Samiya Akter

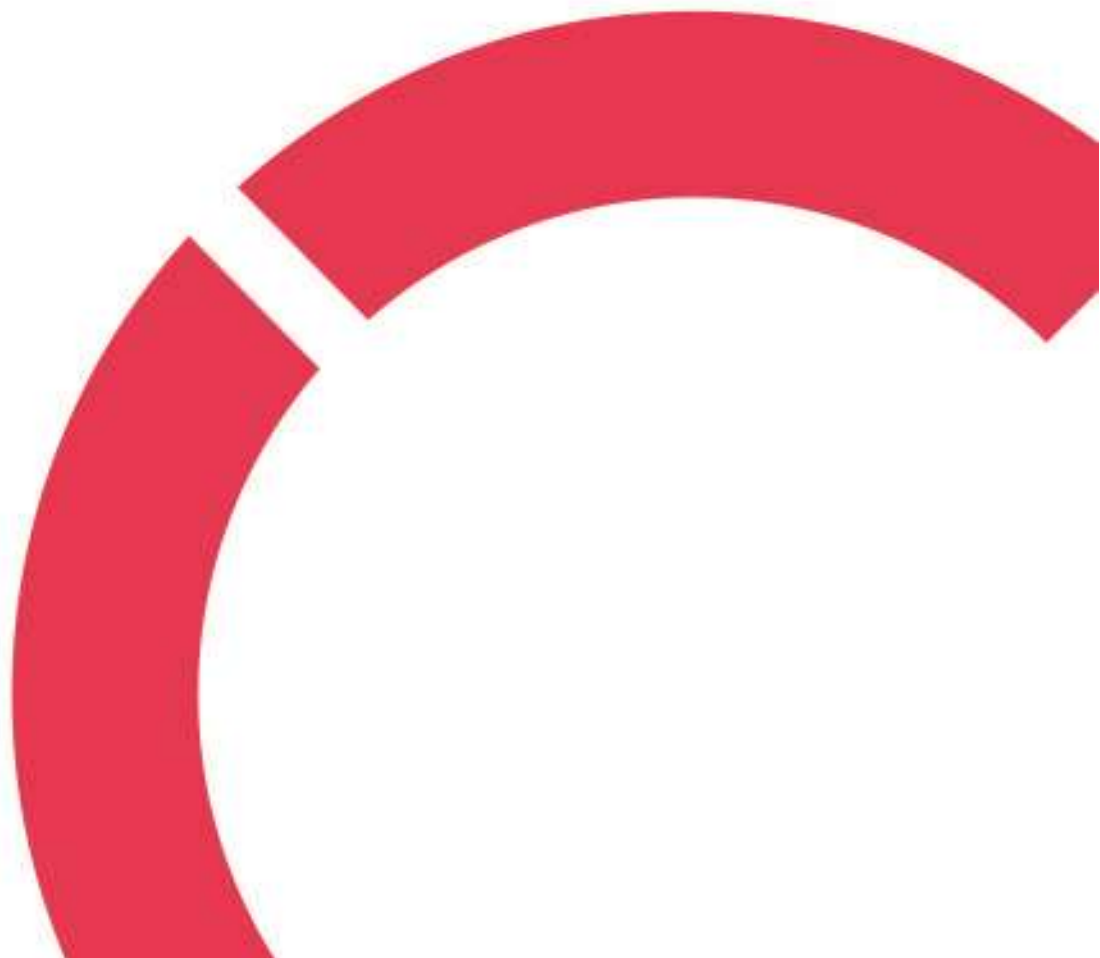# THE IMPACT OF INSTAGRAM INFLUENCER MARKETING ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN BANGLADESH

**ABSTRACT**

| Centria University of Applied Sciences | Date June 2023 | Author Samiya Akter |
|---|---|---|
| **Degree programme** Bachelor of Business Administration, Business Management | | |
| **Name of thesis** THE IMPACT OF INSTAGRAM INFLUENCER MARKETING ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN BANGLADESH | | |
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The objective of this thesis was to study the growth of Instagram in the context of Bangladesh, to be precise, in the scenario of influencer marketing. It also aimed at assessing the authenticity of this advanced marketing tool into the individuals residing in Bangladesh as well as identifying apparently how this marketing tool is implementing the rising media field of Instagram influencers with the goal of accumulating more customer engagement, loyalty, and trust. This research emphasizes the impact of Instagram influencers for brand images while examining the reasons why Bangladeshi consumers are more inclined to this marketing method in terms of their buying behaviour.

To establish theoretical content of the thesis, all the key segments related to this subject were incorporated. Starting with influencer marketing, an in-depth overview on the rise of Instagram in marketing along with its interconnected exposures, and the impact of Instagram influencer marketing on consumer behaviour while illustrating the core marketing strategies as well as highlighting the impact of this particular marketing method on customers' purchase intention.

In order to conduct the research and accomplish the goal, the quantitative approach of having a framework of a survey questionnaire was implemented by using Webropol software with the aim of primary data collection in June, 2023. However, secondary data was also gathered for the literature review used by utilizing sources available on books, e-books, academic journals, and articles which eventually created a full overview on the research topic.

The result of this thesis project provided the argumentative reasoning on how Instagram, the rising media channel and its influential community is empowering and boosting brand images towards the general customers accompanying with sustaining the consumer engagements and values. As a result, the accumulated vivid and profound angles can also be utilized for brands as well as marketers to upgrade their existing strategies and thus gain more customer satisfaction.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The Impact of Instagram Influencer Marketing on Consumer Behaviour in Bangladesh is apparently a research-based thesis where the formulation has been conducted by incorporating two prime aspects of today's business world. Starting with the social media's uttermost revolutions and certainly the widely used marketing tool in this modern era which is Instagram along with its extensive impact on the consumer level of Bangladesh. Now, to specifically mention the objectives behind this thesis, it definitely starts with understanding if Instagram, the sensational media platform for influencer marketing is actually being expanding or evolving into the consumers residing in Bangladesh, and if so, how well its marketing community is being authenticated among people as well as how exactly it's operating to utilize the voices of Instagram influencers in terms of gaining more customer engagement, loyalty and trust. In a nutshell, this thesis is going to be highly reflecting on how this particular platform is impacting on brand images, and the rationality coming from the consumers that are forming them to be more encouraging, adaptive and diverting to this ongoing and pragmatic marketing tool rather than other marketing methods. Apart from that, since this thesis truly specifies a certain region, hence, it makes a room for portraying how this specific South Asian country is ultimately following the path of digital marketing agenda, and moderately moving forward to do advertising or promoting through the potentiality of that. Furthermore, it's going to be comprising both Instagram influencers and consumer perspectives merging with the further considerations that are aligning in this matter. Here, the received outcomes are thoroughly going to be working in favour of the potentiality of the Instagram influencers as well as the customers and their values in such way that people all over the world would get aware of how Bangladesh is also coping with this specific and ongoing trending tool of digital marketing and facilitating themselves thereby.

Nevertheless, while moving onto the central area of the literature review, the heightened agenda was to enlighten the rise of Instagram in the social media, while highlighting all of its corresponding features that came along in the context of influencer marketing starting with overview of Instagram, role of Instagram in marketing, and Instagram influencers and their impact. Eventually, to pivot every attribute towards the central direction of this research paper, some indispensable subjects including the Instagram influencer marketing strategies, and its effect on consumer buying behaviour while nurturing the brief idea on consumers' purchase intention and decision making attached to the Instagram influencer marketing has conclusively finalized the overall literature review. However, the whole thesis has been

customized based on a particular geographical location as mentioned above containing the visualization of how this specific media field signified the overall general market and diversified its impact gradually yet again effectively.

Now, while stating the research questions, the utmost concern here has been detecting the in-depth knowledge, rationality, and accuracy of these below mentioned causes.

1. To study the principal demographic and psychographic features of Bangladeshi consumers who respond to Instagram influencer marketing the best.
2. To study how Instagram influencers profile themselves and engage with their audience in Bangladesh.
3. To study how Instagram influencers influence consumers' perceptions, decision-making and buying behaviour towards brands and products in Bangladesh.

In addition to that, the research has been conducted in a quantitative approach of having a framework of a survey questionnaire published through the Webropol applications in order to gather feedback from the respondents and come up with the final outcomes thereby. Both primary and secondary data have been used here. Thus, all the collected secondary data from the referred books, e-books, articles, academic journals, previous thesis reports and blog posts, has predominantly justified the comprehensive literature review functioning as a foundation to acknowledge the current state of consumer preferences, purchasing behaviour, and the effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies. Furthermore, to nurture that received information and enhance that, primary data has also been collected through online survey responses in this regard. Moreover, concerning the sampling techniques, since I am an eligible micro-influencer active on the Instagram platform consisting of more than 13,000 followers in Bangladesh, hence, on the subject of reviewing this particular research, the participants have been considered as all Instagram users who viewed the Instagram story containing the link of the published survey on the researcher's Instagram account and answered thereby. Here, the questionnaire has been analyzed how the Instagram influencers are successfully persuading the consumer level and providing a huge impact on brands in Bangladesh, simultaneously the relation and dependency of general customers regarding their purchasing intention and behaviour. As a result, through the received outcomes from the end users, all businesses and marketers in Bangladesh can surely utilize and implement that for the sake of improvising their existing strategies as well as brands agenda and therefore boost the companies to go an extra mile to provide more customer satisfaction while keeping the Instagram influencer marketing in mind.

## 2 INSTAGRAM INFLUENCER MARKETING AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Being out of the traditional marketing methods, and in the case of implementing online marketing, the whole concept of social media has the fastest growing communication technologies in both the internet as well as the marketing (Harb, Fowler, Chang, Blum & Alakaleek 2019). And in today's time, Instagram is one of the leading social media platforms considering the marketing objectives for brands. Hence, by executing this specific media platform's advances, now companies do share their core values, brand images and vision towards their customers along with other existing companies in the market. (Mangold & Faulds 2009, 357-365.)

### 2.1 Influencer marketing

In this thesis paper, the content has been structured in such a manner where the initial phase has been started while demonstrating the primary idea on influencer marketing, as well as defining all the related evolutions that have occurred so far in this concept.

### 2.1.1 Definition of influencer marketing

Digitalization and the exposure of social media has flourishingly transformed the media perspectives to a considerable degree that all of its platforms have been successfully generating numerous perspectives and wide-ranging fortuitous aspects. For instance, the influencers, influencer marketing and all the affiliated prodigies also known as Instafamous during this time (Khamis, Ang & Welling 2016.) Starting with influencers, they are basically a bit more discrete rather than the conventional celebrities, in addition, referred to as micro celebrities. To state the uttermost definition, influencers belong to a certain category of individuals who incorporate an extensive network of social media users as their followers in their own channel or platform and hence, generate the right insights and aesthetic towards the target audiences and therefore, set up lucrative examples to influence as an expert in their particular fields. (Zhou, Lü & Mariani 2019.) Here, the considerable interest coming from the consumer's interpretations is that, as the influencer community is much easier to get in touch with and there is always an ongoing mutual communication, it keeps a room for the general people to rely on them easily and hence, keep practicing the lifestyle that is being portrayed. According to the author Álvarez-

Monzoncillo (2023), the influencers have also been introduced as opinion leaders in the society because of the role that they do play in introducing any new products, behaviours or services that are being discovered at the latest in practice or keep leveraging its consumption among the people. They are also more like an actor in the social setting that people keep listening to and following. Apart from that, they can also be identified as semi-celebrities with a wider base of audience. For instance, there was a time, when to do any sort of advertisement brands or companies must reach out the personnel or so to say, the celebrities who is compatible with their business field and thus made their adverts visible to the whole media. However, due to the advancement, as well as the utilization of that, now-a-days they reach out to such celebrities and the influencers to post their products on their blog pages or Instagram profiles along with opinions and thus influence the followers to divert towards those brands. (Álvarez-Monzoncillo 2023, 6-7.) In this present time, the market research has also identified this specific field of influencer marketing as a principle and sensational approach. According to data on youth consumer behaviour, influencers are gaining significance and working at the best interest whilst keeping the consumer engagement in mind and inspiring the best possible amidst of other marketing channels. However, as stated in a study by the Association of National Advertisers (ANA) in the year of 2018, nearly 75% of the consumers corresponded through influencer marketing whereas almost 36% considered that as the most efficacious. (Álvarez-Monzoncillo 2023, 7.)

Accelerated to the growing platform of the social media, as Szakal (2022) discussed, now people are relying on reviews online as well as true feedback in terms of making any sorts of purchase both online and offline. In the context of doing so, they are basically in need of persons who get able to provide the ongoing transparency and consistency for that. Based on this, there has been a new profession discovered who has been known as influencers. In this regard, the job here is to basically point out the utmost reliability in the general people's life that has been provided by the influencers. However, it is also stated that though it's relatively a new genre of interest encountering in the general people preferences, the influencer marketing has become the first choice to promote the brands for both the brands and the influencers. Influencer marketing, according to Lou and Yuan (2019), is also another form of marketing method where marketers and brands both come together in order to settle for specific influencers and hence deliver the task onto them of making the branded contents to advertise those in all the available social media platform.

Thus, influencer marketing is basically a collaboration between the famous social media users and the brands or companies, where both parties get benefitted by exchanging few terms with each other where

the result is bestowed upon the customers. For instance, there is always an influencer marketing deal that the influencers have to promote those brands' products or services as a post in their social media Channel and hence, supposed to be receiving a flat rate per post or some certain percentages of profit from that brand whenever a customer do make a purchase either through their post with a purchase gateway or a promo code. Thus, brands gain more sales and customer engagement. Here, the payment coming from brands towards influencers is never a defined one, and that is because it always depends on that particular deal that both parties have agreed on as well as the responses receiving from their posts, nevertheless it is between three to five figures, and sometimes six figures for celebrities. (McKinsey & Company 2023.) Hence, in light of that it can be simplified as below.

> *A high degree of congruence between the image of a social media influencer*
> *and the consumer's ideal self-image leads to effective endorsement outcomes* (Álvarez-Monzoncillo 2023, 28).

## 2.1.2 Evolutions of influencer marketing

In recent years, influencer marketing has become the revolutionary marketing tactic mostly for the marketers which is taking the reach of brand images and awareness, along with its customer engagement to another milestone. (Leung, Gu, Li, Zhang & Palmatier 2022, 18). Apart from that while scrutinizing the background history on influencer marketing, one common theme that has always been in the picture is in terms of promoting any kinds of brands or encouraging the customers, the requisite of having some influential individuals have had no alternatives even though in the absence of social media. People have always been motivated to make purchases on what they were seeing on either print ads and television or something they were hearing on radio. From that to this road of modern influencer marketing, according to the article published by Aspire (2023) it has brought up the endless changes and that is also keep going so far. For instance, this basically started as a phase one named as the pioneers (FIGURE 1) back in the 18th century where the cream-colored artwork by a British potter, named Josiah Wedgwood got the highest admiration as "Her majesty's Potter" and approval from the Queen Charlotte in the year of 1765, and accelerated to that, the potter was dexterous enough to exploit this essence of portraying the art as "Queensware" by advertising through the stated face value of the influential queen which eventually caused his business a great opportunity. Moving forward to that, phase two started as influencing people through the fictional characters (FIGURE 1). For in-

stance, in 1932 Coca Cola has attained the best possible beverage sales at the height of great depression through the cheery image of Santa Claus in order to divert the target demographic while demolishing the negatives as well as compelling the consumers towards the positive attributes of the company. With time another pattern of influence marketing was discovered known as phase three in the market that kept going for a certain period of time which is still ongoing in the market and that was celebrity endorsements (FIGURE 1). Companies were relying and making agreements with the celebrities because they had a large amount of population following their lifestyle and prioritizing their preferences. As a result, brands like Nike and Pepsi began to establish alliances with them to advertise their products through the quintessence of their popularity. Afterwards, at the peak time of the rising reality TV (FIGURE 1) shows, marketers quickly diverted to those personalities who were being cast in those reality shows referred as phase four. For example, the TV series named "Keeping Up With The Kardashians" which broadcasted in America got world-wide fame just within a bit of time simply because people could relate with such genuine entertainment sectors way better and found it more authentic since it all relied on reflecting the basics of "reality". Therefore, the reality TV stars paved the groundwork for future social media trends based on their overnight success and high volume of viewers engagement. Ultimately, by the moment all the social media platforms, for example, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube were moving upwards with regard to accumulating millions of users, people were getting the window of opportunity to forecast their day-to-day life in another privileged manner. Nonetheless, it has occurred in both ways, starting with the existing celebrities or reality TV stars who already own high profiles of viewers that have been following them, thus it basically leveraged a door for them to gather more engagement on their social networking sights. Another is for the regular people who finally got the possibility to showcase their lives through their contents being more authentic, interactive and true to their followers. Subsequently, this is the core maneuver which captivated people than ever before because such influencers are just the normal people who also being living the same life as others and hence portraying all the good and bad both parts of their lifestyle and eventually engaging and encouraging people through high level of trust and authority provided by their followers, and that is what being designated as influencer marketing (FIGURE 1) in modern society. (Aspire 2023.)

FIGURE 1. Evolutions of influencer marketing (Aspire 2023)

As it is already clarified that influencer marketing is evolving in leaps and bounds, but of course, the more it's expanding the more it requires a critical approach to deal with. Now that it has faced the emerging growth, influencer marketing is just not about influencing people in terms of making them aware of the products or services on behalf of brands, rather than that it's more about Influencer-driven commerce to address measurement and conversion concerns as well as authenticity in partnerships. Starting with the first point of view here, companies are now not forming alliances with the influencers just to advertise, whereas they are basically inserting and verifying that through the various availability of different algorithms and metrics for specific social platforms. Influencers are right now operating something in the middle of the store and its assistance who are implementing the e-commerce platform to make a purchase and eventually they take percentages of those sales and profits. However, it's not just limited in posting photos or videos, influencers are also selling products through the live streaming feature available on Instagram. As a result, countries such as China, USA and even in Europe, brands are ready to pay the influencer comparatively large amount of money in exchange of that because in due course they measure the success through the sales revenue. Another aspect that has been mentioned above concerning the authenticity in partnerships is being handled prudently by the influencers because it has been seen among the consumers, to be precise the millennial, that any sort of campaign that the influencers are taking part in is more like an advertisement rather than influencing. Based on that, the influencers are now providing more of an emphasis on their authenticity while detecting their target audience so that they get able to advertise their influence without compromising. For instance, skin-fluencers are not just portraying the brands who reach them, but they make sure to let their audience know the pros and cons in those brand's products or services as well as their preferred products

while reviewing any products or services that they encountered as a bad experience in the market. In a nutshell, such practices make the influencers more trustworthy by merging this with the technical advancements, even more than conventional celebrities because they stay committed towards their followers while being impartial and true to their areas of expertise. (Ryan 2021.)

## 2.2 The rise of Instagram in marketing

This application tool can also be utilized as a replacement of more time consuming and expensive marketing strategies (Granberg 2019, 10). The basic reason behind brands or companies, regular people and the Influencers community is more engrossed to this social media platform because in Instagram there is a vast opportunity as well as availability for the users to choose their performing actions. Individuals can choose what kinds of content they want to see, create and broadcast. Moreover, the strategy that Instagram owns in order to advertise is fundamentally the strongest marketing tool rather than any others. (Djafarova & Rushworth 2016, 1-7.)

### 2.2.1 Overview of Instagram

Instagram is basically an application over the social media platforms where the core agenda is to upload and share photos and videos. This app was launched by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, two Stanford graduate students, back on the 6th of October, 2010. And just within the launching day, it managed to gather 25,000 users instantly and made a record thereby. Within time, just about a week this app was downloaded for 100,000 times and by the end of that same year, it crossed the number of almost a million among the users. Concerning its history, it required just about eight weeks for the software engineers to build up this app and hence launched it afterwards. The app was first based on a prototype of a web app called Burbn which immediately after raising the funds from investors merged a few advanced features, yet again made sure to ensure that in a very minimalistic approach, for instance uploading photos with filters, commenting and liking. However, the name was originally revolved by combining two words- instant and telegram. At the beginning, it solely relied on the Apple mobile operating system, whereas with time and its expansion in the year of 2012, it also launched for Android devices too. The one central reason behind Instagram launching and its usage flooded all over the social media is simply because just about four months back of the same year, in June 2010, iPhone

4 was launched with an improved version of iOS camera. Nevertheless, in the year 2012, Facebook bought Instagram for $1 billion in cash and stock. (Bystone 2022.)

The functionality of Instagram is definitively straightforward where the prior focus is to post either photos or videos like both long and short clips. Though with time latest and progressive feature has been adjoined here, but as per the inclination of the owners, it has always highlighted the photos and videos publications rather than anything else. There is an availability of followers which works as the bridge between people who want to portray their lifestyles or any sorts of content and hence people who follow them get able to see those. But here is an alternative to make users' own profiles as public or private, and that completely depends on the variability of the profile owner's preferences. (Eldridge 2023.)

However, there are diverse features in order to create contents, sharing procedures and thus communicate through Instagram. Starting with photo and video postings where every Instagram users have the accessibility to post photos and videos as long as it is not against the Instagram Community Guidelines. The collection of photos and videos that a user owns also known as IG feed (Instagram feed) for the followers. Now, people can upload any media up to 1080 pixel according to advanced resolutions formula. (Instagram Help 2023.) Coming out of the traditional way of uploading videos on Instagram feeds, there is a sensational feature named Instagram reels which amazed the whole Instagram community with its wide range of popularity and took this Instagram utilization in a more successful situation than ever before. Reels is basically a video sharing method where users can record as well as merge multiple video clips along with existing audios as well as through the voiceovers, effects and new creative tools for starting with 15 seconds to 90 seconds maximum. Both personal and private accounts can post reels from their profiles and it is at this moment, the most effective way to reach huge potential of audience if one wants to broadcast their Instagram account to that extent. (Introducing Instagram Reels 2020.) Next to that, there is the most used features on Instagram, for instance Instagram stories and instagram stories highlight: Instagram story is basically that kind of a feature available on Instagram which enables the users to post any photos or videos just for 24 hours of a time period. And this is the best way to keep in touch and provide the on-going communicational transparency towards the followers. After that time period, the pictures or videos get vanished if it's not added as Instagram stories highlight in a user's account, to be precisely at the account feed. And that means, even though a story is supposed to be displaying any photos or videos just for a limited time, but with this new advance feature of Instagram highlight, it is now possible to keep those available on a user's account for the long run. (Introducing Stories Highlights and Stories Archive 2017.) Afterwards, there is a live

broadcast feature known as Live video that facilitate all kinds of real time content sharing where users usually stay at the same phase with the audiences and can ask them to join in the live session, or read their comments immediately and thus communicate thereby. (Instagram Help 2023.) Along with that, there is the option of DM (direct message) where users get connected with each other and communicate. In this section, there is a large volume of facilities that have been included recently which leveraged the communicating and contacting methods to another level. For instance, one user can give others both audio and video calls. However, voice texts option has also been added, along with sharing pictures or videos that can be able to see just for one time as well as be in the DM section like a record with the texts. Also, stickers, blocking option, reporting facility, chat theme, mute, shared media, restrict all of these are can also be adjusted according to user's choice of usages. (Instagram DMs 2023.) There is also hashtag feature, and through the hashtag usages people can also get able to encounter the same sorts of contents that come from different profiles, countries or varieties. (Instagram Help 2023.)

According to the Sproutsocial (2023), near to almost 4.89 billion people all over the world are using social media platforms where individuals are effortlessly spending 151 minutes per day which is definitely the highest range so far. Whilst stating about all the social media platforms, it definitely includes Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok, Snapchat and much more, where in terms of business agenda Instagram has been successfully referred as the king of social selling with more than 2 billion users in 2022 simply because it provides the highest ROI (Return On Investment) (FIGURE 2) near to 33% in order to sell products or services. Concerning the users, 18-34 years old people are holding the highest number almost 61.2% when it comes to regularly use this particular social media platform. At the same time, its engagement rates are even four times higher than Facebook. Adding to that, the very latest feature that has been added to Instagram known as reels is making a revolutionary change on this platform than ever before, which making people to spend their 30% of their time that they spend on Instagram, and this is the exact tactic that marketers and brands are utilizing while providing their sponsored content by the influencers. (Sproutsocial 2023.) On top of that, Instagram is used by 81% of social media users for the sake of researching products or services in the commercial sectors (Ambrose 2023). However, in this year of 2023 just about 29% of marketers are willing to invest IN Instagram rather than any other platform (Sproutsocial 2023).
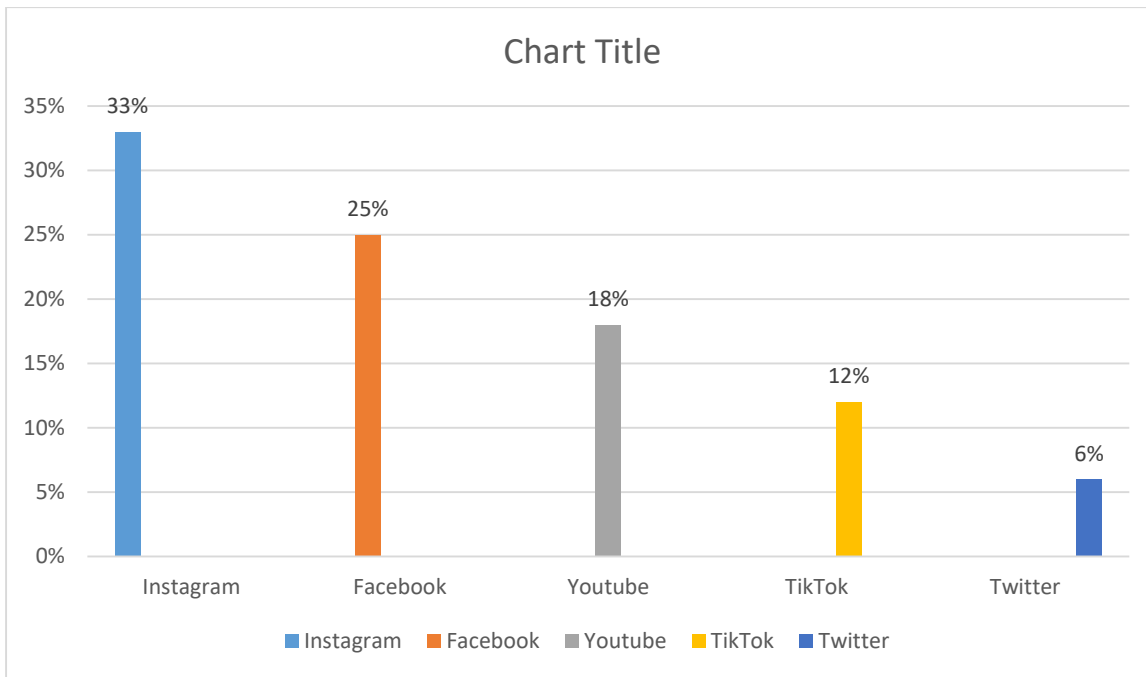
FIGURE 2. Highest ROI for selling products (Sproutsocial 2023)

### 2.2.2 Role of Instagram in marketing

Now, to talk about the functionalities of Instagram in marketing, it basically works in order to foster the brand image or expand its exposure. And one of its ways that brands perceive with the most possible benefits and hence keep executing is working with the Instagram Influencers. Marketing with Instagram influencers eventually leads to lower resistance to the advertising while providing greater authenticity and trustworthiness. In such manners, Instagram influencers basically keep advertising products or services coming from brands with their solid base of followers and these sorts of endorsements are known as electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM). In order to justify the success of Instagram marketing, the marketers operate here by measuring the engagement of people. As it is already mentioned in Instagram there is a vast variety of posting photos, videos, reels, and stories as the core idea is to function with this app. But rather than that, there is always liking, commenting, and sending contents to others which is similar to every other social media platform, as well as an advanced feature of reserving any videos or photos as favourites. And with these features marketers basically measure the success of their marketing campaigns as well as detecting the engagement, starting with the number of followers, likes, comments, and favourites etc. Then again, even from these measuring methods, there

are priorities, and all forms of engagement are handled differently. For instance, the amount of time it requires to do a comment on any posts is definitely more than just liking or viewing them. Hence, all kinds of engagements are certainly not validated at the same level of importance because commenting is more involved than just liking and eventually it refers to the high value of engagements. (Granberg 2019, 15.)

Another crucial aspect here to include is the strategies that companies must comprehend and act accordingly. According to Safko (2010), there are five methods (FIGURE 3) known as strategies for the purpose of acquiring the exposure on Instagram, including analyze existing media, new strategy generates, the social media trinity, resources, and lastly implement and measure. For the first step here to analyse the existing media, it basically sums up to mention all the market plans, campaigns and existing strategy. Moving forward to that, in the second step while generating any new strategies, the first task is to examine the costs that the company had already brought up at the same time of figuring out how many new clients the existing plan is bringing eventually. And by the moment, it gets decided, then the company has to focus on the social media trinity which is the utmost crucial state, because here the three key components of social media for instance, blogging, microblogging, and social networking gets operated to that extent where the marketing agenda gets fulfilled thereby. Adding to that, in the fourth step of resource, it actually refers to the scheme in order to find the resources so that the strategy gets established. The last phase is implement and measure, which relates to how to successfully execute the new strategy and gauge its impact. (Granberg 2019, 15.)

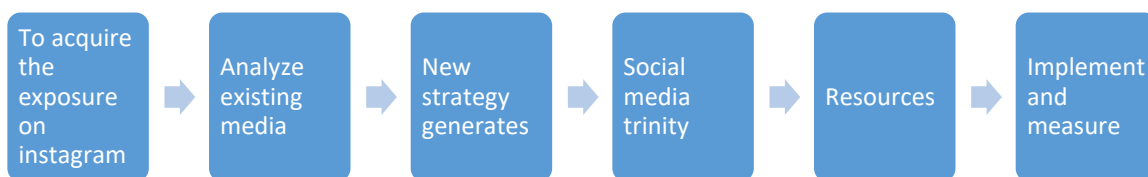| To acquire the exposure on instagram | → | Analyze existing media | → | New strategy generates | → | Social media trinity | → | Resources | → | Implement and measure |

FIGURE 3. Role of Instagram in marketing (Granberg 2019, 15)

Apart from that, brands also can connect with their targeted niche market by uploading high quality photos or videos and engage with others by commenting on as well as enjoying the posts. However, at the initial stage this tactic used to taken in charge just to seek the potential customers, but now it's

more than that. Simply because it requires more requisites to be in the correspondence with the existing customers or followers, as well as, keeping the brand images intact while delivering the up to date information to the audiences of any kinds. The main objective of using Instagram is to get likes and comments from current consumers with the ultimate goal of converting them into followers. The followers of those individuals who follow the account are the secondary target group. Moreover, the role and objective of Instagram marketing generally varies based on different cases, hence, the measuring metrics for those also often differs by solely focusing on the objective. Hence, the total number of followers, likes, and comments is the examples of measurements that are used to build and grow brand awareness. (McCann & Barlow 2015, 273-287.)

While going deeper to this Instagram app usages and it's attributes to keep leveraging the marketing agenda, there are basically two distinct categories of Instagram profiles which are available for the wide range of the users. Starting with the personal account that tends to be the standard ones for those who want to use this application and the available features have already been discussed. However, the Instagram business profile is the advanced version from the Instagram profile category that was launched back in the year of 2016 and right now almost 25 million of business profiles are present. And to be precise, brands who want to outcast their images, the celebrities and the influencers basically prefer this latest and progressive profile idea so that the statistics of the customer engagement becomes clearer to measure. (Varvara 2019, 16.) Furthermore, to do that there are also some additional and advanced features that are highly working in favour of both marketers, brands, influencers and these are provided below.

Starting with Instagram Insights which is an analytics tool designed in order to provide the in-depth information for the business profiles available on this platform. It offers a range of features from various aspects that are specifically tailored to meet the needs of each profile customizable. These features are organized into three categories: activity, content, and audience. Starting with the activity feature, it focuses on assessing the number of individuals reached by a business account, how they discovered the content produced by the account, and the actions they took while viewing the profile. Along with that, the weekly statistical review is divided into different weekdays to provide a detailed analysis. Following that, the second category which is content basically presents all the posts created by the account over a week, including promotional posts, Instagram Stories, and regular posts while providing a comprehensive overview of the content strategy and performance. Then, last but not the least, the audience statistics provide information about the primary regions, age range, gender, and typical peak activity

periods of a profile's followers. Adding to that, it also enables the identification of top cities and countries that engage with the account. Here, the activity timeline, which can be viewed in hours or days, helps to determine the best times to publish content on the profile, considering the patterns of user engagement. (Varvara 2019, 16-17.)

Moving forward to that, promotion and that is certainly a creative feature of the site referred to as promotion is basically to keep acknowledging to the brands, influencers or general users to turn a generated post into an advertisement. This promotional agenda comes with two objectives, first is to create a brand awareness and reach more individuals and the second intent is to provide a following up link towards the viewer's so that they can engage themselves in every possible way with that particular brand or influencer. For instance, sharing that profile with others, visiting the profile, following it, or the highest possibility is getting into the shopping gateway and hence, ordering the products or buying them. Although, while promoting there are alternatives where the users can either promote their posts automatically which will prioritize the similar profiles or indicate that towards a target people by categorizing through location, interests, age and gender. Here, in promotional posts, a budget and timeline of how long it's going to keep promoting gets pre-decided and that eventually leads to the success, cause the higher the budget is, the more it is supposed to be spreading to the audiences. (Varvara 2019, 17.)

Next to that, coming out of the promotional contents, now Instagram has also discovered a more advanced meta tool known as Instagram ads. Through this feature a professional account has the potentiality to create any kinds of customized advertisements as well as boost any feed posts, reels and stories to attract their next customers with precise targeting and actionable insights. (Instagram Ads 2023.)

However, there is a particular feature known as collaboration is relatively an advanced tool that has been added to Instagram quite recently in order to become partners as a collaborative manner where the real task is to boost the creativity, connections and real business growth. Such collaboration refers as co-authoring any post that might be one photo or several photos, as well as videos or reels which is ultimately going to be shown on both of the profile's feed and eventually be available for the rest of the media. (Instagram Collaborate 2023.)

Also, there is the availability of contact information where this specific field is based on the purpose of providing more clarified networking process coming as detailed information which are definitely pre-

ferred by the account's owner. This information for instance, the phone number, address, e-mail address are certainly not mandatory, yet again works as a crossover between the companies or brands and the influencers. (Varvara 2019, 17.)

Now to establish the idea on the effectiveness of Instagram marketing in the context of Bangladesh, a notable example would be referring to a research that has developed the role of digital marketing which includes three prominent social media marketing channels like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. According to the research, the international American pizza restaurant chain Domino's Pizza which made its entry in Bangladesh on February 28th, 2019 by its launching day, gathered a huge success. Almost 72% of the total respondents came to learn about that by the social media platforms. In addition to that, 61% of the respondents got influenced to visit the restaurant relying on the high engagement on all the social media promotional activities. (Akhter 2019, 26-28.)

### 2.2.3 Instagram influencers and their impact

The most tactical approach that has been emerging in this industry is Instagram influencer marketing simply because it is being remarkably successful to connect with potential customers and hence, nurture them thereby (Tafesse & Wood 2021). However, another thesis report concerning "Influencer Marketing as a Marketing Tool" also recognized that, general customers tend to seek recommendations from people like influencers who will be neutral in this sector rather than the brand itself before buying a product (Biaudet 2017, 13). That is why, based on the large possibility of influencing people and therefore, building up own recognition, Instagram influencers have also started to classify themselves on different levels of aspects in this sector and have focused on the distinct segments of the market and its products, as well as claimed themselves as experts. A study conducted by TapInfluence and Influitive revealed that 90% of customers place a high level of trust in recommendations from people within their personal network. Additionally, it was found that online platforms account for 81% of these referrals. (Biaudet 2017, 14.)

Now, concerning the different types of influencers available on Instagram, it basically gets justified by the number of the followers that an account user owns, and that has been provided below (Sanders 2023).
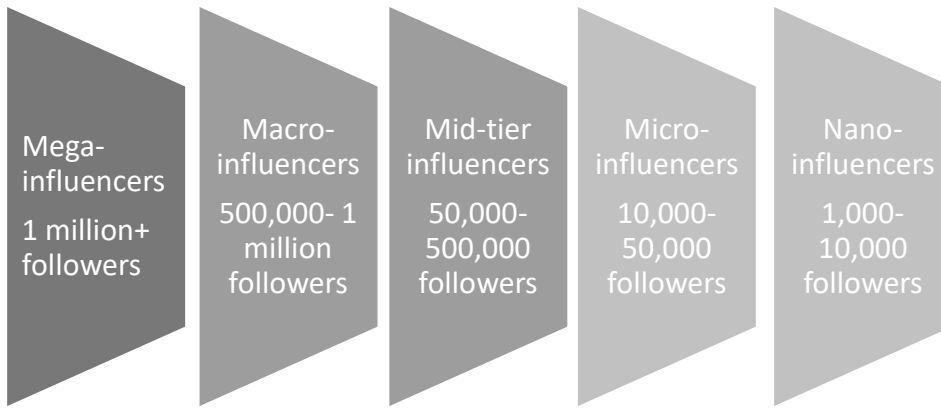
FIGURE 4. Type of influencers and their followers (Sanders 2023)

However, apart from the number of followers there are some other criteria that also classify the influencers and their level of influence. As stated by the review paper of Morteo (2018) on "To Clarify the Typication of Influencers: A review of the literature", the urge of influencing people basically comes either from profession or personal interests for influencers like opinion leaders, experts, celebrities, trendsetters (PICTURE 1) etc. Besides that, the main source of influence which keeps the influencers going and stays on track, along with the engagement rates also impact this cause. (Morteo 2018, 5-7.)

| Profile Criteria | Opinion leader | Expert | Consumer | Social Media luminary | Celebrities | Trendsetters | Blogger | Potential influencers |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Origin of influence | Profession | Profession | Profession | Personal interest | Personal interest | Personal interest | Personal interest | Personal interest |
| Main source of influence | Reputation | Organizational position | Experience | Content quality | Personality | First-hand knowledge | Unbiased opinion | Trust |
| Number of followers | 10,000 – 1 million | 10,000 – 1 million | 500 – 10,000 | More than 1 million | More than 1 million | 10,000 – 1 million | 10,000 – 1 million | 500 – 10,000 |
| Engagement per post | 5% - 25% | 5% - 25% | 25% - 50% | 2% - 5% | 2% - 5% | 5% - 25% | 5% - 25% | 25% - 50% |
| Examples | Activists Analysts Journalists Networkers Thought leaders | Businessmen CEO Executives Insiders | Advocates Employees Fans Users | Instagrammers Social Media mavens Viners Youtubers | Actors Athletes | Platform-specific sensations Rockstars Beauty and fashion | Blog writers | Sharer Summertime player |

PICTURE 1. Main characteristics of influencers (Morteo 2018, 7)

The most important thing that brands have to keep in mind is to have the clear concept of the different categories of influencer and hence identify the right ones while having the correlation between the products, as well as the targeted segments. It might be possible that the influencers which have been

chosen own a little visibility in a grand scheme for instance, not a mega influencer or celebrity, but more like a micro influencer with the same niche that the brands are trying to attract, and eventually this is what comes with greater success. However, celebrity endorsement is a marketing strategy that has been used a lot in the past and even though it is still being successfully practiced. (McCormick 2016, 39-45.)

But now with all the advances that have already been clarified in this thesis paper, it is certain that influencers with followers between 10,000- 50,000 are the new or modern form of celebrities who are thoroughly bringing the similar consumer responses with regard to promotions on Instagram. Adding to that, people often distrust celebrities due to the perception that they are compensated for promoting specific products, leading to doubts about the genuineness of their opinions. (Wei & Lu 2013, 197) Conversely, bloggers acting as influencers appear capable of preserving their authenticity, despite the awareness that they receive payment for their endorsements (Woods 2016, 15). Hence, micro-celebrities are characterized by greater reliability and a stronger inclination to live ordinary lives compared to traditional celebrities. Furthermore, a research conducted on both micro and macro influencers showed that Instagram influencer marketing is the most popular in market segments like the fashion industry (30,51%), followed by accessories (19,07%), and beauty (18,64%) sectors. (Alassani & Göretz 2019)

## 2.3 The impact of Instagram influencer marketing on consumer behaviour

The social media's emergence has broadened consumers' options to access impartial product information shared by fellow consumers as well as influencers. Consequently, it has also empowered them to share their own recommendations about consumption through electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) as well as enabled them to spread the information. (Oliveira 2021, 11-12.) Hence, consumers' buying behaviour is one of the crucial aspects, while dealing with either the whole marketing agenda, or any specific platforms of social media which is interconnected to that. However, this is the topic which has been kept researching, and debating over the years while providing the apprehension of various frame of outlooks to a great extent. (Constantinides 2004)

## 2.3.1 Influencer marketing strategies on Instagram

Authored by Brown & Fiorella (2013), there are two theories that have been practiced regarding the strategy of influencer marketing as specified in the book named as "Influence Marketing". Here, the first identification is the ongoing standard of influence marketing which is highly centralized by retaining the influencers at the centre of marketing universe. Another theory referred as "The scientific truth" truly validates the customers at the centre of marketing universe based on the idea that the customers are definitely superior as well as relying on the core thought that they are the one making the purchase decisions. (Brown & Fiorella 2013, 77-78.)

That is why, in order to justify the first theory, brands or companies implement the Fisherman's Influence Marketing Model (PICTURE 2) that refers keeping the Instagram influencers at the epicentre and circling their followers base identified as the potential Instagram influencers community for the marketers, who may also utilize this formula as the initial phase of the required marketing plan. This is more like a similar concept of "casting a wide net to catch the most fish" because it is the Instagram influencers who are holding the responsibility of making people aware of the brands, and subsequently influencing them to make purchases. (Brown & Fiorella, 77.)
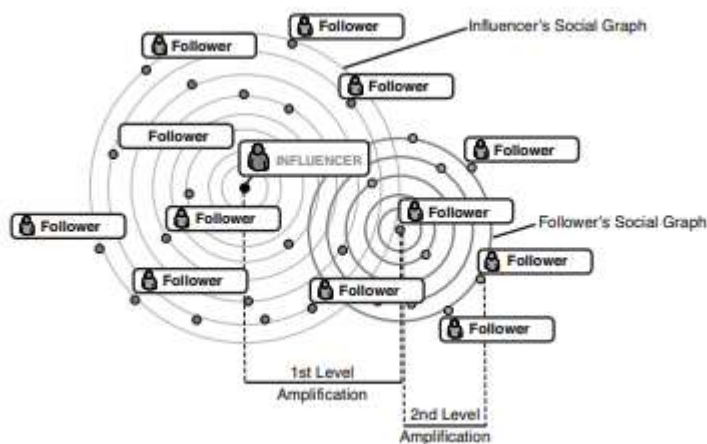


PICTURE 2. Fisherman's Influence Marketing Model (Brown & Fiorella, 77)

Now, focusing on the second theory (PICTURE 3) that prioritize the customers and their decisions that gets influenced by the people, institutions, technologies and communities according to figure two. (Brown & Fiorella 2013, 78). That is also another form of Instagram marketing strategy known as Customer- Centric Marketing Model (PICTURE 3) which is leveraging the first M of the four M's of influencer marketing.
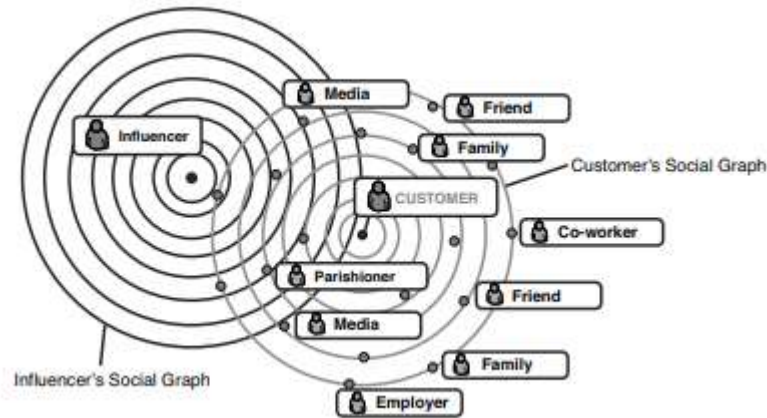
PICTURE 3. Customer-Centric Marketing Model (Brown & Fiorella, 78)

As also illustrated, in the book of Brown and Fiorella (2013) "Influencer Marketing: How to create, Manage, and Measure", there are basically four M's (FIGURE 5) representing make, manage, monitor and measure. And to implement that in the concept of Instagram influencer marketing, brands always try to update their Instagram portfolio highlighting the customers' requirements as well as being connected with them while figuring out where they are currently in their purchase lifecycle for instance, research stage, awareness stage, purchase stage and therefore "make" the right influencers to divert them as the buyers. Moving forward to that, in the "manage" phase in accordance with every other marketing strategy nurturing the relationship with the influencers are mandatory because in such way by contacting with these Instagram influencers, brands are being able to generate trusts, a customer base and the highest possibility of transforming the brand influences as the brown advocates. But of course, this is not the end because the real task starts when the broad and advanced features of Instagram marketing tools assist to "monitor" the implemented marketing campaigns bestowed upon the Instagram influencers and generate ROI thereby. And in the end through "measure", brands as well as the marketers reciprocate to both success or failures of those taken strategies and hence come up with the better version thereby. (Salminen 2018, 10-15.)
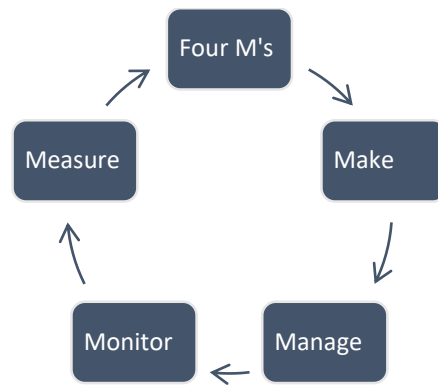
FIGURE 5. Four M's of influencer marketing (Salminen 2018, 10-15)

## 2.3.2 Effects of Instagram influencers marketing on consumers' buying behaviour

To comprise the concept here, three parties are basically being dependent as well as benefitted. For instance, starting with the companies who are willing to invest billions in order to achieve the presence on social networking sites. Then the consumers who are looking forward to those sites while looking for the desired products, along with making any purchases. Finally the influencer community, who are utilizing such urgency of the brands and hence being the authentic source towards the general level of customers. This has been the most pivotal voyage in the customer journey, or the buying behaviour, which keeps influencing and motivating every phase, starting with awareness, consideration, evaluation to purchase, and certainly repurchase. To simplify the relationship between the influencers and the followers as well as the general customers, it is basically the need of the product or services recommendations. It is the consumers who always seek for recommendations from online sources of any kind before justifying a product or even after buying the product to have the thought of if they still want to keep repurchasing it. (Oliveira 2021, 14-15.)

Starting with the purchase intention here, it basically indicates the notion or predetermination coming from the consumers before buying a product or even planning to make a purchase of any products or thinking about taking some services among the huge variations of the availability in the market. To comprise it in another definition, it is more like the initial manifestation coming while making purchases. Hence, by the moment the consumers go down to a positive purchase intention they eventually formulate a positive brand commitment as a result, it leverages them to actually make the purchase. That is why, keeping the central idea of Instagram influencers after forming alliances with brands, they provide the proper insights in order to increase the brands' image positively as well as a high level of

system and information quality, which eventually impacts to attract a large base of customers, but of course, preferably the loyal customers. And this is more like a psychological intention where customers would like to be aware of the brands first and afterwards check all the social network that it has built up to justify it thereby. And in today's time, customers prefer to do so prioritizing the Instagram platform in comparison of others. (Louro 2020, 14.)

Afterwards, the decision making process, and here in terms of any customers making the purchase decision, there are a few components which keep influencing for instance, the cultural, social, personal and psychological characteristics. (Kotler & Armstrong 2006, 134-150.) Accelerated to this core thought of consumers buying process has been referred to as a learning, information processing, and decision-making activity as it proceeds to five phases (FIGURE 6) and these are given below (Kotler & Armstrong 2006, 152-154).

Need recognition → Information search → Alternatives evaluation → Purchasing decision → Post-purchase behaviour

FIGURE 6. Five steps of buyer decision process (Kotler & Armstrong 2006, 152)

In general, the urge or the requisite of buying a product or taking any services always uplifts towards this initial step which is defined as "Problem recognition" according to FIGURE 6. By the moment the customers finalize what exactly they want to purchase, and immediately after that they start to look for information or the availability to meet the requirements of those products or services online by combining both internal and external search. And this stage of the purchase decision making process is referred to as "Information search". Here, they try to brainstorm all the pros and cons before finally deciding which one they should go for as well as recall the previous experiences for any brands of products if they have any. Moving forward to the third stage named as "Evaluation of alternatives" is certainly way clearer for the customers already. Because now they do have the broad idea on all other brands or companies which were in the list and they can thoroughly compare and evaluate the facilities with one and another. That eventually leads them forward to the most beneficial final decision identified as the fourth stage which is "Purchase". Finally, after making the purchase there is one last stage

for better evaluations and reminiscing the whole decision-making journey, and that is "Post-purchase evaluations". In this stage, the core task for the customers is to once again recall the reason behind making this purchase at the first place, and now that it's done already, the task again here is to detect if the product or service that has been taken is being able to meet the requirements and if so how satisfying it is. (Kotler & Armstrong 2006, 152-154.)

Kotler & Armstrong (2006) have also specified the variations concerning the purchase behaviour into various classifications. Starting with complex buying behaviour where it basically refers to the high engagement of customers, which is more like before making the purchase decision customers try to learn about the products in details along with the large availability of other different brands for the same product. And majority of the times it happens to be an expensive or costly products. That is why the consumer will certainly be aware of the learning process by stimulating all the little details about the products and afterwards go for the most suitable and advantageous purchase choice. Moving forward to that there is dissonance-reducing buying behaviour and that is almost similar to the previous one but the slightest difference here is that while choosing the product the availability of brands are not going to be that large. Hence, it provides the opportunity to the consumers to narrow down the brands options and make the decision quickly yet again conveniently. Next, in habitual buying behaviour, both the consumers' engagement along with the brands availability are low, and that is why customers keep buying the same product without doing too much of thinking. Lastly, there is variety seeking buying behaviour which is also related to the habitual buying behaviour, except the fact that customers tend to switch to other variations in the market just to try something different and of course it doesn't indicate that they are not satisfied with the previous brands or companies. (Kotler & Armstrong 2006, 150-152.)

# 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research is basically a well-structured process where information and data are acquired as well as verified so that all the rising factors coming from different angles concerning a specific and pre-decided topic can be studied and analyzed to a broader perspective. Through the implementation of a research project, an overview concentrating on a present condition gets generated to a great extent. However, it also provides a room to enlighten on the chosen domain and recommend all the possible and potential advancements that might occur in the meanwhile and ultimately become interactive and highly useful for the further study. (Flick 2015, 5-7.)

## 3.1 Research design

In order to conduct research of any kind, there are the availability of two different kinds of research methods for the researchers, one is quantitative research method and another one is qualitative research method. For this particular context of this research work, the student designed the outlines based on the quantitative research method. That is because the general agenda of any quantitative research is to generate data and information about the chosen topic in a numerical manner and that is why gathered outcomes are statistically significant to come up with the central idea of the research objectives and determined if it's actually aligning with the those objectives. (Flick 2015, 11.)

Here, in this quantitative approach, the research was implemented through publishing a questionnaire survey on Webropol 3.0 system that eventually collected data from the respondents in the context of fulfilling and reaching the research objectives. The survey for the study was built up with in total twelve questions merging all the required information from the respondents and as a result the raised data from that ultimately put up a major impact to reach to the research goal. The survey (APPENDIX 1) had two pages in total where the first page was designed with five questions in a subtle manner to encourage and engage the respondents so that they feel prompted while filling it out. And while moving on to the next page of the survey, it had seven questions focusing on the deeper understanding of this specific research topic. However, starting with the first research question to basically detect the principal demographic and psychographic features of Bangladeshi consumers who respond to Instagram influencer marketing the best certainly lined up with the raised basic yet again informative questions that had been asked throughout the first page of the survey questionnaire to the respondents, and

these were questions number one, two, three, four and five. After that, in the second page of the survey, questions number eight, nine, and ten were constructed in order to have the profound comprehension of the second research question of this research project which is particularly focused on the Instagram influencers and how they exactly profile themselves and engage with their audience in Bangladesh. Then, for the very last research question about how Instagram Influencers influence consumers' perceptions, decision-making and buying behaviour towards brands and products in Bangladesh eminently provided the detailed overview through the responses that had been received from the respondents in accordance with the survey question number six, seven and twelve.

## 3.2 Sampling technique

As it has already been illustrated that for the thesis work, quantitative methodology had been executed via the survey questionnaire. Through this online tool referred as survey the task here is to examine and evaluate all the data and information that has been collected within a certain size of sampling. Besides that, the population is a large group of people who basically fit into the research objectives and criteria. However, the sampling is the part of the population who participated in the research project that can certainly be justified for the scenario of the whole population. (Sapsford & Jupp 1996, 25-26.)

Now, in the context of this study, the overall population is defined as all the people who are residing in Bangladesh, as well as owning an Instagram account while having the idea about the Instagram marketing. But, of course, based on some practical limitations for instance, time, resources, and accessibility, it was not feasible to analyze this whole population, and that is why as I am an existing Instagram micro-influencer in the region of Bangladesh containing the followers of 13,000+, therefore, the sampling technique was determined based on the followers of my Instagram account. Considering this thesis project, the sample size was the followers who viewed and responded to the Instagram story on my profile containing the survey link which was available for 24 hours. After this specific time, the Instagram story was not showing anymore, and the student immediately closed the survey from the system so that none of the followers could response anymore and that eventually provide the actual number of respondents along with the accumulated data.

## 3.3 Data collection method

For the most parts of any research work, researchers have the possibility to rely on two different sources of data and these are primary data and secondary data. Here, in this thesis project, both primary and secondary data had been used in the nature and significance of the required aspects.

### 3.3.1 Primary data collection

Primary data basically indicates the original or first-hand version of data which is gathered by the researchers itself to develop and facilitate a certain research purpose. And in order to do so, researchers implement various kinds of approaches to collect the primary data for instance, surveys, interviews, field observations, and experiments. (Persaud 2010.) In this thesis work, the principal approach was imposed by publishing a survey questionnaire where the prior focus was to detect the in-depth perceptions from the selected sample size. Since it was an online survey, hence, the respondents were invited to fill out the survey on the student's Instagram account through the most used and recognized feature and that was Instagram story (PICTURE 4). Nevertheless, after keeping the survey published for one day straight, I also posted a thank you message (PICTURE 4) towards the people who responded.
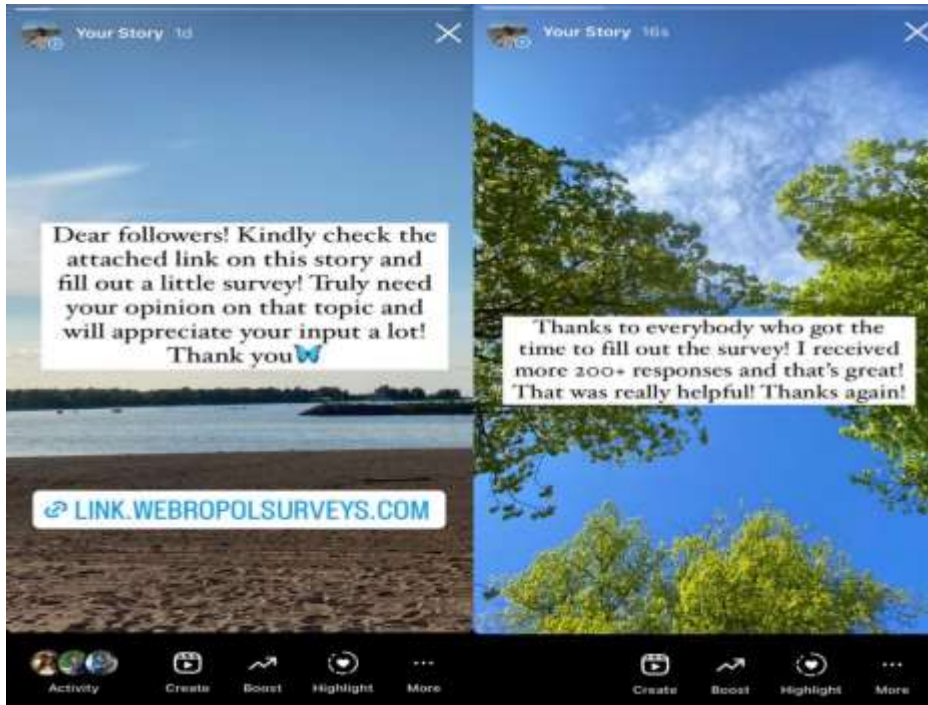


PICTURE 4. Screenshot of the survey link and Thank you message (Instagram story)

The core idea here was to keep the survey as simple as possible so that the targeted people could easily grasp the idea as well as feel uplifted and motivated to drop their beliefs and thoughts. However, as the survey was open for just twenty-four hours, where response errors or inconveniences of any kind had not been encountered that eventually led to collecting the primary data easily. Since it has already mentioned above that the survey questionnaire had been structured containing two pages, hence, it requires to also clarify the pattern of the questions. For the initiating part, there were three screening questions (TABLE 1) in order to receive the idea of who were responding to the survey by inquiring about gender, age and their active time frame on the usages of Instagram. And moving forward to that there were a total of eight structured questions (TABLE 1) that consisted of three dichotomous questions, four multiple choosing questions and one scaling question. In the matter of the dichotomous questions, they could provide their answers in yes or no. For the multiple questions, the respondent could choose their specific, and the best answers, according to their beliefs and concerns. Then, for the scaling question, they could rate from one to ten. And the very last there was one unstructured or open question (TABLE 1), so that the respondents could make me acquainted regarding their own opinion on this certain concern which would certainly be taken in charge for further study of any kinds.

TABLE 1. Types of survey questions (Appendix 1)

| Type of a question | Variety | Question number in the survey |
|---|---|---|
| Screening questions | - | 1, 2, 3 |
| Structured question | | |
| | Dichotomous question | 5, 6, 7, |
| | Multiple-choice question | 4, 8, 10, 11 |
| | Scaling question | 9 |
| Unstructured or open question | - | 12 |

### 3.3.2 Secondary data collection

Secondary data refers to data which has been collected and evaluated earlier for the sake of any primary purposes and now it is offered to be implemented efficiently. Such data basically gets collected for the purposes of other research activities. This source of data has huge benefits simply because it is not expensive as well as not time consuming at all. (Sylvia & Terhaar 2018, 61-62.)

In this thesis work, the initial phase had been established through the large variation of available secondary data collected from different books, e-books, refereed articles, academic journals, previous thesis reports, and blog posts. Moreover, this data collection method had represented the literature review of this thesis work that had gradually oriented the primary research of this research.

## 3.4 Data analysis technique

In this thesis, the collection of both primary and secondary data had been accumulated where the primary data was collected through an online survey amongst the Instagram users, on the other hand the secondary data was collected from previous research conducted on similar topics. As a consequence, in the matter of the data analyzing techniques, the descriptive and explanatory methods had been utilized. I closely examined and thus described the survey feedback and attempted to explain how this demonstrated the influence of Instagram influencer marketing on consumer behaviour. I also did a complete breakdown of the gathered data using different and required graphs as well as displaying how the portion of the sample population behaves to the impact of Instagram influencers in Bangladesh.

# 4 RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The survey questionnaire had been conducted and posted in June 2023 in order to acknowledge and reach the research objective questions while understanding the concept of Instagram influencers marketing on consumer behaviour in the context of Bangladesh. And that is why the establishment of this survey with twelve questions are thoroughly reflecting the research questions of this thesis project. To begin with the respondents' data ratios and details, along with analysing the data graphs of the survey, first of all it was published for one day as a story in my Instagram account where 565 followers viewed the story with the link of the survey, 358 of them opened the survey, 225 started responding and finally 210 participants filled out the survey in a complete manner. And as it has already been pointed out that the core idea of the survey questionnaire was to be acquainted with all the raised research questions and come up with the finalization of these causes. The core principal focus here is to detect the demographic and psychographic features of Bangladeshi consumers, along with the authenticity and engagement of the Instagram influencers Instagram influencers and most importantly, to identify how it's impacting on the consumers buying behaviour.

The first question here that was asked to the respondents from the sample was concerning their gender, and the idea behind this question was basically to figure out the first research question on the demographic feature of the Bangladeshi consumers who respond to Instagram influencer marketing the best. This was basically a screening question with the availability of gender options, such as male, female and other. And from this particular question, as per the graph (FIGURE 7), 109 of the participants confirmed themselves as female, which covered 53% among all the respondents and 46% of the respondents were male.
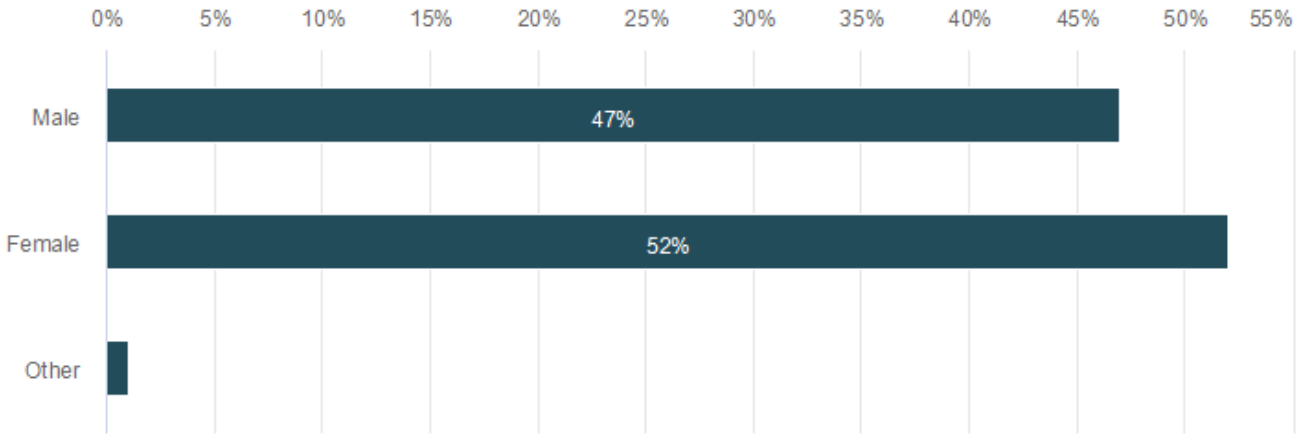
FIGURE 7. Gender

The second question was also a screening question which was asked from the sample that which age group they belong to and that also centralized the core idea to detect another demographic feature relied on the first research question. The age group on this survey had been classified according to generations for instance, genZ (11-26), millennial (27-42), genX (43-58), boomers (59-68) and lastly 69+. Among all respondents, according to the data (FIGURE 8), 170 people belonged from the age group 11-26 which was genZ and that eventually covered 84%. For the rest, 16% of the respondents were the age group of 27-42 who claimed themselves as the millennial and the minority of 1% of respondents belonged from 43-58 referred as genX.
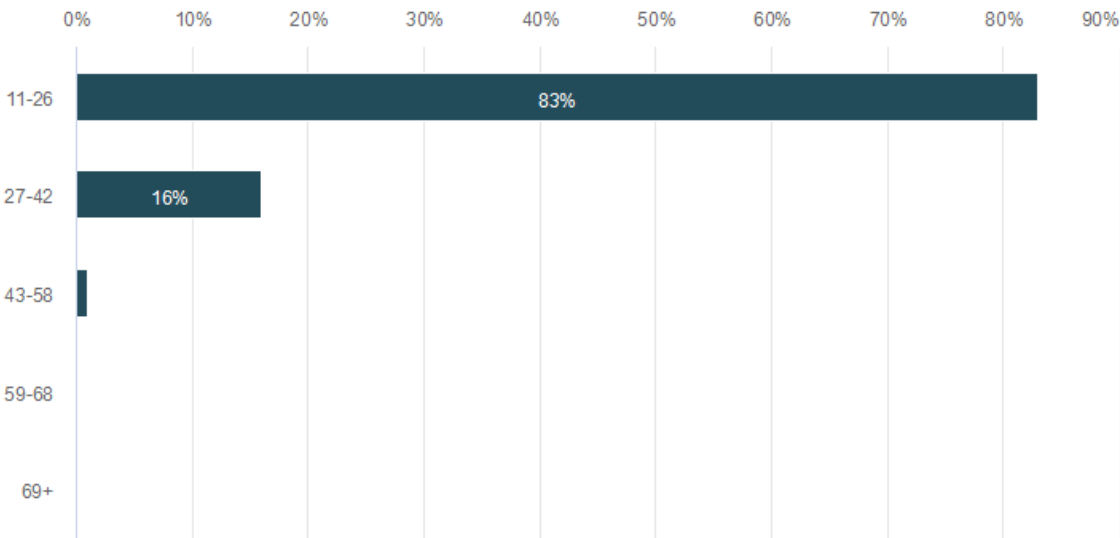


FIGURE 8. Age group

Concerning the third question of the survey, which also concentrates on the first research question, but another pattern of the feature, which was the psychographic one, the aim here was to come up with the idea that how many hours per day the people from the sample basically spent on Instagram. Since it was also a screening questions, hence, answers that might come from different perspectives were considered having the option of less than an hour, 1 hour, 2 hours, more than 3 hours and never. And according to the figure (FIGURE 9), the highest number was 73 from the total of 210 respondents which was more like 37% of the respondents who tend to spend less than an hour on Instagram. Then, there was 64 of the participants which was 32% of them, they answered that they felt prompted to use Instagram more than 3 hours daily. Moreover, among the rest of the respondents 23% of them spent two hours and lastly 8% of the people spent one hour daily. However, there was not a single person who answered that they never spent time using Instagram.
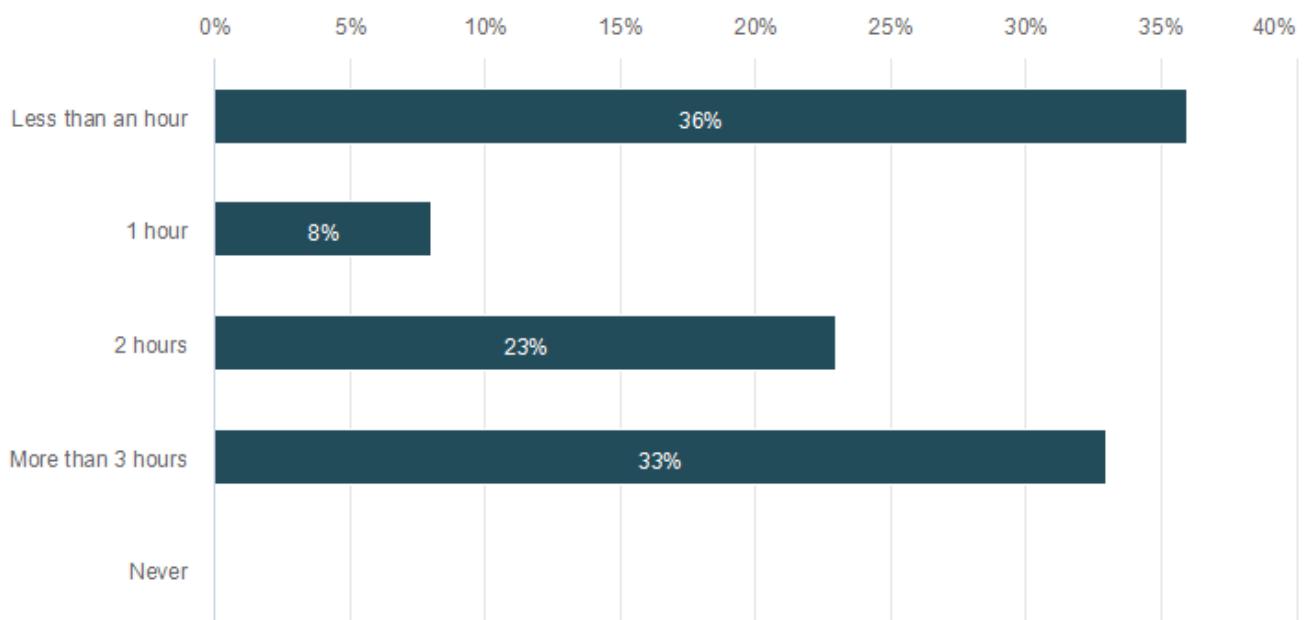


FIGURE 9. Daily time spent on Instagram

The fourth question also similarly focused on the psychographic paradigm of the respondents in accordance with asking the sample about their most interested and preferred type of contents on Instagram. But for this pattern of the question, it was basically a multiple choice question where respondents could select more than one in the aim of identifying their choices which would eventually impact to affirm the first research question. For this specific question, the choosing options were classified into the most up to date content criteria of recent times, such as fashion, beauty, fitness, travel, food, lifestyle and other. The highest response here came into the fashion category of almost 72% (FIGURE

10) which was 145 people among the total of 210 of the respondents. Moving forward to that, 45% of people responded to the beauty category as their most preferred content which was covered by 90 of them in total and certainly the second largest ratio from the respondents. Then again, fitness, travel, lifestyle, food and other contents were preferred by 36%, 34%, 26%, 25% and 15% of the total respondents.
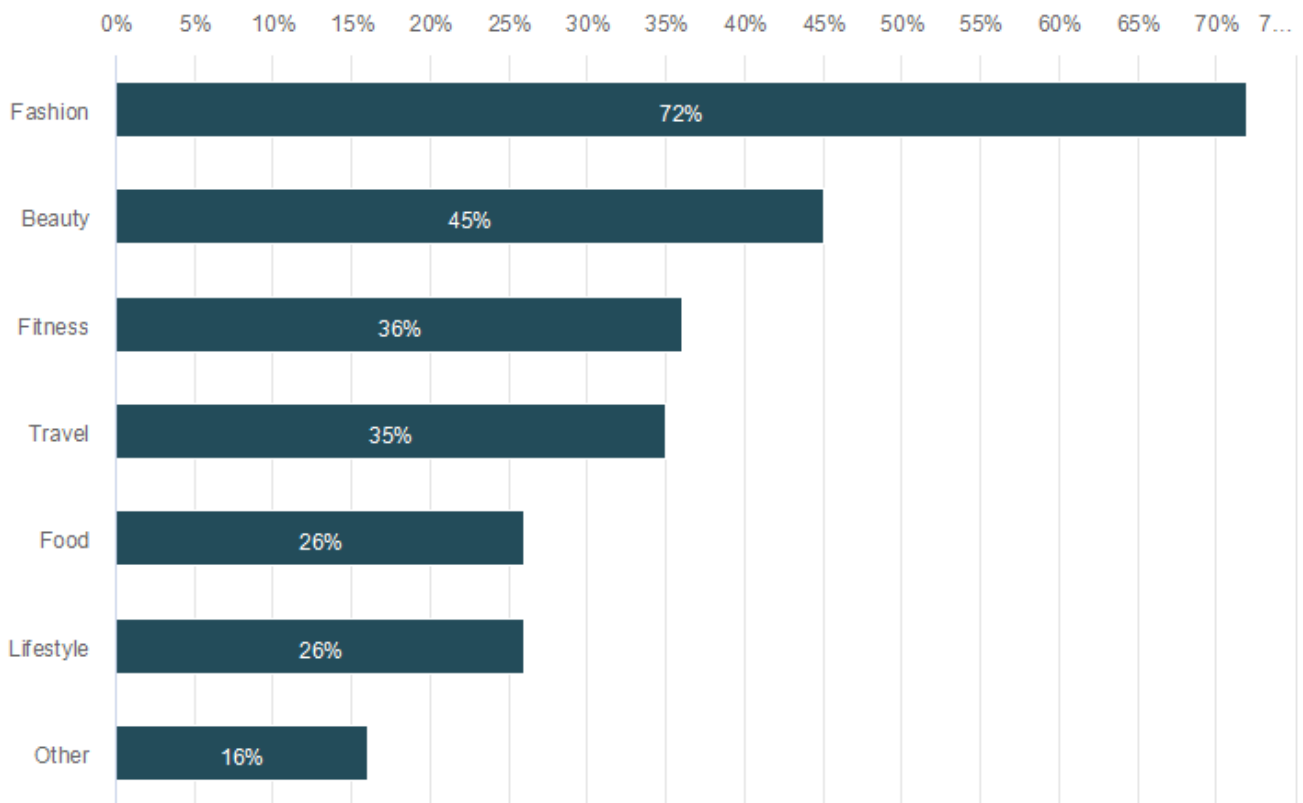


FIGURE 10. Most interesting content types

The fifth question was the question which basically summed up the whole demographic and psychographic features of the Bangladeshi consumers who respond to Instagram influencer marketing the best and assisted to understand the deeper of this context. The question for the sample was if the people residing in Bangladesh were actually aware of influencers who promote products or services on Instagram. This question was a dichotomous question with the answers provided as yes or no. And as specified by the respondents (FIGURE 11), the figure showed nearly 93% of them answered positively and confirmed as yes which was 186 in number out of the total of 210 respondents and just about 7% of them answered that they were not aware of such influencers in Bangladesh.
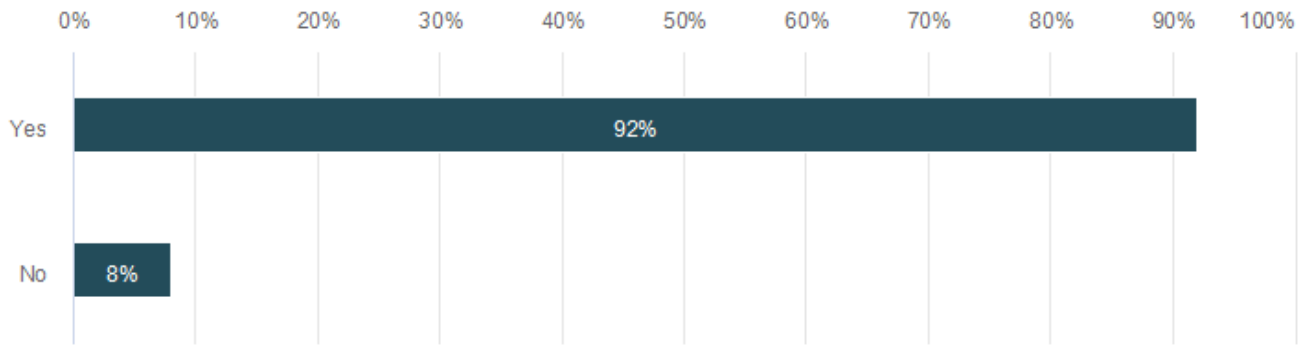
FIGURE 11. Influencer awareness

Now, for the sixth question, it was basically intensely focused on the consumer perception and pur-chase intention which was basically a sub-category in the whole buying behaviour criteria towards the sample. The intention behind formulating this question towards the respondent was to study the third research question which was how the Instagram influencers influence consumers' perception, decision making and buying behaviour towards brands and products in Bangladesh. By asking this question that if they ever followed a brand being influenced by the advertisement of Instagram influencers, basically assisted to study this third research question that had been introduced already. This question was cer-tainly a dichotomous question of having the answering option of yes or no, where the majority of the respondents, practically about 91% (FIGURE 12) of them which was 183 in number among the total respondents of 210 answered that they did follow brands being influenced by the advertisement of In-stagram influencers. However, just about 9% of them answered no in here, and responded in negative with the raised question.
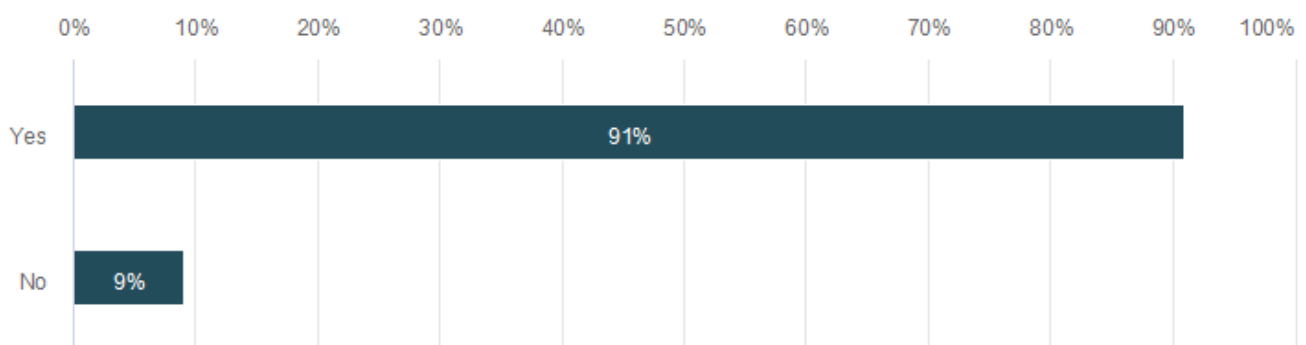


FIGURE 12. Influencers' impact on brand following

Progressing to the seventh number of the survey question which was if the respondents ever bought any products which were promoted by Instagram influencers were also specified onto the central yet again broader idea of understanding the consumer decision making process. This question was interconnected with the third research question that already been mentioned above. This was also a dichotomous question where 165 of the respondents that came about 82% from the sample (FIGURE 13) who replied yes, eventually meant that there are a large number of people in Bangladesh, who highly feel prompted and leveraged enough to trust the products or services, which get promoted by Instagram influencers. Apart from that, 18% of them responded that they had never bought any products advertised by Instagram influencers.
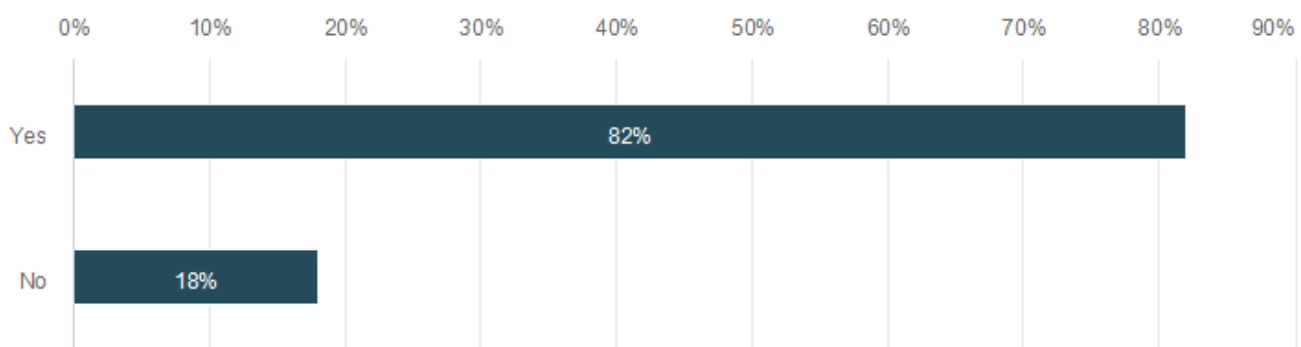


FIGURE 13. Influencers' impact on buying behaviour

Now, regarding the eighth question of the survey, which was asked from the sample, if they believe that Instagram influencers provide genuine product or service recommendations, was fundamentally designed to display in accordance with the second research question which was how exactly Instagram influencers profile themselves, and engage with the audience in Bangladesh. For this multiple choice question, there was a diversification of answers availability so that it would assist to discover the nature of the respondents inherited and honest thoughts. The respondents had options to answer such as 1) yes, I believe Instagram influencers provide genuine product or service recommendations, 2) yes, but I think some influencers may only provide genuine recommendations for certain products or services, 3) no, I don't believe Instagram influencers provide genuine product or service recommendations, 4) no, I think influencers rarely provide genuine recommendations and primarily focused on promotional content, and 5) I don't have an opinion.

Though this question was a bit tactical to answer, still 148 from the total 210 respondents affirmed that yes, they believe that Instagram influencers provide genuine product or service recommendations,

which was the largest proportion of the respondents (FIGURE 14) and that came at 74%. Following that 48 people of the total respondents which was 24% also claimed that yes, but they think some influencers may only provide general recommendations for certain products or services. 5% of the respondents answered that they don't have any opinion, 4% of them clearly disagreed as no and confirmed that they don't believe Instagram influencers provide genuine, product or service and lastly, 3% of them answered no and they think influencers really provide genuine recommendations and are primarily focused on promotional content.
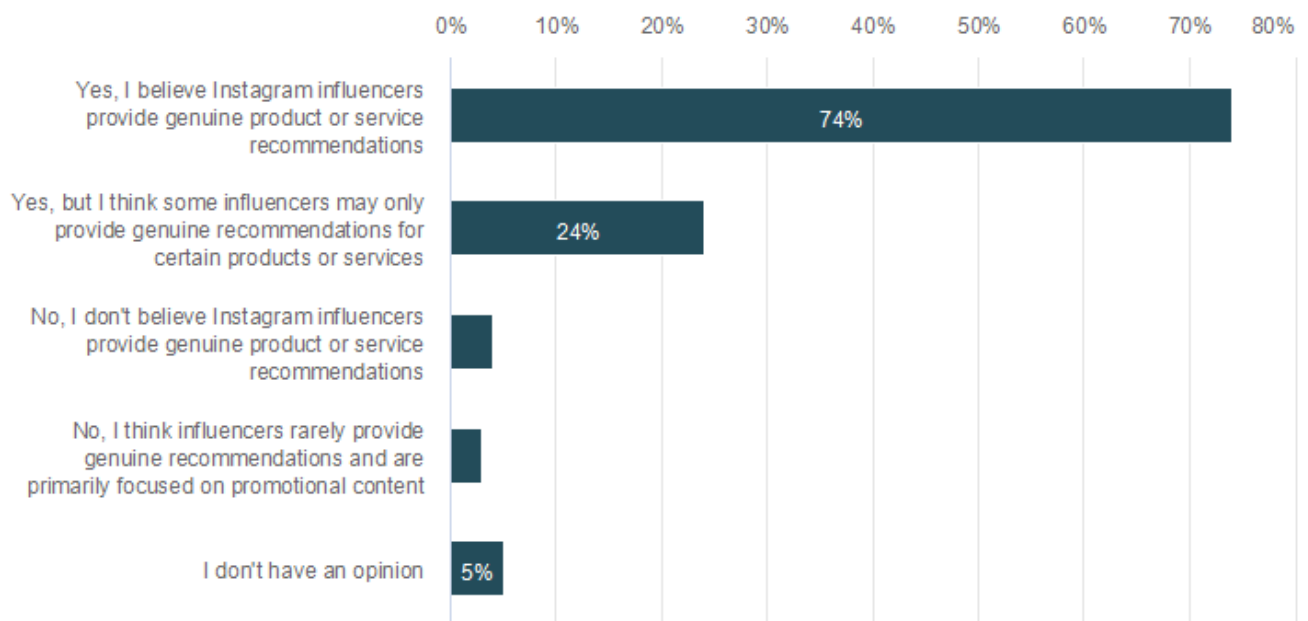


FIGURE 14. Influencer's authenticity on product recommendations

The ninth question was also related to the second research question of influencers profile and engagement, and the question that was asked from the sample was to rate the trustworthiness of the product recommendations provided by Instagram influencers. This was basically the only scaling question with the availability of ratings 0 to 10. And based on the data reports of the survey (FIGURE 15), 43% of the respondents, which was 87 from 210 respondents signified as promoters because they rated from 9-10, which meant this particular number of people were extremely likely to trust the product recommendations provided by Instagram influencers. But there were 30% of the people who answered this scaling question somewhat from 7-8 and showed as passive in the graph. However, 27% of the total respondents rated from 0 to 6, and the number was in total 55 people who were not trusting the product recommendation coming from the influencers to that level.
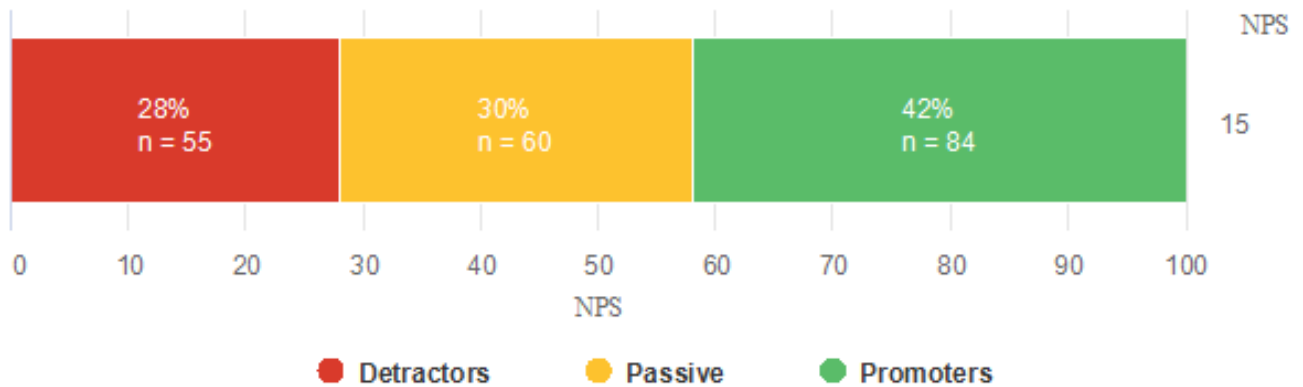
FIGURE 15. Trust on influencers' product recommendations

The tenth question asked the sample again concentrating on the second research question was if they think Instagram influencers actually use the products or services that they promote. For this particular question, there were the variations of answers starting with 1) yes, I believe most influencers genuinely do so, 2) yes, but I think some influencers only use for promotional purposes, 3) no, I believe most influencers do not, 4) no, I think, influencers rarely use, and 5) I don't have an opinion. In this stage, 137 of the respondents which was 68% (FIGURE 16) among from the 210 of the total respondents answered in the most positive way and confirmed that yes they believe most influencers genuinely do so. Apart from that 25% of them confirmed as a yes, but they think some influencers only use for promotional purposes. For the rest 9% answered no, they believe most influencers do not use, 5% of them think that no, influencers rarely use and 4% did not have any opinion.
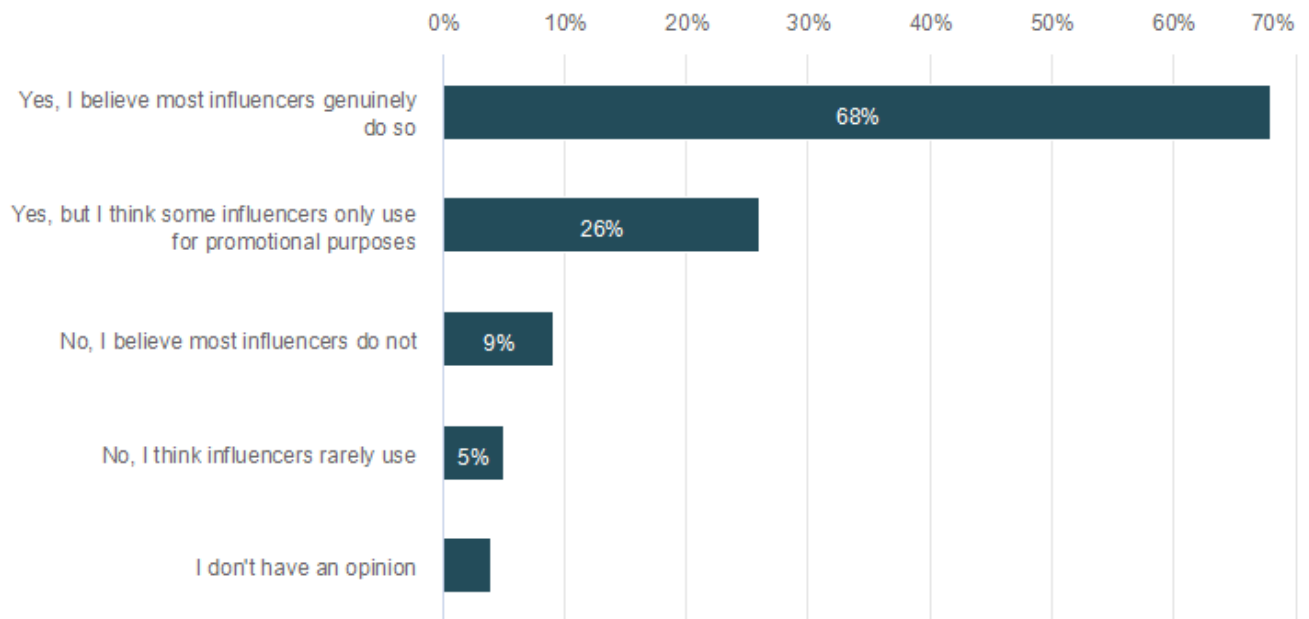
FIGURE 16. Perception on influencers' product usage

The eleventh question was basically the question that was engrossed in influencers profile and engagement criteria related to second research question, and that was, if the respondents from the sample compared themselves to the lifestyle and experience portrayed by Instagram influencers. This was a multiple choice question with the options of 1) yes, I frequently compare myself, 2) yes, but I only compare myself occasionally or under certain circumstances, 3) no, I don't typically compare myself, 4) no, I purposely stay away from self-comparison and 5) I don't have an opinion.

As reported by the figure (FIGURE 17) of the survey 49% of the respondents which is 99 people from 210 of the total respondents acknowledged that yes, they frequently compare themselves. Afterwards 21% of the total respondents, which was 41 in number, answered that no they don't typically compare themselves. And about the others, 15% of the respondents responded, as a yes, but they only compare themselves occasionally, or under certain circumstances, 9% of them answered no, they purposely stay away from self-comparison and the rest of the 6% did not have any opinion.
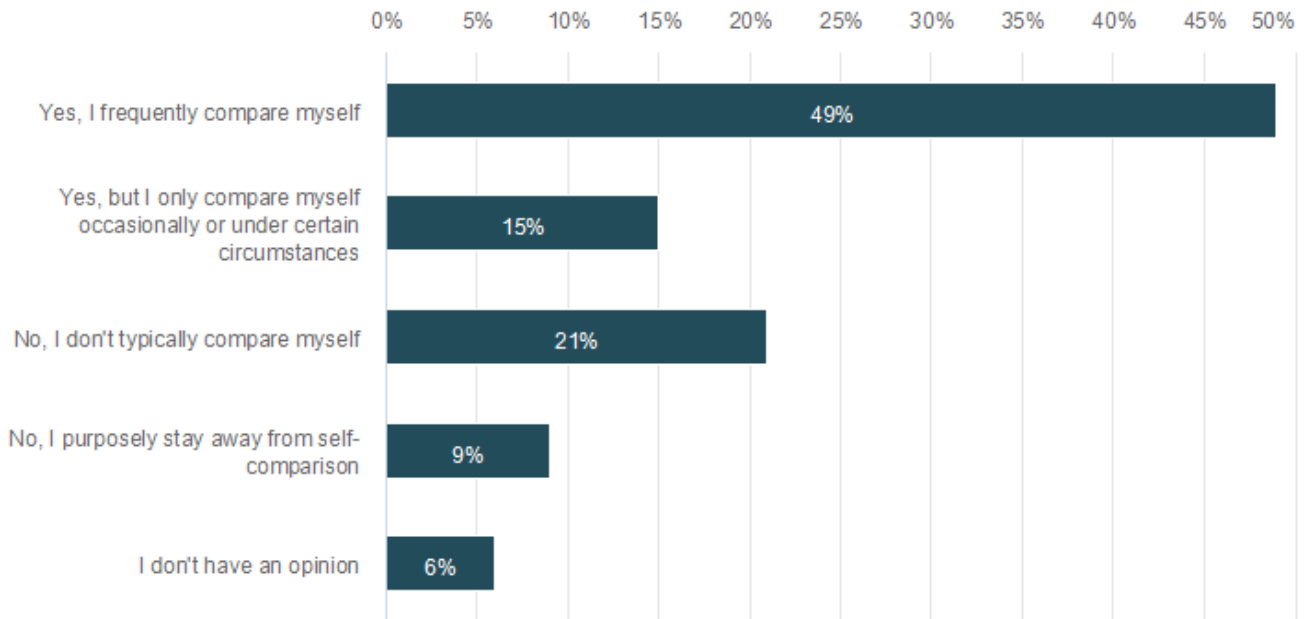
FIGURE 17. Comparison with Influencers'

At the very end of this survey questionnaire (APPENDIX 2/1), there was one unstructured or open question in order to be aware of the real life thought, coming from general level of consumers in Bangladesh concerning this raised research topic. The twelfth number of the question was asked the sample to describe in their own words of how exactly they perceive the overall Instagram influencer marketing on Bangladesh and among 210 of the total respondents 36 participants made sure to express their perception.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

In today's world, the diversification of social media and all of its pioneering is simply just not narrowed down in communicating, exchanging views and thoughts or revolving the daily life, whereas in the corporate world, it's becoming the principle approach that keeps validating from various perspectives and people are also being relied on such advances than ever before. To begin with the research discussion here, the principle objective of this thesis project was to exhibit the core fact concentrated on the consumer's perspectives of Bangladesh, if they actually started to anticipate on this most sensational social media platform, which is Instagram. The core display of this thesis project was to highlight how Instagram, the rising media channel and its influential community is empowering and boosting numerous company products or their services towards the general customers accompanying with sustaining the consumer engagements and values. Furthermore, this study has also tried to assess and generate the authenticity provided by the advanced media tool that brands as well as consumers are utilizing on a large scale. Over and above that, in this thesis work, the theoretical framework has also been illustrated from different perspectives on consumer behaviour so that it assists to discover the profound angles of the raised research questions to achieve the expected goal. Adding to that while focusing on the customers, this thesis also endeavoured to portray the dependency of the people to Instagram, as well as Instagram influencers, while detecting the scale of domination coming from the influencers, and that also established by the vivid and comprehensive literature review.

Now, to state the survey outcomes it has successfully been recognized that in the context of Bangladesh, majority of the consumers who respond to Instagram influencer marketing is the female users rather than male which is successfully incorporating with the literature findings where women also seemed to be more influential on media platforms. However, among all the generations, in accordance with the statistics of the respondents generated by the online survey, certainly determines that in the context of Bangladesh, the users from 11 to 26 years old or so to say the genZ were more influenced by Instagram influencer marketing. Along with that while studying the research questions, the survey successfully demonstrated all the aspects starting with people from Bangladesh are also including this Instagram platform as a major tool to operate for their daily life. With these emerging sectors on today's world, they are also trying to be in the equal pace by having the understanding on various developing criteria for instance, fashion, beauty, fitness etc. which are also bringing huge success for the rest of the world according to the theoretical framework. But of course, it is just not restricted in the

regular life whereas in terms of making any online or offline purchases, they are relying on their opinion leaders known as influencers than ever before. Moreover, on the report of the survey, it has also been clarified that people tend to follow these influencers, compare with them and in consequence, feel motivated to assert all the activities that they are coming across online through these influencers. Besides, it certainly not only narrowed down in their requisites, but also relation between the consumers and influencers is apparent in compliance with the survey data. And that is why the brands are also being diverted to the influencer community in order to establish their images and increase the sales revenue. Based on that, according to the survey respondents, a major domain of Bangladeshi are trusting and relying on the advertisements coming from the influencers as well as feeling encouraged to buy the promoted products and services. Though there is still a bit of controversy concerning the authenticity of influencers' recommendation as well as if they actually use this product and then provide reviews or it's just solely dependent on the commercial interest. But with the attempt and transparency of the influencers in Bangladesh, they are definitely alluring the customers and becoming more promising. As a result, according to the survey result, the consumers are nevertheless seeming to be reliable and trusting influencers. As stated by the direct responses of the Bangladeshi consumers on the survey, such marketing tactics are basically win-win situation for all of the aspects, such as the brands, the Instagram influencers, and most importantly the consumers. This Instagram influencers' marketing tool by this point, is a key promotional tool which is undoubtedly bringing better benefits than other social media marketing.

To conclude, through the implementation of this thesis project both small or big companies in Bangladesh can consider the rising criteria that consumers are expecting and eventually execute those while operating with this specific digital marketing tool. Along with that the influencers may also come across and thereby figure out their lacking on their further advertisements and promotions. Nevertheless, in this research, the limitations which were encountered started with publishing the survey in English. And that somehow impacted on receiving wide-reaching responses from the participants, due to the language barrier as people certainly feel prompted to fill out surveys in their own languages and in Bangladesh the predominant language is Bengali. And following up to that, another research limitation was the choosing of the sample size which was based on the Instagram followers of my Instagram account and that might have narrowed down the diversity of perspectives and experiences. But of course, due to the time restrictions, this particular method of data collection based on this sample was certainly easier compared to a broader size of sample. So, the further recommendation here would be choosing the sample from a larger scale of population.

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Survey Questionnaire

THE IMPACT OF INSTAGRAM INFLUENCER MARKETING ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN BANGLADESH

1. What is your gender?
   - Male
   - Female
   - Other

2. Which age group do you belong to?
   - 11-26
   - 27-42
   - 43-58
   - 59-68
   - 69+

3. How many hours per day do you spend on Instagram?
   - Less than an hour
   - 1 hour
   - 2 hours
   - 3 hours
   - More than 3 hours
   - Never

4. Which type of content on Instagram, are you most interested in?
   - Fashion
   - Beauty
   - Fitness
   - Travel
   - Food
   - Lifestyle
   - Other

5. Are you aware of influencers who promote products or services on Instagram in Bangladesh?
   - Yes
   - No

6. Have you ever followed a brand being influenced by the advertisements of Instagram influencers?
   - Yes
   - No

7. Did you ever buy any products that were promoted by Instagram influencers?
   - Yes
   - No

8. Do you believe that Instagram influencers provide genuine product or service recommendations?
   - Yes, I believe Instagram influencers provide genuine product or service recommendations
   - Yes, but I think some influencers may only provide genuine recommendations for certain products or services
   - No, I don't believe Instagram influencers provide genuine product or service recommendations
   - No, I think Influencers rarely provide genuine recommendations and are primarily focused on promotional content
   - I don't have an opinion

9. How likely are you to trust the product recommendations provided by Instagram influencers
   - 0- Not at all likely
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - 6
   - 7
   - 8
   - 9
   - 10- Extremely likely

10. Do you think Instagram influencers actually use the products or services that they promote?
    - Yes, I believe most influencers genuinely do so
    - Yes, but I think some influencers only use for promotional purposes
    - No, I believe most influencers do not
    - No, I think influencers rarely use
    - I don't have an opinion

11. Do you compare yourself to the lifestyle and experiences portrayed by Instagram influencers?
    - Yes, I frequently compare myself
    - Yes, but I only compare myself occasionally or under certain circumstances
    - No, I don't typically compare myself
    - No, I purposely stay away from self-comparison
    - I don't have an opinion

12. How would you describe your overall perception of Instagram influencer marketing in Bangladesh?

   _____

   _____

   _____

12. How would you describe your overall perception of Instagram influencer marketing in Bangladesh?

Number of respondents: 36

| Responses |
|---|
| This media field is rising rapidly now and people are trusting instagram influencer because of their true advertising and honesty. And brands are also taking full advantages of that. |
| It is developing day by day. |
| Firstly I'm going to say it's unique. It gives different Ideas to Bangladeshi people to improve their style. It helps identify our country country. And lastly it help us buying the right thing that will suit us! |
| Easy Marketing |
| Sometimes influencers exaggerate things that are not entirely true as they get paid by the brands. |
| Influencers try to make the advertisements as real as possible. I just don't trust those brands who pay the Influencers. |
| It has a great impact on consumer behaviour. |
| Well honestly, the whole 'promotional marketing' scenario is so convoluted in Bangladesh, people just start taking money from clients for product promotion. Whereas, it should be the other way round; they should only promote the product that they have been using. This actually pulls down the trust of people on overall online purchases, at the end of the day. |
| No comments. |
| Creative, but at some point they overdo it. |
| Instagram is a platform where potential customers can buy things from instagram influencers. More or less if they are honest promoting any services then it can grow up more |
| It's better than Facebook marketing. |
| It's good but gradually it's becoming a bit cluttery because so many people are trying to be-come one influencer. In easy words there is more marketer and less customer. |
| 9/10 |
| Instagram influencers are important for now a day's marketing in Bangladesh. |
| Good |
| Most of our Bangladeshi brands are using influencers as a key promotional tool. |
| Instagram influencers are helping new entrepreneurs by promoting their products. |
| Nowadays being an instagram influencer is a very popular thing. So, people should try it. |
| It is growing |
| Nowadays the presence of digitalization is visible in every aspect of our life; such as education, health and medicine, entertainment, marketing, finance sectors etc. |
| I think Instagram is a vulgar platform now, influencers should choose another platform. , Instagram has become a dopamine release for boys these days. |
| Nowadays the presence of digitalization is visible in every aspect of our life; such as education, health and medicine, entertainment, marketing, finance sectors etc. |
| It's great |

| |
|---|
| Good work done but less authenticity. Not every product is good, however, I feel they yet talk good about products that don't work for them either. |
| If they focus on advertising valuable products that are really important for us regardless of the products that are important for business compition it would be awesome. |
| Yes it is very important for Instagram influencer marketing in Bangladesh |
| I think Instagram is a vulgar platform now, influencers should choose another platform. , Instagram has become a dopamine release for boys these days. |
| Influencer marketing typically works for specific categories like fashion, makeup and supplements. But there is a preference of influencers as well when it comes to their reviews. |
| They should give true reviews |
| Brilliant |
| Most of them doesn't have any idea how to grab the specific cohorts for the products |
| It's good because they are representing our country product in worldwide. So obviously there are lot of benefits for our overall economy. |
| I do believe that people are being influenced by influencers to the degree that they buy everything that it advertised. |
| Not bad |
| Paid promoters are not fully aware of the quality of the product which causes trust issues |