**A STUDY ON CONSUMERS 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. Two 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 in the business world which involves promoting and making a sale of product or service in the market which helps to identify the necessities and requirements of the consumers. 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 a relationship which is exists between social media handlers and brand preference related to product and service. Such forms of marketing have widely spread since the users of social media are greater in number. 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 may be an individual or group of person who can able to create awareness and influence the consumers to buy the products or services.

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**

1. **Min Xiao, Rang Wang & Sylvia Chan-Olmsted (2018)**[1]**,” Factors affecting YouTube influencer marketing credibility: a heuristic-systematic model”** Under the topic an empirical studies has been examined to determine the trustworthiness of the information given in YouTube. So the present study was attempted to evaluate the systematic information provided by YouTube influencers.
2. **Jooyun Hwang, Sejung Oh and Siyeon Jang (2021)[2],** as a Research papertitled as **"**Consumer Perceptions of Influencer Marketing: Application of Q Methodology and Implications for Business Communication", the aimed to study the consumer types and their perception towards social media. Various marketing strategies are suggested to meet group of customers which can maximize the utilization.
3. **Deniz Ermis, Dima Idjbara and Anando Porobic(2022)[3]** made an study under the title " Consumers’ perception on Influencer Marketing through Instagram”. With the teen age group of 18 samples drawn aimed to explain how brand perception of Generation Z gets influenced by influencer marketing and found out consumers are highly influenced by Instagram Influencers.
4. **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” The cosmetics Industry leverages influencer marketing to increase their relationships with consumers also found out that marketers the knowledge and opportunity to coordinate their influencer programs so that customers get the best results possible.
5. **N. Ganesh Pandian, G. Divya (2017)1,"Identifying the factors influencing consumers’ perception towards online shopping in Madurai city",** the main objective of the study is to identify factors influencing customer perception towards online shopping. The primary data used in the study is questionnaire methodology. The sample size of the study is 322 and the sample size used in the study is Non - Probability convenience sampling technique. The major limitation of this study is Madurai city. In this study they state that respondents mostly pay in cash on delivery. Maximum of the respondents likes to purchase the products of footwear and mobile phones.
6. **Rong-Ho Lin, Christine Jan and Chun-Ling Chuang (2019)2,"Influencer Marketing on Instagram",** This study Influencer Marketing follows the concept of a ‘trusted advisor. They've stated that They've collected 145 responses from the respondents. The age gap between 20-37. They've used a convenience sampling method. In this study They've concluded that a positive attitude towards Instagram changes the impact attitude towards promoted brands.
7. **Joachim Riedla and Lisa von Luckwald (2019)3,"Effects of Influencer Marketing on Instagram",** In this study the main aim is to see the effects of medium-range influencer Instagram postings compared to traditional print advertisements. They've used a convenience sampling method and survey method to use the data. The targeted age group is 14-49 for this study. The sample size for this study is 800. In this study they concluded that classic print advertisements reach the customer better than influencer marketing on Instagram.
8. **Dr.A.S.Gayathri, Husna Anwar (2019)4,"Consumers’ Perception of the Credibility of Social Media Influencers and Its Impact on Purchase Intention",**  the main focus of this study is to determine the perception of credibility of Social media influencers. In this study, they have used questionnaires. They got 60 female respondents specifically from Undergraduate and Postgraduate. They have used statistical tools like Weighted mean, Percentage, Correlation and Regression. Limitation of this study is restricted only to female respondents. This study concluded that tying up or collaborating with influencers to make their business popular among people.
9. **Zrinka Blazevic Bognar, Nikolina Plesa Puljic and Dominik Kadezabek (2019)5," Impact of influencer marketing on consumer behavior"** The study came up with to get the knowledge about how the influencer's impact on the customer behavior and how the Influencer controls the purchasing decision of the customer. This study takes a Structured Survey questionnaire for collecting the primary data. They've collected 500 responses through questionnaires. They also used Hypothesis and Correlation for analyzing the data. By using Hypothesis, they've concluded that there is a positive relationship between the influencer and perception of customer on the product.
10. **Susanna Lee and Eunice Kim (2020)6,"Influencer marketing on Instagram: How sponsorship disclosure, influencer credibility and brand credibility impact the effectiveness of Instagram promotional post",** They've collected 358 responses from the respondents. The age category is between 21-68. They've used likert scale techniques to analyze data. In this study,the researcher understands by giving proper knowledge about how to advertisers and marketers how to make efficient posts on Instagram and that will enhance the fellowship between brand and customer.**Yosra Jarrar, Ayodeji Olalekan Awobamise and Adebola Adewumi Aderibigbe (2020)7, "Effectiveness of Influencer Marketing vs Social Media Sponsored Advertising",** this study evaluated the efficacy of social media advertising and influencer marketing, using sales, page engagement, brand perceptions and buying intentions as the dependent variables. The study shows that social media users tend to save sponsored advertisements more than they save advertisements by influencers. In this study they've received 1136 respondents through an online questionnaire. This study they stated that more respondents save the post which they like the most and use it in future.
11. **Aanchal Nagor (2020)8," Impact of influencer marketing on purchase intention with specific reference to health and beauty products",** this study came up with various different factors that analyze the main role in influencer marketing changes the purchasing behavior of the customer and successful commencement of this promotional tool. They've taken Reliability, Regression, Correlation and Cross tabulation analysis and are used for analyzing the data. They've used a questionnaire form and received 99 responses. This study concluded that if the Influencers are expert in their field or popularity will increase the brands through reaching the maximum targeted audience and influence their purchasing behavior of the audience.
12. **Kamaldeep Singh (2021)9,"Influencer Marketing from a Consumer Perspective: How Attitude, Trust, and Word of mouth Affect Buying Behavior",** thisstudy is intend to know the deep knowledge about how the social media influencer change the attitude and purchasing behavior of the customer. By using semi structured interviews, primary data have been collected. The outcome of the study states that social media influencer impact on customer's purchasing behavior depends on whether the attitude is positive or negative.
13. **Dr. G. Thenmozhi, Dr. P. Sathya (2022)10, "A Study on consumers' attitude towards online shopping in Madurai city",** the aim of the study is to know the relationship between the customer attitude and their Socioeconomic variable towards online shopping. The sample for this study is collected from a working professional from Madurai city. Total of 175 samples were collected for the study. In this study researchers use ANOVA and Regression to analyze the data. In this study they also use the Non - probability convenience sampling design for collecting the data. Based on this study, people from Marital status and monthly income have failed to create a consumer attitude towards online shopping.
14. **Dr. Seereddi Shravya (2022)11,"Impact Of Influencer Marketing On Consumer Purchase Intention Towards Sustainable Apparels'',** the main focus of the study is to examine the impact of influencer marketing or customer intention to buy eco - accommodating apparels. In this study, 463 responses were collected from the places of Visakhapatnam and East Godavari through online and offline questionnaires.
15. **Fatima Ruby R. Amagsila, Ella Mae A. Cadavis, Jhon Paul B. Callueng, Jc Reimark Q. Manio (2022)12,**" **The Impact of Influencer Marketing on Consumers’ Brand Perception of Travel Applications",** In this study they extended that influencers are the person, who can tempt the feelings and attitude of customers to purchase it. They have used Descriptive Correlation for Research design. They received 385 responses. The Survey questionnaire is divided into two parts, 1st part is Demographic profile and 2nd part is Influencer marketing and Brand Perception. In this study gather that Influencer marketing helps the brand to create a understand image in the minds of consumers, with the brand image guiding their purchase intention.
16. **Ms. Lipi Batra,Ms. Nandini Garg and Dr. Ruhee Mittal (2022)13,"The Impact of Social Media Influencers on Purchase Intention",** this study examines how the Influencer intends to buy trustworthiness, similarity and attractiveness of source. They've used questionnaires for collecting the data. They received 120 respondents that were collected through Survey method. SPSS AMOS analytical tool has been utilized in this study. This study is mainly focused on youth of India, because they use Social Media regularly which lends them to follow more influencers on social media platforms.
17. **Dr. Fred Chan (2022)14,"A Study of Social Media Influencers and Impact on Consumer Buying Behaviour in the United Kingdom",** the study's main aim is to gain a depth knowledge about social media influencers. The targeted respondents are between 18 and 65 for this study. Before collecting the data they've used pilot study to check their questionnaire. They've used F Test, Regression and Correlation for analyzing their collected data. Some expertised social media influencers from some areas can attract a small group of true-hearted and wealthy customers who are the targeted clients of the high-end investment products. These influencers may have a higher value than those with many more followers.
18. **Barry Ardley, Calista Craig, Abi Hunt, and Claire May (2022)15,"Product Endorsements on Instagram: Consumer Perceptions of Influencer Authenticity",** In this study the researcher states that the Influencers should be composed 4 major features like Trustworthiness, Transparent, Relatability, Expertise in products which are sold in social media marketing. The researcher takes the age category of 18 - 24. They've used Convenience sampling method to collect the data.
19. **Prof Ilyas Ur Rahman (2023)16,"A Research Insight on the Impact of Influencer Marketing on Consumer Behavior",** The main focus ofthe study is to explore the effectiveness of influencer marketing on consumer behavior and the factors that influence its impact.The study revealed that the use of influencers can effect consumer decision-making, including brand loyalty and purchasing behavior. They've used ANOVA for analyzing the data. They've received 100 responses from the respondents. TheThe study has gathered information that micro influencers are more efficient than macro influencers in increasing the sale of products.
20. **Jianwei Yu, Meili Liang and Chang-Hyun Jin (2023)17," The Effects of Luxury Brand Influencer Characteristics on Self-Brand Connection: Focused on Consumer Perception"**,In this study, they stated that many emerging companies are likely to invest in influencer and expanding their business, also they express that in fashion industry they are using the fashion influencer to increase their brand royalty. This study helps to understand the association between self-brand connection and word of mouth intention. They have collected Primary data through Survey method (518 response) In this study, they concluded that it is necessary to build entertainment elements and content that can actively convey and encourage followers to procure.

**IV.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

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

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 OUTLINE OF THE DEFENDANTS’**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FACTORS** | **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** |  | |

From the above table it was found out that 54% of the respondents’ had completed UG Degree, 97% of the respondents are preferred to buy the products monthly once in online, 35% of respondents are influenced by the influencer marketers to buy the cloth items and 40% of the respondents are influenced through Instagram.

**TABLE No.2**

**OPINION OF THE RESPONDENTS ABOUT INFLUENCER MARKETING**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | Yes | No | **Percentage** | | **Mean** | **Std, deviation** |
| FREEBIES RECEIVED | 38 | 52 | 43 | 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 | 25 | 75 | 45 | 32.53 |
| **TOTAL** | **90** | | **100** | |  | |

75% of the respondents accepted that they don’t have any problem with the delivery person and not faced any fraud activity in online shopping, 43% of the respondents are received freebies and 40% of the respondents are availed the free coupons and benefits.

**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 | XI |
| 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 | VII |
| 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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