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# THE ROLE OF INSTAGRAM INFLUENCERS IN SHAPING CONSUMER PURCHASE BEHAVIOR FOR FASHION BRANDS IN INDIA

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## ABSTRACT :

This research paper aims to explore the increasing influence of Instagram influencers on consumer purchase behavior within India's fashion industry. With the growth of digital media, Instagram has become a major platform for fashion marketing. This study investigates how different types of content (reels, posts, stories) and influencer characteristics (credibility, engagement, follower count) shape consumer trust and preferences for ethnic fashion brands. Using a quantitative research design, primary data was collected from 100+ Instagram users in Gen Z and working professionals using Google Forms. The results suggest that a significant influence of Instagram influencers in shaping consumer decisions, with higher engagement and relatable content leading to greater trust and purchase intention. The findings highlight the effectiveness of influencer marketing over traditional advertising in this sector and offer practical insights for fashion brands in India.

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**Keywords:** Instagram, Influencer Marketing, Fashion Brands, Consumer Behavior, Social Media, India, Digital Marketing, Purchase Decision

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

The emergence of social media platforms has drastically transformed the marketing landscape worldwide. Among these platforms, Instagram has emerged as a dominant force, particularly in India, where the platform boasts millions of active users across diverse demographics. With its visual-centric interface and wide reach, Instagram has become more than just a photo-sharing app; it is now a powerful tool for branding, advertising, and influencing consumer behavior. In recent years, brands—especially in the fashion industry—have shifted from traditional advertising to influencer marketing as a strategy to attract and engage their target audience.

Instagram influencers, individuals with a strong follower base and perceived expertise or appeal in a particular niche, have become key opinion leaders who influence consumer choices. They share content in the form of reels, stories, IGTV videos, and posts that showcase products in a relatable and often aspirational way. The fashion industry, which is highly dependent on visual appeal, trends, and personal style, has naturally gravitated toward this platform. Influencers now act as a bridge between fashion brands and consumers, enabling a more personalized, engaging, and real-time interaction with the audience.

In the Indian context, where a growing number of Gen Z and millennials rely on social media for product discovery and lifestyle inspiration, Instagram influencers have significantly shaped consumer preferences. Whether it's promoting ethnic wear during festive seasons or introducing the latest streetwear collections, influencers drive trends and influence purchase decisions more directly than traditional advertisements ever did. Thus, understanding the role these influencers play in affecting consumer behavior has become essential for marketers, brand strategists, and researchers alike.

### 1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the growing use of Instagram influencers by fashion brands in India, there remains a significant research gap in understanding their actual impact on consumer purchase behavior, particularly in the fashion sector. While many brands invest heavily in influencer collaborations, there is limited academic data that evaluates how these collaborations translate into real consumer action. Do followers merely like the content, or does it lead to actual purchase behavior? What factors—such as the credibility of the influencer, the type of content, or the frequency of engagement—play a role in shaping the consumer's final decision?

Furthermore, in the Indian market, cultural diversity, price sensitivity, and evolving fashion preferences add complexity to consumer behavior. The impact of influencers may vary widely based on factors such as region, age, gender, and income. As such, it is crucial to explore how effective Instagram influencers are across different segments and what elements of their content are most persuasive. This research aims to fill this knowledge gap and offer insights into the underlying factors that influence consumer purchase decisions through Instagram.

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. The main objective of this study is to investigate the role of Instagram influencers in shaping consumer purchase behavior for fashion brands in India. The specific objectives are:
2. To understand the influence of Instagram content (reels, stories, posts) on consumer fashion preferences.
3. To examine the credibility and engagement level of influencers and their impact on consumer trust and brand perception.
4. To identify the demographic patterns that determine responsiveness to influencer marketing.
5. To compare the effectiveness of influencer marketing versus traditional forms of advertising in the Indian fashion industry.
6. To evaluate the purchasing behavior of consumers influenced by Instagram influencers.

### 1.4 Hypotheses

Based on the objectives and prior research in the field, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- **H<sub>1</sub>:** Instagram influencers significantly affect consumer preferences for fashion brands in India.
- **H<sub>2</sub>:** Different types of influencer content (e.g., reels, posts, stories) significantly influence consumer purchase decisions.
- **H<sub>3</sub>:** Influencer credibility and engagement positively impact consumer trust in fashion brands.
- **H<sub>4</sub>:** Influencer marketing is more effective than traditional advertising in promoting fashion products in India.

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## 2. Literature Review

### 1. Influencer Marketing in Digital Era

According to De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders (2017), influencers hold significant sway over their followers by shaping perceptions and purchase decisions through relatable, curated content.

### 2. Instagram's Role in Consumer Engagement

Djafarova & Rushworth (2017) highlight that Instagram's visual nature encourages higher consumer engagement with fashion products compared to text-heavy platforms like Twitter or Facebook.

### 3. Trust and Authenticity in Influencer Marketing

Influencers are viewed as more authentic than traditional celebrities, which leads to greater trust from consumers, as found by Lou & Yuan (2019). Trust is crucial in converting followers into buyers.

### 4. Impact of Influencers on Purchase Intent

A study by Chen (2018) found that influencers significantly impact consumer purchase intent, especially when promoting fashion and beauty products. The study emphasizes the value of personal recommendations.

### 5. Influencer Credibility

Research by Freberg et al. (2011) shows that influencer credibility, including expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, positively impacts brand perception and consumer buying behaviour.

### 6. Visual Content's Impact

Saboo, Kumar, & Ramani (2016) found that Instagram's image-centric platform enhances product recall and brand awareness more effectively than text-focused platforms, making it ideal for fashion marketing.

### 7. Consumer Loyalty and Influencers

Erkan (2015) discusses how influencers, by engaging followers with personal stories and relatable content, help brands build customer loyalty in the fashion industry.

### 8. Micro-Influencers vs. Macro-Influencers

According to Chatzigeorgiou (2017), micro-influencers with niche followings tend to have higher engagement rates than macro-influencers, although both types are effective in different ways for brands.

### 9. The Influence of User-Generated Content

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) point out that user-generated content, often shared by influencers on Instagram, adds authenticity to brand promotions and influences consumer behaviour by reflecting real-life use cases.

### 10. Engagement Metrics

Audrezet, de Kerviler, & Moulard (2020) argue that an influencer's ability to generate high engagement (likes, shares, comments) can be a more valuable metric than follower count in predicting campaign success.

### 11. Influencer-Brand Fit

According to Abidin (2016), the alignment between an influencer's persona and the brand they endorse is key to maintaining authenticity and trustworthiness, thus influencing purchase behaviour.

**12. Emotional Connection to Influencers**

Labrecque (2014) found that consumers develop parasocial relationships (one-sided emotional connections) with influencers, which increases their susceptibility to product recommendations.

**13. Brand Awareness via Influencers**

Studies by Godey et al. (2016) show that influencer endorsements significantly boost brand awareness and drive consumer interest, particularly in visually driven industries like fashion.

**14. Consumer-Brand Relationships**

Ilicic & Webster (2015) suggest that consumers form stronger connections with brands promoted by influencers they admire, making influencer collaborations critical to brand loyalty.

**15. Influencers and Word-of-Mouth**

Word-of-mouth marketing facilitated by influencers is more trusted and influential than paid advertisements, as suggested by research from Bakshy et al. (2011).

**16. Social Proof through Influencers**

Cialdini (2009) found that social proof, where consumers look to others' behaviour to guide their own, plays a significant role in how followers adopt influencer-recommended fashion products.

**17. Instagram Stories and Reels**

A study by Sheldon & Bryant (2016) highlighted that Instagram's features like Stories and Reels offer brands a dynamic, real-time method of interacting with consumers, enhancing engagement.

**18. Impact on Younger Consumers**

Valkenburg, Peter, & Schouten (2006) demonstrate that younger consumers, particularly Generation Z and millennials, are highly influenced by social media, especially visual platforms like Instagram.

**19. Consumer Scepticism and Transparency**

Evans, Phua, Lim, & Jun (2017) found that transparent influencer marketing (disclosing partnerships) reduces consumer scepticism and increases trust, making followers more likely to act on recommendations.

**20. Cultural Relevance of Influencers**

A study by De Cicco et al. (2020) pointed out that influencers who reflect the cultural and social values of their target audience (e.g., promoting local fashion trends) are more effective in driving purchase behaviour

***Gaps in Existing Research***

While there is significant global literature on influencer marketing, limited studies focus specifically on Instagram influencers and their role in the Indian fashion market. There is also a lack of research that categorically analyzes consumer behavior in different demographics like Gen Z vs. working professionals, or how different content formats (e.g., reels, posts, stories) influence behavior differently. Furthermore, while influencer marketing is known to be impactful, studies quantifying the extent of influence on actual purchase decisions—rather than just attitudes—are limited.

***Future Research Directions***

Future studies could explore the long-term impact of influencer marketing on brand loyalty in the fashion industry. There's also scoped to investigate the role of artificial intelligence and virtual influencers in shaping consumer behavior. Additionally, comparative studies between traditional advertising and influencer-driven campaigns in terms of return on investment (ROI) would offer valuable insights for marketers.

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**3. Research Methodology*****3.1 Study Design***

This research follows a quantitative study design aimed at analyzing consumer behavior and the impact of Instagram influencers on purchase decisions related to fashion brands in India. A structured survey method was chosen to collect measurable and analyzable data from a large group of respondents. The quantitative approach allows for objective assessment, statistical interpretation, and generalization of findings across similar populations. The study uses a descriptive design to understand relationships among variables such as influencer credibility, content format, consumer trust, and actual purchasing behavior.

***3.2 Data Collection***

Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. The questionnaire was designed to be simple, direct, and relevant to the research topic. It included both closed-ended and multiple-choice questions to gather demographic details, consumer behavior patterns, opinions on influencers, and past purchasing experiences. The form was shared mainly via Instagram DMs and stories to ensure that the target respondents were active Instagram users.

Secondary data was also reviewed from research articles, industry reports, and online publications to support the theoretical framework and reinforce the interpretation of results. These sources helped in developing a solid background and identifying trends and gaps for the study.

### 3.3 Sampling Techniques

- **Population:** The population for this study consists of Indian Instagram users who follow fashion-related content and influencers. This includes students, young professionals, and fashion-conscious individuals between the ages of 18 and 35.
- **Sampling Unit:** Each respondent who actively uses Instagram and engages with fashion influencers or brands on the platform represents a single sampling unit.
- **Sample Size:** The study surveyed a total of 201 respondents, selected from the target population using online distribution techniques.
- **Sampling Method:** A non-probability sampling method, specifically convenience sampling, was employed. Since the focus was on Instagram users who actively follow fashion influencers, the respondents were selected based on accessibility, relevance, and willingness to participate in the study. Although this method limits the generalizability, it is suitable for exploratory studies where targeted insights are needed.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

The collected data was organized and analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive statistics such as percentages and averages were used to summarize the data. Cross-tabulation was performed to understand relationships between variables like age, frequency of Instagram usage, and influence on buying decisions. Hypotheses were tested using chi-square tests and correlation analysis to determine statistical significance. The use of SPSS ensured accuracy, efficient data handling, and reliable statistical testing for interpreting the outcomes of the study.

### 5.7 Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire is used as the primary data collection tool. It is designed to gather quantifiable insights into Instagram influencer marketing.

#### Questionnaire Structure:

#### Demographic Questions:

1. **What is your age group?**
  - a. Below 18
  - b. 18-25
  - c. 26-35
  - d. 36-45
  - e. Above 45
2. **What is your gender?**
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  - c. Other
3. **What is your highest level of education?**
  - a. High School or Below
  - b. Undergraduate
  - c. Postgraduate
  - d. Doctorate
4. **What is your monthly income range?**
  - a. Below ₹20,000
  - b. ₹20,000 - ₹50,000
  - c. ₹50,001 - ₹1,00,000
  - d. Above ₹1,00,000
5. **How frequently do you shop for fashion products online?**
  - a. Weekly
  - b. Monthly
  - c. Occasionally
  - d. Rarely

**Likert Scale Questions (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree):**

- Instagram influencers influence my purchasing decisions for fashion products.
- I have purchased fashion products after seeing them promoted by an Instagram influencer.
- I consider influencer recommendations more than traditional advertisements (TV, newspapers, billboards) when buying fashion products.
- I prefer buying fashion products recommended by influencers who showcase their personal experience rather than just promoting the product.
- I trust Instagram influencers' fashion recommendations.
- I follow fashion influencers because their recommendations align with my personal style preferences.
- If an influencer promotes multiple brands frequently, I find their recommendations less trustworthy.
- An influencer's expertise in fashion is important for me to trust their recommendations.
- I trust influencers' recommendations more when they are not paid promotions.
- When I see 'Paid Partnership' or 'Sponsored' on a post, I feel the influencer's recommendation is less genuine.
- I have bought a product even after knowing it was a paid promotion because I trust the influencer's choice.

**Yes/No Questions:**

- Do you prefer organic influencer content over sponsored posts?
- Have you followed a fashion brand after seeing it promoted by an influencer?

**data analysis and interpretation**

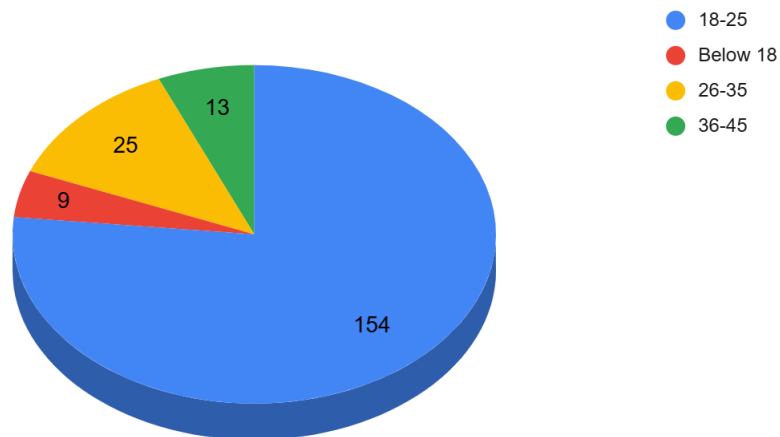
**Descriptive Analysis**

**1. Age**

**What is your age group?**

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25	154	76.6	76.6
	26-35	25	12.4	89.1
	36-45	13	6.5	95.5
	Below 18	9	4.5	100.0
	Total	201	100.0	

**gender**



**Data interpretation**

The most significant portion of participants belongs to the 18-25 age group, comprising 76.6% (154 respondents).

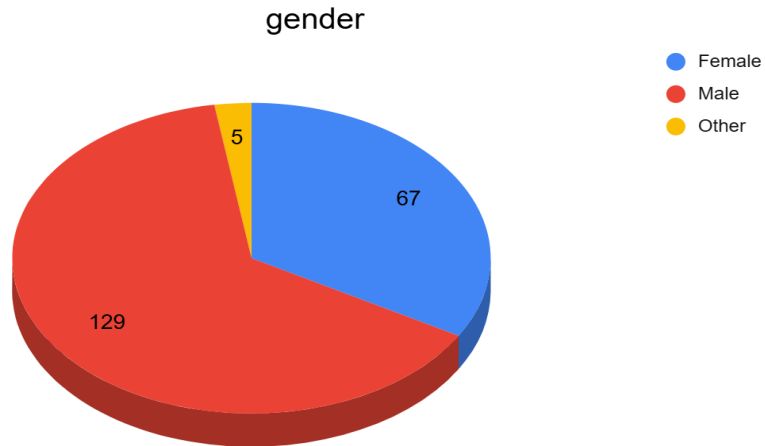
The 26-35 age group accounts for 12.4% (25 respondents).

Older age groups show diminishing frequency, with 6.5% (13 respondents) in the 36-45 group and just 4.5% (9 respondents) categorized as Below 18.

2. Gender

What is your gender?

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	67	33.3	33.3
	Male	129	64.2	97.5
	Other	5	2.5	100.0
	Total	201	100.0	



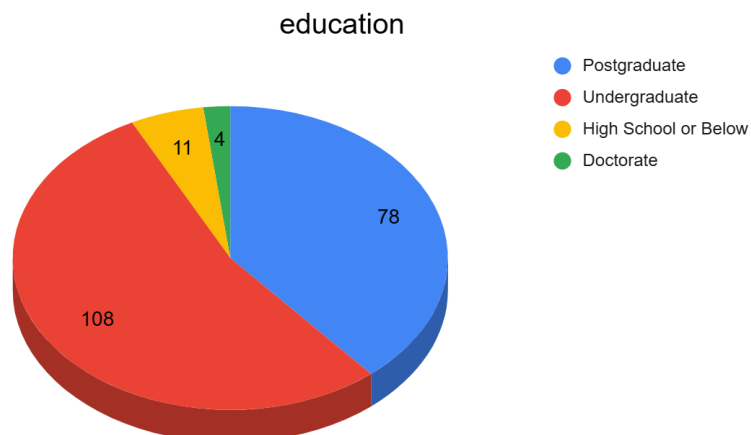
Data interpretation

Males make up the majority of respondents at 64.2%, indicating a potential skew in the population sample toward male participation. With 33.3% of the respondents identifying as female, the representation is significantly lower in comparison to males. The "Other" category has only 2.5% of the responses, highlighting a small representation of non-binary or other gender identities. The data provides a clear picture of gender representation among the respondents, with males significantly outnumbering females and others.

3. Education

What is your highest level of education?

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Doctorate	4	2.0	2.0
	High School or Below	11	5.5	7.5
	Postgraduate	78	38.8	46.3
	Undergraduate	108	53.7	100.0
	Total	201	100.0	



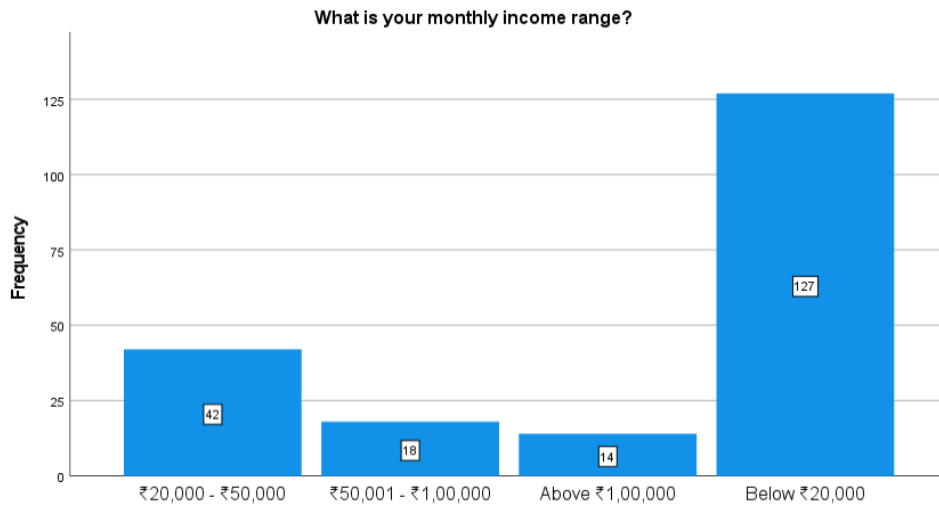
**Data interpretation**

- **Predominant Education Level:** The data shows that the Undergraduate level is the most common, suggesting a well-educated sample.
- **Higher Education Representation:** Combined, Postgraduate and Doctorate holders account for 40.8% of respondents. This indicates a substantial proportion of individuals pursuing or achieving advanced degrees.
- **Potential Areas for Focus:** The limited number of High School or Below (5.5%) and Doctorate (2.0%) respondents highlights opportunities for outreach or educational programs targeting these demographics.

**4. Income**

**What is your monthly income range?**

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	₹20,000 - ₹50,000	42	20.9	20.9
	₹50,001 - ₹1,00,000	18	9.0	29.9
	Above ₹1,00,000	14	7.0	36.8
	Below ₹20,000	127	63.2	100.0
Total		201	100.0	



**Data interpretation**

The most significant segment is the income range "Below ₹20,000", with 127 respondents, indicating a high proportion of low-income earners in the sample.

The next highest range is "₹20,000 - ₹50,000", with 42 respondents, showing a substantially lower frequency.

The remaining ranges, "₹50,001 - ₹1,00,000" and "Above ₹1,00,000", have 18 and 14 respondents, respectively, both indicating lower income frequency.

**5. Shopping Frequency**

**How frequently do you shop for fashion products online?**

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Monthly	65	32.3	32.3
	Occasionally	97	48.3	80.6
	Rarely	24	11.9	92.5
	Weekly	15	7.5	100.0
Total		201	100.0	



**Data interpretation**

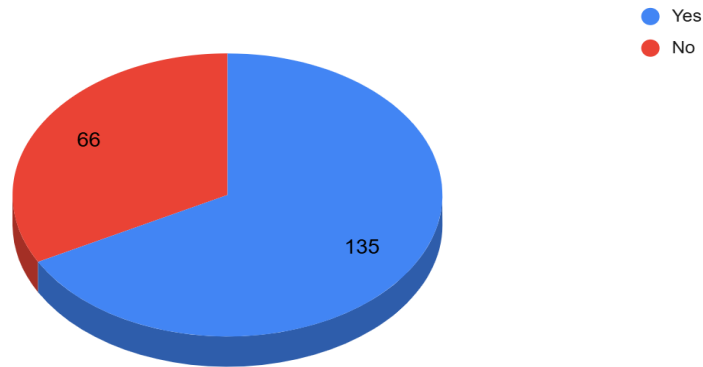
A majority of respondents shop for fashion products occasionally, indicating engagement in online shopping but not on a frequent basis. Only a small fraction shops weekly, suggesting that fashion purchases may be more sporadic rather than consistent. Targeting those who shop occasionally could yield the highest return on marketing efforts. The data suggests potential room for increasing engagement among the monthly shoppers or converting the rare and weekly shoppers into more frequent customers.

**6. Do you pay attention to the number of likes and comments on an influencer's post?**

**Do you pay attention to the number of likes and comments on an influencer's post?**

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	66	32.8	32.8
	Yes	135	67.2	100.0
Total		201	100.0	

Do you pay attention to the number of likes and comments on an influencer's post before considering their recommendation?



**Data interpretation**

A significant majority (67.2%) of respondents pay attention to likes and comments on influencers' posts. This indicates a strong tendency to consider engagement metrics as part of the decision-making process regarding influencer recommendations. A smaller segment (32.8%) does not consider these metrics, suggesting that a portion of the audience may rely on other factors when evaluating influencer recommendations.

The data suggests influencer engagement metrics, such as likes and comments, hold considerable weight in audience perception and decision-making. Marketers should take note of this trend when selecting influencers for partnerships or campaigns.

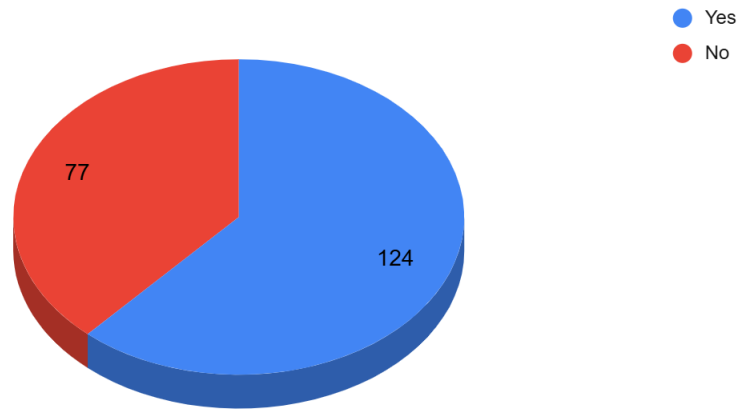
**7. Do you believe influencers with higher engagement (more likes/comments) are more trustworthy?**

**Do you believe influencers with higher engagement (more likes/comments) are more trustworthy?**

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	77	38.3	38.3
	Yes	124	61.7	100.0
Total		201	100.0	



Do you believe influencers with higher engagement are more reliable for fashion recommendations?



**Data interpretation**

A significant proportion of respondents (61.7%) believe that influencers with higher engagement are more trustworthy.

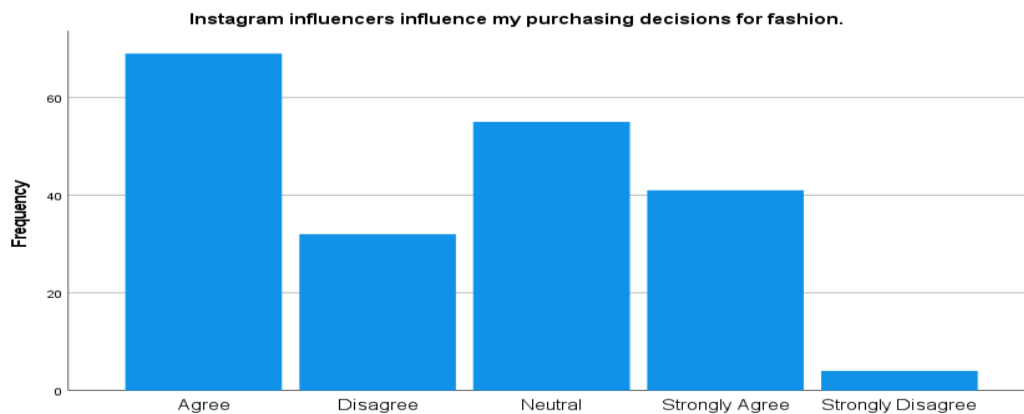
A lesser portion (38.3%) does not share this belief, indicating scepticism towards such influencers.

The data suggests that a majority of participants believe that higher engagement equates to greater trustworthiness among influencers in the context of fashion recommendations. The results could be useful for brands and marketers when considering influencer partnerships.

**8. Instagram influencers influence my purchasing decisions for fashion.**

**Instagram influencers influence my purchasing decisions for fashion.**

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	69	34.3	34.3
	Disagree	32	15.9	50.2
	Neutral	55	27.4	77.6
	Strongly Agree	41	20.4	98.0
	Strongly Disagree	4	2.0	100.0
Total		201	100.0	



**Data interpretation**

There is a clear tendency among respondents that Instagram influencers do impact their purchasing decisions for fashion, with over half (54.7%) either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement.

A sizable neutral segment suggests that there might be varying levels of influence or scepticism among different demographic groups.

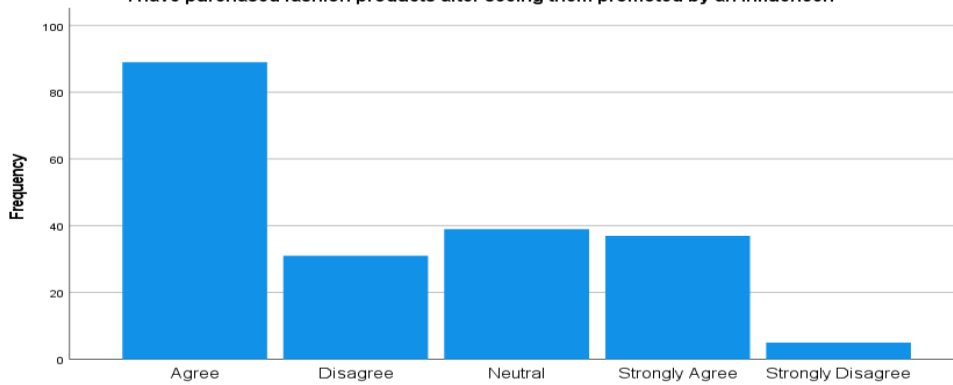
While some respondents disagree, their numbers are minimal compared to those who feel positively influenced.

**9. I have purchased fashion products after seeing them promoted by an influencer.**

**I have purchased fashion products after seeing them promoted by an influencer.**

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	89	44.3	44.3
	Disagree	31	15.4	59.7
	Neutral	39	19.4	79.1
	Strongly Agree	37	18.4	97.5
	Strongly Disagree	5	2.5	100.0
Total		201	100.0	

**I have purchased fashion products after seeing them promoted by an influencer.**



**Data interpretation**

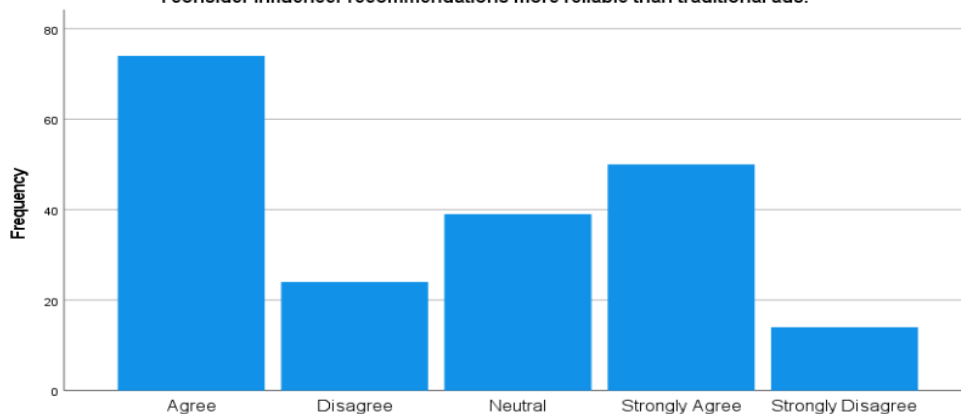
The data implies that influencer promotions significantly affect consumer purchasing decisions, with a majority either agreeing or strongly agreeing. There is a notable percentage of respondents who are neutral or disagree, indicating an opportunity for further engagement strategies to convert these neutral or sceptical consumers. The findings suggest businesses should focus on enhancing influencer partnerships to maximize purchasing influences.

**10. I consider influencer recommendations more reliable than traditional ads.**

**I consider influencer recommendations more reliable than traditional ads.**

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	74	36.8	36.8
	Disagree	24	11.9	48.8
	Neutral	39	19.4	68.2
	Strongly Agree	50	24.9	93.0
	Strongly Disagree	14	7.0	100.0
Total		201	100.0	

**I consider influencer recommendations more reliable than traditional ads.**



**Data interpretation**

Combined responses from "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" 124 responses indicate that a majority 61.7% of participants find influencer recommendations more reliable than traditional ads.

The "Neutral" response from 39 participants 19.4% suggests that a significant portion of respondents are uncertain about the reliability of influencer recommendations.

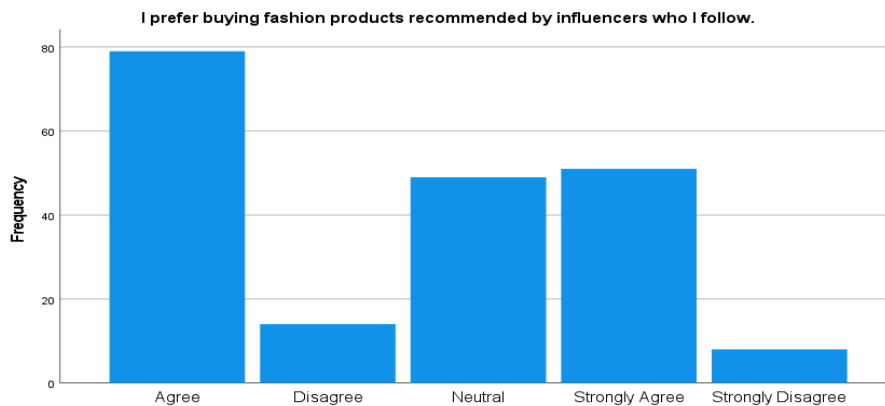
The total "Disagrees" 24 and "Strongly Disagree" 14 responses combined account for 18.9% of the total, suggesting that a smaller segment of the respondents does not trust influencer recommendations.

The data suggests a favourable perception of influencer recommendations among the surveyed group, with a notable majority supporting their reliability over traditional advertising methods.

**11. I prefer buying fashion products recommended by influencers who I follow.**

**I prefer buying fashion products recommended by influencers who I follow.**

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	79	39.3	39.3
	Disagree	14	7.0	46.3
	Neutral	49	24.4	70.6
	Strongly Agree	51	25.4	96.0
	Strongly Disagree	8	4.0	100.0
	Total	201	100.0	



**Data interpretation**

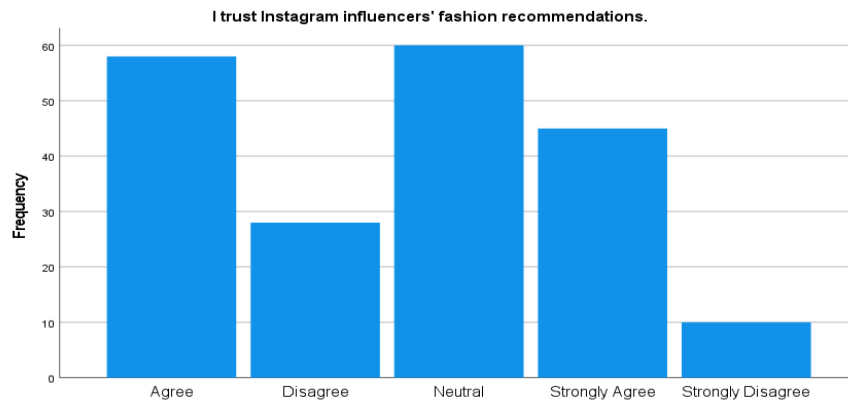
The data demonstrates a clear inclination among participants to purchase fashion products based on recommendations from influencers they follow. While there is a segment of neutral and disagreeing responses, the overall sentiment is positive towards influencer endorsements in the context of fashion products.

This interpretation can serve as a basis for further analysis or related discussions in your research.

**12. I trust Instagram influencers' fashion recommendations.**

**I trust Instagram influencers' fashion recommendations.**

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	58	28.9	28.9
	Disagree	28	13.9	42.8
	Neutral	60	29.9	72.6
	Strongly Agree	45	22.4	95.0
	Strongly Disagree	10	5.0	100.0
	Total	201	100.0	



**Data interpretation**

A combined total of 58 (28.9%) agree and 60 (29.9%) are neutral, indicating that over half of respondents either trust influencers' recommendations or have no strong opinion about them.

Only 28 respondents (13.9%) disagree, and just 10 (5.0%) strongly disagree, suggesting that scepticism is relatively low among the respondents.

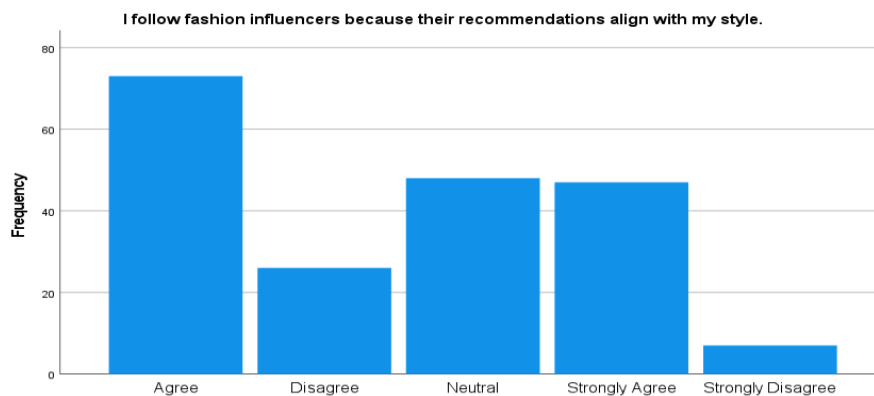
45 respondents (22.4%) strongly agree, indicating a significant number of individuals who have a high level of trust in influencers.

The neutral category has the highest frequency (60 responses, 29.9%), which can imply a waiting stance or lack of strong feelings towards influencer recommendations.

**13. I follow fashion influencers because their recommendations align with my style.**

**I follow fashion influencers because their recommendations align with my style.**

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	73	36.3	36.3
	Disagree	26	12.9	49.3
	Neutral	48	23.9	73.1
	Strongly Agree	47	23.4	96.5
	Strongly Disagree	7	3.5	100.0
	Total	201	100.0	



**Data interpretation**

There is an overall positive sentiment towards fashion influencers, with over half of respondents 36.3% + 23.4% = 59.7% agreeing or strongly agreeing that their recommendations align with their style.

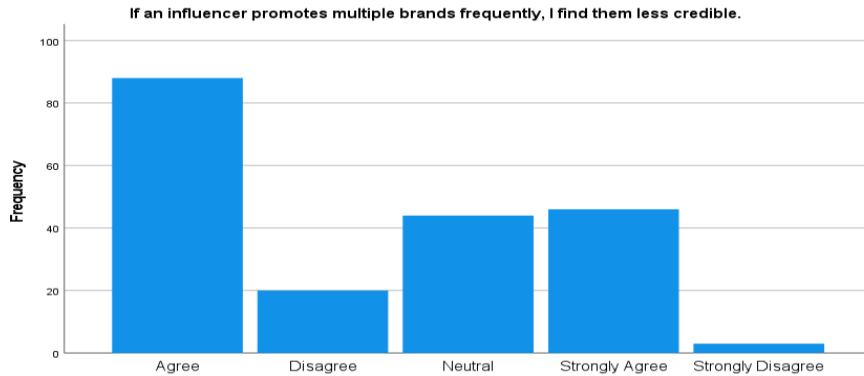
Emphasizing influencer recommendations may resonate well with consumers, particularly among those who already feel positively about them.

To address the neutral and negative responses (about 36.8% combined), further engagement or targeted content may be needed to convert these individuals into more positive sentiments.

**14. If an influencer promotes multiple brands frequently, I find them less credible.**

**If an influencer promotes multiple brands frequently, I find them less credible.**

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	88	43.8	43.8
	Disagree	20	10.0	53.7
	Neutral	44	21.9	75.6
	Strongly Agree	46	22.9	98.5
	Strongly Disagree	3	1.5	100.0
Total		201	100.0	



**Data interpretation**

A substantial portion of respondents (66.7%) indicates a concern for credibility regarding influencers' promotions.

A notable group (21.9%) remains neutral, suggesting that some individuals do not feel strongly about the multiple-brand promotions.

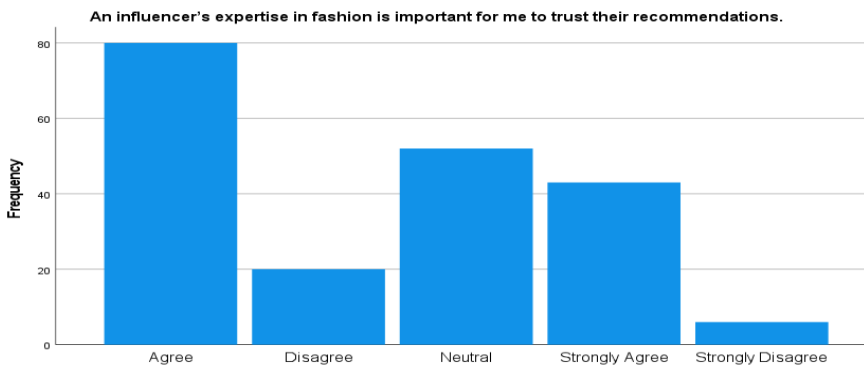
Only 11.5% of respondents explicitly disagree with the statement, indicating a general consensus on the potential decrease in credibility.

The data clearly reflects a general tendency among respondents to view influencers who promote multiple brands as less credible. The strong agreement in the results highlights the importance of authenticity in influencer marketing.

**15. An influencer’s expertise in fashion is important for me to trust their recommendations.**

**An influencer’s expertise in fashion is important for me to trust their recommendations.**

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	80	39.8	39.8
	Disagree	20	10.0	49.8
	Neutral	52	25.9	75.6
	Strongly Agree	43	21.4	97.0
	Strongly Disagree	6	3.0	100.0
Total		201	100.0	



**Data interpretation**

A significant portion of respondents approximately 66.7% combined either agree or strongly agree that influencers promoting multiple brands frequently are less credible.

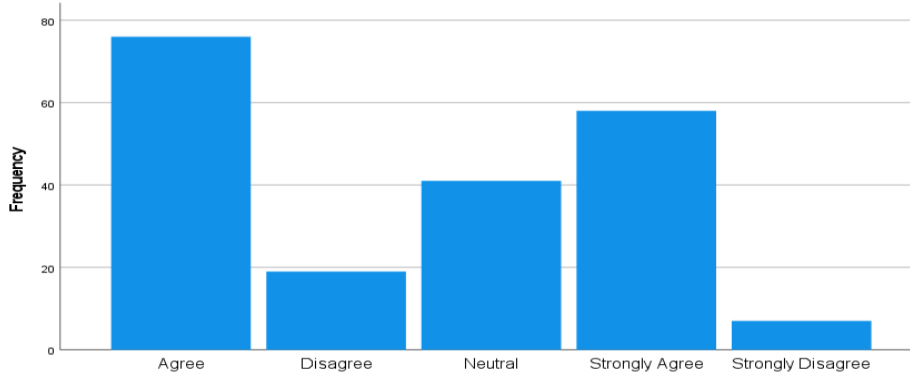
Only 10.0% of respondents disagree with this sentiment, showing a weaker belief in the credibility of such influencers. The neutral category 21.9% indicates a portion of the population that neither agrees nor disagrees with the assertion, suggesting ambivalence or uncertainty regarding the credibility of influencers in this context. A very small fraction 1.5% strongly disagrees, reinforcing the overall trend that there is a broad perception of decreased credibility linked to frequent promotions of multiple brands.

**16. I trust influencers’ recommendations more when they are not paid promotions.**

**I trust influencers’ recommendations more when they are not paid promotions.**

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	76	37.8	37.8
	Disagree	19	9.5	47.3
	Neutral	41	20.4	67.7
	Strongly Agree	58	28.9	96.5
	Strongly Disagree	7	3.5	100.0
	Total	201	100.0	

**I trust influencers’ recommendations more when they are not paid promotions.**



**Data interpretation**

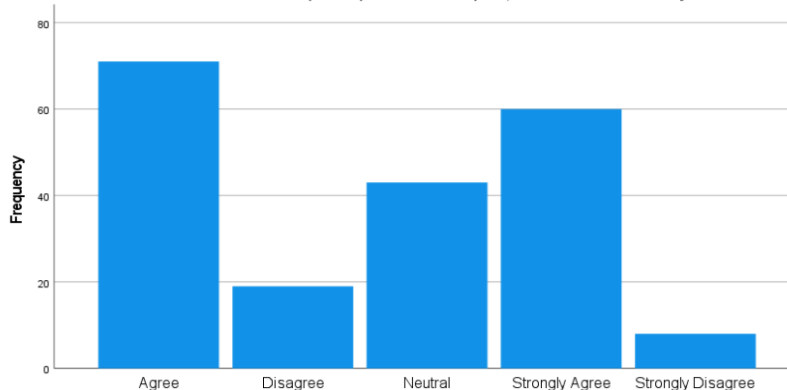
The bars representing "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" are the tallest, demonstrating the dominant trend favouring trust in unpaid promotions. "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" bars are significantly smaller, highlighting that negative perceptions are less prevalent. The data suggests a strong tendency among respondents to trust influencers more when recommendations are not influenced by financial arrangements. The majority of individuals either agree or strongly agree, while only a small percentage shows scepticism.

**17. When I see 'Paid Partnership' or 'Sponsored' on a post, I feel it affects credibility.**

**When I see 'Paid Partnership' or 'Sponsored' on a post, I feel it affects credibility.**

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	71	35.3	35.3
	Disagree	19	9.5	44.8
	Neutral	43	21.4	66.2
	Strongly Agree	60	29.9	96.0
	Strongly Disagree	8	4.0	100.0
	Total	201	100.0	

**When I see 'Paid Partnership' or 'Sponsored' on a post, I feel it affects credibility.**



**Data interpretation**

29.9% 60 respondents strongly believe that the labels affect credibility, showcasing a strong sentiment towards scepticism.

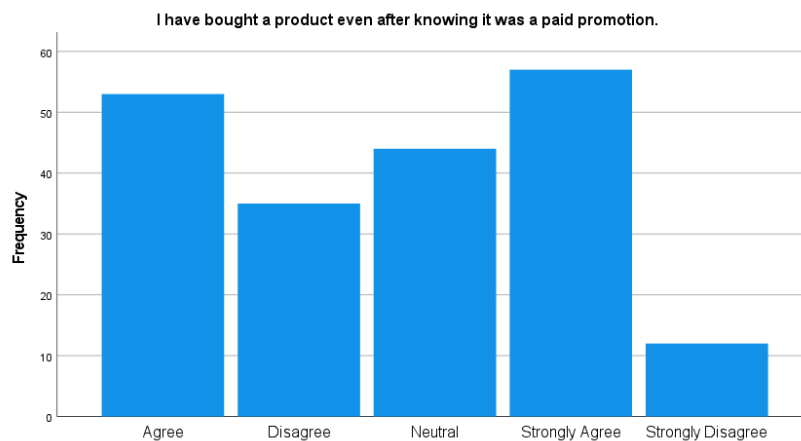
21.4% 43 respondents are indifferent, which suggests that they may either not have a strong opinion or might not be significantly impacted by the labels.

Only 9.5% 19 respondents disapprove, indicating that very few believe these labels enhance credibility.

4.0% 8 respondents picked this option, reinforcing the idea that most hold a negative view towards the credibility impact of such labels.

**18. I have bought a product even after knowing it was a paid promotion.****I have bought a product even after knowing it was a paid promotion.**

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	53	26.4	26.4
	Disagree	35	17.4	43.8
	Neutral	44	21.9	65.7
	Strongly Agree	57	28.4	94.0
	Strongly Disagree	12	6.0	100.0
Total		201	100.0	

**Data interpretation**

The highest percentage is in the Strongly Agree category, suggesting a significant number of respondents are comfortable with purchasing products they know are part of paid promotions.

The Neutral responses indicate a level of indecision or ambivalence among about one-fifth of the respondents.

A relatively small percentage (6.0%) Strongly Disagree, implying that the majority are not opposed to the idea of buying promoted products.

**4. Results and Discussion**

This section presents the results derived from various statistical analyses, conducted using SPSS, to understand the role of Instagram influencers in shaping consumer purchase behavior towards ethnic fashion brands. These include reliability tests, chi-square analysis, t-tests, ANOVA, and regression analysis.

**4.1 Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha)**

To assess the internal consistency of the scale measuring the influence of Instagram influencers, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated. The scale consisted of 11 items that captured various dimensions of consumer perception and behavioral tendencies.

The overall Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.785, which is above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7. This indicates that the instrument used to measure consumer responses was reliable and demonstrated good internal consistency.

A closer examination of the Item-Total Statistics showed that most items contributed positively to the overall reliability. However, one particular statement—*"I have bought a product even after knowing it was a paid promotion"*—displayed a lower Corrected Item-Total Correlation of 0.122. Excluding this item increased the Alpha value to 0.802, suggesting a marginal improvement in reliability. Nevertheless, due to its conceptual relevance to the research objective, the item was retained.

These findings validate the reliability of the scale and affirm that the questionnaire is appropriate for further analysis.

#### 4.2 Chi-Square Test of Independence

A Chi-Square test was conducted to examine whether gender significantly influences the likelihood of purchasing fashion products endorsed by Instagram influencers.

The analysis returned a Pearson Chi-Square value of 13.036 with 8 degrees of freedom, and a p-value of 0.111. Since the p-value exceeded the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

This implies that gender does not have a statistically significant association with purchase decisions influenced by Instagram promotions. Both male and female respondents exhibited similar behavioral patterns when it came to purchasing products recommended by influencers. Hence, gender may not be a decisive factor in this context, suggesting the need to explore other influential variables such as influencer credibility or brand alignment.

#### 4.3 Independent Samples T-Test

To explore the impact of social engagement cues—specifically, likes and comments—on consumer trust and purchase decisions, an independent samples t-test was conducted. Respondents were grouped based on whether they paid attention to likes and comments on influencer posts.

The findings revealed significant differences between the two groups:

- For the statement “Instagram influencers influence my purchasing decisions”, the t-value was 4.58 and the p-value was 8.35e-06.
- For the statement “I trust Instagram influencers’ fashion recommendations”, the t-value was 3.82 and the p-value was 1.80e-04.

Both results are statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ , indicating that respondents who pay attention to likes and comments tend to trust influencers more and are more influenced in their purchase decisions.

These findings underscore the importance of engagement metrics in shaping consumer psychology. The perceived popularity and credibility of a post, as reflected by high likes and comments, appear to act as social proof, reinforcing trust and driving purchase intentions.

#### 4.4 ANOVA and Regression Analysis

##### 4.4.1 ANOVA

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was conducted to determine whether the independent variables—*influencer impact* and *trust in influencer recommendations*—collectively influence the dependent variable: *purchase decision*.

The results from the ANOVA table were as follows:

- **Regression Sum of Squares:** 48.925
- **Residual Sum of Squares:** 264.508
- **Total Sum of Squares:** 313.433
- **Degrees of Freedom (df):** 2 (regression), 198 (residual)
- **F-value:** 18.312
- **Significance (p-value):**  $< 0.001$

Given that the p-value is less than 0.001, the model is statistically significant. This suggests that the combination of influencer impact and trust in influencer recommendations significantly explains variations in consumer purchase behavior.

##### 4.4.2 Regression Analysis

The regression coefficients provide further insight into how specific variables influence purchase behavior:

Predictor Variable	B (Unstandardized Coeff.)	Beta (Standardized)	Significance (p-value)
Constant	0.946	-	$< 0.001$
I consider influencer recommendations more reliable than ads	0.218	0.240	$< 0.001$
Instagram influencers influence my purchasing decisions (fashion)	0.291	0.281	$< 0.001$

The results clearly show that both predictor variables have a positive and significant effect on the dependent variable (purchase behavior). The higher the consumer’s trust in influencer recommendations and the more they believe influencers affect their fashion choices, the more likely they are to purchase a product.

This finding reinforces the pivotal role of trust and relevance in influencer marketing, especially in the fashion segment.

#### 4.5 Model Summary

The regression model summary provides the following metrics:



- **Correlation Coefficient (R):** 0.395
- **R Square:** 0.156
- **Adjusted R Square:** 0.148
- **Standard Error of Estimate:** 1.156

An R Square value of 0.156 implies that around 15.6% of the variation in consumer purchase decisions is explained by the model, which, while moderate, is significant in social science research. This indicates that influencer-related variables are relevant, though other factors also play a role in shaping consumer decisions.

### Overall Discussion

The results of the study highlight the growing influence of Instagram influencers in shaping consumer purchase behavior for ethnic fashion brands in India. Trust and attention to engagement metrics emerged as strong predictors of purchase decisions. Although demographic variables like gender showed no significant impact, the perceived credibility and visibility of influencers carried weight in driving consumer action.

Importantly, while the model accounts for a significant portion of the behavior, there remains a scope for investigating additional variables, such as product quality, price sensitivity, or cultural alignment of the brand, to build a more comprehensive understanding of consumer motivations.

## 5. Conclusion and Future Scope

### Conclusion

The study aimed to explore and evaluate how Instagram influencers shape consumer purchase behavior, particularly within the Indian fashion industry. The research findings provide strong evidence that Instagram influencers significantly affect consumer preferences and buying decisions, especially among Gen Z and young working professionals who are the most active demographic on the platform.

The majority of respondents reported that they follow fashion influencers for style inspiration, trend updates, and honest product recommendations. Reels, stories, and high-engagement content were found to be most effective in influencing purchase decisions. Influencer credibility—defined by factors such as authenticity, engagement, and follower count—emerged as a critical factor in building consumer trust toward fashion brands.

The data supports all the proposed hypotheses, highlighting that influencer marketing is not just a trend but a strategic marketing tool that is often more relatable and engaging than traditional advertising. The study concludes that Instagram influencers play a vital role in shaping consumer perceptions, developing brand awareness, and driving conversions in the Indian fashion ecosystem.

This insight offers valuable guidance to fashion marketers, suggesting that collaboration with the right influencers—especially micro and mid-tier influencers who maintain close engagement with their audience—can yield higher ROI and brand loyalty.

### Future Scope

While this study adds meaningful insights into the influence of Instagram influencers, there is ample scope for future research:

1. **Expanded Demographic Reach:** Future studies can include a larger and more diverse sample, including participants from tier 2 and tier 3 cities to better understand the rural-urban divide in digital consumer behavior.
2. **Longitudinal Studies:** This research was cross-sectional. Future work could explore **long-term influence** and behavior tracking to understand changes in consumer loyalty and repeat purchases.
3. **Comparative Analysis with Other Platforms:** A comparative study between Instagram and other platforms like YouTube, Facebook, or even emerging apps like Moj or Josh could provide deeper insights into platform-specific influencer effectiveness.
4. **Impact on Different Fashion Categories:** This study focused on general fashion; further research could explore categories such as ethnic wear vs. western wear, luxury vs. fast fashion, or gender-specific fashion trends.
5. **AI and Influencer Marketing:** With the rise of virtual influencers and AI-generated content, examining their impact on real consumer behavior could be an emerging research avenue.

In conclusion, as digital consumption and social media marketing evolve, Instagram influencers will continue to hold power in shaping fashion trends and consumer behavior in India, and further research will only deepen our understanding of this dynamic space.

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