

Rise in Instagram Influencers: A Lahore based Survey

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Abstract

Influencers are someone who has bigger audience and influence the decision-making power of the people while buying things online or from the outlets of the different brands. Influencers promote content and give products reviews. Brands contact them on the basis of their position, audience, authority and activeness on the social media. Influencers gain audience usually through making entertaining and sometime informative content. Influencers are the marketers of social media. Influencers are also works as Bloggers, Youtubers and Podcasters, but not all bloggers are influencers. With the passage of time influencers have gained more attention and fame. They had given marketers new dimension of their product endorsement and advertisement. Influencers are making as much money as any other celebrity. Instagram influencers are more famous. They are young age only between 25 to 34 years old.

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Key Words: Influencers, Youtubers, Bloggers, Podcasters, Branding

Kinds of influencers

As we mentioned above influencers are Bloggers, Youtubers and Podcasters, they can be typically making content on fashion, travelling and sometimes on social awareness messages, following are few types of influencers, on the basis of which marketing brands contact them.

- Mega influencers
- Macro influencers
- Micro influencers
- Nano influencers

Literature Review

A literature review is an inclusive summary of former research on a topic. The literature review analyses books, scholarly articles, and other bases applicable to a particular part of research. The review should compute, define, précis, accurately evaluate and illuminate this previous research.

Instagram, Micro-Celebrity and the World of Intimate Strangers Social media like twitter are used by celeb to interconnect to fans, and other superstars, to speak gossips and claims and to 'strategically manage self-disclosure', creating an illusion of intimacy and closeness (p. 147). Hashtags are also used to endorse companies, goods and slogans and have become an extensive celebrity practice. Instagram Influencers also use specific Hashtags to promote cooperates, products and specific taglines. In the hope of achieving a celebrity rank that can lead to sponsorship and funding content, their relationship with their supporters is different to regular users of social media whom they see chiefly as admirers rather than associates or follower. Success within the world of micro-celebrity is reliant on creating closeness with followers through the revelation of personal information that generates an impression of intimacy in a comparable way of achieving para-social communication recognized

(Page, 2012) The linguistics of self-branding and micro-celebrity in Twitter: The role of hashtags Self-branding and Influencers are forms of labor undertaken by both elite and ordinary persons in order to achieve the prominence and influence believed essential to attain status or fame in the offline world. Examples include the online interactions of camgirl, use of Twitter by technology entrepreneurs and celebrity practitioners, and the amateur and professional performers who now populate YouTube. Procedures of self-branding and micro-celebrity operate on a range which comprises on companies who distinguish their identity , the use of branded products to signal status and identity and more generally, the production of a public façades that can be treated as a 'commodity sign' that is consumed and imitated by others. Although this self-mediation may draw explicitly on marketing methods, as the fictional blogger Lonelygirl15 who helped reshape the performativity of youtube. Self-branding is usually rooted with more expanded

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trends where dialogues itself become a worthy talk in a form of searchable talk, which as an exploited means used by marketing and advertising cooperates.

(Robert V. Kozinets, 2014) Between the Suit and the Selfie: Executives' Lessons on the Social "Micro-Celebrity" social media has a "celebrity threshold" – a determinate level of prevalent attention. Beneath this verge, a personal brand can maintain a professional voice. Thrusting lifestyles can then become the coin of the kingdom. Though, once that limit has been breached, content becomes more oriented toward a dreamy and utopian mindscape, almost a fantasy with the personal brand playing a typical role. Brands must move from the beneficial to the representative to the traditional. For personal branders, being narrators who are capable, yet charming and even eccentric is a sound approach. In this article author discuss about the micro celebrities and influencers that they have special and determine level of popular responsiveness. A personal brand can create a professional image that can help in promoting the brand and can affect the people buying choices. Social media is now changing from symbolic to cultural trends.

(Elmira Djafarova, 2018) 'Instafamous' – credibility and self- presentation of micro-celebrities on social media, this article is about Instagram famous influencers their credibility and self-demonstration. Author has included the entire factors which are affecting the local marketers and advertisers in this article. Companies are gradually using micro-celebrities and influencers for their product validation. Social media created a new type of celebrity known as 'micro-celebrities. Online users are aware of these personalities, and their characteristics are based upon the acknowledgment, appreciation, relationship, and ambition of their followers. Insta influencers and minor celebrities are one of a quantity of moneymaking marketing communication strategies. Influencers and micro celebrities don't need to achieve and possess certain talent in any field to be famous on Social media, to be prominent they only need to gain larger amount of followership on social media sites. These influencers would not have received such fame, if social media sites did not exist. They are associated to dissimilar arenas, for example, healthy eating, fashion, beauty, interior design, and paternity. Business and cooperation are willing to shape a much straight connection and relation with their consumers' through an agreement with an influencers and micro-celebrities. Individual buyers and consumers relate and associate specific products and brands with their celeb endorser, which turns in to new extents of credibility and trustworthiness, helping influencers to build product integrity. According to this article woman users are much expected to purchase products that were recommended by their favorite influencers and celebrities. For now Companies are not spending much money and effort on advertisements. Consumers find it easy and appealing that they can directly engage in conversation with their favorite influencers, disregarded of the fact that celebrities and influencers self-presentation on social media may a dreamlike reflection of their real life.

(Khamis S, 2016) Self-branding, micro celebrity and the rise of social media influencers, in this article authors has explained the relation between media and marketing that they are mutually dependent on each other, media relies on advertising income for profitable feasibility, while advertisers have been always relied on media to address their products to their target audience, marketers mainly look for celebrities to endorse their product. There is an obvious relationship between media, celebrity, audience and brand. Influencers through Instagram, pivots attention and story yet importantly spread the possibility for recognition. Convincing narratives attract viewers for multiple reasons; there could be reason of inspirational, relevant, informative and advisory and many more.

Background

With the passage of time users of social media are increasing rapidly, with the new inventions and changes on social media sites, individuals have started to use more social media than ever, Users are creating their own content and becoming content creators. When their content is appreciated, and are able to establish their online community on their own, they are able to call themselves influencers. Now companies and brands are using these influencers to promote their products and services in a much organic manner and trustworthy way. In this era, we can see that modern consumer is way more different than the old one. Trends of marketing is also changing and people tends to find more relatable and interesting, as it is nothing like the old consumer who used to believe whatever they were watching on television and digital media. Nowadays modern consumers put their trust on influencers hands, they rely on influencer's reviews, particularly when the influencers is from their own social class. These days influencers with larger viewership and followership are getting free gifts by many brands, they review them either they are good or bad. Influencers increase awareness of the specific brands, marketers gain exposure through influencer's current audience. Influencers instantly enhance the trustworthiness of your brand. They also improve customer relationship: strengthen associations with brand's customer through connection with followers. They spread positivity related to brand to improve the position of product in the market which creates an affirmative image in the eye of consumer.

Significance of the Study

In this modern era new changes are happening day by day, we need to keep ourselves updated with current situations. Changes have both aspects negative and positive. When we are studying the rise of influencers, it shows an important relation with brands, marketers and media, and how they are dependent on each other. Influencers have changed the dimension of marketing by endorsing the product. It is important to know where the news trends are going, how they are working and what benefit are we gaining from it. It is essential to learn that why Influencers are becoming more famous than television and film celebrities. Another thing which is vital to know is how it is affecting the society and what the impacts of a rapid rise of influencers are.

Problem Statement.

As we are noticing an abrupt rise of influencers on social media especially on Instagram, we should now how social media users are getting affected by it. We need to focus on influences of the Instagram influencers. People are more depending on influencers. In this article we will find out the impacts and effect of the influencers on local advertisers and marketing companies and how they are promoting such brands. How they create credibility of product and if their reviews are positive.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are to find out that if the audience knows about the influencers, do they consider influencer's reviews while buying any product. This study tends to find if influencers are promoting genuine products. How many time consumers depend on influencers to buy new item online. How many followers by product on the basis of influencers review.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is the construction that can hold or backing a theory of a research study. The theoretical framework presents and refers to the theory that clarifies why the research problematic underneath study exists.

Bandwagon Effect

The bandwagon effect is a spiritual spectacle in which people do somewhat principally because other individuals are doing the same thing, irrespective of their own opinions, which they might overlook or prevail. This trend of people to support their theories and actions with those of a group is also called a herd mentality. The term "bandwagon effect" originates from government but has wide associations usually seen in customer behavior and investment activities. This fact can be seen during bull marketplaces and the growth of strength foams. (bandwagon-effect.asp)

Relation with Research

As bandwagon effect has wide relation which normally can be seen consumer behavior and venture activities. It can be relate to current research study because when we talk about that the consumer's habit of buying products is somehow affected by influencers, we can say that its herd mentality people are following influencers ignoring their own beliefs and views. People trust them without any justification and without checking any facts and figures. Trend of influencers is increasing day by day, there is less need of it but people are following because they want to follow the same thing their fellows are following, where everyone else is going. Marketers and brands are gaining benefit from influencers because influencers have more followers and target audience according to the need of marketers and companies. Everyone is becoming influencers just to follow the trend. Influencers also claim to have herd mentality as when many influencers make same content since that content is increasing their viewership.

Source Credible Theory

The source credibility theory as proposed by Hovland, Janis and Kelly (1963) stated that people or receivers are more likely to be convinced when the source presents itself as credible. Furthermore, Hovland (1963) and Weiss (1974) later studied the influence of sources in encouragement. The study was done by comparing credible and non-credible sources using same persuasive message to test if the sources seen as credible could influence opinions change in the message receivers more than the non-credible source. The study confirmed the supposition that credible sources tend to create the anticipated impact on the audience. (Source_Credibility_A_Philosophical_Analysis)

Source credible theory is directly related to consumers buying behavior it looks upon the person who is endorsing the product, if that person is genuine and if that person is celebrity or influencers, consumer buy products watch content on the basis of popularity of the influencers and micro celebrities.

Research Questions

- 1: Do you know about the influencers?
- 2: Do you think influencer make difference on your decision of buying anything?
- 3: Who are your favorite influencer on Instagram can you name them down?
- 4: How many influencers do you follow on Instagram?
- 5: How many times did you buy those products which were reviewed by influencers?
- 6: Do you consider products which influencers promote on Instagram are trustworthy and genuine?
- 7: Do you rely on Instagram Influencer's evaluation or online reviews to buy something new from the market?
- 8: Do you think through that the reviews of the goods by Instagram influencers are credible and authentic?
- 9: Have you ever compared yourself to any Instagram influencer by thinking they are living finest life by all the great things around for free?

Research Methodology

Research methodology is basically the detailed process through which the researcher solves the research problem. It is the comprehensive study of carrying out a research. Research methodology includes specific techniques that the researcher can apply in the research process to collect, assemble and evaluate the data. It describes different tools that can be used to collect the relevant information for the research study.

Research Design

In the current study the researcher chose the survey method for the collection of data to know about the point of view of social media users regarding the rapid rise in Instagram influencers. With the help of survey method it will become extremely easy for the social media users who are mostly youth to submit their answers regarding the problem.

Survey Type

The researcher chose the online survey type for the study so that it becomes extremely easy to distribute the questionnaire among the population through different social networking websites and applications like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and emails.

Population

Research population is defined as a group of individuals who possess similar characteristics. The population that the researcher chose for the study is youth because of the fact the researcher observed that youth are most involved in using social networking sites. The population that the researcher chose is the youth of only Lahore district.

Sample

Sampling is the practice with the help of which the researcher selects the people from the population so that the researcher can easily generalize the results that were derived from the sample on the whole population. Researcher used the simple random sampling technique in this study to produce the results.

Sample Size

The sample size chosen by the researcher was 150 out of which 101 responses are recorded and analyzed. The respondents of the study belonged to the age group of 15-30 years because people who are in this specific age group are considered to be more active users of social networking sites.

Research Tool

Researcher formulated a questionnaire consisting of a series of different question for the purpose of gathering information from the respondents. Questionnaires are often considered as a written form of interview. The questionnaire that the researcher designed contained some open and close questions for the collection of data.

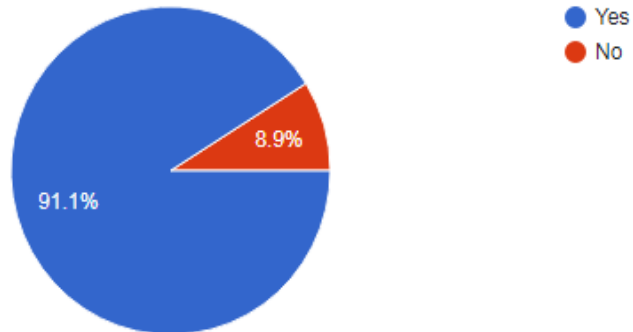
Statistical Analysis

The researcher chose the most commonly used google forms for the purpose of collecting and analyzing the data. Percentage and the frequency of answers are achieved for the clear explanation of results.

Result Presentation

1. Do you know about the influencers?

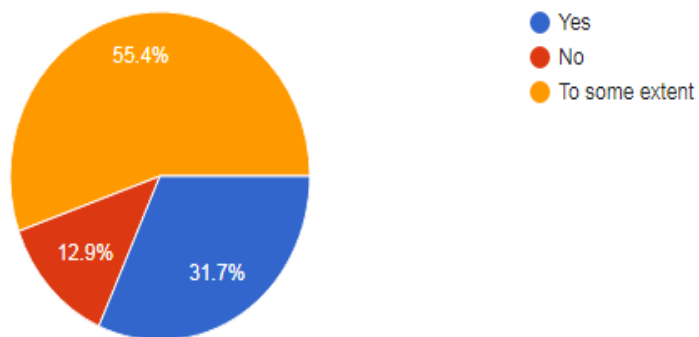
101 responses



In the given graph we can see that 91.1% people know about influencers and according to 8.9% responses they do not know about influencers.

2. Do you think influencers make a difference in your decision of buying anything?

101 responses



As we can see that out of 101 responses 55.4% thinks that influencers influence their buying decision to some extent, and 31.7% ponders that influencers do make difference in their buying decision and 12.9% are of the believe that influencers do not make any difference in their decision of buying products.

3. Who are your favorite influencers on Instagram can you name them down?

101 responses

Humna Raza, Muzamil hasan
Anushay
Daily Dose
Dua amjid
Humna Raza, storyofstyle
Not any
ayeshas
Humna raza. Urooj, Anum (spice of adulging) , shehzeen (the desi wonder woman)
Photographybymaira, by.Rooj, abuzarmir

We can see in above image that according to responses many of them follow influencers on Instagram, the main influencers which were mentioned repeatedly are, Humna Raza, Urooj and Meryam pervaiz.

4. How many influencers do you follow on Instagram?

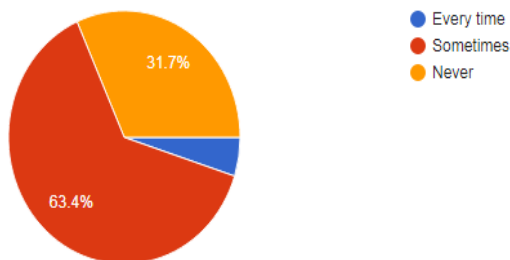
101 responses

5 to 6
more then 8
so many
Very few 2-5
My Instagram is full of influencers never bother to count
Not so much
10 or above
75
8

When we asked our target audience about the numbers of influencers they are following on Instagram, many of them answers that there are following more than 10 influencers on Instagram.

5. How many times did you buy those products which were reviewed by influencers?

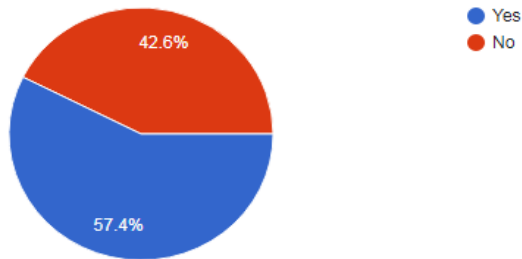
101 responses



According to the graph 63.4% people buy products which were usually endorsed by Influencers, 31.7% never buy them and only 5% buy the endorsed product.

6. Do you consider products that influencers promote on Instagram are trustworthy and genuine?

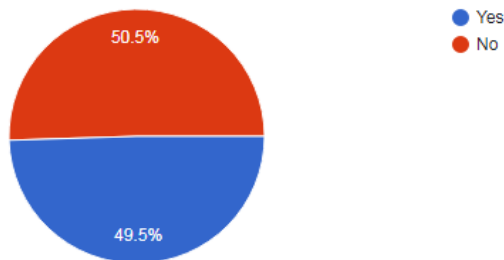
101 responses



In the given graph we can see that 57.4% responses are of the believe that Instagram influencers promote genuine and trustworthy products while according to 42.6% answers influencers do not endorse which are trustworthy and genuine.

7. Do you rely on Instagram Influencer's evaluation or online reviews to buy something new from the market?

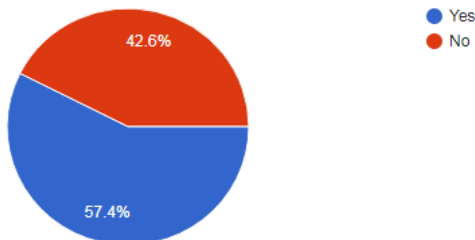
101 responses



According to above responses 49.5% are of believe that they rely on the reviews of Instagram influencers and 50% are of the opinion that they do not depend on Instagram influencer's online reviews about any product.

8. Do you think through that the reviews of the goods by Instagram influencers are credible and authentic?

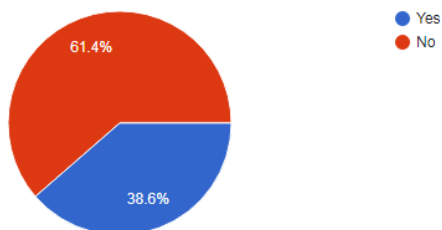
101 responses



57.4% responses as given in the graph that reviews of products are credible and authentic and according to rest of responses which 42.6%, they do not think that reviews are credible and authentic.

9. Have you ever compared yourself to any Instagram influencer by thinking they are living the finest life by all the great things around for free?

101 responses



61.4% are of the attitude that they do not compare their lives with influencers lavishing life, but 38.6% agree that they do compare their selves with famous Instagram influencers.

10. Do you like the content Instagram influencers make? Can you name any of them?

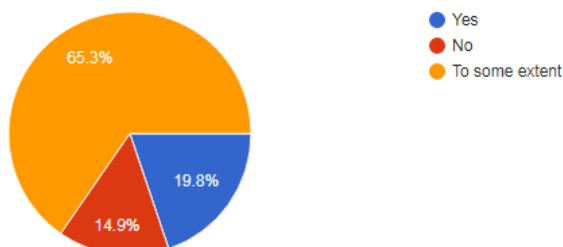
101 responses

By rooj
yes i really like by.rooj's, hira baleeh's and the diary of panda's content.
Some make good content while others don't
Humna raza and irfan junejo content is something eye opening
Start business
I feel all of them give exaggerated review for the products they receive. Maybe not their fault entirely, as they are somehow bounded to do this. Its human psychology. They feel they owe this to those people who have sent them free goods. So, I dont trust fashion influencers, specifically. Otherwise, I do follow bookstagrammers. And surely, their reviews on books impact my choices of buying new books.
Urooj usually talks about mental and physical health

When we ask about the content influencers make, many of the responses answer that they do like content which is made by influencers.

11. Do you ponder that Instagram influencers are promoting unnecessary products?

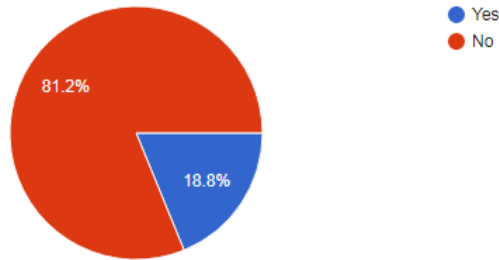
101 responses



65.3% thinks that Insta influencers that endorsing unnecessary products. 19.8% think they do we endorse the product. 14.9 % are of belief that they do not endorse preventable products.

12. Do your purchasing habits have direct impacts because of Instagram Influencers?

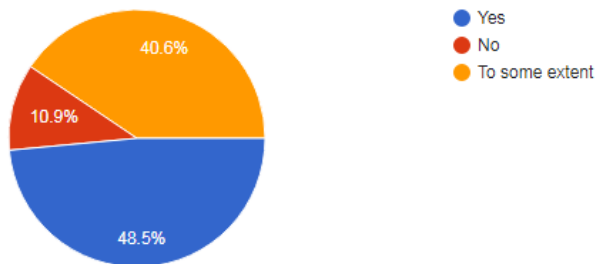
101 responses



It's shown in the given graph that 81.2% responses do not have direct impact on their buying habits because of influencers on Instagram.

13. Do you measure that Instagram Influencers help small businesses?

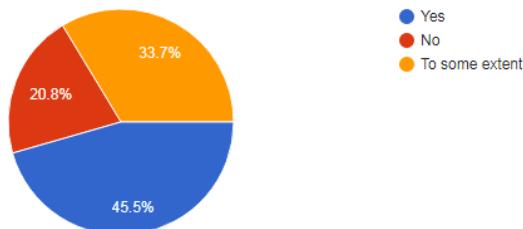
101 responses



In the graph it can be seen that 48.5% responses measures that influencers helps small business while other 40.6% consider that influencers help small business to some extent and only 10.9% thinks that influencers do not help small business startup

14. Do you think that ads and reviews by Instagram influencers have affected the local advertisement companies?

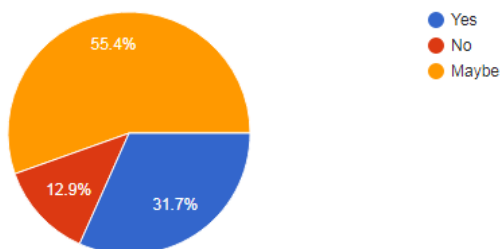
101 responses



It can be seen that according to 45.5% responses out of 101 responses, influencer have affected the local advertisement companies.33.7% thinks that to some extent influencers did have affected the companies. 20.8% do not think that influencers have affected the local advertisement companies.

15. If you are a businessman or would like to start your business would you go to Instagram influencers?

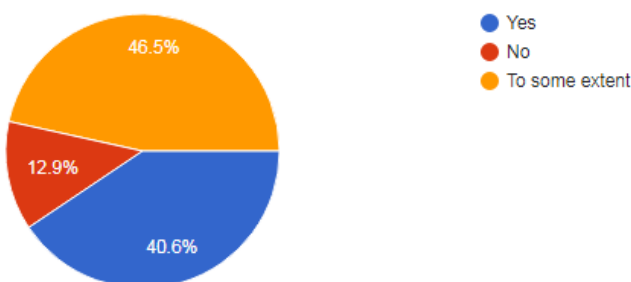
101 responses



55.4% would allow their selves might be to contact Instagram influencers to endorse their product. 31.7% would definitely go to influencers and merely 12.9% will not go to the influencers for their product endorsement.

16. Do you consider that influencers have made advertisements cheap and stress-free?

101 responses



According to 46.5% responses as shown in the graph consider that influencers have made advertisement cheap and stress free, where 40.6% responses in yes, those influencers did have made advertisement cheap and stress free and only 12.9% people thinks influencers did not have made any changes in advertisement.

Result Analysis

After collecting the results we have responses related to our research. Out of 101 responses 91.1% people know about influencers and according to 8.9% responses they do not know about influencers. When we ask them about influence of influencers on their buying decision out of 101 responses 55.4% thinks that influencers influence their buying decision to some extent, and 31.7% ponders that influencers do make difference in their buying decision and 12.9% are of the believe that influencers do not make any difference in their decision of buying products. In another question when we examine our target audience that who are their favorite influencers, according to responses many of them follow influencers on Instagram, the main influencers which were mentioned repeatedly are, Humna Raza, Urooj and Meryam pervaiz. While we asked our target viewers about the numbers of influencers they are following on Instagram, many of them answers that there are following more than 10 influencers on Instagram, some of them answer that they follow no influencers on Instagram. When we inquire them that how many time they buy a product which were endorsed by influencers, 63.4% people answer that they buy products which were usually endorsed by Influencers, 31.7% people never buy them and only 5% always buy the endorsed product. Another question we asked them was, that do they consider that influencers promote trustworthy products in 57.4% responses are of the believe that Instagram influencers promote genuine and trustworthy products while according to 42.6% answers influencers do not endorse which are trustworthy and genuine. One more question we asked from our audience that do they rely on reviews on which their responses were around fifty fifty, According to the responses 49.5% are of believe that they

rely on the reviews of Instagram influencers and 50% are of the opinion that they do not depend on Instagram influencer's online reviews about any product. In other inquiry when we asked about that do they think that influencers reviews and credible and trustworthy, according to 57.4% responses that reviews of products are credible and authentic and according to rest of responses which 42.6%, they do not think that reviews are credible and authentic. After that when we asked Instagram users do they compared themselves with influencers lavish life, 61.4% responses are of the attitude that they do not compare their lives with influencers lavishing life, but 38.6% agree that they do compare their selves with famous Instagram influencers. When we ask about the content influencers make, many of the responses answer that they do like content which is made by influencers mostly they like fashion content, makeup content and many more. When we enquire them whether they think influencer promote unnecessary products, 65.3% thinks that Insta influencers are endorsing unnecessary products while 19.8% think they do endorse the product. 14.9% are of belief that they do not endorse preventable products. It's shown in that 81.2% responses do not have direct impact on their buying habits because of influencers on Instagram. it can be seen that 48.5% responses measures that influencers helps small business while other 40.6% consider that influencers help small business to some extent and only 10.9% thinks that influencers do not help small business startup. According to 45.5% responses out of 101 responses, influencers have affected the local commercial companies. 33.7% thinks that to some extent influencers did have affected the companies. 20.8% do not think that influencers have affected the local advertisement companies. We can see that 55.4% would allow their selves might be to contact Instagram influencers to endorse their product. 31.7% would definitely go to influencers and merely 12.9% will not go to the influencers for their product endorsement. According to 46.5% responses as shown in the graph consider that influencers have made advertisement cheap and stress free, where 40.6% responses in yes, those influencers did have made advertisement cheap and stress free and only 12.9% people thinks influencers did not have made any changes in advertisement.

Conclusion

The main focus of this research was to find out how trends are changing, how the world is coping with latest marketing styles, how influencers are surviving and how users are being influenced by the Instagram influencers. Primarily we were of believe that influencers have enormous impact on the users and their consumer behavior. According to our pre research we assumed that users are of herd mentality, they disown their personal beliefs and follow those groups of people who are following the certain trend. We supposed that social media users are put more interest in influencers rather than the advertisers and cooperate companies.

But after post research where we asked our target audience certain question related to our research. By looking at results can say that people are not following influencers with their eyes off. They do criticize them on whatever content influencers are making that criticism is sometime constructive and negative. It's true that they rely on influencers review but they buy products with their own choice.

Recommendations and Suggestion

Researcher suggests that anyone who is to perform research on this topic should consider getting knowledge about why has the rise in these influences are good over the past few years. What factors have caused their increase and what effects have they left on our business and advertising.

Since influencers have an important role in our society now it is also important to study what role are the playing in the betterment of society and whether the impact is positive or negative in nature.

Research also suggests that anyone who carries on a research regarding same topic should involve some influencers to study both the sides of the story.

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