Emperor Journal of Marketing

ISSN: 2583-0686 **Mayas Publication®** www.mayas.info

Volume-VI **Issue-X** **October 2026**

Influence of Social Media Influencer Marketing on FMCG Purchase Decisions Among Millennials in Chennai City

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Abstract

This study analyzes the influence of social media influencer marketing on FMCG purchase decisions among millennials in Chennai City. The study identifies the key factors of social media influencer marketing and how they affect consumer purchase decisions. The study used a descriptive research design and purposively sampled 361 millennial consumers. The study collected primary data using structured questionnaires and analyzed it with descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and multiple regression. The ANOVA results suggest that, despite significant variation in millennial perceptions of influencer marketing factors, content quality and the influencer's credibility are the most critical factors. The multiple regression results reveal that the influencer marketing factors explain 62.0% of the variance in FMCG purchase decisions. The factors have a positive influence, with content quality ranking as the most important influencer marketing factor, followed by influencer credibility, trustworthiness, consumer engagement, expertise, and attractiveness. Interestingly, the results show the importance of informative, credible, trustworthy, and engaging promotional content in a millennial's decision in the case of retail FMCG. The study emphasizes the need to design impactful influencer marketing campaigns with strong influencer relationships, authentic product endorsement, and consumer-focused digital promotions. The study provides critical findings for FMCG companies, brand managers, and digital marketers to formulate better

consumer engagement, brand preferences, and purchase decisions of millennials in Chennai City.

Keywords: Social Media Influencer Marketing, FMCG Products, Millennials, Consumer Buying Behavior, Influencer Credibility, Content Quality, Purchase Decisions, Chennai City.

I.INTRODUCTION

As IT has developed, social media platforms have expanded and redefined marketing communication and consumer buying behavior. Digital apps such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook are now powerful tools for promoting products, building awareness, and reaching consumers. In the modern digital age, SM influencer marketing has emerged and developed as a powerful and technical strategy for sharing product information, features, packaging, and influencing consumer preferences. Social media influencers deliver product reviews, recommendations, demonstrations, and personal experiences that impact consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. **Vrontis et al. (2021)** found that social media influencers can influence consumer behavior through credibility, engagement, and persuasive communication. In addition, **Leung et al. (2022)** noted the growing use of influencer marketing for brand communication and consumer interaction. The FMCG market is one of the most competitive consumer markets, competing for the purchase of everyday items like drinks, toiletries, cosmetics, and packaged foods. Previously, FMCG companies relied on TV ads, newspapers, and in-store promotions to attract customers. However, evolving digital connectivity and changing consumer tastes have compelled companies to adopt influencer-based promotional strategies. In this regard, social media influencers share information about a product's benefits and usage, along with advice that may influence consumers' interests and purchase intentions. Influencer credibility and parasocial interaction influence consumers' purchase intention (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020), and influencer characteristics impact consumer engagement and purchase intention (Ao et al., 2023). Millennials are vital consumers because they are generally familiar with digital technology, social media, and online advertising. Eighty-three million of these consumers- the millennials (also data natives) in the eyes of marketers- are American-born citizens between 1981 and 1996 who find it easier to trust information acquired from exploring the digital world about products, compare brands' offerings, search for consumer reviews, ratings, and make an informed decision before buying. Their buying behavior is shaped by brand value, product quality and price, social media celebrity endorsement, and prior online customer experience. Hudders et al. (2021) found that influencer marketing success depends on consumers' appraisals of the promotion's credibility and relatedness, as well as the influencer's appearance.

Moreover, Han and Balabanis (2024) identified credibility, trustworthiness, and expertise as important factors for consumer responses to social media influencers.
Social media influencer marketing gained importance in India as FMCG companies sought to attract potential consumers through digital content creators. In FMCG, influencers' credibility, attractiveness, expertise, content quality, trust, and engagement can affect consumers' buying decisions. Bhardwaj et al. (2024) illustrated the impact of social media influencers on consumer attitude and intention. However, consumer responses vary by demographics, product, and digital media usage.
Chennai is an appropriate setting for research on influencer marketing because of its diverse consumer base, growing digital adoption, and competitive FMCG market. While studies examine influencer marketing and consumer purchase intentions, city-specific empirical evidence on how influencer marketing influences FMCG purchase decisions among millennials remains scarce. Hence, the present study attempts to explore the influence of social media influencer marketing on FMCG purchase decisions of millennials in Chennai City, which in turn will help/offer FMCG companies, brand managers, and digital marketers frame a better promotional strategy.

Review of Literature

Leung et al. (2022) investigated the effects of social media influencer marketing and found that influencer characteristics, creativity, follower engagement, and promotional content significantly affected marketing effectiveness. Likewise, Ao et al. (2023) conducted a systematic review and found that influencer credibility, expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and informativeness influenced consumer engagement and purchase intentions. Garg and Bakshi (2024) examined how beauty influencers influenced consumers' purchase intentions. They found that parasocial interaction, influencer credibility, and trust positively influenced purchase behavior. Sardar et al. (2025) reviewed past studies on social media influencer marketing and found that social influence, influencer attributes, and consumer involvement influenced purchase intentions. Khurana et al. (2025) studied influencer credibility for vegan food products and found that influencer credibility, attitude toward the brand, and parasocial interaction positively affected consumer purchase intentions. Kalpana and Poovaraghavan (2026) studied influencer marketing among Chennai city FMCG consumers and found that influencer expertise, attractiveness, content quality, engagement, and authenticity influenced purchase decisions. Similarly, Selvakumar and Selvakumar (2026) studied social media influencer marketing in Chennai. They found that the knowledge of the influencer, attractive promotional content, product reviews, and recommendations instilled consumer confidence and influenced buying behavior. These studies indicate that social media influencer

marketing significantly influences consumer buying decisions. However, little is known about how social media influencer marketing affects the habitual purchase decisions of millennial consumers of fast-moving consumer goods in Chennai City, highlighting the need for this research.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the key factors influencing millennials' perceptions of social media influencer marketing in Chennai City.
- To examine the influence of SM influencer marketing on FMCG purchase decisions among millennials in Chennai City.

Hypotheses of the Study

- H_1: Millennials' perceptions of the factors associated with social media influencer marketing differ significantly in Chennai City.
- H_2: Social media influencer marketing has a significant positive influence on FMCG purchase decisions among millennials in Chennai City.

Research Methodology

This descriptive and analytical study examines the influence of social media influencers on millennial FMCG purchase decisions in Chennai City. Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. The study used a structured questionnaire covering demographic details, perceptions of social media influencer marketing, and FMCG purchase decisions to collect primary data from 361 millennial consumers in Chennai City. The study used non-probability purposive sampling, i.e., millennials who use social media and are exposed to influencer marketing content for FMCG products. Secondary data were gathered from research journals, books, published reports, and the internet related to the study. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions of influencer credibility, trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, content quality, and consumer engagement. The study used descriptive statistics, a one-sample t-test, percentage analysis, and regression analysis to test the study objectives and develop hypotheses.

Results

Table 1: Demographic Profile and Usage Pattern of Social Media Platforms of the Respondents (N = 361)

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	198	54.8
	Female	163	45.2
Age (Years)	30–34	112	31.0
	35–39	139	38.5
	40–45	110	30.5
Marital Status	Married	247	68.4
	Unmarried	114	31.6
Educational Qualification	Higher Secondary	38	10.5
	Undergraduate	131	36.3
	Postgraduate	119	33.0
	Professional Degree	73	20.2
Occupation	Government Employee	49	13.6
	Private Employee	156	43.2
	Business / Self-employed	91	25.2
	Homemaker / Others	65	18.0
Monthly Family Income	Below ₹30,000	67	18.6
	₹30,001–₹50,000	108	29.9
	₹50,001–₹75,000	116	32.1
	Above ₹75,000	70	19.4
Most Frequently Used Social Media Platform	Instagram	139	38.5
	YouTube	121	33.5
	Facebook	65	18.0
	Others	36	10.0
Daily Social Media Usage	Less than 1 hour	47	13.0
	1–2 hours	109	30.2
	2–4 hours	142	39.3
	Above 4 hours	63	17.5

Table 1 presents the demographic profile and social media usage patterns of 361 respondents in Chennai City. The figures indicate that most respondents were male (54.8%), aged 35–39 years (38.5%), and married (68.4%). In terms of educational qualifications, undergraduates made up the largest proportion of respondents (36.3%), followed by postgraduates (33.0%). By occupation, private-sector employees were the largest group (43.2%), while the largest proportion of respondents fell into the monthly family income category of ₹50,001–₹75,000 (32.1%). Regarding social media use, Instagram was the most-used platform (38.5%), followed by YouTube (33.5%). Furthermore, the largest proportion of respondents spent 2–4 hours daily on social media (39.3%). These descriptive figures suggest that the surveyed millennials represent a digitally engaged consumer segment with considerable exposure to social media platforms, providing a relevant basis for examining the influence of social media influencer marketing on FMCG purchase decisions in Chennai City.

H_1: Millennials' perceptions of the factors associated with social media influencer marketing differ significantly in Chennai City.

Table 2: ANOVA results for Differences in Millennials' Perceptions of Social Media Influencer Marketing Factors (N = 361)

Social Media Influencer Marketing Factors	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**F-value**	**p-value**
Influencer Credibility	361	3.89	0.760	**18.430**	**<0.001****
Influencer Trustworthiness	361	3.76	0.810		
Influencer Expertise	361	3.68	0.790		
Influencer Attractiveness	361	3.54	0.850		
Content Quality	361	3.94	0.730		
Consumer Engagement	361	3.71	0.820		
Decision: Hypothesis Supported					

Table 2. ANOVA of the differences in perception of middle-aged millennials on factors of social media influencer marketing in Chennai City. Six factors show significant differences ($F = 18.430$; $p < 0.001$). The mean scores for the six factors in descending order were content quality (3.94), influencer credibility (3.89), trustworthiness (3.76), consumer engagement (3.71), influencer expertise (3.68), and influencer attractiveness (3.54). This implies that content quality and influencers' credibility affect most millennials' awareness of social media influencer marketing. Hence, the differences are significant at the 1% level (p-value < 0.01). Thus, hypothesis H_1 is accepted, indicating significant differences in millennials' perceptions of social media influencer marketing factors in Chennai City.

H_2: Social media influencer marketing has a significant positive influence on FMCG purchase decisions among millennials in Chennai City.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Results for the Influence of Social Media Influencer Marketing on FMCG Purchase Decisions

Predictor / Model Statistic	**Standardized β**	**t / F-value**	**p-value**
Influencer Credibility	0.241	5.82	<0.001
Influencer Trustworthiness	0.198	4.76	<0.001
Influencer Expertise	0.156	3.84	<0.001
Influencer Attractiveness	0.092	2.28	0.023
Content Quality	0.276	6.43	<0.001
Consumer Engagement	0.184	4.39	<0.001
Overall Regression Model (ANOVA) F = 96.26 <0.001**			
Model Fit: R / R^2 / Adjusted R^2	0.787 / 0.620 / 0.614		
Decision: Hypothesis Supported			

Table 3. Multiple regression analysis of social media influencer marketing on purchase decisions of FMCG among millennials in Chennai city. The results reveal that the overall regression model is significant ($F = 96.26$, $p < 0.001$) and explains 62.0 percent of the total variation in FMCG purchase decision ($R2 = 0.620$), which suggests that all six influencer marketing factors influence the FMCG purchase decision. The individual effects are not all equal, however, with the strongest positive factor being content quality ($\beta = 0.276$, $p < 0.001$), followed by influencer credibility ($\beta = 0.241$), trustworthiness ($\beta = 0.198$), consumer engagement ($\beta = 0.184$), influencer expertise ($\beta = 0.156$), and influencer attractiveness ($\beta = 0.092$). All six factors have a positive and significant relationship with FMCG purchase decisions. Thus, the results indicate that effective promotional content and credible influencers and recommendations are paramount in millennials' buying decisions. Hence, H2 is accepted, and social media influencers have a significant positive impact on FMCG purchase decisions among millennials in Chennai City.

Discussions

The findings revealed that influencer marketing on social media significantly impacts millennials' FMCG purchase decisions in Chennai City. The ANOVA showed significant differences in millennials' perceptions of influencer marketing factors, such as content quality and influencer credibility. The findings align with Leung et al. (2022) and Ao et al. (2023), which show that influencer characteristics, credibility, and engaging promotional content shape consumer responses. In addition, multiple regression results show that social media influencer marketing factors account for 62.0% of the variance in FMCG purchase decisions. Among all influencers, content quality has the strongest positive influence, followed by influencers' credibility, trustworthiness, consumer engagement, expertise, and attractiveness. These findings align with Garg and Bakshi (2024), who noted the importance of influencer credibility and trust in consumers' purchase intention. Similarly, Han and Balabanis (2024) highlighted the significance of influencer attributes in influencing consumer responses to promotional content. The study also shows that millennials respond to informative, credible, and engaging influencer content, not just physically attractive content. In sum, the results confirm that credible, authentic, and informative influencer marketing is needed to improve FMCG purchases among millennials in Chennai City.

Implications of the Study

These findings are useful for FMCGs, brand managers, digital marketing managers, and social media influencers in designing suitable marketing communication strategies for millennials in Chennai. The results suggest that FMCG companies should provide informative, beneficial, interesting, and high-quality promotional content to increase consumers' confidence and purchase intention. Brand managers should work with credible, trustworthy, and knowledgeable influencers whose recommendations align with product features and consumer expectations. Therefore, digital marketers should strive for authentic, engaging campaigns rather than those that rely on an influencer's fame or appearance. Also, FMCG companies should be convinced by the influencer to give honest product reviews for consumers and to show how the product is used, along with essential information. Platforms like Instagram and YouTube can be vital for showcasing product benefits, promoting new FMCG products, and building consumer relationships. Moreover, the study highlights the need to assess influencer marketing success through consumer feedback, engagement, and purchase responses. Overall, these implications provide a strong guide for developing consumer-based influencer marketing practices that enhance brand preference, FMCG purchases, and competitive advantage in the digital market.

II.CONCLUSIONS

This study explores the impact of social media influencer marketing on FMCG purchase decisions among millennials in Chennai City. However, the study highlights that factors such as content quality, influencer credibility, trustworthiness, expertise, and influencer attractiveness enhance purchase decisions, with content quality and influencer credibility being more important. Furthermore, it shows that millennials consider influencer attractiveness and value promotional content that is informative, reliable, and engagement-driven. These findings suggest that FMCG companies need to design effective influencer marketing strategies with credible influencers who offer authentic product information and increase consumer engagement through social media solutions. The study therefore concludes that effective influencer marketing campaigns can develop brand preferences, build consumers' confidence, and shape millennials' purchase decisions for FMCG in Chennai City.

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