

# The Influence of Social Media Personalities on Students' Lifestyle Decisions

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**Abstract:** In today's digital era, Social media stars, generally referred to as people of influence, have grown into influential figures, affecting young people's attitudes, goals, and behaviors. Social media content frequently reaches further entertainment for college students, impacting their eating habits, fashion choices, lifestyle choices, and even academic goals. Using an overall analytic technique, this study explores the multifaceted influence of social media personalities on students' lifestyle decisions through a thematic analysis of existing literature. It shows how Influencers on Social Media are growing, Interaction of Students with Influencers, Influence on Consumption, Behavior, and Lifestyle, Social and Psychological Effects, Implications for Education and Ethics. The finding show that students' exposure to influencers has both beneficial effects—by raising awareness for motivation—and detrimental effects—by encouraging materialism and comparison. The paper concludes by students make healthy lifestyle choices, the report ends by highlighting the importance of digital knowledge, ethical influencer behaviors, and balanced social media use.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Influencers, Students, Lifestyle Choices, Digital Behavior, Psychological Impact Consumption.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Globally, the prevalence of social media has changed how people communicate, share information, and create culture. Social media sites like Instagram, YouTube, and others have made celebrity more accessible by enabling regular people to influence and set trends. These people, referred to as social media influencers (SMIs), occupy a special position between peers and celebrities. They create media that appeals to millions of people and frequently promotes lifestyles, goods, and businesses (Khamis, Ang, & Welling, 2017).

Social networking is both an educational and fun platform for students. Constant exposure to the carefully chosen photos and stories of influencers, however, has an impact on how they build their identities and make decisions in their daily lives. Many students, often without realizing it, replicate the habits, fashions, and consumption habits of the influencers they look up to. Influencers are now important role models in contemporary youth culture as a result (Abidin, 2021).

With a focus on psychological, behavioral, and cultural aspects, this study aims to comprehend how social media personalities affect students' lifestyle choices. The study uses a thematic approach to identify important areas of influence and concern and synthesize relevant information.

## II. THEME 1: INFLUENCERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA ARE GROWING

### ➤ *The Rise of Influencer Culture*

The digital revolution has led to the rise of social media influencers. Influencers developed naturally inside online networks, in contrast to traditional celebrities who became well-known through television or movies (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2011). They are able to establish a strong connection with audiences because of their relatability and honesty.

Influencers usually focus on topics like personal development, fashion, fitness, beauty, education, or travel. They work with brands to market goods in ways that resemble peer recommendations more than advertisements. According to Audrezet, de Kerviler, and Moulard (2020), the "peer approval effect" influences customer behavior and builds trust, especially with younger audiences who place a higher value on authenticity than traditional advertising.

#### ➤ *The Motivation of Students*

For students, influencers represent accessibility and ambition. They seem like relatable people, regular people who have succeeded by being creative and persistent. In order to establish emotional connections with their fans, their content frequently features personal tales of hardships, achievements, and difficulties. The difference between influence and entertainment is blurred because students view influencers as reliable sources of lifestyle advice, claim Djafarova and Trofimenko (2019).

### III. THEME 2: INTERACTION OF STUDENTS WITH INFLUENCERS

#### ➤ *Engagement Patterns*

Likes, comments, shares, and participation in online challenges are ways that students interact with influencers. Both passive imitation (copying habits) and active consumption (seeking inspiration) are evident in this involvement. According to research, college students use social media for three to four hours every day on average, and a large amount of that time is spent on content from celebrities (Statista, 2024).

#### ➤ *Para Social Interactions*

The emotional bond that followers form with influencers is explained by the Para social interaction hypothesis (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Despite the one-sided nature of the interaction, students frequently feel as though they know these individuals intimately. The influencer's lifestyle choices are imitated and internalized as a result of this emotional investment.

#### ➤ *Social Recognition and Identity*

Students' involvement in influencer-driven trends also addresses psychological demands for affiliation and validation. Like similar content or follow the same influencer as peers strengthens group identity (Marwick, 2015). However, this can also lead to herd behavior, in which students embrace lifestyle fads out of social conformity rather than personal preference.

### IV. THEME3: INFLUENCE ON CONSUMPTION, BEHAVIOR, AND LIFESTYLE

#### ➤ *Fashion and Personality*

Influencers have a major effect over fashion trends. Casaló, Flavián, & Ibáñez-Sánchez (2018) found that students often mimic current digital aesthetics in their clothing, makeup, and accessories. Instagram and other platforms magnify visual

content, prompting students to tailor their appearance to influencer standards.

#### ➤ *Health, Fitness and Dieting*

Fitness and wellness influencers encourage workout routines and nutrition strategies. While this may encourage better practices, it also encourages unrealistic body expectations. Students may.

Follow restrictive diets or participate in fitness challenges to mimic influencer physiques, putting their mental and physical wellbeing at danger (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018).

#### ➤ *Patterns of Consumption*

Students' purchase decisions are influenced by influencer marketing. Influencers frequently use sponsored articles or affiliate links to advertise fashion labels, technology, and lifestyle goods. According to a 2019 study by Lou and Yuan, when followers believe that influencers are genuine and trustworthy, their buy intentions rise dramatically. Students' financial priorities may be strained by this trend, which normalizes spending.

#### ➤ *Aspirations for Education and Employment*

Some influencers encourage students to pursue goals or skill-based learning because they are experts in education and motivation. According to de Veirman and Hudders (2020), educational influencers on LinkedIn or YouTube offer job advice and promote constructive behavioral change. However, when pupils fall short of perceived success criteria, an overabundance of respect for "success influencers" can lead to uneasiness or self-doubt.

### V. THEME 4: SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT

#### ➤ *Self-Awareness and Comparison*

Continuous exposure to idealized lives generates social comparison pressures. Students may feel inadequate when comparing their real lives to the curated pictures of influencers (Vogel, Rose, Roberts, & Eckles, 2014). This issue leads to low self-esteem and physical dissatisfaction, particularly among female students.

#### ➤ *Issues with Mental Health*

According to Keles, McCrae, and Grealish (2020), excessive usage of social media is linked to anxiety, depression, and sleep difficulties. Stress, time waste, and a loss of academic focus might result from the urge to maintain an influential lifestyle.

#### ➤ *The Development of Identity*

Students' changing identities are shaped by their influences. Young adults and adolescents experiment with how they show themselves online, frequently creating their digital personas by copying influencers (Abidin, 2021). This might

encourage self-expression and innovation, but it can also lead to a dependence on online approval for one's value.

## VI. THEME 5: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL AND ETHICS

### ➤ *Digital Literacy's Function*

Educational institutions should encourage digital literacy in order to lessen adverse effects. Students need to be able to analyze influencer content critically, discern between sponsored and real messages, and comprehend the business goals of influencer marketing (Livingstone, 2019).

### ➤ *Moral Difficulties*

Influencers have moral obligations to their audience. Influential audiences can be affected by the promotion of dangerous goods or unrealistic lifestyles. To fulfill ethical standards, sponsorship transparency and content authenticity are crucial (Evans, Phua, Lim, & Jun, 2017).

### ➤ *Influencers' Potential for Good*

Influencers don't always have negative impacts. Numerous social media influencers promote self-improvement, sustainability, and mental health awareness. Education institutions and responsible influencers can work together to raise awareness of environmental, health, and professional skills challenges (Alonso-Dos-Santos, Moreno, & Castañeda, 2020).

## VII. CONCLUSION

Students' perceptions and lifestyle choices have been altered by social media influencers. They have had an effect on decisions about purchasing, appearance, physical wellness, and self-perception due to their ongoing exposure. Although they can be sources of inspiration and innovation, influencers frequently encourage students to have irrational expectations and engage in excessive consumption.

Programs for digital literacy that enable students to evaluate influencer content critically must be incorporated into educational settings. Balanced media use should be promoted by parents and educators, prioritizing in-person social contacts above virtual imitation.

In the end, the way social media celebrities affect students' lifestyle choices reflects the dichotomy of the digital age: susceptibility through imitation and empowerment through inspiration. Whether influencer culture continues to be a tool for growth or a threat to students' wellbeing will depend on finding this equilibrium.

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