

A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER CREDIBILITY ON INTENTION TO PURCHASE ORGANIC SKIN CARE PRODUCTS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of social media has significantly changed the way consumers obtain information about products and make purchasing decisions. Social media influencers have become an important source of product-related information, particularly among young consumers who frequently engage with platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook. In the organic skin care market, influencers often share product reviews, demonstrations, recommendations, and personal experiences that may influence consumers' perceptions and purchase intentions. This study aims to examine the impact of social media influencer credibility on college students' intention to purchase organic skin care products. Influencer credibility is examined through dimensions such as trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, and authenticity, while purchase intention refers to the likelihood of students purchasing organic skin care products promoted or recommended by social media influencers. The findings of the study are expected to provide insights into how influencer characteristics affect the purchasing decisions of young consumers and may be useful to organic skin care brands and digital marketers in developing effective influencer marketing strategies.

Keywords: Social Media Influencers, Influencer Credibility, Purchase Intention, Organic Skin Care Products, College Students, Social Media Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an integral part of the daily lives of young consumers and has transformed the traditional methods through which businesses communicate with their target customers. Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and other social networking sites enable consumers to access product information, reviews, demonstrations, recommendations, and opinions before making purchasing decisions. As a result, social media marketing has become an important component of modern marketing strategies.

One of the major developments in social media marketing is the emergence of social media influencers. Influencers are individuals who have developed a substantial following on social media and are capable of affecting the attitudes, perceptions, and behavioral intentions of their followers. They frequently collaborate with brands to introduce and promote products through sponsored posts, reviews, tutorials, demonstrations, and personal recommendations. Unlike traditional advertisements, influencer content is often presented in a more personal and interactive manner, which can influence how consumers perceive the promoted product.

The credibility of an influencer is an important factor in determining whether followers are willing to accept and act upon the information provided by the influencer. Credibility generally involves characteristics such as trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, and authenticity. An influencer who is perceived as knowledgeable about skin care, honest in providing opinions, and genuine in their recommendations may have a stronger influence on consumers' perceptions and purchase intentions.

The organic skin care industry has received increasing attention as consumers become more interested in products perceived as natural, environmentally conscious, and free from certain synthetic ingredients. College students represent an important consumer group in this context because they are generally active users of social media and are frequently exposed to beauty and skin care-related content. Influencers can therefore play a role in shaping their awareness, attitudes, and intentions toward organic skin care products.

Purchase intention refers to the likelihood or willingness of a consumer to purchase a particular product in the future. While exposure to influencer content can create awareness, the credibility of the influencer may determine whether consumers consider the recommendation reliable enough to influence their purchase intention. Understanding this relationship is particularly relevant for organic skin care brands that use influencer marketing to reach younger consumers.

Therefore, the present study focuses on examining the impact of social media influencer credibility on intention to purchase organic skin care products among college students. The study seeks to understand whether different dimensions of influencer credibility are associated with students' willingness to purchase organic skin care products recommended or promoted through social media.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. **Casaló, Flavián, and Ibáñez-Sánchez (2020)** studied opinion leadership on Instagram and found that influencers' characteristics and the content they provide can affect followers' attitudes and behavioral intentions. The study highlights the role of influencers in shaping consumer responses on social media.
2. **Kumar, Venugopal, Devi, Aswini Priya, and Rao (2023)** investigated the relationship between Instagram influencer credibility and followers' purchase intention among Indian Instagram users aged 18–24. The study considered expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness and found that influencer-related credibility factors were associated with purchase intention.
3. **Chavare, Nayak, Birau, and Alapati (2024)** studied **influencer credibility and purchase intention among Indian Gen Z consumers**. The study examined whether brand attitude complements influencer credibility in shaping purchase intention, providing useful evidence for research involving young Indian social media users.
4. **Singh and Agrawal (2024)** studied the **impact of social media influencers on** Generation Z's purchase intentions in the cosmetics and skincare industry. The research examined perceived credibility, trust, brand attitude, and perceived image in relation to purchase intention among Indian consumers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the impact of social media influencer credibility on college students' intention to purchase organic skin care products.
- To assess the factors influencing college students' perceptions of social media influencer credibility, including trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, and authenticity.
- To analyze the influence of these factors on students' awareness, perceptions, and intention to purchase organic skin care products and to provide insights for influencer marketing strategies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Research Design:** The study adopted a descriptive research design.
- **Data Collection:** Both primary and secondary data were collected for this study.
- **Primary Data:** Primary data were collected from the sampled respondents using a questionnaire.
- **Secondary Data:** Secondary data were collected from journals and magazines on related topics.
- **Sample Selection:** The study population comprised college students, and 100 students were randomly selected for the study.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The respondents' characteristics examined in this study included gender, social media usage, and purchasing behavior. Simple percentage analysis was used to describe the sample and identify emerging trends or patterns. The study also examined the impact of social media influencer credibility on college students' intention to purchase organic skin care products.

SIMPLE PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

Simple percentage analysis was used to determine the percentage of respondents in each category.

Table 1 Gender of Respondents

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Male	40	40%
Female	60	60%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: Of the 100 respondents, 40% were male and 60% were female. Thus, the majority of respondents were female.

Table 2 Age of Respondents

Age Group	Number of Respondents	Percentage
18–20 years	60	60%
21–23 years	40	40%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: The majority of respondents (60%) were in the 18–20-year age group.

Table 3 Educational Qualifications of Respondents

Educational Qualification	Number of Respondents	Percentage
UG	70	70%
PG	30	30%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: Of the 100 respondents, 70% were undergraduate (UG) students and 30% were postgraduate (PG) students. Thus, the majority were undergraduate students.

Table 4 Awareness of Organic Products

Awareness	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	80	80%
No	20	20%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation: A large majority of respondents (80%) were aware of organic products.

Table 5 Main Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions

Main Factor	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Influencer recommendation	10	10%
Product quality	30	30%
Price	20	20%
Reviews and ratings	15	15%
Ingredients	15	15%
Brand reputation	10	10%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: Product quality was the most frequently reported factor influencing respondents' purchase decisions (30%), followed by price (20%).

Table 6 Intention to Purchase Organic Skin Care Products Recommended by Influencers

Intention to Purchase	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Highly likely	25	25%
Likely	30	30%
Neutral	20	20%
Unlikely	15	15%
Highly unlikely	10	10%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: The largest proportion of respondents (30%) indicated that they were likely to purchase organic skin care products recommended by influencers, followed by those who were highly likely to do so (25%). Together, these groups accounted for 55% of respondents.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that social media influencers play an important role in shaping college students' intention to purchase organic skin care products. The findings show that 80% of respondents are aware of organic products, while product quality (30%) and price (20%) are the major factors influencing their purchase decisions. In addition, 30% of respondents indicated that they were likely and 25% were highly likely to purchase organic skin care

products recommended by influencers. This indicates that influencer recommendations can positively influence students' interest and purchase intention, particularly when influencers are perceived as trustworthy, knowledgeable, attractive, and authentic. Therefore, influencer credibility can be considered an important aspect of social media marketing for organic skin care brands targeting college students.

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