

A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISIONS: H&M VS. SAVANA

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Abstract:

This study examines the impact of social media influencers on consumer purchase decisions in the fast-fashion industry, with specific reference to H&M and Savana. As digital platforms increasingly shape consumer behavior, influencer marketing has become a key promotional strategy. The research focuses on how influencer credibility, authenticity, trustworthiness, relatability, and engagement affect brand perception and purchase intention among consumers aged 18–35 years. A quantitative approach was adopted using a structured questionnaire administered to 100 respondents from urban and semi-urban areas. Data was analyzed through percentage analysis and Chi-Square testing. The findings indicate that Instagram is the primary platform for fashion discovery, and influencer marketing significantly impacts purchase intention. However, consumers show moderate skepticism toward sponsored content, and brand trust and authenticity remain decisive factors in final purchase decisions.

Keywords: *Social media influencers, Fast-fashion Industry, Influencer Marketing*

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Introduction:

The rapid advancement of digital technology and the widespread use of social media platforms have significantly transformed marketing communication. Traditional advertising methods such as television and print media are now complemented and often overshadowed by digital marketing strategies, particularly influencer marketing. Influencers serve as a bridge between brands and consumers by combining promotional content with personal storytelling, making marketing messages feel more authentic and relatable. This approach is especially effective among Gen Z and young millennial consumers, who value peer opinions, social proof, and genuine recommendations. In the fashion industry, influencer marketing plays a major role in shaping trend awareness, brand perception, and purchase intention. Consumers frequently rely on haul videos, styling tips, reviews, and sponsored posts before making buying decisions.

This study presents a comparative analysis of H&M, a globally established fast-fashion brand, and Savana, a digitally native fashion label. Although both operate in the same industry, their influencer strategies and digital positioning differ. The study examines how influencer marketing impacts consumer trust, brand awareness, and purchase decisions for these two brands.

Literature Review:

1. Lou and Yuan (2019)

Lou and Yuan examined how influencer credibility affects consumer trust and purchase intention on social media. Their findings show that trustworthiness and authenticity significantly improve brand attitudes and buying intention. Informative, experience-based content is more effective than purely promotional posts. The study concludes that credibility enhances persuasion and reduces perceived purchase risk among young consumers.

2. Djafarova and Rushworth (2017)

Djafarova and Rushworth explored the impact of Instagram influencers on young female consumers. Their research indicates that relatability and perceived similarity influence purchase intention more than celebrity status. Consumers prefer influencers who appear genuine and accessible, highlighting the importance of emotional connection in fashion-related buying decisions.

3. Sokolova and Kefi (2020)

Sokolova and Kefi analyzed the role of parasocial interaction in influencer marketing. The study found that emotional bonds formed between followers and influencers increase trust and purchase intention. Influencer self-disclosure and personal storytelling enhance psychological closeness, making promotional content appear more credible.

4. Schouten, Janssen, and Verspaget (2020)

This study compared social media influencers with traditional celebrities. The findings reveal that influencers generate higher trust, engagement, and identification than celebrities. Micro-influencers, in particular, produce stronger persuasive outcomes due to perceived authenticity and niche audience alignment. Relatability was found to be more influential than fame.

5. Hudders, De Jans, and De Veirman (2021)

Hudders and colleagues examined the impact of sponsored content disclosure. Their findings suggest that transparency does not reduce effectiveness; instead, when paired with authenticity, it strengthens long-term credibility. The study highlights that consumers value honest communication in influencer-brand collaborations.

6. Campbell and Farrell (2020)

Campbell and Farrell viewed influencer marketing as a long-term brand-building strategy rather than just a sales tool. Their research indicates that effectiveness depends on engagement quality,

audience fit, and sustained partnerships. Influencer marketing enhances awareness and consideration but requires strong brand equity to convert intention into actual purchase behavior.

Significance of the Study:

The present study is significant as it examines the growing influence of social media influencer marketing on consumer purchase decisions within the fast-fashion industry, with specific reference to H&M and Savana. In the contemporary digital environment, consumers increasingly rely on influencer-generated content for product discovery, reviews, styling inspiration, and brand evaluation. Understanding this influence is essential for analyzing modern consumer behavior patterns. The study contributes academically by integrating concepts such as Source Credibility Theory, Parasocial Interaction, and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) into a practical comparative framework. It helps bridge the gap between theoretical perspectives and real-world marketing practices.

From a managerial perspective, the findings provide actionable insights for fashion brands, digital marketers, and influencer strategists. The research highlights the importance of authenticity, credibility, engagement, and brand trust in shaping purchase intention. Additionally, the comparative analysis of an established global brand (H&M) and a digitally native brand (Savana) offers valuable implications for brands operating at different stages of market maturity.

Scope of the Study:

The scope of the study is confined to analyzing the impact of social media influencer marketing on consumer purchase decisions in the fast-fashion sector, specifically focusing on H&M and Savana. The study covers:

- Influence of social media platforms, particularly Instagram.
- Role of influencer credibility, authenticity, and relatability.

- Consumer perceptions of brand awareness, trust, and purchase intention.
- Comparative evaluation of influencer marketing strategies adopted by H&M and Savana.

The research is limited to urban and semi-urban respondents aged 18–35 years who actively use social media platforms. The study excludes offline marketing strategies and focuses only on digital influencer-driven communication. It adopts a cross-sectional approach, capturing consumer responses at a single point in time.

Research Methodology:

The study adopts a descriptive and comparative research design to examine the relationship between social media influencer marketing and consumer purchase decisions.

1. Data Collection:

- **Primary Data:** Collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to 100 respondents aged 18–35 years from urban and semi-urban areas.
- **Secondary Data:** Collected from academic journals, research articles, company websites, and digital marketing reports.

2. Sampling:

- Sampling Method: Non-probability convenience sampling.
- Sample Size: 100 respondents.
- Sampling Unit: Social media users within the specified age group.

3. Variables:

- Independent Variable: Social Media Influencer Marketing.
- Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchase Decision.

4. Tools for Analysis:

- Percentage Analysis.
- Chi-Square Test to determine the association between influencer marketing and purchase decisions.

The research follows a quantitative and cross-sectional design.

Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To study the impact of social media influencers on consumer purchase decisions in the fast-fashion industry.
- To examine the role of influencer credibility, authenticity, and trustworthiness in shaping buying behavior.
- To analyze consumer awareness and perception of H&M and Savana.
- To compare the effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies adopted by H&M and Savana.
- To evaluate the relationship between influencer marketing exposure and purchase intention.
- To determine whether influencer marketing significantly influences consumer purchase decisions.

Hypotheses:

H_{01} (Null Hypothesis):

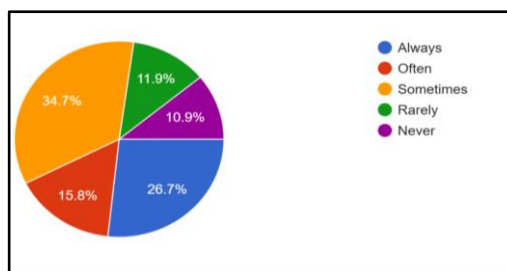
There is no significant relationship between social media influencer marketing and consumer purchase decisions in the fast-fashion industry.

H_{11} (Alternate Hypothesis):

There is a significant relationship between social media influencer marketing and consumer purchase decisions in the fast-fashion industry.

Results:**Q. How often do you make fashion purchases influenced by social media?**

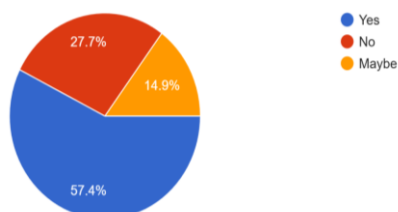
FREQUENCY	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
ALWAYS	27	26.7%
OFTEN	16	15.8%
SOMETIMES	35	34.7%
RARELY	12	11.9%
NEVER	11	10.9%

**Interpretation:**

The survey reveals that 34.7% of respondents sometimes make fashion purchases influenced by social media, while 26.7% always do so. Smaller proportions are purchased often, rarely, or never. This suggests that influencer marketing frequently triggers purchases, though not consistently for all consumers.

Q. Do you have any go-to influencers for fashion advice?

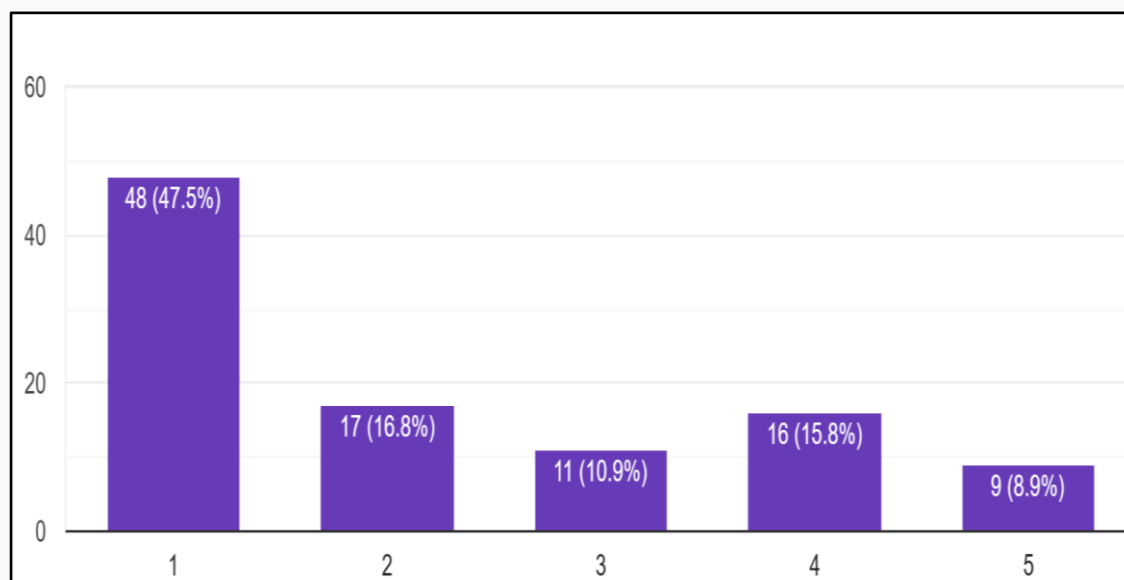
RESPONSE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
YES	58	57.4%
NO	28	27.7%
MAYBE	15	14.9%

**Interpretation:**

The data indicates that 57.4% of respondents have specific influencers they rely on for fashion advice, while 27.7% do not. This reflects the development of parasocial relationships between consumers and influencers.

Q. I am more likely to purchase a product if it is promoted by an influencer.

RATING	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	48	47.5%
2	17	16.8%
3	11	10.9%
4	16	15.8%
5	9	8.9%

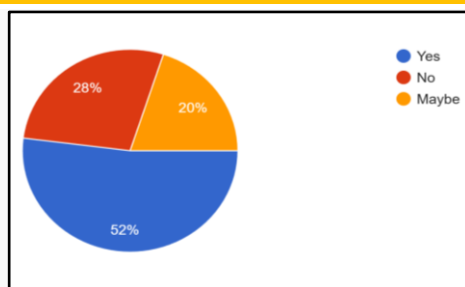


Interpretation:

The table reveals that 47.5% of respondents strongly agree that influencer promotions increase their likelihood of purchase. A smaller proportion shows neutrality or disagreement, indicating that influencer endorsements significantly impact purchase intentions, especially among young consumers.

Q. Would an influencer review change your negative opinion?

RESPONSE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
YES	52	52%
NO	28	28%
MAYBE	20	20%

**Interpretation:**

The table shows that 52% of respondents believe influencer reviews can change their negative opinion about a brand, indicating the persuasive power of influencer credibility in reshaping perceptions.

Testing of Hypothesis: The Chi-Square test was conducted to examine the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase decisions.

Testing of Hypothesis:**Chi-Square Calculation Table**

Influence Level	O (Yes)	E (Yes)	O–E	(O–E) ²	(O–E) ² /E	O (No)	E (No)	O–E	(O–E) ²	(O–E) ² /E
Low	10	15.5	-5.5	30.25	1.95	15	9.5	5.5	30.25	3.18
Moderate	25	24.8	0.2	0.04	0.001	15	15.2	-0.2	0.04	0.003
High	27	21.7	5.3	28.09	1.29	8	13.3	-5.3	28.09	2.11
Total	8.53									

$$X = 1.95 + 3.18 + 0.001 + 0.003 + 1.29 + 2.11$$

$$\underline{X = 8.53}$$

Chi-Square Statistic () = 8.53

Degrees of Freedom (df) = (3–1)(2–1) = 2

Level of Significance = 5%

Critical Value (df = 2) = 5.991

Since: C = 8.53 > 5.991

Therefore, the Null Hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected.

Hence, There is a significant relationship between social media influencer marketing and consumer purchase decisions for fashion brands such as H&M and Savana.

Findings:

Based on the data analysis, the following key findings were observed:

- The majority of respondents (18–25 age group) are highly active on social media.
- Instagram is the dominant platform for fashion discovery and influencer engagement.
- A significant proportion of respondents follow fashion or lifestyle influencers.
- Influencers play a major role in brand discovery for both H&M and Savana.
- Influencer reviews reduce perceived risk and uncertainty before purchase.

- Influencer promotions increase purchase intention, though not uniformly for all consumers.
- Authenticity is considered the most important factor in influencer marketing.
- Sponsored posts generate moderate skepticism among consumers.
- H&M demonstrates a stronger purchase conversion impact compared to Savana.
- Influencer marketing influences purchase intention more strongly than actual final purchase behavior.

Conclusion:

The study concludes that social media influencer marketing plays a significant role in shaping consumer awareness, perception, and purchase intention within the fast-fashion industry. Influencers act as important intermediaries between brands and consumers, especially among Gen Z and young millennial audiences. While influencer marketing effectively enhances brand visibility and consideration, final purchase decisions are influenced by additional factors such as brand trust, perceived product quality, and price-value ratio. Authenticity and credibility emerge as critical determinants of influencer effectiveness.

The comparative analysis reveals that H&M benefits from its established brand equity, which strengthens the impact of influencer promotions. Savana, being digitally native, relies more heavily on influencer-driven visibility but must build long-term brand trust to sustain conversion rates. Overall, influencer marketing functions as a catalyst in the consumer decision-making process rather than a standalone determinant. Its effectiveness depends on authenticity, strategic influencer selection, and strong brand positioning.

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