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Impact of Over-Promotion and Erosion of Brand Trust: The Dark Side of Influencer Marketing

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Abstract: *Usage of social media is increased drastically and Influencer marketing has become a leading strategy in digital advertising, which makes brands to connect with consumers through the trusted personalities. But excessive promotional content provided by influencers, referred as over-promotion, has raised concerns regarding its negative impact on brand trust. This research study investigates how does over-promotion affects consumer perceptions and erodes trust in brands. The research study was conducted by collecting data from users of social media platform, specifically who goes through influencers content to study the frequency of influencer promotions, perceived authenticity and brand trust, using a descriptive & analytical research method. The research study shows that excessive promotional activity by influencers significantly reduces perceived authenticity which leads to decline in trust and purchase intention of consumer. The research study highlights the importance of balanced collaboration between influencer & brands and offers strategic implications for marketers.*

Keywords: Over-Promotion, Brand Trust, Influencer Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Authenticity and Credibility, Social Media Marketing

I. INTRODUCTION

With the rapid growth of usage of social media platforms, influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful tool for brand promotion. Social Media Influencers plays an intermediary role between the brands and the consumers, leveraging their credibility and personal connection with followers to influence their purchase decisions. Influencer marketing has become a leading method of digital promotion. As brands are increasingly trusting influencers, a concerning trend has emerged as over-promotion. The Influencers regularly endorse multiple products within a short time frame, sometimes across competing brands. This excessive promotion can lead to scepticism among consumers, ultimately damaging the trust that once made influencer marketing effective. This study shows the dark side of the influencer marketing by analysing how does over promotion contributes to the erosion of brand trust.

Influencer Marketing

The partnership between brands and individuals having a strong online or social media presence and credibility among followers is known as influencer marketing. Influencer marketing is when brands and influencers work together. These influencers endorse products through their content such as posts, videos, and reviews. They talk about products through their content (posts, videos, reviews). Influencer marketing is a way for brands to reach people who like what the influencers have to say.

Over-Promotion

The concept of over promotion describes the influencers' excessive product endorsements, which often leads to content saturation. The overexposure of advertisements to the customers can lead followers to believe that an influencer is not a

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genuine but rather motivated by business. The influencer becomes like a salesperson, than someone who is being real. Over-promotion is when influencers talk about products much and it gets annoying.

Authenticity and Credibility

Influencers' efficiency is mainly determined by authenticity. And their credibility comes into question when they overpromote the products, which lowers the perceived genuineness of their recommendations.

Brand Trust

The customers willingness to trust the brand's ability to fulfil the promises made by the companies is known as brand trust. It is built when the brand is transparent, reliable and honest in its marketing program. Influencer marketing initially may gain trust, but the extreme and unnecessary promotion of products reduces perceived genuineness.

Research Objectives

- To learn the impact of over-promotion on brand trust
- To study the impact of over-promotion on perceived influencer authenticity
- To find the relationship between influencer authenticity and brand trust

Need of the Study

Consumers have become more dependent on influencer marketing, today and they have started asking questions about everything and there is no attention towards the adverse things that happens due to over promotion of the products. Thus, we need to think that how much trust is lost towards the influencer marketing and the negative impacts of it.

Research Question

The rise influencer marketing has raised remarkable concerns about consumer trust. When brands over promote they often leave consumers feeling confused and results in consumer ambiguity. On other hand, genuine authenticity and credibility are the real factors needed to build a strong and positive relationship between brand and consumers. Thus, are these factors truly helps in building a good relationship?

Significance of the Research

The research study helps in designing marketing campaigns and maintain trust and good relationship with the consumers through their brands. Also, the study helps to the academicians who are researching in the area of digital marketing or influencer marketing.

Literature Review

1. Yakup Durmaz, Wilk-Jakubowski (2023), in their research focused on how does the influencer marketing make an impact on trust, trust inclination and consumer purchase intentions and suggesting that businesses should utilize the social media marketing (Instagram) towards their customers.
2. Chen, Y et al. (2024), the study deals with the impact of influencer marketing in social media, on purchase intentions of consumer. It emphasized that trust is really important when it comes to influencers, as it can change the way people think and act.
3. Chavare et al. (2024) study pointed out that when it comes to making buying decisions consumers really look for influencers who're trustworthy and experts in their field. These two qualities, trustworthiness and expertise are key factors, to an influencer being effective.
4. Meizhi Pan, et al. (2024), figured out that how believable a source, has an impact on how people interact with things and what they think. This just shows again how important it is to have people talking about products when you are making plans for marketing on the internet. The thing is, credible influencers are really important, for marketing strategies.

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5. Khan & Altaf (2020), this study showed that people are more likely to trust an influencer and then buy something because of them, due to their Credibility. Hence, Credibility becomes really important here. It helps connect the influencer marketing and people who actually wants to buy products, and mentioned that Influencer marketing and purchase intention are closely linked when credibility is high.

6. Adesokan, A.; Rahman, A.B.; Tsiropoulou, in their research study looked at how people trust each other in relationships between influencers and brands. It turns out that trust is really important for these relationships to be strong and last a time. The trust, between influencers and brands determines how well they work together and how long they keep working.

7. Abebe et al. (2017), found out that when people see much of what influencers post they start to think negative about it. If the influencer content is just too much, then it becomes unlike for the people. So, the marketing efforts will not working well because, overexposure of the influencer content.

8. Vogue Business (2022), published that, when influencers try to sell things much it makes people trust them less. This is because people think that when they see a lot of promotions, it is not really what the influencer thinks and the content becomes less believable & too commercial. The influencer content should be true and real.

9. Gui et al. (2025), identified that there is a need to work on how influencers can be honest and fair when they are talking to people. Influencer marketing needs to be an ethical practice and responsible communication, making sure that influencers are truthful, honest & transparent. and not misleading people.

10. Sánchez et al. (2023), studied that when people mix up their thoughts and ideas with things they are paid to say it can be really confusing, for the people who are listening. The blurring of sponsored content can confuse audiences and negatively impact the perceived authenticity of the personal and sponsored content.

11. Chen Sun, et al (2026) found that when people do not know what is going on and companies do not talk about the paid partnerships they have, customers or people trust them less and thus, companies need to be honest, about paid partnerships to keep the trust alive among the customers.

12. Kotler and Keller (2016) said that peoples buying behavior is affected by culture, social, psychological and personal factors and highlighted that trust plays a crucial role in shaping consumer decisions and loyalty.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Universe: Social Media Users
Population: Pune City
Sample Frame: Users consuming Influencer Content
Sample Size: 350 respondents
Research Type: Descriptive and Analytical
Data Collection: Primary and Secondary
Primary Source: Questionnaire responses
Secondary Source: Research Papers, Articles
Data Interpretation: Graphs
Statistical Tool: Different Statistical tools
Sampling Technique: Convenience sampling

III. DATA ANALYSIS

The Study was conducted by collecting the data from 350 respondents from Pune City, regarding the impact of over-promotion on brand trust and authenticity in the context of influencer marketing.

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Demographic Summary

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Male	180	51.4%
Female	170	48.6%
Total	350	100%

Table no. 3.1 demographic summary

The sample seems fairly balanced, which ensures unbiased representation of opinions by both genders. This indicates that there are almost equal number of social media users who follows influencers. This improves the reliability of the study through findings from both male and female respondents.

The impact of over-promotion on brand trust

Over Promotion	High Trust	Moderate Trust	Low Trust	Total
Low	85	35	30	150
Moderate	10	20	50	80
High	05	35	80	120
Total	100	90	160	350

Table 3.2.1 Observed Frequencies for impact on brand trust

Over-Promotion	High Trust	Moderate Trust	Low Trust
Low	42.86	38.57	68.57
Moderate	22.86	20.57	36.57
High	34.29	30.86	54.86

Table 3.2.2 Expected Frequencies

The calculated Chi Square Test value is 112.8, at 4 degree of freedom with 0.05 level of significance, and the table value of Chi-square test at 4 degree of freedom with 0.05 significance level is 9.488 (Critical value). The calculated Chi-square value is substantially higher than the critical value at 5% significance level, hence the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between over-promotion and brand trust. Over promotion of the brand significantly influences brand trust. The study shows that as the level of over promotion increases the proportion of consumers with low trust increases and high trust decreases. And on other hand, lower levels of promotion are associated with higher levels of brand trust. Thus, unnecessary promotional activity, negatively effect on how does consumers perceive and trust a brand.

The impact of over-promotion on perceived influencer authenticity

Over-Promotion	High Authenticity	Moderate Authenticity	Low Authenticity	Total
Low	70	20	10	100
Moderate	50	50	50	150
High	20	40	40	100
Total	**140**	**110**	**100**	**350**

3.3.1 Observed Frequencies for impact on perceived influencer authority

Over-Promotion	High Authenticity	Moderate Authenticity	Low Authenticity
Low	40	31.43	28.57
Moderate	60	47.14	42.86
High	40	31.43	28.57

Table 3.3.2 Expected Frequencies

The value of Chi Square test of independence 58.67 here, is higher than the critical value 9.488 at degree of freedom 4, with 5% of significance level, rejects the null hypothesis. This shows that over-promotion significantly affects how consumers perceive influencer authenticity. The data suggests that when over promotion is low, influencers are

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perceived as very authentic by the consumers. But, if the level of promotion increases, the perception of authenticity declines, with more respondents' rating authenticity as moderate or low. Thus, over promotional activity reduces the perceived genuineness of influencers, which may negatively influence audience trust and engagement.

The relationship between influencer authenticity and brand trust

Authenticity	High Trust	Moderate Trust	Low Trust	Total
High	80	30	10	120
Moderate	30	60	30	120
Low	10	30	70	110
Total	120	120	110	350

3.4.1 Observed Frequencies for relation between influencer authenticity and brand trust

Authenticity	High Trust	Moderate Trust	Low Trust
High	41.14	41.14	37.71
Moderate	41.14	41.14	37.71
Low	37.71	37.71	34.57

3.4.2 Expected Frequencies

Here, The Chi-square test of independence indicates a significant relationship between influencer authenticity and brand trust, as the calculated value 131.64 is higher than the critical value 9.488 at degree of freedom 4 at 5% of Significance level, thus the null hypothesis is rejected. This suggests that influencer authenticity is important for determining brand trust among consumers. This shows that higher levels of perceived authenticity are associated with higher levels of brand trust. And, when authenticity is low, consumers show lower trust in the brand. Thus, the authenticity of the influencers emerges as a key factor of trust, which highlights the importance of genuine and transparent influencer behavior.

IV. FINDINGS

The demographic study shows a balanced gender distribution among respondents, with 51.4% male and 48.6% female participants. This even representation improves the reliability of the study, as the findings reflect both genders without significant bias. In, the research study, it shows that over promotion significantly, impacts negatively on brand trust, also results showed that there is a strong relationship between the level of promotion by the brands through influencers and trust levels of the consumers. It is found that high level of over promotion is related with lower level of brand trust, which indicates that over promotional content may reduce consumer trust in brands. Also, the study found that over promotion has significantly affects perceived influencer authenticity. As intensity of promotion increases, the perception towards authenticity decreases. This proposes that consumers are likely to perceive influencers as less genuine when they are engaged in over promotions. The data analysis has showed a positive relationship between the influencer authenticity and brand trust. The higher levels of perceived authenticity are directly associated with higher levels of trust in the brand. This highlights the critical role of authenticity in building and maintaining consumer trust.

V. IMPLICATIONS

1. The study shows that over-promotion through influencer marketing reduces brand trust. So, marketers should avoid excessive promotion and adopt a balanced content strategy with a mix of promotional and non-promotional content
2. As over-promotion negatively impacts perceived influencer authenticity, brands should Collaborate with influencers who shares honest opinions, aligns naturally with the brand and avoid forced or scripted promotions.
3. The study also highlights that authenticity strongly influences brand trust. Consumers trust the influencers who appear honest and consistent. Thus, marketers should choose influencers based on Credibility, Audience trust and Content consistency and not just follower count

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