
INFLUENCER FATIGUE AND CONSUMER RESPONSE TO INFLUENCER MARKETING: EVIDENCE FROM SOCIAL MEDIA USERS IN ERNAKULAM

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ABSTRACT

Influencer marketing has become a dominant promotional strategy on social media, yet growing consumer fatigue toward sponsored content raises critical questions about its continued effectiveness. This paper examines influencer fatigue among social media consumers and explains how repeated influencer promotions are associated with consumer attention, trust, engagement, and purchase-related response. The study was developed from dissertation data collected from social media users in Ernakulam, Kerala, through a structured questionnaire. A descriptive research design was adopted to systematically describe consumer opinions, social media usage patterns, and behavioural responses, and respondents were selected through convenience sampling based on accessibility and willingness to participate. Descriptive results showed that Instagram was the most frequently used platform, a substantial majority of respondents followed influencers, and an overwhelming proportion reported feeling tired or annoyed by influencer promotions. The leading reason for fatigue was too many sponsored posts. A chi-square test revealed a significant association between daily time spent on social media and whether respondents followed influencers. The earlier exploratory factor analysis section was replaced with multiple correlation analysis based on the reported Pearson correlation matrix. The combined association of eight fatigue indicators with reduced purchase-decision impact was statistically significant, indicating that perceptions of advertisement overload, inauthenticity, repetition, and engagement decline jointly correspond with weaker purchase influence. The findings indicate that influencer fatigue is a broad consumer response involving excessive promotion, reduced trust, weakened

engagement, and lower purchase influence, highlighting the need for marketers to reassess the frequency and authenticity of influencer-driven campaigns to sustain consumer attention and brand credibility.

KEYWORDS: *Influencer Fatigue, Influencer Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Social Media, Multiple Correlation, Descriptive Analysis.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Influencer marketing has become an integral component of contemporary social media communication, with brands increasingly leveraging digital content creators to reach target audiences through ostensibly authentic peer-like endorsements. Unlike conventional advertising formats that are often perceived as intrusive or overtly commercial, influencer-generated content tends to resonate with consumers because it mirrors everyday user experiences and conversational styles. This perceived closeness to ordinary consumer reality has made influencer marketing a preferred strategy for many organizations seeking to cultivate brand awareness, foster engagement, and drive purchasing behaviour among digitally native audiences.

Nevertheless, the very attributes that render influencer marketing effective may also precipitate its diminishing returns when audiences encounter promotional content with excessive frequency. A growing body of anecdotal and empirical evidence suggests that repeated exposure to sponsored posts, product endorsements, and collaborative brand campaigns can engender a phenomenon commonly referred to as influencer fatigue. This condition manifests as emotional exhaustion, perceptual irritation, waning interest, or declining trust in both the influencer and the brands they promote. As consumers are inundated with an ever-increasing volume of paid partnerships across multiple social media platforms, their capacity to distinguish genuine recommendations from commercially motivated content becomes progressively strained.

The significance of this issue extends beyond individual consumer annoyance, as influencer marketing fundamentally depends upon the preservation of perceived authenticity and relational trust between content creators and their followers. When audiences perceive that influencers are prioritizing commercial agreements over authentic engagement, the credibility that underpins the entire marketing model becomes eroded. Consumers may respond by passively scrolling past advertisements without interaction, actively unfollowing or muting influencers, discounting product recommendations, or altogether ceasing to rely on influencer

content when making purchase decisions. This trajectory poses a considerable dilemma for marketers and brand strategists, as the very communication channel chosen to cultivate consumer trust and affinity may inadvertently undermine those objectives through overutilization. Consequently, understanding the antecedents, manifestations, and behavioural consequences of influencer fatigue has emerged as a pressing concern for both academic researchers and marketing practitioners alike.

1.1 Problem Statement

Influencer marketing has emerged as a preferred promotional strategy for brands seeking to engage consumers through authentic peer-like endorsements on social media platforms. However, the proliferation of sponsored content has given rise to influencer fatigue, a condition wherein consumers experience tiredness, irritation, and diminished trust toward both influencers and the brands they promote. Despite growing anecdotal evidence of this phenomenon, limited empirical research has systematically examined the antecedents and behavioural consequences of influencer fatigue among social media users. Furthermore, the extent to which fatigue indicators collectively influence consumer purchase decisions remains inadequately explored in the existing literature. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating the relationship between influencer-fatigue perceptions and reduced purchase-decision impact among social media consumers in Ernakulam, Kerala.

1.2 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on social media users who are exposed to influencer marketing content, specifically targeting individuals residing in Ernakulam, Kerala, as the geographic boundary for data collection. The research examines consumer perceptions of influencer fatigue, including advertisement overload, perceived inauthenticity, content repetition, reduced trust, and engagement decline, along with behavioural responses such as ad avoidance and diminished purchase influence. The study employs a quantitative descriptive research design, utilizing a structured questionnaire with Likert-scale items to capture self-reported attitudes and behaviours. Data were collected from a convenience sample of 220 respondents during February 2025, providing a cross-sectional snapshot of influencer fatigue patterns within the defined population. The findings are intended to offer practical insights for marketers and brand strategists while also contributing to the academic discourse on consumer behaviour in the context of social media marketing.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To describe consumers' exposure to influencer marketing and identify the major reasons for influencer fatigue among social media users.
2. To examine the relationship between social media usage and influencer-following behaviour and to test the combined association of influencer-fatigue indicators with reduced purchase-decision impact using multiple correlation analysis.

1.4 Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant association between the average daily time spent on social media and whether consumers follow influencers.

H02: Influencer-fatigue indicators are not jointly related to the reduced impact of influencer promotions on consumer purchase decisions.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Recent studies consistently demonstrate that influencer marketing plays a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase behaviour through constructs such as credibility, trust, authenticity, and perceived fit between influencers and brands. Empirical findings indicate that influencer credibility—comprising expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness—directly influences consumers' purchase intentions, brand loyalty, and engagement levels (Suganya & Bawa, 2024). Likewise, contemporary research highlights that trust acts as a central mechanism in influencer communication, where perceived authenticity and relatability foster stronger emotional connections and increase the likelihood of purchase decisions (Beriwal et al., 2024). Meta-analytic evidence further confirms that influencer characteristics, informational value, and communication style significantly affect both attitudinal outcomes and actual purchase behaviour, reinforcing the importance of message sincerity and usefulness in marketing effectiveness (Pan et al., 2024).

Scholarly work also emphasizes that influencers shape consumer preferences when their communication aligns with audience expectations of honesty and personal relevance. Influencers are often perceived as peers rather than traditional advertisers, which enhances the persuasive power of their recommendations, particularly among younger audiences (Nadiga& Rajath, 2025). Studies on youth consumption behaviour further suggest that emotional engagement, parasocial relationships, and perceived authenticity play a critical role in influencing purchase decisions, especially when influencer content resonates with consumers' lifestyle and identity (Kaur, 2025). However, research also notes that the

perceived alignment between influencer identity and the promoted product is essential; incongruence or overly personal content may reduce perceived credibility and weaken persuasive outcomes (Leite et al., 2024).

While influencer marketing continues to expand, recent literature highlights a growing resistance among younger consumers, particularly Generation Z, toward overly commercialized influencer content. Evidence suggests that perceived brand control over influencers leads to moral concerns and avoidance behaviours, resulting in disengagement from both influencers and endorsed brands (Pradhan et al., 2022/extended relevance in recent discourse). More recent discussions reinforce that excessive sponsored posts and overt persuasion diminish authenticity, prompting users to distrust influencer endorsements. For instance, survey-based insights reveal that a significant proportion of young consumers lose trust when influencers frequently promote products, indicating sensitivity to commercialization and lack of transparency (YPulse findings reported in 2024 trends). These findings align with broader arguments that audiences increasingly expect genuine, less scripted content, with transparency in sponsorship disclosures playing a key role in maintaining trust (BBB National Programs, 2025).

In parallel, recent scholarship has examined the “dark side” of influencer marketing, focusing on issues such as excessive advertising, misleading information, and declining authenticity. Studies published in 2025 identify multiple risks associated with influencer practices, including deceptive endorsements, promotion of harmful products, and lack of disclosure, all of which can undermine consumer trust and distort purchasing behaviour (University of Portsmouth study, 2025). These concerns are compounded by the rapid growth of the influencer industry, where the pursuit of engagement and monetization may lead to repetitive messaging and diminished content quality. Such trends contribute to skepticism, particularly when followers perceive influencers as prioritizing financial gain over honest communication (Fortinberry Murray, 2025).

A growing body of literature conceptualizes influencer fatigue as a form of consumer resistance arising from content overload and perceived insincerity. Social media fatigue research indicates that excessive branded content, intrusive advertising, and irrelevant messages contribute to disengagement behaviours such as reduced interaction and passive consumption (Fernandes & Oliveira, 2024). Similarly, industry and academic discussions describe influencer fatigue as a saturation effect, where repetitive and low-quality sponsored content leads to declining trust, lower engagement, and increased ad avoidance (Norenus-Raniere, 2023). This fatigue is particularly pronounced among younger consumers, who

exhibit a preference for peer recommendations and micro-influencers, perceiving them as more authentic and less commercially driven (YPulse insights, 2024).

Overall, the reviewed literature suggests that influencer marketing effectiveness depends not only on reach and visibility but also on perceived sincerity, usefulness, and authenticity of the message. At the same time, the emergence of influencer fatigue highlights the limitations of current practices, emphasizing the need to consider negative consumer responses such as ad avoidance, reduced engagement, and adverse brand perceptions. Consequently, recent research shifts focus from purely positive outcomes toward understanding resistance mechanisms, positioning influencer fatigue as a critical construct in evaluating the long-term sustainability of influencer marketing strategies.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quantitative descriptive research design to examine consumer opinions, social media usage patterns, and behavioural responses toward influencer promotions among social media users in Ernakulam, Kerala. Data were collected during February 2025 using a structured Google Forms questionnaire administered to 220 respondents selected through convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique in which participants were chosen based on their accessibility, availability, and willingness to participate in the study. The survey instrument captured demographic information, social media consumption habits, influencer-following behaviour, perceived reasons for advertising fatigue, and responses to influencer advertisements, along with ten Likert-scale statements measuring fatigue-related perceptions and behavioral outcomes. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondent profiles and fatigue patterns. For inferential analysis, a chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine the association between daily social media usage time and following influencers. Additionally, a multiple correlation analysis was performed to evaluate the joint relationship between eight fatigue indicator variables (measuring advertisement overload, excessive product promotion, perceived inauthenticity, reduced trust, diminished interest, content repetition, lower engagement, and ad-ignoring behaviour) and the outcome variable representing reduced purchase-decision impact (Q19). Pearson correlations among all ten Likert-scale items were also computed to examine the bivariate relationships between fatigue dimensions and behavioural outcomes, with all statistical tests evaluated at a significance level of $p < .05$.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Descriptive Profile of Respondents

The descriptive results show that the sample included a large proportion of young adults, although older respondents were also strongly represented. The gender distribution was almost balanced. Students formed the largest occupational group, and Instagram was the most frequently used platform. A clear majority followed influencers and had experienced tiredness or annoyance due to influencer promotions.

Table 1 Descriptive summary of respondents and influencer-marketing exposure.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-24 years	97	44.09
Age	25-34 years	37	16.82
Age	Above 45 years	86	39.09
Gender	Female	108	49.09
Gender	Male	112	50.91
Occupation	Student	89	40.45
Occupation	Employed	45	20.45
Occupation	Self-employed	33	15.00
Occupation	Homemaker	14	6.36
Occupation	Other	39	17.73
Daily social media use	Less than 1 hour	34	15.45
Daily social media use	1-2 hours	68	30.91
Daily social media use	2-4 hours	70	31.82
Daily social media use	More than 4 hours	48	21.82
Most used platform	Instagram	130	59.09
Most used platform	YouTube	63	28.64
Most used platform	Facebook	27	12.27
Follow influencers	Yes	176	80.00
Follow influencers	No	44	20.00
Felt tired/annoyed	Yes	189	85.91
Felt tired/annoyed	No	31	14.09

Note. N = 220. Percentages are based on valid responses.

4.2 Reasons for Influencer Fatigue and Ad Response

The leading reason for influencer fatigue was too many sponsored posts, followed by lack of authenticity, unrealistic lifestyle portrayal, promotion of multiple brands, and repetitive content. The behavioural response also indicates resistance: nearly three-fourths of respondents skipped or scrolled past influencer advertisements.

Table 2 Major reasons for influencer fatigue and responses to influencer advertisements.

Measure	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Reason for fatigue	Too many sponsored posts	76	34.55
Reason for fatigue	Lack of authenticity	44	20.00
Reason for fatigue	Unrealistic lifestyle portrayal	42	19.09
Reason for fatigue	Promotion of multiple brands	31	14.09
Reason for fatigue	Repetitive content	27	12.27
Response to influencer ads	Skip or scroll past	159	72.27
Response to influencer ads	Watch completely	24	10.91
Response to influencer ads	Check reviews elsewhere	17	7.73
Response to influencer ads	Ignore completely	16	7.27
Response to influencer ads	Mute or unfollow influencer	4	1.82

Note. N = 220. Category labels follow the questionnaire and frequency output available in the dissertation.

4.3 Descriptive Analysis with Mean and Standard Deviation

Table 3 Descriptive analysis of influencer-fatigue indicator relationships.

Code	Indicator	Mean	SD
Q11	Overwhelmed by influencer advertisements	0.505	0.042
Q12	Influencers promote too many products	0.509	0.028
Q13	Sponsored posts feel fake or forced	0.460	0.043
Q14	Trust influencers less than earlier	0.461	0.034
Q15	Excessive promotions reduce interest	0.523	0.049
Q16	Influencer content feels repetitive	0.511	0.056
Q17	Fatigue affects engagement	0.540	0.036
Q18	More likely to ignore influencer ads	0.498	0.047
Q19	Promotions have less impact on purchase decisions	0.541	0.059
Q20	Fatigue negatively affects brand perception	0.530	0.053

Note. M and SD stand for Mean and Standard deviation.

Based on the data presented in Table 3, a consistent pattern of influencer fatigue is observable across the sample. Mean scores for all ten indicators (Q11–Q20) cluster near the midpoint of the 0–1 scale, with an overall mean of 0.508 ($SD = 0.052$), suggesting that respondents generally incline toward agreement with statements reflecting negative perceptions of influencer marketing. The highest means were recorded for items relating to diminished marketing effectiveness, particularly "Fatigue affects engagement" ($M = 0.540$, $SD = 0.036$) and "Promotions have less impact on purchase decisions" ($M = 0.541$, $SD = 0.059$), indicating that fatigue is translating into measurable reductions in consumer responsiveness. Respondents also reported feeling overwhelmed by the volume of influencer advertisements ($M = 0.505$, $SD = 0.042$) and perceived that influencers promote an excessive number of products ($M = 0.509$, $SD = 0.028$), while concurrently expressing diminished trust ($M =$

0.461, $SD = 0.034$) and viewing sponsored posts as inauthentic ($M = 0.460$, $SD = 0.043$). The relatively low standard deviations across items, ranging from 0.028 to 0.059, point to a reasonable degree of consensus among participants. Behaviourally, the data show that fatigue is associated with active disengagement, as reflected in elevated scores for ignoring influencer ads ($M = 0.498$, $SD = 0.047$) and for fatigue negatively affecting brand perception ($M = 0.530$, $SD = 0.053$).

4.4 Inferential Test: Association Between Social Media Time and Following Influencers

A chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine whether following influencers differed according to average daily time spent on social media. The association was statistically significant, $\chi^2(3, N = 220) = 8.38$, $p = .039$. Therefore, H_{01} was rejected. The effect size was small, but the pattern indicates that heavier social media users were more likely to follow influencers. For example, 95.83% of respondents who spent more than four hours daily on social media followed influencers, compared with 61.76% among those who spent less than one hour daily.

Table 3 Cross-tabulation of daily social media time and influencer-following behaviour.

Average daily time on social media	Follow influencers: No	Follow influencers: Yes	Total	% Yes
Less than 1 hour	13	21	34	61.76
1-2 hours	17	51	68	75.00
2-4 hours	12	58	70	82.86
More than 4 hours	2	46	48	95.83
Total	44	176	220	80.00

Note. $\chi^2(3, N = 220) = 8.38$, $p = .039$.

4.5 Multiple Correlation Analysis of Influencer-Fatigue Indicators and Purchase-Decision Impact

The purpose of this test was to examine whether the fatigue indicators were jointly associated with the statement that influencer promotions have less impact on purchase decisions. The outcome variable was Q19, while the predictors were Q11 to Q18, covering advertisement overload, excessive product promotion, perceived inauthenticity, reduced trust, reduced interest, repetition, lower engagement, and ad ignoring. The multiple correlation was statistically significant, $R = 0.736$, $R^2 = 0.542$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.525$, $F(8, 211) = 31.22$, $p < .001$. Thus, H_{02} was rejected. The model explains approximately 54.2% of the variance in

reduced purchase-decision impact, showing that fatigue-related perceptions jointly correspond with weaker influence of influencer promotions on consumer buying decisions.

Table 4: Multiple Correlation Model Summary.

Outcome variable	Predictor block	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F(df)	p
Q19: Promotions have less impact on purchase decisions	Q11–Q18 fatigue indicators	0.736	0.542	0.525	31.22 (8, 211)	< .001

To further examine the bivariate relationships among all ten Likert-scale items, a Pearson correlation matrix was computed. As presented in Table 6, all 45 inter-item correlations were positive and statistically significant at the $p < .001$ level, with coefficients ranging from .407 to .619.

Table 5: Pearson Correlations Among Influencer-Fatigue Indicators and Purchase-Decision Impact.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Q11: Overwhelmed by ads	—									
2. Q12: Too many products promoted	.489	—								
3. Q13: Sponsored posts feel fake	.462	.462	—							
4. Q14: Reduced trust in influencers	.440	.463	.472	—						
5. Q15: Excessive promotions reduce interest	.542	.522	.490	.516	—					
6. Q16: Content feels repetitive	.480	.498	.407	.448	.595	—				
7. Q17: Fatigue affects engagement	.534	.555	.449	.492	.548	.527	—			
8. Q18: More likely to ignore ads	.521	.522	.442	.488	.541	.534	.536	—		
9. Q19: Less purchase impact	.578	.515	.463	.509	.571	.521	.619	.552	—	
10. Q20: Negative brand perception	.538	.523	.481	.528	.577	.567	.598	.528	.601	—

The strongest correlation observed was between Q17 (fatigue affects engagement) and Q19 (promotions have less impact on purchase decisions), $r = .619$, $p < .001$, indicating that consumers who report that fatigue diminishes their engagement with influencer content are also most likely to report reduced purchasing influence. Similarly, Q20 (negative brand perception) demonstrated strong associations with both Q19 ($r = .601$, $p < .001$) and Q17 ($r = .598$, $p < .001$), suggesting that fatigue-related disengagement is closely tied to both reduced

purchase impact and unfavorable brand attitudes. Among the predictor variables, the strongest intercorrelation was observed between Q15 (excessive promotions reduce interest) and Q16 (content feels repetitive), $r = .595$, $p < .001$, implying that perceived repetition and diminished interest are particularly intertwined aspects of the fatigue experience. The weakest correlation, though still significant, was between Q13 (sponsored posts feel fake) and Q16 (content feels repetitive), $r = .407$, $p < .001$, suggesting that authenticity concerns and repetition represent somewhat distinct dimensions of influencer fatigue.

4.6 Discussion

The findings reveal that influencer fatigue is a pervasive phenomenon among the social media users surveyed in this study. While a substantial majority of respondents reported following influencers, an even greater proportion acknowledged experiencing tiredness or annoyance in response to promotional content. This apparent contradiction indicates that consumers may maintain their follower relationships with influencers while simultaneously adopting more guarded, discriminating, or passive orientations toward sponsored messages. Rather than severing connections entirely, audiences appear to engage in selective attention, mentally filtering out content they perceive as commercially motivated. The descriptive evidence identifies the sheer volume of sponsored posts as the primary driver of fatigue, lending support to the proposition that excessive commercialization erodes the relational and social appeal that initially attracted followers to influencer content. Additionally, perceived inauthenticity and repetitive messaging were found to compound this effect, as they diminish the perceived personal relevance and credibility of influencer recommendations. The pronounced tendency among respondents to skip or scroll past advertisements suggests that fatigue manifests behaviorally through active avoidance strategies, extending beyond mere attitudinal displeasure to encompass concrete actions that directly undermine marketing effectiveness.

The chi-square analysis confirms that social media exposure plays a meaningful role in shaping influencer engagement patterns. Respondents who devoted more time to social media platforms were disproportionately represented among those who followed influencers, rendering them more susceptible to repeated encounters with sponsored content. Although the observed association reached statistical significance, the modest effect size indicates that time spent online constitutes only one contributing factor within a broader constellation of influences. Other variables, including content quality, perceived authenticity of endorsements, algorithmic content delivery, and the frequency of paid partnerships, likely

interact with usage intensity to determine the extent of fatigue experienced by individual consumers. The multiple correlation results offer more compelling evidence that the various dimensions of influencer fatigue operate in concert rather than in isolation. Advertisement overload, excessive product promotion, perceived inauthenticity, diminished trust, content repetition, reduced engagement, and active ad avoidance collectively accounted for a substantial proportion of variance in the weakened influence of influencer promotions on purchasing decisions. This finding suggests that influencer fatigue is best conceptualized as an interconnected behavioural and perceptual syndrome, wherein multiple reinforcing factors converge to erode the persuasive power of influencer marketing.

5. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that influencer fatigue is a significant and multidimensional consumer response characterized by advertisement overload, perceived inauthenticity, content repetition, and diminished engagement. The findings reveal that although consumers continue to follow influencers, they increasingly adopt avoidance behaviours such as skipping or scrolling past sponsored posts, thereby undermining the effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns. The multiple correlation analysis confirms that fatigue indicators collectively exert a strong negative influence on purchase decisions, explaining over half of the variance in reduced promotional impact. The chi-square results further indicate that heavier social media users are more susceptible to repeated exposure and subsequent fatigue, though this association remains modest in magnitude. These insights carry practical implications for marketers and brand strategists, who must prioritize authenticity, content diversity, and moderation in sponsored post frequency to preserve consumer trust and engagement. Additionally, the study highlights the need for brands to move beyond volume-based promotional strategies toward more value-driven, personalized, and transparent influencer collaborations. Future research should employ longitudinal designs and experimental methodologies to establish causal relationships and examine how influencer fatigue evolves over time across diverse demographic groups and cultural contexts.

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