

Influence Marketing and Its Impact on Brand Loyalty Among Consumers in Coimbatore

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Abstract: One of the most successful approaches in digital marketing in the era of social media is influencer marketing. Brands are increasingly engaging with influencers to market their products or services, shape consumers' perceptions, and develop strong relations with customers. This research explores the effect of influencer marketing on the development of consumer brand loyalty in Coimbatore. This research aims at studying the influence of influencer characteristics such as credibility, authenticity, expertise, reliability, and quality of content on the attitude formation of consumers towards the brand and the intention of consumers to demonstrate brand loyalty.

The research uses a descriptive research design and gathers primary data from customers in Coimbatore using a structured questionnaire. The statistical techniques of percentage analysis, Likert scale analysis, and ranking are used to analyze the responses of the customers. From the results obtained from the analysis, it is observed that influencer marketing influences positively brand loyalty as it increases brand awareness, customer trust, emotional bonding, and repurchase intention. Customers tend to be more loyal to brands whose influencers are trustworthy and authentic. The use of social media has gained great importance in influencing the buying behavior of customers.

This study has proven the importance of influencer marketing in encouraging brand loyalty among consumers in Coimbatore and provides useful information for marketers who want to develop an influencer-based promotional strategy. This research helps to understand consumer behavior in the online marketing environment and gives useful suggestions for developing consumer loyalty in collaboration with social media influencers.

Keywords: *Influencer Marketing, Brand Loyalty, Consumer Behavior, Social Media Influencers, Consumer Trust, Purchase Intention, Brand Awareness, Coimbatore.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The advent of the digital age, there have been immense changes in marketing strategies because of the rise of social media channels such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook. One of the most effective and innovative strategies that have come up in the wake of this digital phenomenon is Influence Marketing or Influencer Marketing. It is a marketing strategy that involves the association of companies with people who have a very strong online presence along with a devoted following and work to market the brand's products or services.

Influencer marketing has emerged as one of the key digital marketing techniques in today's world of business. The emergence of social media sites including Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook has made influencer marketing an essential tool for shaping consumer opinions and purchase decisions. As per Freberg et al. (2011), social media

influencers are independent third-party endorsers who affect attitudes and behavior of consumers through the use of social media sites. Consumers in Coimbatore, which is a fast-growing commercial and educational center in Tamil Nadu, have started to use social media platforms on a much higher scale. Influencers who create content on social media platforms about fashion, beauty, electronics, food, and lifestyle get actively engaged by consumers from various age groups. Thus, influencer marketing becomes a significant marketing tactic in Coimbatore.

Influencers tend to disclose personal experience, products' reviews and recommendations, thereby helping their followers gain confidence in these brands. Lou and Yuan (2019) argued that influencer credibility and informative nature of content greatly affect consumers' trust and intention to purchase these brands. This research will help in analyzing the impact of influencer marketing on brand loyalty of consumers in Coimbatore.

➤ *Statement of the Problem*

Within the current scenario of digital marketing, social media websites like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook have taken center stage as the main avenues for brands to communicate with their consumers. The practice of influencer marketing has become widely popular as a means of promotion among consumers. But then again, there is doubt as to whether the effects of influencer marketing actually led to brand loyalty.

The consumers are very much aware of the digital content and influencer recommendations on a daily basis. Although the influencers may increase awareness and temporary engagement, there is no certainty that the promotion leads to any loyalty or just helps in temporary buying decisions. Besides, the amount of trust in the influencers differs depending upon the authenticity and credibility of the content provided by the influencers.

➤ *Objectives of the Study*

- To examine how much knowledge the consumers possess about influencer marketing through the social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook
- To explore the effect of credibility of the influencer (that is, trustworthiness, expertise, and authenticity) on the consumer buying behavior.
- To find the relationship between influencer marketing and brand loyalty.
- To examine the difference between the various categories of influencers (that is, micro, macro, and celebrity influencers) for building up brand loyalty among consumers.
- To identify the factors that affect the success or failure of building brand loyalty among consumers through influencer marketing.

➤ *Scope of the Study*

The scope of the research will be limited to examining the effects of influencer marketing on brand loyalty among consumers by making use of digital media and social media. With the advent of social media channels such as Instagram, YouTube and Facebook, influencer marketing has become an important aspect of marketing, which is increasingly being used by companies to target their young consumer segment.

• *Scope of the Research will Include:*

- ✓ Consumers in Coimbatore are the consumers who make extensive use of social media for finding information about new products, writing product reviews, and interacting with brands.
- ✓ Influencer Marketing Tactics - This includes endorsement by micro, macro and celebrity influencers in different industries like fashion, beauty, electronics and lifestyle.
- ✓ Elements That Build Brand Loyalty - This includes purchase intention, trust, attachment, satisfaction, and word-of-mouth recommendation.

- ✓ Digital Interaction Attributes - This includes authenticity, credibility, reliability, transparency of sponsored posts, and interactions of influencers and followers.
- ✓ Geographic & Demographic Constraints – The study is limited to consumers residing in the city of Coimbatore, who are both urban and semi-urban in nature with diverse age groups, occupations, educational background and socioeconomic status.

➤ *Limitations*

- The study is undertaken using a small group of subjects who might not necessarily represent the entire population.
- The research might take place in a limited geographical location such as a particular city or town.
- The study involves the use of survey responses that may be affected by bias of the respondents.
- Even though credibility of influencers and brand loyalty are included in the research, other factors like prices and quality of products are not included.
- There are constant changes happening in influencer marketing trends at an extremely fast pace.

➤ *Tools for Data Analysis*

The data collected will be analyzed using the following statistics tools:

- Percentage Analysis
- Chi-Square Test
- Correlation Analysis
- Likert Scale Technique
- Ranking Method

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a way through which researchers gather, analyze, and interpret data to accomplish research objectives. The objective of this research study is to investigate the effect of influencer marketing on brand loyalty among consumers and how influencer marketing impacts consumer attitude and purchase intention in Coimbatore.

This research study uses a descriptive research design that will assist in studying the perception of consumers about influencer marketing and how influencer marketing affects brand loyalty. The descriptive research will help in understanding consumer perceptions and behavioral intentions towards influencer marketing.

The study was conducted among consumers living in Coimbatore City, Tamil Nadu. Coimbatore was chosen because there is an increase in the usage of the internet and social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook.

➤ *Overview of the Study*

The marketing strategy that incorporates influencer marketing is the one whereby the firm collaborates with

people who have a significant influence on social media platforms and uses them to market their products and services. These individuals commonly known as influencers develop a following by creating their own content and establishing their personal brand. Influencer marketing is different from celebrity endorsements since it focuses more on relatability. There has been a great rise in the use of influencer marketing, which has become an important source of information about products for digitally-savvy consumers that make use of social media platforms. Influencers believe in truth and personalization, and that is what makes influencer marketing superior to all forms of marketing. The primary objective of using influencers is to generate emotions.

➤ *About Influencer Marketing*

In the marketing strategy of using the influencer marketing campaign, the company collaborates with individuals who have a certain influence on social media and uses them in promoting the product or service. The individual in question, known as the influencer, builds a fan following by creating content and building his/her own personal brand. In comparison to celebrity endorsements, the influencer marketing campaign focuses more on authenticity and relatability.

The development of social networking sites such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter has made the job of influencer marketing easier. These influencers can communicate with their followers through various forms of media on these sites such as posts, videos, live interactions, and many others. Therefore, marketing communication has shifted from advertisement-oriented communication to interactive communication. The influencers develop content that comprises entertainment, information, and promotion, and therefore, ads appear to be very natural and nonobstructive.

➤ *Brand Loyalty Concept*

Loyalty to a brand can be described as the continuous and consistent preference and buying of a specific brand compared to its competitors. Loyalty to a brand indicates a strong sense of allegiance to the brand, even in the presence of other competing brands. The loyal customer continues using the brand in addition to promoting it to other people, thus creating positive word of mouth. Brand loyalty is recognized as one of the primary goals of marketing because of the profitability and loyalty it ensures.

The concept of brand loyalty is associated with both behavioral and attitudinal aspects of consumers. Behavioral loyalty involves the continued buying of the brand by the consumer, whereas attitudinal loyalty involves the emotional attachment to the brand. The consumer may continue buying the same brand for reasons of convenience; however, it takes more than that to have the consumer become loyal to the brand.

III. DATA ANALYSIS

All the data gathered from the structured questionnaires have been appropriately categorized, tabled, analyzed, and interpreted with the use of the proper statistical tools. The primary purpose of this chapter is to convert the data collected into information and make logical conclusions that will help achieve the objectives of the study.

Some of the tools used for analyzing the data include Percentage Analysis, Likert Scale Technique, Ranking Technique, Weighted Average Technique, Chi-Square Technique, and bar graphs and pie charts. The use of these tools assists in comprehending the behavioral attitude and perception of the respondents regarding the subject of this research.

➤ *Percentage Analysis*

Simple Percentage Analysis is an elementary, yet common statistical tool used in research studies. This is the tool that helps us to present our data in the form of percentage. Through this analysis, we can easily know about the proportion of people falling into various groups.

Simple Percentage Analysis is a tool through which we convert our raw data into percentages to make comparisons easy.

➤ *Chi-Square*

A test of statistical significance, which determines how likely it is to occur by chance, according to the specified hypothesis. The test is applied to verify whether the standard deviation of a population equals a certain value. A chi-square test is a statistical significance test, which operates on the basis of frequency of occurrences; it can be applied to both qualitative data. Some of the most popular applications of this test include probability testing, probability distribution testing, statistical dependence and independence testing, and common population testing. Chi-square test is any statistical hypothesis test in which the test statistic has a Chi-square distribution if the null hypothesis is true.

➤ *Correlation Analysis*

Correlation is a statistic that measures how strongly two variables are correlated (that is, change at a constant rate when considered together). Correlation is a commonly used technique to describe the relationship between variables without establishing causality.

To establish Correlation for influencer credibility and purchase intention, a Correlation test was conducted to establish the association between influencer credibility and purchase intention.

➤ *Likert Scale Analysis*

The Likert scale is being used in measuring the attitude and opinion of the respondents concerning Instagram Reels. This is where the respondents are asked how much they agree or disagree with the given statements.

➤ *Ranking Analysis*

Ranking analysis is an easy-to-use statistical technique, which is helpful in finding the order of importance of different factors as per the opinion of the respondents. In this technique, the respondents rank the factors in a particular order; e.g., 1 being the most important, 2 being the second and so forth. Thus, the researcher is able to find out which factor is more important than the other.

To find out the most important factors influencing the purchasing behavior of the consumer, ranking analysis is conducted. The respondents rank the five factors – Influencer Credibility, Authenticity, Product Quality, Price, and Influencer Popularity from 1 to 5 where 1 is the most important and 5 is the least important factor.

IV. FINDINGS

- Simple Percentage Analysis
- Correlation
- Chi-Square
- Ranking Analysis
- Likert scale analysis

V. SUGGESTION

- Based on the findings, the following suggestions are recommended:
- Brands should focus more on micro-influencers as they are perceived as more relatable and trustworthy.
- Influencers should share personal experiences and authentic reviews to increase trust among consumers.
- Brands should emphasize product quality along with influencer promotion.
- Influencer content should be more engaging and interactive to improve brand perception.

VI. CONCLUSION

The present research has been carried out to investigate the effect of influencer marketing on brand loyalty in Coimbatore. From the results obtained, influencer marketing is one of the key factors that determine consumer behavior in terms of purchases, particularly on sites such as Instagram. Most of the respondents reported making purchases on account of recommendations by influencers. Nevertheless, from the results of the correlation and chi-square test, it is evident that credibility and engagement of the influencer do not affect the brand loyalty of the respondents.

In conclusion, quality, authenticity, and trust are critical factors in establishing loyalty rather than just influencer fame alone. Consequently, brands in Coimbatore need to integrate influencer marketing techniques alongside good product value and transparency to establish customer loyalty.

Influencer marketing continues to be a potent digital tool, but the establishment of brand loyalty through this

marketing technique is dependent on credibility and relationship building.

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