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Impact of Instagram and YouTube Influencers on Consumer Purchase Intentions: A Comparative Study in Bihar

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of digital technologies and social media platforms has significantly transformed consumer behaviour and marketing practices in India. Instagram and YouTube have emerged as influential digital platforms through which content creators shape consumer perceptions, brand preferences and purchasing intentions. Influencer marketing has increasingly become an important promotional strategy for businesses seeking to establish personal connections with consumers. However, the effectiveness of influencer marketing may differ across geographical, socioeconomic and demographic segments, particularly between rural and urban consumers. Bihar provides a relevant geographical context for examining these differences because of its diverse consumer markets, varying levels of digital literacy and changing patterns of internet adoption.

The present paper examines the potential impact of Instagram and YouTube influencers on consumer purchase intentions in Bihar, with particular emphasis on influencer credibility, trustworthiness, content quality, perceived authenticity, product information and demographic characteristics. The study draws upon Source Credibility Theory, the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Stimulus–Organism–Response framework to develop an integrated conceptual model. A comparative research design involving rural and urban consumers is proposed to assess variations in platform usage, consumer trust and purchase intentions.

A review of existing literature indicates that influencer credibility, informative content, entertainment value and perceived similarity between influencers and followers are important factors associated with purchasing intentions. The paper further identifies researchable differences between Instagram's visual and short-form promotional content and YouTube's longer product demonstrations and reviews. It concludes that influencer marketing strategies in Bihar should consider regional languages, digital literacy, cultural relevance and consumer trust when targeting different market segments.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing; Instagram; YouTube; Consumer Purchase Intention; Rural Consumers; Urban Consumers; Digital Marketing; Bihar; Consumer Behaviour.

1. Introduction

The emergence of social media has brought substantial changes to the ways consumers search for information, evaluate alternatives and make purchasing decisions. Traditional promotional tools, such as television advertisements, newspapers, posters and celebrity endorsements, increasingly operate alongside digital communication channels that allow consumers to interact directly with brands and content creators.

Influencer marketing represents an important development in this changing promotional environment. Social media influencers are individuals who develop audiences through content creation, communication and perceived expertise in particular fields. They may influence consumer attitudes by sharing product reviews, personal experiences, recommendations, tutorials and sponsored promotional messages.

Among the various social media platforms, Instagram and YouTube occupy distinctive positions in digital marketing. Instagram is associated with visually appealing content, reels, lifestyle recommendations and interactive promotional formats. YouTube offers opportunities for product demonstrations, comparison videos, educational discussions, detailed reviews and longer explanations.

The distinction between these platforms is important because consumers do not necessarily respond to all forms of promotional communication in the same manner. A consumer purchasing clothing may be influenced by Instagram fashion reels, whereas a consumer purchasing a mobile phone may seek detailed YouTube reviews before making a final decision. These examples illustrate potential differences in how platforms support different stages of the consumer decision-making process.

The IAMAI–Kantar Internet in India 2025 report estimated approximately 958 million active internet users in India during 2025, comprising about 548 million rural and 410 million urban users. These national figures demonstrate the growing relevance of rural digital markets but do not represent Bihar-specific Instagram or YouTube usage.

1.1 Context of Bihar

Bihar combines expanding urban centres, extensive rural settlements, traditional retail systems and emerging digital consumption practices. Urban markets such as Patna, Bhagalpur, Gaya and Muzaffarpur provide opportunities to study digitally connected consumers, while rural communities offer an important setting for understanding the interaction between social media, local networks and conventional purchasing practices.

Social media influencers may affect consumer behaviour through recommendations, demonstrations, emotional appeal, perceived expertise and social identification. However, differences in purchasing power, internet access, language preferences, education and product availability may influence responses to such messages. A comparative study can help identify whether the same marketing strategies are appropriate for both consumer groups.

2. Statement of the Problem

Although influencer marketing has received considerable attention, its effectiveness cannot be assumed uniform across consumer segments and platforms. Consumers may follow influencers for entertainment, information, lifestyle inspiration or social interaction. Following an influencer does not automatically result in an intention to buy. Purchase intentions may depend on trust, familiarity with the product, financial capacity, perceived benefit and availability of alternative information.

In Bihar, rural and urban consumers may experience different conditions of digital access and technological familiarity. Meanwhile, Instagram and YouTube differ in content formats and modes of engagement. The central research problem is: To what extent do Instagram and YouTube influencers affect consumer purchase intentions in Bihar, and how do these relationships differ between rural and urban consumers?

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the influence of Instagram and YouTube content creators on consumer purchase intentions in Bihar.

2. To compare the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention among rural and urban consumers.

3. To investigate the role of influencer credibility, authenticity, expertise and trustworthiness in consumer decision-making.

4. To examine whether Instagram and YouTube differ in their relationships with consumer purchase intentions.

5. To analyse the influence of digital literacy, age, education and income on responses to influencer promotions.

6. To understand the role of regional language, cultural similarity and product information in influencer effectiveness.

7. To suggest appropriate marketing strategies for businesses targeting rural and urban markets in Bihar.

4. Review of Literature

4.1 Influencer credibility and purchase intentions

Lou and Yuan (2019) examined how informational value and influencer credibility affect consumer trust in branded messages. Their findings highlighted trustworthiness, attractiveness, perceived similarity and informative content in strengthening trust, brand awareness and purchase intentions.

4.2 Consumer engagement and influencer characteristics

Ao et al. (2023) conducted a meta-analysis of 62 studies with an aggregate sample of 22,554 participants, examining expertise, trustworthiness, credibility, product congruence, entertainment value and informative value. Their findings support a multidimensional approach to influencer effectiveness.

4.3 Role of social media platforms

Han et al. (2024), in a meta-analysis published in Psychology & Marketing, identified the relevance of credibility, trustworthiness and expertise and suggested that influencer effects can differ by platform, geographical context and product characteristics.

4.4 Influencer marketing effectiveness

Pan et al. (2025) synthesised 1,531 effect sizes from 251 papers, reporting the relevance of informational and entertainment value, source credibility and persuasion knowledge in explaining marketing effectiveness.

4.5 Research gap

Existing studies establish a broad relationship between influencer characteristics and consumer outcomes, but a direct rural–urban comparison of Instagram and YouTube in Bihar remains a useful avenue for original field research. The proposed study incorporates platform differences, digital literacy, regional-language relevance and the distinction between favourable attitudes and intended purchases.

4.6 Credibility and parasocial relationships

Sokolova and Kefi (2020) examined the relationships between credibility, parasocial interaction and purchase intentions among followers of Instagram and YouTube beauty and fashion influencers in France. Perceived familiarity and personal connection can contribute to purchase intentions when supported by trust.

5. Theoretical Framework

5.1 Source Credibility Theory

Source Credibility Theory suggests that communication is more persuasive when its source is perceived as expert, trustworthy and attractive. Ohanian (1990) developed a measurement scale for these three dimensions. Consumers may be more willing to consider recommendations when influencers demonstrate product knowledge and present information authentically.

5.2 Theory of Planned Behaviour

Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour explains behavioural intentions through attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. Influencer content may affect attitudes and social perceptions; affordability, product access and online purchasing confidence may affect perceived control.

5.3 Stimulus–Organism–Response Framework

The proposed mechanism is: Stimulus (influencer credibility, content quality, demonstrations and platform format) → Organism (trust, attitude, emotional connection and perceived value) → Response (product interest and purchase intention). Residence and digital literacy could moderate these relationships.

6. Research Hypotheses

H1: Perceived influencer credibility is positively associated with purchase intentions.

H2: The association between influencer marketing exposure and purchase intention differs between rural and urban consumers.

H3: Instagram and YouTube influencer content differ in their associations with purchase intention.

H4: Consumer trust mediates the relationship between credibility and purchase intention.

H5: Digital literacy moderates the relationship between marketing exposure and purchase intention.

H6: Perceived cultural and linguistic similarity with influencers is positively associated with purchase intention.

H7: Product information quality is positively associated with purchase intention.

These hypotheses are proposed for empirical testing and are not presented as verified results.

7. Research Methodology

7.1 Research design

A descriptive and explanatory cross-sectional comparative survey is proposed, using structured quantitative responses and limited qualitative comments.

7.2 Study area

Selected urban and rural areas in Patna, Bhagalpur, Gaya and Muzaffarpur districts are suggested. Geographical coverage and the sampling process would determine whether results can be generalised beyond sampled locations.

7.3 Sample size and sampling technique

A proposed sample of 400 adults (200 rural and 200 urban) would facilitate group comparison. A stratified multistage approach is preferable, selecting respondents aged 18 or older who have used at least one platform in the previous three months.

Consumer category	Proposed respondents	Percentage
Rural consumers	200	50%
Urban consumers	200	50%
Total	400	100%

Table 1. Proposed sample allocation, not actual observations.

7.4 Data sources

Primary data: structured face-to-face and online questionnaires. Secondary data: scholarly articles, official digital reports, academic publications and relevant statistical studies.

7.5 Research variables

Variable	Role	Indicators
Influencer credibility	Independent	Expertise, authenticity, trustworthiness
Content quality	Independent	Clarity, information, entertainment
Platform exposure	Independent	Instagram/YouTube usage frequency
Consumer trust	Mediator	Confidence in recommendations
Digital literacy	Moderator	Information evaluation ability
Residential background	Grouping/moderator	Rural/urban
Purchase intention	Dependent	Likelihood and willingness to purchase

7.6 Questionnaire

The proposed survey would use a five-point agreement scale, from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Sample items:

• I consider product recommendations reliable when influencers provide convincing evidence.

• Instagram influencer content helps me discover products and brands.

• YouTube product reviews help me evaluate products before purchasing.

• I am more likely to consider products recommended by an influencer I trust.

• Influencers communicating in my preferred language are easier to understand.

• I compare recommendations with other information before purchasing.

• I am likely to purchase a suitable product recommended by an influencer in the near future.

The instrument should be piloted and, where possible, adapted from validated measurement scales. Purchase intention should be distinguished from actual purchase behaviour.

7.7 Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics, independent-samples t-tests or non-parametric alternatives, regression analysis, moderation and mediation tests, and confirmatory factor analysis could be used. Construct reliability may be evaluated with Cronbach's alpha or composite reliability, as appropriate.

8. Comparative Analysis and Discussion

This section provides a conceptual comparison informed by the literature. The distinctions are research propositions, not field findings from Bihar.

8.1 Instagram versus YouTube

Dimension	Instagram	YouTube
Promotional formats	Reels, stories, posts	Reviews, tutorials, demonstrations, shorts
Consumer engagement	Visual discovery, social interaction	Product evaluation, research, entertainment
Information depth	Often concise	Potentially detailed
Possible strength	Awareness and discovery	Understanding and comparison
Typical categories	Fashion, cosmetics, lifestyle	Electronics, education, lifestyle
Credibility signals	Authenticity, transparency	Expertise, evidence, transparency

Table 2. Typical platform affordances, not measured Bihar-specific preferences.

Instagram's short-form visual formats may facilitate rapid brand discovery, whereas YouTube can support detailed product evaluations. Neither distinction is universal: both platforms accommodate varied content types. Product and audience characteristics may determine which format is more persuasive.

8.2 Rural versus urban consumers

Basis	Rural factors to investigate	Urban factors to investigate
Digital access	Connectivity and device constraints	Frequency and diversity of access
Language	Local and regional preferences	Mixed language preferences
Trust	Influencer and interpersonal recommendations	Influencer and independent reviews
Availability	Retail and delivery access	Retail and delivery choices
Purchase constraints	Affordability and logistics	Affordability and convenience

Table 3. Contextual factors to investigate; no verified differences are asserted.

The central issue is not whether rural consumers are inherently less receptive, but whether the conditions under which influencer recommendations become persuasive differ. Product access and affordability may separate expressed interest from actual purchasing.

8.3 Regional-language content

Hindi and languages such as Bhojpuri, Maithili, Magahi and Angika may be relevant depending upon district and consumer group. Familiar-language communication may improve accessibility and relatability, but accuracy, product suitability and transparent sponsorship remain necessary.

8.4 Digital literacy

Digital literacy affects the ability to recognise sponsorship, verify claims and compare price and quality. The proposed study should test whether digital literacy moderates the influence of exposure and trust on purchase intentions.

9. Findings from Literature and Expected Contributions

Literature reviewed in this paper indicates that influencer credibility is meaningfully associated with consumer response. Informative and entertaining content can contribute to effectiveness, while platform characteristics and product types may moderate these relationships.

For Bihar, the study proposes to test whether these relationships vary by rural–urban background and digital literacy. Results should not be reported as Bihar-specific findings without primary data. Purchase intention is also not synonymous with a completed purchase.

10. Suggestions and Managerial Implications

10.1 Credible influencers

Choose creators with relevant expertise, transparency and demonstrable familiarity with promoted products rather than relying on follower counts.

10.2 Regional-language marketing

Evaluate content in Hindi and relevant regional languages, keeping local cultural context and district-level differences in view.

10.3 Platform-specific strategies

Consider Instagram for product discovery and short messaging and YouTube for detailed explanations; evaluate both against the target consumer and product category.

10.4 Ethical promotional practices

Identify sponsored content clearly, avoid unsubstantiated claims and support transparent advertising.

10.5 Affordability and access

Consider product availability, pricing, delivery and after-sales service when evaluating the practical impact of campaigns.

10.6 Informed consumption

Encourage consumers to compare claims, prices and independent reviews and recognise paid endorsements.

11. Limitations

The paper relies on secondary evidence and presents no original survey data from Bihar. Any later cross-sectional survey would also be limited by self-reported intentions, sample selection bias and possible confounding factors such as income, education, age and product category. Findings may vary over time as digital platforms and influencer practices evolve.

12. Scope for Future Research

Future studies may measure actual purchases, compare micro-influencers and celebrities, examine different product classes or use longitudinal methods. Experiments that assign otherwise similar Instagram- and YouTube-style messages could improve causal inference by distinguishing effects of the platform, creator and content.

13. Conclusion

Influencer marketing is an important element of contemporary digital communication. Instagram and YouTube offer businesses opportunities to reach audiences through reviews, demonstrations, recommendations and interactive

promotional formats. Existing studies associate credibility, trustworthiness, expertise, content quality and perceived similarity with consumer engagement and purchase intention.

Bihar provides a meaningful setting for examining whether these relationships differ across rural and urban markets and how digital literacy, trust and regional-language relevance shape consumer responses. Effective influencer marketing should therefore be grounded in credibility, informative communication, consumer understanding and responsible promotional practices. Original field research is needed before making definite claims about the comparative effectiveness of Instagram and YouTube in Bihar.

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- Academic submission note: This is a conceptual/literature-based comparative paper with proposed fieldwork. Add survey findings and statistical results before presenting it as a completed empirical study.