

Original Article

# Comparative Analysis between Micro and Macro Fashion Influencers of Instagram in India

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**Abstract** - The social media influencer marketing industry has grown exponentially in recent years, increasing from a global market value of \$1.7 billion in 2016 to \$13.8 billion in 2021. With the rise of fashion and lifestyle influencers on Instagram, the marketing team of popular brands is seen collaborating with macro and micro-influencers alike to market their products. The paper aims to understand the extent to which the follower count of Instagram influencers impacts the purchase decision of their viewers. To study the above, a detailed questionnaire was prepared that recorded the response of twenty-five participants concerning twelve product endorsement videos created by three macro and three micro fashion and lifestyle Instagram influencers. Based on the collected data, it was concluded that a higher follower count did not guarantee an increased sale of the marketed product as the research participants showed greater interest in purchasing the products endorsed by the micro-influencers under consideration, thereby indicating the greater potential of the latter's marketing strategy translating into higher sales. The findings of this study can help brands in choosing suitable influencers to market their products for maximum brand recognition.

**Keywords** - Fashion, Micro-influencer, Macro-Influencer, Instagram-influencer, Marketing, Brand, Maximum brand recognition.

## 1. Introduction

Social media is used by billions of people worldwide and has quickly emerged as one of the technologies that define our generation. Facebook claims to have 1.56 billion daily active users and 2.38 billion monthly active users (Facebook, 2019). The overall number of social media users worldwide is expected to reach 3.29 billion in 2022, accounting for 42.3% of the world's population (eMarketer, 2018). It is not unexpected that marketing teams of various brands have embraced social media as a marketing medium, given the sizable potential audience accessible who spend several hours a day on social media. Influencer marketing is one such social media marketing tactic that has gained immense popularity. This form of marketing involves the use of 'influencers or people with a significant following on social media platforms who endorse a company's products or services to their followers. The influencer marketing sector has shown tremendous growth over the past six years, increasing from a market value of \$1.7 billion in 2016 to \$13.8 billion in 2021 (Maan, 2021). It is predicted that over the next five years, the value of the Indian influencer marketing industry will increase at a compound annual growth rate of 25 percent, from Rs. 900 crores in 2021 to Rs. 2200 crore in 2025 (Basuroy, 2023). Due to the rapid

increase in the number of creators and the growing number of collaborations between brands and artists, the industry is expected to soar to unprecedented heights (Social Beat, 2022).

Contrary to popular belief, the culture of influencer marketing is not new. For centuries, high-profile people have affected consumer purchasing decisions. People sought the guidance of kings, queens, and popes over what medications to take during the 17th and 18th centuries. When Roscoe Arbuckle decided to endorse Murad cigarettes in the early 1900s (although he refused to smoke them), he became one of the industry's first celebrity influencers. In the 1980s and 1990s, celebrity endorsements exploded. Michael Jordan endorsed everything from his Air Jordans to Wheaties, Gatorade, and McDonald's. Jennifer Aniston's endorsement of L'Oreal convinced women that they too could have hair like Rachel Green (The character played by Aniston in the TV show 'Friends') (L'oreal, 2015). Cindy Crawford and The Spice Girls made iconic Pepsi commercials that are still remembered today (Brenner, 2021). Even the legendary Indian actor Shah Rukh Khan has promoted everything from soaps to cars and pan masala (Afaqs News Bureau, 2022). He was chosen to represent Pepsi as a brand diplomat in the early 1990s. The actor continued to appear in commercials



for the company from the 1990s through 2011 (Afaqs News Bureau, 2022). With the surge in internet usage in the 2000s, you no longer needed to be a celebrity to be an influencer. Bloggers surged in popularity, writing about travel, parenting, food, and the like, and the lifestyle business sector was born. Social media ruled the 2010s, and influencer marketing as we know it now started to develop. Now, influencer marketing has grown into a billion-dollar industry, and there are influencers of all ages, interests, and industries.

Influencer marketing was revolutionized with the advent of social media, especially Instagram, in 2010, which offered a platform with unparalleled scope and accessibility. Influencers that joined Instagram early were able to amass sizable, devoted followings. From 100 million users in 2013 to over a billion now, Instagram's user base grew rapidly in the years that followed, and influencer marketing surged alongside it. ("*Why Instagram Is The Best Platform for Influencer Marketing*", 2019) In 2019, 92% of influencers cited Instagram as their preferred networking site. By the end of the decade, 86% of businesses used influencer marketing as part of their marketing spend. Social media users are accustomed to seeing sponsored content and may even actively seek it out to discover products they may enjoy. Instagram is undoubtedly the Mecca of influencer marketing. Selena Gomez, for instance, has over 144 million followers on Instagram, and she engages with each of her posts. In 2018, the exposure of a single photo shared by her was valued at \$3.4 million (Maxim, 2018). However, she comes at a high price: one post that Selena sponsors for a brand can cost upwards of \$800,000 (Mejia, 2018).

While major brands may use celebrities like Selena Gomez as influencers, these traditional celebrities are so expensive that smaller brands have started and will continue to benefit from the success of what is known as "micro-influencers" (Appel et al., 2019). Micro-influencers are influencers that are less well-known than celebrities but have devoted, loyal followings that are often more niche in nature. They can have anything from a few thousand to hundreds of thousands of followers (Main, 2017). Influencer marketing has become more and more enticing to marketers since these influencers are typically seen as more reliable and genuine than traditional celebrities (Enberg, 2018). These individuals are often regarded as reliable "experts" in the topics they post about, which attracts viewers and encourages interaction. Additionally, by employing these influencers, the company may engage customers more successfully via first-person narrative, which is seen as being warmer and more genuine than advertisements (Chang et al., 2019).

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Research Aim**

The paper intends to conduct a comparative analysis between different fashion micro and macro influencers of

Instagram to understand how the respective influencers' marketing strategies affect brand recognition.

### **2.2. Research Design**

The methodological approach adopted for this paper is a quantitative study of a comparative analysis between micro and macro fashion influencers on Instagram and how their marketing strategies affect brand recognition. In this research paper, influencers with less than 500K followers are considered micro-influencers, and influencers with more than 500K followers are considered macro-influencers.

### **2.3. Tools Used**

To conduct this analysis, a questionnaire survey was distributed among the participants. The survey consisted of video endorsements of 6 different influencers (3 micro-influencers and 3 macro-influencers) linked to each question. Two different endorsement videos from each Instagram Influencer were presented to the participants.

### **2.4 Informed Consent**

In the research study conducted, all participants were allowed to voluntarily complete a survey that was designed to gather valuable insights into a particular area of interest. Before participating in the study, all participants were informed of the nature of the study and the purpose of the survey. They were also informed that their responses would be used anonymously for research purposes only and that their personal information would not be disclosed or shared with anyone.

### **2.5. Sample**

A survey consisting of a questionnaire was distributed randomly to 25 participants living in Delhi NCR, aged between 16 and 44 years old. Among the participants, 68% were female, and 32% were male.

### **2.6. Data Collection Procedure**

The participants were required to watch each video and rate them on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) based on inclusivity and content quality. The inclusivity of a post considers the price of the product shown (if a product is affordable to a larger audience) and the product's usefulness (whether a product serves the purpose of a larger audience). Content quality refers to the quality of the content and whether the content is appealing to the audience.

### **2.7. Data Analysis**

The responses of the 25 participants were analyzed to determine which type of influencer (micro or macro) was more likely to convince the audience to buy a particular product through their video endorsements.

### 3. Results

This section of the research paper will analyze the data collected from the participants of this study. The participants were required to rate the inclusivity and content quality on a scale of 1 (Lowest) to 5 (Highest) of 2 different posts of 6 influencers (3 micro-influencers and 3 macro-influencers). Each post's results are shown graphically to easily compare

the types of content that appeal to audiences and ultimately influence their choice to purchase a certain product.

#### 3.1. Micro-Influencer 1

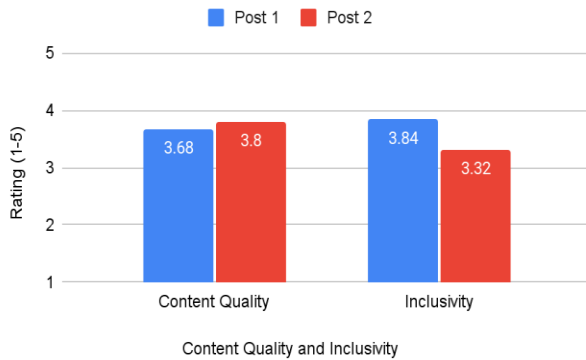
The paper examines two recent brand promotions by Micro Influencer 1, who has a large following of 58.8K people and focuses on fashion, beauty, and makeup content.

**Table 1. Details of the Instagram posts of Micro-Influencer 1** (Lifestyle/Fashion Influencer) with 58.8K Followers

	Post1 Endorsement/Modeled for BEWAKOOF OFFICIAL (Streetwear Brand)	Post 2 Endorsement for Crocs X Staple Pigeon (Footwear)
<b>Product</b>	The Hatke Streetwear Collection	Crocs x Staple Homing Pigeon All Terrain Clog
<b>Price</b>	Ranges from Rs. 599- Rs.2000	Retail: Rs.5695 Resale: Rs. 16000
<b>Likes/Comments</b>	49.6K likes/ 117 comments	3005 likes/ 33 comments

**Table 2. Details of the Instagram posts of Micro-Influencer 2** (Video Editor /Fashion Influencer) with 39.5K Followers

	Post 1 Endorsement for KAMA AYURVEDA (Wellness Brand)	Post 2 Endorsement for NOISE (Smartwatch Brand)
<b>Product</b>	Eladi Hydrating Face Cream	Noise ColourFit Ultra 2
<b>Price</b>	Rs. 1050	Rs. 8,999
<b>Likes/Comments</b>	2588 likes/ 45 comments	2887 likes/ 54 comments



**Fig. 1 Graphical representation of content quality and inclusivity of Instagram posts of micro-influencer 1. (N=25)**

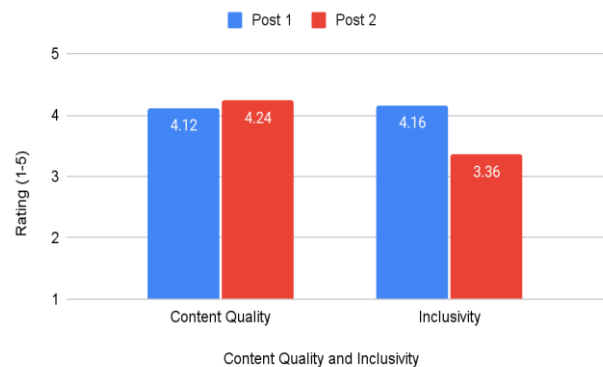
The influencer promotes various fashion and lifestyle products, including clothing, cosmetics, and accessories. The analyzed endorsements include Kama Ayurveda's Eladi Hydrating Face Cream, a beauty product based on Ayurvedic principles, and Noise ColourFit Ultra 2, a smartwatch brand.

As per the responses to the questionnaire survey, micro-influencer 1 has an above average (higher than 2.5) rating for both inclusivity and content quality. The graph also suggests that though the content quality of the Kama Ayurveda endorsement is rated lower as compared to the endorsement for Noise, the inclusivity of the former is rated to be higher

than the latter (3.32). The endorsement for Kama Ayurveda (2588 likes/ 45 comments) also has a lower engagement as compared to Noise (2887 likes/ 54 comments).

#### 3.2. Micro-Influencer 2

Micro-Influencer 2 is a video editor who posts content related to fashion and lifestyle with an audience of 39.5K followers. The influencer primarily promotes streetwear clothing and accessory brands. The analyzed endorsement posts include Bewakoof Official's Hatke Streetwear Collection and Croc's X Staple Pigeon's Homing Pigeon All Terrain Clog.



**Fig. 2 Graphical representation of content quality and inclusivity of Instagram posts of micro-influencer 2. (N=25)**

As per the graph, micro-influencer 2 has a high rating (more than 4) for their content quality and an above average to high rating (3 to 4) on the inclusivity of the products they endorse. While there is a negligible difference in the content quality of the 2 posts, the endorsement for Bewakoof Official

exhibits a significantly higher rate of inclusivity when compared to the post for Croc's X Staple Pigeon. The endorsement post for Bewakoof Official also has a higher engagement rate.

**Table 3. Details of the Instagram posts of Micro-Influencer 3 (Fashion Influencer) with 102K Followers**

	Post1 Endorsement for <b>JOHN JACOBS</b> (Eyewear Brand)	Post 2 Endorsement for <b>UNIQLO</b> (Clothing Brand)
<b>Product</b>	JJ Classic eyewear	Uniqlo Fall Winter Collection
<b>Price</b>	Rs. 3000- Rs. 4000	Rs. 1990- Rs. 10,990
<b>Likes/Comments</b>	22K likes/ 264 comments	20.4K likes/ 207 comments

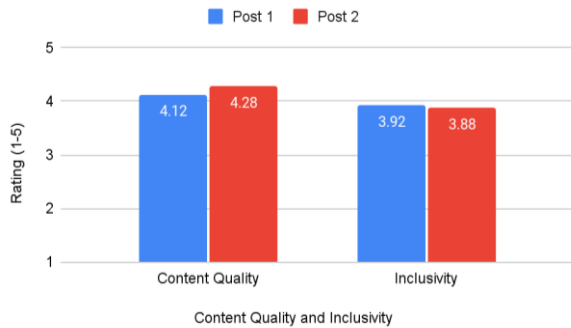
**Table 4. Details of the Instagram posts of Macro Influencer 1 (Fashion Influencer) with 1.8 million Followers**

	Post1 Endorsement for <b>MYNTRA</b> (Online Fashion Store)	Post 2 Endorsement for <b>LANCÔME</b> (Beauty and Cosmetics Brand)
<b>Product</b>	Sarees at Myntra Big Fashion Festival	Lancôme Skincare
<b>Price</b>	Under Rs. 1000	Rs. 2200 - Rs. 10,401
<b>Likes/Comments</b>	178k likes/ 1379 comments	41.8K likes/ 273 comments

**3.3. Micro-Influencer 3**

Micro-influencer 3 shares content related to fashion with an audience of 103K followers. This influencer promotes products related to fashion, accessories, and lifestyle. Two specific product endorsements were analyzed, John Jacobs' JJ Classic Eyewear and Uniqlo's Fall Winter Collection.

According to the graph, micro-influencer 3 has an above-average to high (more than 4) rating for their content quality and an above-average (more than 2.5) rating for the inclusivity of the products they endorse. Though there is a negligible difference in the inclusivity rating for both endorsements, the endorsement for Uniqlo has a higher rated content quality than that of John Jacob's endorsement.

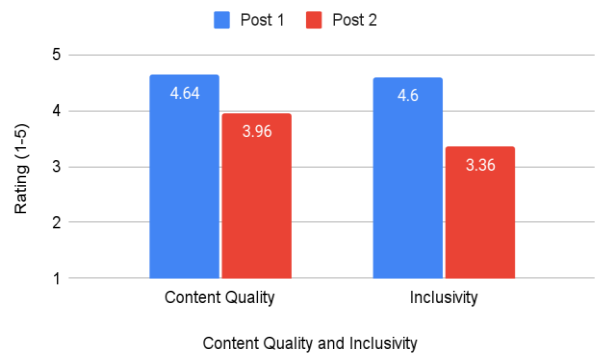


**Fig. 3 Graphical representation of content quality and inclusivity of Instagram posts of micro-influencer 3. (N=25)**

However, John Jacob's endorsement has a higher inclusivity score than the endorsement for Uniqlo. The engagement for John Jacob's post is also higher than that of Uniqlo.

**3.4. Macro Influencer 1**

Macro-influencer 1 is a fashion content creator with a significant following of 1.8 million Instagram users. This influencer has collaborated with several fashion and beauty brands, promoting their products through her social media channels. The analyzed posts include the endorsement for Myntra's Big Fashion Festival and Lancôme's Skincare.



**Fig. 4 Graphical representation of content quality and inclusivity of Instagram posts of macro influencer 1. (N=25)**

**Table 5. Details of the Instagram posts of Macro Influencer 2 (Fashion/Lifestyle Influencer) with 1.7 million Followers**

	Post 1 Endorsement for Nykaa (Cosmetics Brand)	Post 2 Endorsement Anaash (Accessory Brand)
<b>Product</b>	Charlotte Tilbury x Nykaa Winter Kits	GIZA bag
<b>Price</b>	Rs. 2900- Rs. 6800	Rs. 12,400
<b>Likes/Comments</b>	6677 likes/ 36 comments	8139 likes/ 52 comments

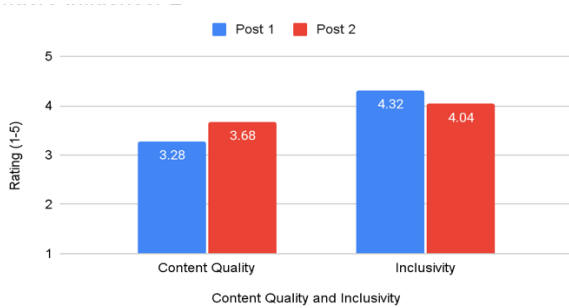
**Table 6. Details of the Instagram posts of Macro Influencer 3 (Fashion/Lifestyle Influencer) with 969K Followers.**

	Post 1 Endorsement Blue Heaven Cosmetics (Cosmetics Brand)	Post 2 Endorsement for MYNTRA (Lifestyle Brand)
<b>Product</b>	Blue Heaven Makeup	Myntra Winter Collection 22
<b>Price</b>	Rs. 899	Rs. 587- Rs. 12260
<b>Likes/Comments</b>	34.5K likes/ 103 comments	23.5k likes/ 61 comments

As per the graph, the influencer has an above average rating (more than 2.5) on both their content quality and the inclusivity of the products they promote. The endorsement for Myntra has a higher-rated content quality and inclusivity as compared to that of Lancôme. There is also a substantial difference in the engagement of the two endorsements, with the Myntra endorsement having a much higher engagement than the Lancôme endorsement.

**3.5. Macro Influencer - 2**

Macro Influencer 2 is a fashion and lifestyle content creator with a significant following of 1.7 million Instagram users. Their content typically focuses on fashion, beauty, lifestyle, and travel, and they often collaborate with the brands that promote these products. The analyzed posts include Blue Heaven Cosmetics' makeup and Myntra's Winter Collection.



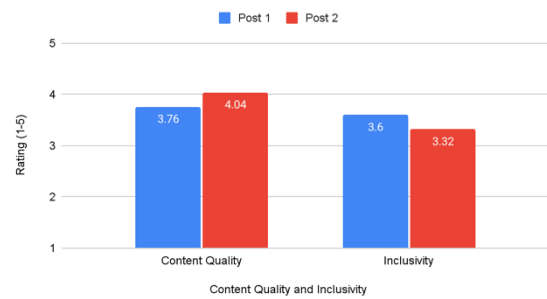
**Fig. 5 Graphical representation of content quality and inclusivity of Instagram posts of macro influencer 2. (N=25)**

As seen in the graph, macro influencer 2 has an above-average rating (more than 2.5) on their content quality and a high rating (more than 4) on the inclusivity of the products they promote. While the content quality for Blue Heaven

Cosmetics' endorsement is rated lower than that of Myntra's endorsement, the inclusivity of the former is rated higher than the inclusivity of the latter. Blue Heaven Cosmetics' endorsement also has a higher engagement than Myntra's endorsement.

**3.6. Macro Influencer- 3**

Macro Influencer 3 is a fashion and lifestyle influencer with an audience of 969K Instagram users. Their content typically focuses on fashion, beauty, lifestyle, and travel, and they often collaborate with the brands that promote these products. The analyzed posts include Nykaa's Charlotte Tilbury x Nykaa Winter Kits and Anaash's Giza bag.



**Fig. 6 Graphical representation of content quality and inclusivity of Instagram posts of macro influencer 3. (N=25)**

The graph shows us that macro influencer 3 has an above-average (more than 2.5) rating for both content quality and inclusivity. While the endorsement post for Nykaa has a lower content quality than the video endorsement for Anaash, the latter has a lower inclusivity rate as compared to the former. The endorsement for Anaash also has a higher engagement than Nykaa's endorsement post.

#### 4. Discussion

In the realm of social media marketing, influencers have become a powerful tool for businesses to reach out to a vast and diverse audience. The rise of fashion and lifestyle influencers on Instagram has been a key driver behind the exponential growth of the influencer marketing industry. Brands are increasingly collaborating with macro and micro-influencers alike to market their products, recognizing the potential of these individuals to reach out to their target audience effectively. To better understand the effectiveness of influencer marketing, this research paper conducts a study to investigate the impact of Instagram influencer follower count on the purchasing decisions of their viewers. To conduct this study, a questionnaire was developed to gather information on the effectiveness of Instagram fashion and lifestyle influencers' video endorsements. The questionnaire covered various aspects of the endorsements, including content quality and inclusivity of the products being endorsed.

In this paper, we have identified content quality and inclusivity of endorsements as two key factors that impact brand recognition through influencer marketing. Several studies have shown that high-quality content is essential for brand engagement on social media (Rice and Galbraith, 2020). Thus, companies should invest in marketing strategies that produce engaging content and implement strategies to encourage user interaction to boost their online engagement, build brand awareness, and influence purchasing behavior. The inclusivity of products is also an essential factor in raising brand visibility. Creating inclusive content involves developing brand messaging and advertising that not only represents but also resonates with a diverse audience. This approach can make customers feel valued and included, thereby enhancing their connection with the brand. (Ojiaku, 2023)

This study's results show that a micro-influencer's average content quality rating is more than 6% better than a macro influencer's average content quality rating. This significantly high content quality rating of micro-influencers can be attributed to the fact that "they have the potential to engage audiences around topics that are specific to a particular interest." (Ehlers and Forbes, 2021). On the other hand, the average inclusivity rating of a macro influencer is more than 3% better than the average inclusivity rating of a micro-influencer. The high inclusivity rate of macro influencers can be credited to their larger audience. Macro influencers tend to promote products that are easily accessible to a broad audience to be inclusive, while micro-influencers focus on a specific niche in which they have the expertise and a dedicated following. However, having a niche audience can be advantageous for boosting brand recognition, as brands can leverage these highly selective communities and achieve a level of precision in targeting that is more challenging with macro-influencers.

This study has certain limitations that must be acknowledged. One such limitation is the small sample size of the participants that completed the questionnaire survey. Alongside this, the questionnaire was found to be lengthy and time-consuming, which could have deterred potential participants from completing the survey. Additionally, the selection of influencers for the analysis was not completely random because only influencers on Instagram were chosen, which introduces the possibility of bias in results as other social media platforms may have different types of influencers and audience demographics. Another limitation of the study is that only two posts from each of the six influencers (three micro and three macro influencers) were analyzed, which may not provide a comprehensive understanding of their content and impact on their audiences. Therefore, it is important to consider these limitations when interpreting the findings of this study and to exercise caution when applying them to other contexts.

This study's results can help inform these decisions by providing evidence that micro-influencers may be a more effective choice for promoting a brand's products than macro-influencers, despite having a smaller following. In light of these findings, brands may need to reconsider their influencer marketing strategies and focus on partnering with micro-influencers with a more specialized and engaged audience. By doing so, brands can tap into highly curated communities and potentially achieve greater success in promoting their products and increasing their sales.

#### 5. Conclusion

With the increasing use of social media all around the world, influencer marketing has emerged as a novel and progressively effective way for brands to increase their recognition and appeal to a wider range of audience. In this study, we have investigated the impact of Instagram influencers' follower count on the purchasing decisions of their viewers and identified content quality and inclusivity of endorsements as two key factors that impact brand recognition through influencer marketing. Macro influencers have the ability to reach a large number of people quickly and effectively, making them a powerful tool for building brand awareness and driving sales. On the other hand, micro-influencers can be a better option for brands targeting specific niche communities or seeking unique content quality in product endorsement. Micro-influencers often have a more engaged and loyal following, which can lead to higher levels of trust and credibility with their audience. Ultimately, the choice between macro and micro-influencers will depend on various factors, including the brand's goals and target audience, as well as the influencer's content style and level of engagement. By carefully considering these factors and selecting the appropriate influencer for their needs, brands can increase their chances of success in the competitive world of influencer marketing.

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