

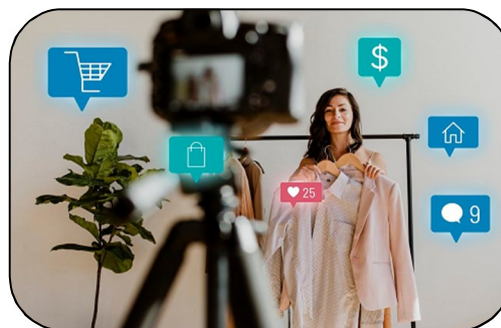


INFLUENCER MARKETING AND CONSUMER PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR

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ABSTRACT

Influencer marketing has emerged as an important digital marketing approach in which individuals with established online audiences promote products, services, brands, or experiences through social media and other digital platforms. This study examines the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase behaviour, with particular focus on how influencer credibility, expertise, attractiveness, authenticity, content quality, and audience engagement can influence consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions. The growth of social media platforms has enabled consumers to access product recommendations, reviews, demonstrations, and opinions from influencers before making purchase decisions. Influencer-generated content can contribute to brand awareness, product knowledge, consumer engagement, purchase intention, and brand perceptions. The study also considers the importance of trust and perceived authenticity in influencer–consumer relationships. Consumers may respond differently to influencer marketing depending on factors such as age, interests, social influence, product category, platform used, and previous experience with the brand. The study identifies challenges including sponsored-content transparency, excessive promotional content, credibility concerns, fake engagement, changing consumer preferences, and privacy issues. Overall, the study indicates that influencer marketing can influence consumer purchase behaviour when promotional content is relevant, credible, transparent, and aligned with audience interests. Businesses therefore need to carefully select influencers and develop responsible, customer-oriented influencer marketing strategies.



KEYWORDS: *Influencer Marketing, Consumer Purchase Behaviour, Social Media Marketing, Influencer Credibility, Consumer Trust, Purchase Intention, Brand Awareness, Brand Engagement.*

INTRODUCTION

Influencer marketing has become an important component of modern digital marketing as businesses increasingly use social media platforms to communicate with consumers and promote their products and services. Influencers are individuals who have developed an online following and can affect audience awareness, opinions, engagement, and purchasing decisions through their content and recommendations. The growth of platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, and other digital channels has changed the way consumers obtain information about products and brands. Consumers can now access product demonstrations, reviews, recommendations, tutorials, and personal

experiences shared by influencers before making purchasing decisions. This has created new opportunities for businesses to communicate with specific consumer segments.

Influencer marketing differs from traditional advertising because promotional messages are often presented through personalized and interactive content. Influencers may communicate products through reviews, demonstrations, stories, videos, live sessions, and other forms of content. The effectiveness of such communication can depend on the influencer's credibility, expertise, attractiveness, authenticity, and relationship with followers. Consumer purchase behaviour refers to the processes through which consumers identify their needs, search for information, evaluate alternatives, make purchasing decisions, and assess their experiences after purchase. Influencer-generated content can become part of the information-search and evaluation stages by providing consumers with product information and opinions. One of the important factors in influencer marketing is consumer trust. Consumers may consider influencers more relatable or approachable than traditional advertising sources. However, the perceived authenticity of promotional content can be affected when audiences believe that recommendations are excessively commercial or insufficiently transparent.

Influencer marketing can influence several aspects of consumer behaviour, including brand awareness, product knowledge, attitudes, purchase intention, engagement, and brand perceptions. The impact may vary according to the type of product, characteristics of the influencer, characteristics of the audience, and the social media platform used. The increasing use of influencer marketing has also created challenges. These include sponsored-content disclosure, fake followers and engagement, misleading promotions, credibility concerns, privacy issues, and changing consumer preferences. Businesses therefore need to consider transparency and responsible communication when developing influencer marketing campaigns.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Aim

The main aim of this study is to examine the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase behaviour and to understand how influencer characteristics, content, credibility, and audience engagement influence consumer purchasing decisions.

Objectives

1. To understand the concept, importance, and development of influencer marketing in the digital marketing environment.
2. To examine the major factors influencing consumer purchase behaviour.
3. To study the influence of influencer credibility, expertise, attractiveness, and authenticity on consumer responses.
4. To examine the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention.
5. To analyze the role of influencer marketing in creating brand awareness and product knowledge.
6. To examine the influence of social media content and influencer recommendations on consumer attitudes toward products and brands.
7. To study the role of consumer trust and perceived authenticity in influencer-consumer relationships.
8. To examine the impact of influencer marketing on brand engagement, customer interest, and purchasing decisions.
9. To identify the challenges associated with influencer marketing, including sponsored-content disclosure, fake engagement, credibility concerns, and excessive promotional content.

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10. To suggest suitable influencer marketing practices that can support effective consumer engagement and responsible marketing communication.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature on influencer marketing indicates that social media influencers have become an important source of information and brand communication for consumers. Influencers use digital platforms to share opinions, experiences, recommendations, reviews, and promotional content about products and services. Their established relationships with online audiences can influence consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions. Previous studies have examined influencer credibility as an important factor affecting consumer responses. Credibility is commonly associated with characteristics such as expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Consumers may be more receptive to influencer recommendations when they perceive the influencer as knowledgeable, reliable, and genuine. Research has also highlighted the importance of authenticity in influencer marketing. Consumers may respond positively when sponsored content appears consistent with an influencer's usual interests, communication style, and personal identity. Excessive promotional content or recommendations that appear inconsistent with an influencer's profile may affect audience perceptions of credibility.

Several studies have examined the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention. Influencer recommendations can provide consumers with information about product features, benefits, usage, and experiences. Such information can influence consumer attitudes and may contribute to purchase intentions, particularly when the product is relevant to the consumer's interests. The literature also emphasizes the role of social media engagement. Likes, comments, shares, views, live interactions, and other forms of engagement can create communication between influencers and followers. Higher interaction may strengthen relationships between influencers and audiences and increase exposure to promoted products. Research on electronic word-of-mouth suggests that online recommendations and consumer-generated opinions can influence product perceptions and purchasing decisions. Influencer content can function as a form of digital word-of-mouth by providing consumers with product-related opinions and experiences.

The literature indicates that brand awareness and product knowledge can also be affected by influencer marketing. Influencers can introduce products to audiences who may not previously have been familiar with particular brands. Demonstrations, tutorials, reviews, and product comparisons can provide additional information during the consumer decision-making process. Studies have further examined the influence of parasocial relationships between influencers and followers. Consumers may develop a sense of familiarity or connection with influencers through repeated exposure to their content. Such relationships can affect how audiences respond to recommendations and promotional messages.

The effectiveness of influencer marketing may differ according to influencer type, audience characteristics, product category, social media platform, and campaign objectives. Micro-influencers may have smaller audiences but can operate within specialized communities, while larger influencers can provide broader reach. Research has also identified several challenges associated with influencer marketing. These include fake followers, artificial engagement, lack of transparency, undisclosed sponsorships, misleading claims, excessive advertising, and concerns about authenticity. These issues can affect consumer trust and the credibility of influencer campaigns.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a descriptive and exploratory research methodology to examine the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase behaviour. The study focuses on

understanding how influencer characteristics, promotional content, credibility, authenticity, and audience engagement may influence consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions. The study is primarily based on secondary data collected from academic books, research journals, research papers, digital marketing studies, industry reports, and reliable online publications. Existing literature is reviewed to understand the concepts, theories, trends, and developments related to influencer marketing and consumer behaviour. A qualitative approach is used to analyze and interpret the collected information. The study examines important factors such as influencer credibility, expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, authenticity, content quality, audience engagement, electronic word-of-mouth, brand awareness, and purchase intention.

The study also considers the role of major social media platforms in influencer marketing and examines how influencer-generated content can become part of the consumer decision-making process. Particular attention is given to information search, product evaluation, brand perception, purchase intention, and post-purchase responses. The collected information is organized and analyzed descriptively to identify major patterns, relationships, benefits, and challenges associated with influencer marketing and consumer purchase behaviour.

The study also examines challenges such as fake followers, artificial engagement, undisclosed sponsorships, excessive promotional content, credibility concerns, privacy issues, and changing social media trends. The study has certain limitations because it relies mainly on secondary data and does not include direct surveys or interviews with consumers or influencers. Consumer responses may also vary according to age, income, interests, product category, social media platform, and cultural background. Despite these limitations, the methodology provides a broad understanding of the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase behaviour.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The rapid growth of social media has significantly changed the way consumers obtain information about products and services. Consumers increasingly use social media platforms to discover brands, read reviews, watch product demonstrations, follow recommendations, and communicate with businesses. As a result, influencer marketing has become an important promotional approach for businesses seeking to reach specific consumer groups. One of the major problems is the difficulty of determining how influencer marketing affects actual consumer purchase behaviour. Exposure to influencer content may increase awareness or interest, but consumer purchasing decisions can also be influenced by price, product quality, personal preferences, income, reviews, previous experiences, and recommendations from other sources. Another important issue is influencer credibility and consumer trust. Consumers may respond differently to influencer recommendations depending on how knowledgeable, trustworthy, authentic, and relatable they perceive the influencer to be. Excessive promotional content may also affect perceptions of authenticity.

The increasing amount of sponsored content creates challenges related to transparency and disclosure. Consumers may find it difficult to distinguish between genuine personal recommendations and paid promotional content when commercial relationships are not clearly communicated. The growth of influencer marketing has also created concerns regarding fake followers, artificial engagement, misleading product claims, and inappropriate promotional practices. These issues can affect the credibility of influencers and the trust of their audiences. Another problem is that consumer responses to influencer marketing can vary according to age, lifestyle, interests, product category, social media platform, and individual purchasing behaviour. Therefore, a single influencer marketing strategy may not produce the same response among all consumers.

Businesses also face difficulties in selecting appropriate influencers and measuring the effectiveness of influencer campaigns. High follower counts do not necessarily indicate high levels of engagement, trust, or influence on purchasing decisions. The problem addressed by this study is therefore to understand how influencer marketing influences consumer purchase behaviour and which factors determine consumer responses to influencer-generated promotional content. The study focuses on the relationship between influencer marketing and brand awareness, consumer trust, product perceptions, engagement, purchase intention, and purchasing decisions, while also considering the challenges associated with credibility, transparency, and responsible influencer marketing.

NEED OF THE STUDY

The rapid growth of social media and digital platforms has changed the way consumers search for product information and interact with brands. Influencers have become an important source of product recommendations, reviews, demonstrations, and promotional content. Therefore, there is a need to study how influencer marketing influences consumer purchase behaviour. The study is needed to understand the role of influencer credibility, expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and authenticity in shaping consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions. Consumers may respond differently to influencer recommendations depending on their perception of the influencer and the relationship they have developed with the influencer's content. There is also a need to examine how influencer marketing contributes to brand awareness and product knowledge. Influencer content can introduce consumers to new products and provide information that may be considered during the purchasing process.

The study is important for understanding the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention. While influencer content may create awareness and interest, actual purchasing decisions can also depend on price, product quality, personal preferences, income, reviews, and previous experiences. The study is also needed because of increasing concerns about authenticity and transparency in influencer marketing. Sponsored content, paid partnerships, excessive promotional messages, fake followers, and artificial engagement can affect consumer trust and perceptions of influencer credibility.

The growing importance of social media engagement and electronic word-of-mouth provides another reason for the study. Likes, comments, shares, reviews, recommendations, and discussions can influence how consumers perceive products and brands. The study can also help businesses understand how to select suitable influencers based on audience relevance, engagement, credibility, content quality, and product-influencer fit, rather than relying only on follower numbers.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR RESEARCH

Future research can examine the influence of artificial intelligence and virtual influencers on consumer purchase behaviour and compare their effectiveness with human influencers. Further studies can investigate differences between micro-influencers, macro-influencers, and celebrity influencers in terms of credibility, audience engagement, brand awareness, purchase intention, and consumer trust. Researchers can examine the impact of influencer marketing across different product categories, such as fashion, beauty, food, technology, travel, fitness, and financial services, to identify variations in consumer responses.

Future research can focus on the relationship between influencer authenticity and consumer trust and examine how transparency in sponsored content affects consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions. Studies can investigate the influence of influencer-brand fit, examining whether consumers respond differently when an influencer's image, expertise, interests, and content are closely related to the promoted

product. Further research can examine the role of social media platform differences in influencer marketing. Comparative studies can investigate consumer responses across platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, and emerging digital platforms.

Researchers can conduct longitudinal studies to examine whether influencer marketing produces long-term effects on brand loyalty, repeat purchases, and customer relationships, rather than focusing only on short-term purchase intention. Future studies can investigate the impact of fake followers, artificial engagement, bots, and misleading influencer practices on consumer trust and campaign effectiveness.

There is also scope for research into influencer marketing disclosure and consumer awareness of sponsored content, including how different forms of disclosure affect perceptions of credibility and authenticity. Further research can examine differences in influencer marketing responses based on age, gender, income, education, lifestyle, digital experience, and cultural background. Finally, future studies can develop quantitative models to measure the relationship between influencer credibility, content quality, audience engagement, consumer trust, purchase intention, and actual purchasing behaviour.

Scope And Limitations

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study covers the examination of influencer marketing and its relationship with consumer purchase behaviour. It focuses on understanding how influencer-generated content, recommendations, reviews, and promotional activities can influence consumer awareness, attitudes, engagement, purchase intention, and purchasing decisions. The study covers major factors associated with influencer marketing, including influencer credibility, expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, authenticity, content quality, audience engagement, and influencer-brand fit.

The study also examines the role of social media platforms in influencer marketing and considers how consumers use influencer content during different stages of the purchasing process, including information search, product evaluation, and purchase decisions. The scope includes the relationship between influencer marketing and brand awareness, product knowledge, consumer trust, brand engagement, purchase intention, and brand perceptions. The study also considers challenges such as sponsored-content disclosure, fake followers, artificial engagement, excessive promotional content, credibility concerns, and changing social media trends.

Limitations of the Study

The study is primarily based on secondary data collected from academic books, research journals, research papers, industry reports, and other published sources. Therefore, the findings depend on the availability and reliability of existing information. Consumer responses to influencer marketing can vary according to age, income, lifestyle, interests, culture, product category, social media usage, and individual preferences. Therefore, the findings may not apply equally to all consumer groups.

The study does not involve direct surveys or interviews with consumers or influencers. Consequently, individual experiences, opinions, and motivations may not be fully represented. Social media platforms and influencer marketing practices change rapidly. Changes in algorithms, platform features, consumer trends, and influencer strategies may affect the relevance of some findings over time. The study provides a broad overview of influencer marketing and does not examine every influencer, platform, product category, or consumer segment in detail.

FINDINGS

The study on Influencer Marketing and Consumer Purchase Behaviour indicates that influencer marketing has become an important component of digital marketing and can influence consumer awareness, attitudes, engagement, purchase intention, and purchasing decisions. The study finds that influencer credibility is an important factor in consumer responses. Consumers are more likely to consider recommendations when influencers are perceived as knowledgeable, trustworthy, reliable, and experienced in the relevant product category. Authenticity is also an important factor. Consumers tend to respond more positively when influencer content appears genuine, relevant to the influencer's usual interests, and consistent with their communication style.

The findings indicate that influencer marketing can increase brand awareness and product knowledge by introducing products and services to audiences through reviews, demonstrations, tutorials, recommendations, and other forms of content. The study finds that social media engagement plays an important role in influencer marketing. Likes, comments, shares, views, and direct interactions can increase exposure to promotional content and encourage communication between influencers, brands, and consumers. Influencer marketing can influence consumer purchase intention by providing product information, social proof, personal recommendations, and opinions that consumers may consider during the evaluation of alternatives. The findings indicate that consumer trust is closely related to perceptions of influencer credibility and authenticity. Excessive advertising or promotional content that appears inconsistent with an influencer's normal content may reduce perceived authenticity.

The study also finds that influencer-brand fit can influence consumer responses. When the promoted product is relevant to the influencer's expertise, interests, and audience, promotional content may appear more appropriate and credible. The findings show that influencer marketing can contribute to brand engagement and consumer interaction. Consumers may use influencer content to ask questions, share opinions, seek product information, and communicate with other users. The study identifies several challenges, including fake followers, artificial engagement, undisclosed sponsorships, misleading claims, excessive promotional content, and credibility concerns. These issues can affect consumer trust and the perceived effectiveness of influencer campaigns. Consumer responses to influencer marketing vary according to age, lifestyle, interests, product category, social media platform, previous brand experience, and individual preferences. Therefore, influencer marketing strategies need to consider the characteristics of the intended audience.

DISCUSSION:

Influencer Marketing and Consumer become an important digital marketing strategy in which brands collaborate with individuals who have an established audience on social media platforms. Influencers can affect consumer purchase behaviour by shaping awareness, perceptions, preferences, and attitudes toward products or perceive recommendations from influencers as more personal and relatable than traditional advertisements. When an influencer is considered knowledgeable and authentic, followers may be more willing to role. Consumers often observe what influencers use, wear, or recommend, which can create social proof. Likes, comments, reviews, and testimonials can further reinforce consumers' perceptions that Purchase Behaviour Influencer marketing has become an important digital marketing strategy in which brands collaborate with individuals who have an established audience on social media platforms. Influencers can affect consumer purchase behaviour by shaping awareness, perceptions, preferences, and attitudes toward products or services. One major factor is trust and credibility. Consumers may perceive recommendations from influencers as more personal and relatable than traditional

advertisements. When an influencer is considered knowledgeable and authentic, followers may be more willing to consider the products they recommend.

Social influence also plays an important role. Consumers often observe what influencers use, wear, or recommend, which can create social proof. Likes, comments, reviews, and testimonials can further reinforce consumers' perceptions that a product is popular or acceptable. Another important factor is content quality and engagement. Informative demonstrations, product reviews, tutorials, and comparisons can help consumers understand a product and reduce uncertainty before purchasing. Interactive content can also strengthen the relationship between influencers and their audiences. However, influencer marketing does not always lead directly to purchases. The effect can depend on factors such as the influencer's credibility, relevance to the product, audience characteristics, product price, consumer involvement, and previous brand awareness. Excessive sponsorships or content that appears inauthentic may reduce consumer trust.

Overall, influencer marketing can influence different stages of consumer purchase behaviour—from product awareness and information search to evaluation, purchase intention, and post-purchase attitudes. Its effectiveness therefore depends not simply on the number of followers an influencer has, but also on the quality of the relationship between the influencer, the audience, and the brand.

CONCLUSION

Influencer marketing has become an effective tool for influencing consumer purchase behaviour in the digital age. Influencers can shape consumers' awareness, attitudes, preferences, and purchase intentions through authentic content, product recommendations, reviews, and personal engagement. Consumer trust, influencer credibility, relevance, and the quality of content play important roles in determining the effectiveness of influencer marketing.

Overall, influencer marketing can significantly contribute to consumers' decision-making processes, particularly when the promotion is perceived as genuine and relevant. However, consumers may also be influenced by factors such as product quality, price, brand reputation, and their own needs and preferences. Therefore, businesses should focus on building authentic and transparent relationships with suitable influencers rather than relying solely on follower numbers. Effective influencer marketing can strengthen brand engagement and support consumer purchase decisions when it provides meaningful value to the target audience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Influencer marketing should focus on authenticity, credibility, and relevance to effectively influence consumer purchase behaviour. Businesses should select influencers whose content and audience closely match the products or services being promoted. Greater attention should be given to audience engagement and trust rather than only the number of followers. Influencers should provide accurate and transparent information about products and clearly disclose sponsored content.

Brands should also use informative and engaging content such as product demonstrations, reviews, tutorials, and user experiences to help consumers make informed purchase decisions. Regular analysis of consumer responses, engagement levels, website visits, and sales can help businesses understand the effectiveness of influencer marketing. Building long-term relationships with suitable influencers can further strengthen brand awareness, consumer trust, and purchase intention.

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