

An Empirical Analysis of Role of Social Media and Influencer Marketing in Shaping Consumer Purchase Intentions in E-commerce

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Abstract

E-commerce's explosive growth has drastically changed marketing strategies, with social media becoming a key venue for advertising. E-commerce companies may engage directly with customers, increase brand awareness, and impact purchase decisions through social media marketing. Because influencer marketing can convey relatable and genuine brand messaging, it has become one of the most important digital marketing methods. Influencers have a significant impact on consumer attitudes and buy intentions in the internet marketplace due to their credibility and large following. The purpose of this study is to investigate how social media and influencer marketing contribute to the expansion of e-commerce and to assess how they affect customer purchasing decisions. Based on both primary and secondary data, the study uses a descriptive research design. Online consumers who regularly use social media sites were given a structured questionnaire to complete in order to gather primary data. Journals, books, websites, and earlier research papers were the sources of secondary data. To evaluate the data gathered, the study uses graphical depiction and percentage analysis. The results show that while influencer endorsements boost trust and lower perceived risk related to online purchases, social media platforms have a substantial impact on consumer awareness and engagement.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Influencer Marketing, E-commerce, Consumer Buying Behavior, Digital Marketing, Online Shopping

Introduction

E-commerce has revolutionized business operations and consumer purchasing in the digital age. Online purchasing behavior has been greatly impacted by the quick expansion of social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and X (Twitter). Beyond communication and entertainment, social media has developed into a potent marketing tool that helps companies interact directly with consumers and build brand loyalty.

Influencer marketing has become a crucial part of e-commerce social media marketing. Influencers, or those with a sizable social media following and reputation, are crucial in influencing the opinions and decisions of consumers. Influencers establish genuine relationships between brands and customers through live sessions, unboxing videos, product evaluations, and endorsements. Consequently, influencer marketing and social media have become crucial.

Social Media's Place in E-Commerce: Social media sites serve as online markets where customers find goods, evaluate costs, read reviews, and decide what to buy. E-commerce businesses can successfully target particular client categories with the use of features like shoppable posts, live streaming, and customized ads.

Influencer Marketing Concept: Brands and social media influencers work together to promote goods and services through influencer marketing. Celebrities, business leaders, bloggers, and micro-influencers with a devoted fan following and high levels of interaction are examples of influencers.

Effect on Consumer Purchase Behavior: Influencer endorsements are frequently regarded as more reliable than conventional marketing. Customers rely on influencers for product details, user experiences, and frank evaluations, all of which have a big impact on their e-commerce purchasing decisions.

Advantages for Online Retailers: (i) Enhanced visibility and awareness of the brand. (ii) Increased consumer trust and engagement. (iii) Marketing that is more affordable than traditional advertising. (iv) Increased revenues and higher conversion rates.

Influencer Marketing Difficulties: (i) Measuring return on investment is challenging. (ii) Danger of phony engagement and followers. (iii) Lack of openness and ethical concerns. (iv) Reduced consumer trust due to over-commercialization.

Background of the Study

Globally, e-commerce has grown rapidly as a result of increased internet adoption and smart phone usage. Social media platforms have developed into effective marketing and customer engagement tools in tandem with this expansion. Social media gives companies the ability to communicate with customers directly, distribute information quickly, and advertise items successfully. Social media marketing has a significant impact on consumer views and purchasing decisions in the e-commerce industry. Influencer marketing is now a crucial component of social media marketing plans. On social media, influencers are those with a large following and a solid reputation. Their suggestions and opinions have a big impact on consumer behavior. In order to market items in a genuine and interesting way and increase brand visibility, e-commerce companies are increasingly working with influencers.

Statement of the Problem

Even while e-commerce companies use social media and influencer marketing extensively, there are issues with efficacy, legitimacy, and return on investment. Customers are being exposed to more and more promotional content, which can cause problems like advertisement fatigue, distrust of sponsored posts, and trouble spotting real influencers. Choosing the right influencers, tracking campaign effectiveness, and ensuring ethical marketing techniques are challenges faced by many e-commerce companies. Studying how social media and influencer marketing affect consumer behavior and the expansion of e-commerce companies as a whole is therefore essential.

Objectives of the Study

1. To understand the role of social media in the growth of e-commerce.
2. To examine the concept and importance of influencer marketing.
3. To analyse the satisfaction of influencer marketing on consumer purchase decisions.
4. To study the benefits of social media marketing for e-commerce businesses.

Research Methodology

The methodical process used to gather, evaluate, and analyze study data is referred to as research methodology.

Research Design

In order to characterize the influence of social media and influencer marketing on customer purchasing behavior in e-commerce, the study used a descriptive research design.

Sources of Data

Primary data were gathered by giving customers who utilize social media and e-commerce platforms a structured questionnaire.

Secondary data were gathered from books, journals, research papers, websites, publications, and earlier studies on influencer and social media marketing.

Convenience sampling was adopted with a sample size of 130 respondents drawn from social media users who shop online. A structured questionnaire was used as the primary tool for data collection.

Scope of the Study

The study's focus is limited to comprehending the function and effects of influencer marketing and social media on online shoppers. Popular social media sites including Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram are the subject of the study. Influencer-influenced consumer views, trust, and buying intentions are covered. Only active social media users who shop online are included in the study. The results help researchers, marketers, and e-commerce businesses comprehend the latest developments in digital marketing.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study has some drawbacks despite meticulous planning.
2. The study's small sample size might not accurately reflect the total population.
3. Convenience sampling could lead to skewed answers.
4. The sincerity of the responses determines the study's accuracy.
5. In-depth investigation was hampered by time constraints.
6. Over time, conclusions may become less relevant due to the rapid changes in social media trends.

Review of Literature

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) after researching social media's role in corporate communication, came to the conclusion that social media platforms offer dynamic settings that support businesses in developing solid client relationships and increasing brand awareness.

Freberg et al. (2011) influencers are seen as opinion leaders whose legitimacy and sincerity have a big impact on consumers' perceptions of businesses, according to this author, who studied influencer marketing.

De Veirman, Cauberghe, and Hudders (2017) in their analysis of how influencer popularity affects brand perception, found that influencers with an ideal number of followers generate more brand trust and engagement than those with overly huge numbers.

Lou and Yuan (2019) purchase intention and brand recognition in e-commerce are positively impacted by authentic and educational material, according to the investigation into the efficacy of influencer marketing on social media.

Ki and Kim (2020) transparency, sponsorship disclosure, and influencer-brand fit are critical elements in influencing customer trust and purchasing behavior, according to this study on trust in influencer marketing.

Analysis and Interpretation

I. Gender of the respondent and satisfaction towards the influencer recommendations are more trustworthy than traditional advertisements

Null Hypothesis (Ho): There is no significant association between the gender of the respondent and satisfaction towards the Influencer recommendations are more trustworthy than traditional advertisements.

Alternative Hypothesis (Ha): There is significant association between the gender of the respondent and satisfaction towards the Influencer recommendations are more trustworthy than traditional advertisements.

Table 1 ANOVA

Rate your overall satisfaction on the Influencer recommendations are more trustworthy than traditional advertisements.						
(1-Highly satisfied 2-Satisfied 3-Neutral 4-Unsatisfied 5-Highly unsatisfied)-Gender						
		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Celebrity	Between Groups	1.564	1	1.564	.932	.336
	Within Groups	214.905	128	1.679		
	Total	216.469	129			
Macro-influencer	Between Groups	.823	1	.823	.717	.399
	Within Groups	147.054	128	1.149		
	Total	147.877	129			
Micro-influencer	Between Groups	4.611	1	4.611	3.571	.061
	Within Groups	165.266	128	1.291		
	Total	169.877	129			
Social media platform	Between Groups	7.029	1	7.029	4.838	.030
	Within Groups	185.963	128	1.453		
	Total	192.992	129			

From the above table, there is no significant association between gender and satisfaction towards influencer recommendations being more trustworthy than traditional advertisements for Celebrity (sig. 0.336), Macro-influencer (sig. 0.399), and Micro-influencer (sig. 0.061), all of which are greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. However, there is a significant association for Social media platform (sig. 0.030), which is less than 0.05. Hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted for that variable.

II. Monthly income of the respondent and factor makes trust an influence the most

Null Hypothesis (Ho): There is no significant association between the monthly income of the respondent and factor makes trust an influence the most.

Alternative Hypothesis (Ha): There is significant association between the monthly income of the respondent and factor makes trust an influence the most.

Table 2

Cross tab							
Count		Factor makes trust an influence the most					Total
		Honesty	Expertise	Transparency	Number of Followers	Recommendations	
Monthly Income	Less than 10000	14	17	18	22	2	73

Monthly Income	10000-25000	6	8	10	5	1	30
	25000-50000	3	5	3	3	0	14
	50000-100000	2	6	1	0	0	9
	More than 100000	2	0	0	2	0	4
Total		27	36	32	32	3	130

Chi-Square Tests				
Pearson Chi-square	Value	Df	Table value	Result
	17.097	16	26.296	Ho Supported

The chi-square calculated value of 17.097 is less than the table value of 26.296 for 16 degrees of freedom at the 5% level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. There is no association between the monthly income of the respondent and the factor that makes trust an influence the most.

Findings

- Social media plays a significant role in e-commerce marketing.
- Influencers strongly impact consumer buying decisions.
- Young consumers are more influenced by influencer marketing.
- Trust and authenticity are key factors.

Suggestions

- Brands should collaborate with credible influencers.
- Transparency in sponsored content should be ensured.
- Micro-influencers can be used for niche marketing.

Conclusion

Influencer marketing and social media have become effective instruments in the e-commerce sector, greatly impacting consumer awareness, trust, and purchase behavior. According to the report, consumers use social media platforms extensively to find products and make decisions, and influencers are a major factor in forming opinions and preferences. The efficacy of influencer marketing is mostly determined by authentic content, credibility, and openness. Even while social media marketing has many advantages, such as higher brand awareness and engagement, there are still issues like tracking efficacy and upholding trust. Overall, the study concludes that e-commerce companies can get a competitive edge in the online market by utilizing social media and influencer marketing techniques.