**A STUDY ON CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS INFLUENCER MARKETING WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MADURAI NORTH CITY**

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**ABSTRACT**

Modern world where we moved from traditional way of life to technology world. 2 years old kids nowadays are eager to watch videos on YouTube which make them feel happy and comfortable and help them to express their emotional reactions. In terms of business, the main objective is to earn maximum profit with a short span of time and minimum risk. As a competitive world, everyone works like an Eagle with a sharp eye to watch the changes which may happen in any corner of the world with the help of technological development. Marketing is like an ocean where everyone needs to find a unique way to retain the consumers for a long time and bring reputation to the business. One of the marketing techniques is Influencer Marketing. The present study aimed to find out the consumers’ perceptions towards Influencer Marketing and satisfaction level of consuming the products through Influencer Marketing. Data collected from 90 respondents by adopting Convenient Sampling Technique. Tools like Simple Percentage Method, Mean, Standard Deviation and Likert Scaling Techniques were used to analyze and conclude the study.

***KEYWORDS: Celebrity, Consumers, Influencer Marketing, Perception, Preference, Social media.***

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Marketing is a crucial aspect of any business that involves promoting and selling products or services to customers. It involves understanding the needs and wants of consumers, identifying the target markets, and creating strategies to reach those markets effectively. One of the key elements of successful marketing is building a strong brand identity which involves the development of a unique brand image, message, and positioning that resonates with the target audience and sets them apart from competitors.Influencer marketing is collaboration between popular social-media users and brands to promote brands’ products or services. Its forms of marketing have become increasingly popular in recent years, as more and more people turn to social media for recommendations and advice. The goal of influencer marketing is to leverage the influence of these individuals to reach a wider audience and increase brand awareness. As partners with influencers who have large followings, brands can tap into their audiences and build trust and credibility with potential customers. Influencers can come from a wide range of places. Any individual, group, brand, or place could potentially be an influencer. It includes affirmation and product/service advertisements by influencers, individuals, and organizations that have a perceived degree of awareness or social impact in their field.

1. **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

With the e-world everything can be bought or sold within a fraction time, to withstand in the market and to overcome the competition in the business world, there is need for a unique strategy which can helps the firm or company to earn profit, attract a greater number of customers, retain in the market for a longer period. One among the unique and traditional strategies to attract the customer is Influencer Marketing, so the aim of the study is to investigate the role of influencer marketing to what extent to make the consumer retain to buy the product through influencer marketing. Even though the product is not satisfied the customer tends to buy because of their favorite celebrity. Thus, the study was undertaken to know the Consumer Perception towards Influencer Marketing with Special reference to Madurai North City.

**III.OBJECTIVES**

The present study aimed to:

1. identify the customer's perception towards influencer marketing.
2. determine the satisfaction level of customers through influencer marketing.

**IV.SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

With modern technology, there are different modes available to companies to market for the business, especially social media is the best and fastest way to reach out to the consumers within a short span of time. One among them isInfluencer Marketing, who can be famous celebrities in various fields. So, the present study focused on understanding the Consumer Perception towards Influencer Marketing within Madurai North.

**V. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**A.** **Min Xiao, Rang Wang & Sylvia Chan-Olmsted (2018)**[1]**,” Factors affecting YouTube influencer marketing credibility: a heuristic-systematic model”** The delivery of marketing or advertising messages is often carried out by the so-called YouTube influencers. Empirical studies have examined how perceived information credibility of source credibility influences consumers’ attitudes, purchase intentions, and actual purchase behaviors in the contexts of traditional media platforms. To explore how heuristic and systematic information cues influence individuals’ evaluation on the credibility of information provided by YouTube influencers. The focus of this study is to explore how heuristic and systematic information cues influence individuals’ evaluation on the credibility of information provided by YouTube influencers.

**B.** **Jooyun Hwang, Sejung Oh and Siyeon Jang (2021)[2],** in this Research paper **"**Consumer Perceptions of Influencer Marketing: Application of Q Methodology and Implications for Business Communication".Changes in media use among consumers require brands to re-think which media to choose to effectively communicate their messages. Therefore, it is very important to understand how influencers are perceived by audiences for the success of influencer marketing. The purpose of this study is to identify consumer types according to their perceptions of SMIs and influencer marketing. observed that authenticity of influencer marketing messages and trust between an influencer and its consumers are not the priorities for all consumer types. Consumers expect different values in influencer marketing depending on their social media preferences and subjective perceptions of influencers and marketing approaches. This study observed various reasons for why and how people consume social media content which is created by influencers and brands. While some expect influencers and their marketing to be authentic and transparent, others simply consume influencer content on social media for entertainment purposes. Different marketing strategies are recommended to meet a particular group’s needs and expectations for influencers in order to maximize the effectiveness of business communication.

1. **Deniz Ermis, Dima Idjbara and Anando Porobic(2022)[3]** researched " Consumers’ perception on Influencer Marketing through Instagram”. The authors further state that influencers are used as an extension of word-of-mouth (WOM) with a focus on the social context and are a form of relationship building that will expand their audience. To increase the effectiveness of the content, influencers tend to add personal touches which provides an enjoyable experience. The empirical collection of data is mainly based on qualitative focus groups carried out by the researchers with eighteen respondents on a semi-structured bias of interviews. The study mainly focused on answering the research question in the context of participants from Sweden and to the age groups of 18-25. The focus on understanding the consumer influencer relationship, based on chosen elements, furthest explains how brand perception of Generation Z gets influenced by influencer marketing. Influencers are a phenomenon that is rapidly growing and using them as marketers for various brands is evolving. The aim of this paper is therefore based on the importance of this topic in nowadays discussions, where the presence of influencer marketing on Instagram is only growing. The findings presented in this research indicate that consumers are highly influenced by Instagram Influencers due to a variety of reasons.
2. **John Simon E. Abraham, Sophia Justine L. Floreto, Margaux Isabella B.Pagkalinawan, and Antonio E. Etrata, Jr. (2022)[4]** ."Consumer Perception on Influencer Marketing Efforts of Brands in the Beauty and Cosmetics Industry" highlighted that to know the process of identifying, engaging and promoting people that create interaction with a brand or company's customer. A quantitative method with a descriptive-correlational approach was used to estimate - if they exist - the direction and significance of the relationship among factors used. The cosmetics Industry leverages influencer marketing to increase their relationships with consumers. The findings of this research give marketers the knowledge and opportunity to coordinate their influencer programs so that customers get the best results possible. To determine the factors, it is recommended that marketers must prioritize the ones that have a significant impact on consumer response towards their brands. If these practitioners consider these recommendations, the brands that they handle may have a competitive advantage in the digital marketing landscape.

**IV.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**A.** **Research Design:** Analytical with Descriptive Research Design.

1. **Determination of Sample Size:**

o **Sample Size:** 90.

o **Sampling Technique***:* Convenient Sampling Technique.

o **Sample Area:** Madurai North City.

o **Primary Source:** Questionnaire was used to collect the data.

o **Method of Data Collection:** Google form.

o **Secondary Data:** Journals and internet sources.

1. **Framework of Analysis:** Tools like Simple Percentage Method, Mean, Standard Deviation and Likert Scaling Techniques were adopted to measure the responses according to the objectives of the study.

**VII. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

**TABLE No.1**

**DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS’**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **PARTICULARS** | **CLASS INTERVAL** | **FREQUENCIES** | **PERCENTAGE** | **MEAN** | **STD. DEVIATION** |
| AGE | 15 - 17 | 13 | 14.44 | 30 | 18.08 |
| 18 - 20 | 49 | 54.44 |
| Above 20 | 28 | 31.11 |
| GENDER | Male | 23 | 25 | 45 | 31.11 |
| Female | 67 | 74 |
| EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION | 10th | 3 | 3 | 22.5 | 19.28 |
| 12th | 17 | 18 |
| UG | 49 | 54 |
| PG | 21 | 23 |
| NUMBER OF TIMES PURCHASE THE PRODUCT THROUGH ONLINE SHOPPING | Weekly | 1 | 1 | 22.5 | 43.67 |
| Twice in a week | 1 | 1 |
| Monthly | 88 | 97 |
| THROUGH INFLUENCER MARKETING PRODUCTS PREFERRED TO BUY | Food items | 11 | 12 | 15 | 8.76 |
| Cosmetics | 8 | 8 |
| Sports items | 10 | 11 |
| Electronics items | 16 | 17 |
| Cloth item | 32 | 35 |
| All the above | 13 | 14 |
| SOURCE OF INFLUENCER MARKETING | Instagram | 36 | 40 | 15 | 13.78 |
| YouTube | 16 | 17 |
| Facebook | 2 | 2 |
| Newspaper Advertisement | 2 | 2 |
| Television Advertisement | 8 | 8 |
| Friends and Relatives | 26 | 28 |
| **TOTAL** | **90** | **100** |  |

**TABLE No.2**

**OPINION OF THE RESPONDENTS ABOUT INFLUENCER MARKETING**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | Yes | No | **Percentage** | **Mean** | **Std, deviation** |
| FREEBIES RECEIVED | 38 | 52 | 42 | 57 | 45 | 9.90 |
| AVAILED BENEFITS OF COUPON CODE | 36 | 54 | 40 | 60 | 45 | 12.73 |
| PROBLEMS FACED WITH DELIVERY PERSON | 22 | 68 | 25 | 75 | 45 | 32.53 |
| FACED ANY FRAUDULENT ACTIVITY WHILE ONLINE SHOPPING | 22 | 68 | 24 | 75 | 45 | 32.53 |
| **TOTAL** | **90** | **100** |   |

**TABLE No.3**

 **LIKERT SCALING ANALYSIS**

**RESPONDENTS SATISFACTION LEVEL THROUGH INFLUENCER MARKETING**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SATISFACTION LEVEL** | **TOTAL** | **AVERAGE** | **RANK** |
| PRODUCT | 5484 | 60.93 | I |
| PRODUCT PRICE | 5059 | 56.21 | VIII |
| COLOUR VARIATION | 5125 | 56.94 | VI |
| QUALITY | 5174 | 56.49 | V |
| SHIPPING CHARGE | 4975 | 55.28 | X |
| RETURN IN CASE OF DEFECTIVE ONE | 4956 | 55.07 | 11 |
| WARRANTY | 5079 | 56.43 | VII |
| EXTRA BENEFITS | 5041 | 56.01 | IX |
| ON TIME DELIVERY | 5384 | 59.82 | II |
| CASH BACK | 5219 | 57.99 | IV |
| SIZE / QUANTITY | 5239 | 58.21 | III |

# Based on the Likert Scaling Techniques, the Product was ranked as I with a Mean score of 60.93. The On-time delivery of the Product was ranked as II with a Mean score of 59.82. Return in case of defective one is the least score with 55.07.

**TABLE No.4**

 **PREFERENCE OF THE RESPONDENTS ABOUT INFLUENCER MARKETING**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **PREFERENCE** | **TOTAL** | **AVERAGE** | **RANK** |
| TECHNICAL SKILL (PURCHASED IN ONLINE) HAS BEEN INCREASED SINCE STARTED PURCHASED PRODUCT THROUGH INFLUENCE MARKETING | 5339 | 59.32 | I |
| MORE COMFORTABLE TO BUY THE PRODUCT WHICH HAS BEEN USED BY CELEBRITIES | 5175 | 57.5 | IV |
| ONLINE SHOPPING IS BETTER THAN TRADITIONAL SHOPPING | 5125 | 56.94 | VI |
| COMFORTABLE WITH ONLINE SHOPPING | 5339 | 59.32 | I |
| LACK OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE SALESPERSON IN ONLINE SHOPPING | 5184 | 57.60 | III |
| FIRST EXPERIENCE WHILE PURCHASING THE PRODUCTS THROUGH INFLUENCER MARKETING | 5249 | 58.32 | II |
| SATISFIED WHILE PURCHASING THE PRODUCTS THROUGH INFLUENCER MARKETING | 5156 | 57.29 | V |

Based on the Likert Scaling Techniques, “Technical skill (purchased in online) has been increased since started purchasing products through influence marketing " and “Comfortable with Online shopping " are ranked as I with a Mean score of 59.32. "Online Shopping is better than traditional shopping" with a score of 56.94.

# **VIII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

● Period of the study is limited.

● The study is confined to Madurai city only.

● The sample size of the study is limited to 90 respondents.

● Consumer’s perception and celebrities’ preference is not a stable one.

**IX.FINDINGS**

● Out of 90 respondents, 74% of respondents belong to the Female gender.

● 27% of respondents belong to the age group of Eighteen.

● 54% of respondents belong to UG students.

● Out of 90 respondents, 97% of respondents purchase products weekly through online shopping and none of respondents purchase products daily through online shopping.

● Clothes are mostly preferred by the respondents of 35%.

● 40% of the respondents are mostly influenced by Instagram.

● Respondents are not satisfied with Coupon Code and Freebies while purchasing products through Influencer Marketing.

● Most of the respondents are facing problems with delivery people and fraudulent activities while purchasing products through Influencer Marketing.

● Based on the Likert Scaling Techniques, Quality of the product ranked as a V on Likert Scaling Techniques.

● Based on the Likert Scaling Techniques, Lack of communication ranked as an 3rd on Likert Scaling Techniques

**X. SUGGESTIONS**

The consumers mostly preferred to buy products through online shopping rather than traditional shopping because it is Time efficient, Affordable, Comfortable, Coupon Code with the help of influencers, etc. The Influencers and manufacturers are mostly focusing on teenage groups, they should also take some measures to attract middle age group people.

Before purchasing any product, people should verify the comments for the product whether to Buy or not.

**XI.CONCLUSION**

Most of the Consumers preferred to buy products at high cost that are influenced by the most popular celebrity or their favorite celebrity. Consumers tend to buy the product because of influencers offering Discounts, Coupon code, Offers, etc. Influencer marketing can be a highly effective strategy for brands to reach their highly targeted consumers.

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