The Repercussions of Influencer Marketing on Consumer's Purchase Intention

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Abstract: *Influencer marketing is a marketing technique of working with social media users, celebrities, and other content creators who have a strong social media presence. Instead of reaching out to the target market, the brand owners employ or collaborate with a well-known person to promote their brand to a large audience of consumers. The influencer marketers prefer opting for people who can influence consumers' cognitive processes and purchase decisions. In this paper, the researcher has tried to establish a relationship between various factors like Physical Attractiveness, Source Credibility, Brand Match-Up with Consumer Purchase Intention. The researcher has used systematic sampling techniques for the study and collected data from people from various parts of India. The sample size for this study is 230 and the responses were collected through an online survey. Along with the primary data, secondary data was also collected to get a deeper understanding of the topic.*

Keywords: Influencers, purchase intention, marketing, consumers

1. Introduction

Influencer marketing is a form of marketing that focuses on employing influential people in a specific area to promote a brand's message. Instead of reaching out to the target demographic, the brand owners would employ or persuade a well-known influencer to promote the business to a large audience. Due to social media's vast, real-time reach and experience, this form of marketing has become nearly unavoidable. Influencer marketing is currently being used by practically every marketer because social media platforms are continuing to grow at a rapid pace. More importantly, there has been a substantial surge in the number of Influencers since the inception of social media.

These influencers or third-party endorsers mould the audience's attitude through tweets, blogs, podcasts, images, videos, content creation, and a variety of other means on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter.

This strategy is being drastically used by various brands to heighten their reputation and to attract a lot of consumers to purchase what they are selling.

Few studies state that consumers rely on Influencer marketing more as they find it more authentic than the traditional advertisements which show that this type of marketing strategy is gaining popularity and in no time, it might become one of the most effective strategies.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing is a new marketing tactic that is being widely used by numerous marketers around the world. The term "influence" can be widely defined as the ability to influence someone, something, or a chain of events (Brown & Hayes, 2008)

"A technique that employs social media (content created by everyday people using highly accessible and scalable technologies such as blogs, message boards, podcasts, microblogs, bookmarks, social networks, communities, wikis, and vlogs) and social influencers (everyday people who have an outsized influence on their peers by virtue of how much content they share online) to achieve an organization's marketing and business goals" 2012 (Singh)

2.2 Influencers

Most of the time, influencer marketers are employed as a marketing technique to communicate with the target audience, communicating information and influencing the consumer's purchase intent (Burke, 2017).

The goals of using social media influencers, according to Chen, Fay, and Wang (2011), are to promote branding, raise awareness, improve customer service, and manage customer relationships. People with a big social media following who can influence or persuade others are known as social media influencers. They also have the ability to influence other people's purchasing decisions. Furthermore, Nandagiri and Philip (2018) discovered that a social media influencer's support of a brand had a favorable impact on their followers.

2.3 Physical Attractiveness

Physical attractiveness refers to how appealing or beautiful a person's physical characteristics are to others (Shimp, 2000).

Previous studies have also confirmed that an influencer's physical attractiveness is one of the characteristics and major factors that influence consumer buying behaviour; the more consumers are physically attracted to an influencer, the more it influences their purchase intentions, according to Tsai and Chang (2007).

Attractiveness is frequently misinterpreted. It does not, however, always imply physical attractiveness. Rather, it is concerned with the personality and actions of a social media influencer. There have been several other findings that are similar to Munnukka et al. (2016)'s study and have supplemented their perspective. These are the connections between a customer's positive behaviour and a social media influencer's physical appearance (Lim et al. 2017).

2.4 Source Credibility

The level to which the target audience views the source to gain expertise and knowledge in their comprehension of the product or service is defined by source credibility theory (Till and Busler, 2000). The study also claims that one of the most important factors in enhancing the source's credibility is the quality of the argument and the persuasive power of the influencer. Because of their experience, consumers typically assume that information and knowledge handed on by influencers are reliable, which has an impact on their consumer buying behaviour and potential purchases.

Consumers acquire a good attitude about a brand, according to Spry, Pappu, and Cornwell (2011), when reviews or suggestions relating to products and services are reliable.

2.5 Brand Matchup

According to the Brand Match-Up Theory, there must be a perfect fit between brand attributes and celebrity behaviour or persona. The degree of appropriateness between the influencer and the endorser can be used to determine the amount of an effective mismatch (Erdogan 1999).

Although, according to Kamins and Gupta's (1994) research, if a celebrity match-up is well-suited or appealing to users, the celebrity develops amazing eye-catching touch with the followers instinctively. When it comes to influencer marketing, it's all about determining the impact of the exact match-up.

2.6 Purchase Intention

The first step in creating a marketing communication strategy is to identify, analyze, and comprehend the target audience and their purchasing intentions (Smith & Taylor, 2004). Before any marketing effort can be carried out, three basic questions must be answered. These include: who is the buyer? Why do people buy a specific product (target market)? What do they buy, how do they buy it, when do they buy it, and where do they buy it? Smith (2004).

The commitment to buy is a form of resolve that investigates consumer psychology and their desire to acquire a specific brand of goods. The variety of buying intents is facilitated by factors such as preparing to buy a product and anticipating buying a product (Porter, 1974).

2.7 Physical Attractiveness and Purchase Intention

On social media, marketers utilize attractive spokespersons and models to advertise items, supposedly because attractive individuals sell more products (Dion, Berscheid, and Walster). It is rare to see an unattractive person endorsing a brand's products since it is considered that physical attractiveness boosts the effectiveness and value of the brand name and that when a brand is appreciated, the likelihood of a customer making a purchase increase. Customers draw conclusions about a person and his or her personality as they read a blog or post. According to social psychology research, we make such conclusions spontaneously and regularly as we observe others. Many studies have shown that customers' purchasing decisions are influenced by physical beauty.

The buying public shows affection for physically attractive influencers and hence prefers them to unattractive ones (C.A. Onnu, 2019).

2.8 Source Credibility and Purchase Intention

The notion of a message recipient's belief in the veracity of a message source is referred to as source credibility, and it has nothing to do with the message itself (Brown, Broderick & Lee, 2007). It is described as the degree to which information recipients see a source of information as credible, knowledgeable, and trustworthy.

When compared to a similar version of the same campaign without credible endorsers, advertisements and promotions with credible influencers are rated more favourably. Friends are more trusted than strangers, and celebrities who aren't paid to promote a brand are considered as more trustworthy than those who are (Kotler, 2016)

2.9 Brand Matchup and Purchase Intention

To obtain outstanding outcomes, it is critical that an endorser and the product be in sync. The match-up hypothesis investigates how well a brand and its endorser match (Asia Business Journal, 2017).

Creating a good fit between an endorser and a brand can be a good marketing approach. When a strong relationship between an endorser and a product emerges, a large match-up relation frequently emerges. To put it another way, as a brand's representative, social media influencers must be a good fit for the product's attributes. A perfect match will result in a favourable attitude toward the endorsed brand. The most fundamental goal in obtaining consumers' buy intentions, according to Shimp (2008), is a match between an endorser and the brand.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Data and Measures

The sample size taken is 230. Google forms were sent across social media platforms like WhatsApp, Email, Instagram, and other various platforms. The respondents were given enough time to fill the questionnaire to reduce sampling error. The sample was collected from respondents who belong to different income and age groups from different parts of India. The study uses a convenience sampling technique which is a type of non-probability sampling technique. It involves selecting the sample population from a pool of conveniently available respondents.

The questionnaire was carefully designed to meet the requirements of the research. The researcher divided the questionnaire into two parts – The first part consisted of the factors that influence purchase intention, and the second part focuses on the demographic aspects of the respondents. Most of the questions were constructed using a five-point Likert scale. Other than that, there were also a few nominal

and ratio questions. Multiple Regression was used to factor the results.

3.2 Demographic Details of the Respondents

In the demographic table 1.0, it is shown that out of 230 respondents, 32.2% of the respondents are male and 67.8% of respondents are female which means that 74 out of the total sample size are male and the rest 156 respondents are female. Now, let's look at the Marital Status of the respondents, in the above table it is shown that 77.4% of respondents are married, and 22.6% of respondents are single, i.e., 178 respondents are married, and 52 respondents are single. In the occupation group of respondents, 35.2% of respondents are employed, 4.8% are unemployed, 57.8% are students, and 2.2% respondents are Self-employed, which means that out of the total sample size, 81 are employed, 11

are unemployed, 133 are students and 5 are self-employed. 32.2% of the respondents live in the northern part of India, 60.9% live in the Southern part of India, 3% live in the Eastern side of India and 3.9% live in the Western side of India, which means that the researcher was able to collect data from 74 respondents from North India, 140 from South India, 7 from East India and 9 from West India. 7.8 % have income below 1,00,000 p.a, 22.6% have income that ranges between 1,00,000 – 5,00,000 p.a, 11.7% have income that ranges between 5,00,000- 10,00,000 p.a, 8.7% have income above 10,00,000 p.a. and 49.1% of the respondents don't have any income which means that 18 respondents have income below 1,00,000 p.a. 52 respondents have income that ranges between 1,00,000- 5,00,000 p.a, 27 respondents have income that ranges between 5,00,000 – 10,00,000 p.a, 20 respondents have income above 10,00,000 p.a and 113 respondents have no income.

Table 1

Demographic Variable		Number of respondents	Percentage %
Gender	Male	74	32.2
	Female	156	67.8
Total		230	100%
Marital Status	Married	178	77.4
	Single	52	22.6
Total		230	100%
Occupation	Employed	81	35.2
	Un Employed	11	4.8
	Student	133	57.8
	Self Employed	5	2.2
Total		230	100%
Residence	North India	74	32.2
	South India	140	60.9
	East India	7	3
	West India	9	3.9
Total		230	100%
Income	Below 1,00,000 p.a	18	7.8
	1,00,000 – 5, 00, 000 p.a	52	22.6
	5,00,000 – 10, 00, 000 p.a	27	1.7
	Above 10,00,000 p.a	20	8.7
	No Income	113	49.1
Total		230	100%

3.3 Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression (MLR) is used to determine a mathematical relationship among anumber of random variables. To understand a relationship in which more than two variablesarepresent, multiplelinear regression is used.

In this study, multiple regression is being used to determine the dependence of PhysicalAttractiveness, Source Credibility, Brand Match-Up of the influencer on Consumer.

Purchase Intention.

The dependent variable here is–

Purchase Intention

The independent variables are–

Physical Attractiveness

Source Credibility
Brand Match -Up

The hypothesis for multiple regression –

H1a– There is a significant relationship between the Physical Attractiveness of the Influencer and the Customer's Purchase Intentions.

H1b-There is a significant relationship between Source Credibility and the Customer's Purchase Intention.

H1c- There is a significant relationship between Brand Match- Up and the Customer's Purchase Intentions.

Multiple Regression was performed on the dataset to explore the dependence relationshipbetween Physical Attractiveness, Source Credibility, and Brand Match-upwith Purchase Intention.

The statistical significance of the independent variables was tested, and the results reported in Table 2.10 show that customer purchase intention was significantly dependent on three influencer marketing variables along with the variable -physical attractiveness (b= 0.197), source credibility (b = 0.041), brand match-up (b =0.185). Positive correlations have been observed for the Physical Attractiveness and Brand Match- up oftheinfluencer.

Multicollinearity in the independent variables in these analyses was low (highest Variance Inflation Factor was 1.419). The errors were found to be independent as the values of the Durbin Watson test was within an acceptable range (1.771).

F test values were also seen to be significant, thus establishing the goodness of fit of the regression model. Thus, the hypotheses, H1a and H1 c can be accepted as they are significant and the hypotheses H1b and H1d are being rejected as they don't have significant values.

Table 2

Dependent Variable: Customer Purchase Intension	B	B	T	Significance	VIF
Independent Variable					
Physical Attractiveness	0.183	0.197	2.901	0.004	1.135
Source Credibility	0.036	0.041	0.551	0.582	1.347
Brand Match-up	0.17	0.185	0.185	0.016	1.419

N= 230; df=4, 225; F= 5.220, Significant F= 0.00; R^2= 0.085; Adjusted R^2= 0.069

3. Suggestions

1. It was found that physical attractiveness does play an important role in the customer's purchase-making intention. So, when marketers use influencers to endorse their product or brand, they should keep this fact in mind that in some way or the other physical qualities of an influencer does affect the purchase decision of the customers, so therefore when choosing an influence, the marketers can choose someone who has attractive physical qualities and who can affect the customer's positively they are targeting at.

2. Brand Match-Up of the influencer is also an important factor that leads to the customer's purchase decisions. While choosing an influencer for endorsing a brand the marketers should make sure that they focus on choosing someone who fits perfectly for their brand. If the influencer makes a good fit for the brand, then the influencer will have a positive influence on the customers. And good influence on the customers means that the purchase on the customer's end will be more, thus increasing sales of the company.

3. Customer's residing in different places give importance to physical attractiveness and brand match-up differently. So, when marketers choose an influencer for promoting their brand, they can focus on choosing a more attractive person for the state that gives more importance to attractiveness. Similarly, the Brand Match-Up of the influencer also depends on the residence of the respondent so the same thing can be done for that too. This way, they can increase sales.

4. In this study, a particular industry was not targeted, so any researcher who is willing to take up a study on influencer marketing can try targeting industries like fashion, luxury items, beauty products, foods, drinks, etc.

5. Influencer Marketing is widely spreading like a fire and is being used by almost all companies and brands. Everything has become online and therefore, influencing customers on that same platform will be beneficial for the companies.

6. The companies should also not only stick to one influencer to endorse their brand, instead, but they should also reach out to many influencers, cause in that way the brand or company will gain faster recognition.

4. Conclusion

The study was conducted to find the relationship of Physical Attractiveness, Source Credibility and Brand Match - Up with Purchase Intention of brands. The regression analysis of the data collected showed that there is a positive relationship between Physical Attractiveness and Brand Match-Up of the influencer with the Purchase Intention of brands. There was a that there is a significant difference between physical attractiveness and Customer Attitude with the residence of the respondents. There was a relationship between physical attractiveness and time spent on shopping. There was also a relationship between source credibility and time spent on shopping. It was found that source credibility and time spent on a single shopping spree. There was also a relationship between Brand Match-Up and the occupation of the respondent. It was also found that there is a relationship between Brand Match-Up and the people that the respondents follow on social media platforms. Influencer marketing has come out as not only an influential factor but rather a causal factor in the results of this paper. Physical attractiveness and brand match-up all have an impact on the customer's purchase intention. The tests have by and large bore favorable significant results in the light of variables used. Thus, influencer marketing does result in a sales hike. Hence the up and about trend these days.

Another implication of this paper is that it goes out to show the extent to which today's customer is aware and influenced by media and influencers. Influencers are worshipped as icons now. If the customer perceives the physical attractiveness, and the match between the influencer and the product to be favorable, he is inertly being influenced to like that product which leads to the purchase of that product. Features of the product itself take secondary importance.

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