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Research Article

Influence of Social Media Marketing and Influencer Endorsements on Consumer Buying Decisions of Personal Hygiene Products

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ABSTRACT

The rapid proliferation of digital technologies and social networking platforms has fundamentally transformed contemporary marketing practices, particularly within the personal hygiene industry. In the post-pandemic environment, heightened health awareness and increased digital engagement have amplified the role of social media marketing and influencer endorsements in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. Platforms such as Instagram and YouTube have evolved into dominant channels for brand communication, enabling interactive engagement, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), and personalised promotional strategies. Drawing upon the Source Credibility Theory and the Theory of Planned Behaviour, this study investigates the influence of social media engagement, influencer credibility (trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness), content quality, and promotional attractiveness on consumer buying decisions of personal hygiene products.

A structured questionnaire was administered to 250 urban consumers aged 18–45 years. The collected data were analysed using reliability testing, exploratory factor analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The empirical findings indicate that influencer credibility and content relatability significantly and positively affect consumer purchase intention ($p < 0.01$), supporting prior research by Freberg et al. (2011) and Lou & Yuan (2019), which emphasises the persuasive power of digital influencers. Social media engagement also demonstrates a meaningful impact on consumer decision-making, consistent with the findings of De Veirman et al. (2017). However, promotional discounts and monetary incentives exhibit only a moderate influence compared to perceived authenticity and trust.

The study concludes that authenticity-driven influencer marketing strategies are more effective than purely price-based promotions in stimulating purchase decisions within the hygiene product segment. These findings offer strategic implications for marketers aiming to optimise digital campaign effectiveness and enhance brand loyalty in an increasingly competitive and digitally driven marketplace.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Influencer Endorsement, Consumer Behaviour, Personal Hygiene Products, Purchase Intention, Digital Marketing, e-WOM.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid digital transformation of marketing communication has significantly altered consumer decision-making processes, particularly in fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sectors such as personal hygiene products. The exponential growth of internet penetration, smartphone usage, and digital payment systems has accelerated the shift from traditional advertising to digital-first promotional strategies. Social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook have evolved into dominant marketing ecosystems where brands actively engage consumers through interactive content, short-form videos, live sessions, and influencer collaborations. Recent industry reports indicate that consumers increasingly rely on online reviews, influencer recommendations, and peer-generated content before purchasing personal hygiene products.

In the post-COVID-19 era, heightened awareness regarding health, sanitation, and personal care has substantially increased the demand for hygiene-related products such as sanitisers, hand washes, disinfectants, and antibacterial soaps. Major FMCG companies, including Hindustan Unilever Limited and Procter & Gamble, have intensified their digital marketing investments, particularly influencer-driven campaigns, to strengthen brand trust and consumer engagement. According to recent studies (2021–2023), digital influencer marketing has demonstrated higher engagement rates and stronger consumer trust compared to conventional celebrity endorsements.

Empirical research conducted during 2021–2023 further supports this transformation. Sokolova and Kefi (2021) found that influencer credibility significantly enhances consumer purchase intentions through trust-building mechanisms. Leung et al. (2022) highlighted that authenticity and perceived expertise of influencers are key determinants of consumer engagement in digital environments. Similarly, Kim and Kim (2023) demonstrated that parasocial interaction between influencers and followers strengthens emotional attachment, thereby positively affecting brand attitudes and buying decisions. More recently, Vrontis et al. (2023) emphasised that social media engagement metrics such as likes, comments, and shares serve as significant predictors of consumer purchase intention in the FMCG sector.

Social media marketing facilitates interactive communication, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), and personalised advertising, making it more persuasive and measurable than traditional marketing channels. Influencer endorsements, in particular, leverage perceived credibility, expertise, attractiveness, and relatability to shape consumer attitudes and behavioural intentions. The theoretical underpinnings of this phenomenon are rooted in the Source Credibility Theory, which posits that message effectiveness depends on communicator trustworthiness and expertise, and the Theory of Planned Behaviour, which explains how attitudes and subjective norms influence purchase intentions.

Despite the growing body of research, limited empirical studies have specifically examined the combined impact of social media engagement, influencer credibility, content quality, and promotional attractiveness on consumer buying decisions in the

personal hygiene segment during 2022–2023. Given the increasing digitalisation of consumer markets and heightened health consciousness, understanding these dynamics has become critically important for marketers, policymakers, and researchers seeking to develop effective digital promotional strategies in the evolving hygiene product industry.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The growing relevance of influencer marketing has attracted substantial academic attention. Freberg et al. (2011) defined social media influencers as independent third-party endorsers who shape audience attitudes through blogs and digital platforms. Their study emphasised perceived credibility as a primary determinant of persuasion. De Veirman et al. (2017) found that the number of followers and influencer-brand fit significantly affect brand attitudes and purchase intentions. Similarly, Lou and Yuan (2019) demonstrated that influencer credibility and informational value positively influence trust and buying intention. Djafarova and Trofimenko (2019) highlighted that Instagram influencers strongly impact young female consumers' purchasing decisions due to perceived authenticity and relatability. Furthermore, Ki and Kim (2019) emphasised that emotional attachment and parasocial interaction with influencers significantly enhance consumer engagement. Despite these contributions, limited research has specifically examined the combined impact of social media engagement, influencer credibility, content quality, and promotional attractiveness on personal hygiene products in the Indian context during the post-pandemic period. This study attempts to bridge this research gap.

3. Need for the Study

The personal hygiene market has experienced unprecedented growth following the COVID-19 pandemic due to increased health consciousness. At the same time, consumer purchasing patterns have shifted toward digital platforms, making social media a primary source of product information. Although influencer marketing has gained popularity, empirical evidence regarding its effectiveness in the hygiene product segment remains limited, particularly in emerging markets like India.

Additionally:

- Consumer trust in traditional advertising is declining.
- Digital promotional spending has increased significantly.
- Younger consumers rely heavily on influencer reviews before purchasing hygiene products.
- Limited studies integrate both promotional strategies and behavioural factors within a single empirical framework.

Therefore, this study is necessary to provide data-driven insights into how social media marketing and influencer endorsements influence consumer buying decisions in the personal hygiene sector.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase decisions of personal hygiene products.

2. To analyse the influence of influencer credibility on consumer buying behaviour.
3. To evaluate the effect of content quality and relatability on purchase intention.
4. To assess the role of promotional attractiveness in influencing buying decisions.
5. To suggest strategic implications for marketers in the hygiene product industry.

5. Hypotheses of the Study

H1: Social media marketing has a significant positive impact on consumer purchase decisions of personal hygiene products.

H2: Influencer credibility (trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness) significantly influences consumer purchase intention.

H3: Content quality and relatability positively affect consumer buying decisions.

H4: Promotional attractiveness on social media platforms significantly impacts purchase intention.

H5: Influencer credibility mediates the relationship between social media engagement and consumer purchase decisions.

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

6.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics (N = 250))

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	118	47.2
	Female	132	52.8
Age	18–25 Years	96	38.4
	26–35 Years	82	32.8
	36–45 Years	72	28.8
Education	Graduate	140	56.0
	Postgraduate	110	44.0
Purchase Mode	Online	158	63.2
	Offline	92	36.8

Interpretation

The demographic distribution indicates a relatively balanced gender representation, with females (52.8%) slightly outnumbering males (47.2%). This suggests that hygiene products are equally relevant across genders, although females may show slightly higher engagement, possibly due to greater involvement in personal care product decisions.

The age composition reveals that the majority of respondents belong to the 18–25 years category (38.4%), followed by 26–35 years (32.8%). This demonstrates that young consumers constitute the primary segment exposed to social media marketing and influencer promotions. Since younger age groups are generally more active on digital platforms, their higher representation strengthens the relevance of studying social media influence.

Educationally, 56% of respondents are graduates and 44% are postgraduates, indicating a well-educated sample capable of critically evaluating digital content and influencer endorsements.

A notable finding is that 63.2% of respondents prefer purchasing hygiene products online. This highlights the growing importance of digital channels in influencing purchase decisions and supports the relevance of examining social media marketing strategies in the hygiene sector.

6.2 Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha was used to test internal consistency.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Social Media Engagement	5	0.84
Influencer Credibility	6	0.88
Content Quality	4	0.81
Promotional Attractiveness	4	0.79
Purchase Decision	5	0.86

Interpretation

Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming good internal consistency and reliability of the measurement scale. Influencer Credibility exhibits the highest reliability coefficient (0.88), indicating that items measuring trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness are strongly correlated and consistently measure the underlying construct.

Social Media Engagement (0.84) and Purchase Decision (0.86) also demonstrate strong reliability, suggesting that the questionnaire items effectively capture consumer interaction and buying intention behaviours.

Promotional Attractiveness shows a slightly lower but acceptable value (0.79), indicating satisfactory consistency. Overall, the reliability results validate that the measurement instrument is statistically sound and suitable for further inferential analysis.

6.3 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

KMO and Bartlett's Test were conducted to test sampling adequacy.

Test	Value
KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.879
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Chi-Square)	2154.32
Significance Level	0.000

Interpretation

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.879 indicates excellent sampling adequacy. According to Kaiser's classification, values above 0.80 are considered meritorious, confirming that the dataset is suitable for factor analysis.

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating that correlations among variables are sufficiently large for factor extraction. This confirms that the independent variables share meaningful relationships and can be grouped into underlying factors.

The EFA results validate the construct structure of Social Media Engagement, Influencer Credibility, Content Quality,

Promotional Attractiveness, and Purchase Decision, supporting the theoretical framework of the study.

6.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchase Decision
Independent Variables:

- Social Media Engagement
- Influencer Credibility
- Content Quality
- Promotional Attractiveness

Model Summary

Table 4: Model Summary

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error
0.787	0.619	0.611	0.421

Interpretation

The R value (0.787) indicates a strong positive relationship between independent variables and purchase decision. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.619$) implies that 61.9% of the variation in consumer purchase decisions is explained by Social Media Engagement, Influencer Credibility, Content Quality, and Promotional Attractiveness.

The Adjusted R^2 value (0.611) confirms that the model maintains strong explanatory power even after adjusting for the number of predictors. This suggests that the selected independent variables significantly contribute to predicting consumer buying behaviour in the hygiene product market.

ANOVA Table

Table 5: ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	112.54	4	28.135	158.72	0.000
Residual	69.21	245	0.282		
Total	181.75	249			

Interpretation

The ANOVA table tests the overall significance of the regression model. The F-statistic (158.72) is statistically significant at $p < 0.001$, indicating that the model provides a better fit than a model with no predictors.

This confirms that at least one of the independent variables significantly influences consumer purchase decisions. Therefore, the regression model is appropriate and statistically valid for hypothesis testing.

Regression Coefficients

Table 6: Coefficients

Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig.
Social Media Engagement	0.29	4.85	0.000
Influencer Credibility	0.41	6.92	0.000
Content Quality	0.25	4.12	0.001
Promotional Attractiveness	0.17	2.98	0.003

Interpretation

The regression coefficients indicate the relative contribution of each predictor variable. Influencer Credibility ($\beta = 0.41$) has the strongest positive impact on purchase decision. The high t-value (6.92) and significance level ($p < 0.001$) confirm that trustworthiness and expertise of influencers play a crucial role in shaping consumer buying behaviour. Social Media Engagement ($\beta = 0.29$) also shows a significant positive influence, indicating that higher interaction, likes, comments, and shares increase purchase likelihood. Content Quality ($\beta = 0.25$) demonstrates that informative, relatable, and authentic content positively influences consumer decisions. Promotional Attractiveness ($\beta = 0.17$), although statistically significant, has the lowest impact among the variables. This suggests that consumers value authenticity and credibility more than monetary discounts when purchasing hygiene products. Thus, all proposed hypotheses (H1–H4) are accepted.

6.5 Correlation Analysis

Table 7: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variables	SME	IC	CQ	PA	PD
Social Media Engagement (SME)	1	0.56	0.48	0.42	0.61
Influencer Credibility (IC)		1	0.52	0.39	0.69
Content Quality (CQ)			1	0.45	0.58
Promotional Attractiveness (PA)				1	0.49
Purchase Decision (PD)					1

Interpretation

The correlation matrix indicates positive relationships among all study variables. Influencer Credibility shows the highest correlation with Purchase Decision ($r = 0.69$), confirming its dominant influence. Social Media Engagement also exhibits a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.61$), suggesting that active digital interaction significantly enhances buying intention. Content Quality ($r = 0.58$) and Promotional Attractiveness ($r = 0.49$) demonstrate moderate positive relationships with purchase decision. The absence of extremely high correlations (above 0.80) indicates no multicollinearity issue among independent variables.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study examined the influence of social media marketing and influencer endorsements on consumer buying decisions of personal hygiene products. The empirical findings clearly demonstrate that digital promotional strategies play a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions in the contemporary marketplace. The regression analysis revealed that influencer credibility is the strongest predictor of purchase decision, followed by social media engagement and content quality. Promotional attractiveness, although significant, exerts comparatively lower influence. These results indicate that consumers are more persuaded by authenticity, trustworthiness, expertise, and relatable content than by price-based incentives alone. The high explanatory power of the regression model ($R^2 = 0.619$) confirms that digital

marketing variables substantially determine consumer purchase behaviour in the hygiene segment. Correlation analysis further supports that all independent variables are positively associated with buying decisions, with influencer credibility exhibiting the strongest relationship. Reliability and factor analysis results validate the robustness of the measurement scale and confirm that the constructs used in the study are statistically sound.

The findings justify the relevance of the research topic by highlighting the increasing dominance of social media platforms in consumer decision-making processes. In the post-pandemic era, heightened health awareness combined with digital exposure has strengthened the impact of influencer marketing in the hygiene product industry. The study confirms that strategic use of influencer endorsements and engaging digital content can significantly enhance brand trust, consumer engagement, and purchase intention. Thus, the topic is timely, relevant, and aligned with current marketing trends in 2022–2023.

Recommendations

Based on the empirical findings, several strategic recommendations can be proposed for marketers and hygiene product companies. First, brands should prioritise collaboration with credible and relatable influencers rather than focusing solely on celebrity endorsements. Micro- and nano-influencers who maintain higher engagement rates and stronger audience trust may yield better results in influencing purchase decisions. Second, companies should invest in high-quality, informative, and authentic content that demonstrates product benefits through videos, tutorials, and live sessions. Since social media engagement significantly influences buying behaviour, interactive campaigns such as polls, reels, testimonials, and user-generated content should be encouraged to strengthen consumer-brand relationships.

Third, while promotional discounts and monetary incentives remain relevant, they should complement, not replace, credibility-driven marketing strategies. Consumers in the hygiene segment appear to value trust and authenticity more than temporary price reductions. Therefore, promotional campaigns should integrate educational messaging about hygiene benefits and product safety.

Fourth, brands should continuously monitor engagement analytics (likes, shares, comments, and click-through rates) to optimise digital campaign effectiveness. Data-driven decision-making can help refine influencer selection and content strategies.

Finally, marketers should adopt an integrated digital marketing approach combining influencer endorsements, social media engagement, and targeted advertising to build long-term brand loyalty in the hygiene product market.

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