

The Impact of influencers on consumers' buying behavior in food industry with special reference to Lucknow city

Kritika Malhotra * and Ankita Singh

Department of Commerce, National PG College, University of Lucknow, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India.

World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2025, 26(01), 1083-1094

Publication history: Received on 24 February 2025; revised on 01 April 2025; accepted on 03 April 2025

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2025.26.1.0968>

Abstract

This study examines the impact of influencer marketing on consumer buying behavior within Lucknow's food industry. With the rise of social media platforms, influencers have become pivotal in shaping consumer preferences and purchase decisions. This research aims to understand how these influencers affect consumers' choices regarding food products and services in Lucknow.

A descriptive research design was employed, utilizing a structured questionnaire to collect quantitative data from a diverse sample of Lucknow residents. The survey focused on various factors, including the frequency of social media usage, trust in influencers, perceived authenticity of content, and the extent to which influencer endorsements affect purchasing decisions. The findings reveal that a significant portion of consumers are influenced by social media endorsements when making food-related purchases. Trustworthiness and content authenticity emerged as critical factors; consumers are more likely to be influenced by those they perceive as credible and genuine.

These insights suggest that businesses in Lucknow's food industry can enhance consumer engagement and drive sales by collaborating with influencers who maintain authenticity and credibility. By aligning marketing strategies with influencers who resonate with the target audience, businesses can effectively leverage the power of social media to influence consumer buying behavior.

Keywords: Influencer marketing; Consumer buying behavior; Food industry; Social media influencer; Consumer perception

1. Introduction

In the vibrant tapestry of Lucknow's culinary scene, where every dish tells a story of tradition and innovation, a new chapter is being written by the advent of food influencers. These digital tastemakers, armed with smartphone and social media platforms, have emerged as powerful agents of change, reshaping the city's gastronomic landscape one post at a time. Amidst the timeless allure of kebabs sizzling on charcoal grills and the delicate intricacy of biryani's simmering in copper pots, waving its way into the fabric of consumer choices.

Lucknow with its rich cultural heritage and culinary legacy, serves as the perfect backdrop for this exploration into the impact of food influencers on Consumer behaviour. From the iconic TundayKababi to the lesser-known gems hidden in the maze-like streets of Chowk, the city offers a diverse array of flavours and experiences waiting to be discovered. Yet, in this age of digitalization, the journey of culinary exploration has taken on a new dimension, guided not only by tradition and taste but also by the curated narratives of online personalities.

* Corresponding author: Kritika Malhotra

This study endeavors to unravel the complex web of factors driving the influence of food influencers in Lucknow . Beyond the allure of delectable dishes captured in high definition photographs, lies a deeper understanding of the Psychology behind consumer choices. What motivates individual to try a new eatery recommended by an influencer ? How do these digital storytellers leverage nostalgia and authenticity to establish credibility and trust ? And what implications does this evolving dynamic hold for the traditional food ecosystem of Lucknow?

As we embark on this journey, we delve into the symbiotic relationship between food influencers and local eateries, exploring the ways in which they collaborate to create compelling narratives that resonate with audiences far and wide. Through a blend of qualitative research, interviews, and case studies, we aim to shed light on the mechanism through which food influencers shape perceptions, preferences, and ultimately, purchasing decisions.

In doing so, we not only uncover the profound influence of digital media on the culinary landscape of Lucknow but also celebrate the resilience and adaptability of its food culture in the face of modernization. By bridging the gap between tradition and technology, this study seeks to provide valuable insights for businesses, marketers, and policymakers alike, as they navigate the ever-changing terrain of consumer behaviour in the digital age.

2. Literature Review

The study conducted by Sati Aypar and IpekKanzancioglu(2020) The work in their paper provides a concise overview of previous research on the influence of food influencers on consumer behaviour. It includes discussions on social influence theory, perceived usefulness within the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), consumer attitudes, and purchase intention. Previous studies examining these factors are reviewed, highlighting gaps in the literature and setting the stage for current study,s objective. This synthesis of existing research form the theoretical framework for investigating the effect of perceived usefulness of food influencers' recommendations on consumers' intention to purchase food products/services.

The study conducted by PornpozLaohasukkasem et.al, (2021) the study focuses on assessing the impact of online influencers on consumers' purchasing behaviour regarding Japanese food in Bangkok, Thailand. The methodology involved collecting data from 407 Japanese food consumers through a convenience sampling method and analyzing it using quantitative techniques, specially multiple regression analysis (MRA). The findings suggest that the credibility, attractiveness and trustworthiness of online influencers significantly influence consumers' purchase intention, while the expertise of online influencers did not show a significant impact. The implication of the study is that it could assist business owners and marketers in managing their online marketing strategies effectively, by understanding the influence of online influencers and selecting appropriate strategies to enhance their businesses.

The study conducted by Adam J Kucharczuk et.al, (2022) The review explores the influence of social media food and beverages advertisements on adolescents' food choices. It begins by noting the significant presence of adolescents on social media platforms and how food and beverage brands capitalize on this. The study aims to systematically appraise literature from 2015-2020, focusing on articles retrieved from databases like CINAHL and pubmed using search terms like "social media use," "food advertisements," "adolescents," and "food choices."

After applying inclusion criteria and assessing study quality, six articles are selected for analysis. The finding reveal two primary trends: adolescent tend to recall unhealthy food advertisements more readily, and celebrity endorsement is prevalent in social media food ads. These findings underscore the need for healthcare professionals to routinely screen adolescent for social media use and educate them, along with their parents, about the health risks associated with unhealthy food buying behaviour.

The study conducted by Mai Ngoc Tran (2023) The study aimed at investigating the factors influencing consumers' attitudes toward social media influencers and subsequent impact on purchase intentions, focusing on 333 university students in Hanoi following food influencers. The study employs Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SPSS and AMOS 22 for data analysis. Results indicate that trust, social attractiveness, specialization, experience, and perceived usefulness significantly affect consumers' attitudes, which in turn influence purchase intentions. The findings are expected to contribute a better understanding of consumer behaviour and aid businesses and individuals in enhancing marketing and service strategies to attract more potential customers.

2.1. Statement of the Problem

In today's digital era, influencer marketing has become a dominant force in shaping consumer preferences, especially in the food industry. With the increasing reliance on social media platforms like Instagram , YouTube, and Facebook,

consumers in Lucknow are heavily influenced by food bloggers, vloggers, and digital content creators. These influencers not only introduce new food trends but also impact purchasing decisions through their reviews, recommendations, and promotional content.

however, there is limited research on how influencers truly impact consumer buying behavior in the food industry, particularly in Lucknow city. this study will provide valuable insights for businesses, marketers, and consumers on the effectiveness and challenges of influencer marketing in the food industry.

2.2. Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it explores the growing influence of social media influencers on consumer buying behavior in the food industry, with a specific focus on Lucknow city. As influencer marketing continues to evolve, understanding its impact can benefit multiple stakeholders, including businesses, marketers, consumers, and researchers.

Objective of the study

- To study the influence of demographic factors on consumer purchasing decision in the Lucknow food market.
- To assess the comparative effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies used by local food businesses in Lucknow and determine best practices for enhancing consumer trust & brand loyalty.

3. Research methodology

The research methodology outlines the approach used to conduct this study on the impact of influencers on consumer buying behavior in the food industry with special reference to Lucknow city.

3.1. Research Design

This study follows a descriptive research design, as it aims to analyze consumer behavior based on the influence of social media influencers in the food industry. The study relies on quantitative data collected through structured questionnaire.

3.2. Data Collection Method

- Primary Data: The primary data for this study was collecting using a survey questionnaire, which was designed to understand consumer preferences, trust in influencers, and purchasing behavior.
- Sampling technique: A random sampling method was used to select respondents from different age groups and backgrounds to ensure diversity in opinions.
- Sample size: The survey responses were gathered from 100+ participants to ensure reliable and valid conclusions.

3.3. Data analysis

- The collected responses were analyzed using statistical methods, where responses were categorized and visualized through pie charts and bar graphs.

3.4. Data analysis and interpretation

The pie chart represents the age distribution of respondents participating in the study. The majority of respondents, 40%, fall within the age group of 18-25 years, indicating significant participation from young adults. This is followed by 35% of respondents in the 26-35 years age group, suggesting that middle-aged adults also form a large part of the sample. Respondents aged 36-45 years constitute 18.9% of the total, while the percentages for individuals below 18 years and above 45 years are not explicitly mentioned in the data. This distribution highlights that the study primarily reflects the perspectives of younger and middle-aged consumers.

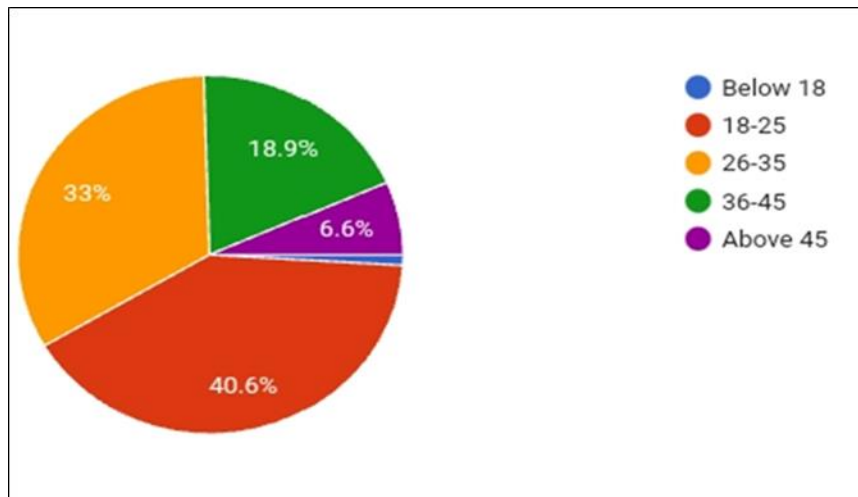


Figure 1 Age of the Respondent

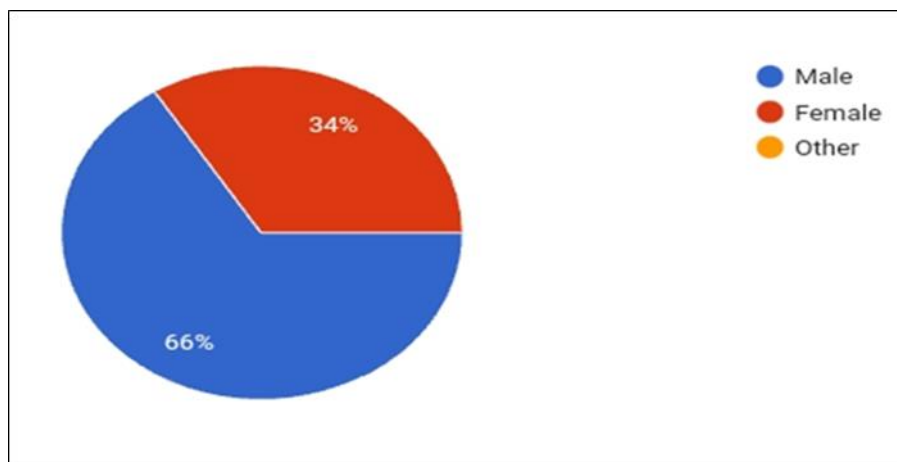


Figure 2 Gender of the Respondent

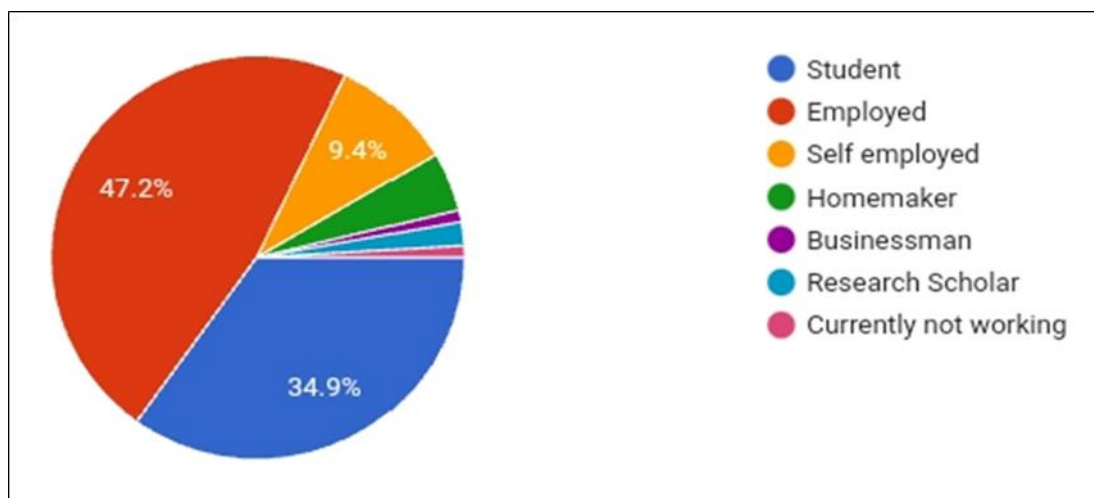


Figure 3 Occupation of the Respondent

The pie chart illustrates the gender distribution of the respondents. A significant majority, 66%, of the participants are male, while 34% are female. This indicates a higher representation of male respondents in the study compared to females, which could influence the overall findings depending on the gender-specific preferences and behaviors in consumer buying patterns.

The pie chart showcases the occupational distribution of respondents. The largest group, 47.2%, consists of employed individuals, indicating a significant representation of working professionals. Students make up 34.9%, highlighting substantial participation from the younger, academic demographic. Self-employed individuals constitute 9.4% of the total respondents. The remaining percentage, which accounts for homemakers, business professionals, and research scholars, is not explicitly broken down, suggesting a smaller collective representation of these groups in the study.

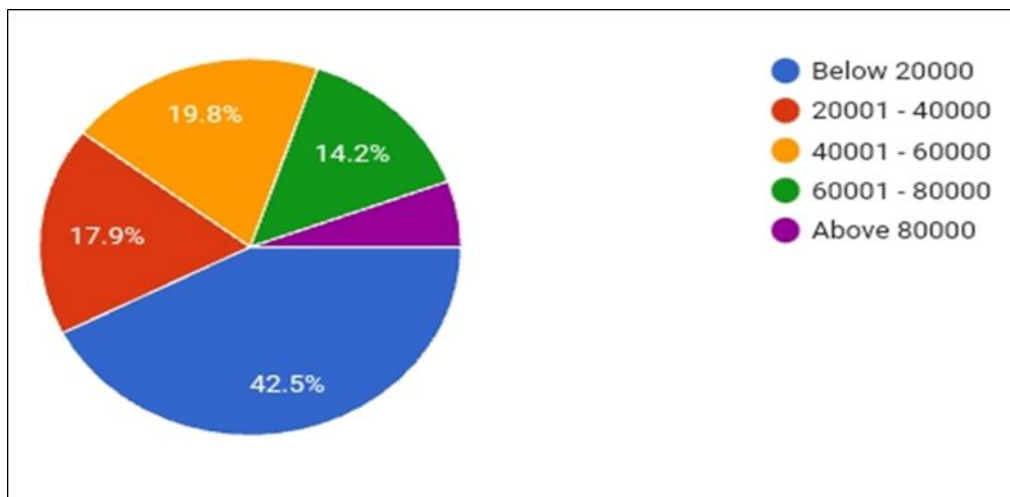


Figure 4 Monthly income of the respondent

The pie chart represents the monthly income distribution of the respondents. The largest segment, 42.5%, earns below ₹20,000, indicating a significant portion of respondents belong to the lower income bracket. Respondents earning ₹40,001 - ₹60,000 make up 19.8%, followed closely by those earning ₹20,001 - ₹40,000 at 17.9%. A smaller group, 14.2%, falls within the ₹60,001 - ₹80,000 income range. The percentage of respondents earning above ₹80,000 is not mentioned, suggesting it constitutes a minor or negligible portion of the sample.

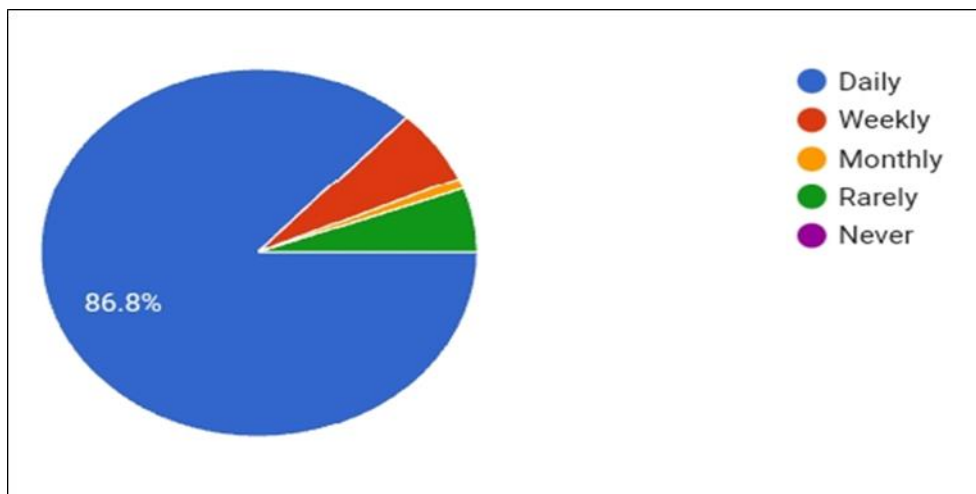


Figure 5 How often do you use social media

The pie chart represents the monthly income distribution of the respondents. The largest segment, 42.5%, earns below ₹20,000, indicating a significant portion of respondents belong to the lower income bracket. Respondents earning ₹40,001 - ₹60,000 make up 19.8%, followed closely by those earning ₹20,001 - ₹40,000 at 17.9%. A smaller group, 14.2%, falls within the ₹60,001 - ₹80,000 income range. The percentage of respondents earning above ₹80,000 is not mentioned, suggesting it constitutes a minor or negligible portion of the sample.

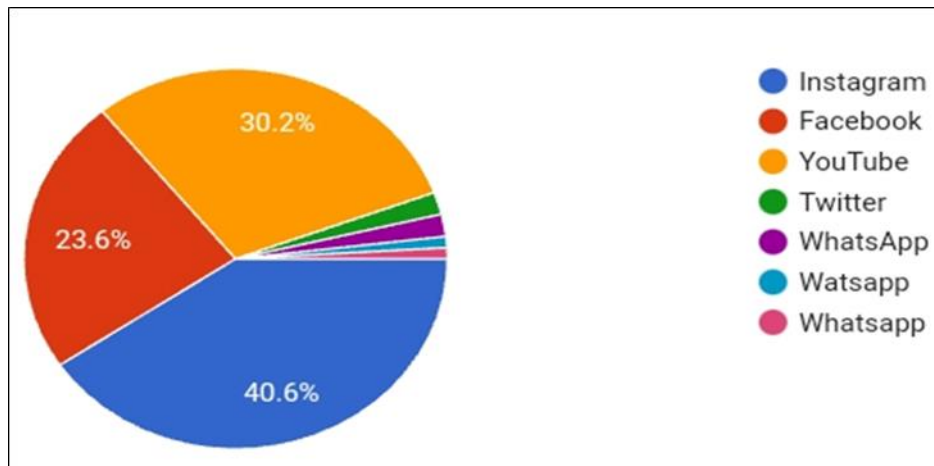


Figure 6 Which social media platforms do you use the most

The chart highlights the respondents' preferences for social media platforms. Instagram emerges as the most popular platform, used by 40.6% of respondents, reflecting its widespread appeal among users. YouTube follows with 30.2%, indicating strong engagement with video content. Facebook accounts for 23.6%, showing its continued relevance. The remaining percentage includes Twitter and WhatsApp, suggesting these platforms have a smaller but notable user base. This distribution reflects the dominant role of visually rich and interactive platforms like Instagram and YouTube in influencing consumer behavior.

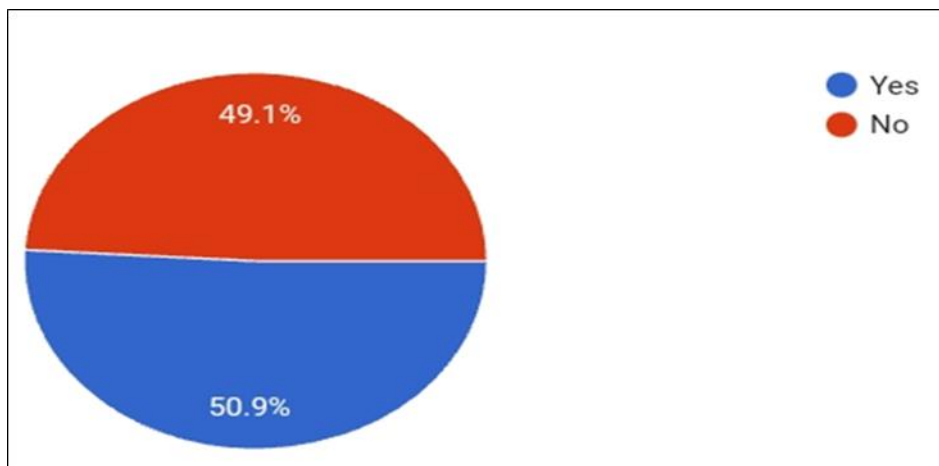


Figure 7 Do you follow food influencers on instagram

The chart illustrates whether respondents follow food influencers on Instagram. The responses are almost evenly split, with 50.9% stating yes, they follow food influencers, while 49.1% responded no. This near balance indicates a diverse audience, with half of the respondents engaging with food influencers, potentially impacting their buying decisions, while the other half may rely on different sources for food-related information or inspiration.

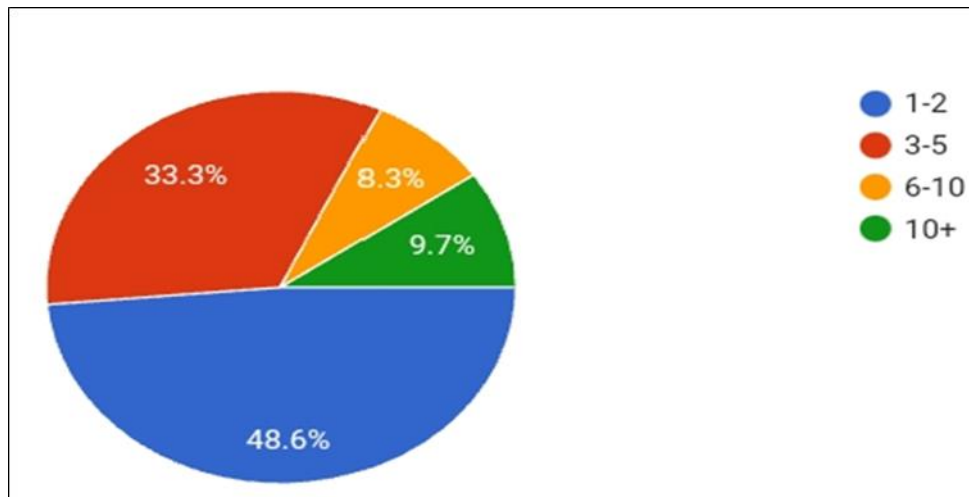


Figure 8 If yes, how many influencers do you follow?

The chart explores the number of food influencers followed by respondents who answered "yes" to the previous question. The majority, 48.6%, follow 1-2 influencers, indicating a preference for a limited number of sources. 33.3% of respondents follow 3-5 influencers, suggesting moderate engagement with food influencers. A smaller group, 9.7%, follows 10 or more influencers, reflecting a highly engaged audience. The percentage for respondents following 6-10 influencers is not specified, but it forms part of the remaining group. This data highlights varying levels of interaction with food influencers among the respondents.

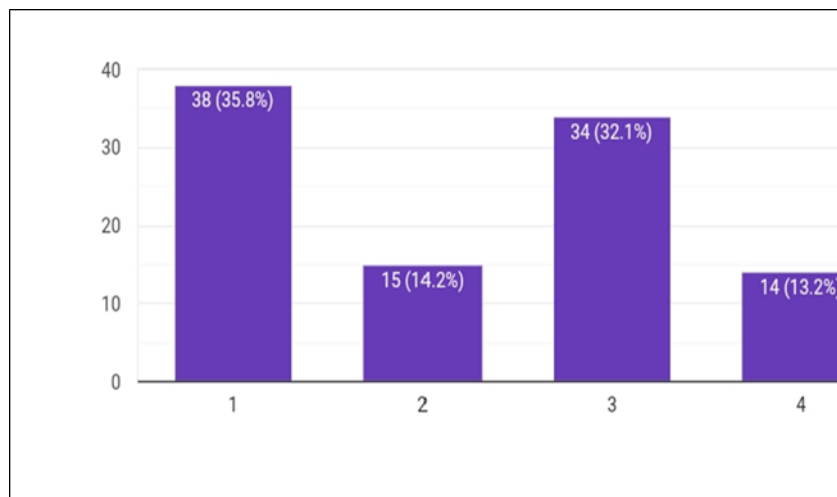


Figure 9 On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you trust the recommendations of food influencer?

The chart represents the respondents' trust in food influencers' recommendations on a scale of 1 to 5. The majority, 35.8%, rated their trust as 4, indicating a relatively high level of trust in the recommendations of food influencers. 32.1% rated it as 3, reflecting moderate trust. A smaller group, 14.2%, rated it as 2, suggesting a lower level of trust. 13.2% rated it as 1, indicating minimal trust, while only 4.7% rated it as 5, showing a very high level of trust. This distribution suggests that while many respondents place a moderate to high level of trust in food influencers, there is still a notable portion with lower trust in their recommendations.

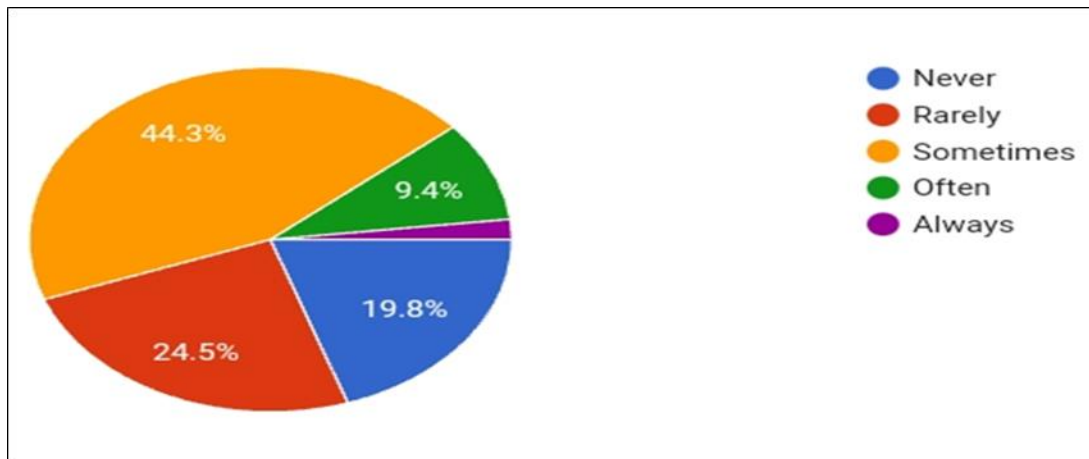


Figure 10 How often do you try new food products or visit new restaurant based on recommendation

The pie chart depicts how often respondents try new food products or visit new restaurants based on influencers' recommendations. The largest group, 44.3%, try new products or visit new restaurants sometimes, indicating occasional influence by food influencers. 24.5% do so rarely, while 19.8% never try new things based on influencer recommendations. A smaller group, 9.4%, try new food items or restaurants often. The percentage for those who always follow such recommendations is not mentioned. This suggests that while some respondents are influenced by food influencers, the overall trend leans toward occasional or rare action based on these recommendations.

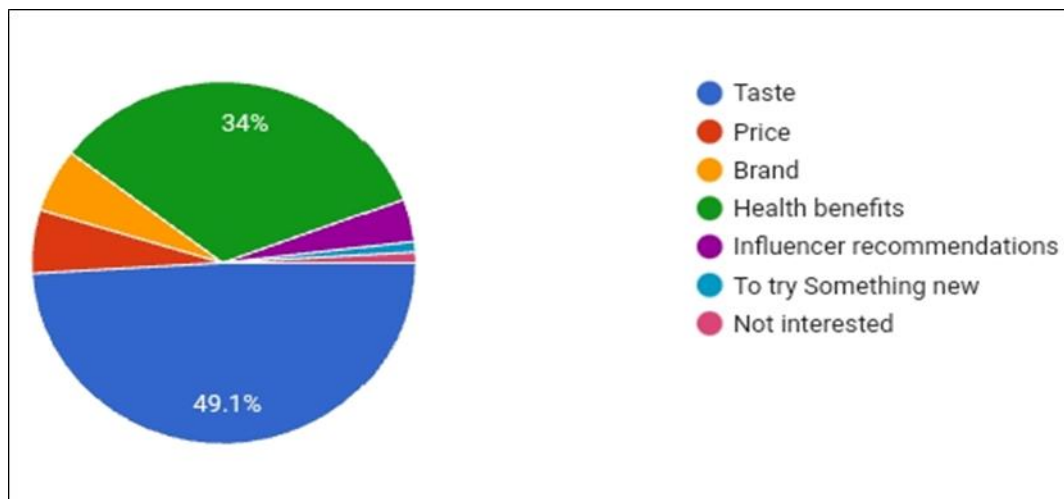


Figure 11 What factors influences your decision to buy food products ?

The pie chart outlines the key factors that influence respondents' decisions to buy food products. The most significant factor is taste, with 49% of respondents prioritizing it when making purchase decisions. Health benefits play a role for 34% of respondents, reflecting a growing concern for healthier food options. The remaining factors include brand, price, influencer recommendations, the desire to try something new, and those who are not interested in specific factors. These other categories collectively represent the remaining portion of the chart, indicating that while taste and health benefits are the leading influences, other factors also contribute to consumers' food buying decisions.

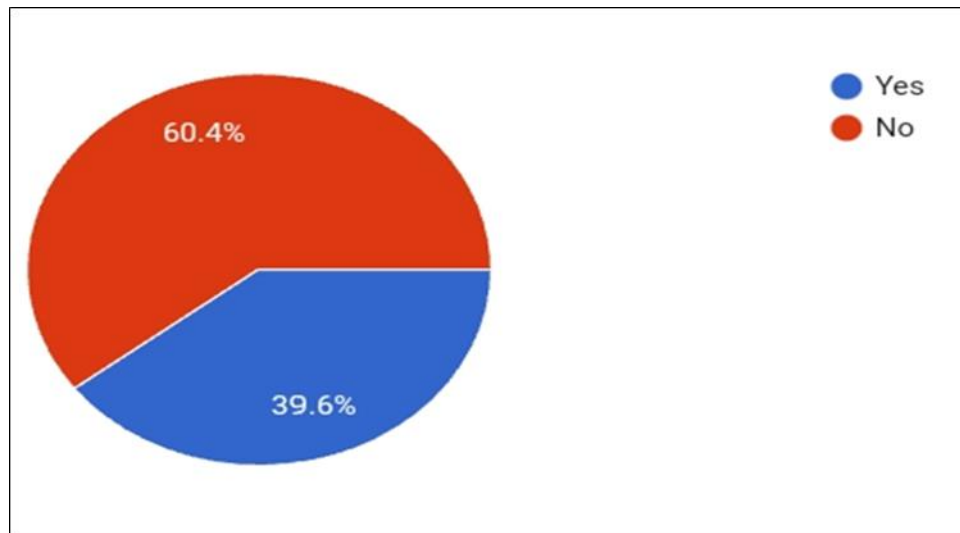


Figure 12 Have you ever purchased food products solely based on influencer's recommendations ?

The chart shows whether respondents have ever purchased food products solely based on influencers' recommendations. A majority, 60.4%, have never made a purchase solely influenced by an influencer's recommendation, indicating that many consumers do not rely entirely on influencer-driven suggestions. However, 39.6% of respondents have purchased food products based on influencer recommendations, suggesting a significant portion of consumers are influenced by online personalities in their buying decisions.

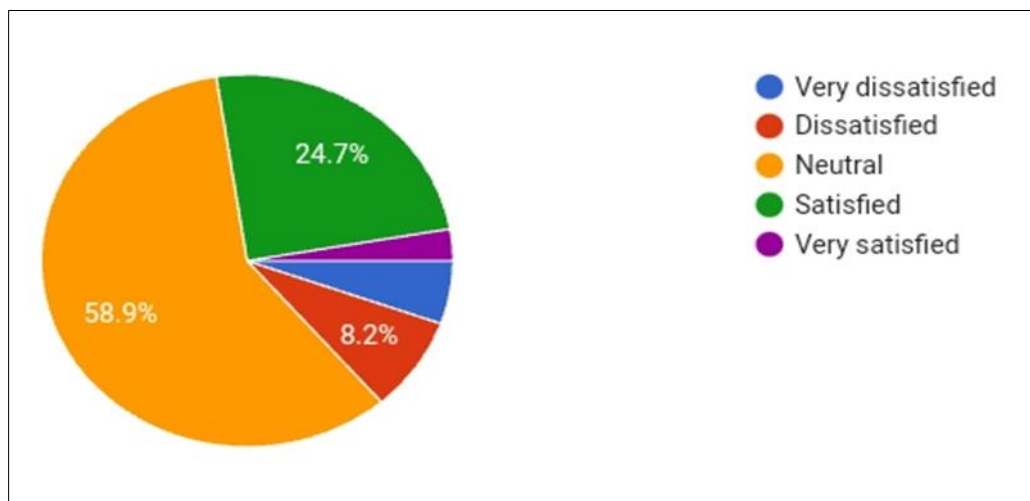


Figure 13 If yes, how satisfied were you with the purchase ?

The chart shows the satisfaction levels of respondents who have purchased food products based on influencers' recommendations. The majority, 58.9%, reported being neutral about their purchase, indicating neither strong satisfaction nor dissatisfaction. 24.7% of respondents felt satisfied with their purchase. The percentages for those who were very satisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied are not specified in the chart. This suggests that while a portion of consumers are content with their purchases, a larger group remains indifferent to the impact of influencers on their buying decisions.

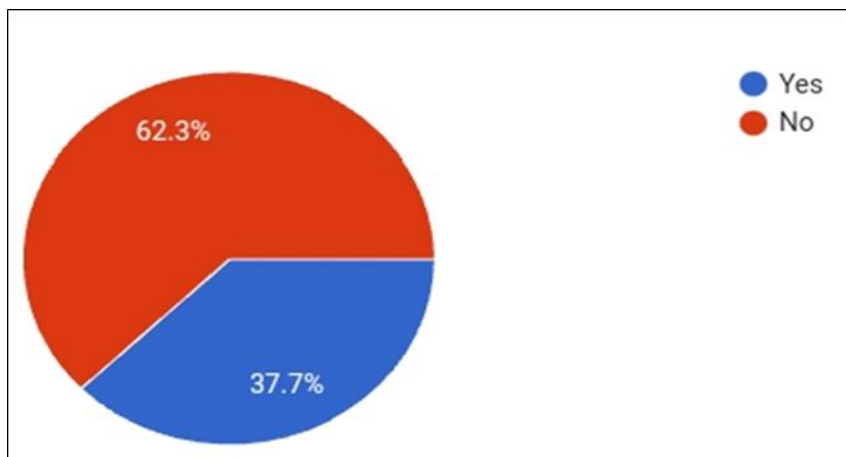


Figure 14 Do you believe that influencers provide genuine reviews about the food products?

The chart reveals respondents' perceptions regarding the authenticity of food influencers' reviews. A majority, 62.3%, do not believe that influencers provide genuine reviews about food products, suggesting skepticism about the authenticity of influencer content. On the other hand, 37.7% of respondents believe that influencers do provide genuine reviews, indicating that a significant portion of the audience still trusts the opinions shared by influencers despite the skepticism of the larger group.

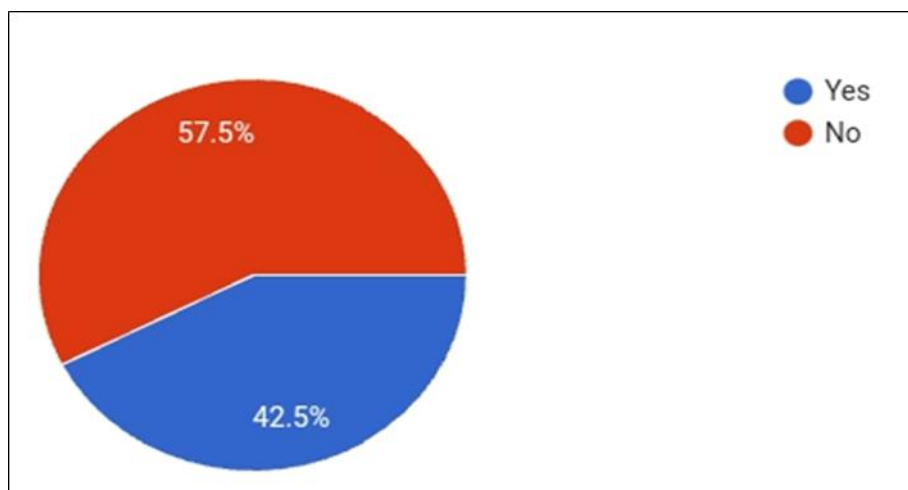


Figure 15 Do you follow any local food influencers based on lucknow ?

The chart depicts whether respondents follow local food influencers based in Lucknow. 57.5% of the respondents do not follow local food influencers, suggesting a lack of engagement with regional influencers. In contrast, 42.5% of respondents do follow local food influencers, indicating a moderate level of interest in food content specific to Lucknow. This shows that while local influencers have a presence, they are not the primary choice for a majority of respondents.

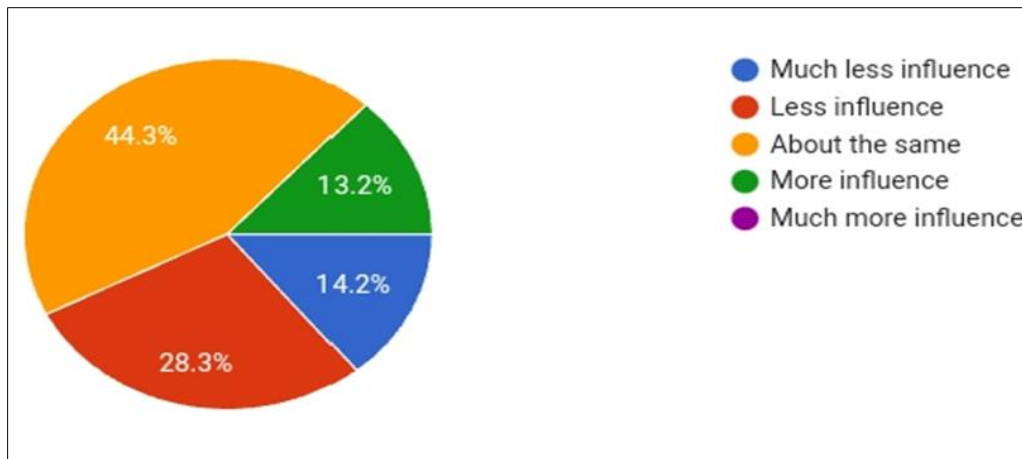


Figure 16 How do you rate the influence of local food influencers compared to national /international influencer ?

The chart illustrates how respondents rate the influence of local food influencers compared to national or international influencers. The majority, 44.3%, believe the influence of local influencers is about the same as national or international influencers, indicating that local influencers are considered equally impactful by many respondents. 28.3% perceive local influencers as having less influence, while 14.2% feel they have much less influence. A smaller group, 13.2%, believes local influencers have more influence, suggesting that a portion of the audience values the content of local influencers more than that of larger, more widespread influencers.

Scope & limitations

- This study is limited to lucknow city, and findings may vary for other locations.
- The analysis is based solely on survey responses, without additional qualitative insights from interviews or focus groups.
- The study focuses on consumer perception and responses rather than actual sales data of businesses.

Suggestion

Businesses should consider partnering with micro-influencers who have smaller but highly engaged followings. These influencers often maintain personal connections with their audience, leading to higher trust and authenticity, which can positively influence purchasing decisions

4. Conclusion

This study underscores the the influence of social media influencers on consumer purchasing behaviour within lucknow's food industry. The findings reveal that consumers are notably swayed by online endorsements, with trustworthiness and content authenticity emerging as pivotal determinants in their decision-making processes. Notably, micro-influencers, who often maintain more personal and engaged relationships with their audiences, exert a more pronounced impact on consumer behaviour compared to traditional celebrity influencers.

These insights carry substantial implications for businesses operating in Lucknow's food sector. By strategically collaborating with influencers who are perceived as credible and authentic, businesses can enhance consumer engagement and drive sales. Aligning marketing strategies with influencers who resonate with the target audience allows businesses to effectively harness the power of social media, thereby shaping consumer buying behavior in a favourable manner.

Furthermore, this research contributes to the broader understanding of influencer marketing's role in the food industry, particularly within the context of emerging markets like Lucknow. It highlights the necessity for businesses to adapt to evolving digital landscapes and consumer preferences. Future research could expand upon these findings by exploring longitudinal effects of influencer collaborations and examining potential variations across different demographic segments.

In conclusion, influencer marketing stands as a potent tool in shaping consumer behavior within the food industry. By comprehending and leveraging the dynamics of trust and authenticity, businesses can craft effective strategies that not only reach out but also resonate with their intended audiences, thereby ensuring sustained success in a competitive marketplace.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

References

- [1] Bognar, z.b.,Puljic,N.P.,&Kadezabek, D.(2019). Impact of Influencer Marketing on consumer Behaviour. Economic and Social Development:Book of Preceedings,301-309.
- [2] Hake, dr.C,et.al,(2023). The impact of Influencer Marketing on Consumer Behaviour:Effectiveness on Increasing Brand Awareness, Improving Brand Perception, And Driving Sales.Rabindra Bharati Journal Of Philosophy,0973-0087.
- [3] Mishra, MS.S.,&Ashfaq, dr.R.(2023). Influencer Impact: Examining the effect of influencers on Consumer Behaviour and Purchase Decisions. Operations Management and Economics,2799-1008.
- [4] Haque,Dr.M., et.al,(2023).Impact of Influencer Marketing on Consumer Behaviour : An Analytical study. Journal of Propulsion Technology,44,1001- 4055.