

INFLUENCER MARKETING: KEY DRIVERS OF FEMALE CONSUMER PERCEPTION

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ABSTRACT:

Influencer marketing significantly influences consumer buying behaviour and purchase decisions. By leveraging the trust and authority established by influencers, brands can effectively reach and persuade their target audiences. The personal and relatable nature of influencer content makes it more engaging and trustworthy than traditional advertising. Consumers often perceive influencers as experts in their niche, leading them to consider their recommendations more seriously. This form of marketing also creates a sense of FOMO (fear of missing out) and social proof, encouraging consumers to try new products or services endorsed by influencers. As a result, influencer marketing has become a powerful tool for brands to drive sales and build brand loyalty.

Key Words: Advertisement, Authenticity, Consumer, Influencer.

INTRODUCTION:

Influencer marketing, a burgeoning force in the digital landscape, harnesses the power of social media personalities to promote products and services to their engaged audiences. By collaborating with influencers who have established credibility and a loyal following in specific niches, brands can authentically connect with consumers and drive purchasing decisions. Unlike traditional advertising, influencer marketing relies on the genuine relationship's influencers cultivate with their followers, making the promotional content more relatable and persuasive. With the rise of social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, influencers have become key tastemakers and trendsetters, shaping consumer preferences and driving conversations about brands in ways never seen before. As brands seek innovative ways to reach their target audiences in an increasingly cluttered digital space, influencer marketing has emerged as a compelling strategy to cut through the noise and foster genuine connections with consumers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE :

Yodi, H. P., Widyastuti, S., & Noor, L. S. (2020) in their study examines the impact of content marketing and influencer marketing on purchasing decisions mediated by consumer behaviour. The study focused on consumers from the Erigo Company, with 100 respondents selected using purposive sampling. Path analysis was employed for analysis. The findings indicate that both content marketing and influencer marketing directly influence consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions. Content marketing directly influences both consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions, while influencer marketing indirectly affects purchasing decisions through consumer behaviour. The indirect effect of content marketing on purchasing decisions through behaviour is smaller compared to the direct effect of marketing on purchasing decisions.

Trivedi, J., & Sama, R. (2020), the paper investigates the impact of celebrity influencers versus expert influencers on consumers' online purchase intentions for consumer electronics products. It also tests the mediating role of brand admiration and brand attitude between influencer marketing and online purchase intentions, as well as the moderating role of message involvement on brand attitude. The study surveyed 438 respondents and utilized structural equation modelling, hierarchical regression analysis, and the Hayes process method. The findings suggest that expert influencers are more effective than celebrity influencers for marketing consumer electronics. Brand attitude and brand admiration play mediating roles, and message involvement acts as a moderator in influencing purchase intentions.

Grafström, J., Jakobsson, L., & Wiede, P. (2018) carried out their study Influencer marketing has emerged as a new phenomenon, evolving from traditional strategies like print ads and celebrity endorsements. Its significant growth began around 2016. Influencers, individuals with substantial social media followings, are now key marketing tools for companies seeking to engage their target audiences effectively. The authors explore how millennial attitudes are influenced by these promotional messages, considering this group's strong online presence. This research aims to provide insights for businesses considering collaborations with influencers. The rise of influencer marketing led to the introduction of new marketing regulations in 2016, requiring clear disclosure of paid partnerships on social media, altering public perception of influencer marketing.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM :

Businesses looking to make the most of influencer marketing must comprehend how consumers feel about the tactic. The goal of this study is to look into how consumers feel about influencer content on a variety of levels, such as legitimacy, impact on buying behaviour, and compatibility with consumer values. By exploring these facets, the study aims to offer significant perspectives on the extent and possibilities of influencer marketing in modern consumer society.

OBJECTIVES :

From the above problem the following objectives have been framed

- To ascertain the Level of female perception towards influencer marketing
- To identify the factors that influencing the female perception on influencer marketing

METHODOLOGY:

The study based on the primary in nature. The required data for the study have been collected through issues of questionnaire. The sample consists of 56 women employees working in Coimbatore District. Using convenience sampling were selected. Statistical tools like Simple frequency, Chi-Square Test, Correlation and ANOVA have been employed.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Profile of Female Consumers

Particulars		Frequency	Percentage N=56
Age	20- 30	37	66.1
	31-40	16	28.6
	41- 50	2	3.6
	above 50	1	1.8
Educational Qualification	SSLC	1	1.8
	HSC	1	1.8
	UG/ PG	45	80.4
	Ph. D	9	16.1
Employment Status	Professional	43	76.8
	IT employee	4	7.1
	Entrepreneur	2	3.6
	House Wife	7	12.5
Income level	up to 25000	32	57.1
	25001- 35000	15	26.8
	35001- 50000	6	10.7
	Above 50000	3	5.4
Area of Residency	Urban	32	57.1
	Rural	24	42.9
awareness of influencer marketing	Yes	46	82.1

	No	10	17.9
Frequency of follow social media	Daily	22	39.3
	weekly	14	25.0
	occasionally	13	23.2
	Never	7	12.5
Considering trendsetter in social circle	Yes	26	46.4
	No	30	53.6
Importance of Social Status	Very Important	25	44.6
	Somewhat important	25	44.6
	Not important	6	10.7

According to the data, the bulk of respondents (66.1%) are between the ages of 20 and 30. A notable proportion of respondents (80.4%) have undergraduate or graduate degrees, and 76.8% work as professionals. Furthermore, a sizeable portion (57.1%) live in cities and (82.1%) are familiar with influencer marketing. The frequency categories with the highest percentage of daily followers of influencers are 39.3%, and among those who consider themselves trendsetters (46.4%) and value social status (44.6%) highly. Based on these results, influencer marketing efforts may identify a potentially profitable target audience in this youthful, educated, urban-dwelling demographic that actively engages with influencer material and prioritizes social status in their purchase decisions.

Table 2: Association of Select Variables with Female Consumers perception - Chi- Square Test

Variables	Chi-square value	d.f.	P Value	Association
Age	9.536	6	.146	Not Significant
Educational Qualification	8.767	6	.187	Not Significant
Employment Status	8.196	6	.224	Not Significant
Income level	6.236	6	.397	Not Significant
Importance of social status when you making purchasing decisions	16.293**	4	.003	Significant

Age, educational attainment, work status, and income level are not substantially correlated with respondents' opinions about influencer marketing, according to the statistical analysis. Nonetheless, the significance of social status in purchase decisions is shown as a significant factor ($p = .003$), suggesting that people's tendency towards influencer marketing is considerably influenced by their perceptions of social status. This implies that people who value social standing more are susceptible to the influence of others while making judgments about what to buy. This research highlights how important it is to take psychographic elements—like perceptions of social status—into account in addition to demographic traits when developing influencer marketing plans because these elements have a big influence on consumer behaviour and how they interact with influencer material.

Table 3: Nature of relationship of select variables with Female Consumers Perception - Correlation Analysis

Variables	r	r ²
Age	0.011	0.000
Educational Background	0.884*	0.781
Employment status	0.630	0.397
Income level	0.053	0.003
Area of Residency	0.744*	0.554
Are you aware of influencer marketing?	0.914*	0.835
Frequency of follow social media	.052	0.003
Considering trendsetter in social circle	.042*	0.002

***Significant at One Per Cent Level :**

The correlation analysis reveals that educational background, area of residency, and awareness of influencer marketing exhibit strong positive correlations with female consumers' perception, explaining 78.1%, 55.4%, and 83.5% of the variance, respectively. In contrast, age, income level, frequency of following social media, and considering oneself a trendsetter in social circles show very weak correlations, indicating minimal impact on perception. Employment status has a moderate positive correlation, accounting for 39.7% of the variance. These findings suggest that educational background, area of residency, and influencer marketing awareness are key factors influencing female consumers' perception, while the other variables have negligible effects.

Table 4: Mean difference between select variables with Female Consumers perception - ANOVA

Variables	F Value	P Value	Significant
Age	2.185	.023	Significant
Educational background	.930	.548	Not Significant
Employment status	1.094	.393	Not Significant
Income level	1.144	.352	Not Significant
Area of Residency	.663	.818	Not Significant
Awareness of influencer marketing	.657	.823	Not Significant
Frequency of watching social media	.521	.925	Not Significant
Considering trendsetter in social circle	.617	.857	Not Significant
Importance of social status when making purchase	1.951	.043	Significant

Age and the significance of social status are statistically significant predictors of the dependent variable, according to the analysis of variance (ANOVA) results. Conversely, factors such as educational background, employment status, income level, area of residence, awareness of influencer marketing, frequency of following influencers, and self-perception as a trendsetter are not significant predictors. Age has a significant effect on the dependent variable, according to the F value of 2.185 and p-value of .023. Likewise, the relevance of social status is demonstrated by its F value of 1.951 and p-value of .043. These findings suggest that social status and respondents' age have a substantial influence on the dependent variable, while income level, employment status, and educational background do not significantly correlate with the dependent variable.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY :

The fact that the study's scope is restricted to a certain demographic or geographic region may limit the findings' applicability to larger consumer populations. Furthermore, response bias or social desirability bias may be introduced when self-reported data from surveys and interviews is relied upon. Furthermore, because customer opinions and trends in this industry may change quickly over time, the study might not adequately reflect the dynamic nature of influencer marketing. Last but not least, limitations on time and money could limit the scope of the study or the size of the sample, which would affect how thorough the results are.

CONCLUSION:

Influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful strategy for businesses to engage with consumers in the digital age. Its ability to leverage the credibility and reach of social media personalities has transformed traditional marketing approaches. However, careful consideration of audience demographics, authenticity, and regulatory compliance is essential for maximizing its effectiveness and maintaining consumer trust. As influencer marketing continues to evolve, businesses must adapt their strategies to meet changing consumer preferences and technological advancements in order to remain competitive in the marketplace. This study reveals many scope like Influencer marketing's effectiveness, legitimacy, and influence on purchase decisions are the main topics of this study,

which tries to investigate how consumers view it. It looks at how consumers evaluate influencer material, whether they trust influencers, and whether these marketing tactics fit with their tastes and beliefs using surveys and qualitative interviews. In order to shed light on the extent and possibilities of influencer marketing in modern consumer culture, the study will investigate these areas.

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