

EXPLORING THE MACRO-ENVIRONMENTAL FORCES SHAPING FASHION INFLUENCER MARKETING: INSIGHTS FROM A PESTLE ANALYSIS.

Abstract

Influencer marketing has emerged as one of the most influential digital marketing strategies within the fashion industry, where social media personalities shape how consumers discover brands, evaluate products and decide what to buy. The rapid growth of social media platforms has enabled fashion influencers to shape consumer attitudes, preferences, and purchasing behavior through visually driven and interactive content. While influencer marketing offers significant opportunities for fashion brands, its development is strongly affected by external environmental forces. This paper provides a comprehensive PESTLE analysis of influencer marketing in the fashion industry by examining political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental factors shaping its evolution. The study adopts a structured analytical approach based on existing literature and current digital marketing trends. The findings suggest that regulatory changes, economic dynamics in digital advertising, evolving consumer culture, technological innovation, data privacy laws, and sustainability concerns significantly influence influencer marketing practices in the fashion sector. The analysis demonstrates that while influencer marketing provides strong market growth potential for fashion brands, it also presents challenges related to regulation, authenticity, ethical concerns, and sustainability pressures. The present study significantly contributes to existing marketing literature by offering a structured macro-environmental analysis of influencer marketing in fashion and provides insights for researchers, fashion marketers, and policymakers seeking to understand the broader ecosystem shaping the rapidly expanding Indian fashion industry.

Keywords: PESTLE analysis, Social media marketing, Influencer marketing, Fashion industry, Consumer behaviour

1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technologies and social media platforms has significantly transformed the landscape of marketing communication (Kant et al., 2025). Social media influencers acting as third party endorsers and influencing followers' attitudes and preferences by sharing product and experiences online (George et al., 2025). Influencer marketing refers

32 to a form of digital marketing in which brands collaborate with social media personalities
33 who have large and engaged audiences (Joshi et al., 2023). Influencers are people who using
34 their knowledge, experience, and competence in a specific field (Tiwari et al., 2025; Deng et
35 al., 2025). They are using regular updates about a variety of subjects on multiple social media
36 platforms to continuously inspire and persuade their audience (Belanche et al., 2021). The
37 purchase decisions that were previously driven mainly by mass advertising and in-store
38 experience are now strongly shaped by the social media personalities (Wang and
39 Scheinbaum, 2018).

40 Fashion is one of the rapidly growing industries in today's ever- changing environment
41 (Agnihotri et al., 2024). The fashion industry has emerged as the most represented category,
42 emphasise the importance of influencer marketing (Chetioui et al., 2019). The SMIs create
43 content that promotes products or brands in a way that appears authentic and relatable to their
44 followers (Masuda et al., 2022). Thus, consumers follow fashion creators to discover new
45 trends, outfit inspirations, product reviews, styling tips that shape the fashion preferences of
46 their audiences and purchase decisions (Li and Chan, 2024; Tiwari et al., 2024).

47 SMIs are giving their followers both benefits and drawbacks. These days, the adverse
48 transmission of incorrect reviews of goods is also being evaluated (Xie et al., 2026; Chetioui
49 et al., 2019). Due to social media's dysregulation, consumers may be exposed to false
50 information (Hains et al. 2023). However, consumers rely heavily on the reliability and trust
51 of influencers to make the purchasing decisions (Tiwari et al., 2026; Kumar et al., 2023). The
52 growth of influencer marketing does not occur in isolation (Bentley et al., 2025). It is strongly
53 influenced by external environmental factors such as government regulations, technological
54 developments, economic conditions, cultural trends, legal frameworks, and environmental
55 concerns. Understanding these external influences is essential for analysing the opportunities
56 and challenges associated with influencer marketing in the fashion industry.

57 One widely used strategic tool for analysing external business environments is the PESTLE
58 framework. A PESTLE analysis examines six macro-environmental factors: political,
59 economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental forces that influence industries and
60 organizations. Thus, by applying this framework, researchers and marketers can gain a
61 comprehensive understanding of how external forces shape the development of influencer
62 marketing in fashion industry. Therefore, the present article intends to answer the following
63 research question:

64 RQ1: What are the main opportunities and barriers in the political, economic, social,
65 technological, environmental and legislative fields associated with the influencer marketing
66 in fashion industry?

67 Accordingly, the current study aims to analyze the macro-environmental factors affecting
68 influencer marketing in the fashion industry through a PESTLE framework. Thus, the study
69 seeks to address the following objective:

70 RO1- To explore the political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental
71 factors influencing the growth and strategic practices of influencer marketing within the
72 fashion industry.

73 The present research provides a holistic understanding of the macro environmental factors
74 impacting influencer marketing in the fashion industry. This PESTLE analysis theoretically
75 expands existing research by incorporating macro-environmental factors impacting
76 influencers and brands, beyond consumer behaviour. From a managerial perspective, the
77 study provides practical insights for fashion brands and marketers to design more effective
78 and sustainable influencer campaigns by aligning their strategies with regulatory
79 requirements, technological advancements, changing consumer preferences, and
80 environmental concerns and thereby improving decision-making and long-term brand
81 credibility among consumers.

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83 **2. Literature Review**

84 **2.1 Influencer marketing and fashion Industry**

85 Influencer marketing refers to brand initiated collaborations with individuals who have
86 developed sizable and engaged followings on social media and who can shape audiences'
87 attitudes and behaviours (Myers et al., 2024; Sokolova and Kefi,2020). In other way, it refers
88 to identifying opinion leaders who have strong engagement on social media which measured
89 through indicators such as the size of their follower base, the number of likes on their posts,
90 the comments on their content, or a mix of these elements (De Veirman et al., 2017). An
91 influencer is "a person who has the ability to influence other people's decisions about the
92 purchase of particular goods or services." (Costello and Yesiloglu, 2025). Influencers usually
93 produce text, photos, audio, and video material for online platforms. Influencers can also be
94 referred to as bloggers, YouTubers, podcasters, photographers, Instagrammers, TikTokers,

95 etc., depending on the platform they use for sharing content (Tiwari et al., 2023; Kadekova
96 and Holienčinova, 2018). They provide information about brands, prices and product
97 attributes.

98 As a component of culture and identity, fashion is always changing, requiring instantaneous
99 and interactive communication (Lang and Armstrong, 2018). Fashion influencers are ordinary
100 individuals who regularly post outfit inspiration, styling tutorials, hauls and brand
101 collaborations (Tiwari et al 2025; Chetioui et al., 2019). They act as opinion leaders,
102 signalling which looks are on-trend, appropriate for certain occasions or aligned with desired
103 identities (Choi ,2020). Fashion influencers are building relationships with followers through
104 frequent posting, replying their comments and self-disclosure, which supports feelings of
105 closeness and trust among consumers (Rienda et al., 2021). Influencers promote trends and
106 encourage products among their particular niche and influencing consumers' perceptions of
107 brands and their choices when making purchases (Cabeza-Ramirez et al., 2023; Kumar et al.,
108 2023). In the fashion industry, influencers possess the ability to enhance brand awareness,
109 encourage consumers' intention to buy the clothing they endorse, wear, or display on their
110 social media profiles. Consequently, this enhances the higher sales for the brands they
111 endorse and promo

112 In recent years, the importance of traditional media in the fashion industry has declined as
113 new forms of communications have emerged (Belanche et al., 2021). The fashion market now
114 operates in a highly globalized environment where consumers are more knowledgeable,
115 selective, and demanding (Tiwari et al., 2025; Cabeza-Ramirez et al.,2023). At the same time,
116 brands face intense competition from numerous market players. Therefore, fashion
117 companies now increasingly rely on social networking platforms as they offer cost-effective,
118 easily accessible, and interactive channels for communication (Vrontis et al., 2021; Chetioui
119 et al., 2019). Influencer marketing helps brands to connect more closely with their target
120 audiences, who often depend on the opinions, recommendations, and experiences shared by
121 other consumers when forming perceptions about fashion brands(Zameer et al., 2026; Tiwari
122 et al., 2026). Consequently, content created by influencers seems more natural, genuine, and
123 relatable, allowing it to influence followers more directly and effectively compared to
124 conventional advertising approaches (Lou and Yuan, 2019). However, from a business and
125 marketing perspective, enhancing the user experience by minimising the negative
126 consequences of employing new technology is a crucial component of creating virtual content
127 (Leung et al., 2022). The impact of commercial ethics on advertising activities supports and

128 enhances the brand image and thereby improving overall organisational performance
129 (Hudders and Lou, 2023).

130 Existing research on influencer marketing in the fashion industry has mainly focused on
131 micro-level factors such as influencer credibility, attractiveness, trust, authenticity and their
132 impact on consumer purchase intention (Zhang et al.,2026; Kilumile et al., 2025; Al Mamun
133 et al., 2023). There remains a notable gap of macro-level analyses that systematically
134 integrate external environmental forces shaping the dynamics of influencer marketing. There
135 is substantial gap in fashion industry because of its visually driven, trend-sensitive sector
136 linked with identity, culture and ethical debates, where existing work rarely applies structured
137 frameworks to synthesise how the macro environmental factors constrain or enable influencer
138 strategies. Thus, the present study attempts to fill this gap by using PESTEL framework to
139 analyse how external factors such as political regulations, economic volatility, changing
140 social media consumption patterns, technological advancements, legal issues related to
141 advertising disclosure, and environmental concerns impacting rapidly growing fashion
142 influencer marketing.

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144 **3. Methods**

145 The present study aims to investigate the influence of PESTLE factors on influencer
146 marketing in fashion industry. The PESTLE analytical framework is used to categorize and
147 evaluate the external factors affecting influencer marketing practices This study adopts a
148 analytical approach to examine the macro-environmental factors influencing influencer
149 marketing in the fashion industry. The research relies primarily on secondary data obtained
150 from previous articles, industry reports, marketing research publications, and credible online
151 sources discussing influencer marketing trends. Thus, the existing research on influencer
152 marketing and fashion marketing strategies was reviewed to identify key environmental
153 influences. The identified factors were categorized into the six PESTLE dimensions. Each
154 factor was analyzed in terms of its impact on influencer marketing practices in the fashion
155 industry. This approach allows researchers to systematically examine how political,
156 economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental conditions influence the
157 development and sustainability of influencer marketing strategies.

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159 **4. Results**

160 **4.1 Political Factors**

161 Political factors refer to government policies, regulations, and political stability that influence
162 business operations. In the context of influencer marketing in the fashion industry, political
163 environments affect digital advertising practices, social media regulation, market access
164 limits, government support for digital entrepreneurship and cross-border marketing activities.
165 These are discussed below:

- 166 • **Advertising disclosure regulations-** The government has introduced policies
167 requiring influencers to disclose paid advertisement and sponsored content clearly.
168 These regulations aim to protect consumers from misleading advertising practices.
169 Such policies influence how fashion brands collaborate with influencers and require
170 greater transparency in promotional activities. Also, paid endorsements must disclose
171 "material connections" in their advertisement as per the guidelines of FTC (Federal
172 Trade Commission).
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- 174 • **Data privacy and sovereignty laws-** One important political factor is governments
175 are becoming more concerned about the influence of social media on public opinion,
176 misinformation, and data privacy. Some countries have imposed restrictions on certain
177 social media platforms due to concerns about national security or data governance.
178 India also banned Tik Tok in 2020 on national security grounds and shifted the reel
179 trend to the Instagram.
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- 182 • **Promoting content creators-** Government support for digital entrepreneurship also
183 plays a crucial role in the growth of influencer marketing. In many countries,
184 policymakers are promoting digital economies and encouraging young entrepreneurs
185 to build careers as content creators or influencers. Such policies contribute to the
186 expansion of influencer marketing ecosystems. In India, through Budget 2026-27
187 initiatives like the \$1 billion Creator Economy Fund and AVGC Content Creator Labs
188 in 15,000 schools and 500 colleges, builds skills in video editing and visual
189 storytelling essential for fashion hauls and styling content and encouraging creators'
190 economy.

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192 • **Political stability and initiatives-** Political stability within a country also affects the
193 growth of the fashion industry and digital marketing activities. Stable political
194 environments encourage investments in marketing innovation and digital business
195 development. India's consistent democratic governance, progressive digital policies
196 like Digital India, and absence of major disruptions create a predictable environment
197 for fashion brands to invest confidently in long-term influencer partnerships and
198 maintaining relationship with them.

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200 **4.2Economic Factors**

201 Economic conditions play a crucial role in shaping influencer marketing within the fashion
202 industry. The growth of influencer marketing is closely linked to digital advertising spending,
203 ROI and cost structure, consumers purchasing power, and the expansion of the online retail
204 market. These are outlined below:

205 • **Market size and growth-** The global influencer marketing industry has experienced
206 rapid economic growth over the past decade. As per, Fashion Influencer Marketing
207 Market Global Report 2026, the fashion influencer marketing market size is expected
208 to grow to \$33.8 billion in 2030 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 32.1%.
209 In India, fashion is one of the fastest-growing influencer verticals. As per Qoruz
210 Report 2024, 4.7 lakh fashion influencers in India, comprising 11–12% of the total
211 creator base, with the sector projected to reach USD 1.5 billion by 2027 (IMARC,
212 2025).

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214 • **ROI and cost structure-** As media costs rise, brands demand measurable returns
215 from influencer spending, increasingly treating it as a performance channel rather than
216 pure branding. In the fashion industry, influencer marketing offers cost-effective
217 promotional opportunities. Compared with traditional celebrity endorsements,
218 collaborations with social media influencers can be more affordable while still
219 reaching highly targeted audiences. Fashion brands typically achieve 5–11x ROI
220 through micro-influencers, outperforming mega-collaborations due to superior
221 engagement rates (3–8%) amid a projected ₹3,375 crore market by 2026 (IMARC,
222 2025). This cost efficiency has encouraged both large fashion brands and small
223 emerging brands to adopt influencer marketing strategies.

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- **Creator economy income structure-**The rise of the creator economy is another important economic factor. Influencers increasingly generate income through brand collaborations, affiliate marketing, sponsored content, and merchandise sales. This economic model has transformed influencer marketing into a significant component of the digital economy. Economic pressures push many brands to diversify away from expensive mega-influencers toward this middle tier, which can offer more flexible pricing and niche, loyal audiences.
- **Expansion of E-commerce:** E-commerce growth in the Indian fashion industry serves as a crucial economic factor propelling influencer marketing. Social commerce features allow consumers to purchase products directly through social media platforms. The economic success of fashion e-commerce supports sustained influencer investment because creators directly drive traffic into brand apps and marketplaces. With online fashion sales projected to reach \$25 billion by 2027 (25% CAGR), platforms like Myntra and Ajio have transformed fashion influencers into direct revenue drivers through posts and affiliate links. Thus, social media influencers function as “sales associates” in a low-cost, scalable channel, which is particularly attractive in emerging markets like India where digital fashion consumption is surging.
- **Increasing consumers spending power-** Economic factors such as consumer disposable income also influence fashion purchasing behavior. When economic conditions are strong and consumers have higher disposable income, fashion consumption increases, and influencer marketing campaigns become more effective in driving sales. In India rising middle income class and annual growth in disposable income increases the demand for ethnic fusion and fast fashion trends among consumers.

4.3 Social Factors

256 Social and cultural trends are among the most influential drivers of influencer marketing in
257 the fashion industry. Fashion consumption is closely connected to social identity and culture,
258 lifestyle expression, and peer influence. These are described below:

- 259 • **Social media growth**-Social media growth emerges as a significant factor driving
260 influencer marketing in India's fashion industry. Consumers increasingly rely on
261 social media platforms for information, entertainment, and shopping inspiration. With
262 over 500 million active users in 2026 and platforms like Instagram and YouTube
263 dominating fashion discovery, leading to high growth of influencer marketing in
264 India. Thus, fashion influencers serve as trusted sources of recommendations because
265 their content appears more authentic than traditional advertising.
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- 267 • **Gen Z values and identities**- The younger generations, particularly Generation Z and
268 Millennials, play a significant role in the popularity of influencer marketing. These
269 consumers are highly active on social media and often follow influencers who share
270 similar interests, lifestyles, or values. Thus, fashion influencers who show real
271 content, talk openly about issues, and balance trendiness with affordability and
272 sustainability gain stronger trust and engagement.
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- 274 • **Authenticity and community over fame**-The concept of authenticity has become a
275 critical social factor in influencer marketing. Consumers prefer influencers who
276 appear genuine and relatable rather than overly commercialized. Audiences are
277 fatigued with polished celebrity-style influencers; they prefer micro/nano creators
278 who feel like friends and build niche communities. As a result, micro-influencers with
279 smaller but highly engaged audiences are becoming increasingly important in fashion
280 marketing.
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- 282 • **Rising sustainability culture**- The rising sustainability culture represents a crucial
283 social factor in influencer marketing. The social media now normalises thrifting,
284 upcycling, and “slow fashion” through hashtags like #SustainableFashion, among
285 audience. This shift, fueled by social media movements, pressures fashion creators to
286 promote verified green practices amid fast-fashion dominance, fostering niche
287 communities with their followers. Thus, Eco-influencers and “green fashion” creators
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289 on Instagram to are exposing fast-fashion harms, highlight transparent brands, and
290 teach DIY repairs, especially appealing to Gen Z in India and globally.

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- 293 • **Cultural Specificity-** Another social trend impacting influencer marketing is the
294 increasing importance of diversity and representation in fashion. Consumers expect
295 brands and influencers to promote inclusive fashion that reflects different body types,
296 ethnic backgrounds, and cultural identities. In India, fashion influencers like, Komal
297 Pandey, Kritika Khurana, etc. blend global trends with local ethnic and budget-
298 conscious styling, resonating with diverse urban and semi-urban audiences. Audiences
299 increasingly value influencers who reflect their own language, city, body type, and
300 cultural norms; and ethnic–western fusion.

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302 **4.4 Technological Factors**

303 Technological innovation is one of the most significant drivers of influencer marketing in the
304 fashion industry. Advances in social media platforms, artificial intelligence, and mobile
305 technology have enabled influencers to reach global audiences and create engaging content.
306 The following points described it:

- 307 • **Advancement in algorithms and AI-** Social media algorithms play a crucial role in
308 determining the visibility of influencer content. The platforms use advanced
309 algorithms to personalize content, improve targeting and recommend content to users
310 based on their preferences and behavior. This technology allows influencer content to
311 reach highly targeted audiences.

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- 313 • **Virtual & AI influencers:** Emergence of virtual influencers is a big change in
314 influencer marketing. These virtual influencers (e.g., Lil Miquela, Imma) deliver
315 flawless visuals 24/7 at 50% lower production costs than human creators with perfect
316 visuals, and no scandals. These AI entities experts in AR try-ons, metaverse fashion
317 shows, and personalized styling recommendations, driving higher conversions
318 through seamless shoppable experiences, particularly suggesting fast-fashion
319 scalability and global campaigns. However, they challenge authenticity perception
320 and therefore, fashion brands use them with due care along with human influencers,

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322 • **Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Try-Ons-** Augmented reality technologies are
323 emerging as new tools for fashion marketing. Virtual try-on features allow consumers
324 to visualize clothing or accessories before purchasing them online. Influencers can use
325 these technologies to demonstrate products in innovative ways. Additionally, video-
326 based platforms have significantly transformed influencer marketing in fashion.
327 Short-form video content has become one of the most effective formats for
328 showcasing fashion products, styling tips, and lifestyle inspiration.

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330 • **Advanced analytics & performance measurement** - Artificial intelligence is
331 significantly influencing influencer marketing strategies. Brands increasingly use AI-
332 based analytics tools to identify suitable influencers, measure campaign performance,
333 and analyze audience engagement. In the fashion industry, where around 60% of
334 purchases are influenced by what people see, real-time dashboards help track how
335 well content is performing. Additionally, fashion brands use AI to tracks ROI;
336 platforms predict performance from engagement patterns, shifting to performance-pay
337 models.

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340 • **Live streaming and real-time engagement-**Live streaming have emerged as pivotal
341 technological factors transforming influencer marketing. The platforms like Instagram
342 Live and YouTube Live enable creators to show outfits, conduct instant styling
343 sessions, and facilitate direct purchases through shoppable features, driving
344 conversion rates up to 8–10 times higher than static posts. The fashion influencers are
345 using a live session for product launches, fashion hauls, and interactive marketing
346 which fosters authentic interactions with consumers. Consumers can also purchase
347 fashion products directly through influencer posts or live streaming sessions.

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349 **4.5 Legal Factors**

350 Legal regulations play a crucial role in shaping influencer marketing practices. As influencer
351 marketing grows, governments and regulatory agencies are introducing laws to ensure
352 transparency and protect consumers. These are described below:

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- **Disclosure and Endorsement Regulations-** Advertising disclosure regulations require influencers to clearly indicate when content is sponsored or paid. Accordingly, influencers must clearly label sponsored content to avoid misleading consumers. In India, the Consumer Protection Act 2019 (Section 2(28)) and IT Rules 2021 mandate upfront #Ad or #Sponsored disclosures, enforced by the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) and Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI). If they violated this law, the fines up to ₹50 lakh are imposed on both brands and influencers. The US FTC similarly requires "material connection" disclosures, with 2025, fines exceeding \$5 million globally.
 - **Data privacy and protection-** Data privacy laws significantly affect influencer marketing activities as creators and brands collect audience data through contests, polls, and analytics for targeted campaigns. With increasing digital engagement, data usage is regulated under frameworks of Information Technology Act, 2000. In India, the Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023 (DPDP) designates influencers handling emails, locations, or purchase preferences as "data fiduciaries," mandating explicit consent, purpose limitation, and breach notifications within 72 hours, with penalties up to 4% of global turnover. Furthermore, at global level, GDPR compliance also complicates cross-border fashion collabs.
 - **Intellectual Property and Right of Publicity-** Social media influencers frequently use music, images, and other creative content in their posts. Without explicit contracts specifying ownership and usage rights, reposting or repurposing influencer content for ads can trigger infringement claims, while deepfake technology raises publicity rights violations—unauthorized use of a creator's likeness in fashion campaigns. In India, Delhi High Court precedents protect personal branding, requiring morality clauses and watermarking. Also, globally, clear licensing terms have become standard to balance creative collaboration with legal protection for all the parties. Thus, fashion influencers must keep things transparent.
 - **Defamation, Hate Speech, and Content Liability-** Influencers may be held accountable for disseminating hate speech, harmful content, or provocative narratives

387 that violate constitutional principles, criminal regulations, and platform guidelines.
388 The legal consequences of such actions can arise concurrently through civil liability,
389 criminal proceedings, and contractual obligations imposed by platforms or
390 collaborating brands. The influencers risk lawsuits under IPC Section 499
391 (defamation) for body-shaming comments or brand disparagement, while IT Act
392 Section 66A and 69A target hate speech that incites communal tensions through
393 controversial styling critiques. Thus, fashion brands must include morality clauses and
394 pre-approval workflows in contracts to mitigate legal risks.

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- 396 • **Contractual and Labor Obligations-** Influencers, now often classified as
397 "commercial entities" under the Consumer Protection Act (CPA), and have specific
398 tax and regulatory obligations. The gifts received from brands attract income tax at a
399 30% slab, alongside mandatory (TDS) deductions. Additionally, they qualify for
400 certain labor-like protections, such as timely payments and dispute resolution
401 mechanisms. Fashion collaboration contracts commonly include morality clauses
402 (prohibiting controversial behavior) and exclusivity terms (banning competitor
403 promotions). The Influencer Integrity and Governance Council (IIGC), established in
404 2025, introduces industry-wide ethics codes that further standardize professional
405 conduct and accountability. Thus, a balance between creative freedom and legal
406 accountability is essential to safeguard consumers, uphold market integrity, and
407 preserve influencer credibility.

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409 **4.6 Environmental Factors**

410 Environmental factors have emerged as pivotal influencers in fashion marketing, driven by
411 growing consumer awareness, regulatory pressures, and the industry's substantial ecological
412 footprint. The fashion industry contributes around 8–10% of global carbon emissions and
413 produces about 92 million tons of textile waste each year. As a result, influencers play a key
414 role in promoting sustainability, but they can also sometimes spread misleading claims about
415 being environmentally friendly (greenwashing). These are described below:

- 416 • **Sustainability expectations and consumer demand-** The rise of sustainable fashion
417 has created new expectations for brands and influencers. Consumers are becoming
418 more aware of environmental issues such as textile waste, carbon emissions, and

419 unethical labour practices in the fashion industry. Younger consumers, especially Gen
420 Z and millennials who represent 60% of fashion buyers, now view clothing choices as
421 statements of personal values. Surveys indicate 67% actively seek brands using
422 organic cotton, recycled polyester, or low-water dyes, expecting influencers to reflect
423 this. Thus, fashion influencers play an important role in educating audiences about
424 sustainable fashion choices, including second-hand clothing, slow fashion, and ethical
425 production practices.

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427 • **Greenwashing scrutiny and regulatory enforcement-**Greenwashing occurs when
428 vague terms like "eco-friendly" or "planet-positive" lack evidence, misleading
429 followers. The EU's Digital Product Passport (mandatory 2026) requires QR codes
430 tracing fiber origins, while India's ASCI issued 150+ greenwashing advisories in 2025
431 alone. ASA (UK) banned Shein ads for unproven claims; influencers reposting them
432 share liability. Influencers promoting fast-fashion hauls risk credibility loss when
433 vague sustainability messaging faces backlash through #GreenwashingExposed
434 campaigns. Thus, fashion brands must provide verifiable certifications, compelling
435 creators to prioritize authentic eco-partnerships over promotional excess to maintain
436 trust amid heightened environmental accountability.

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438 • **Fast fashion's waste and pollution footprint-** Fast fashion's waste and pollution
439 footprint significantly influences influencer marketing. The fashion industry,
440 generating 92 million tons of textile waste annually and accounting for 10% of global
441 carbon emission. Also, producing one cotton T-shirt requires 2,700 liters of water
442 (enough for one person's drinking needs for 2.5 years), while synthetic dyes pollute
443 rivers and contribute 20% of global industrial wastewater. Influencers promoting
444 Shein/Zara hauls face growing backlash via #SheinExposed, pushing brands toward
445 thrift flips and upcycling content that counters overconsumption narratives while
446 aligning with Gen Z's sustainability expectations. Thus, fashion brands must
447 recommend recycling and reuse ideas among their followers for reducing such waste
448 and promoting sustainability.

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451 • **Material and supply chain innovations-**Material and supply chain innovations
452 serve as a key environmental factor impacting influencer marketing in the fashion

453 industry. Bans on toxic chemicals like PFAS (France, 2026) and EU textile disposal
454 regulations push brands toward sustainable alternatives such as mushroom leather and
455 lab-grown silk. Influencers highlight these new materials through styling content, but
456 must verify claims with certifications to avoid misleading followers. Traceability tools
457 and transparent supply chains help consumers check authenticity, positioning creators
458 as educators in sustainable fashion rather than just trend promoters. Thus, Fashion
459 brands are increasingly collaborating with influencers who advocate for sustainable
460 lifestyles to align marketing strategies with environmental values.

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463 **5. Conclusion**

464 Influencer marketing has become a central component of marketing strategies within the
465 fashion industry. The effectiveness and sustainability of influencer marketing practices are
466 strongly influenced by macro-environmental factors. Thus, the present study applied the
467 PESTLE framework to analyze political, economic, social, technological, legal, and
468 environmental influences on influencer marketing in fashion. The PESTLE analysis
469 demonstrates that influencer marketing in the fashion industry operates within a complex
470 external environment. Political regulations influence digital advertising practices, economic
471 trends shape marketing investments, social dynamics drive consumer engagement,
472 technological innovation enhances marketing capabilities, legal frameworks regulate
473 transparency, and environmental concerns reshape fashion promotion strategies. The analysis
474 reveals that while influencer marketing offers significant opportunities for brand growth and
475 consumer engagement, it also faces challenges related to regulation, ethical concerns, and
476 sustainability pressures. Theoretically, it provides a comprehensive macro-perspective that
477 complements existing micro-level studies in influencer marketing literature. Furthermore, the
478 research provides important insights for marketers and fashion brands to develop more
479 effective influencer marketing strategies and anticipate future industry trends. Fashion brands
480 gain practical guidance to navigate disclosure rules through compliance training, optimize
481 budgets with performance-based micro-influencer partnerships, leverage AI analytics for ROI
482 tracking, ensure authentic sustainability messaging, and build long-term creator relationships.
483 Future research may explore the long-term impacts of influencer marketing on consumer
484 behaviour and examine how evolving technologies and sustainability initiatives will shape
485 the future of fashion marketing. Thus, the present study equips fashion brands with a strategic

486 roadmap to harness influencer marketing's potential while addressing external challenges,
487 ultimately fostering consumer trust, sustainable growth, and competitive advantage in India's
488 dynamic digital landscape.

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