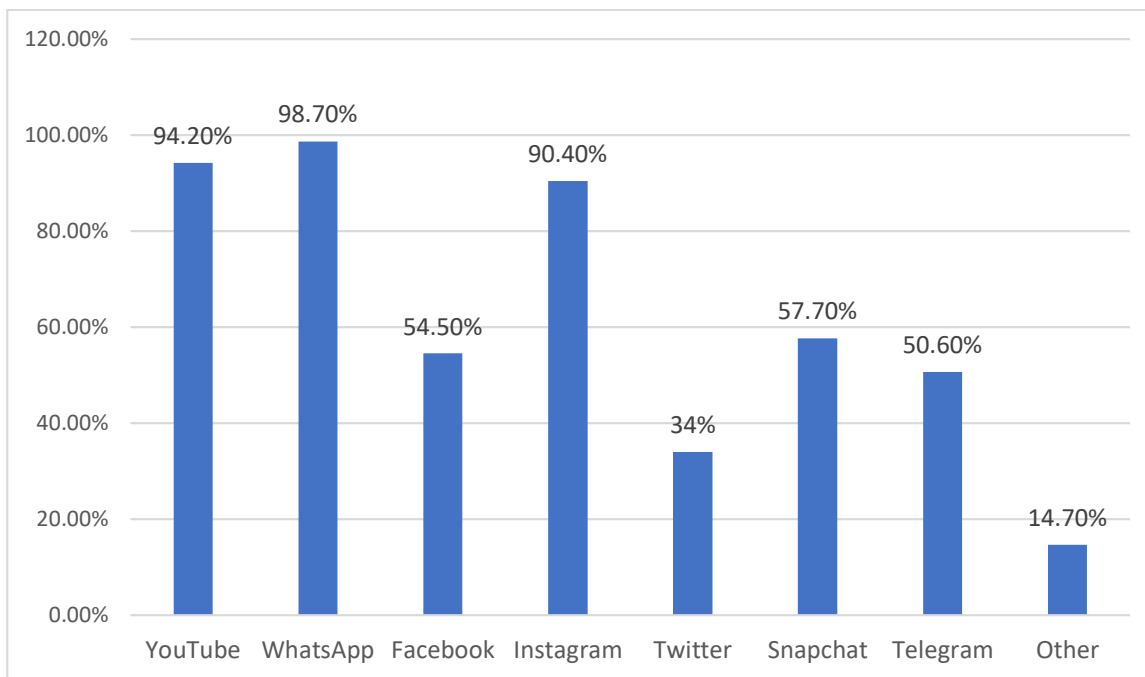
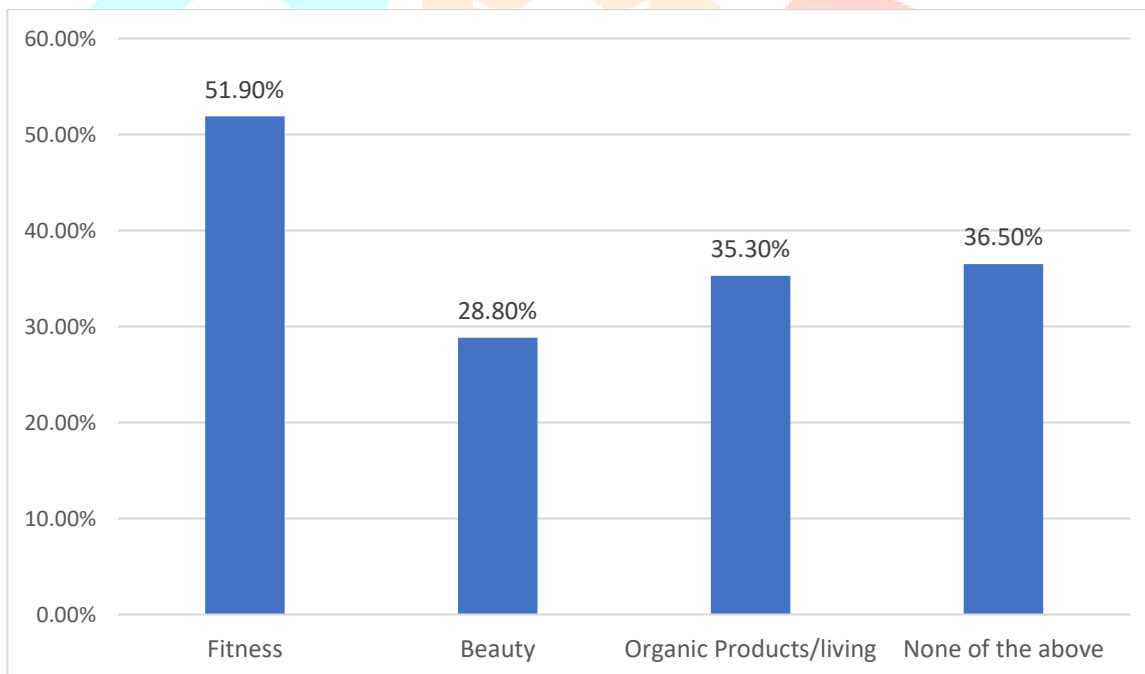
ANALYSIS

The information gathered from 157 samples was coded and altered in Microsoft Excel. The information was organised into frequency tables. Descriptive statistics are used to understand the data's various dimensions. For hypothesis testing, inferential statistics such as the Chi² Test are used.

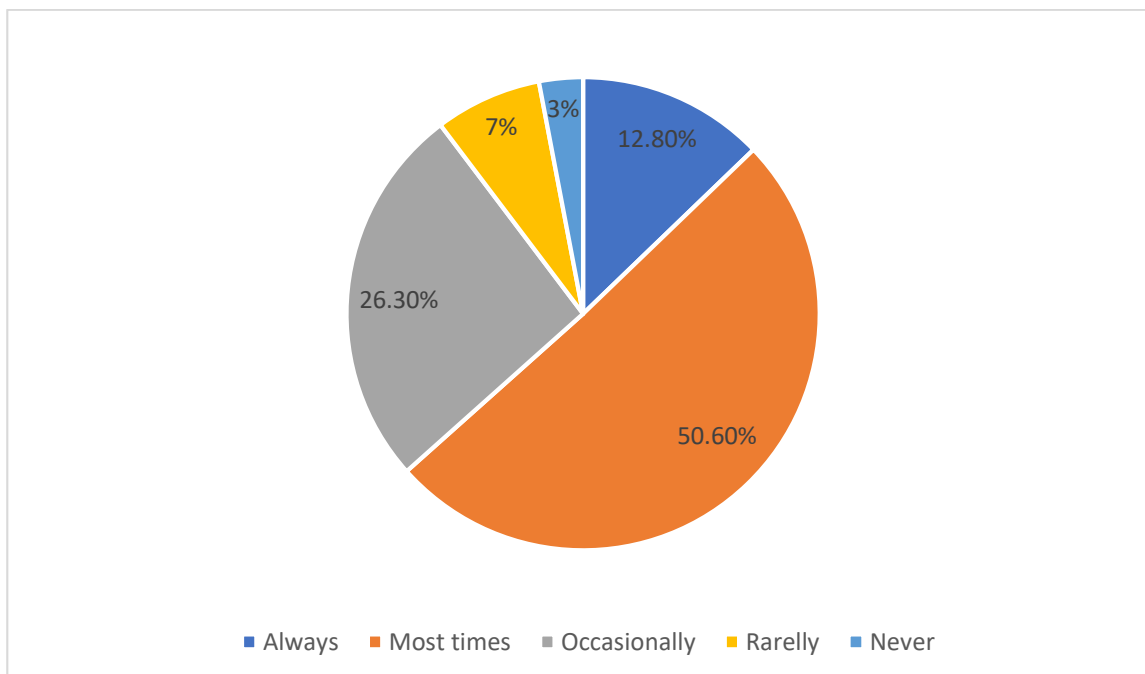
A total of 157 people were included in the study, with 69 men and 88 women. The sample size is made up of young people aged 15 to 25, who are divided into three age groups. Nearly all of the respondents are between the ages of 18 and 25. Students make up the majority of those who responded.

Only two people out of the 157 people polled stated they don't use social media. It speaks to the enormous influence that social media has on the lives of today's youth.

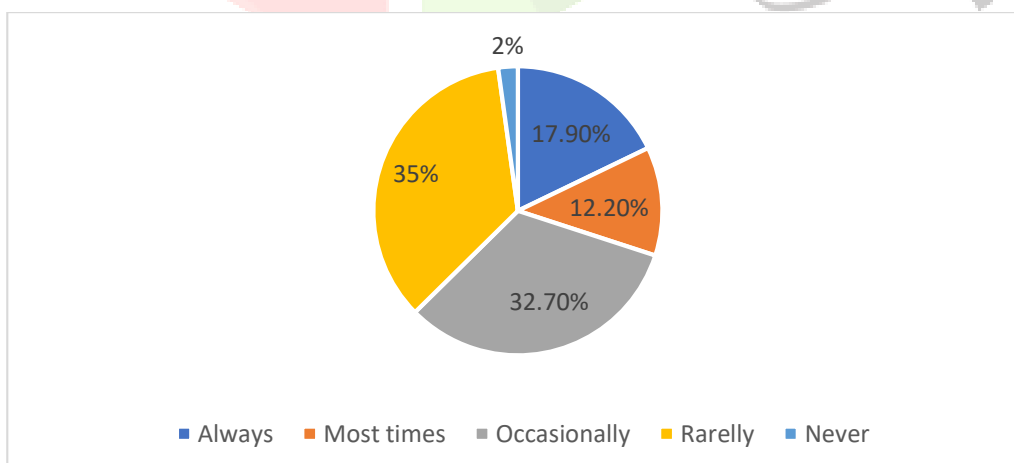
The research demonstrates how popular YouTube, WhatsApp, and Instagram are among teenagers. This also supports the concept that most social media influencers are active on Instagram and YouTube because it allows them to reach a larger audience. On social media, nearly 3/4 of respondents follow celebrities or social media influencers. The average number of influencers followed is 5, according to the statistics. Nearly 20% of samples follow more than 10 influencers.

Diagram 1: Most used social media platforms.**Diagram 2: Most followed category of social media influencers.**

According to the results of the poll, the majority of young people follow fitness-related social media celebrities. Organic products and organic living are becoming increasingly popular, and influencers in these fields have a big following. Nearly half of those polled say that they will check out technology-related social media influencers as needed.

Diagram 3: Occurrence of advertisements or endorsements by social media influencers

In their use of social media, the majority of respondents acknowledged that they come across product marketing by influencers. It depicts the present level of advertising and endorsements, as well as the penetration of social media advertising alongside traditional media. To gain new clients, small and new developing firms have been focusing on social media influencers' branding. However, despite the increased frequency of advertisements and endorsements, the number of people considering or purchasing the products remains low. The percentage of people who really check out the product or service is depicted in the graphic below.

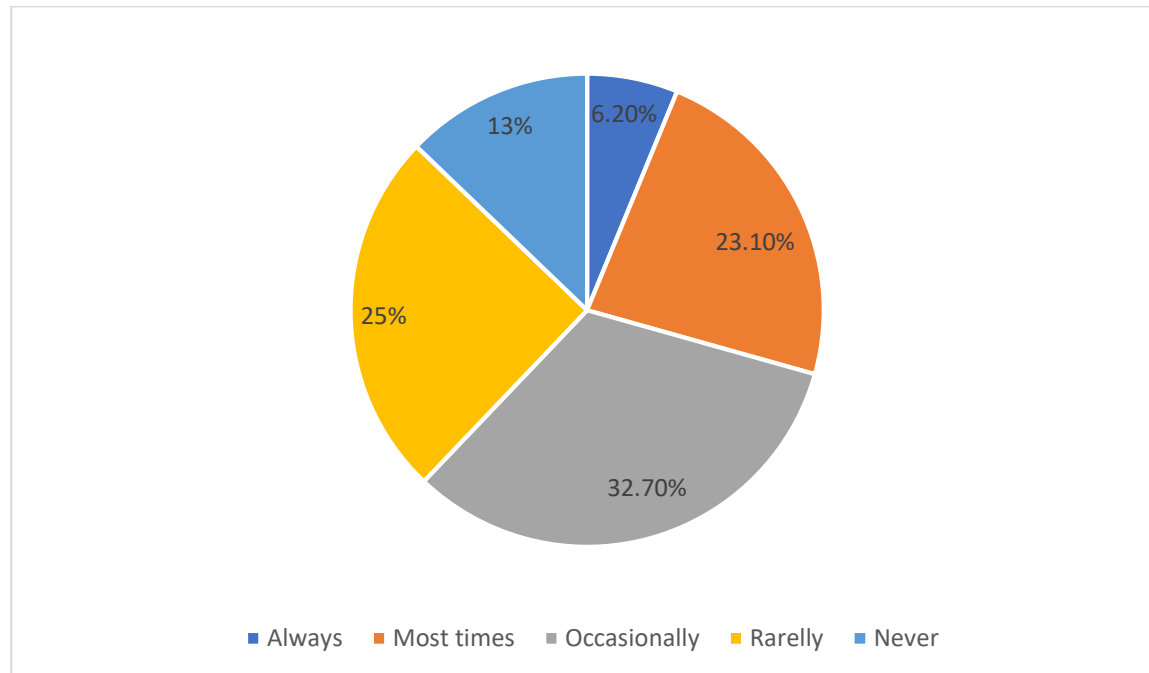
Diagram 4: Percentage of respondents who actually check out the product/service promoted by the social media influencer

According to the graph, less than half of the total responders actually try out the product or service. The percentage of persons who buy the product or service is significantly lower, accounting for less than 40% of the total sample size. Only 11% of respondents said they bought the products the majority of the time.

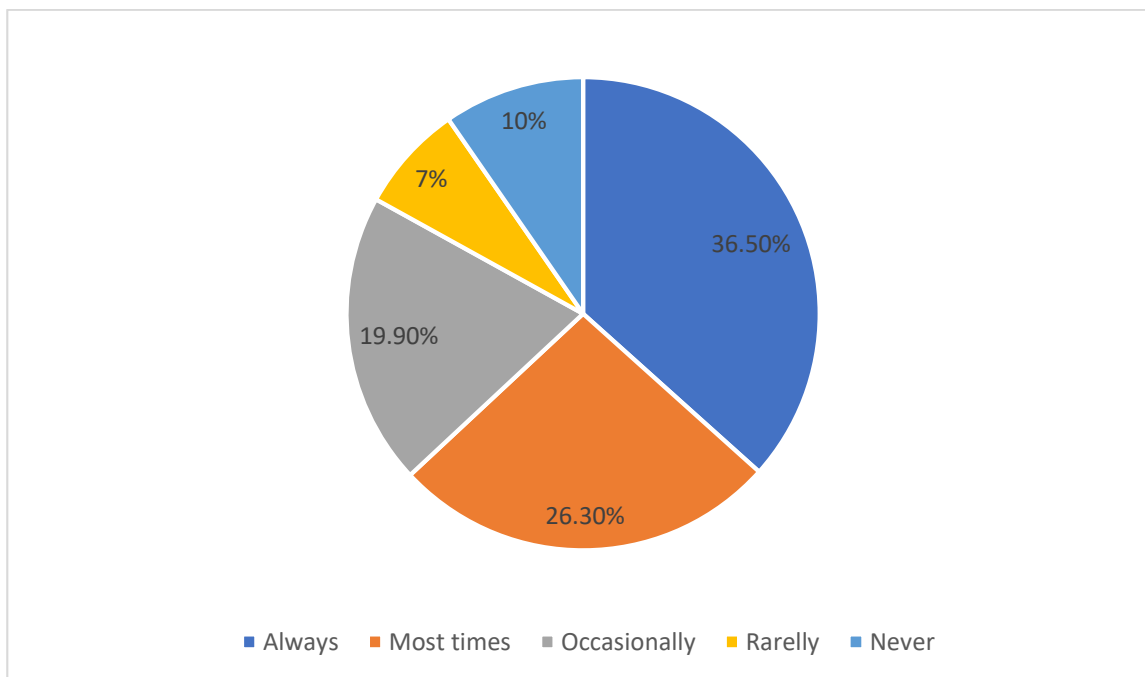
When it came to gauging trust in the influencers who were advertising the product, the majority of the sample was picky, only trusting the product if it was pushed by an influencer in the same area. Almost three-quarters

of the respondents agreed that they would check costs, reviews, and other factors before purchasing any product recommended or pushed by social media influencers.

Diagram 5: Consideration of a brand which is promoted by a social media influencer but is relatively new or smaller.



When it came to younger or smaller brands, the majority of the sample size believed that they would buy the product regardless of whether it came from a newer or smaller company. It can support the fact that certain newer firms, such as Boat, Mamaearth, Groww, or Mivi, have grown to prominence in their respective industries solely through the use of social media influencers for marketing. Along with advertisements and endorsements, many social media reviewers in a specific field review and share their comments on the items or services that are available. These kind of social media reviews gain more credibility than those who promote things for sponsorship purposes. Nearly 80% of individuals trust online reviews more than endorsements or marketing.

Diagram 6: Trust over reviews which are not sponsored.**HYPOTHESIS**

- 1: The impact of a social media influencer on a consumer's purchase intent varies by gender.
2. Gender influences the impact of social media influencers on consumer purchasing behaviour.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

To test the hypothesis, Chi² test of independence is used. Expected observation is calculated from the actual observation.

For calculation of chi value, Chi Value = Σ (Actual Observation-Expected Observation)

Testing of Hypothesis 1:

H₀ = Impact of Social Media Influencer on consumer's intent to purchase is independent on gender.

H₁ = Impact of Social Media Influencer on consumer's intent to purchase is dependent on gender.

Actual Observations

	Males	Females	Total	Percentage
Always	7	15	22	14.02
Neutral	22	29	51	32.48
Never	40	44	84	53.50
Total	69	88	157	100

Expected Observations

	Males	Females
Always	9.668789809	12.33121019
Neutral	22.41401274	28.58598726
Never	36.91719745	47.08280255

X^2 Statistics (P Value) = 0.409

As the significance value is greater than 0.05, we accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternate hypothesis. It indicates that impact of influencers on consumer's intent to purchase is independent of gender. Null hypothesis does hold good which means two attributes are not associated and the association is just because of a chance.

Testing of Hypothesis 2

H_0 = Impact of Social Media Influencer on consumer buying behaviour is independent on gender.

H_1 = Impact of Social Media Influencer on consumer buying behaviour is dependent on gender.

Actual Observations

	Males	Females	Total	Percentage
Always	9	8	17	10.83
Neutral	15	11	26	16.56
Never	45	69	114	72.61
Total	69	88	157	100

Expected Observations

	Males	Females
Always	7.47133758	9.52866242
Neutral	11.426751559	14.57324841
Never	50.10191083	63.89808917

X2 Statistics (P Value) = 0.17565909

As the significance value is greater than 0.05, we accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternate hypothesis. It indicates that impact of influencers on consumer buying behaviour is independent of gender. Null hypothesis does hold good which means two attributes are not associated and the association is just because of a chance.

FINDINGS

The use of social media influencers and their brand image for product and service marketing is widespread, and almost all forms of influencers tend to promote some brand or another in their interactions with audiences, whether it's through a video, a post, or something else entirely. Despite the fact that social media marketing is becoming more popular, the number of people considering or purchasing the things promoted remains low. Over the endorsements and marketing of social media influencers, the sample tends to trust reviews produced by non-sponsored reviewers.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE

Study was conducted on samples from Gorakhpur only so cannot be generalized. Most of the respondents are students. Buying capacity may also work as a mediator in this process which cannot be studied in this research. As impact of social media and influencer strategies is increasing the study can be extended in terms of few more product categories. Also, the study of relationship between antecedents of influencer and the impact can be studied in detail.

CONCLUSION

Social media is becoming most influencing tools for the marketing strategies for companies. Data shows that influencer marketing gives better reach than traditional marketing tools. Most of the customers follow social media and they also follow the different influencers. Both the hypothesis verified says that influencers are impactful in male as well as female to shape their minds to buy the products. Influencer's endorsement makes positive attitude towards brand which will lead towards purchase intention of consumer. Knowledge, popularity and fan following are few of the indicators which decides the impact of Influencer. Research concludes that for reaching to consumer influencers can be utilized effectively. This is the cost-effective opportunity for the marketers for effective results.

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