

An Empirical Study on the Impact of Digital Influencer Marketing on Smartphone Purchase Behaviour in North Karnataka

Mr. Raturaj Patil¹, Dr. Shivashankar K², Dr. S. M. Porapur³, Dr. Veerendrakumar M. Narasalagi⁴

¹Research Scholar, Department of Management Studies, Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU), Belagavi, Karnataka, India raturajpatil767@gmail.com

²Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies, Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU), Belagavi, Karnataka, India vtushiva@gmail.com

³Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies, Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU), Belagavi, Karnataka, India shantiporapur@yahoo.com

⁴Associate Professor, MBA Department, BLDEA's V.P. Dr.P.G. Halakatti College of Engineering Vijayapura, Karnataka, India, veerumn@gmail.com

Abstract

This study looks at how customer in North Karnataka India choose smartphone particularly when digital influencer marketing is involved. Using a structured questionnaire and a numbers-based methodology researchers gathered responses from 382 social media users. They concentrated on four key factors all of which are related to whether or not consumers genuinely want to purchase the phone: how trustworthy people find influencers how well the content is how much users interact on social media and how they feel about the brand. The analysis which makes use of SEM (structural equation modeling) and regression demonstrates that each of the four elements has a significant positive influence. The most significant predictor is attitude of the brand which also serves as a crucial mediator. Influencer marketing essentially increases consumer trust fortifies their emotional bond with a business and encourages them to produce a purchase It functions as both a source of information and awell as a means of influencing consumers opinions of the brand. These findings offer helpful information. on how to maximize influencer marketing for local tech marketers.

Keywords: Smartphone, Consumer Behaviour, Purchase Intention, Brand Attitude Digital Influencer Marketing

INTRODUCTION

Today's marketing heavily relies on social media influencers in part due to rapid evolution of digital communication. When individuals are unsure about what to purchase—smart phones for instance—they turn to the content of influencers. Influencers add credibility and reliability to advertisements. They act as genuine honest opinion leaders who assist people in determining what is worth their money by bridging the difference between brands and consumers. In the competitive Smartphone market developing a strong brand currently includes more

than just specs Businesses must establish an emotional connection with consumers and provides personalized digital experiences (Attiq et al. (2022). This shift is especially apparent in nations like India where internet access is ubiquitous and young people are constantly online. Influencer recommendations influence consumer purchasing decisions far more than conventional advertisements (Mahajan and Garg 2026). If marketers wish to stay competitive they must delve deeply and comprehend the strength of this influence in order to craft messages that truly meet the needs of consumers (Hwang et al. 2021).

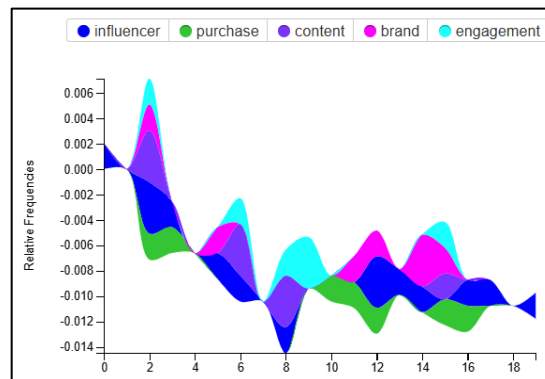
LITERATURE REVIEW

Nowadays digital influencer marketing is very popular particularly with regard to smartphones.

Influencers tell stories that provoke thought and emotion in addition to showcasing their products. As a result, they are regarded as contemporary opinion leaders (Campbell and Farrell 2020).

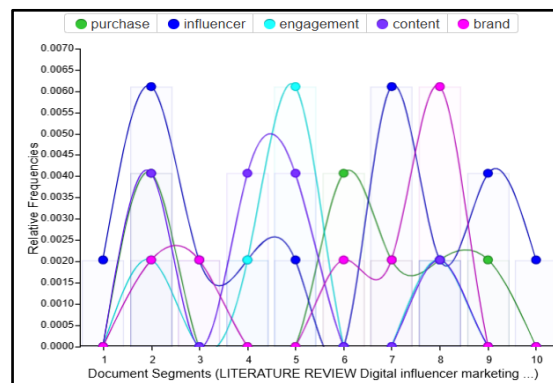
Research indicates that individuals are more likely to buy when the influencer seems trustworthy, their content is high-quality, there's plenty of interaction on social media, and the brand feels positive to the audience—that's what pushes folks to actually want to make a purchase (Vrontis et al., 2021). **Influencer**

attention and get curious about the product (Balaban & Mustăneă, 2019). Detailed product demos, unboxing videos, and straightforward comparisons — these work especially well in the smartphone world, helping customers really understand what they're looking at (Zhu et al., 2022). And if the



credibility matters a lot when it comes to customer decisions. People tend to trust influencers who seem smart, honest, and appealing—whether that appeal is physical, social, or both. When an influencer checks these boxes, their words hold more weight and their promotions actually stick with an audience (Wiedmann & von Mettenheim, 2020). If followers see someone as a trustworthy source, it takes away some of the anxiety they usually feel before making big purchases like expensive smartphone (Saima & Khan, 2020). On top of that, when fans feel a personal connection to an influencer—what researchers call a parasocial interaction—they're even more likely to trust their recommendations and start favoring the brands those influencers support (Kay et al., 2020). **Content quality** For influencers,

influencer brings emotion into the conversation, it feels more personal. That connection makes their pitch way more convincing (Munsch, 2021). (SME) Social media engagement isn't just about likes and shares — it's the direct conversations, comments, and back-and-forth between influencers and their fans that really matter. When people interact with posts or talk about a brand online, it builds up that brand's reputation and makes it appear more desirable. Honestly, the more active the community is, the stronger the influence becomes. In the Smartphone market, for example, Individuals are far more likely to trust product recommendations if they see others jumping in, discussing, or validating those suggestions. And when influencers actually listen and respond, it creates a real sense of connection.



everything starts with the kind of content they put out. When they tell a good story and pair it with sharp, visually appealing posts, people pay more

That loyalty? It lasts, and it

shapes how people choose what to buy over time. **Brand attitude** sits right at the center of real

purchasing decisions and influencer marketing. Tons of studies say the way public feel about a brand really depends on how well an influencer's endorsement matches their own identity, values, and everyday habits (Belache et al 2021). In the smartphone world, people pay close attention to how digital creators shape their opinions, since phones aren't just gadgets—they're part of how folks showcase who they are (Ladhari et al., 2020). When influencers back a brand, it can boost its reputation for being innovative and spark an emotional bond, which pushes people closer to actually buying (Farivar et al., 2021). Finally, **purchase intention** When public understand about purchasing something, a most of it comes down to how many they trust the influencer, the caliber of their content, and how they engage their viewers All of that shapes how folks feel about a brand. For people who grew up online, research shows there's a strong link between wanting to buy tech products and hearing good things from digital creators (Vithayathil et al., 2020). Younger Smartphone users, in particular, often pick influencer recommendations over regular ads because they see these influencers as more genuine and think they truly understand what they're talking about (Guerreiro et al., 2020). According to recent studies, consumers' judgments about cellphones are being influenced by internet influencers. However experts claim that truly understand how culture influences digital adoption we need more targeted research in regions like emerging economies (Sudarshan 2021). It is evident from this disparity that It is essential to assess the effects of influencer marketing on individuals in areas such as North Karnataka.

RESEARCH GAP

Public are informed that digital influencers have an important influence on consumer purchasing decisions particularly in rapidly evolving markets like smart phones. To be honest however the majority of the research focuses on large cities and broad general consumer groups leaving out how people act in smaller areas. The ways that audience engagement brand perception influencer trust and content quality interact to influence consumers purchasing decisions in semi-urban culturally diverse regions have not been fully investigated.

There is a lack of accurate data particularly when it comes to India's quickly expanding markets. We need to conduct in-depth research on smartphone users in areas like North Karnataka in order to fully comprehend the situation.

METHODOLOGY

The researchers used a quantitative approach to determine how North Karnataka residents Smartphone purchasing habits are influenced by digital influencer marketing. Using a descriptive cross-sectional design they essentially examined customer attitudes and purchase decision at a particular point in time rather than monitoring changes over time. Four primary factors were examined in the analysis: the influencers level of trustworthiness the calibre of their digital content social media interactions and brand attitudes. They aimed to ascertain the interplay between these variables. to affect a person's decision to purchase a Smartphone. The study concentrated on individuals between the ages of 18 and 40 who use digital media highly and seek advice from online influencers particularly when purchasing Smartphone. This group is not just active on the internet they shop online frequently and are at ease with technology. Participants were carefully selected by the researchers to ensure that each had ample exposure to influencer content. They received 382 valid responses from the 400 surveys that were distributed giving them with enough information for a reliable multivariate analysis. Participants completed a standardized survey on their own. We used items from well-established research and a 5 Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree - strongly agree to measure each variable. The survey consisted of three main sections: statements centered around the main subjects of our research so digital media usage patterns and demographic questions. To ensure that the survey made sense and was effective we first conducted a pilot study with forty participants. After getting their feedback, we tweaked how some questions were written and changed up the order a bit. Cronbach's alpha showed the scales were reliable, since every score landed above the standard 0.70 mark. We also asked experts to weigh in, and ran exploratory factor analysis; just to be sure the

survey measured what it was supposed to and covered all the core ideas.

We used AMOS and SPSS to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics painted a picture of who the participants were and The way they utilized social media then correlation analysis highlighted some initial links between variables. After that, we tested the hypotheses and checked how well the overall model worked with multiple regression and structural -equation modeling. To make the output held up, we ran diagnostic tests for normality, multicollinearity, and certain model fit indices. The research follows strict ethical norm rules from start to finish. Everyone who took part know accurate what they were signing up for, and their privacy was

a top priority—no one's identity was revealed. People joined in because they needed to, not because they had to. Altogether, this clear and upfront approach built a solid foundation for looking at how digital influencer marketing shapes people's decisions to buy smartphone in North Karnataka.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

After eliminating incomplete questionnaires, 382 valid responses were examined. AMOS and SPSS were used for statistical analysis. Following the procedures outlined in the methodology. The results evaluate the influence of **Influencer Credibility (IC)**, **Content Quality (CQ)**, **Social Media Engagement (SME)** and **Brand Attitude (BA)** on **Purchase Intention (PI)**.

Table -1: Respondents' Demographic Profile(n = 382)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	212	55.5%
	Female	170	44.5%
Age	18–25	204	53.4%
	26–33	121	31.7%
	34–40	57	14.9%
Monthly Smartphone Budget	< ₹15,000	144	37.7%
	₹15,000–₹25,000	168	44.0%
	> ₹25,000	70	18.3%

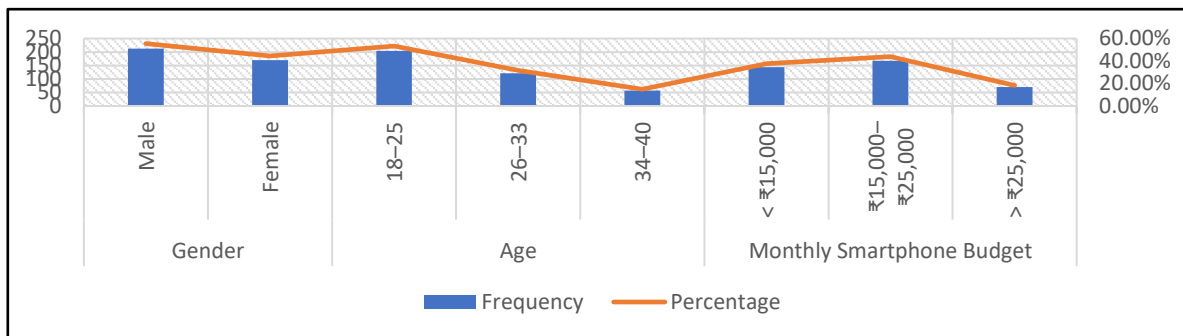
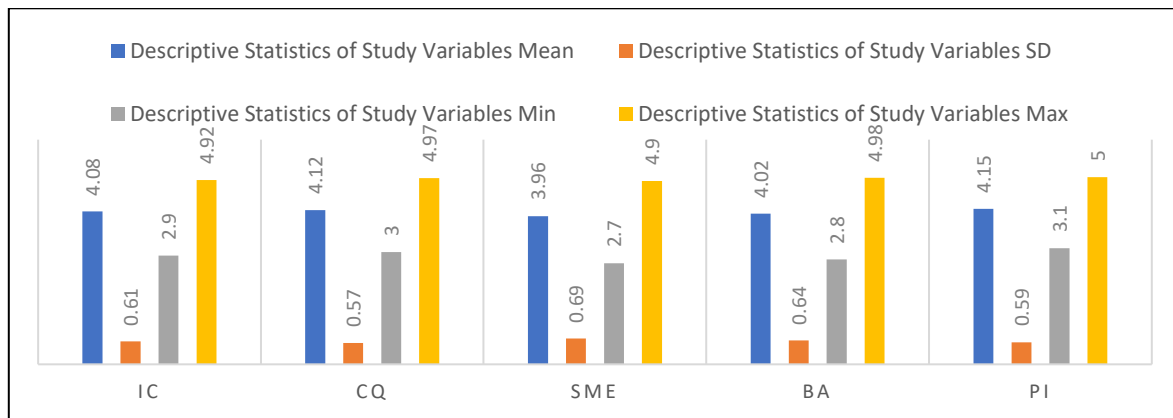


Table 2: Study Variable Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
IC	4.08	0.61	2.90	4.92
CQ	4.12	0.57	3.00	4.97
SME	3.96	0.69	2.70	4.90
BA	4.02	0.64	2.80	4.98
PI	4.15	0.59	3.10	5.00

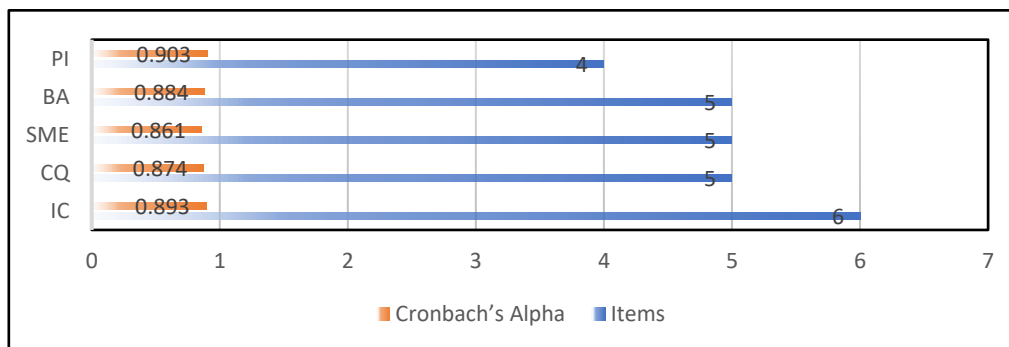


Interpretation: All examined constructs had high mean scores (above 3.90), according to the analysis. These results display that customers in the

Smartphone market continue to have a strong and positive opinion of the part that digital influencer marketing plays in their decision-making.

Table 3: Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha)

Variable	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
IC	6	0.893
CQ	5	0.874
SME	5	0.861
BA	5	0.884
PI	4	0.903



Interpretation: The research results show that every reliability value exceeded 0.85, indicating a remarkable degree of internal consistency throughout the measurement scales.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix

Variables	IC	CQ	SME	BA	PI
IC	1	.624**	.591**	.662**	.693**
CQ	—	1	.618**	.645**	.701**
SME	—	—	1	.574**	.611**
BA	—	—	—	1	.732**
PI	—	—	—	—	1

**Significant at $p < 0.01$

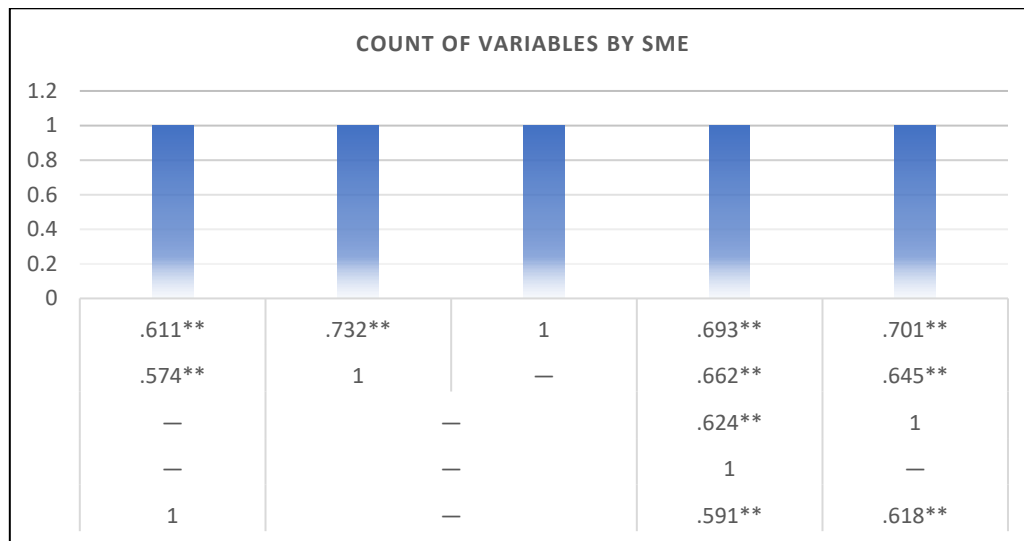


Table 5: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error
1	.791	.626	.621	.365

Interpretation: The findings indicate that 62.6% of the variation in purchase intention can be accounted for by the combined influence of the independent variables—influencer credibility, content quality,

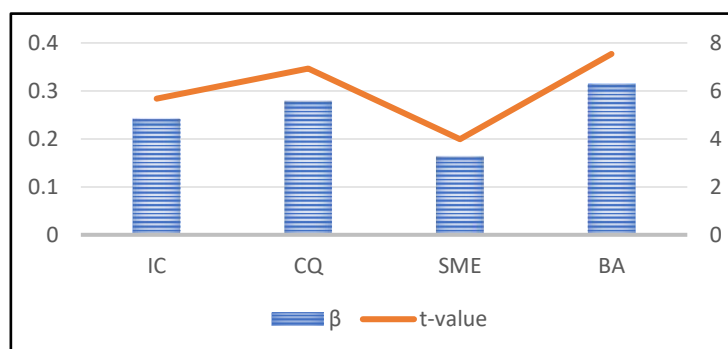
social media interaction, and brand attitude. This indicates that certain elements make up a significant and statistically significant portion of the variables influencing consumer decisions in the smartphone industry.

Table 6: Coefficients of Regression

Predictor	β	t-value	Sig. (p)	Result
IC	0.241	5.684	0.000	Supported
CQ	0.278	6.931	0.000	Supported
SME	0.163	3.987	0.000	Supported
BA	0.314	7.542	0.000	Supported

Regression Formula:

$$PI = 0.241(IC) + 0.278(CQ) + 0.163(SME) + 0.314(BA)$$



Interpretation: Of all the factors examined, Brand Attitude has the greatest statistical impact and is the most effective indicator of purchase Intention.

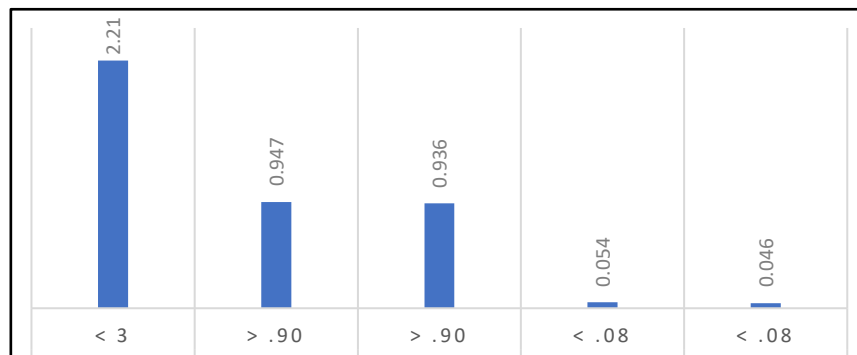
Influencer credibility and content quality, which continue to be important factors influencing customer decision, come in second and third,

respectively. Although social media platform engagement also acts a vital role in the model, its relative impact is the least significant of the four criteria, indicating that although contact is

important, Smartphone purchasers are more influenced by the brand's internal view and the caliber of the information offered.

Table 7: Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) Goodness-of-Fit

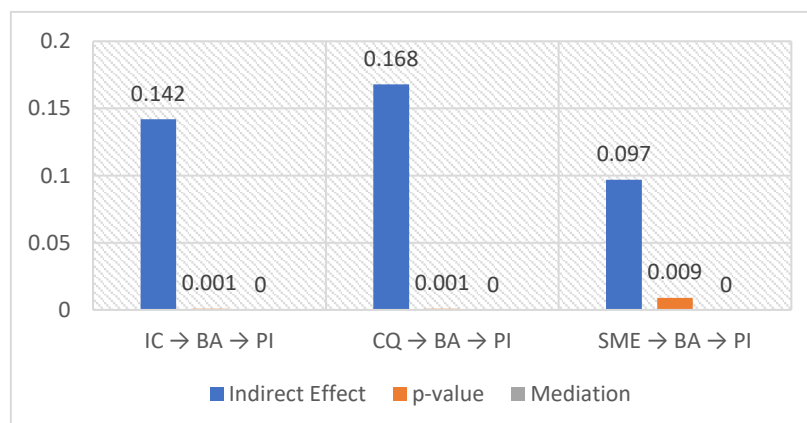
Fit Index	Recommended	Obtained
χ^2/df	< 3	2.21
CFI	> .90	.947
TLI	> .90	.936
RMSEA	< .08	.054
SRMR	< .08	.046



Interpretation: The statistical analysis established the general validity and suitability of the (SEM) framework by confirming that the model fit indices exceeded all common standards.

Table 8: Indirect Effects (Mediation Test – BA as Mediator)

Path	Indirect Effect	p-value	Mediation
IC → BA → PI	0.142	0.001	Partial
CQ → BA → PI	0.168	0.001	Partial
SME → BA → PI	0.097	0.009	Partial



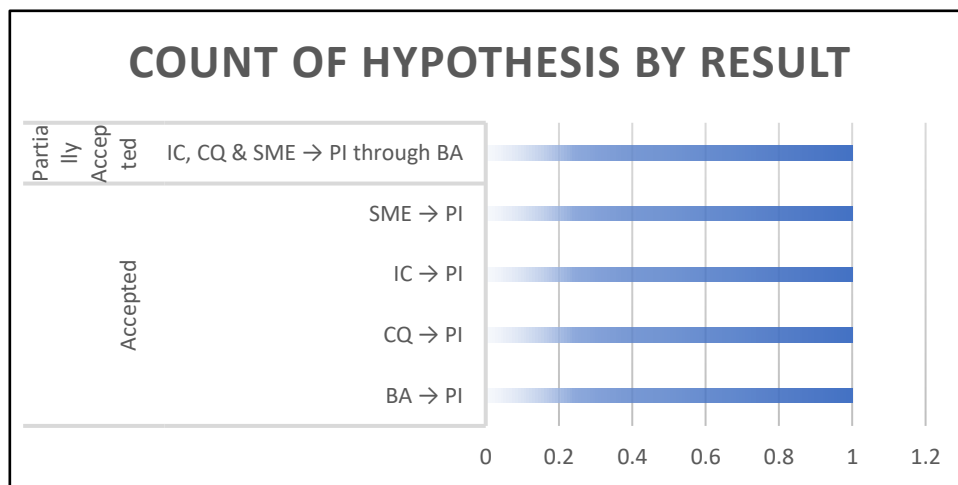
Interpretation: According to the statistical analysis, Brand Attitude plays a critical mediating role in the relationship between the dependent variable, Purchase Intention (PI), and the independent

variables, Influencer Credibility (IC), Content Quality (CQ), and Social Media Engagement (SME). This suggests that although elements like content and credibility are important, their final influence on a consumer's choice to purchase a

smartphone is mostly achieved through the formation of a positive and enduring internal perception of the brand itself.

Table 9: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypo-thesis	Statement	Output
H1	IC $\rightarrow$ PI	Accepted
H2	CQ $\rightarrow$ PI	Accepted
H3	SME $\rightarrow$ PI	Accepted
H4	BA $\rightarrow$ PI	Accepted
H5	IC, CQ & SME $\rightarrow$ PI through BA	Partially Accepted



Overall Interpretation

The study shows solid proof: digital influencer marketing really shapes how people in North Karnataka buy smartphones. Turns out, brand attitude is the biggest driver. Influencers aren't just sharing product info—they're creating a real emotional connection between brands and buyers. And the numbers back it up. The regression and SEM results all look strong, giving clear support for every hypothesis in the research.

Discussion

The research gives convincing proof that digital influencer marketing significantly influences North Karnataka consumers' smartphone purchasing decisions. It turns out that the most important factor is brand attitude. Influencers are fostering a genuine emotional bond between brands and consumers in addition to disseminating product information. And the figures support that. All of the research's hypotheses are clearly supported by the robust regression and SEM results.

It turns out that brand attitude was the biggest factor that shaped how people responded. Basically, buyers connect with the emotional and symbolic messages influencers send out, not just with clever sales pitches. Sure, social media engagement didn't matter quite as much, but it still played a key role when it came to building trust and giving people a sense of community. Content quality and influencer credibility mattered, too. People still want influencers who know their stuff and can show it off in sharp, engaging ways. When you put it all together, the study shows that influencer marketing sparks positive feelings toward tech brands—and people see influencers as real sources of information they can count on.

Conclusion

This study shows that internet influencers really shape how people in North Karnataka decide which smartphone to buy. When consumers regularly see social media endorsements—especially ones that feel authentic and speak to their emotions—they tend to trust brands more, feel more connected, and

are more likely to actually make a purchase. One standout insight is just how much brand attitude matters here. Influencer marketing doesn't just spread information; it actually shifts how people view brands and builds loyalty over time. So now, digital influencer marketing isn't just a nice-to-have for smartphone companies—it's become a must-have for reaching today's consumers.

Managerial Implications

- **Prioritize Authentic Influencer Partnerships:** Rather than follow raw follower counts, companies should partner with influencers that demonstrate authentic knowledge, transparency and consistency in engaging their audience. Consumer trust and purchase intent are primarily influenced by high levels of perceived trustworthiness.
- **Invest in High-Value Content Quality:** High-definition product demos side-by-side comparisons and real-world day-in-the-life use cases should be the focus of these marketing budgets. They are at least several orders of magnitude more effective than generic rote advertisements.
- **Invest in High-Value Content Quality:** Realistic day-in-the-life use cases side-by-side comparisons and high-definition product demonstrations should be the focus of these marketing budgets. They outperform generic rote promotional posts by at least several orders of magnitude.
- **Boost Engagement-Oriented Campaigns:** Brands should encourage active two-way communication between influencers and potential followers in order to maximize social proof. Long-term loyalty can be increased and a sense of community can be fostered by strategies like sharing follower stories, answering individual user comments and holding live Q&A sessions.
- **Invest in High-Value Content Quality:** Realistic day-in-the-life use cases side-by-side comparisons and high-definition product demonstrations should be the focus of these marketing budgets. They are at least several

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- **Boost Engagement-Oriented Campaigns:** Brands should encourage active two-way communication between influencers and potential followers in order to maximize social proof. Long-term loyalty can be increased and a sense of community can be fostered by strategies like sharing follower stories, answering specific user comments and conducting live Q&As.
- **Emphasis on Brand Emotion and Identity:** Technical specs disclosure is insufficient because brand attitude is the primary predictor of purchase intent; therefore, campaigns must do more than simply reveal technical specs. Marketing narratives should emphasize aspirational value, how the product expresses personal identity and how it fits into the individual lifestyle of the user.
- **Use Region-Specific Strategies:** Therefore, localized content delivery is a must for brands looking to establish themselves in the North Karnataka market [3]. This includes closing the aperture between global tech and local consumer sensibilities using vernacular language (in this case, Kannada) and culturally sensitive communication methodologies.

Future Scope

- **Methodological Shifts:** Future investigators ought to think about experimental or longitudinal approaches. Going beyond cross-sectional data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), researchers could track changes in both behavioral aspects over time and draw more definitive causal connections between influencer behaviors and customer responses.
- **Broadening Generalizability:** You can figure out if these behavioral patterns are universal or only linked to specific products by comparing how people act in different places or with different high-involvement items, like wearable tech, laptops, or smart home devices (Vithayathil et al., 2020).

- **Qualitative Exploration:** Quantitative surveys don't always catch the depth psychological Evidence behind why people buy based on what influencers say. To get at those subtleties, try using focus groups or sit-down interviews, since these qualitative methods dig into what's really going on beneath the surface (Bell et al., 2022).
- **Advanced Theoretical Models:** If we include moderating factors like perceived risk, income, cultural background, or digital skills, the model gets a whole lot sharper (Yadav & Jain, 2022).
- **Evolving Digital Formats:** Trying out this study again—especially with the rise of micro-influencers, AI-generated virtual influencers, and live shopping—will give researchers and managers a deeper looks how things are shifting in the evolving digital world (Belanche et al., 2021).

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