A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MICRO AND MACRO INFLUENCERS IN SHAPING CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISIONS

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Abstract:

The research presents a detailed comparative analysis of micro and macro influencers, concentrating on their impact on consumer faith, purchasing behavior, engagement activities, and buying decisions. The social media continuously transforming the marketing environment, influencers have become vital components in brand communication strategies. Micro influencers, who typically have smaller yet more dedicated audiences, are analyzed for their perceived authenticity and closer engagement with their followers, while macro influencers are assessed for their wider reach and visibility for brands. A quantitative research methodology was used for this study. Data was collected from a structured survey questionnaire. The results indicate prominent differences in how audiences view and engage with micro and macro influencers, providing insights into which type is more effective in influencing consumer behavior. This study adds to the expanding knowledge in influencer marketing by underscoring essential audience response factors that guide brand collaboration strategies.

Keywords: Micro influencers, Macro influencers, Consumer purchase decisions, Social media marketing, Brand engagement, Influencer effectiveness,

INTRODUCTION:

Social Media:

The rise of social media has dramatically transformed the way we communicate, engage, and share information on a global scale. This shift has created a platform for influencer marketing, a tactic that takes advantage of the credibility, approachability, and knowledge of online personalities to affect consumer perceptions and actions.

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Influencer Marketing:

It has emerged as one of the most dynamic and persuasive tools for driving consumer awareness, interest, and purchase behavior. Influencers, who possess the power to affect the opinions and actions of their followers, act as trusted intermediaries between brands and consumers.

Micro Influencers:

A micro influencer is an influencer who has a follower count of 10,000–100,000. Each brand may define micro influencers differently, depending on follower count. Micro-influencers have specific niche audiences that are deeply engaged and connected to them. Whether influencers a beauty, fitness, fashion, lifestyle, wellness, food, or travel brand, there is probably a large pool of micro-influencers available to reach out to.

Macro Influencers:

Individuals who are social media major leaders with a following of 100,000 to one million are known as macro influencers. Macro influencers are influencers on YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and other social media platforms with 100,000 to 1 million followers. Along with social media presence, macro influencers have high-quality content creation and balanced visibility across platforms. Working with macro influencers has benefits that include strong audience reach, higher engagement rates, cost-effective return on investment (ROI), and boosted brand awareness.

Depending on their follower count, influencers are typically categorized into **micro influencers** and **macro influencers**. Micro influencers generally have smaller audiences (often ranging from 10,000 to 100,000 followers) but maintain a close-knit and loyal community that values their recommendations. They are perceived as more approachable, authentic, and genuine, often engaging in two-way communication with followers. As influencer marketing continues to grow, understanding its mechanisms, particularly how different tiers of influencers impact consumer trust, engagement, and purchase behavior, has become essential for brands aiming to optimize their communication strategies in the digital age.

CONSUMER PURCHASING DECISIONS:
The term "consumer purchasing decision factors" refers to the range of internal and external elements that influence a person's decision to buy a product or service. These can include emotional needs, social cues, habits, perceptions, price sensitivity, and product availability. The consumer buying decision process applies to the decision-making processes launched by the customer before, during, and after the purchase of goods or services offered in return for money in the market. It aids the seller/marketer in the sale of their goods or services in the market. If a marketer is successful in understanding consumer behavior as it relates to the consumer

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purchasing process of choice for goods or services, the advertiser may be successful in selling its products or services.

CONSUMER BUYING DECISION MAKNG PROCESS
Problem Recognition

Need recognition, whether prompted internally or externally, results in the same response. In the context of influencer marketing, influencers often act as external triggers through product reviews, lifestyle content, or recommendations that create awareness and stimulate consumer needs. For instance, when a micro or macro influencer showcases a new fashion item or gadget, followers may realize their own desire or need for that product.

Information Search:

Once a need is recognized, consumers begin searching for information about products or services that can satisfy that need**.**

Evaluation of Alternatives:

In this stage, consumers compare various brands, features, and prices to determine which product meets their expectations. Micro influencers often influence this stage more effectively due to their interactive engagement and personalized communication with followers, whereas macro influencers may influence it through motivated content and wider brand visibility. The influencer messages can heavily affect how consumers buying decisions.

Purchase Decision

After evaluation of alternatives, consumers enter at a purchase intention that may lead to the final decision. However, several factors such as social influence, price, availability, and post reviews can still affect the outcome. Influencers substantially influence this stage by offering **discount codes**, **offers**, or **personal recommendations**. Consumers are more likely to make purchase decisions when they perceive influencers as trustworthy and relatable. Micro influencers can drive purchase conversion through personal engagement and niche recommendations, while macro influencers generate a large-scale impact through mass visibility.

Post-Purchase Behavior

The consumer's experience after buying the product determines satisfaction, repeat purchase intentions, and WoM recommendations. Positive experiences lead to customer loyalty, whereas dissatisfaction may result in negative reviews or brand switching. Influencers continue to shape post-purchase behavior through **product usage tutorials**, or **review updates** that reinforce brand loyalty and encourage repeat purchases. Consumers often share their own experiences in comment sections, creating a feedback loop that strengthens or weakens brand perception.

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Table 01: PLATFORMS USED FOR MICRO INFLUENCERS

PLATFORMS	PRIMARY LAYOUT	FIELD FOR	KEY FEATURES
INSTAGRAM	Reels, Stories, Live videos, Photos	Lifestyle, fashion, beauty, food, vlogs	Highly engaged audience, strong community connections, hyper local marketing
YOUTUBE	Long forms videos, Shorts, Live streams	Tutorials, Personal vlogs, Product reviews	Massive content, live streaming, Monetization, Search engine integration
FACEBOOK	Videos, Posts, Stories, Groups	Community building, Broad demographic categories	Highly reachable, Huge market place, multi-platform accessibility
TWITTER	Shorts, Posts, Videos	B2B,politics,Real time trends, Upcoming movies	Hash tags, media sharing, mentions, direct messages

Source: Primary Data

Table 02: PLATFORMS USED FOR MACRO INFLUENCERS

PLATFORMS	PRIMARY LAYOUT	FIELD FOR	KEY FEATURES
INSTAGRAM	Reels, Stories, Live videos, Photos	Lifestyle, fashion, beauty, food, vlogs	Broader audience, collaboration, strong influence and trust.
YOUTUBE	Long forms videos, Shorts, Live streams	Tutorials, Personal vlogs, Product reviews	Large subscribers, long term content, ROI
FACEBOOK	Videos, Posts, Stories, Groups	Community building, Broad demographic categories	Community engagement, long term influence, collaboration with national and global
TWITTER	Shorts, Posts, Videos	B2B,politics,Real time trends, Upcoming movies	Strong hashtags, professional brand collaboration.

Source: Primary Data

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TABLE 03: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:

MICRO INFLUENCERS
(Authenticity, Trust, Personal Connection, Engagement, Credibility)

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CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISION (Dependent Variable)
(Brand Preference, Purchase Intent, Evaluation, Final Choice)

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MACRO INFLUENCERS
(Professional Content, Visibility, Trendsetting,Brand Influence, Reach)
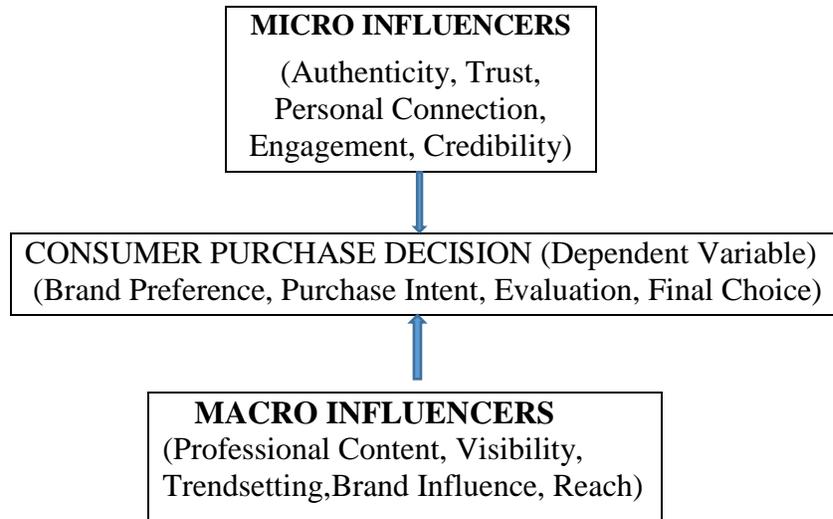
SOURCE: Primary Data
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A primary distinction between micro and macro influencers lies in their relative trade-off between reach and engagement. Macro influencers, with follower counts typically ranging between 100,000 and 1 million, are often engaged for their expansive visibility and ability to generate mass awareness (Opic & Pandža Bajs, 2024). In contrast, micro influencers—commonly defined as those with 10,000 to 100,000 followers—are known to cultivate stronger, more meaningful engagement rates (Campbell & Farrell, 2020; Conde & Casais, 2023).

Balaban and Mustățea (2019) also observe that micro influencers are viewed as more relatable, often regarded as peers rather than distant figures. In contrast, macro influencers—while respected for their professionalism and popularity—can suffer from the perception of being overly commercial, particularly when promoting too many sponsored products. According to Li et al. (2024), this authenticity gap affects how followers respond to brand endorsements, with micro influencers driving more persuasive intent under conditions of higher message-persona congruence.

Influencer marketing leverages opinion leaders to promote products or services on digital platforms, particularly social media. As a form of native advertising, it relies on the trust influencers build with their audiences to sway consumer attitudes and behaviors. Consumers tend to exhibit a higher level of trust toward product recommendations made by social media influencers than traditional advertisements due to their perceived reliability and authenticity (De Veirman et al., 2017).

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OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To analyze the role of micro and macro influencers in shaping consumer purchase decisions across different applications such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook.
- To examine the relationship between influencer characteristics (Genuine, credibility, competencies, and attractiveness) and consumers buying decision-making behavior.
- To compare the effectiveness of micro and macro influencers in influencing consumer attitudes, faith, engagement levels, and purchase intentions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

1. RESERACH DESIGN:

This study employed a quantitative research design to systematically examine and compare the Effectiveness of micro and macro influencers based on three key variables: consumer faith, follower's engagement, and buying decisions. A quantitative approach was selected due to its capacity to produce measurable, objective data that can reveal statistically significant patterns and relationships.

2. SAMPLING:

A non-probability purposive sampling technique was adopted for respondent. The main strength of this sampling method lies in its ability to gather detailed, meaningful, and context-rich data from relevant respondents who can provide valuable insights. Since the aim of the study is to examine the influence of social media influencers on consumer buying behavior, it was essential to include only those individuals who actively use social media platforms and engage with influencer-generated content.

3. SURVEY:

The questionnaire was circulated with Individuals aged between 18 and above who actively use social media and follow at least one influencer (micro or macro). The questionnaire included a combination of structured (closed-ended) and semi structured (open-ended) questions. Likert scale items (5-point scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree") to assess variables such as faith, followers' engagement, credibility, and purchase decisions.

4. STATISTICAL TOOLS:

To analyze the collected data, percentage analysis was employed to understand the distribution and frequency of responses across various variables. "A Chi-Square Test of Independence was performed to examine the relationship between social media platform usage and purchase decisions influenced by online influencers." The Chi-Square test is basically used in surveys, behavioral studies, market research, and social sciences where data is classified into categories such as gender, age group, preferences, or purchasing behavior.

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5. HYPOTHESIS:

To examine dynamics between micro and macro influencers empirically, the following hypotheses have been formulated. They aim to test differences in consumer trust, engagement levels, perceived credibility, and influence on purchase decisions between micro and macro influencers.

Hypothesis 1:

This hypothesis examines whether micro-influencers, due to their perceived authenticity and approachability, more trust compared to macro-influencers. Trust is a vital segment in influencer marketing as it directly affects how consumers respond to promotional messages and product endorsements.

H1: There is a significant difference in consumer trust between micro and macro influencers.

H01: There is no significant difference in consumer trust between micro and macro influencers.

Hypothesis 2:

This hypothesis examines that micro influencers are highly engage with their audience. Engagement level is most vital role in social media. Comparatively macro influencers are slowly engage the followers.

H1: Consumer engagement with social media influencers significantly affects purchasing decisions.

H01: Consumer engagement with social media influencers significantly affects purchasing decisions.

Hypothesis 3:

This hypothesis states that micro and macro influencers are shaping their consumers purchase decisions. There are huge consumers affect in these application like instagram, YouTube, Facebook.

H1: Social media influencers have a significant effect on consumer purchasing decisions.

H01: Social media influencers have a significant effect on consumer purchasing decisions.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION:

DATA ANALYSIS:

The research collected 85 responses through an online survey questionnaire. The data collected was systematically analyzed to address the research objectives. Quantitative responses, primarily gathered using Likert scale items, were subjected to statistical analysis to identify patterns, relationships, and differences in consumer buying decisions of micro and macro influencers.

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1.1 Demographic Profile

1.2 Age of the Respondents

The age distribution of the survey respondents reveals that the majority fall within the 18–25 age group, accounting for 68.6% respondents. This suggests that over half of the participants are young adults, a demographic that is typically very active on social media and highly engaged with influencer content. This is followed by a notable proportion in the 26–35 age, representing 22.9% respondents. Additionally, only 8.6% of the respondents belonged to the older age groups of 36 - 45 age.
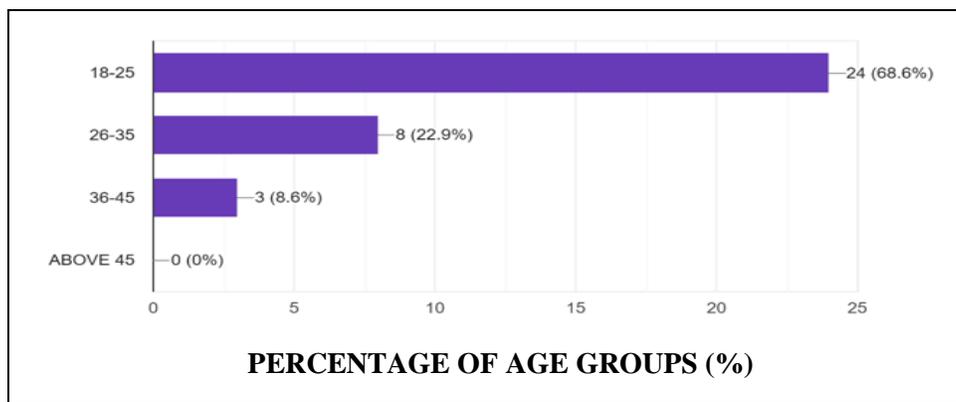
Figure 1: Graph on Age of the Respondents

These diagram shows that the research sample is primarily composed of younger respondents (aged 18–35), which aligns with the primary audience of social media influencer marketing. This demographic factor suggests that influencer marketing resonates more strongly with adults users and is particularly relevant to their online behavior. Consequently, marketing strategies utilizing influencer platforms are likely to be most effective when tailored toward these younger age groups.

Gender of the Respondents
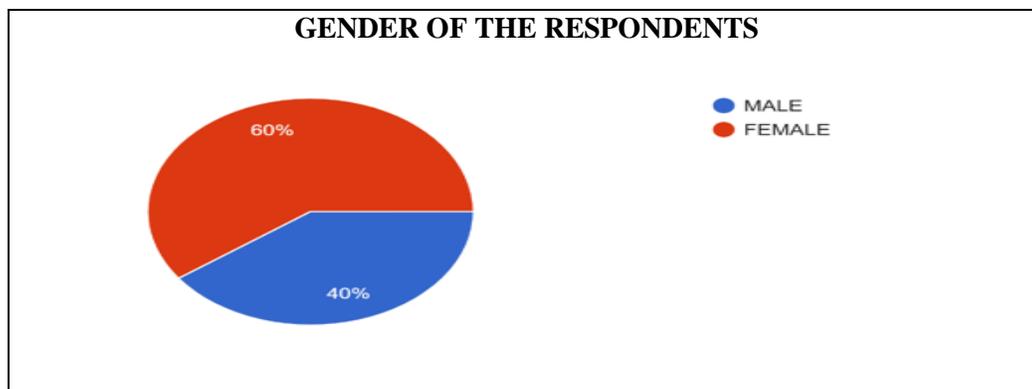
Figure 2: Graph on Gender of the Respondents

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The gender distribution of the respondents is relatively balanced, with a slight majority of female participants at 60.00% (n = 51) compared to female participants at 40.00% (n = 34). This balance is beneficial for the study, as it reduces gender-related bias and provides a more comprehensive understanding of influencer impacts. Additionally, findings related to trust, engagement, and purchase behaviors can be generalized across genders, enhancing the validity and applicability of the conclusions drawn from this research.

USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA RESPONDENTS:

PERCENAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USERS
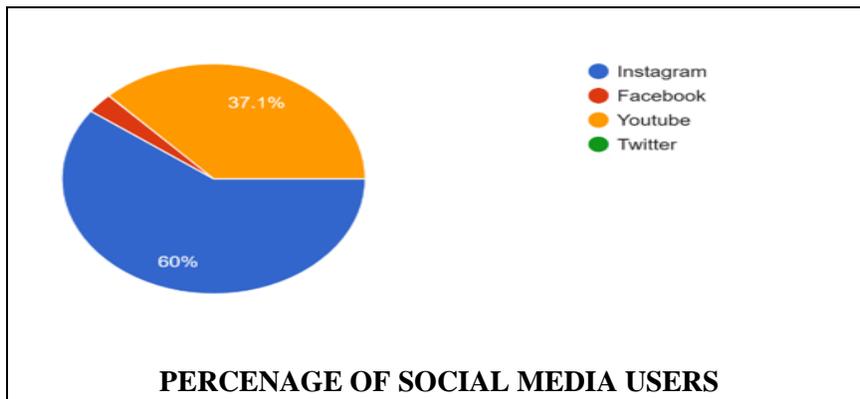
Figure 3: Graph on Usage of Social Media Respondents

The figure shows that clearly indicate that Instagram and YouTube are the dominant platforms for influencer engagement among respondents, with 60.00 % (n = 51) and 37.1% (n = 32) of participants respectively preferred primary channels. These trends underscore the strong influence of visually driven Medias within emerging influencer marketing, where photo and video-based content effectively capture follower's attention. The creative features of Instagram such as Reels, Stories and continues posts along with You Tube's long form of videos, contribute to sustained user engagement and perceived credibility.

CONTENT FORM THE SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS

PERCENTAGE OF CONTENT FROM THE SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS
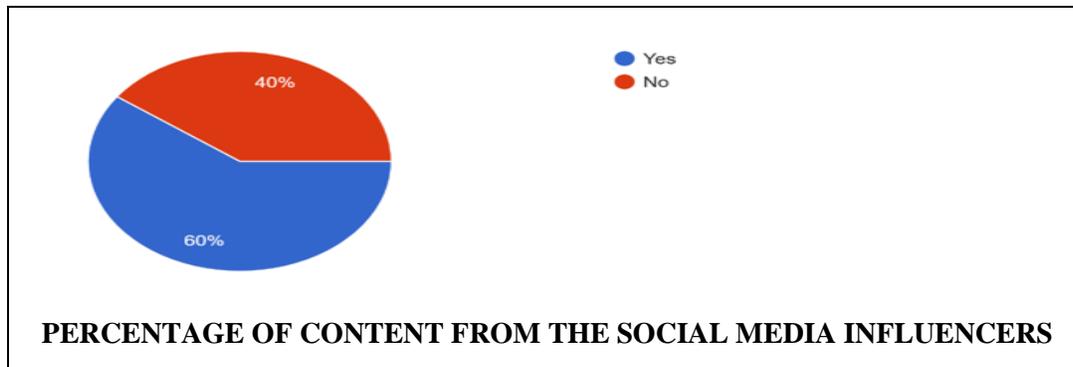
Figure 4: Graph on Content from Social Media Influencers

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The figure shows that clearly indicate that Instagram and YouTube are the dominant platforms for influencer engagement among respondents, with 60.00 % (n = 51) and 40.00% (n = 34) of participants respectively preferred primary channels. The majority of the respondents watching the content of social media marketing.

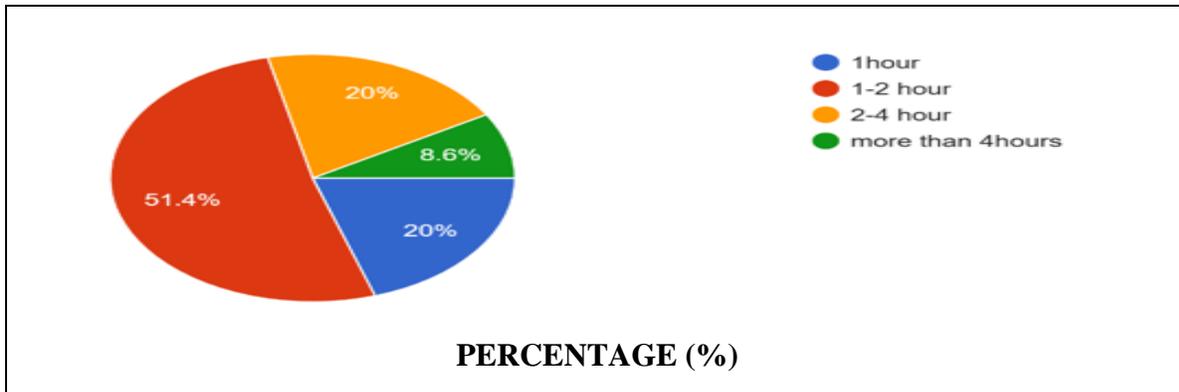**HOURS SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS**

Figure 5: Graph on Hours Spent on Social Media Respondents

The figure shows that a significant majority of respondents, 51.4% (n = 44), use social media several hours a day. This frequent usage suggests that these followers are likely to be regularly exposed to influencer content, making them highly relevant for a study on influencer marketing. A much smaller portion of respondents use social media more than one hour a day: 20% (n =17), and rarely: 8.6% (n = 7). The majority of respondents are actively engaged with social media and therefore capable of offering meaningful insights into micro and macro influencers.

INFLUENCER CATEGORY FOLLOW BY THE RESPONDENTS
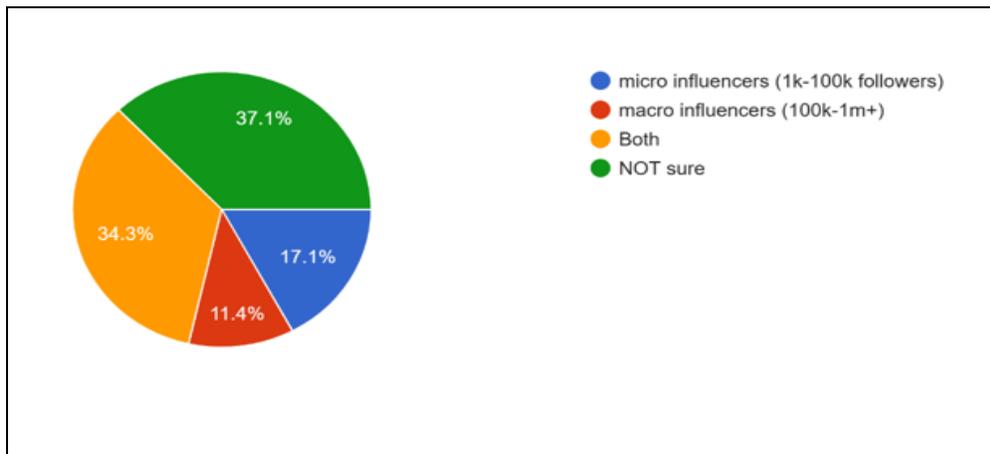
Figure 6: Graph on Influencer Category Follow by the Respondents

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The figure shows that 17.1% (n = 15) of respondents felt neutral toward micro influencers and 34.03% (n = 29) felt toward macro influencers in terms of trust. This suggests that a prominently portion of the follower neither strongly trusts nor distrusts influencer content, regardless of the influencer's following. This overall suggests that while micro and macro influencers may have reach and visibility, trust is not guaranteed. It highlights the importance for both micro and macro influencers to build genuine relationships with their audience through authentic content, transparency, and consistent engagement.

MICRO INFLUENCERS PROVIDE HONEST PRODUCT REVIEWS
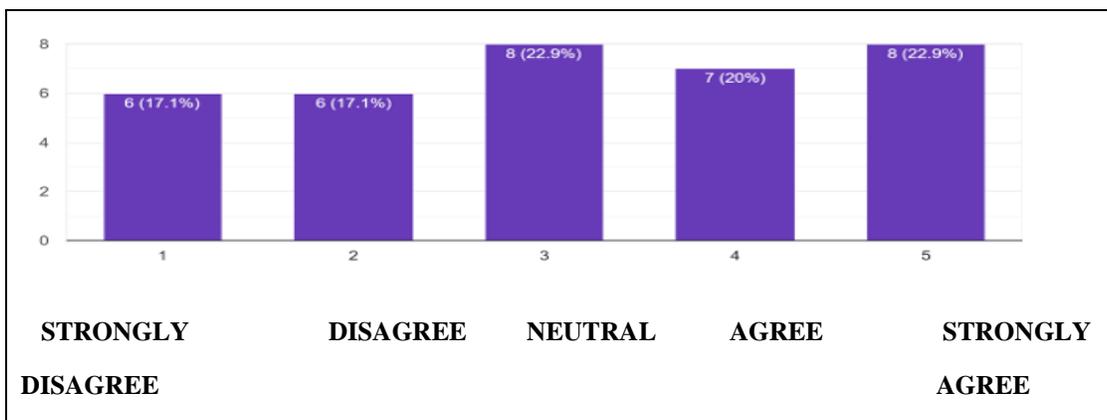
Figure 7: Graph on Micro Influencers Honest Product Review to the Respondents

The largest segment of respondents, 22.9%, believe that neither micro nor macro influencers provide honest product recommendations. This level of doubt may stem from increasing consumer awareness of paid promotions and genuine endorsements and sponsored content. It suggests that influencer credibility is being evaluated by audiences who are becoming more authenticity of digital recommendations.so both influencers provide strong product reviews to the respondents.

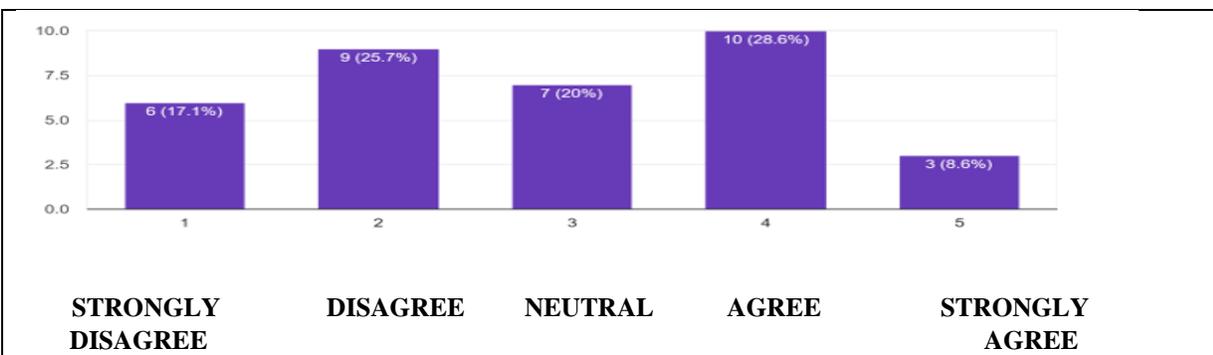## MICRO INFLUENCERS CONTENT FEELS PERSONALISED AND TRUST

Figure 8: Graph on Micro Influencers Content feels Personalized and trust by the Respondents

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The figure shows that trust levels attributed to micro influencers are slightly more than to macro influencers among respondents, with 28.6% (n = 24) expressing trust in macro influencers and 25.7% (n = 22) in micro influencers. This suggests that follower count alone may not significantly influence how much trust an influencer acquires. This could be attributed to the perceived authenticity, reliability, and closer audience connection that micro influencers often cultivate, as opposed to the more commercial and brand-driven image typically associated with macro influencers.

Brand Recommendations from Micro Influencers to the Respondents
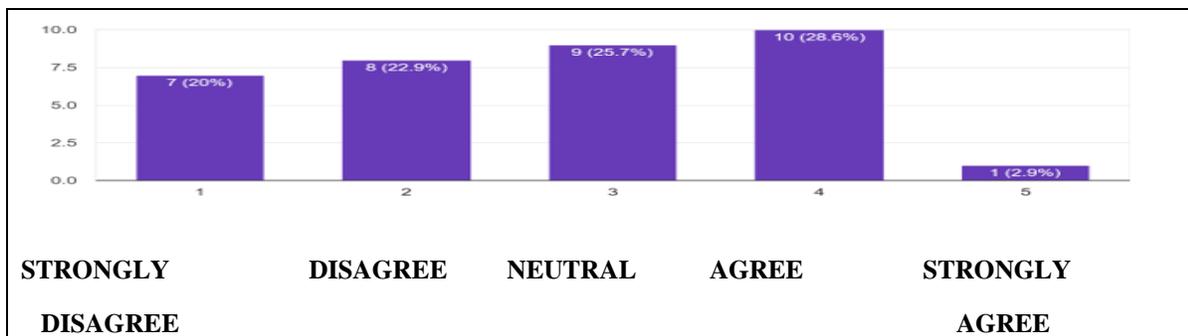
Figure 9: Graph on Brand Recommendations from Micro Influencers to the Respondents

The figures shows that 28.6% view micro influencers as more brand recommendations compared to the smaller 2.9% who attribute greater brand recommendations to macro influencers. This supports the growing narrative that micro influencers, with their smaller and more engaged audiences.

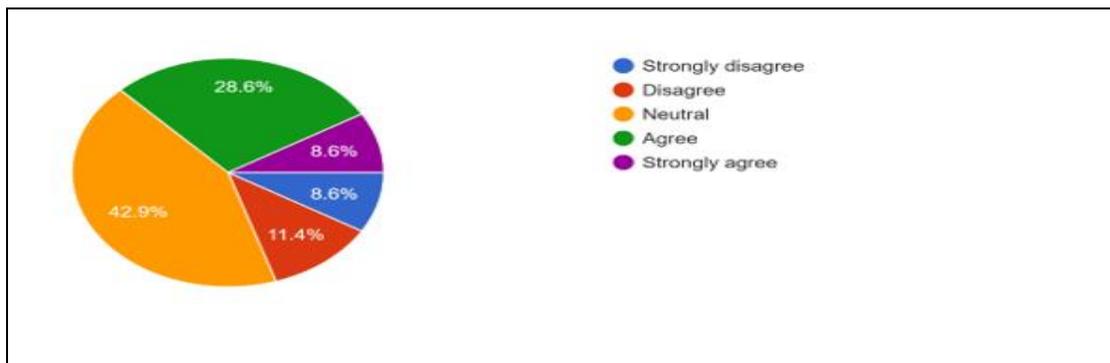**Micro Influencers Engage Directly to the Respondents**

Figure 10: Graph on Micro Influencers Engage Directly to the Respondents

The figure shows that Engagement with micro influencers shows a divided audience response. While 42.9% of respondents indicated a neutral likelihood to engage. A larger segment of 8.6%

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expressed an unwillingness to interact with their content. However, the presence of 28.6% agree respondents suggests a significant group of passive followers who actively interact with their followers. The data implies that while micro influencers have potential for engagement, their effectiveness may depend heavily on niche targeting and relevance of content.

Macro Influencers Strong Brand Visibility and Credibility
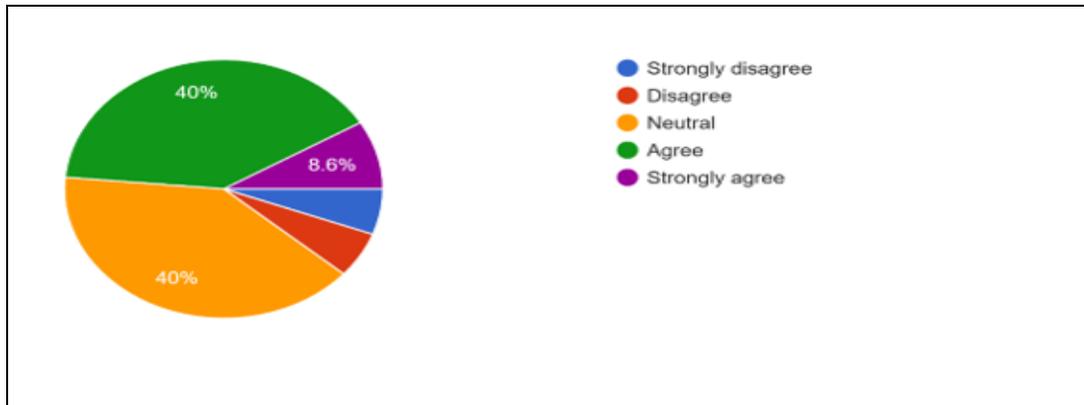
Figure 11: Graph on Macro Influencers Strong Brand Visibility and Credibility to the Respondents

The figure shows that Brand visibility and credibility with macro influencers shows a divided follower's response. While 40% of respondents indicated a neutral strong brand visibility and credibility. A larger segment of 6% expressed their view of brand visibility. However, the presence of 40% agree respondents suggests a significant group of followers who actively interact with their followers. The data implies that while macro influencers have potential for credit worthiness and loyalty to the followers.

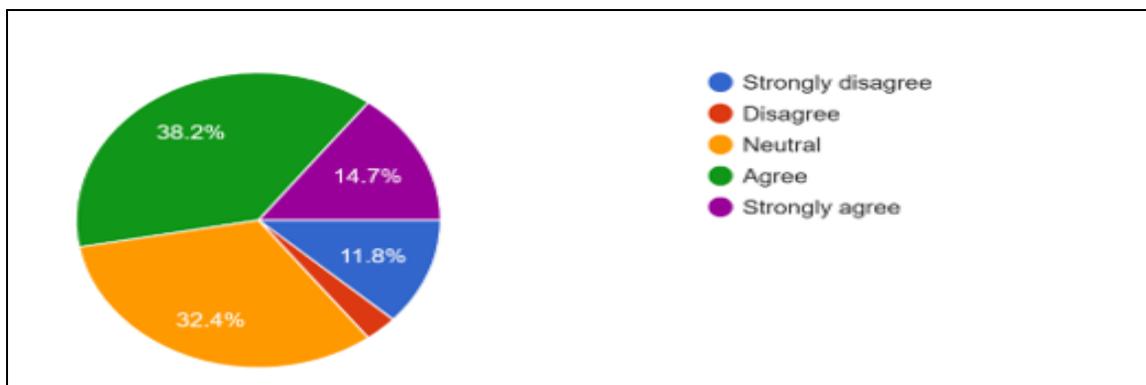### Micro Influencers Appear More Professional in Content Creation

Figure 12: Graph on Micro Influencers Appear More Professional in Content Creation to the Respondents

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The data shows that overall majority of 38.2% respondents accept the professional content creation in micro influencers. Micro influencers build their professional life and career develop in this stage. And least number of the respondents (11.8%) is dis-agreeing this statement. So micro influencers show their content in more professionalism and attract huge followers.

Macro Influencers trends and lifestyle standards
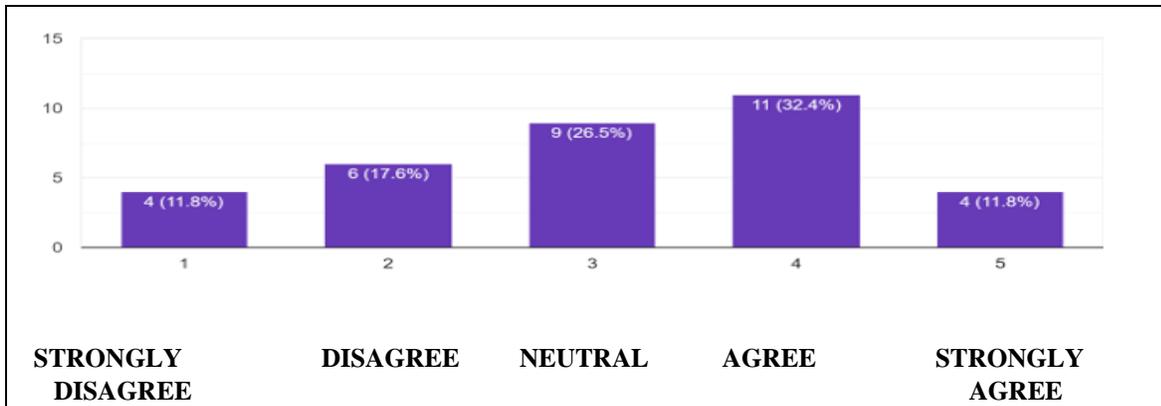
Figure 13: Graph on Macro Influencers trends and lifestyle standards to the Respondents

The figures shows that 32.4% view macro influencers are more trends and life style standards compared to the smaller 11.8% of followers not preferred trends and life style of macro influencers. These results are very low development of growing in macro influencers. And also 11.8% strongly accept the standard of lifestyle and trends. For example, some branded beauty products.
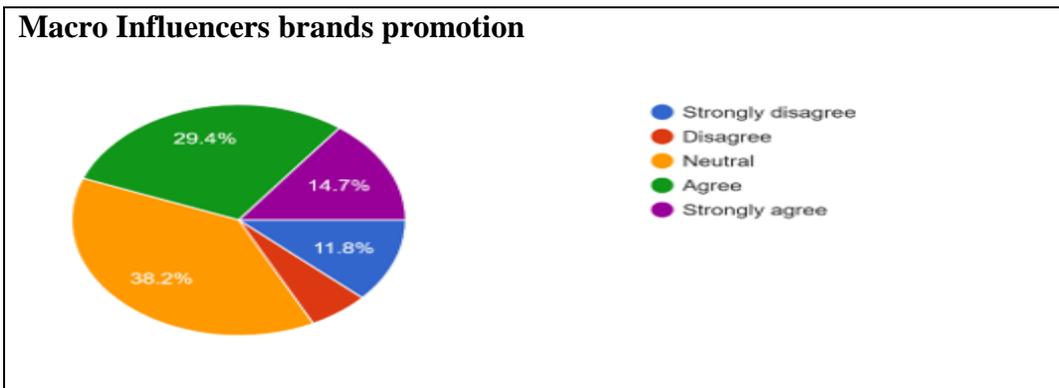

Figure 14: Graph on Macro Influencers brands promotion to the Respondents

The largest segment of respondents, 38.2%, believe that neither micro nor macro influencers provide brands promotion, revealing a broad uncertainty toward influencer marketing as a whole. Macro influencers show their own brand promotion and some collaboration promotions interact the followers. And micro influencers also show their own brand promotion and other brand/product promotions to the respondents. The 11.8% of the respondents they are not purchasing brands.

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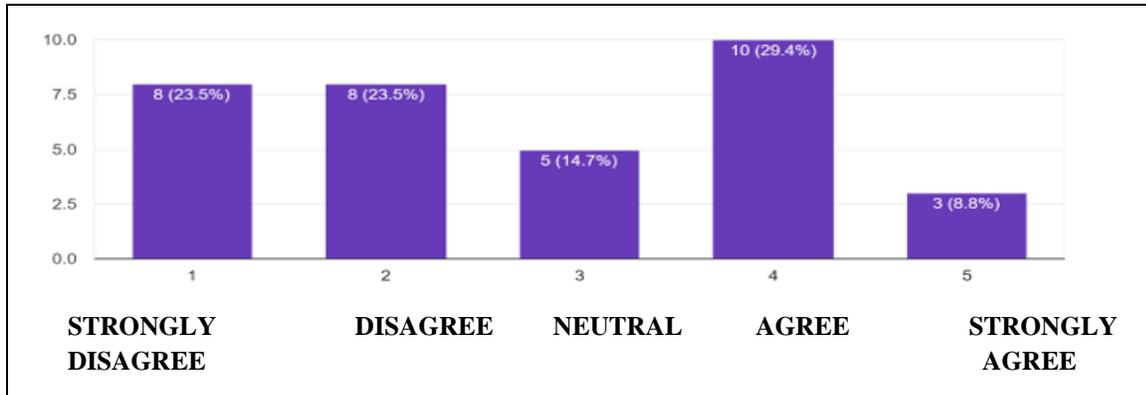**Search for Products Online After Seeing Influencer Content**

Figure 15: Graph on Search for Products Online After Seeing Influencer Content to the Respondents

The figure shows that 29.4.1% (n=10) of respondents are agree toward micro and macro influencers content and 23.5% (n = 8) strongly disagree the online buying decisions. This suggests that an audience are not fully trust in the online buying decisions. This overall suggests that while micro and macro influencers may have reach and visibility, trust is not guaranteed. It highlights the importance for both micro and macro influencers to build genuine relationships with their audience through authentic content, transparency, and consistent engagement.

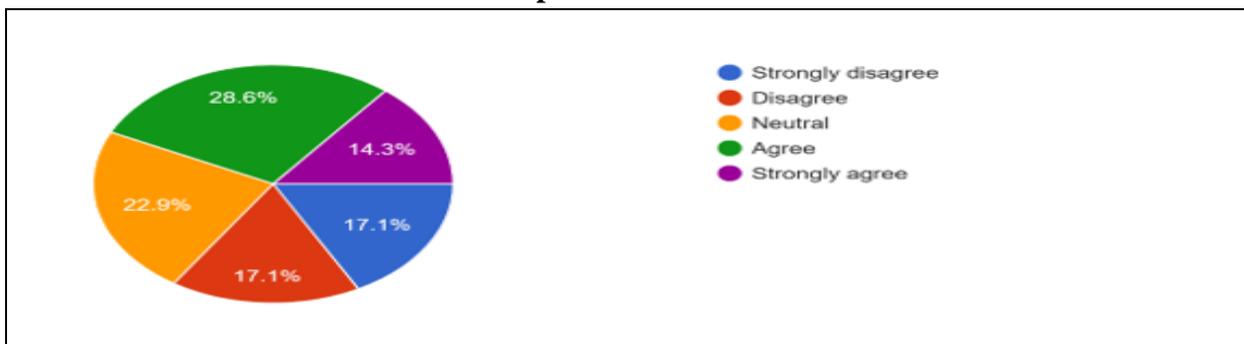**Purchased a Product due to influencer promotion**

Figure 16: Graph on Purchased a Product due to influencer promotion to the Respondents

The figure shows that 28.6% of the respondents are accept a product due to influencer promotion. Both micro and macro influencers are using their promotion strategies. And the influencers promoting their product like offers, discounts, page subscription etc., so the followers are more interest to buying the products in influencer's promotion. For example, most of the influencers using beauty products and showing in their lives, stories and posts.

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More likely to Purchase if the Influencer Shares Reviews or Tutorials to the Respondents
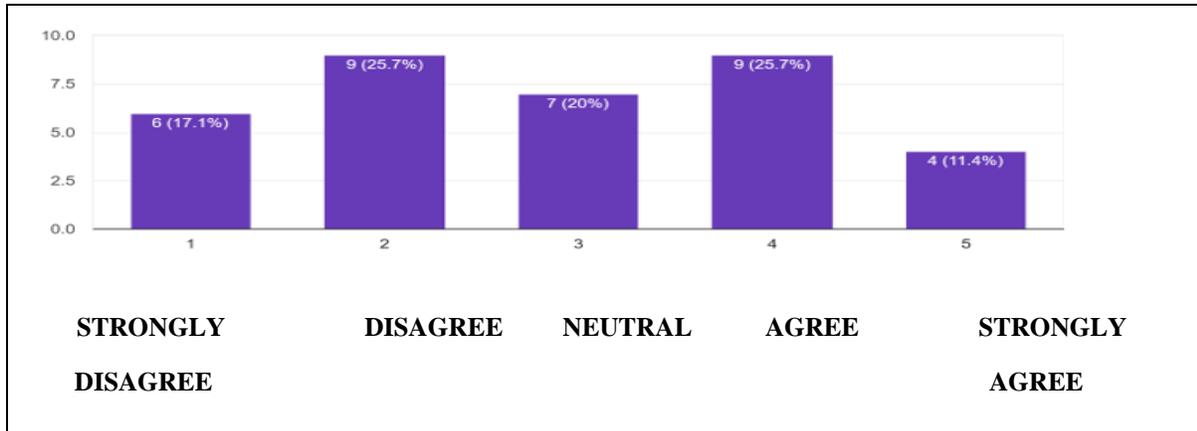

Figure 17: Graph on more likely to Purchase if the Influencer Shares Reviews or Tutorials to the Respondents

The figure represents that 25.7% of the respondents are highly accept the statement like if the influencer shares reviews and tutorials. In this statement is majority for micro influencers. Bcoz micro influencers only spent huge time in social media. They repeatedly share their reviews, comments, feedbacks to the followers.

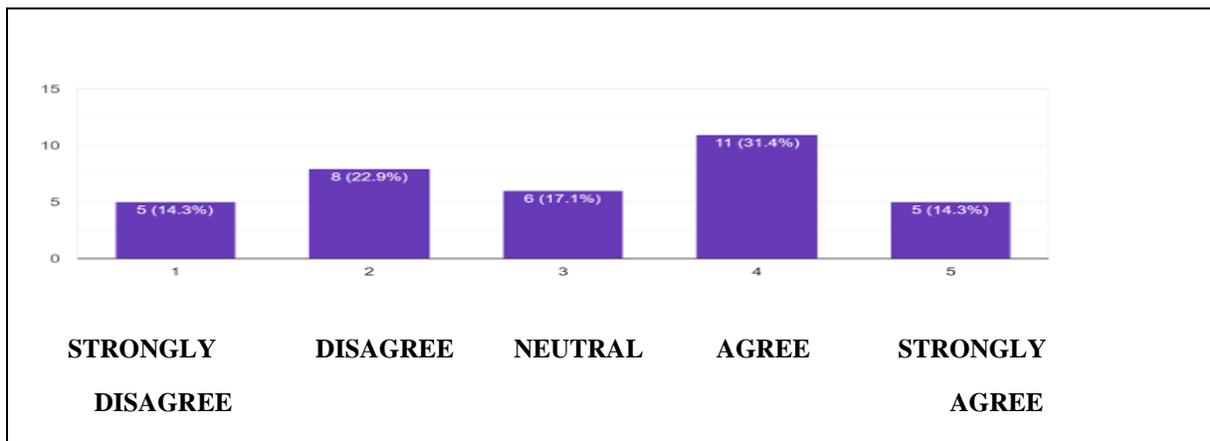**Influencers Promotions about Product Quality**

Figure 18: Graph on Influencers Promotions about Product Quality to the Respondents

The data presented 31.4% (n=11) of the respondents agree the statement. Most of the micro and macro influencers are showing the product quality to the audience. Then only the followers getting more awareness about the products. The 14.3% of the respondents are not trust the influencers about the product quality.

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Type of Influencers Impacts Purchase Decisions more to the Respondents
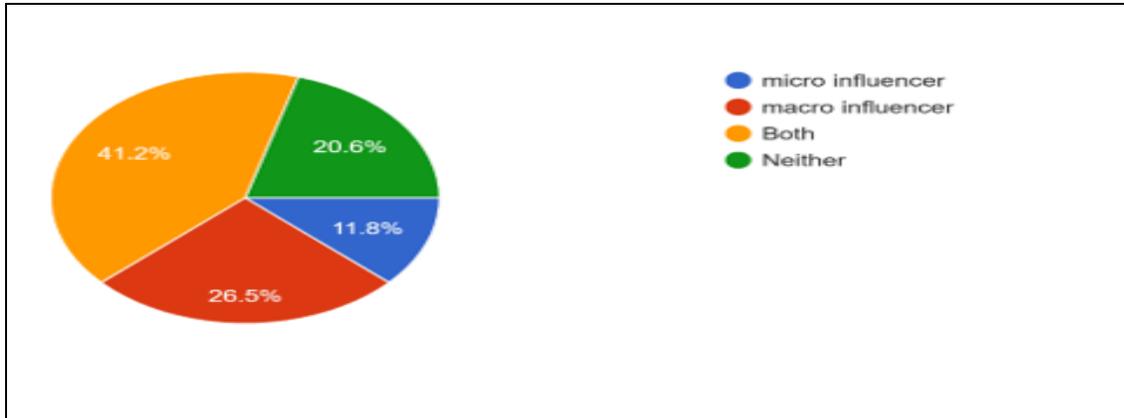

Figure 19: Graph on which Type of Influencers Impacts Purchase Decisions more to the Respondents

The figure shows that 41.2% of the respondents accept impact of both micro and macro influencers. These both influencers using lot of strategies like posts, reels etc., and the followers highly affect these micro and macro influencers. Most of the purchase decisions are influencers influencing.

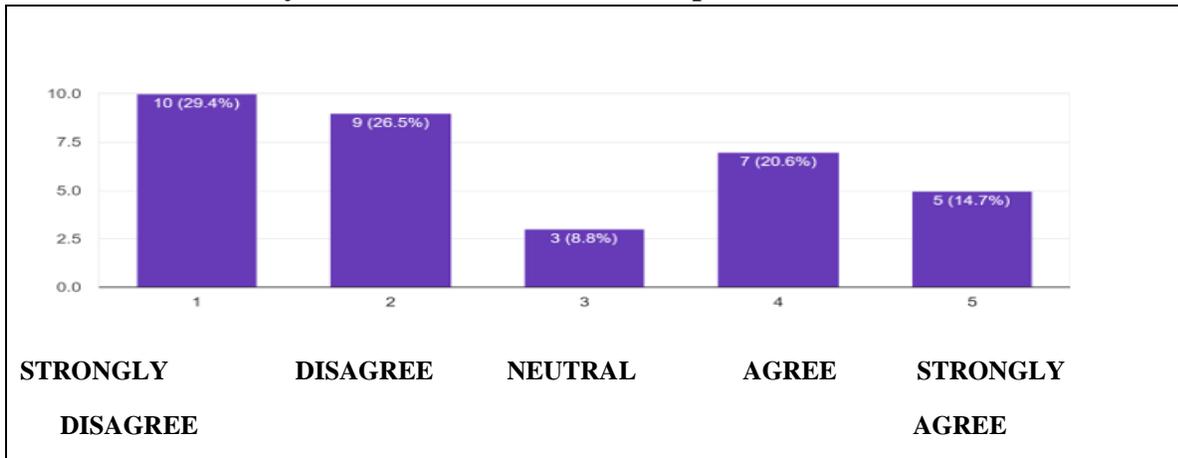**Influencers Affect my Brand Preference to the Respondents**

Figure 20: Graph on Influencers Affect my Brand Preference to the Respondents

The data represent that 29.4% of the respondents disagree the statement. Most of the audience are not prefer branded products and they are not affected it. But certain cases the audience prefer most of the related products and its more affected. The macro influencers are introducing a lot of branded products so the followers are getting more confused to choosing the right one. Similarly the audience will affect them.

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FINDINGS

The succeeding section presents the key findings from the study, highlighting insights into consumer perceptions and engagement level with micro and macro influencers. These results shows that an impact of each influencer type holds in shaping purchasing decisions and consumer engagement level.

- Majority of the respondents are trust micro influencers because they are contributed to perceived authenticity, reliability, and closer audience connection.
- Macro influencers are strongly trust brand collaborations, high quality content and broad followers reach.
- Micro influencers have potential engagement for their effectiveness may depend heavily on niche targeting and relevance of content.
- Macro influencers highly stronger impact on their buying decisions.
- Micro influencers are less influence impact their buying decisions.

CONCLUSION

This study presented that understanding of how consumers perceive and engage with micro and macro influencers in today's media marketing. It explores platform preferences, trust, engagement level and purchasing decisions, offering insights that both reinforce and challenge existing assumptions a distinct trend is the prominence of visual platforms such as Instagram and YouTube, which facilitate immersive content that enhances influencer engagement.

Many consumers show an attitude toward trust, probably influenced by the transparency of sponsors. Micro-influencers demonstrate slightly higher authenticity and reliability, while macro-influencers deliver quality content and broadly reach. Notably, follower count was not viewed as a strong indicator of credibility. Instead, authenticity, content quality, and engagement level were valued more. While micro influencers tend to generate higher active engagement due to approachability and reliability. Both influencer types are effective, but macro influencers have a slight edge in driving purchases, likely due to their broader reach and aspirational appeal.

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