

Influencer Marketing in India: A Changing Approach to Digital Marketing

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Abstract

Influencer marketing has become a key component of digital marketing, greatly influencing consumer behavior and preferences for online purchase. Every customer uses their mobile phones exclusively for daily business. Influencer marketing on social media is currently one of the newest digital marketing strategies. In recent years, influencer marketing has become one of the most important tactics employed by companies and brands to increase sales, increase exposure, or enhance their reputation. Whether or whether they are associated with brands, influencers have the power to influence consumer behavior. Influencers are growing in popularity, and more individuals are choosing to follow them to stay up to date with their content. In order to obtain mentions, reviews, and recommendations, influencers and brands are collaborating more. The study's objective is to look into influencer marketing trends, opportunities, and challenges. The researcher used secondary sources to collect the data. secondary data obtained from Google Scholar, publications, and the official website. This study is descriptive in nature.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Influencers, Digital Marketing

1. Introduction

Electronic word-of-mouth, which is the sharing of any brand or product-related information with others, has been shown throughout time to have a favourable effect on people's product awareness, consideration, and purchasing behaviour from an advertising point of view. Influencers are those with a strategic approach and the ability to use online communication channels to influence people's purchasing decisions.

2. Literature Review

Author	Title	Objectives	Findings	Results
Lakshmi Kalyani Chinthal a 2025	Next-Gen Marketing : Trends in Influencer Marketing , Data-Driven Campaigns, and Social Media Evolution	explores the emerging trends in next-gen marketing , with a particular focus on influencer marketing , data-driven campaigns, and the ongoing evolution of social media.	the paper aims to provide insights into how businesses can leverage these innovations to remain competitive in an increasingly dynamic marketing environment.	ethical challenges that businesses must address, including data privacy concerns, transparency, and maintaining trust with consumers. By navigating these challenges and staying ahead of emerging trends, businesses can position themselves for success in the dynamic marketing landscape of the future.



Author	Title	Objectives	Findings	Results
Sven Harambašić, Vatroslav Škare 2024	Influence Decoded: Challenges And Opportunities Shaping The Future Of Influencer Marketing Research	comprehensive exploration of the theoretical underpinnings of influencer marketing, with a particular emphasis on identifying and elaborating on key research opportunities in the field.	highlights the need for nuanced measurement metrics beyond mere follower counts, underscoring the importance of influencer - consumer alignment.	the study emphasizes the critical role of authentic content narratives and platform-specific strategies. The integration of AI and the emergence of AI-powered influencers present a transformative shift, necessitating further investigation.

3. Limitation of the Study

Due to time constraints, there is not a lot of primary data, and the study was founded on a conceptual framework. The study relies solely on secondary data from several secondary sources, including blogs, websites, journals, and Google Scholar. Certain domains, such social media influencer marketing, which does not make use of specific social media platforms, are the only ones included by the study. Since the majority of the data used in this study was taken from previous research, the findings might not be generalizable. While this study's qualitative approach might provide valuable insights, it lacks the statistical reliability of quantitative methods.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Social media's rise has led communication to change from one-to-one to many-to-many, altering how people typically communicate. Social media has taken over as the primary information source. In the world of digital marketing, influencers who are seen as approachable, natural information sources have emerged as crucial players for brands looking to communicate directly with customers. To gain more understanding about influencer marketing's

current trends, potential future developments, and problems. The researcher is interested in this topic.

5. Objective of the Study

The purpose of this research is to examine current trends in influencer marketing as well as potential problems and opportunities in the future.

The study wants to highlights the growing significance of artificial intelligence in the selection of influencers, the trend toward micro and nano influencers, and the rising need for transparency and authenticity.

6. Methodology

The study focuses on a comprehensive review and analysis of the theoretical literature to produce new ideas because it is conceptual in nature and does not gather primary data. concepts, offer frameworks, and offer a deeper understanding of how influencer marketing impacts trends, paving the path for future expansion. The study will concentrate on the important review and summary of essential concepts, theories, and previous studies rather than empirical research (such as surveys or interviews). In this study, the secondary method of data collection is used. This is a descriptive study, which is basic research.

7. Background

7.1 MAKETING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Social media sites are now vital resources for companies trying to engage with their target markets. Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and TikTok have developed from straightforward means for communication to effective marketing tools that give companies access to a wide range of people. Businesses' approach to marketing has changed as a result of social media's capacity to interact personally with customers (Fuchs, 2014).

Businesses need to modify their marketing tactics as social media keeps changing in order to remain relevant. The popularity of short-form video content is one of the main trends in social media marketing. Short, interesting videos that are simple to watch and share have become more common thanks to platforms like TikTok and Instagram Reels. These platforms offer a fun, interactive way to engage customers and showcase goods or services, making them crucial for companies trying to reach younger audiences (Kamal & Shnarbekova, 2021).



7.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND EVOLUTION OF INFLUENCER MARKETING

Influencer marketing, in its broadest definition, is the practice of prominent people or organizations endorsing or placing goods on social media. Additionally, it is defined as a long-term marketing approach whereby well-known social media users are chosen to endorse goods or brands (Bu, Parkinson, & Thaichon, 2022). Accordingly, influencer marketing is a marketing strategy that leverages recommendations from influencers for goods or services in order to boost sales, draw in new customer segments, create word-of-mouth advertising, and boost brand or product engagement (Kim & Kim, 2021).

Accordingly, studies show that influencer marketing yields a higher return on investment (ROI) than traditional celebrity marketing, which has a wider consumer reach. This is primarily owing to the perception of greater creative control over their own material, ultimately leading to a better perceived authenticity of the sponsorship itself. The impression (perception) that influencers are genuine rather than market-driven catalysts in their relationships with businesses is one of the reasons they have reshaped the marketing mix (Kapi Tan, van Esch, Soma & Kietzmann, 2021).

In a nutshell influencer marketing has gained traction, is today regarded as one of the most sophisticated marketing strategies, and is expected to be adopted by 86% of US marketers by 2025 (Insider Intelligence, 2021). Therefore, before starting to design a marketing strategy based on influencers, it is crucial to have a fundamental grasp of influencers' personal brands, or influencers as human brands (Jun & Yi, 2020).

7.3 NAVIGATING THE TRENDS IN INFLUENCER MARKETING

The increasing significance of social commerce is a trend in social media. E-commerce features are being incorporated into social media platforms more frequently, enabling companies to sell goods straight from their profiles. For instance, Facebook has created its own marketplace for local businesses, while Instagram has added tools that let people buy straight from postings. As more customers seek seamless shopping experiences without having to leave their preferred social media platforms, this trend is anticipated to continue growing in the upcoming years (Aris et al., 2021).

AI and machine learning are also increasingly being incorporated into social media sites. By optimizing advertising and content distribution, these technologies enable companies to target the appropriate audience with their advertisement. AI is able to examine user interactions and behavior, giving insights on the kinds of ads and

content that appeal most to particular groups. This makes it possible for companies to develop highly focused advertising campaigns that boost interaction and conversions (Zulaikha et al., 2020).

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in campaign optimization and influencer identification is another new trend. To find influencers with the best engagement rates, audience demographics, and content success, AI-powered systems examine enormous volumes of data (Geyser, 2022). Brands can increase return on investment (ROI) and optimize their marketing expenditures thanks to this technology. Furthermore, by improving customer engagements through virtual product try-ons and interactive experiences, immersive technologies like augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) are changing influencer marketing (Jin & Ryu, 2020).

According to recent studies, shifting consumer preferences and technological advancements are causing a shift in influencer marketing strategies. The increasing prevalence of micro and nano influencers people with tiny but very active followings is one noteworthy development (Abidin, 2021). According to research, these influencers are more likely to inspire trust and authenticity than macro or celebrity influencers since their advice is seen as more approachable and reliable (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

7.4 BARRIERS AND LIMITATIONS IN INFLUENCER MARKETING

Choosing the Right Influencer

Many influencers have fake followers, which makes it hard for brands to know who they're actually reaching.

Some influencers promote too many products, making their channels seem less trustworthy or even causing legal issues.

This can reduce the effectiveness of the message and hurt brand reputation. Source: Taylor (2020)

Creating Authentic Brand Stories

Being honest about paid promotions can actually increase trust among followers.

A strong story is key: it's a series of events where an influencer works toward a goal, making the content feel real.

Influencers understand their audience best, so giving them freedom to express themselves naturally helps build powerful brand connections. Sources: Zhou et al. (2021), Feng et al. (2021), Ye et al. (2021), Chopra et al. (2021), Martínez-López et al. (2020)

Navigating AI in Influencer Marketing

AI helps improve audience targeting and checks for content authenticity using tools like sentiment analysis.

It also frees up time for marketers by automating data analysis.

However, there are ethical concerns—AI depends heavily on available data and may carry biases or lack



transparency. Sources: Backaler (2018), Mursalin et al. (2023)

Risks to Authenticity & Transparency

Declining Consumer Trust

Paid promotions can seem fake if not clearly disclosed.

Audiences may lose trust in influencers if they don't appear genuine. Sources: Choi (2021), Feng et al. (2022)

Influencer Fraud

Some influencers buy fake followers or likes to look more popular.

Brands that don't properly check influencer data may waste money on ineffective campaigns.

To address this, companies now use third-party tools to audit influencer metrics and verify real engagement. Source: Audiense (2021)

Opportunities in Influencer Marketing

Despite the challenges facing influencer marketing, such as issues of authenticity and transparency, the future holds promising opportunities. One major opportunity is the growing consumer interest in sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR). People are increasingly drawn to brands and influencers who advocate for environmental and social causes, allowing businesses to build stronger relationships with socially conscious audiences. Another emerging opportunity lies in the use of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR). These technologies enhance customer engagement by offering immersive experiences, such as virtual try-ons for fashion and beauty products, making brand interactions more interactive and personal. Additionally, influencer marketing is becoming more data-driven, with companies using analytics tools to understand consumer behavior and preferences. This helps brands design more targeted and effective campaigns, improving engagement and boosting return on investment.

8. Conclusion

Influencer marketing is entering a transformative phase shaped by emerging trends, technologies, and a shift in consumer expectations. The rise of micro and nano influencers reflects a growing demand for authenticity and relatability, while the dominance of short-form video content highlights how consumption habits are changing. Despite challenges such as influencer fraud and the need for greater transparency in sponsored content, the landscape offers exciting opportunities for brands that prioritize trust and innovation.

Advancements in AI, AR, and VR are expanding the ways consumers interact with brands, enabling more personalized and immersive experiences. Additionally, the increasing relevance of sustainability and corporate social responsibility presents a unique avenue for influencers and companies to connect with values-driven audiences. To

succeed, brands must adapt to these changes, leverage data-driven strategies, and foster genuine relationships with their communities. With thoughtful execution, influencer marketing will continue to be a powerful force in shaping modern brand narratives and driving meaningful engagement.

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