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Impact of Influencer Marketing on Consumer Brand Trust – A Pune Hotels Centric Study

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Abstract: *Influencer marketing has emerged as a significant tool in digital marketing, especially within the hospitality industry. This study examines the impact of influencer marketing on consumer brand perception and trust in the hotel industry in Pune. The research is entirely based on secondary data sources such as journals, research papers, industry reports, and online platforms.*
The study explores how influencers shape consumer decisions through authentic content, visual storytelling, and personal experiences. In the competitive hospitality market of Pune, influencer marketing helps hotels differentiate themselves and build credibility among potential customers. Consumers increasingly rely on influencer-generated content before making hotel booking decisions.
The findings reveal that influencer marketing positively impacts consumer brand trust by reducing uncertainty and providing social proof. However, challenges such as over-commercialization and lack of transparency may negatively affect credibility. The study concludes that ethical and strategic use of influencer marketing enhances brand value and customer loyalty in Pune's hotel industry...

Keywords: Brand, Trust, Pune, Hotel

I. INTRODUCTION

Influencer marketing refers to a digital marketing strategy where brands collaborate with individuals who have a strong presence on social media platforms to promote their products or services. In the hotel industry, influencers share their experiences related to accommodation, food, services, and overall hospitality. In a growing urban city like Pune, the hospitality sector is highly competitive, with numerous hotels striving to attract customers. Brand trust plays a crucial role in influencing customer decisions, as hotel services are intangible and experience-based. Customers often depend on reviews and recommendations before making bookings.

Influencer marketing has become a powerful medium for hotels in Pune to build trust and improve brand perception. Through authentic reviews, engaging visuals, and relatable storytelling, influencers bridge the gap between hotels and consumers. This study aims to understand how influencer marketing impacts consumer brand trust using only secondary data.

Objectives of the Study

- To understand the concept of influencer marketing
- To analyse its role in building consumer brand trust
- To study the effectiveness of influencer marketing in Pune's hotel industry
- To identify factors influencing consumer trust
- To examine the impact of influencer content on customer decision-making

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the hotel industry in Pune and examines how influencer marketing affects consumer brand trust and behaviour. It includes analysis of luxury and premium hotels operating in the region, with reference to JW Marriott Hotel Pune as a representative case of influencer-driven brand positioning.

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The hotel industry in Pune is highly competitive, and establishments like JW Marriott actively use digital platforms, social media collaborations, and influencer marketing strategies to enhance brand visibility and customer engagement. The study analyses how such practices contribute to shaping consumer perceptions and trust.

The research is limited to secondary data sources such as academic journals, industry reports, hotel websites, and digital content. It does not include primary data collection methods like surveys or interviews. The findings are therefore based on already available published information and case-based interpretation.

Literature Review

Influencer marketing has gained importance due to the rise of social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and travel blogs. Research indicates that influencer marketing is more effective than traditional advertising because it emphasizes personal connection and authenticity. Consumers tend to trust influencers as they perceive them as independent and relatable individuals.

Studies on consumer behaviour highlight that trust is a key factor influencing purchase decisions. Influencers contribute to building trust by sharing real-life experiences, honest reviews, and visual content. In the hotel industry, such content helps potential customers evaluate service quality, ambiance, and overall experience before booking.

Research also emphasizes the role of micro-influencers, who have smaller but highly engaged audiences. These influencers are perceived as more credible and relatable compared to celebrity influencers. Their recommendations often result in stronger consumer trust and higher engagement levels.

Transparency is another critical aspect identified in literature. When influencers clearly disclose paid partnerships, it enhances credibility and maintains trust. However, misleading promotions or excessive advertisements can damage both brand image and consumer trust.

Overall, literature suggests that influencer marketing significantly contributes to brand awareness, customer engagement, and purchase intention. In the hospitality sector, it acts as social proof and reduces perceived risk, making it an effective strategy for building consumer brand trust.

Case Studies

Case Study 1: JW Marriott Hotel Pune







Overview

- Industry: Hospitality
- Location: Pune
- Category: Luxury Hotel

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Use of Influencer Marketing (Based on Secondary Sources)
From analysis of social media platforms and digital reports:
• The hotel collaborates with travel and lifestyle influencers
• Influencers share:
o Stay experiences
o Food reviews
o Event promotions
o Luxury amenities

Impact on Consumer Brand Trust
1. Authentic Experience Sharing
Influencers post real-life experiences, which reduces uncertainty for customers.
2. Visual Storytelling
Photos and videos help consumers evaluate hotel quality before booking.
3. Social Proof
Positive influencer reviews act as recommendations, increasing trust.
4. Decision-Making Influence
Consumers are more likely to choose hotels endorsed by influencers they follow.

Case Study 2: The Corinthians Resort & Club Pune
Overview
• Industry: Hospitality
• Location: Pune
• Category: Luxury Resort
Influencer Strategy
• Collaborations with travel bloggers and lifestyle influencers
• Promotion of destination weddings and weekend stays
• Instagram reels showcasing property aesthetics
Impact
• Enhanced brand visibility among young consumers
• Increased trust through visually appealing content
• Improved engagement and booking interest

Research Methodology
Research Type
Descriptive Research
Nature of Data
• Entirely based on Secondary Data
Sources of Data
• Academic journals on digital marketing
• Research papers on influencer marketing
• Hotel industry reports
• Online articles and case studies
• Company websites and social media content
Data Collection Method
• Literature review

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• Analysis of published case studies
• Review of digital marketing reports

Data Analysis

• Qualitative analysis of existing data
• Comparative interpretation of studies and reports

Limitations of the Study

• The study is based only on secondary data
• No primary data validation (survey/interview)
• Findings depend on existing published sources
• Limited geographical focus (Pune)

Findings and Suggestions

Findings

Based on secondary data analysis:

• Influencer marketing has a positive impact on brand trust
• Consumers rely on influencer reviews before selecting hotels
• Authentic and transparent content builds stronger trust
• Micro-influencers are more effective than celebrity influencers
• Over-commercialization reduces credibility

Suggestions

• Hotels should focus on authentic influencer collaborations
• Maintain transparency in paid promotions
• Use micro-influencers for better engagement
• Avoid excessive promotional content
• Build long-term influencer relationships

II. CONCLUSION

Influencer marketing plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and building brand trust in Pune's hotel industry. It allows hotels to connect with consumers in a more personalized and engaging manner. By leveraging authentic content and strategic collaborations, hotels can enhance their brand image and customer loyalty.

However, maintaining transparency and avoiding excessive commercialization is essential to sustain trust. When implemented ethically, influencer marketing becomes a powerful tool for long-term brand success in the hospitality sector.

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