

# **A Study on Impact of Social Media Influencers: How Trustworthy are Social Media Influencers, and How Can Brands Build Genuine Connections with their Audience through Influencer Marketing**

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## **Abstract**

In the world of social media, influencers play a big role in telling us about products and brands. This study asks two important questions: Can we really trust these influencers? And, can brands use influencers to connect with us in a real and honest way?

Social media influencers have become important agents in the digital age, influencing customer behaviour and brand impression. This essay explores the complex world of influencer marketing, concentrating on methods for firms to build actual relationships with their audience and the reliability of social media influencers.

Although influencers are a powerful tool for spreading corporate messages, there is always a risk of inauthenticity. Companies have to tread carefully when it comes to making the most of an influencer's reach while yet maintaining a sincere relationship with the public. When an influencer's character, material, and endorsements match their actual ideals and experiences, it's

said to be authentic. Influencers are crucial in informing us about items and brands on social media. This research poses two crucial queries: Could we genuinely rely on these influencers? Can influencers help brands engage with consumers in a genuine and sincere way?

In the digital age, social media influencers play a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour and brand perception. This essay delves into the intricate realm of influencer marketing, focusing on strategies that businesses may use to establish genuine connections with their audience and the validity of social media influencers.

Influencers can be an effective means of promoting business messaging, but there's always a chance that they won't be genuine. Businesses must exercise caution while attempting to maximize an influencer's reach while still question of trustworthiness surrounding social media influencers and explores strategies for brands to cultivate genuine connections with their audience through influencer marketing.

This study looks at whether we can trust social media influencers and how brands can make real connections with people through them.

*Key Words: Social Media Influencers, Brand, Influencer Marketing, Influencer Credibility, Transparency.*

## **Introduction**

In the fast-paced world of social media, influencers have become significant players in affecting how consumers buy and perceive brands. This study investigates the realm of influencer marketing, focusing on two key questions: Can we trust these social media influencers? Can they actually help brands connect with us?

Social media influencers have progressed from simply providing content to playing important roles in how businesses promote themselves online. They have the capacity to affect how consumers think, buy, and perceive a company, making them crucial partners for businesses navigating the competitive online market. However, relying on influencers raises a major concern: can we believe what they say?

While influencers are effective at spreading the word about businesses, there is a risk that they are not genuine. Companies must exercise caution while using influencers' reach while maintaining a genuine connection with the general audience. Authenticity is essential here; when an influencer's attitude, material, and suggestions reflect their own values and experiences, communication feels authentic.

This study investigates the critical question of whether social media influencers are genuinely dependable. As influencers play an increasing role in informing us about products and brands, it is critical to understand the complexity of whether we can truly trust them. This study is more than simply an intellectual quest; it's a practical examination of how far we can trust the voices directing our decisions in the broad realm of social media.

When it comes to using influencers for company marketing, transparency becomes quite important. The study investigates how open influencers are about their relationships, alliances, and motivations for

supporting a business. It looks at the fine balance that firms must find between maximizing an influencer's reach and maintaining a genuine relationship with their audience. In this context, transparency serves as the foundation for trust, as consumers increasingly expect honesty and openness from the influencers they follow.

The digital age has fundamentally altered how marketing operates, and influencer marketing is at the forefront of this transformation. This essay seeks to unravel the difficulties of whether we can trust social media influencers and proposes techniques for brands to actually engage with their target audience through influencer marketing. As we navigate this digital landscape, essential concepts like social media influencers, brand, influencer marketing, influencer credibility, and transparency will help us negotiate the maze of personalities, brands, and consumer trust in the dynamic world of social media.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Consumer Trust in Influencers: Author: Smith and Yang (2017)***

Smith and Yang (2017) conducted a thorough investigation of the dynamics of consumer confidence in social media influencers. The study looked into crucial elements such as credibility, authenticity, and knowledge, revealing their critical roles in determining customer impressions. The findings highlighted the significant role these elements have in influencing trust in the context of influencer marketing.

### ***Impact Of Social Media Influencers: Author: Jyoti Dutta & Manali Bhattacharya.(2016)***

Dutta and Bhattacharya (2016) investigated the impact of social media influencers, focusing on the key aspect of trustworthiness. Their research meticulously investigated the authenticity of social media influencers and looked into techniques for brands to create genuine connections with their target audience via influencer marketing. The findings provide useful information for negotiating the difficulties of influencer-consumer relationships in the digital age.

### ***Consumer Satisfaction with Influencer Products: Author: Babin and Harris (2016)***

Babin and Harris (2016) conducted research on consumer satisfaction with influencer-endorsed products. The study carefully studied the impact of influencer marketing on consumer perceptions of product quality and satisfaction, offering unique insights into the dynamics of post-purchase experiences as well as influencers' influence on consumer satisfaction rates.

### ***Influencer Marketing: Author: Brown and Hayes (2008)***

In their key work, Brown and Hayes (2008) pioneered the concept of influencer marketing as a brand strategy. Their findings underscored the importance of influential persons in amplifying marketing efforts, demonstrating influencers' ability to effectively reach and engage certain target audiences. The study provided a core understanding for the strategic use of influencers in contemporary marketing techniques.

### ***Trustworthiness of Online Recommendations: Author: Dellarocas et al. (2007)***

Dellarocas et al. (2007) investigated the dependability of online recommendations, providing insight into how consumers evaluate the authenticity of digital information. The study provided useful insights into the complex processes that shape trust in online contexts, revealing elements that either promote or decrease trust in digital suggestions.

## **Statement of the Problem**

The problem addressed in this study is the level of trustworthiness associated with social media influencers and the challenge brands face in building authentic connections with their audience through influencer marketing. There is a need to understand whether consumers can rely on influencers and how brands can establish genuine relationships in a landscape where concerns about authenticity and transparency persist. This research aims to explore the factors influencing trust in influencers, and it seeks to provide insights into effective strategies for brands to foster meaningful connections with their target audience through influencer partnerships.

### **Need for the Study**

This study is important because it focuses on how much we can trust social media influencers and how brands can genuinely connect with people through them. Many people wonder if influencers are reliable, and brands face a challenge in building real relationships with their audience using influencers. We need to figure out what factors affect trust in influencers and discover smart strategies for brands to create meaningful connections with people through influencer marketing. This study aims to give clear insights into these issues.

### **Objectives**

- To examine the customers' trust in social media influencers and their purchasing decisions based on it.
- To identify and analyse effective strategies of brands to Building Genuine Connections with their audience through influencer marketing.
- To assess the perceived trustworthiness of social media influencers from the perspective of their followers.
- To examine the participants' preferred social media platforms and their activeness in following influencers, celebrities, or popular accounts.

### **Scope of the Study**

- **Understanding Consumer Trust in Social Media Influencers:**

Investigate customers' trust in social media influencers. Identify the variables that influence consumers' trust in influencers, such as sincerity, transparency, and consistency.

- **Effective Strategies for Developing Genuine Connections:**

Determine and assess successful techniques used by brands to develop genuine connections with their target audience through influencer marketing. Evaluate how these techniques affect consumer perception and brand loyalty.

- **Customer Preferences and Social Media Engagement:**

Examine the participants' preferred social media platforms for influencer interaction. Analyse participants' activity levels when it comes to following influencers, celebrities, or popular accounts across many platforms.

- **An in-depth study on trustworthiness:**

Conduct a thorough examination into the intricacies of trustworthiness among social media influencers. Identify specific behaviours or characteristics that increase or decrease confidence in influencers.

- **The Impact of Trust on Purchasing Decisions:**

Investigate how consumers' faith in social media influencers impacts their purchasing decisions. Investigate how much influencers impact consumers' product and brand preferences.

### Research Methodology

This study employs a methods research technique to investigate the trustworthiness of social media influencers as well as brand tactics for developing real connections through influencer marketing. A quantitative survey measures the impact of influencer reputation on customer behaviour, whereas qualitative methods, such as interviews with influencers and brands, investigate relationship dynamics and content authenticity. The content of social media posts is analysed. Keywords such as "social media influencers," "brand," "influencer marketing," "influencer credibility," and "transparency" lead the selection of literature. The study attempts to provide a holistic picture of influencer trustworthiness and effective brand-audience interactions by triangulating various disparate data sources.

### Hypothesis of the Study

**H0:-** There is no significant relationship between customers purchasing decision, trustworthiness and brand connection with social media influencers.

**H1:-** There is a significant relationship between customers purchasing decision, trustworthiness and brand connection with social media influencers.

### ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	49.523	13	3.809	3.326	<.001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	137.432	120	1.145		
	Total	186.955	133			

### Hypothesis testing

#### Interpretation:-

The study's findings, which support the alternative hypothesis, show a strong link between customer purchase decisions, trustworthiness, and brand connection with social media influencers. This indicates that social media influencers have a significant impact on influencing consumers to make purchases, establishing trust, and forming a relationship with the business. The findings imply that influencers' impact extends beyond mere promotion to impacting customer decisions and perceptions. For brands, this highlights the effectiveness of influencer marketing in developing true connections with their target demographic. It suggests that by strategically partnering with trustworthy influencers, brands can not only increase their visibility but also foster a sense of trust and connection with consumers, which favorably influences their purchasing decisions. This insight underscores the necessity of carefully selecting and collaborating with influencers for brands looking to maximize the effect of their social media marketing.

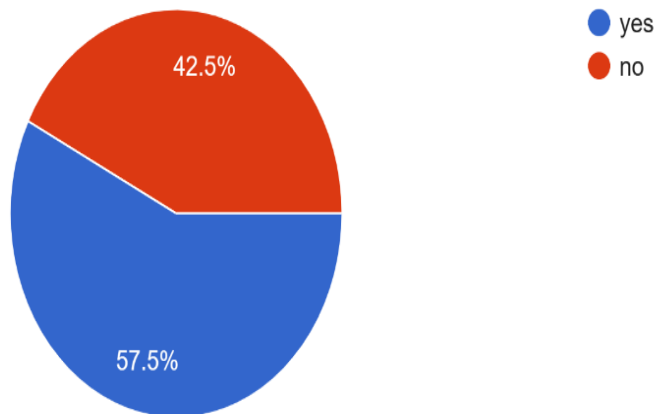
### Data Interpretation and Analysis

#### 1.Are you influenced by social media or using social media influencer?

**Table no.01:-**

Particulars	Percentage
Yes	57.5%
No	42.5%

**Analysis:-**



**Interpretation:-**

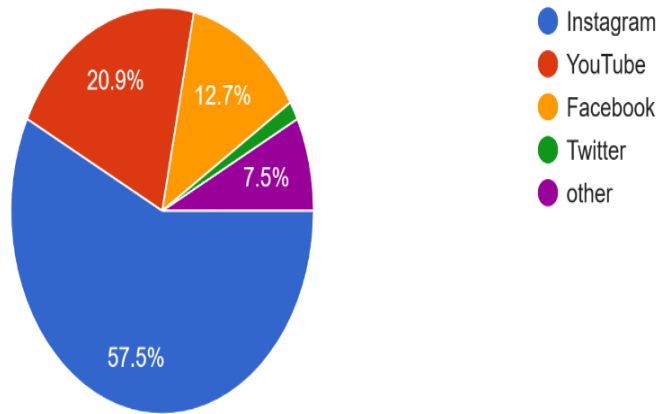
The table shows that there is a significant influence, accounting for 57.5% of the overall dynamics, with the remaining 42.5% appearing to be influenced by other elements or variables. This emphasizes the discovered factor's strong impact and its central importance in the current situation.

**2.Which of the following Social Media platform do you prefer use?**

**Table no.02:-**

Platforms	Percentage
Instagram	57.5%
You tube	20.9%
Facebook	12.7%
Twitter	1.5%
Other	7.5%

**Analysis:-**



**Interpretation:-**

The findings show a spread of online presence, with Instagram leading at 57.5%, followed by YouTube at 20.9% and Facebook at 12.7%. Twitter has a lower share 1.5%, whereas the other platforms collectively give 7.5%. This analysis shows the differing levels of impact and popularity across social media platforms

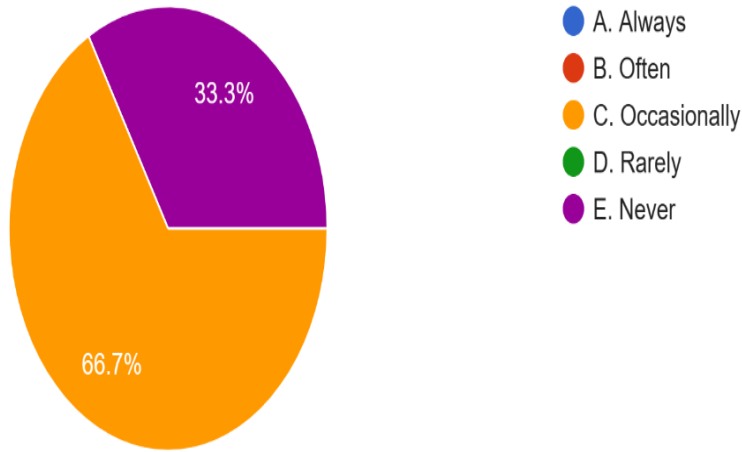
**3. Participants who followed any influencers, celebrity or other popular accounts on social media?**

**Table no 03:-**

Particulars	Percentage
Yes	52.2%
No	25.4%
Don't follow	22.4%

**Analysis:-**

**Interpretation:-**



About 52.2% of participants actively follow influencers, celebrities, or popular accounts on social media. A remarkable 25.4% do not follow such accounts, while 22.4% are either not actively following or choose not to follow. This statistic illustrates different levels of involvement with influential persons on social media.

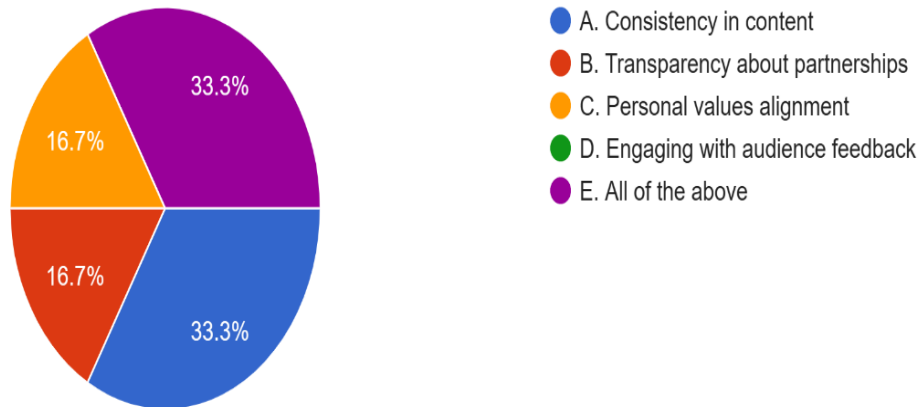
**4. Do you subscribe to the products or concepts which are promoted by the influencer?**

**Table no.04:-**

Particulars	Percentage
To great extent	5.2%
To large extent	18.7%
To some extent	45.5%
Not at all	30.6%



**Analysis:-**



**Interpretation:-**

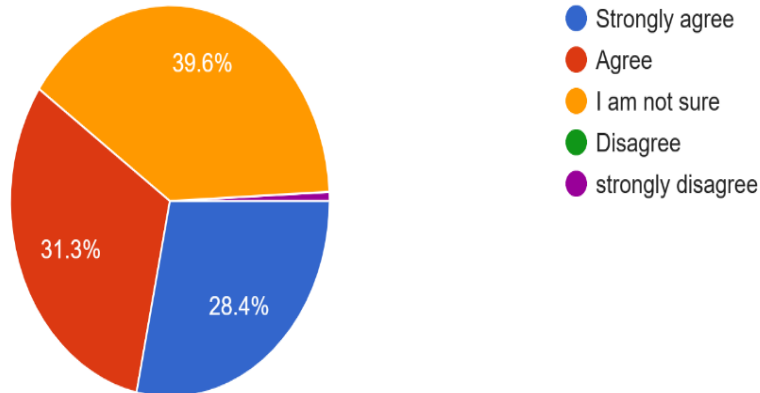
According to the breakdown of replies, 5.2% of participants strongly support the products or concepts promoted by influencers, while 18.7% do so heavily. Furthermore, 45.5% subscribe to some extent, while 30.6% do not subscribe at all. This research demonstrates varied degrees of influence on customer behavior caused by influencer promotions.

**5. Do you actively seek out online reviews before making purchase decisions?**

**Table no .05:-**

Particulars	Percentage
Strongly agree	28.4%
Agree	31.3%
I am not sure	39.6%%
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0

**Analysis:-**



**Interpretation:-**

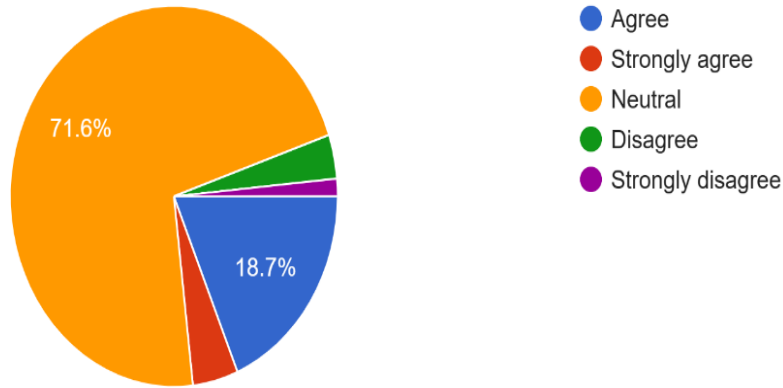
According to the data, 60% of respondents said they actively consult online reviews before making purchasing decisions. However, a significant 39.6% express hesitation, indicating a wide range of consumer habits and decision-making processes, emphasizing the varying dependence on internet evaluations in the purchasing process.

**6. How much do you trust recommendations from social media influencers?**

**Table no.06:-**

Particulars	Percentage
Strongly agree	18.7%
Agree	0
I am not sure	71.6%
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0

**Analysis:-**



**Interpretation:-**

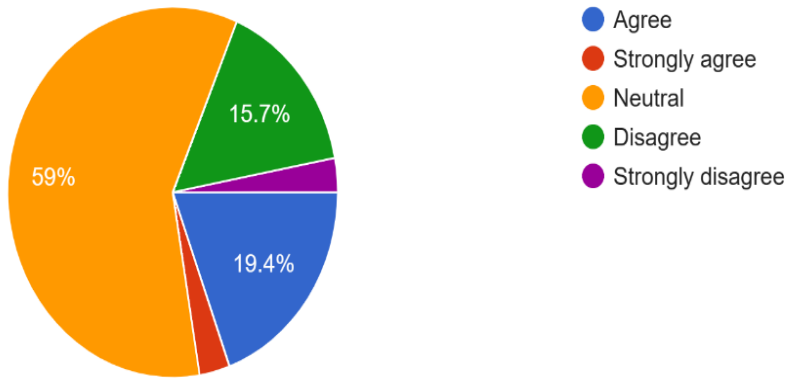
According to the data, 71.6%, are unsure about believing suggestions from social media influencers, indicating a high level of scepticisms or ambivalence. Only 18.7% strongly agree, suggesting a low level of confidence. The absence of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed shows a lack of open distrust, but it also emphasizes a general sense of uneasiness.

**7. Have you ever bought something an influencer suggested?**

**Table no.07:-**

Particulars	Percentage
Strongly agree	0
Agree	19.4%
Neutral	59%
Disagree	15.7%
Strongly disagree	0

**Analysis:-**



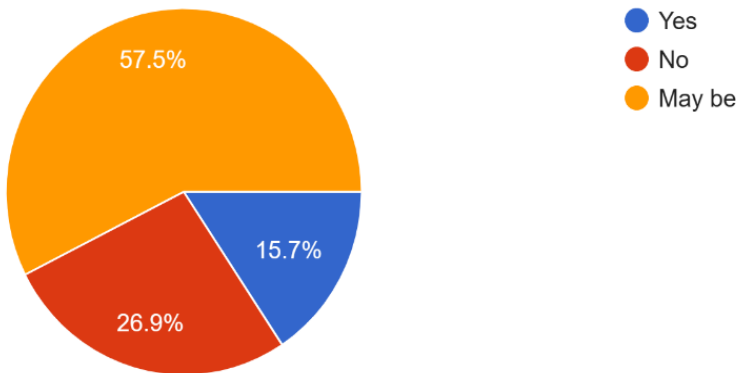
**Interpretation:-**

According to the data, 19.4% of respondents say they have purchased something based on an influencer's recommendation, with 59% remaining neutral. A significant 15.7% disagree, showing some level of unhappiness. The absence of highly agreeing or strongly disagreeing responses shows that influencer recommendations had a mixed impact on respondents' shopping pleasure.

**8. Do you really think influencers really use wat they talk about ?**

**Table no.08:-**

Particulars	Percentage
Yes	15.7%



**Analysis:-**

**Interpretation:-**

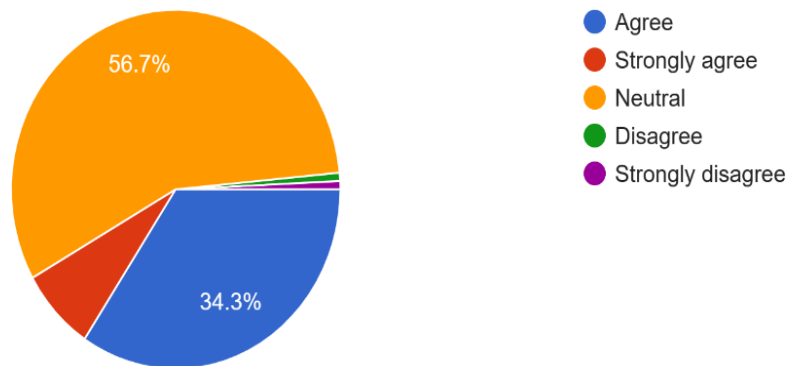
According to data, 57.5% are sceptical about influencers using the things they promote, while 26.9% believe they do not. A smaller number, 15.7%, believe influencers actually utilize the promoted items. This demonstrates a general cynicism and a lack of trust in the legitimacy of influencer product endorsements.

**9. Does online recommendations helps in brand recall?**

**Table no.09:-**

Particulars	Percentage
Strongly agree	0
Agree	34.3%
Neutral	56.7%
Disagree	15.7%
Strongly disagree	0

**Analysis:-**



**Interpretation:-**

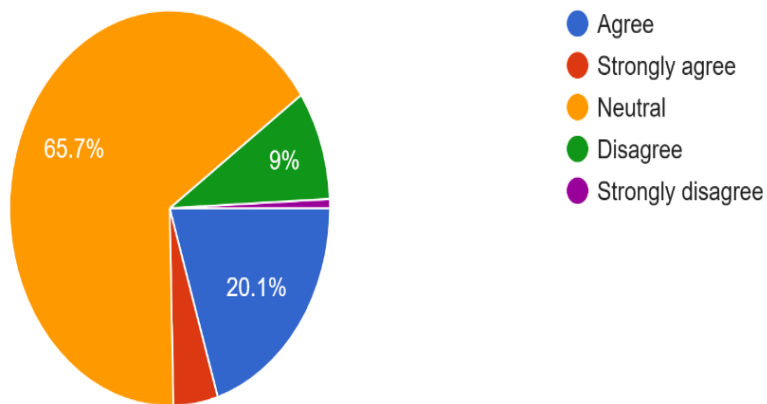
According to the data, while 34.3% agree that online recommendations help with brand recall, the majority (56.7%) are undecided. Approximately 15.7% disagree, indicating that online recommendations have a variable impact on brand memory. The lack of significant agreement or substantial disagreement suggests a variety of viewpoints on the importance of internet recommendations in brand retention.

**10. Is social media influencers are reliable sources of information about products I desire?**

**Table no.09:-**

Particulars	Percentage
Strongly agree	0
Agree	20.1%
Neutral	65.7%
Disagree	9%
Strongly disagree	0

**Analysis:-**



**Interpretation:-**

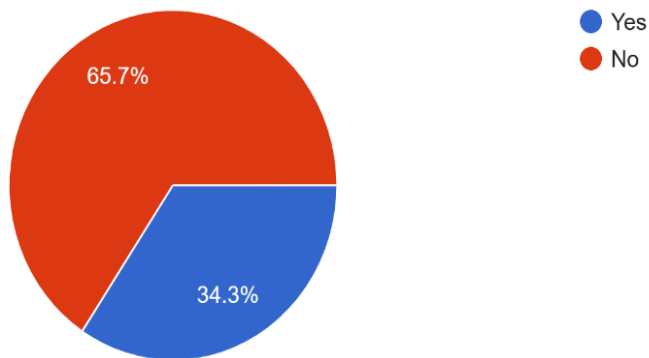
According to the data, 65.7% are neutral about the dependability of social media influencers for product information, while 20.1% agree. A significant 9% disagree. The lack of strong agreement or disagreement demonstrates a widespread lack of confidence in influencers' capacity to provide information about desired products.

**11. Do you ever feel tricked by an influencer?**

**Table no,11:-**

Particular	Percentage
Yes	65.7%
No	34.3%

**Analysis:-**



**Interpretation:-**

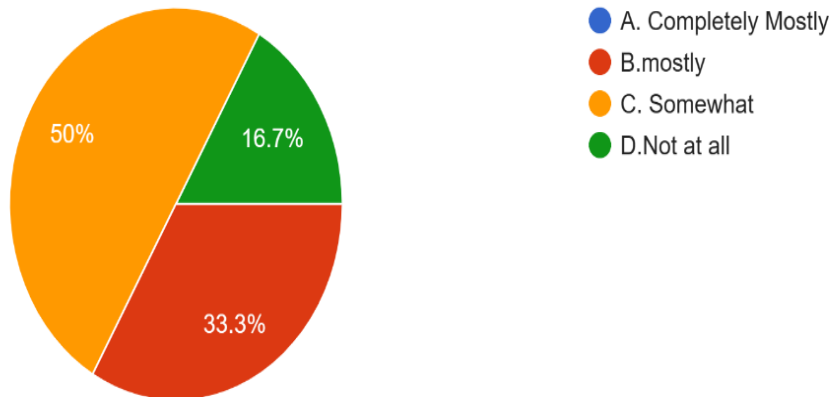
According to the data, huge 65.7% admit to being duped by influencers, while 34.3% say otherwise. This high percentage indicates a general sense of mistrust or disappointment among respondents, underscoring the potential difficulties influencers may face in gaining and sustaining trust with their audience due to perceived dishonesty or manipulation.

**12. Awareness of a brand is necessary for the its growth?**

**Table no 12:-**

Particulars	Percentage
Completely mostly	0
Mostly	33.3%
Somewhat	50%
Not at all	16.7%

**Analysis:-**



**Interpretation:-**

According to the data, 83.3% of respondents realize the value of brand awareness for growth, with 50% saying it is somewhat necessary and 33.3% saying it is absolutely critical. A minority, 16.7%, believe that brand awareness is not vital for a brand's growth.

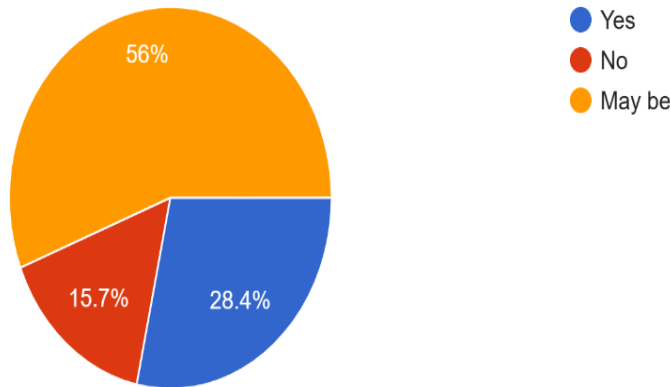
**13. Do you think the company's trustworthiness increase if it gets promoted by the influencer of your choice?**

**Table no.13:-**

Particular	Percentage
Yes	28.4%
No	15.7%
May be	56%

**Analysis:-**





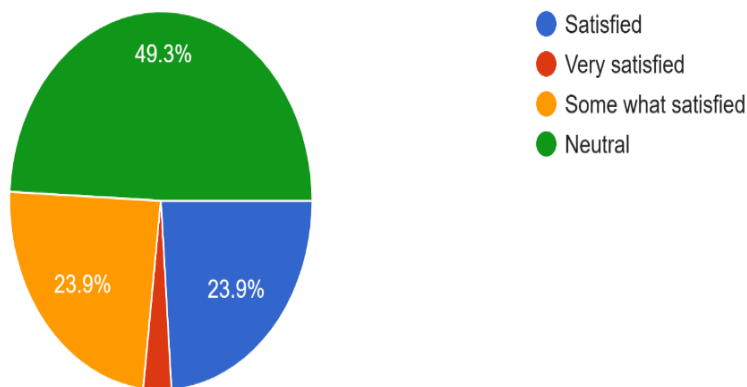
**Interpretation:-**

According to the data, 56%, are unsure about the influence of their preferred influencer on a company's trustworthiness. However, 28.4% say it builds trust, while 15.7% disagree. This implies that respondents had a mixed view of the impact of influencer promotion on a company's perceived trustworthiness.

**14. Did you get satisfaction from the social media influencers products ?**

**Table no. 14:-**

Particular	Percentage
Satisfied	23.9%
Very Satisfied	0
Somewhat Satisfied	23.9%
Neutral	49.3%



**Analysis:-**

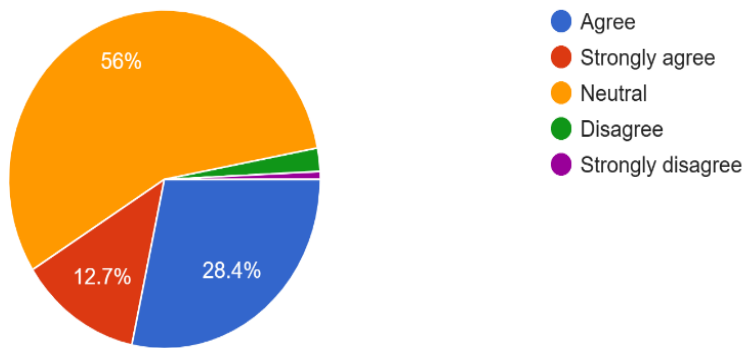
**Interpretation:-**

According to the research, respondents' satisfaction with social media influencers' products varies. Notably, no satisfaction was recorded with fashion and cosmetic products. However, 50% were satisfied with health and wellness items, 16.7% with vacation products, and 33.3% with other categories, demonstrating a range of customer experiences.

**15. Is influencer Marketing the future of Social Selling?**

**Table no.15:-**

Particular	Percentage
Agree	28.4%
Strongly agree	12.7%
Neutral	56%
disagree	20%
Strongly disagree	0



**Analysis:-**

**Interpretation:-**

According to the findings, 41.1% of respondents agree or strongly agree that influencer marketing is the future of social selling. The majority, 56%, stays neutral. The absence of severe disagreement (0%) shows a broad acceptance or openness to the concept, with potential for growth and investigation.

**Conclusion**

Based on the statistics and research offered in the document, it is recommended that organizations prioritize openness, authenticity, and consistency when using influencer marketing to develop true connections with their target audience. Furthermore, it is recommended that organizations establish and evaluate effective strategies for developing true connections with their target audience via influencer marketing. This could include assessing how these tactics influence consumer perception and brand loyalty. Furthermore, marketers must understand the factors that drive consumers' trust in influencers,

such as authenticity, transparency, and consistency. By solving these issues, brands may improve their influencer marketing campaigns and strengthen relationships with their target audience.

### **Suggestion**

Finally, the study on the impact of social media influencers sheds light on the intricacies of influencer marketing, the problems of establishing trust with the audience, and the importance of openness in influencer-brand interactions. The document provides a thorough examination of the mechanics of influencer credibility and its consequences for brand-customer interactions in the digital age, giving light on the changing environment of modern marketing and consumer behaviour. The study also emphasizes the variable levels of influence and popularity across different social media platforms, as well as the varying degrees of impact on customer behaviour generated by influencer promotions. Overall, the study underlines the crucial significance of social media influencers in affecting consumer behaviour and brand perception in the digital age, as well as the need of using influencer marketing to create true connections with the audience.

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