


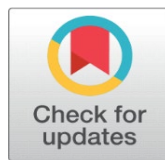


# A STUDY ON RELIABILITY TEST TO CONFIRM ANTECEDENT OF INFLUENCER MARKETING AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR WITHIN PUNE CITY

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This research study investigates the antecedents of social media influencer marketing. These antecedents were found and perceived to impact consumer behavior within Pune City. In particular, the research focuses on understanding the role of key factors such as trust & credibility, consumer connect & engagement, and social circle influence, the conceived belief system of the consumer antecedents that drive consumer decisions in influencer-led campaigns. By investigating these factors, the study aims to confirm their significance and reliability to firmly shape the construct of the impact of SMIs on consumer purchasing patterns, in a quickly developing urban market.

**Methods:** The researchers employed a quantitative research approach, picking primary data from active social media users in Pune city. These users are followers of social media influencers using platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter. The Structured survey questionnaire was distributed to measure variables such as consumer trust & credibility, influencer content richness & authenticity, and purchase intent. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's alpha, to evaluate the consistency of the identified antecedents which influence consumer behavior.

**Results:** The analysis revealed that the alpha value of 0.754, fits contentedly within the prescribed range, indicating that the 42 items (defining antecedents) are well-designed. It also reveals that these items effectively acquire the envisioned concept. The inclusion of 42 items in the analysis advocates that a larger number of items normally increases the likelihood of capturing a comprehensive picture of the construct, thereby the reliability increases.

**Conclusion:** This study confirms the importance of factors such as "Influencers are credible specialists, and following their advice is accepted socially" and "Consumers' aristocracies support social media influencers' recommendations". These factors when synthesized to "credibility" and "recommendation-centric", bring into the limelight as crucial antecedents to be considered in the social media influencer marketing effectiveness within Pune City. The findings provide valuable perceptions for marketers looking to optimize their strategies. They can leverage social media influencer marketing to engage local viewers. This research study also contributes to the academic understanding : (a) how influencer marketing affects consumer behavior within Pune city (b) offers practical applications for businesses within the urban setting.

**Keywords:** Reliability Test, Social Media Influencers, Antecedents for influencer marketing, consumer behavior

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The gradient of social media has renovated the model of social media marketing. Thus, enabling brands to influence consumers across content that is personalized, and it is dynamic. A key spectacle within this digital marketing ecosystem

ecology is social media influencer marketing. It involves using social media personas to boost sell of products and/or services. These social media influencers are often remarked as reliable and significant. Social media influencers can model consumer minds and behavior through their confirmations and subjects.

In recent contemporary times, influencer marketing has gained significant traction grip across numerous cities in India. Pune is a rapidly growing city known for its tech-savvy population. Pune is contributing heavily to the digital economy of India. As businesses in Pune progressively turn to influencers to drive, the engagement of consumers has become one of the key factors. Additionally, the understanding of the antecedents that guide the efficacy of the marketing strategy adopted by almost all Pune business houses has become crucial. However, despite its popularity, a limited understanding of the key antecedents which is driving the social media influencer to consumer relationships and its impact on consumer behavior concerning cities like Pune.

This research study targets to address this gap, by investigating the antecedents of influencer marketing. The study also assesses the impact on consumer behavior within Pune City. Conducting a reliability study, the researchers look to prove the factors contributing to the social media influencer marketing effectiveness and also in shaping purchasing decisions. The study also provides insight into manifest brand loyalty, in addition to the consumers' trust. The conclusions will offer beneficial intuitions for both marketers and businesses within Pune city, who are seeking to improve the social media influencer-driven approaches in the interior of a specified urban setting.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The Social Media Influencer marketing space continues as a powerful strategy for brands. The SMI landscape has progressed with platforms, new trends, platforms, and consumer expectations. Various researchers have come up with the consensus that audiences increasingly value influencers having higher transparency, authenticity, and richness in the content. Thus, social media influencers have now adopted a spotlight on organic storytelling without any form of sales pitches.

Authenticity of social media influencers (SMI) and Trust in SMIs are two key predictors that define how successful the influencer is, importantly in managing customer relationships. As advocated by Audrezet et al. (2020), authenticity is important to support a good relationship with the customers and followers, including the commercial post where the researchers emphasized on passion of the influencer creating value in terms of authenticity and originality which in turn builds trust. As advocated by Boerman et al.(2017), transparency plays a pivotal role in social media influencer marketing. The study conducted by the researchers outlines that when the influencer shows sponsorship and brings passion to the content they are presenting, it adds up to the credibility with a positive perception. Freberg et al. (2011) through their framework showed critical factors that exhibit transparency of the social media influencer. His framework has also brought into the limelight the likability associated with the influencer by the consumers. Other Experimenters similar to Jin and Phua( 2014) studied the part of social media influencers in extremity operation for brands, showing how influencers can help maintain a positive brand image during difficulties.

Another research conducted by Lou & Yuan (2019), provided insight that influencers who are perceived as authentic will have a greater impact on followers' purchase intentions. The researchers also projected that the effectiveness of influencer marketing is attained by social media influencers only through perceived credibility, parasocial relationships, and attractiveness. The research conducted gave an insight that social media influencers who are perceived as authentic and knowledgeable are the ones who can influence consumer decision-making. They also brought to notice that the followers of these social media influencers will be trusted for the product recommendations made as the content is genuine. Evans et al.(2017) suggested through their research, that while social media influencer tactics is genuinely known by the consumers, SMIs are more trusted influencers when they are transparent about sponsorships.

Based on the literature review the following research questions are framed by the researchers :

{RQ-1} What are the antecedents and how are they correlated?

{RQ-2} Which antecedent is not very closely coupled with the other antecedents?

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

To anchor the antecedents (factors/attributes) the researcher for this paper, the researcher has adopted (a) the method of building a structured questionnaire, (b) collecting the responses from respondents, (c) using a reliability test to formalise the antecedents and build a comprehensive picture of the construct.

#### 3.1. DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLE

The primary data for this study was collected from 35 respondents with in Pune city, using a structured questionnaire set with a point Likert scale as advocated by Rensis Likert (1932). The questionnaire was distributed among all the respondents with age ranges between : 18-24 years old, 25-34 years old, 35-44 years old, 45-54 years old, 55 or older within Pune City. The sampling procedure used was convenience sampling to select the surveyed respondents. This is because of respondents' willingness to participate with less challenged approachability including data collection in the smallest viable time.

#### 3.2. DATA ANALYSIS APPROACH

The collected data from 35 respondents were used to measure the reliability of the construct. The questionnaire had 43 items that were used to collect data from the respondents. To evaluate the consistency amongst the items chosen for data collection. As advocated by Keith S. (2018) , Cronbach's alpha is a statistic commonly quoted by authors to demonstrate that tests and scales that have been constructed or adopted for research projects are fit for purpose.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section describes the results of data analysis carried out using SPSS and also depicts the outcome of each analysis.

#### 4.1. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Carol Scheffner Hammer (2011) advocated that the demographic profile for respondents' aids in finding the personas with whom research findings are associated. Sarantakos (2013,pg.75), provided and insight that demographic variables deal with demographic data such as age, income, marital status etc. The table below highlights the demographic variables and corresponding frequency with per centage.

**Table A: Demographic profile of respondents participating in the research survey for influencer marketing**

		Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-24 years old	8	22.9%
	25-34 years old	12	34.3%
	35-44 years old	6	17.1%
	45-54 years old	5	14.3%
	55 or older	4	11.4%
Gender	Male	15	42.9%
	Female	17	48.6%
	Prefer not to say	3	8.6%
Marital Status	Single	12	34.3%
	Married	18	51.4%

	Divorced / Widowed	3	8.6%
	Prefer not to say	2	5.7%
Education Level	Less than high school	2	5.70%
	High school diploma	5	14.30%
	Some college or vocational training	8	22.90%
	Bachelor's degree	12	34.30%
	Postgraduate degree (Master's or Ph.D.)	8	22.90%
Employment Status	Employed full-time	12	34.30%
	Employed part-time	5	14.30%
	Self-employed	3	8.60%
	Unemployed	2	5.70%
	Student	7	20.00%
	Retired	4	11.40%
	Other	2	5.70%
Household Income (annual)	Less than ₹200,000	4	11.40%
	₹200,000 - ₹500,000	8	22.90%
	₹500,001 - ₹1,000,000	12	34.30%
	₹1,000,001 - ₹2,000,000	7	20.00%
	₹2,000,001 or more	4	11.40%
How long have you lived in Pune?	Less than 1 year	5	14.30%
	1-5 years	10	28.60%
	6-10 years	8	22.90%
	More than 10 years	12	34.30%

The demographic profile of the 35 respondents exposes a diverse range of characteristics across various categories. In terms of age distribution, the largest group of respondents is aged 25-34 years old, comprising 34.3% of the sample. This is followed by the 18-24 years old category at 22.9%. The age groups 35-44 years and 45-54 years old make up 17.1% and 14.3%, respectively, while those 55 or older account for 11.4% of the respondents. This age distribution highlights a predominance of younger to middle-aged individuals, with fewer respondents in the older age brackets.

Gender distribution among the respondents is relatively balanced, with a slight majority of females (48.6%) compared to males (42.9%). A small portion, 8.6%, preferred not to disclose their gender. This gender distribution suggests that the sample has a good representation of both genders, with a marginally higher proportion of female respondents.

In case of the marital status, the majority of respondents are married (51.4%), followed by singles at 34.3%. Divorced or widowed individuals make up 8.6% of the sample, and a small percentage (5.7%) chose not to disclose their marital status. This indicates that the sample is predominantly composed of individuals who are either married or single, with fewer from other marital statuses.

In terms of education level, the highest proportion of respondents hold a Bachelor's degree (34.3%), followed by those with some college or vocational training and those with a postgraduate degree (both at 22.9%). The remaining respondents are either high school graduates (14.3%) or have less than a high school education (5.7%). Employment status shows a diverse range, with 34.3% employed full-time, 20.0% students, and 14.3% part-time workers. Other categories include self-employed (8.6%), unemployed (5.7%), retired (11.4%), and others (5.7%). Household income data shows that 34.3% of respondents earn between ₹500,001 and ₹1,000,000 annually, with significant portions also earning between ₹200,000 and ₹500,000 (22.9%) and ₹1,000,001 to ₹2,000,000 (20.0%). The remaining respondents are divided equally between those earning less than ₹200,000 and those earning ₹2,000,001 or more (both 11.4%).

Lastly, the length of residence in Pune varies, with 34.3% having lived there for more than 10 years, followed by 28.6% who have resided in Pune for 1-5 years. The remaining respondents are split between those who have lived in Pune for 6-10 years (22.9%) and those who have been there for less than 1 year (14.3%). This distribution shows a mix of long-term residents and relatively newer inhabitants, providing a broad perspective on the respondent pool's experience with the Pune city.

## 4.2. RELIABILITY VERIFICATION AND VALIDATION

The reliability statistics presented in table A below, indicate that the set of 42 items used in the survey or test exhibits good internal consistency, as reflected by a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.754. This value suggests that the items are consistently measuring the same underlying construct. As suggested by Tavakol and Dennick (2011), in reliability analysis, a Cronbach's Alpha value between 0.7 and 0.8 is generally considered good, implying that the items are closely related and collectively provide a reliable measure of the construct in question.

**Table A : Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.754	42

The fact that the alpha value is 0.754, which falls comfortably within this range, indicates that the items are well-designed and effectively capture the intended concept. The inclusion of 42 items in the analysis further supports this conclusion, as a larger number of items typically increases the likelihood of capturing a comprehensive picture of the construct, thereby enhancing reliability.

While the Cronbach's Alpha is already at a good level, suggesting that the measurement tool is reliable, there might still be opportunities to fine-tune specific items to further strengthen the internal consistency. However, based on the current statistics, it can be confidently stated that the instrument is reliable and well-suited for its intended purpose.

**Table B: Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted**

	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Social media influencers' recommendations are credible due to trust in them	.784
Consumers believe social media influencers provide authentic and reliable information about the brands they are showcasing	.746
The genuineness of social media influencers' content is accepted.	.746
Social Media Influencers are credible enough to decide to purchase.	.746
The content shown and presented by social media influencers is practical	.742
Social Media Influencers' expertise builds consumer trust	.754
Social Media influencers care about their consumers.	.742
Social Media influencers disclose brand partnerships which makes it more transparent.	.740

The content are consistent to steer confidence and trust building.	.754
Social Media influencers are followers of consumer feedback.	.753
Feedback is used to improve content and presentation in the advertisement	.747
The consumer feels ownership when social media influencers throw challenges and ask questions	.749
Social Media Influencers are always ready to hear the needs of consumers	.742
Social media influencer engagement with consumers builds sense of a community	.751
Following a social media influencer is based on personality traits	.751
Only take purchase decisions from the social media influencer whom the consumer follows	.747
Social Issues taken up by social media influencers are followed more	.748
Friends and social circle recommendations match social media influencers followed	.745
Consumer self-efficacy increases by purchasing brands recommended	.749
Consumer's long-term purchase plans are aligned with recommendations made by the social media influencers	.743
Social Media Influencers recommended beneficial products	.740
Purchases made based on social media influencers' advice depict responsibility.	.745
Social media influencer keeps consumers upto date with latest brand trends	.742
A consumer's individuality is projected when influencer is followed	.746
Social Media Influencers' expertise builds consumer trust	.745
Social firnds' views taken into considering before purchasing products recommended by social media influencer	.740
Opinion by others influences consumers' preferences and purchase intention	.750
Consumers' aristocracies support social media influencers' recommendations	.767
Influencers are credible specialists, and following their advice is accepted socially	.774
Consumer purchases in pressure from social media influencers	.742
Consumer gets limited alternatives which triggers purchasing on recommendations by influencers	.758
Discounts affect consumers' purchase intentions which is influenced by social media influencers	.752
The purchase intent of recommended products is influenced by convenience.	.754
Fear of missing out induces consumers to follow influencer recommendations.	.757
Consumers feel exploring products is recommended by Pune social media influencers.	.761
Consumer wants to try out recommended products in the future	.742
Consumers are persuaded to go for products recommended by Pune social media influencers	.750



Consumers wants to purchase proposed products though not tried before	.748
Consumers have bought products recommended by social media influencers earlier	.737
Consumer is well connected and buys products recommended by social media influencers	.757
Consumer takes advise when purchasing products	.753
Influencer content impacts purchase intentions	.740

The table above provides detailed insights into Cronbach's Alpha values if each item were deleted from the set of 42 items used in the survey. These values help assess how the removal of each item impacts the overall reliability of the measurement tool. Generally, items with higher Cronbach's Alpha values if deleted, such as "Influencers are credible specialists, and following their advice is accepted socially" (0.774) and "Consumers' aristocracies support social media influencers' recommendations" (0.767), are crucial for maintaining the internal consistency of the scale. Their removal would lead to a decrease in the overall reliability, indicating their strong contribution to the measure's consistency, Tavakol and Dennick (2011).

On the other hand, items with moderate values, like "Social Media Influencers' expertise builds consumer trust" (0.754) and "Discounts affect consumers' purchase intentions which is influenced by social media influencers" (0.752), are important but slightly less critical. These items still contribute positively to the internal consistency but removing them would have a more modest impact on the overall reliability.

Items with lower Cronbach's Alpha values if deleted, such as "Consumers have bought products recommended by social media influencers earlier" (0.737), suggest that removing these items might improve the overall reliability of the scale. This indicates that these items may be less consistent with the others in measuring the underlying construct.

In conclusion, the measurement tool demonstrates good overall reliability, with most items contributing positively to its internal consistency. The analysis highlights that certain items are particularly valuable for maintaining the measure's robustness, while others might benefit from further review to enhance reliability. Thus, the tool is well-designed, but refining items with lower impact values could further improve its effectiveness.

## 5. CONCLUSION

It can be derived from the demographic distribution of the respondents that 41% of them are 16 years who are main users of social media and influence family buying decisions out of which 52% (107 respondents) are males.

It can also be observed that 31% (64 respondents) have a family income of more than 2 lakhs Indian rupees as annual family income while 25% (52 respondents) have family income of more between 1 lakh to 2 lakh.

When the responses were categorised for analysis, it is observed that 51.69% are males and 48.31% are female respondents out of total 207 respondents. Within this it is observed that males more inclined to social media than female respondents i.e. 19% (41) as compared to 25% (12%) respectively, spending more than 40 minutes per day.

When the Paster Power is considered as an attribute to compare between the two genders on the grounds of responses collected and analysed, it is observed that:

- 1) Female respondents are marginally ahead of males in creating pressure tactics on their parents when it comes to family buying decisions i.e. 6.76% (14) as compared to 6.28% (13) respectively.
- 2) Again, Female respondents are found more aligned towards upward appeal than the male counterparts which is 12.08% (25 respondents) as compared to 9.66% (20 respondents). Upward tactics reveal that the level of influence tactics used is moderate where an individual takes approval from someone senior, in this case it is parents.
- 3) In Exchange tactics where there is more of an exchange for a favour is involved, female respondents are found far ahead of their male counterparts. 7.25% (15 respondents) of females use this tactic as opposed to 4.35% (9 male respondents).

- 4) in the coalition tactics, where both the parties shake hands together to take a common judgement and decision in family buying behaviour, both male and female are comparatively very close. Male respondents are marginally above the female respondents i.e. 11.59% (24 male respondents) as compared to 11.11% (23 female respondents) respectively.
- 5) Rational Tactics focuses on pressure tactics but with logical reasoning to justify the argument. In this category, male respondents are ahead of the female counterparts i.e. 19.32% (40 male respondents) as compared to 13.53% (28 female respondents).

It is observed that the Paster Power where iGen middle adolescents are involved have a high degree of influence on their parents in the family buying decisions which is indirectly influenced by the social media influencers.

The usage of social media and following the influencers from social media has a strong correlation to the level of influence in family buying decisions.

As scope of future study, it is recommended that the construct derived through this research should be tested for other types of paster power since only five attributes were considered. Middle adolescent respondents considered for this study was limited to 14 years – 16 years which can be expanded on both lower and upper limit.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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