



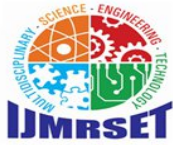
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## International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

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# A Comparative Study of Influencer vs. Traditional Marketing in the East Vidarbha Region

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**ABSTRACT:** The rapid evolution of marketing communication has significantly transformed how businesses interact with consumers. Traditionally, marketing relied on mass media channels such as newspapers, television, radio, and outdoor advertising, which emphasized credibility and institutional trust. However, with the emergence of digital platforms and increased internet penetration, influencer marketing has gained prominence as a more personalized and engaging form of communication. This study focuses on the East Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, which presents a unique blend of traditional and digital media consumption patterns. The research aims to compare the effectiveness, trustworthiness, and influence of traditional marketing and influencer marketing on consumer behaviour in this region. The study highlights how demographic factors, regional diversity, cultural influences, and technological accessibility shape marketing preferences. It concludes that both marketing approaches coexist and complement each other rather than compete, making a hybrid strategy essential for effective communication in semi-urban and rural markets.

**KEYWORDS:** Influencer Marketing, Traditional Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Digital Marketing, Media Trust, Advertising Strategies

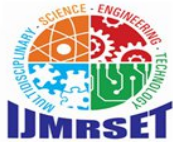
## I. INTRODUCTION

Marketing has evolved significantly over the past century, transforming from simple word-of-mouth strategies to complex digital campaigns powered by artificial intelligence, big data, and social media influencers. Traditional advertising, which dominated the 20th century, relied on print, radio, and television to reach mass audiences (Tungate, 2007). However, with the rise of digital platforms, influencer marketing has emerged as a dynamic alternative that leverages social media personalities to promote brands and products. This shift has redefined the way businesses interact with consumers, emphasizing engagement, authenticity, and personalized marketing strategies (Joshi, Lim, Jagani, & Kumar, 2023).

The East Vidarbha region, comprising districts such as Nagpur, Wardha, Bhandara, Gondia, Chandrapur, and Gadchiroli, represents a unique case where traditional and digital media coexist. People in this region continue to rely on newspapers and radio for daily information while simultaneously engaging with digital platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp. This dual behavior creates a hybrid marketing environment where both traditional and influencer marketing play significant roles. Traditional marketing in this region is deeply rooted in trust and familiarity. Consumers often perceive advertisements in newspapers or on television as credible and reliable. On the other hand, influencer marketing is gaining popularity due to its relatability, authenticity, and localized content. Influencers, often speaking in regional dialects like Zadiboli, create a strong emotional connection with audiences. Therefore, this study aims to analyze how these two forms of marketing function in parallel and influence consumer decision-making in East Vidarbha.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Dharani, Venkatalaxmi, and Venugopal (2025) highlight that influencer marketing drives higher engagement through interaction, while traditional marketing ensures wider awareness among mass audiences. They conclude that combining both strategies is most effective, as it builds reach as well as trust. Griva and Jha (2023) emphasize that influencer marketing builds trust through authenticity and personal connection, whereas traditional advertising creates trust through familiarity and brand stability. Both approaches influence consumer decisions in different but complementary



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ways. Saemundsson (2012) highlights that traditional media (newspapers, television, radio) continues to be perceived as more credible and reliable due to its structured, fact-checked, and authoritative nature. In contrast, digital media gains popularity because of its interactivity and personalized engagement, particularly among younger audiences.

Bognar, Puljić, and Kadežabek (2019) emphasize that influencer credibility significantly impacts consumer purchasing behavior. They find that micro-influencers, due to their authenticity and relatability, often generate stronger consumer trust and engagement than celebrity influencers. Korenkova et al. (2020) conclude that traditional advertising is more informative and trustworthy, while digital advertising is more engaging and entertaining. Both forms play complementary roles, and their effectiveness depends on marketing objectives and target audience.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The primary problem identified in this study is the lack of clarity regarding the effectiveness of influencer marketing versus traditional marketing in semi-urban and rural regions like East Vidarbha. Most existing research focuses on urban audiences, leading to a gap in understanding regional consumer behavior. Businesses often apply urban-centric marketing strategies in these areas, which may not yield effective results due to differences in culture, media access, and consumer preferences. Additionally, varying levels of internet connectivity and digital literacy further complicate the adoption of influencer marketing in certain districts.

The study uses both primary and secondary data for a well-rounded analysis. Primary data is collected through questionnaires and interviews to understand consumer preferences, while secondary data includes literature reviews, case studies of brands like OnePlus and Samsung, and market reports. The sample consists of 100 smartphone consumers aged 18–35 from East Vidarbha, selected using random sampling across urban, semi-urban, and rural areas.

#### Objectives of the research paper

1. To understand how people in the East Vidarbha region perceive and trust influencer marketing compared to traditional marketing.
2. To explore which approach traditional or influencer marketing works better for creating brand awareness and engaging customers.
3. To examine how demographic factors (such as age, education, occupation, and location) shape consumer responses to both marketing methods.
4. To identify the overall preferences and attitudes of consumers towards influencer marketing versus traditional marketing practices in the region.

### IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 1. Time spend by respondent on social media in a day.

On an average day, how much time do you spend on social media (e.g., Instagram, YouTube, Facebook)?

100 responses

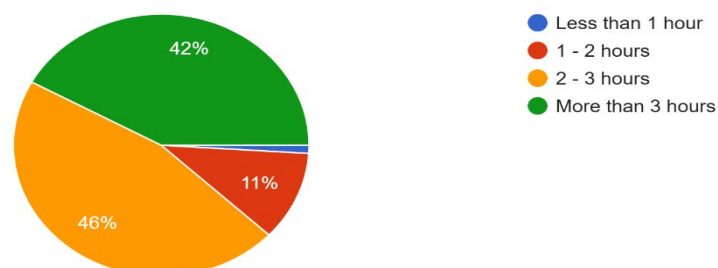
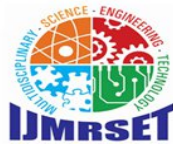


Chart No.1 – Showing Social Media Usage of Respondents



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### Data Analysis and Interpretation

From the above chart it is interpreted that most of the respondents spend more than 2–3 hours on social media daily, indicating that social media is a major part of their routine. The high usage shows that respondents are highly engaged with digital platforms, which increases the effectiveness of influencer marketing in influencing their awareness and buying behaviour

### 2. Sources of information about product

Where do you most often discover new products or brands?

100 responses

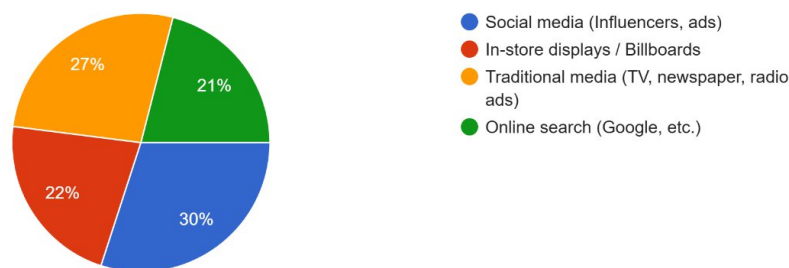


Chart No.2 – Showing Source of Product Discovery

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

From the above chart it is interpreted that most of the respondents discover new products or brands through social media (30%), followed by traditional media (27%), in-store displays (22%), and online search (21%). This shows that social media is the most preferred source of product discovery among respondents. The findings indicate that influencer marketing plays a major role in creating awareness, while traditional marketing still holds significant importance. Therefore, both digital and traditional channels are important for effective marketing strategies.

### 3. Trust of respondents on traditional advertisement

I trust the information provided in traditional advertisements.

100 responses

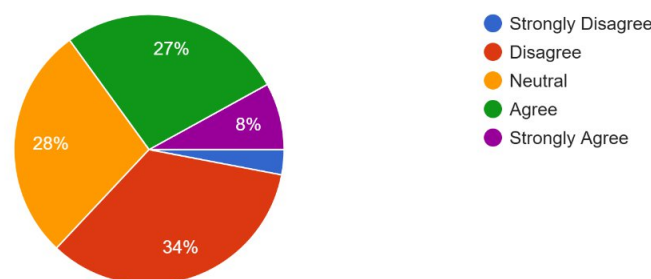
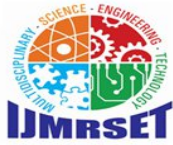


Chart No.3 – Showing Trust in Traditional Advertisements

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

From the above chart it is interpreted that respondents have mixed opinions on traditional advertisements, with many showing moderate trust while a significant number remain neutral or disagree.



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### 4. Trust on influencer by respondents

I trust product recommendations from influencers I regularly follow.

100 responses

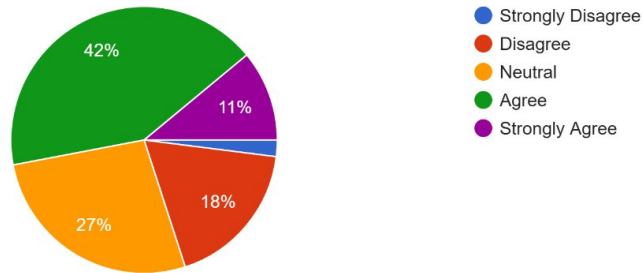


Chart No.4 – Showing Trust in Influencer Recommendations

#### Data Analysis and Interpretation

From the above chart it is interpreted that most of the respondents trust product recommendations from influencers, with a majority agreeing or strongly agreeing, while a smaller portion remains neutral or disagrees.

### 5. Influencer of buying decisions.

Which type of marketing influences your buying decisions more: influencer marketing or traditional marketing?

100 responses

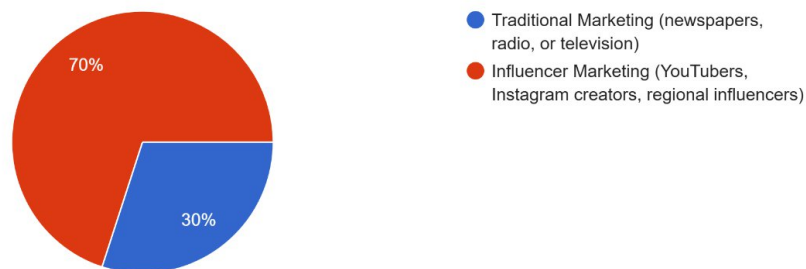


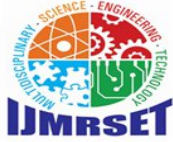
Chart No.5 – Showing the Influence of Marketing Type on Buying Decisions

#### Data Analysis and Interpretation

Most respondents (70%) are influenced by influencer marketing, while only 30% prefer traditional marketing, showing a clear preference for influencer-based promotions.

## V. CONCLUSION

While traditional marketing continues to hold relevance, influencer marketing has significantly reshaped the advertising landscape by offering more cost-effective and high-engagement alternatives. Businesses must carefully assess their marketing objectives and target audience demographics to choose the most suitable approach. In regions like East Vidarbha, where both digital and traditional media are actively consumed, relying on only one strategy may limit overall effectiveness.



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The comparative analysis highlights that influencer marketing excels in engagement, relatability, and trust, whereas traditional marketing remains strong in mass reach and brand credibility. Therefore, future marketing strategies should focus on a hybrid approach, combining the strengths of both methods to maximize impact.

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