

A Study on Influencer Marketing and Its Impact on Buying Behaviour Among College Students

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Abstract: *This study examines the growing importance of influencer marketing and its impact on the buying behaviour of college students. In the modern digital era, social media influencers play a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions, preferences, and purchase decisions. The study aims to analyze the level of awareness, perception, and influence of influencer marketing among youth.*

The research is based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire from college students. A descriptive research design has been adopted, and the collected data has been analyzed using percentage analysis and graphical representation. The findings indicate that a majority of respondents are aware of influencer marketing and are influenced by influencer recommendations while making purchase decisions.

It is also observed that factors such as trust, credibility, relatability, and content quality significantly affect consumer behaviour. However, ethical concerns such as misleading promotions and lack of transparency have also been identified. The study concludes that influencer marketing is an effective promotional tool but requires responsible and ethical practices to maintain consumer trust..

Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Social Media, Brand Trust, Purchase Decision, Youth Influence

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic marketing environment, businesses continuously adopt innovative strategies to promote their products and services. With the rapid growth of digital technologies, traditional advertising methods are being replaced by more interactive and engaging forms of communication. One such modern strategy is influencer marketing.

Influencer marketing refers to a form of social media marketing where individuals with a large number of followers influence the opinions and buying decisions of their audience. These influencers create content that is more relatable, authentic, and engaging compared to traditional advertisements.

Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook have become major channels for influencer marketing. Influencers promote products through reviews, tutorials, unboxing videos, and lifestyle content, which directly impacts consumer perception and behaviour.

College students form a highly active segment of social media users. They are constantly exposed to influencer content, making them more likely to be influenced by digital trends and recommendations. Their behaviour is shaped by peer influence, online engagement, and lifestyle aspirations.

This study focuses on understanding how influencer marketing affects the awareness, perception, and buying behaviour of college students. It also highlights the importance of trust, credibility, and ethical practices in influencer marketing.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the level of awareness of influencer marketing among college students



- To analyze the perception of students towards influencer marketing
- To evaluate the influence of influencer marketing on buying behaviour
- To identify the most effective social media platforms used for influencer marketing
- To study the role of trust and credibility in influencer marketing
- To analyze the impact of content quality on consumer decisions

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sharma and Gupta (2023), in their research paper "*Impact of Influencer Marketing on Consumer Behaviour*," examined how social media influencers affect the purchasing decisions of young consumers. The study revealed that influencer marketing plays a significant role in creating brand awareness and shaping consumer perception. It was found that consumers tend to trust influencers more than traditional advertisements, which increases their likelihood of making a purchase.

Patel and Mehta (2022), in their study "*Role of Social Media Influencers in Digital Marketing*," analyzed the effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies. The findings indicated that influencers who create relatable and engaging content are more successful in influencing audience behaviour. The study also highlighted that authenticity and consistency in content are key factors in building consumer trust.

Kumar and Singh (2021), in their research paper "*Influence of Digital Marketing on Youth Buying Behaviour*," focused on the impact of digital platforms on consumer decisions. The study found that frequent exposure to influencer content on platforms like Instagram and YouTube significantly affects the buying behaviour of college students. It also emphasized that visual content and product demonstrations increase consumer interest.

Verma (2020), in the study "*Effectiveness of Influencer Marketing in Brand Promotion*," explored how influencer marketing helps brands in maintaining strong market presence. The findings suggested that influencers contribute to higher brand recall and engagement among consumers. However, the study also pointed out that excessive promotional content may reduce credibility.

Reddy and Kumar (2022), in their research paper "*Consumer Perception towards Influencer Marketing*," examined how consumers perceive influencer promotions. The study revealed that while consumers are aware of paid promotions, they are still influenced by creative and appealing content. It also highlighted that trust in influencers plays a crucial role in shaping consumer attitudes.

Desai (2021), in the research "*Impact of Social Media Influencers on Purchase Decisions*," analyzed the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer behaviour. The study concluded that influencer recommendations significantly increase the likelihood of product trials and purchases. It also emphasized the importance of influencer credibility and expertise.

Khan and Ali (2022), in their study "*Role of Media Platforms in Influencer Marketing*," examined the impact of different digital platforms. The findings showed that Instagram and YouTube are the most effective platforms for influencer marketing due to their visual appeal and high user engagement. The study also indicated that repeated exposure enhances brand recall.

Joshi (2023), in the research paper "*Ethical Issues in Influencer Marketing*," focused on the ethical concerns related to influencer promotions. The study highlighted issues such as lack of transparency, misleading advertisements, and hidden sponsorships. It concluded that there is a need for stricter regulations and ethical practices in influencer marketing.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the systematic approach used to collect, analyze, and interpret data for the study.

Research Design: Descriptive research design

Nature of Data: Primary and Secondary data

Data Collection Method: Structured questionnaire

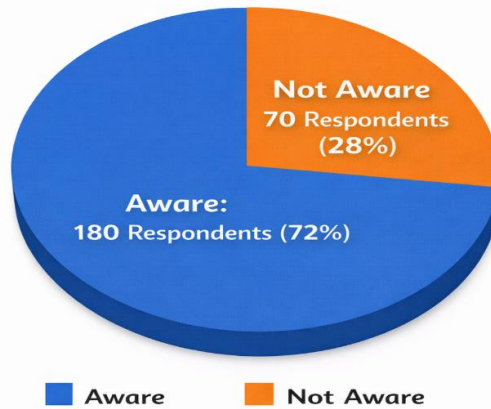
Sampling Technique: Convenience sampling



Sample Size: 250 respondents
 Sampling Area: College students from Pune region
 Tools for Data Analysis: Percentage analysis, charts and graphs

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION: -

Chart 1: Awareness of Influencer Marketing



Response | Number of Respondents | Percentage

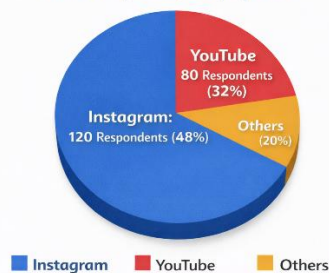
Aware | 180 | 72%
 Not Aware | 70 | 28%
 Total | 250 | 100%

Interpretation:

The majority of respondents are aware of influencer marketing, indicating high exposure among college students.

Chart 2: Major Platform of Influence

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION: -
 Table 2: Major Platform of Influence



Analysis:

Instagram is the most influential platform due to high engagement and visual content.

Platform | Respondents | Percentage

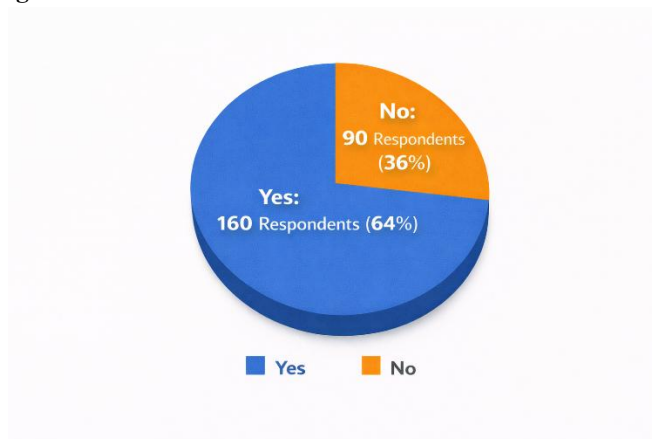
Instagram | 120 | 48%
 YouTube | 80 | 32%
 Others | 50 | 20%



Analysis:

Instagram is the most influential platform due to high engagement and visual content.

Chart 3: Influence on Buying Behaviour



Response | Respondents | Percentage

Yes | 160 | 64%

No | 90 | 36%

Conclusion:

A majority of students are influenced by influencer marketing in their buying decisions.

FINDINGS

High Awareness of Influencer Marketing Among Students

A majority of respondents are familiar with influencer marketing and regularly consume influencer-based content on social media platforms.

This indicates that influencer marketing has become an integral part of the digital environment, especially among college students who are highly active online.

Influencer Content Strongly Affects Purchase Decisions

A significant proportion of respondents admitted that influencer recommendations impact their buying decisions.

This suggests that influencer marketing is not just informative but also persuasive, directly shaping consumer preferences and actions.

Instagram Emerges as the Most Influential Platform

Most respondents reported Instagram as their primary platform for following influencers and discovering new products.

The visual nature and high engagement rate of Instagram make it highly effective for influencer marketing campaigns.

Trust and Credibility Play a Crucial Role

Respondents are more likely to trust influencers who appear genuine, knowledgeable, and relatable.

This highlights that authenticity is a key factor in determining the success of influencer marketing strategies.

Micro-Influencers Have Higher Impact

Many respondents showed a preference for micro-influencers over celebrities due to their relatability and niche content.

This suggests that smaller influencers may have stronger connections with their audience, leading to higher engagement and influence.

Content Quality Influences Consumer Behaviour

High-quality, creative, and informative content was found to attract more attention and engagement.



This indicates that well-designed content enhances the effectiveness of influencer marketing and increases the likelihood of purchase.

Repeated Exposure Increases Brand Recall

Frequent exposure to influencer promotions leads to better brand recognition and memory retention.

This shows that consistency in influencer campaigns plays an important role in building strong brand awareness.

Ethical Concerns Affect Consumer Trust

Some respondents expressed concern over misleading promotions and lack of disclosure in paid partnerships.

This highlights the need for transparency and ethical practices to maintain long-term consumer trust

SUGGESTIONS

Focus on Authentic and Transparent Content

- a) Influencers should clearly disclose paid promotions and partnerships to maintain trust among followers.
- b) Transparency increases credibility and helps in building long-term relationships with consumers.

Collaborate with Relevant and Niche Influencers

- a) Brands should partner with influencers who align with their product category and target audience.
- b) Niche influencers create more meaningful engagement and better conversion rates.

Prioritize Micro-Influencers for Better Engagement

- a) Micro-influencers often have a loyal and engaged audience compared to celebrity influencers.
- b) Their relatability and authenticity make their recommendations more impactful.

Enhance Content Quality and Creativity

- a) Influencer content should be visually appealing, informative, and engaging.
- b) Creative storytelling and real-life demonstrations can significantly improve consumer interest and trust.

Leverage Multiple Digital Platforms

- a) Brands should use a combination of platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and other social media channels.
- b) A multi-platform strategy ensures wider reach and better audience engagement.

Monitor Consumer Feedback and Engagement Metrics

- a) Regular analysis of likes, comments, shares, and feedback helps in evaluating campaign effectiveness.
- b) This allows brands to modify strategies according to consumer preferences.

Ensure Ethical Marketing Practices

- a) Influencer marketing should avoid misleading claims and false information.
- b) Ethical practices enhance brand image and consumer trust in the long run.

Increase Consumer Awareness

- a) Educating consumers about influencer marketing helps them make informed decisions.
- b) Awareness reduces the chances of being misled by promotional content.

Maintain Consistency in Branding

- a) Consistent messaging across influencer campaigns strengthens brand identity.
- b) It helps in improving brand recall and recognition among consumers.

Use Data-Driven Marketing Strategies

- a) Brands should rely on analytics and consumer data to plan influencer campaigns.
- b) Data-driven decisions increase efficiency and effectiveness of marketing efforts.



CONCLUSIONS

Influencer Marketing as a Powerful Digital Tool

- a) The study clearly indicates that influencer marketing has become a highly effective strategy in influencing consumer buying behaviour.
- b) It plays a significant role in shaping awareness, perception, and purchase decisions among college students.

Strong Impact on Youth Segment

- a) College students, being active social media users, are highly influenced by influencer-generated content.
- b) Their preferences and buying behaviour are significantly shaped by trends and recommendations.

Importance of Trust and Authenticity

- a) Trust, credibility, and relatability are the key factors that determine the success of influencer marketing.
- b) Consumers tend to rely more on influencers who provide genuine and honest opinions.

Role of Digital Platforms

- a) Platforms like Instagram and YouTube play a crucial role in enhancing the reach and effectiveness of influencer marketing.
- b) These platforms provide interactive and engaging content formats that attract young consumers.

Need for Ethical and Responsible Marketing

- a) Despite its effectiveness, influencer marketing raises concerns regarding transparency and misleading promotions.
- b) There is a strong need for ethical practices and regulatory measures to ensure consumer protection.

Future Scope of Influencer Marketing

- a) With the continuous growth of digital media, influencer marketing is expected to expand further.
- b) Innovative strategies, combined with ethical practices, will determine its long-term success

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