

## **Influencer Marketing: Reaching the Right Person at the Right Place**

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### **Introduction & Background**

Marketing as a field has grown exponentially over the last few years. Companies, organizations, and even the government is looking for new ways to reach a consumer through marketing. Influencer marketing, in which these organizations are making use of individuals which the consumer might trust more through association, seems to be the latest trend in marketing. The increased use of social media has contributed immensely to this rise since most influencers use it as a platform to communicate with their audience. This study was an attempt at understanding the various social media platforms used by the audience to view different content and additionally gauge its impact on consumers which could help companies decide appropriate marketing strategies to reach the right customer at the right place.

Recent popular developments in marketing have been on digital and mobile platforms. Influencer marketing is one of the most recent trends in the Marketing field and promotes an integrated path across different fields. The Return-on-Investment and potential of influencer marketing makes it a subject that cannot be overlooked by marketers. There have been heavy investments in influencers by several large companies who understand its importance in order to promote their products and services.

This research paper would assist marketers interested in increasing their horizons to attract consumers through influencer marketing. Since the primary age group in focus of study his study was account adolescents (18-21 years), it will help marketers understand the behaviour of this segment of consumers given the fact that they will soon have purchasing power and are ideal targets for marketers to instill a sense of brand loyalty. This may help marketers understand how this segment is different from the others and reach them more effectively.

## Literature Review

Table 1 Review of Literature

Sl. No.	Title of the Paper	Names of authors	Name & Indexing of the Journal/Book/Book Chapter	Geography/ Region of study	Framework adopted	Major findings of the study	Gaps addressed/ identified	No of Citations received as per google scholar
1	Sponsored: The Emergence of Influencer Marketing	Steven Woods, 2016	Trace: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange	New York City, United States	Quantitative and survey research.	Approaches of huge advertising agencies for influencers - outsourcing or hiring an entire social media team, influencers receive a high amount of ROI.	It talks about the point of view of large agencies and corporate brands with huge sums of advertising budgets.	2681
2	Social Butterflies- How Social Media Influencers	Burke, Kayleigh Elizabeth(2017)	vtechworks (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University)	Survey was conducted among Virginia	Descriptive statistics	It analyzes SMI effects on product perception through	comparative differences between SMI posts and brand post.	6

	are the New Celebrity Endorsement			Tech students		socialization and test for differences in product perception generated by brands and SMIs		
3	Word of mouth and viral marketing: taking the temperature of the hottest trends in marketing	Rick Ferguson ,2008	Emerald Insight		Examination of real life campaigns that are emanating from well- known companies	This paper throws light on the empirical measures like return on investment with the expectations that they can remarkable returns on brands.	Understanding the success and failings of word-of- mouth or viral marketing.	422

4	'Perceived Authenticity' and 'Trust' in Social Media driven Influencer Marketing and their influence on intentions-to-buy of 18-24-year-olds in Ireland	Isabel Bruns,2018	Resource.dbs (Dublin Business School )	Ireland	Academic Research	Maximum respondents are likely to follow Influencers with fewer followers, and they are called Micro-Influencers. Characteristics of Social Media Influencers ,Critical success factors for corporate Influencer marketing, The credibility of Influencer Marketing and GENERATION Z	The gap addressed is about a millennial study in Ireland about how customers are attracted to influencers	
5	The Rise of Social Media Influencer Marketing on Lifestyle Branding: A	Morgan Glucksman,2017	Strategic Communications,Elon University		Qualitative content analysis	Characteristics of social media influencers in particular, Lucie Fink, and their endorsements of brands in her	Facilitates to understand the reason for social media as the trending influencer in a	31

	Case Study of Lucie Fink					social media handles.	huge way in 2017.	
6	Towards a world of influencers: Exploring the relationship building dimensions of Influencer Marketing	Ann-Sofie Gustavsson Arij Suleman Nasir Sarvinoz Ishonova,2017	Semantics Scholar	Sweden	Qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews	Avenues and platforms used by SMEs while building relationships with influencers were identified, and they are found to be communication, events, feedback and gifts.	Swedish SMEs' relationship building activities are influenced by few of the underlying dimensions.	
7	Influencer Marketing as a Marketing Tool	Sofie Biaude,2017	Theseus	Finland	Qualitative and detailed insight	Essential for influencers to disclose contents of collaborations	Theoretically and empirically describes the use of influencer marketing	

8	Social Media Sellout: The Increasing Role of Product Promotion on YouTube	Carsten Schwemmer, Sandra Ziewiecki, 2018	Sage Journals, Social Media + Society	Germany	Compiled dataset which includes information for videos uploaded by the most popular YouTube channels.	Indicates oral promotion of you tube videos	Research done for proper understanding of the magnitude of product promotion.	6
9	The Impact of Influencer Marketing on Consumers' Attitudes	Johan Grafström et al, 2018	Digitala Vetenskapliga Arkivet	Jönköping University, Sweden	To meet the purpose of the thesis, focus groups were conducted.	Influencers affect attitude of millennials through their various methods of promotion	Investigates the reasons behind marketing in Instagram and blogs	2

11	Identifying Millennials' key influencers from early childhood: insights into current consumer preferences	Amy M. Young, Mary D. Hinesly, 2012	Emerald Group Publishing Limited	General	Draws research insights from psychology, consumer preference. Confirms key influencers across generations	Gives a thorough knowledge about millennials, complements current approaches	Suggested research approach for understanding millennial influencers	61
12	Modelling the impact of social media influencers on behavioural intentions of millennials: The case of tourism in rural areas in Greece	Chatzigeorgiou, Chryssoula, 2017	Munich Personal RePEc Archive	Athens, Thessaloniki and Patras	Analysis of data collected through questionnaires.	Decision making of millennials on potential rural tourism destinations are influenced	Understanding of impact of influencer marketing on millennials with respect to rural tourism.	17

13	Influencer Marketing Case Studies with Incredible Results	Andrew Loader, 2018	Influencer Marketing Hub		Providing a better understanding through real-life insights.	Learning how influencers have delivered impressive results for leading brands	A comprehensive study of recent activities being undertaken in different fields by influencer marketers.	
14	3 Best Influencer Marketing Case Studies of 2018	Faizan Raza, 2018	Marketing & Growth Hacking		Understanding of the methods used by influencers to reach their audience.	Best practices adopted by influencers in influencer marketing.	Understanding of the practices adopted by influencers to reach their audience.	190
15	6 Influencer Marketing Case Studies With Phenomenal Success	Jasmine Demeester, 2018	Online Marketing Institute		Understanding theoretical knowledge through real life examples	Use of different influencers in campaigns to produce different results.	Knowledge about the latest trends in marketing.	15
16	How You Can Build A Powerful Influencer Marketing Strategy in 2019	Sujan Patel, 2019	BIGCOMMERCE		Theoretical study of existing companies.	Types of campaigns, competition and giveaways, key performance indicators, understanding influencer	current state of influencer marketing, how to deploy your own influencer marketing strategy.	49



						landscape and the rise of micro influencer		
17	Case Studies: Micro-Influencer Marketing Campaigns that Worked Well	William Comcowich,2018	glean.info		Understanding theoretical knowledge through real life examples	Advantages of micro influencers and maintaining a long term relationship with influencers and also providing real life companies as examples	Provides reasoning of why it is better to work with micro - influencers instead of famous celebrities	7
19	The challenges and opportunities of marketing to Millennials	Dennis Pitta,2012	Emerald Insight		Descriptive analysis of different generations	Generation and status related effects were studies	Examines Millennials from a variety of perspectives that add to our knowledge about the cohort.	619
20	10 Influencer Marketing Case Studies With Insane Results	Shane Barker, 2019	The Huffington Post		Study of strategies adopted by different companies while adopting	Most brands worked with influencers having high engagement rates. Brands	Content promoted and methodologies followed in order to obtain	33

					influencer marketing.	provide influencers with creative freedom, so that the sponsored content blended in seamlessly with their usual content which makes the campaigns more authentic, and trustworthy.	optimal results.	
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## **Research Objectives and Methodology**

### **Problem Statement**

Though influencer marketing is something every marketer is talking about, so far definitive research has not been conducted regarding its impact and whether or not it affects consumers of different age groups. There has been no study about the appropriate platforms on which influencers can reach their audience depending on the type of content they create, knowing which a marketer might be able to reach a more appropriate audience. Another problem area found was that no conclusive evidence was drawn regarding the difference in impact caused by influencer marketers when the content is sponsored versus when it is not.

### **Objectives**

To understand the level of trust consumers, have on influencers.

To understand the consumers, trust on reviews.

To understand their purchase behaviour based on influencers.

To analyze influencer marketing, with the aim is to test these factors against different age groups to find a trend or pattern.

Another objective is to identify the platforms used by audiences while viewing different fields of content which will enable marketers and influencers to find the right platforms to reach them.

### **Sampling Plan & Methodology**

This is an applied research using descriptive and empirical design. Simple random sampling technique is followed. A questionnaire was prepared with the objectives in mind. The questions were designed around social media accounts with respect to the top social media accounts widely used in India namely - Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn and Quora in the order of their popularity.

Moreover, the questionnaire focused on trending fields of content like Food, Lifestyle, Health, Marketing, Technology, Fashion, Travel, Celebrities, and Work Related, that influencers mainly create content on, that could be used by marketers to generate brand awareness through influencers. The questionnaire has been attached in appendix 1 for further reference. The main focus of study were students studying in different universities and young professionals who have a working experience of four years' maximum. This helps to understand the purchase pattern and their behavior on product reviews given by influencers. This age group was compared with the other age groups to understand their patterns in perception.

The questionnaires were sent to respondents online. 220 filled sample responses were received. The same response data were checked for normality before making data analysis and interpretation. Kalmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro- Wilk test of normality were used. After checking for normality one response which showed outlier property was removed and the total sample size is 219. Tables 1 to 3 indicates the results of Kalmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro - Wilk test of normality. This test indicates that the data is distributed normally.

Table 2 Teste of Normality

Tests of Normality							
	Trusting Opinion	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Gender	No	.422	21	.000	.599	21	.000
	Yes	.377	47	.000	.629	47	.000
Age	No	.502	21	.000	.434	21	.000
	Yes	.448	47	.000	.478	47	.000

Table 3 Test of Normality

Tests of Normality							
	Trusting Product Reviews	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Gender	No	.350	15	.000	.643	15	.000
	Yes	.381	10	.000	.640	10	.000
	Maybe	.405	43	.000	.613	43	.000
Age	No	.461	15	.000	.498	15	.000
	Yes	.400	10	.000	.623	10	.000
	Maybe	.479	43	.000	.425	43	.000

Table 4 Test of Normality

Tests of Normality							
	Likely Purchase	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Gender	Highly Unlikely to Purchase	.367	5	.026	.684	5	.006
	Unlikely to Purchase	.414	9	.000	.617	9	.000

	Neither likely nor unlikely to Purchase	.390	40	.000	.623	40	.000
	Likely to Purchase	.369	14	.000	.639	14	.000
Age	Highly Unlikely to Purchase	.231	5	.200*	.881	5	.314
	Unlikely to Purchase	.	9	.	.	9	.
	Neither likely nor unlikely to Purchase	.482	40	.000	.390	40	.000
	Likely to Purchase	.403	14	.000	.584	14	.000

The demographic characters and other attributes are specifically mentioned in pie charts and bar diagrams to be more representative.

The following null hypothesis were framed to help attain the research objectives

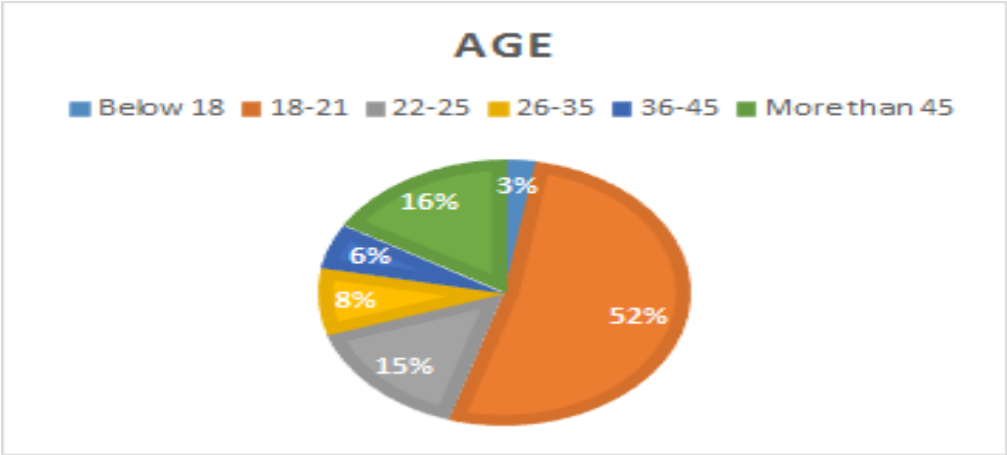
- There is no significance difference between gender and trusting opinion on social medic
- There is no significance difference between gender and trusting product reviews in social medic
- There is no significance difference between gender and likely purchases based on reviews
- There is no significance difference between age and trusting opinion on social medic
- There is no significance difference between age and trusting product reviews in social medic
- There is no significance difference between age and likely purchases based on reviews

Analysis of variance technique (ANOVA) is used to check the acceptance or rejection of null hypothesis. An anova basically indicates the difference in means with the population groups based on certain assumptions likely normality, random samples and equal variances. Based on the results of ANOVA, decision to use Posthoc test will be made. As ANOVA will not help to identify the different pairs of means which are exhibiting significant differences, Posthoc test is used to check for the significant differences in the mean at the same time subsequently controlling for the type one errors.

### Analysis and Interpretation of Results

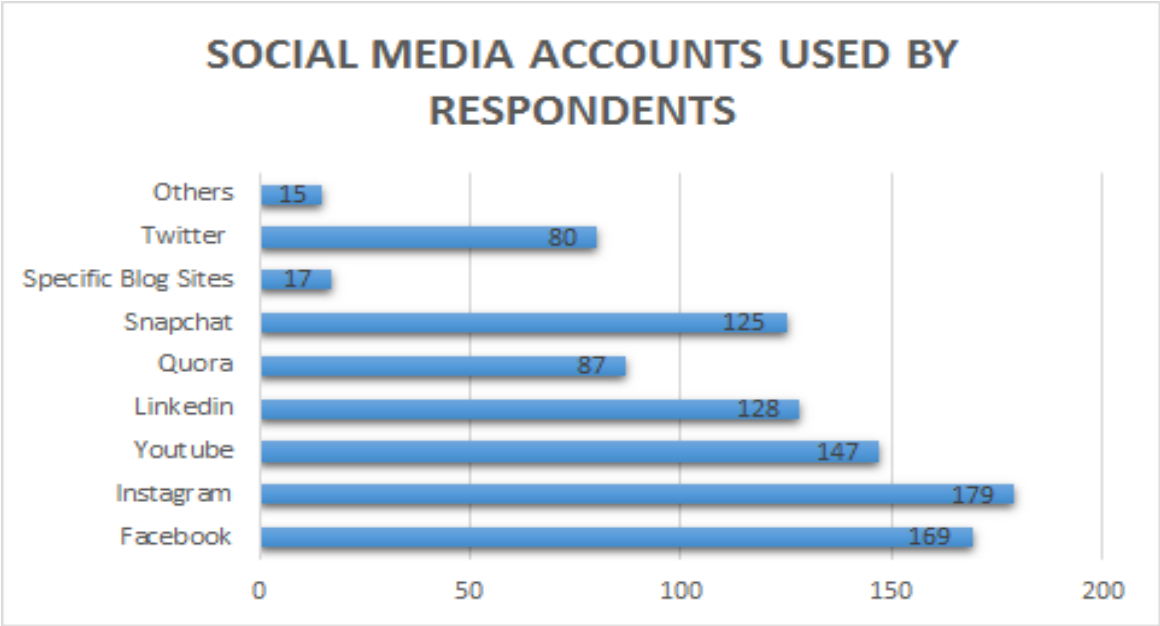
144 males and 74 females have responded. Age of Respondents are shown in the pie chart below

Figure 1



The respondents include members of all age groups, the majority of them falling under the age group 18-21.

Figure 2 Social Media Accounts Used



Source: Authors own

The social media platform used most commonly is Instagram, followed closely by Facebook and YouTube. Other than the social media platforms mentioned, respondents also have accounts on Pinterest, Reddit, Tik Tok, and WhatsApp. Majority of the respondents follow 1-10 influencers. Only 15% of the respondents do not follow influencers on social media. In the more visual categories, such as Food, Travel, Fashion, Celebrities and Lifestyle, Instagram has a lead in terms of being a preferred platform for usage, with YouTube having the next majority. This trend is

observed in the field of Marketing too. When it comes to Technology and Health on the other hand, YouTube has a lead over all other platforms. Work related searches are done primarily on LinkedIn and YouTube. From this one may infer that consumers are shifting towards a world of visual content, especially when it comes to following influencers. The least used platforms from this survey were found to be Snapchat and Quora when it comes to following influencers. Marketers will have to keep this in mind while designing campaigns.

Most of the respondents are ambiguous in their purchase behaviour of the products promoted or used by influencers. This shows us that though influencer marketing may help with the awareness and consideration stages, the final purchase behaviour may remain independent of the marketing strategy. This preliminary study necessitates us to take further studies in order to exactly understand, the level of influence of different social media upon the final purchase of the consumers.

**Table 5 Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Gender	68	1.60	.493	.243	-.430	.291	-1.871	.574
Age	219	2.1096	1.55240	2.410	.929	.164	-.631	.327
Trusting Opinion	219	.7215	.44931	.202	-.995	.164	-1.020	.327
Trusting Product Reviews	219	1.2922	.87602	.767	-.607	.164	-1.427	.327
Likely Purchase	219	2.7580	.96302	.927	-.524	.164	-.359	.327
Valid N (list wise)	68							

One-way ANOVA

ANOVA is conducted to check statistically whether the samples means are the same or not.

Table 6 ANOVA

<b>ANOVA ( gender and trusting opinion)</b>					
Gender					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.

Trusting Opinion					
Between Groups	.123	1	.123	.504	.480
Within Groups	16.156	66	.245		
Trusting Product Reviews					
Between Groups	.100	2	.050	.200	.819
Within Groups	16.180	65	.249		
Likely Purchase					
Between Groups	.051	3	.017	.067	.977
Within Groups	16.229	64	.254		

Results indicates that there is significance difference between gender and trusting opinion, trusting product reviews and likely purchases based on reviews in social media and the null hypothesis is accepted at 5 % level of significance

Table 7 ANOVA

Age					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Trusting Opinion					
Between Groups	31.639	1	31.639	13.906	.000
Within Groups	493.731	217	2.275		
Total	525.370	218			
Trusting Product Reviews					
Between Groups	14.629	2	7.315	3.094	.047
Within Groups	510.740	216	2.365		
Likely Purchases					
Between Groups	112.422	4	28.106	14.565	.000
Within Groups	412.948	214	1.930		

Results indicates that there is no significance difference between age and trusting opinion, trusting product reviews and likely purchases based on reviews from social media and the null hypothesis is rejected at 5 % level of significance



Posthoc test is performed to understand which age group among the five different categories of age are exhibiting significant differences in age with respect to likely purchases

Table 8 Test of Homogeneity of Variances-One way

Test of Homogeneity of Variances					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Likely Purchase	Based on Mean	9.745	5	213	.000
	Based on Median	7.393	5	213	.000
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	7.393	5	179.010	.000
	Based on trimmed mean	9.425	5	213	.000

Test of homogeneity of variance is significant as the alpha values are 0.00 at 5 % level of significances

Table 9 ANOVA

Likely Purchase					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	38.326	5	7.665	9.965	.000
Within Groups	163.848	213	.769		
Total	202.174	218			

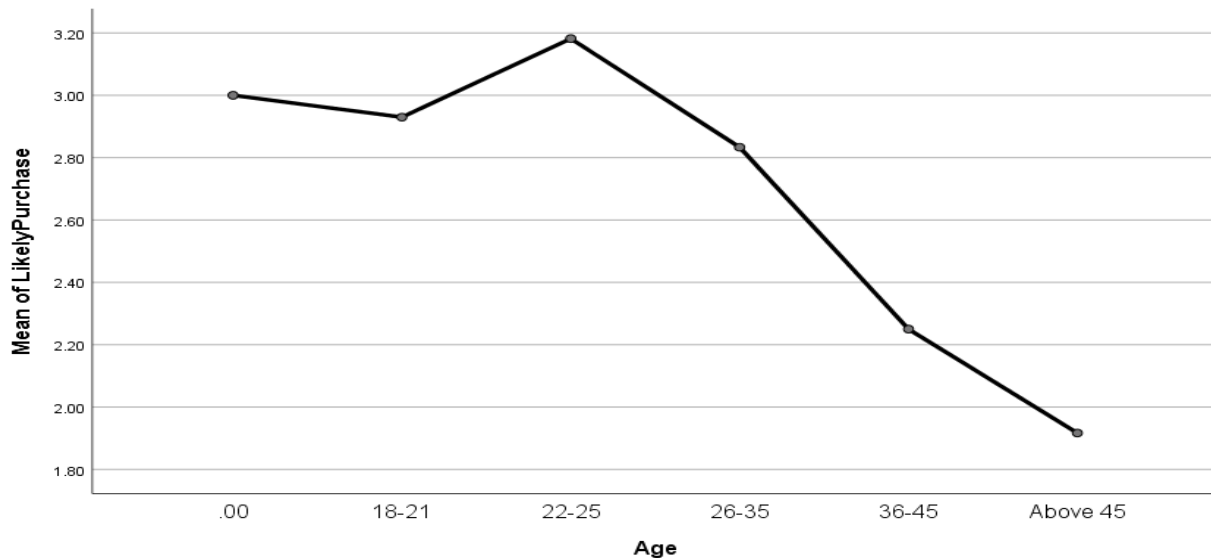
Table 10 Post Hoc Tests

Homogeneous Subsets-for Different age group and likely Purchase using Tukey and Duncan Test

Likely Purchase					
	Age	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
			1	2	3
Tukey B <sup>a,b</sup>	Above 45	36	1.9167		
	36-45	12	2.2500	2.2500	
	26-35	18		2.8333	2.8333
	18-21	114		2.9298	2.9298
	.00	6		3.0000	3.0000
	22-25	33			3.1818
Duncan <sup>a,b</sup>	Above 45	36	1.9167		
	36-45	12	2.2500	2.2500	
	26-35	18		2.8333	2.8333
	18-21	114			2.9298
	.00	6			3.0000
	22-25	33			3.1818
	Sig.			.282	.060

Posthoc test is performed to understand the differences in distances in means between the different age groups and the likely purchases from social media influencers. Posthoc is performed only using Tukey and Duncan test. Tukey test indicates that the difference between the nearest {(age group 26-35 (2.833))} and farthest means {(age group 22-25 (3.1818))} is 0.3488. Duncan test results also indicate similar phenomenon with the same mean difference of 0.3488. This indicates that the age group 22 to 25 and the age group 26-35 are significantly different from each other in their decision on likely purchases using social media influencers.

Figure 17 Means Plots



The means plot above indicates that the age group 22 to 25 are the most influenced in terms of the likely purchase and the graph line comes down with the progress of age.

## Conclusion

The objective of this study is to identify influencer market using social media on the trust, product reviews, opinion and likely purchases. Results of the statistical tests indicate that gender is not significantly influence the trusting opinion, trusting product reviews and likely purchases. But the different age groups show significant positive results on trusting opinions on social media, trusting product reviews and the likely purchases. The age group 22 to 25 is the most influenced of all the other groups. This phenomenon indicates that the youngsters who are graduating or just graduating are the highly influenced groups due to social media.

The findings from this research paper would help marketers in creating awareness on a specific social media platform based on the industry they are involved with, or are marketing using. Using the right platform is crucial in order to reach the right consumer at the right place. Understanding this dimension may help marketers in generating leads by creating cost effective campaigns.

Marketers need to keep in mind that imposing on an influencer through paid reviews may not be as helpful as the ones that are unpaid. Therefore, the aim should be to impress that influencer enough to talk about their product rather than pay them to do it. Issuing samples and freebies to influencers may inspire an influencer to recommend the brand to their audience. Such a review, however, will be honest and need not necessarily be positive. Therefore, the marketer must reach out to the right influencer, and only give them the most appropriate, personalized product. Issuing them a product that would be of a greater benefit to the marketer than to the influencer may produce negative results.

Marketers also need to focus on reaching the kind of consumer who has significant purchasing power or one that can influence purchase behaviour. While reaching a wide audience is necessary to establish a brand, it is also important to add to sales and revenue through this form of marketing. Though one may argue that the primary impact of influencer marketing is raising brand awareness, end of the day, marketing has to aid the business and contribute in some form to its profits. Thus, marketers need to keep in mind their objectives (wider audience or more sales) while selecting their influencer marketing campaign, in order to achieve their goals in a more effective manner.

### **Suggestions**

1. There has not been a thorough research about the attributes that make for an ideal influencer. Clear cut requirements have not been defined and there has been no study about the results based on the type of influencer and what they add to the brand with respect to the audience they affect.
2. There has been no research done on the negative impact influencers might have on the brands in some cases.

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