

Influencer Marketing : Social Media Influencers Versus the Millennials in Beauty Care Products

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Abstract: *Today's marketing world is evolving rapidly, driven by the surge of influencer marketing strategies. Among these strategies, influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful tool for engaging with younger demographics, particularly millennials. Influencer marketing can be highly effective; however, it's also important to consider all of the pros and cons of influencer marketing. This research is focused on understanding how these influencers affect our choices in beauty care. This study will look into how much we trust these influencers and if that trust makes us buy the products they recommend. This study will help us see how influencers are changing the beauty industry and what that means for consumers and companies. The pros and cons of social media influencers and its affect on the purchase intentions are highlighted in the study. Finally some strategies are identified to be adopted by organizations to improve influencer marketing*

Keywords: Digital marketing, millennials, social media influencers, purchase intentions, strategies.

I. INTRODUCTION

Marketing is about individuals discovering means and ways to deliver unique value by fulfilling the necessities and requirements of other individuals (Ferrell, 2021). For this, various strategies like Digital Marketing, Green Marketing or Guerrilla Marketing have been developed over the years (Wind and Mahajan, 2001). Digital marketing can be defined as application of digital technologies, to generate channels and networks to reach potential beneficiaries to effectively fulfil the consumers need and hence in achieving the organization's goals, (Sawicki, 2016). One such channel created is influencer marketing. A lot of research has been done to define exactly what influencer marketing is, why companies are using it more and more and what it brings them (Backaler and Shankman, 2018; Coll, 2019; Genú, 2019; Levin, 2019). Influencer marketing is a new effective and cost-efficient marketing tool as it is not perceived by customers as advertising (Ye, Hudders, De Jans and De Veirman, 2021).

With the rise of the internet and the explosion of social media, a new wave of trendsetters emerged – influencers. These digital personalities, including social media influencers, bloggers, and vloggers, hold considerable sway over vast audiences (Ye et al., 2021). Their opinions and recommendations have become influential forces, molding consumer preferences and guiding purchasing decisions in our digital-centric world. As a result of this digital revolution, a new marketing tactic emerged – influencer marketing. This strategy has swiftly become a game-changer in the advertising realm, disrupting traditional marketing methods. The concept of endorsing products through non-celebrity influencers on social media was once unimaginable. Yet, here we are, witnessing the power of influencers to drive desired results for brands, marking a paradigm shift in marketing practices.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Khamis, S., Ang, L., & Welling, R., (2017) proposes the evolution of influencer marketing is closely tied to the rise of social media platforms, which have democratized content creation and allowed individuals to amass significant followings.

Freberg, K., et al., (2011) suggests that Influencer Marketing is a form of social media marketing involving endorsements and product placement from influencers, people, and organizations with a purported expert level of knowledge or social influence in their field.

Smith, A.N., Fischer, E., & Yongjian, C., (2012) defined Millennials as an individual's born between 1981 and 1996, are digital natives who spend a significant portion of their time on social media platforms. Their buying behavior is heavily influenced by digital content and online recommendations.

Djafarova, E., & Rushworth, C., (2017) & Evans, N.J., Phua, J., Lim, J., & Jun, H., (2017) Studies have shown that influencer marketing can positively affect millennials' buying behavior by enhancing brand awareness, shaping brand perceptions, and driving purchase intentions. Influencers can also help personalize a brand, making it more relatable and trustworthy to the millennial audience. However, there are also potential negative effects, such as overexposure leading to skepticism and distrust among consumers. Additionally, the perceived inauthenticity of some influencer endorsements can result in adverse reactions from millennials who value authenticity and transparency.

Neal, (2017); Xiao et al., (2018) in their study found that companies are seeking to take and use the advantage that comes from influencers having a relationship with their followers.

Kolarova (2018) states that when reliability and trustworthiness is attached to the source of a marketing campaign, there is also an observed behavior of adapting and imitating the behavior by people in the immediate social setting. Hence, it is likely that when an influencer posts about a product and covertly or overtly recommends it, the phenomenon of imitation may kick in and influencer marketing may thus translate into a successful strategy for the brand. Therefore, when an influencer posts content which is explicitly commercial in its appeal, the persuasion attempt leads to desirable outcomes.

Campbell, C., & Evans, N.J., (2018) describes the growing concern over misleading advertising and undisclosed endorsements has led to increased scrutiny by regulatory bodies, necessitating clear disclosure of influencer-brand relationships. Ethical considerations are paramount, as failure to adhere to these guidelines can damage both influencer and brand reputations.

Objectives of the Study

- To get an insight about the term 'Millennials'.
- To understand how Social Media Influencers affect an individual's choices in beauty care products.
- To find out the pros and cons of Social Media Influencers and its affect on the purchase intentions.
- To identify strategies to be adopted by organizations to improve Influencer marketing.

Research Gap

Researchers have raised questions about the impact that influencer marketing would have on network users (Farivar, Wang and Turel, 2022; Kwiatek, Baltezarević and

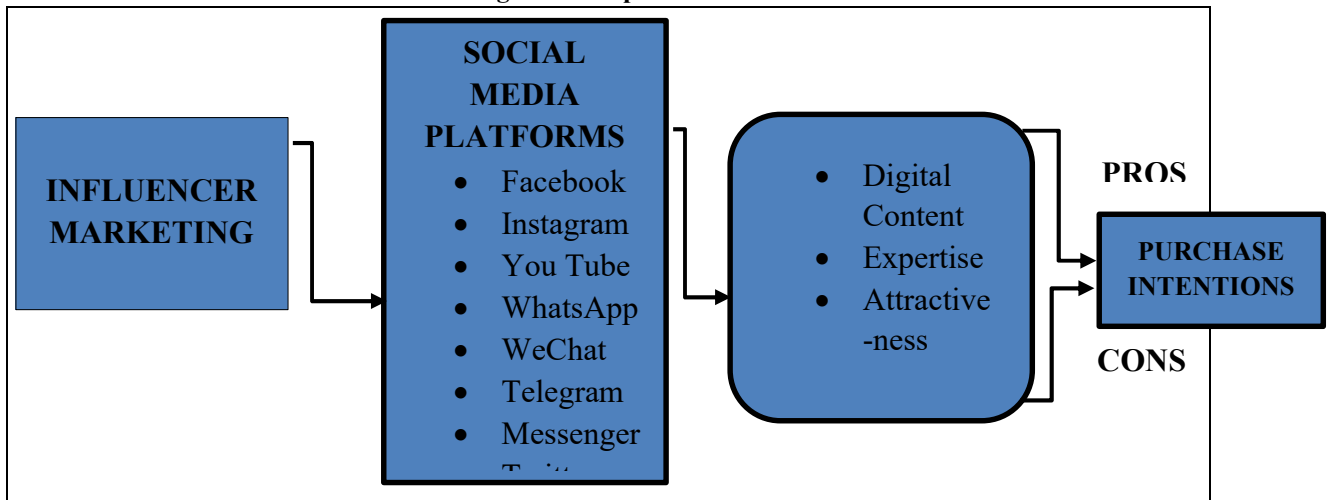
PapaKonstantinidis, 2021). There is a real lack of ethical framework around social media and their influencers. It is easy to think that influencers have an impact on the consumer buying decision behavior as they create a feeling of trust with the followers (Ye et al., 2021). This relation encourages the followers to take their attitudes and beliefs and this makes it difficult for consumers to discriminate commercial content from non-commercial content (Evans, Phua, Lim and Jun, 2017). The primary objective of this paper is to identify the pros and cons of influencer marketing suggesting strategies for the improvement of the same by the companies.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: Descriptive study

Data Source: Secondary Data collected through internet, websites, etc.

Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Author

Millennials

Millennials are those who have experienced both the era's (the era before and after the internet boom). They have not only experienced the internet but they have made the full use of technology and gave so much back to the society in terms of technology, innovation, awareness, entertainment, education and what not. So, we can say that they are not just the passive users of technology, instead they are some of its main drivers. Mark Zuckerberg we all know him, one of the most famous millennials, grew Facebook from a college directory into a powerful and influential social networking website over the course of 10 years. Other millennial innovators include Instagram founders Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger and TikTok developer Zhang Yiming.

One of the defining characteristics of millennials around the world is that they came of age during an era of major technological shifts, especially those associated with the rise of the Internet. In the United States, millennials are the first generation to have access to computers, cell phones, and smartphones from a young age. As young adults, they were the target consumers for social media and streaming entertainment. Younger millennials, for example, tend to be more comfortable with technology than older millennials (Britannica).

Millennials are the first generation to integrate all manner of digital technology into their daily lives. They use social media to keep up with friends (using websites such as Facebook and apps such as Instagram and TikTok on their phones), date (on apps that include Tinder, Bumble, and Hinge), network (on the website LinkedIn), shop (on Amazon and other websites), and consume entertainment (using YouTube, Spotify, Netflix, Prime, and others).

Millennials is the word which denotes to the particular demographic group which demonstrates a term commonly used to refer to individuals born between approximately 1981 and 1996, represent a generation situated between Generation X (Gen X; those born between 1965 and 1980) and Generation Z (Gen Z; those born from approximately 1997 to the early 2010s). Coined by William Strauss and Neil Howe in their book "Generations" (1991).

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Influencers and the Beauty Care Industry

In the digital era, social media influencers play a big role in the beauty industry. They use platforms like Instagram and YouTube to share their favourite beauty products and tips (Geyser, 2022). Beauty (make up and cosmetics) related videos are the most popular content category for females on YouTube (Petrov, 2023). According to research done by STATISTA

the fastest growing platform - Instagram shows the highest engagement of the social media users in the beauty care segment (Phua et. al., 2017).

This has changed the way people decide what beauty products to buy and which beauty trends to follow. Nowadays customer and consumer both watch a review or a video review before buying any particular product and not only they watch or read a review but also they make purchase decision based on the reels watched for that particular product. The Reels are nothing but a video showcasing unboxing of the product, how the product will look alike when we receive the product, how's the packaging done, what are the ingredients list of the product (which is a must to know factor for a skin care or haircare enthusiast), how to use this product, what are the results or after effect of the product in long run, how the product is helping in getting the desired results the very same YouTube videos are also made. The Emergence of influencers arise in Covid-19 or we can say the lockdown period is a boom for this industry, and so as to the companies as well. The influencer's actually educated and aware the customers regarding the product and this actually builds the trust and direct relationship between the followers and influencer's which is beneficial for the companies to endorse their products to the customers which is represented by the representative of the customer only, not only this they created the need to use the product into the minds of the customers, and promotes repeated purchase decisions (Ayuaspharalinda & Tanuwidjaja, 2021).

Purchase Intentions: Pros and Cons of Social Media Influencers (SMI)

Pros of SMI

Quick Trust Building

The term 'Influencer' is identified itself as influencer for building trust and recommendations. Organizations partnering with them will be able to build trust for a brand within the audience.

Brand Awareness

Influencers are visible across all digital platforms. Identifying the platform for promoting brand may help to choose a specific popular influencer on that platform for increasing brand awareness.

Enrichment of Content strategy

Influencer content if shareable can enrich content strategy providing fresh perspectives to the audience.

Reaching target audience efficiently and effectively

Influencers sometimes have defined demographics. Hence target audience can be reached without wastage of resources.

Value to target audience

Influencers make available valued content to audience, making them aware and entertaining them. Company's brand association with this value enhances its reputation.

Cons of SMI

Finding the right influencer

Sometimes the influencers may not align with company's values and policies. Hunting for them may be time consuming.

High Cost

Top-notch influencers may be costly.

Lack of control over Messaging

Influencers may create a content which may not align with the brand persona.

Gaps in Audience Engagement

Not all audience engage at the same level. Some may be fake as well.

Negative Publicity

If the influencer, by chance, garner negative publicity, it may impact a brand reputation.

Strategies to improve Influencer Marketing

Analyse the goal of the campaign

Work upon or build a strategy

Find the right target market and target audience

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Become aware that all social media platforms are not same
Make sure that the marketing content is authentic, genuine and honest.
Make use of mixed platform
Partner with influencer marketing agency

IV. CONCLUSION

Companies will understand the role of influencer marketing in creating better positioning of the products/brand image in the minds of the customers.

Companies will come to know who are the better influencers- Mega, Macro, Micro or Nano, in the beauty industry, due to which the presentation and promotion of the product will be cost effective and will fetch better returns.

Limitation of the study

The study is descriptive in nature and is based on Secondary data obtained from internet.

Scope of the study

As social media influencers' impact grows, companies should anticipate the rise of specialist and industry-specific influencer marketing platforms. These platforms will give marketers cutting-edge resources for finding, screening, and working with influencers that share the same values as their target market.

As the number of social media influencers rises, the rise of industry specific influencer marketing platforms are anticipated. These platforms will aid the marketers cutting edge resources for finding, screening and working with influencers that share the same values as their target market.

Brands can work with influencers to increase consumer/customer engagement and to boost conversions by providing interactive augmented reality filters, virtual try-on experiences and 360-degree product presentations combining virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR).

Analytical tools like Predictive Modeling Technique can be used for the selection of the influencers to enhance influencers collaboration with brands.

In order to reach maximum customers on various social media platforms, businesses need to modify their influencer marketing strategies

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