



Influence of Social Media Influencers on Brand Purchase Behaviour Among Young Consumers in Hyderabad

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become an important part of the daily life of young consumers. Many young people follow social media influencers on platforms such as Instagram and YouTube and regularly watch their product reviews, recommendations, and promotional content. Influencers can create awareness about different brands and may also affect the purchase decisions of consumers. This study examines how social media influencers influence the brand purchase behaviour of young consumers in Hyderabad, and how factors such as trust, content type, recommendations, and influencer credibility shape their buying decisions.

A descriptive, quantitative survey design was used. Primary data were collected through a structured 20-item questionnaire administered online to 73 young consumers aged 18–30 between 25 August and 3 October 2026. The data were analysed using frequencies, means, Spearman rank correlation, chi-square, Mann–Whitney U and Kruskal–Wallis tests, and multiple regression.

The results show that Instagram is the dominant platform (64.4%) and that 64.4% of respondents have bought a product because of an influencer's recommendation, although only 47.9% do so "sometimes" or "often". Overall influence on brand purchase decisions is moderate (mean 3.14 on a 5-point scale). Trust in influencer recommendations is the strongest predictor of influence ($\rho = .43$, $p < .001$; $\beta = .41$ in regression) and of purchase frequency. Honesty and positive reviews are the most cited trust builders, while follower count is the least cited. Gender, age, occupation, and time spent on social media were not significantly related to purchase behaviour or overall influence. The findings suggest that influencer marketing works for young consumers in Hyderabad mainly when it is perceived as trustworthy, rather than simply because an influencer is popular.

Keywords: Social Media Influencers, Brand Purchase Behaviour, Young Consumers, Influencer Marketing, Purchase Decision, Social Media, Hyderabad.

1. Introduction

Social media has changed the way people communicate, search for information, and make purchase decisions. Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and other social media applications are widely used by young people. Along with entertainment, these platforms have also become an important place for brands to promote their products and services.

Social media influencers are people who have a large number of followers and can influence the opinions and choices of their audience. They share content about different products through reviews, videos, photos, stories, and recommendations. Young consumers may trust influencers because they feel that the influencers provide personal opinions and experiences about products.

In recent years, many brands have started working with social media influencers to reach young customers. Influencer promotions can create awareness about a brand and may encourage consumers to try or purchase a product. However, the influence may be different from one consumer to another depending on factors such as trust, influencer popularity, type of content, product information, and personal interest.

Hyderabad has a large population of young consumers who actively use social media. Therefore, it is useful to study whether social media influencers actually affect their brand purchase behaviour. This study focuses on understanding the influence of social media influencers on the purchase behaviour of young consumers in Hyderabad and the factors that make influencer marketing effective.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Brands increasingly spend on influencer collaborations on the assumption that an influencer's recommendation converts followers into buyers. Yet young consumers are exposed to a large volume of sponsored content, and they may be aware that many recommendations are paid. It is therefore not clear how far influencers actually change what young consumers buy, which influencer qualities matter most, and which kinds of content are effective. Existing

work on Hyderabad youth has largely examined attitudes and purchase intention; evidence on actual brand purchase behaviour, considered together with influencer characteristics and content, is limited. This study addresses that problem.

1.2 Significance of the Study

- For marketers and brands, the study indicates which influencer qualities and content formats are associated with stronger purchase influence among young consumers.
- For influencers, it highlights the importance of honesty, authenticity, and credible reviews in sustaining audience trust.
- For consumers and educators, it offers evidence of how susceptible young buyers are to influencer promotions and where critical awareness is needed.
- For researchers, it provides a recent, locally focused dataset that can be extended with larger samples and other product categories.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To examine the influence of social media influencers on brand purchase behaviour among young consumers in Hyderabad.
2. To identify the effect of influencer credibility, expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness on young consumers' purchase behaviour.
3. To examine the influence of influencer-generated content, product recommendations, and engagement on consumers' purchase decisions.
4. To identify the major social media influencer factors that influence brand purchase behaviour among young consumers in Hyderabad.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

- **H1:** Trust in influencers' product recommendations is positively related to the overall influence of influencers on brand purchase decisions.
- **H2:** Engagement with influencer content (brand awareness, effect of reviews, interest in promoted products, and consideration of recommendations) is positively related to the overall influence of influencers on brand purchase decisions.
- **H3:** Gender, age group, and occupation are associated with whether a respondent has purchased a product on an influencer's recommendation.
- **H4:** Time spent on social media per day is positively related to the overall influence of influencers on brand purchase decisions.

1.5 Research Gap

1. **Limited geographical focus:** Many studies examine influencer marketing across general or international consumer groups, while there is a need for more research specifically focusing on young consumers in Hyderabad.
2. **Limited focus on brand purchase behaviour:** Previous studies often focus on purchase intention, brand attitude, or consumer trust. More research is needed to examine the broader relationship between influencer marketing and brand purchase behaviour.
3. **Limited focus on young consumers:** Young consumers are highly active on social media, but their responses to influencer recommendations may differ according to credibility, authenticity, content quality, and engagement. More focused research is required.
4. **Influencer characteristics and content together:** Previous research has examined individual factors such as credibility, follower numbers, content value, and parasocial interaction. There is a need to examine these factors together in relation to brand purchase behaviour.
5. **Changing digital environment:** Social media platforms and influencer marketing practices continue to change. Therefore, updated research is needed to understand how young consumers in Hyderabad respond to current influencer marketing practices and brand recommendations.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study covers young consumers aged 18 to 30 years, including students, working professionals, business persons, and others, who use social media. It examines influencer-related factors (trust, content type, and promotional offers) and their relationship with brand purchase behaviour across product categories such as fashion, beauty, food, and electronics. It does not measure sales, brand loyalty over time, or the effect of any specific brand campaign.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Prasad and Reddy (2021)

Prasad and Reddy (2021) conducted a study titled "*Influence of Social Media Influencers on Consumer Buying Behavior: A Study of Hyderabad Youth.*" The study examined how social media influencers affect the buying behaviour of young consumers in Hyderabad. The researchers mainly focused on the

credibility and relatability of influencers as important factors influencing consumer behaviour. The study found that influencers on platforms such as YouTube and Instagram had a noticeable influence on the trends and buying decisions of young consumers. The study provided an early understanding of influencer marketing among Hyderabad youth, although it was mainly limited to urban respondents.

2.2 Srinivas and Anusha (2022)

Srinivas and Anusha (2022) studied the *“Role of Social Media Influencers in Shaping Youth Purchase Decisions in Hyderabad.”* The objective was to understand how influencer marketing is adopted by young consumers and how it affects their purchase behaviour. The study considered factors such as trust and relatability of influencers. The findings indicated that Instagram influencers were particularly influential in shaping the purchase decisions of young consumers. However, the study was conducted with a relatively small sample size, which limited the generalisation of its findings.

2.3 Madhavi and Ramesh (2023)

Madhavi and Ramesh (2023) conducted research on *“Consumer Attitudes Towards Influencer Marketing in Hyderabad.”* The study focused on understanding consumer perceptions regarding the credibility and expertise of social media influencers. According to the findings, the expertise of an influencer played a more important role in developing consumer trust than simply having a large number of followers. The study mainly concentrated on attitude formation and purchase intention but did not examine actual purchase behaviour in detail.

2.4 Satish Kumar, Ganeshdas and Khaleeq ur Raheman (2024)

Satish Kumar, Ganeshdas and Khaleeq ur Raheman (2024) examined *“The Rise of Social Commerce: A Study of Consumer Buying Behavior Among Youth in Hyderabad.”* The study explored the growing adoption of social commerce and its relationship with consumer buying behaviour. Factors such as peer validation and influencer posts were considered in the study. The researchers found that Instagram played a major role in the adoption of social commerce among young consumers. However, the study was based on cross-sectional data, which provides information only for a particular period.

2.5 Kothapally Susmitha and Nazia Sultana (2025)

Kothapally Susmitha and Nazia Sultana (2025) conducted a study titled *“Effectiveness of Influencer Marketing on Customer Purchase Intention of Cosmetics Among Women in Hyderabad.”* The research examined how influencer marketing affects women's intention to purchase cosmetic products. The study considered influencer credibility, engagement, and brand alignment as important factors. The findings showed that **credibility was the strongest factor influencing purchase intention**. However, the study was specifically focused on women consumers and the cosmetics industry, creating scope for research covering young consumers and different product categories.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study uses a descriptive and quantitative research design with a cross-sectional survey. A survey was selected because it helps collect and compare the opinions, attitudes, and self-reported buying behaviour of young consumers at a particular point in time.

3.2 Population and Sample

The target population for this study includes social-media users between 18 and 30 years of age. The final sample comprised 73 respondents, selected through convenience sampling. Respondents were 50.7% male and 49.3% female, and 57.5% were students.

3.3 Sources of Data

Primary data were collected using a structured online questionnaire between 25 August 2026 and 3 October 2026. Secondary information was taken from published studies related to influencer marketing and consumer behaviour, which are discussed in Chapter 2.

3.4 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire has 20 closed-ended questions divided into four parts. The complete questionnaire is provided in the Appendix.

Table 3.1 Structure of the questionnaire

Part	Questions	Content
A. Demographic profile	Q1–Q3	Age group, gender, occupation
B. Social media usage	Q4–Q7	Main platform, daily time, frequency of watching influencer content, following brand-promoting influencers
C. Trust and perception	Q8–Q12	Trust in recommendations, brand awareness, effect of reviews, interest in promoted products, consideration of purchase
D. Purchase behaviour and influence	Q13–Q20	Past purchase, purchase frequency, product category, content type, trust factors, discounts, brand switching, overall influence

3.5 Measurement and Coding of Variables

The responses were given numerical scores to make the data easier to analyse statistically. Agreement items used a five-point Likert scale; other ordinal items were scored as shown below.

Table 3.2 Variables and scoring

Variable (question)	Scale and scoring
Trust in recommendations (Q8)	Very Low = 1, Low = 2, Moderate = 3, High = 4
Awareness of new brands (Q9), effect of reviews (Q10), interest in promoted product (Q11), effect of discounts (Q18)	Strongly Disagree = 1 to Strongly Agree = 5
Consideration of purchase (Q12), purchase frequency (Q14)	Never = 1, Rarely = 2, Sometimes = 3, Often = 4
Frequency of watching influencer content (Q6)	Never = 1 to Very Often = 5
Time on social media (Q5)	Less than 1 hour = 1, 1–2 hours = 2, 2–4 hours = 3, More than 4 hours = 4
Overall influence (Q20)	Very Low = 1 to Very High = 5
Past purchase (Q13)	Yes = 1, No = 0

3.6 Tools of Analysis

- **Descriptive statistics:** frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations.
- **Spearman rank correlation:** to test relationships between ordinal variables (H1, H2, H4).
- **Chi-square test:** to test association between demographic variables and past purchase (H3).
- **Mann–Whitney U and Kruskal–Wallis tests:** to compare overall influence between groups.
- **Multiple linear regression:** to estimate the combined effect of trust and engagement variables on overall influence and on purchase frequency.

Non-parametric tests were used because most of the variables are ordinal and the sample size is relatively small. All statistical tests were conducted at the 5% significance level using Python, mainly with pandas and SciPy.

3.7 Reliability

Internal consistency of the seven perception and influence items (Q8–Q12, Q18, Q20) was checked using Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951). The value obtained was $\alpha = 0.63$, which is modest but acceptable for an exploratory study; the items measure related but distinct aspects of influence and use different response scales, which lowers alpha.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Participation in the survey was voluntary. Respondents were informed that their answers would be used only for academic purposes. The results are presented in aggregate form, and no individual respondent is identified.

4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter explains the responses collected from 73 young consumers. Section 4.1 gives the respondent profile, Sections 4.2 to 4.6 discuss the main descriptive results, and Section 4.7 presents the hypothesis testing. Percentages are based on 73 responses, so a few totals may vary slightly because of rounding.

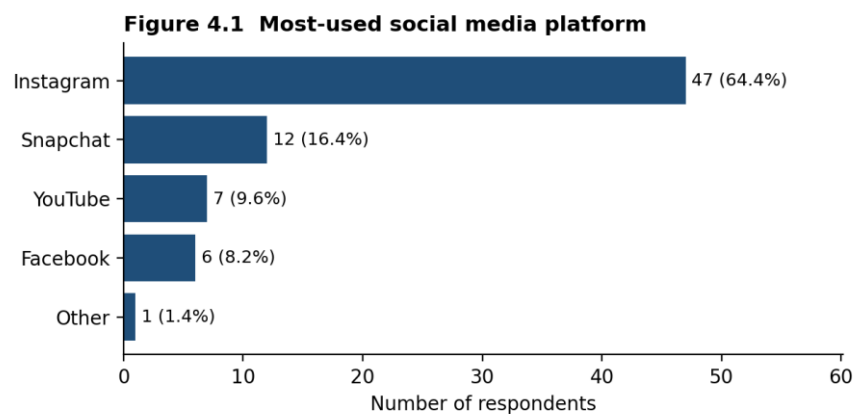
4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 4.1 Demographic profile (n = 73)

Variable	Category	Respondents	%
Age group	18–20 years	26	35.6
	21–23 years	27	37.0
	24–26 years	14	19.2
	27–30 years	6	8.2
Gender	Male	37	50.7
	Female	36	49.3
Occupation	Student	42	57.5
	Working professional	18	24.7
	Business	9	12.3
	Other	4	5.5

The sample mainly represents young consumers and is almost evenly divided between males and females. About 72.6% of respondents are between 18 and 23 years, while students make up the largest group at 57.5%. Therefore, the results largely reflect the views of college-age consumers.

4.2 Social Media Usage Pattern



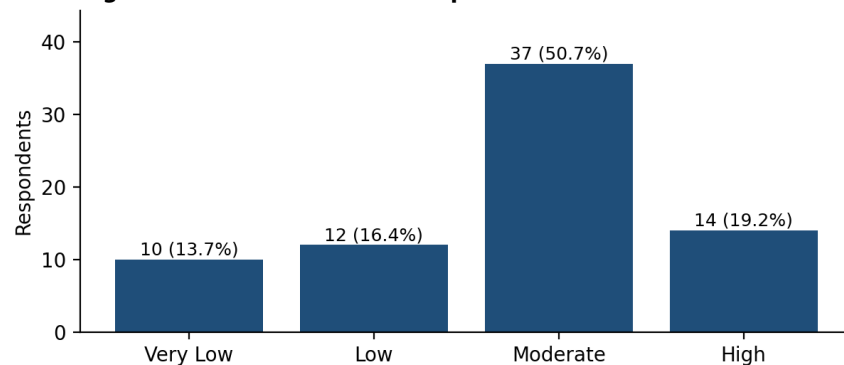
Instagram is the most used platform (64.4%), followed by Snapchat (16.4%), YouTube (9.6%), and Facebook (8.2%). This is consistent with earlier Hyderabad studies that identify Instagram as the key platform for influence.

Table 4.2 Time spent on social media and exposure to influencers

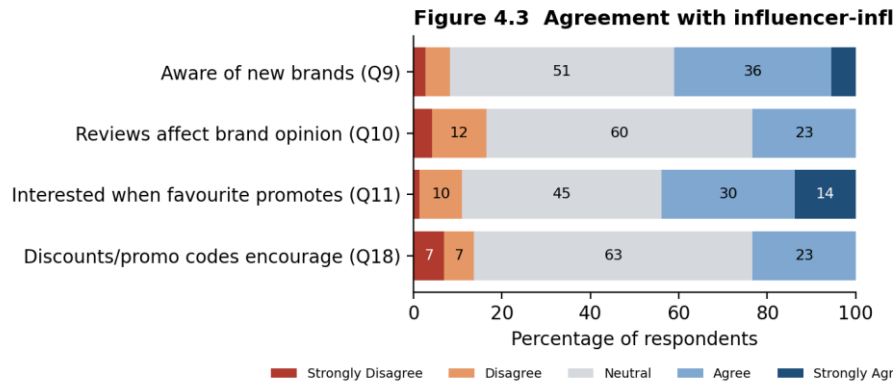
Item	Response	Respondents	%
Daily time on social media (Q5)	Less than 1 hour	16	21.9
	1–2 hours	21	28.8
	2–4 hours	25	34.2
	More than 4 hours	11	15.1
Watches influencer content (Q6)	Never	3	4.1
	Rarely	14	19.2
	Sometimes	43	58.9
	Often	11	15.1
	Very often	2	2.7
Follows brand-promoting influencers (Q7)	Yes	28	38.4
	Maybe	29	39.7
	No	16	21.9

Nearly half of the respondents (49.3%) spend at least two hours a day on social media. Most respondents watch influencer content at least sometimes (76.7%). However, only 38.4% clearly say that they follow influencers who promote brands, while 39.7% are unsure. This may mean that many young users see influencer content without always viewing it as advertising.

4.3 Trust and Perception of Influencers

Figure 4.2 Trust in influencer product recommendations

Half of the respondents (50.7%) report a moderate level of trust in influencers' product recommendations. Only 19.2% report high trust, while 30.1% report low or very low trust (mean = 2.75 on a 4-point scale). This shows that some trust exists, but respondents are still cautious about influencer recommendations.



The results show that influencers are more effective in creating awareness and interest than in directly encouraging a purchase. 41.1% agree that influencers make them aware of new brands, and 43.8% are interested in a product when their favourite influencer promotes it. Reviews are less persuasive: only 23.3% agree that influencer reviews affect their opinion of a brand, and 60.3% are neutral. Discounts and promo codes encourage 23.3%, while 63.0% are neutral.

Table 4.3 Descriptive statistics of perception and influence items

Item	Mean	SD	Scale
Trust in recommendations (Q8)	2.75	0.92	1–4
Awareness of new brands (Q9)	3.36	0.79	1–5
Reviews affect opinion of brand (Q10)	3.03	0.73	1–5
Interest when favourite influencer promotes (Q11)	3.45	0.90	1–5
Recommendations make me consider purchase (Q12)	2.55	0.75	1–4
Discounts / promo codes encourage purchase (Q18)	3.03	0.76	1–5
Overall influence on brand purchase decisions (Q20)	3.14	0.85	1–5

Interest in promoted products (mean 3.45) and brand awareness (mean 3.36) have the highest means, while consideration of purchase (mean 2.55 on a 4-point scale) is comparatively low. Overall, the results suggest a simple funnel effect: influencers can attract attention and create interest, but converting that interest into an actual purchase is more difficult.

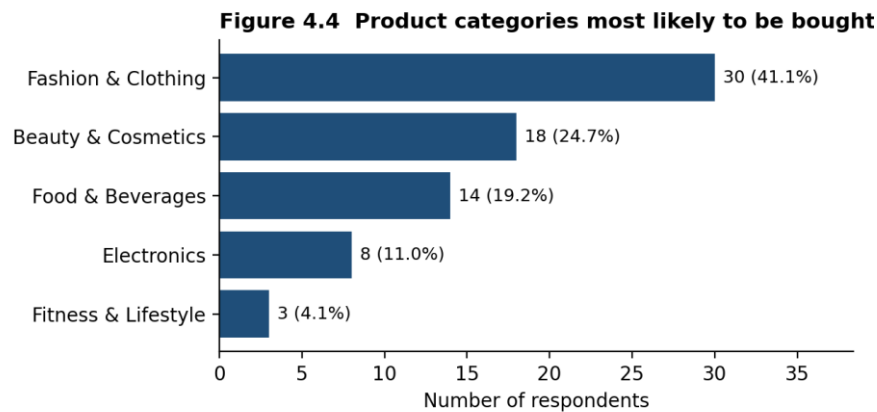
4.4 Purchase Behaviour

Table 4.4 Purchase behaviour based on influencer recommendations

Item	Response	Respondents	%
Considers buying after recommendation (Q12)	Never	9	12.3
	Rarely	17	23.3
	Sometimes	45	61.6
	Often	2	2.7
Has bought because of influencer (Q13)	Yes	47	64.4
	No	26	35.6

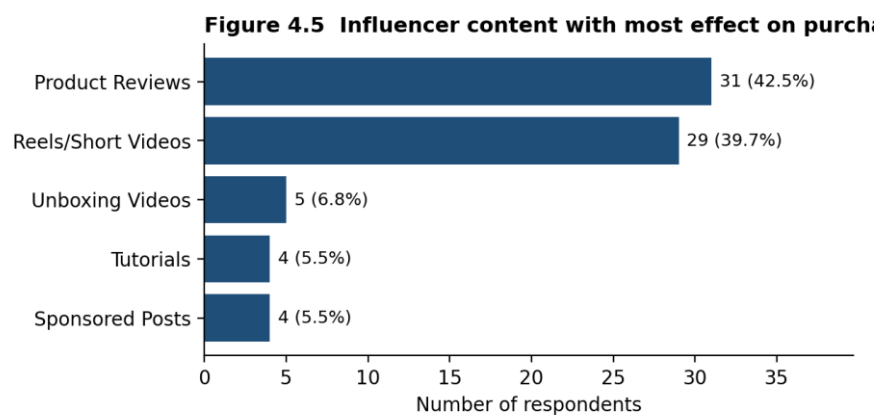
Item	Response	Respondents	%
Frequency of such purchases (Q14)	Never	8	11.0
	Rarely	30	41.1
	Sometimes	31	42.5
	Often	4	5.5
Changed preferred brand because of influencer (Q19)	Yes	20	27.4
	Maybe	39	53.4
	No	14	19.2

Almost two-thirds of the respondents (64.4%) have purchased a product because of an influencer recommendation. This shows that influencer recommendations can affect actual buying behaviour. At the same time, such purchases are not very frequent, with 52.1% saying they do this never or only rarely. Brand switching is less common; 27.4% definitely changed their preferred brand, while 53.4% answered “maybe”. Respondents who had switched brands were much more likely to have bought on recommendation (18 of 20) than those who had not switched (4 of 14).

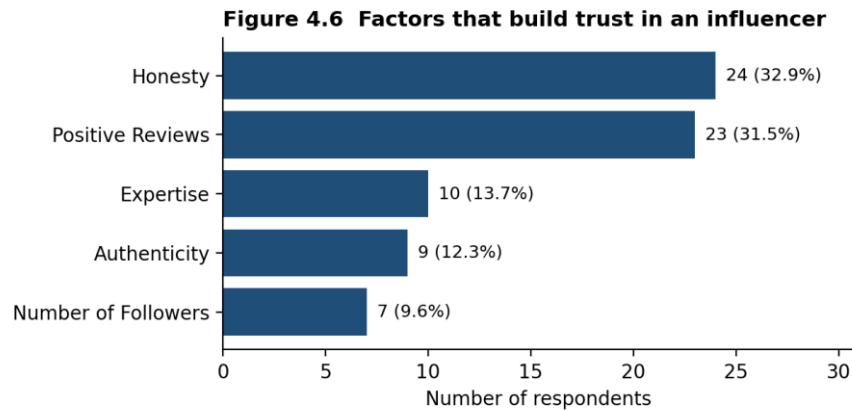


Fashion and clothing is the leading category (41.1%), followed by beauty and cosmetics (24.7%) and food and beverages (19.2%). Category preferences differ by gender: 17 of the 18 respondents who chose beauty and cosmetics are female, whereas 21 of the 30 who chose fashion and 6 of the 8 who chose electronics are male.

4.5 Content Type and Trust Factors



Product reviews (42.5%) and reels or short videos (39.7%) together account for over 80% of responses. Unboxing videos, tutorials, and sponsored posts matter much less. Explicitly sponsored posts are among the least effective formats (4 respondents, level with tutorials), which supports the view that young consumers respond better to content that looks organic.



Honesty (32.9%) and positive reviews (31.5%) are the most cited reasons for trusting an influencer, followed by expertise (13.7%) and authenticity (12.3%). Number of followers is cited by only 9.6%. Honesty and authenticity together account for 45.2% of responses, showing that perceived sincerity is the main basis of trust. Popularity on its own carries little weight.

4.6 Overall Influence on Brand Purchase Decisions

Table 4.5 Overall influence of influencers on brand purchase decisions (Q20)

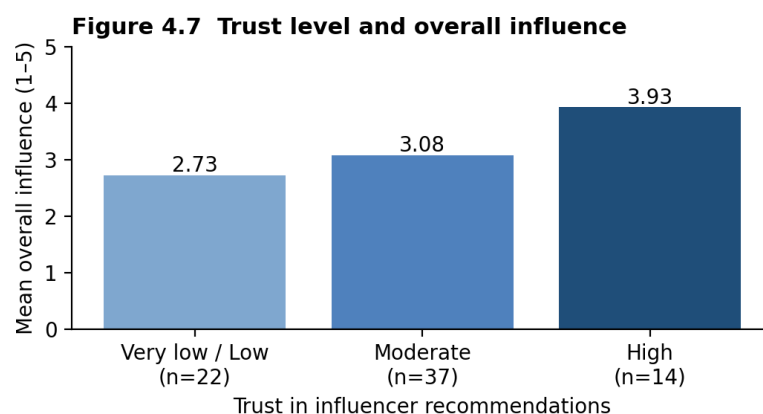
Level of influence	Respondents	%
Very low	4	5.5
Low	5	6.8
Moderate	46	63.0
High	13	17.8
Very high	5	6.8

Most respondents (63.0%) consider the overall influence to be moderate. About 24.7% rate it as high or very high, while 12.3% rate it as low or very low. The mean score of 3.14 on a 5-point scale also points to a moderate level of influence rather than a very strong one. Respondents who follow brand-promoting influencers report higher average influence (mean 3.43) than those who are unsure (3.21) or who do not follow them (2.50).

4.7 Hypothesis Testing

H1: Trust and overall influence

Trust in influencer recommendations shows a significant positive correlation with overall influence (Spearman $\rho = .43$, $p < .001$) and with purchase frequency ($\rho = .35$, $p = .002$). When respondents are grouped by trust level, mean overall influence rises from 2.73 (very low/low trust) to 3.08 (moderate) and 3.93 (high); the difference is significant (Kruskal–Wallis $H = 14.37$, $df = 2$, $p < .001$). **H1 is supported.**



H2: Engagement with influencer content and overall influence**Table 4.6 Spearman correlations with overall influence (Q20), n = 73**

Variable	ρ	p-value	Result
Awareness of new brands (Q9)	.33	.005	Significant
Effect of reviews on brand opinion (Q10)	.29	.012	Significant
Interest when favourite influencer promotes (Q11)	.15	.192	Not significant
Recommendations make me consider purchase (Q12)	.24	.041	Significant
Discounts / promo codes (Q18)	.24	.041	Significant
Purchase frequency (Q14)	.31	.009	Significant
Brand switching (Q19)	.42	< .001	Significant

Three of the four engagement variables (awareness, effect of reviews, and consideration of purchase) are significantly related to overall influence; interest in a promoted product is not. Discounts, purchase frequency, and brand switching are also significantly related. **H2 is partially supported.**

Table 4.7 Multiple regression: predictors of overall influence (Q20)

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	0.617	0.569		1.08	.282
Trust (Q8)	0.376	0.100	.41	3.78	< .001
Awareness (Q9)	0.205	0.119	.19	1.73	.089
Effect of reviews (Q10)	0.154	0.134	.13	1.15	.252
Interest (Q11)	−0.107	0.105	−.11	−1.02	.310
Consideration of purchase (Q12)	0.275	0.119	.24	2.32	.024

$R^2 = .331$, adjusted $R^2 = .281$, $F(5, 67) = 6.63$, $p < .001$. The model explains about a third of the variation in overall influence.

Trust is the strongest predictor ($\beta = .41$), followed by consideration of purchase ($\beta = .24$). The other variables do not add significantly once trust is accounted for. A second regression for purchase frequency ($R^2 = .19$, $F(5, 67) = 3.15$, $p = .013$) again showed trust ($\beta = .34$, $p = .006$) and frequency of watching influencer content ($\beta = .25$, $p = .025$) as the significant predictors.

H3: Demographics and purchase behaviour**Table 4.8 Chi-square tests of association with past purchase (Q13)**

Variable	χ^2	df	p-value	Result
Gender	1.29*	1	.256	Not significant
Age group	3.76	3	.288	Not significant
Occupation	1.51	3	.679	Not significant
Main platform	3.62	4	.460	Not significant

Continuity-corrected. Some cells have small expected counts, so results should be read with caution.

None of the demographic variables is significantly associated with whether a respondent has bought a product on an influencer's recommendation. Overall influence scores also do not differ by gender (Mann–Whitney $U = 702$, $p = .650$). **H3 is not supported.** Influencer effects appear to cut across demographic groups in this sample, although the small sample limits the power of these tests.

H4: Time on social media and overall influence

Time spent on social media is not related to overall influence ($\rho = -.07$, $p = .575$; Kruskal–Wallis $p = .700$), nor is the frequency of watching influencer content ($\rho = -.01$, $p = .961$). Mean influence scores are similar across the four time groups (3.25, 3.24, 3.00, and 3.09). **H4 is not supported.** How much time young people spend online matters less than how much they trust what they see. Differences by content type ($p = .494$) and by main trust factor ($p = .337$) were also not significant.

Table 4.9 Summary of hypothesis tests

Hypothesis	Test	Result	Decision
H1: Trust and overall influence	Spearman; Kruskal–Wallis	$\rho = .43$, $p < .001$	Supported
H2: Engagement and overall influence	Spearman; regression	3 of 4 variables significant	Partially supported
H3: Demographics and purchase	Chi-square; Mann–Whitney	All $p > .25$	Not supported
H4: Time online and overall influence	Spearman; Kruskal–Wallis	$\rho = -.07$, $p = .575$	Not supported

5. FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Findings

- 64.4% of respondents use Instagram most, far ahead of Snapchat (16.4%) and YouTube (9.6%).
- 76.7% watch influencer content at least sometimes, but only 38.4% say they follow influencers who promote brands.
- 50.7% report moderate trust and 30.1% low or very low trust; only 19.2% report high trust (mean 2.75 out of 4).
- 64.4% have bought a product on an influencer's recommendation, yet 52.1% do so never or rarely. Overall influence averages 3.14 out of 5, and 63.0% rate it as moderate.
- Influencers are most effective in creating awareness (41.1% agree) and interest (43.8%); reviews (23.3%) and discounts (23.3%) persuade fewer respondents.
- Fashion and clothing (41.1%), beauty and cosmetics (24.7%), and food and beverages (19.2%) are the leading categories. Beauty purchases are almost entirely female (17 of 18), while electronics and fashion are male-dominated.
- Product reviews (42.5%) and reels (39.7%) are the most influential content types; sponsored posts and tutorials are the least influential.
- Honesty (32.9%) and positive reviews (31.5%) are the main trust factors, while follower count is cited by only 9.6%.
- Trust is significantly related to overall influence and purchase frequency and is the strongest predictor in regression ($\beta = .41$).
- Gender, age, occupation, platform, and daily time on social media show no significant relationship with purchase behaviour or overall influence.

5.2 Suggestions

- Choose influencers on the basis of perceived honesty, authenticity, and fit with the product rather than follower count.
- Use review-style content and short videos (reels), which respondents found most influential, and avoid overtly sponsored posts.
- Match influencers to categories: for example, female influencers for beauty and cosmetics, and male-oriented creators for electronics and fashion.
- Combine influencer awareness campaigns with conversion tools such as honest reviews and offers, since awareness alone does not lead to purchase for most respondents.
- Disclose paid partnerships clearly; this is likely to protect long-term trust.

- Maintain honest, balanced reviews, including limitations of a product, and be open about brand collaborations.
- Check recommendations against independent reviews and consider whether the content is paid before making a purchase.

5.3 Conclusion

This study examined the influence of social media influencers on brand purchase behaviour among young consumers in Hyderabad. The evidence shows that influencers are an established part of young consumers' information environment: most respondents watch influencer content, most have bought a product on an influencer's advice, and Instagram is the main channel. However, the overall influence is moderate, purchases on recommendation are occasional, and trust is cautious.

Among the factors studied, trust stands out as the main difference between respondents who are more influenced and those who are less influenced. Honesty and authenticity, not follower count, are what young consumers say builds that trust, and reviews and short videos are the formats that work best. Demographic characteristics and the amount of time spent online do not appear to have much effect in this sample. For brands, the main takeaway is that influencer marketing is more useful when the influencer is credible, honest, and suitable for the product, rather than being selected only for a large reach. Further studies with larger and more representative samples would help confirm these findings.

5.4 Scope for Further Research

Future studies could use a larger, probability-based sample with a screening question on place of residence; examine specific product categories or influencer tiers (micro, macro, and celebrity influencers); include variables such as parasocial interaction, perceived advertising disclosure, and impulse buying; use structural equation modelling; and compare Hyderabad with other cities.

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