

SYNOPSIS OF THE THESIS

Impact of Influencer Marketing On the Purchasing Behavior of Indian Millennials

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1. Introduction:

Influencer marketing has emerged as a major digital marketing strategy in recent years, especially in India. The rising popularity of social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter has elevated influencers by captivating audiences with relevant, real, and visually striking material. These influencers are being used by brands more and more to mould customer tastes and influence purchases. This change reflects a trend in commercial marketing away from static celebrity endorsements and toward more dynamic, personalized campaigns. A large portion of India's population falls within the millennial age bracket, which includes those born between 1981 and 1996. Technology, social media, and digital literacy are all strengths of the millennial generation. They react strongly to social affirmation and online material. Digital experiences, peer recommendations, and influencer endorsements often affect their purchasing choices. The intersection of the digital revolution and consumer culture necessitates an understanding of the impact of influencer marketing on the purchasing intentions of this demographic.

The rise of influencer marketing has deep ties to the broader digital revolution taking place in India. The expansion of e-commerce platforms, reduced data costs, and heightened smartphone use have fundamentally transformed consumer interactions with businesses. For marketers seeking to influence customer behavior, influencers are a powerful tool due to the fact that millennials in this digital era spend a great deal of time engaging with others who share their interests and opinions.

Even with influencer marketing's widespread use, empirical research that methodically looks at its factors is still needed, especially with strong analytical methods. This research seeks to identify the critical factors influencing Indian millennials' purchase choices. These attributes include beauty, trustworthiness, credibility, and the quality of content generated by influencers, along with user engagement. This work uses Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to elucidate the links among these aspects, therefore enhancing both theoretical literature and practical marketing techniques.

Emergence of Influencer Marketing in India

Influencer marketing's meteoric ascent in India represents a turning point in the evolution of brands' online customer service strategies. Billboards, print advertisements, and television commercials exemplify classic advertising methods that have progressively diminished in efficacy for engaging tech-savvy Indian customers. Influencer marketing has grown in popularity due to two main reasons: consumers' growing distrust of traditional forms of advertising and their rising dependence on the word-of-mouth recommendations of influential people online. The rise of prominent users with substantial followings on social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter is a direct consequence of their strategic and continuous content creation.

The core tenet of influencer marketing is the Source Credibility Theory, which holds that the communicator's perceived competence, attractiveness, and trustworthiness are directly related to how successful a persuasive message is (Rathod, 2022). Influencers in India are typically seen to be more trustworthy than celebrities or corporate spokespeople due to the greater frequency and intimacy of their interactions with followers. This relatability factor is very important for millennial and Gen Z consumers when making purchases.

The widespread availability of mobile phones and inexpensive internet connectivity in India have greatly contributed to the fast growth of influencer marketing in the country. By the end of 2022, there were more than 750 million smartphone users in India, and by 2026, there will be more than 1 billion, according to a Statista analysis (Shah & Agarwal, 2020). Additionally, the democratisation of digital content consumption brought about by telecom companies like Reliance Jio's inexpensive bandwidth has boosted screen time on social media sites. More than 80% of Indian internet users actively use at least one social networking site every day, according to the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) (Patel, 2024) These advancements have improved influencers' efficacy and reach in addition to growing the digital audience.

The two predominant influencer marketing campaigns may be conducted on YouTube and Instagram. YouTube provides comprehensive analyses and tutorials, but Instagram's visually-oriented format allows influencers to promote products via striking photographs and videos. Among the most popular industries in India where influencers have amassed sizable fan bases and influenced purchasing habits include food, fashion, technology, fitness, and beauty. For example,

Indian beauty influencers such as Shreya Jain and Malvika Soltani have partnered with both local and international firms to promote goods, and their suggestions often result in quantifiable increases in website traffic and product sales (S. Kumar, n.d.).

In recent years, India's influencer marketing sector has seen phenomenal growth. The Indian influencer marketing market was estimated to be worth INR 900 crore in 2021 and is projected to reach INR 2,200 crore by 2025 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 25%, according to research by GroupM and Exchange4Media (Rathod, 2022). This trend demonstrates how influencer marketing offers more measurable results, businesses are investing more in it, individualised, and targeted outreach than conventional advertising. The emergence of micro-influencers is a key development fueling the expansion of influencer marketing in India. Most micro-influencers have between tens of thousands and one hundred thousand followers, whereas superstars and macro-influencers have millions. Despite having a smaller audience overall, micro-influencers may generate more revenue because to their highly engaged and niche fan base. For local and up-and-coming firms trying to build trust in certain market sectors, this makes them more useful (Nayak & Das, n.d.). Micro-influencers are the go-to option for direct-to-consumer marketers in industries including beauty, nutrition, fashion, and education because of their relatability and reliability.

Additionally, marketers increasingly prioritise ongoing interaction with the influencer's audience above one-time promotions and long-term partnerships. This change is in line with the idea of relationship marketing, which prioritises developing enduring relationships with customers above making rapid purchases. Influencers' perceived sincerity and genuineness aid in bridging the gap between businesses and customers, resulting in less transactional and more conversational marketing (Kartajaya et al., 2019). Formalising the influencer marketing industry has also been aided by government and regulatory participation. In 2021, the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) issued rules mandating that influencers use hashtags such as #sponsored, #ad, or #collab to explicitly reveal paid advertisements (Patnaik, 2021). By encouraging openness and preventing consumer deception, these rules hope to increase confidence in influencer-generated material.

To facilitate brand-influencer partnerships, influencer marketing platforms and talent agencies have also surfaced. Based on follower demographics, engagement metrics, and content topics,

these middlemen pair businesses with relevant influencers using artificial intelligence and data analytics.

2. Research Motivation:

Millennials in India, who are generally defined as individuals born between 1981 and 1996, make up one of the biggest consumer groups in the nation right now. This generation is unique in its attitudes, tastes, and purchasing patterns since they were raised in a period of tremendous technical advancement and socioeconomic upheaval. Studying Indian millennials is important because of their sizeable population, economic potential, and crucial role in determining the country's digital and consumer future.

The demographic advantage is clear: millennials make up about 30% of India's population, making it one of the youngest countries in the world (Bohini et al., 2022). This generation will persist in dominating the workforce for decades and constitutes a significant segment of the working-age population. Unlike previous generations, Indian millennials have matured in an environment where social media, mobile phones, and widespread internet access are ubiquitous, profoundly influencing their product research and purchasing decisions. In order to get into India's growing consumer market, marketers must understand the unique habits of Indian consumers.

Immersion in digital technology is one of the traits that distinguish Indian millennials. Over 800 million people in India use the internet, according to current industry figures, and the vast majority of them are millennials who are engaged on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube (Wahab et al., 2021). These platforms have become into effective marketing avenues and brand engagement, in addition to serving as means of communication. Millennials consume a lot of material online and often depend on digital word-of-mouth, influencer endorsements, and peer evaluations instead of conventional advertising techniques (Rayyan, 2022). Influencer marketing is especially pertinent to this group as a result of this paradigm shift.

The millennial generation in India is very responsive to influencer marketing, which uses popular people to promote goods and services. Influencers who seem sincere and reliable have a greater chance of influencing this generation's purchase choice since they prioritise relatability and authenticity. According to research, millennials' opinions about a company and their propensity to purchase are greatly influenced by the credibility, dependability, and attractiveness of influencers

(Manzoor et al., 2023). Unlike conventional superstars, social media influencers communicate with their followers on a more intimate and engaging level, creating a feeling of community and connection. It is common for this interaction to lead to increased influence over consumer behavior.

Economic considerations further highlight how important Indian millennials are. They are a group with rising disposable incomes as a result of greater access to financial services, entrepreneurship, and formal job sectors. Millennials' fondness for high-end, cutting-edge, and lifestyle-focused items is influenced by their economic empowerment, which also gives them the ability to make their own purchase choices (Francis & Sarangi, 2022). Millennials are more experience-driven than previous generations, and they value goods and services that provide ease, emotional fulfilment, and personalisation. These demands may be successfully met by brands using influencer marketing to provide content that relates to the goals and lifestyles of millennials.

One of the main factors facilitating this change is India's increasing digital penetration. Millennials in urban and semi-urban regions may now actively engage in online ecosystems because to the democratisation of access to digital platforms brought about by the development of low-cost smartphones and 4G/5G networks (Farooq & Raju, 2019). Because of this connectedness, influencer marketing initiatives may now reach new areas outside of major cities. Additionally, the growth of regional influencers and vernacular content enables marketers to reach a variety of millennials from different language and cultural backgrounds.

The rising mistrust of conventional advertising among Indian millennials is another crucial area of research. Before making a purchase, this group is more likely to look for peer and social approval and is often more sceptical of direct brand messaging. When done correctly, influencer marketing may be a potent tool for overcoming this scepticism by offering relevant testimonials and first-hand accounts (A. Kumar & Garga, n.d.). A thorough grasp of influencer-consumer interactions and how they affect purchase intentions is necessary in light of this change in trust dynamics. Additionally, Indian millennials have a high affinity for businesses that exhibit sustainability, diversity, and social responsibility. Millennials want companies to reflect their ethical beliefs and are becoming more aware of local and global social concerns. Millennial followers are more loyal and engaged with influencers that support issues and uphold openness (Shettigar & Jha, 2024).

Therefore, these value-driven aspects must also be taken into account while studying millennials in the context of influencer marketing.

3. Review of Literature:

Theoretically, a number of theories, including the Social Learning Theory and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), have been used to explain how digital interactions affect millennial consumer behaviour (Conner, 2020). In terms of what influences customers' intentions to purchase, the TPB identifies three primary factors: attitudes, subjective standards, and perceived behavioral control. The Social Learning Theory says that people pick up routines from the people they look up to, yet this is not the case. The importance of perceived influencer involvement, trust, and credibility in influencing millennial purchase intentions has been validated by empirical study in India using these ideas (Sethuraman, 2023). It is impossible to exaggerate the practical significance for companies and marketers. Businesses who successfully comprehend and interact with India's millennial generation, which is predicted to reach its peak in the next ten years, would have a major competitive edge. Influencer marketing is a powerful strategy for brand development and client acquisition because it caters to millennial desires for authenticity, engagement, and experience. Additionally, it provides quantifiable results in terms of engagement, reach, and conversions, giving marketers data-driven insights to help them improve their tactics.

(Chopra, Avhad, et al., 2021) Influencer marketing is gaining popularity as consumers increasingly turn to social media platforms for purchase decisions. This research uses social learning theory and TPB to determine what factors significantly affect consumers' actions. Consumers' views of influencers and their sense of power over their own conduct have a positive effect on their behaviors, according to studies. Perceived danger little affects behavior; nevertheless, personal significance, motivation, and trust significantly influence it. Consumers carefully evaluate specific influencers for distinct product categories, rendering the choice of the suitable one essential. Influencer posts have an effect on consumers in four dimensions: familiarity with the brand, expertise in the subject matter, preference for the brand, and propensity to agree with the influencer's position. Successful influencer marketing involves identifying the right type of influencer who offers curated advice, stories, and suggestions to create engagement with the audience.

(Dogra et al., 2024) Investors' behavioral intentions are linked to financial advertising; gender and marital status mediate this connection, whereas perceived risk acts as a moderator. The results were examined using PLS-SEM once the survey and data collection from 481 participants were finished. The impact of marital status and gender on group-to-group mediation factors may be seen by multigroup analysis (MGA). The findings confirmed the hypothesized strong relationship between informativeness, honesty, and perceived risk, as well as a sizable relationship between credibility and the inclination to invest. No evidence was found that perceived threat served as a moderator. Gender has a role in how credibility, informativeness, and honesty are linked to investment intentions, perceived risk, and truthfulness, respectively. Conversely, the correlations between honesty and perceived risk, engagement and credibility, and credibility and perceived risk are all moderated by married status. The study helps understand millennial investment decision-making when exposed to financial promotions and advertisements, providing insights for government policy framing.

(Muralidharan et al., 2016) The aim of this study is to address a deficiency in the literature via analysis the cultural factors that impact the choice of socialization agents and integrating previous studies on Millennials' environmentally conscious purchasing habits. The study's subjects were younger Millennials from both India and the US, and they were asked to fill out an online survey. Results indicated that personal relationships were more influential than mass media in raising environmental awareness and encouraging green purchasing behavior. Concern for the environment acted as a mediator in the socialization process, and gender inequalities were seen in every nation. Prospects are examined.

(Vidani, 2023) Nowadays, influencer social media has become a significant medium for businesses to interact with customers, marketing has become an essential strategy for contemporary enterprises. How does customer behaviour change as a result of influencer marketing? Combining Bandura's and Walters' theories of social learning with TPB, this research seeks to answer the issue. Two important traits that have a beneficial effect on consumer behavior are the degree to which people feel they can control their own behavior and their attitude toward influences. Peer pressure, however, had little effect on patron behavior. Perceptions of risk, however, did not influence action to the same extent as other categories, including trust, personal meaning, and inspiration. Product influencer fitting is vital for customers, since they follow many influencers for various

products. In addition to influencing readers' opinions about the company and the expert's expertise on the subject, influencer posts also impact readers' own preferences and the products they end up buying. Finding the right influencer to engage your target audience with well-chosen stories, advice, and recommendations is essential for successful influencer marketing. As social media platforms continue to grow in popularity, influencer marketing is likely to become an even more significant part of the marketing landscape in the coming years.

(Caraka et al., 2022) This study looks at how famous social media personalities like Raffi Ahmad and Nagita Slavina influence the vacation plans of young adults. The information was analysed using hierarchical likelihood employing structural equation modelling after a representative sample of Millennials was selected via snowball sampling. Here in the digital age, data show that visitors are successful and provide light on what factors impact their visit intentions. To determine each element's relative relevance, the study used logistic regression using hierarchical likelihood modelling of structural equations and variational approximation. The used approach is an advanced iteration of the structural equation model that incorporates logistical variational approximation for feature selection and hierarchical likelihood estimation.

(Karaila, 2021) Studied, the primary objective was to identify the characteristics of social media influencers that have an effect on consumer behaviour and to evaluate the impact that these influencers have. It was decided to conduct a survey in order to pre-test these qualities and establish the impact they have on customers' behaviour. The data indicate that attractiveness positively affects word-of-mouth, purchase intention, and attitudes towards streamers, indie games, and AAA games. There is a favourable influence that trustworthiness has on these aspects. There was no moderating effect of the type of game on the link between the attributes of the influencer and the behaviour of the customer.

(Nayak & Megha, 2024) Examined influencing industry consumer decision-making processes, market data, and scholarly study. Important subjects to address include influencer traits, content types, social media sites, and ethical standards. Insight into consumer trends and patterns is provided by the study's findings, which help us comprehend the evolution of customers' preferences. Because it draws on several sources, this study significantly expands our understanding of the topic. It also serves as a valuable reference for academics, marketers, and

industry professionals who are interested in gaining an understanding of the complexity of influencer marketing.

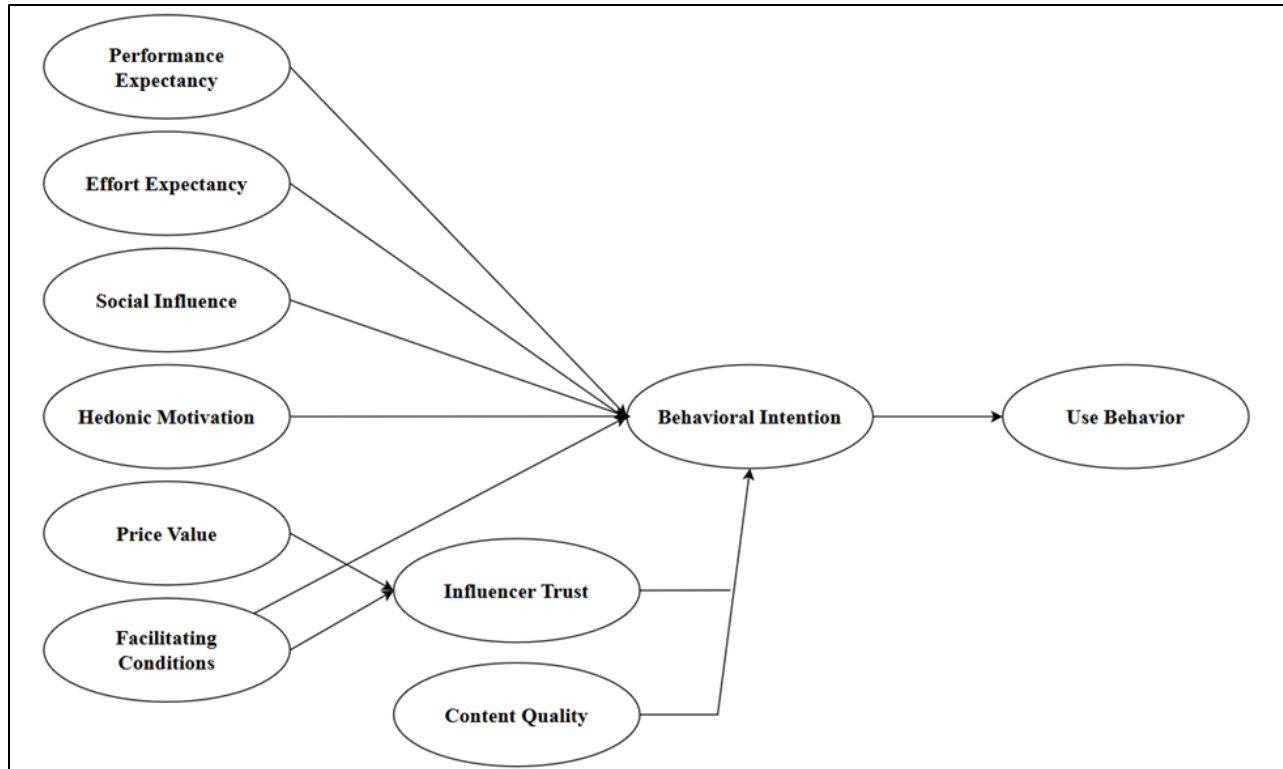
4. Research Gap and Conceptual Framework:

Research Gap

After reviewing the literature, significant study gaps exist in influencer marketing (IM), notably in its efficacy, generational impact, and theoretical foundation. Numerous studies have shown how influencer marketing evolved from conventional advertising and how it affects customer attitudes, purchase intentions, and brand involvement, but no standard theoretical framework exists. The processes by which influencers effect consumer behavior are still debated in most studies. Although studies have examined influencers' traits (e.g., trustworthiness, attractiveness, credibility) and their impact across platforms and industries, there is little cross-cultural analysis, especially in emerging economies like India, where consumer behaviour may differ from Western norms. Despite Millennials and Gen Z's increased interest in influencer marketing, few research has contrasted their behavioural differences or studied how psychographic and socio-cultural aspects affect their interaction with social media influencers.

Few longitudinal or experimental studies have confirmed influencer attribute-consumer reaction causal correlations. Overreliance on cross-sectional surveys and bibliometric reviews shows a need for empirical, theory-driven research that may provide marketers with generalizable insights and practical tactics. Finally, the ethical and transparency issues surrounding influencer collaborations are understudied, making it difficult to determine how authenticity and perceived manipulation effect long-term customer trust and brand loyalty. These gaps provide opportunities for future study to understand influencer marketing's involvement in digital consumer behaviour holistically and culturally.

Conceptual Framework:



Conceptual Framework of the Study

5. Research Objectives

1. To analyze the influence of performance expectancy on millennials' purchasing intentions in response to influencer marketing.
2. To evaluate the role of effort expectancy in shaping millennials' purchasing intentions when engaging with influencer content.
3. To examine the impact of social influence on purchasing intentions among Indian millennials.
4. To assess the effect of facilitating conditions on actual purchasing behavior inspired by influencer marketing.

6. Research Hypothesis

H0: Performance expectancy has no significant impact on the purchasing intentions of Indian millennials in response to influencer marketing.

H1: Performance expectancy has a positive impact on the purchasing intentions of Indian millennials in response to influencer marketing.

H0: Effort expectancy does not positively influence the purchasing intentions of Indian millennials when engaging with influencer content

H2: Effort expectancy positively influences the purchasing intentions of Indian millennials when engaging with influencer content.

H0: Social influence does not significantly affect the purchasing intentions of Indian millennials in response to influencer marketing.

H3: Social influence positively affects the purchasing intentions of Indian millennials in response to influencer marketing.

H0: Facilitating conditions do not significantly influence the purchasing intentions of Indian millennials in response to influencer marketing.

H4a: Facilitating conditions positively influence the purchasing intentions of Indian millennials in response to influencer marketing.

H0: Facilitating conditions do not significantly affect the actual purchasing behavior of Indian millennials.

H4b: Facilitating conditions positively affect the actual purchasing behavior of Indian millennials.

H0: Hedonic motivation has no positive impact on the purchasing intentions of Indian millennials in response to influencer marketing.

H5: Hedonic motivation has a positive impact on the purchasing intentions of Indian millennials in response to influencer marketing.

7. Research Methodology

Sample Design

A statistically valid sample of millennials from India was used to investigate how influencers affect consumers' choices to buy. In terms of gender, the sample was representative, economic status, level of education, and geographic location, among other crucial demographic characteristics. A basic random sample strategy was used to accomplish this. This strategy will allow us to recruit a representative sample of people from all walks of life, regardless of their level of social media activity or familiarity with influencer material. A total of 500 people will make up the sample.

Data collection

This research used a variety of data sources to look at how 600 millennials in India were influenced by social media celebrities' marketing efforts to buy things. Accurate and consistent data collection was achieved via the use of standardized questionnaires. Millennials, who are heavy users of social media and offline and online influencer content consumers, were the intended respondents to the survey that was carried out in many cities throughout India. Several aspects were considered in this technique, including the following: hedonic motivation, social influence, conducive circumstances, confidence in the influencer, habit, perceived quality of influence, price-value ratio, and performance and effort expectations. These factors may be used to forecast not only the respondents' actual buying behavior but also their intentions to purchase. Gender, age, education, wealth, and location were all considered as important demographic factors in the study's quest to enhance segmentation analysis. The conclusions were further supported by including secondary data derived from official papers, academic research, and institutional records, which supplemented the original data. Using this all-encompassing method of data collecting, we could find out more about how influencer marketing affects the buying habits of millennials in India.

Source of data

The goal of the research was to combine primary and secondary sources in order to provide a thorough and sophisticated grasp of the difficulties. Marketing initiatives using well-known Indian social media personalities figures and their effects on millennials' spending habits were the primary research focuses.

Primary source:

This study used structured surveys, questionnaires, and Google Forms as the main data collection methods.

Structured questionnaires:

The structured surveys sought to collect extensive data on the impact of influencer marketing on Indian millennials' buying habits. Surveys designed to systematically collect comprehensive data on influencer marketing among Millennials included factors such as hedonic motivation, price value, habit, confidence in influencers, perceived quality of influence, social influence, effort expectancy, facilitating conditions, and performance expectancy. To measure respondents' actual purchasing behaviors and intentions to buy, the surveys used Likert-scale questions. Using this methodical approach, it was able to consistently and quantitatively learn about millennials' buying habits and influencer marketing.

Surveys:

The participants in this research were young adults (22–40 years old) in India who are very engaged on social media and who follow digital influencers on a daily basis. Data was gathered from a diverse group of respondents, spanning various socioeconomic backgrounds and geographical areas, using both online and offline methods. This ensured that the data was inclusive and representative. Researchers used the UTAUT2 paradigm to inform our survey questions, which sought to learn how often millennials' intentions to purchase and their actual behavior were influenced by factors including performance expectation, social influence, effort expectancy, enabling circumstances, and hedonic incentive. Including people of both sexes to represent the range of opinions and actions impacted by social media purchases. The investigation of trends and differences in the experience and effects of influencer marketing by age, gender, and place was made possible by the broad demographic coverage.

Google forms:

Google Forms was used to distribute the surveys and questionnaires in order to increase reach and guarantee effective data collecting. This approach made it simple for millennials who were used to using digital platforms to participate, guaranteeing simplicity and anonymity, both of which are essential for promoting candid answers about delicate situations. Additional offline techniques

including paper-based questionnaires and in-person interviews were used in places with poor internet connectivity. By reducing biases associated with the digital divide and guaranteeing inclusion across various technical and socioeconomic settings, our quantitative approach assisted in capturing a balanced sample.

Secondary data:

Secondary data was sourced from reputable entities, including official papers, academic journals, government reports, and publications from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as global studies on how influencer marketing affects millennials. The impact of online influencers on millennial buying behavior was clarified by these sources, which framed the key findings within broader commercial and social contexts. The research was conceptually and analytically substantiated by examining previous studies in social media marketing, consumer psychology, and technology adoption frameworks such as UTAUT2.

Pilot Study – Results and Actions Taken

To ensure the instrument was clear, relevant, and reliable, a **pilot research with 50 participants** selected from the target demographic was carried out before the main survey. Results from the pilot showed satisfactory levels of internal consistency; all main constructs had **Cronbach's alpha values more than 0.70**. Minor issues were noted in the wording of items related to influencer trust and content quality, which were subsequently rephrased for greater clarity. Feedback was also received regarding the layout of the questionnaire, which was reorganized to group related items and improve the flow of responses. Based on the pilot, the final instrument was revised and finalized for large-scale deployment.

Survey Instrument

The data collecting tool was a **structured questionnaire** that was based on validated measures from earlier research. Several important concepts from the **UTAUT2** model were modified for this study. These included the following: hedonic motivation, social influence, enabling circumstances, performance expectation, and effort expectancy. Relevance to influencer marketing literature led to the inclusion of other constructs, such as **influencer credibility, trust, and content quality**.

Each concept was assessed using five-point Likert scales, spanning from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Items were modified slightly to suit the Indian millennial context, ensuring cultural relevance and comprehension. The instrument underwent expert validation by academics and practitioners in marketing and consumer psychology.

8. Data Analysis

Data Analysis Tools

The **AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures)** tool was used for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), whereas **IBM SPSS Statistics** was used for preliminary analysis. Using SPSS, researchers performed descriptive statistics, reliability testing (Cronbach's alpha), and frequency analysis. This study used AMOS to examine both the **measurement model (Confirmatory Factor Analysis - CFA)** and the **structural model** (showing supposed relationships).

The decision to adopt SEM was based on its ability to evaluate many dependent connections among both observable and latent variables all at once. The method was particularly effective for validating constructs such as influencer trust, behavioral intention, and purchase behavior, where indirect and direct effects needed to be estimated.

The tools and their purposes included:

- **SPSS:** Demographics, frequency analysis, reliability checks.
- **AMOS:** CFA, path analysis, model fit indices, regression weights, and hypothesis testing.

Measures

The data was gathered using a structured questionnaire. Using a Likert-type scale, researcher have developed a questionnaire that ask participants to share their opinions on the many study topics under investigation. To get accurate data on the examined subjects, carefully formulated questions have been created. A distinct questionnaire has been created for each of the five respondent categories included in the survey.

Variables

- Behavioral Intention
- Use Behavior

- Education
- Income level
- Geographical location.

Sampling Technique

This study employed the random sample approach since it was the most effective way to pick research participants. According to the principle of random sampling, an equal number of people from a given demographic will be chosen to participate in the study. As a result, we are certain that our results will be impartial and generalizable. This process eliminates any systematic preferences or tendencies since each person or component is chosen at random. The external validity of study findings is improved by the widespread use of random sampling, which offers an objective and equitable representation of a population. After dividing the population into these pertinent strata, it's easy to create a representative and balanced sample by selecting individuals at random from the organisations.

$$P = 1 - \left(\frac{N-1}{N} \right) \left(\frac{N-2}{N} \right) \dots \left(\frac{N-n}{N-(n-1)} \right)$$

Inclusion and exclusion Criteria

Inclusion

- Millennials aged between 22 to 40 years.
- Individuals who have regular access to the internet and social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, Twitter.).
- Inhabitants from many geographical areas around India, embodying a range of socioeconomic and educational profiles.
- Participants who agreed to participate in the research did so willingly.

Exclusion

- Individuals aged under 22 or beyond 40 years.
- Individuals who abstain from social media or do not engage with digital influencers.
- Participants who submitted incomplete or contradictory answers in the survey.
- Individuals who are incapable of giving informed consent or who refuse to participate.

Tools and techniques

Tools:

The statistical software SPSS (Statistical package for the social sciences) and the AMOS tool are used in this study.

Methods:

Measurement model and validity

The reliability and practicality of research findings are supported by measurement and validity models, which provide a structured framework. In order to evaluate complicated topics, measurement models clearly show how observed occurrences relate to fundamental principles. On the other side, validity serves to prevent inaccurate or deceptive findings by making sure the measuring instruments accurately reflect the desired structures. Essential parts of every study are reliable measurement models. Their findings are credible and authoritative, which is important for making informed decisions and advancing knowledge in several sectors.

FACTOR ANALYSIS

KMO and Bartlett's Test

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test assesses the appropriateness of data for Factor Analysis. The assessment evaluates the adequacy of sampling for the whole model and for each variable individually. The statistic quantifies the degree of variation across variables that may indicate shared variance. Factor analysis is more appropriate for your data if the percentage decreases.

There is a range of 0–1 for the KMO statistic. A comprehensive framework for statistical analysis:

- A KMO value between 0.8 and 1 indicates an appropriate sample size.
- KMO values below 0.6 indicate the need for corrective actions owing to insufficient sampling. Exercise your own judgment for values ranging from 0.5 to 0.6, since several authors have established this value at 0.5.
- Significant partial correlations in respect to the overall correlations are shown when KMO values are close to zero. Component analysis is greatly hindered by the existence of correlations.

The formula for the KMO test is as follows:

$$MO_j = \frac{\sum_{i \neq j} r_{ij}^2}{\sum_{i \neq j} r_{ij}^2 + \sum_{i \neq j} u}$$

- As a correlation matrix, $R = [r_{ij}]$,
- The partial covariance matrix, denoted as $U = [u]$,
- The summation notation, translated as "add up," is represented by Σ

The Reliability and Validity of the scale:

Assessment of the measuring scale's validity and reliability is a crucial task for academics. Reliability and validity assessments of all research measures validated the significance of the findings.

Reliability

A measurement's reliability is defined as its consistency. When tested again under the same circumstances, a trustworthy instrument always gives the same findings. If, for instance, a thermometer reads the same temperature for a liquid under the same circumstances in several tests, then may say that the findings are dependable.

9. Finding and Recommendations

The results of this research carry significant implications across three major domains: **theoretical**, **practical**, and **societal**.

Findings:

The findings of the present study have been critically evaluated in light of existing academic literature, and notable congruence as well as divergence has been observed. This section outlines both the alignment and contradiction of the current results with previously published work, thus providing a balanced and scholarly interpretation of the outcomes.

The study's identification of influencer credibility, content quality, and emotional trust as significant predictors of purchase intention is strongly aligned with the findings of Lou and (Lou & Yuan, 2019), who emphasized the critical role of authenticity and trustworthiness in influencer-follower relationships. Similarly, highlighted that perceived behavioral control and personal relevance significantly affect consumer behavior, supporting the present study's inclusion of psychological constructs adapted from the UTAUT2 framework.

Research by confirms the positive effect of hedonic motivation on behavioral intention. Millennials' digital purchasing journeys are motivated by fun, self-expression, and emotional gratification, according to this study. This further substantiates the argument that emotional aspects have become increasingly prominent in marketing effectiveness among younger consumer cohorts.

In terms of social influence, the findings are consistent with those of (J. Chen, 2021) and (Vrontis et al., 2021), both of whom recognized that subjective norms and peer validation act as important motivators for digital engagement and consumer decision-making. These studies reinforce the notion that collectivist tendencies, particularly in Indian society, heighten the role of social networks and influencer impact.

Contrary to some prior studies such as those by, which emphasized the importance of facilitating conditions and performance expectancy, this study observed these variables to have a weaker influence on behavioral intention. This divergence suggests that Indian millennials, having matured digitally, do not perceive technical barriers or ease of access as crucial concerns in influencer-driven decisions. This finding offers a new perspective: digital fluency has likely normalized the use of social commerce tools, diminishing the role of traditional usability constructs.

1. Theoretical Implications

- This study extends the applicability of the **Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2)** by integrating influencer-specific variables such as **credibility, emotional trust, and content quality**, which are not traditionally part of the model.

- The integration of **parasocial interaction theory** within the framework provides a new dimension to understanding consumer-influencer relationships in digital marketing contexts.
- The research contributes to literature on **Indian millennials**, an under-explored consumer segment in global influencer marketing research, thereby enhancing cross-cultural applicability of existing models.

2. Practical Implications

- The findings offer clear guidelines to **digital marketing professionals, brand strategists, and social media consultants** for crafting more effective and targeted influencer campaigns.
- By understanding the psychological drivers behind millennial purchase behavior—such as hedonic motivation, trust, and social influence—brands can design more **emotionally intelligent and experience-driven campaigns**.
- The insights can also help platforms like Instagram and YouTube develop **algorithmic tools** to better match influencers with appropriate brand campaigns based on behavioral predictors.

3. Societal Implications

- The research highlights the significance of **ethical influencer behavior and responsible advertising**, especially in a digital world where disinformation and materialism are prevalent.
- It emphasizes the increasing need of **customers becoming digitally literate**, particularly when it comes to identifying sponsored material from original content.
- Furthermore, by encouraging the use of **value-driven messaging** and socially conscious content, the study advocates for marketing practices that are **not only profitable but also ethically constructive**.

Recommendations:

In order to improve the efficacy of influencer marketing campaigns aimed at Indian millennials, this research offers a number of **workable and actionable suggestions** for companies, digital marketers, influencers, and policymakers.

1. **Strategic Selection of Influencers**

Brands should carefully vet influencers based on **credibility, authenticity, and content quality** rather than follower count alone. Micro-influencers, who maintain a niche but engaged audience, may offer higher conversion rates due to their perceived trustworthiness and relatability. Brands must prioritize long-term relationships with such influencers to foster consistency and brand loyalty.

2. **Focus on Emotional Resonance and Authenticity**

Emotional trust was found to be a powerful predictor of purchase intention. Therefore, marketers should move beyond promotional content and encourage influencers to share **personal stories, product experiences, behind-the-scenes content**, and relatable narratives that build emotional connections. Genuine storytelling is more impactful than scripted promotions, particularly for millennial audiences.

3. **Content Should Be Purpose-Driven and Value-Oriented**

Content that aligns with **social values** such as sustainability, inclusivity, and ethical consumption resonates more with Indian millennials. Brands should ensure their influencer campaigns are not only persuasive but also reflect **corporate social responsibility (CSR)** to enhance brand image and consumer loyalty.

4. **Measure Engagement, Not Just Reach**

Marketers are advised to shift their metrics of success from vanity metrics (likes, impressions) to more meaningful KPIs such as **engagement rates, sentiment analysis, click-through rates, and conversion metrics**. These measures more accurately reflect consumer interest and intention to purchase.

5. Personalized Influencer Campaigns

Given the diversity within the millennial population, influencer campaigns should be **segmented** based on psychographic variables such as lifestyle, income level, digital behavior, and regional preferences. Personalized content delivered through targeted influencer partnerships can yield better ROI.

6. Compliance with Transparency Guidelines

Influencers and brands should adhere to **regulatory frameworks** such as the ASCI guidelines in India, which require disclosure of paid partnerships through hashtags like #Ad or #Sponsored. Transparency builds trust and enhances credibility.

10. Research Limitations:

Although this research might provide some insight on the influencer marketing purchase intentions of millennials in India, it is important to keep in mind that it does have certain limitations. At first glance, the research doesn't cover much ground since most of the data come from cities. This may not accurately reflect the variety of India's millennial population, particularly those from semi-urban or rural areas. Second, the research uses self-reported data, which may be biased due to social desirability or memory errors. Thirdly, the study's cross-sectional design impairs its capacity to document shifts in customer behavior over time or in reaction to changing digital trends. Uncontrollable elements like influencer scandals, changes in social media algorithms, and quick technical advancements could also have affected participant perceptions throughout the data collecting period. It is possible that external socio-political or macroeconomic factors influence customer attitude and behavior, but this is not taken into consideration by the model. These restrictions point to the necessity for more longitudinal and multi-regional research to fully comprehend the effect of influencer marketing and care in extrapolating the results.

10. Scope of future research

This study provides vital insights into the elements impacting the purchase intentions of Indian millennials in influencer marketing, but there is still lot of potential for further research in this area. Future research may further develop the behavioral framework by examining other dimensions like perceived pleasure, customer innovativeness, or brand trust. Also, a comparison across cohorts of different generations, such Gen Z and Gen X, may show how each age reacts to influencer marketing differently. Additionally, useful for documenting how consumer behavior changes over time, particularly in reaction to shifting digital trends and technical breakthroughs, would be longitudinal research. The research's generalizability may also be improved by extending it to other geographical areas within India. And last, using qualitative techniques like focus groups or interviews may help reveal more about the psychological and emotional foundations of influencer-consumer connections.

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