A STUDY ON INFLUENCER MARKETING AMONG CONSUMERS IN SOCIAL MEDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO APPARELS

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ABSTRACT

Influencer marketing has gained popularity as a method used by businesses to advertise their goods and services on social media networks in recent years. This research seeks to look into how influencer marketing affects consumer behavior in the clothing sector. The study's main topics will be consumer views and influences towards influencer marketing, the efficiency of influencer marketing in promoting apparel products, and the variables like consumer trust, social attractiveness and social reference how it affects consumers' decisions to buy apparel products pushed by influencers. A group of customers who follow social media influencers will be surveyed using a questionnaire as part of the study's quantitative research methodology. Utilizing statistical tools like ANOVA and Chi square test, the data gathered will be examined. The results of this research will help to clarify the impact of influencer marketing in the apparel sector and how it affects Consumer behavior.

Keywords: Influencer marketing, Influencer trust, Influencer reference, Social Attractiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Social media sites like YouTube, Facebook and Instagram have recently gained popularity as outlets for influencer marketing efforts. Influencers on social media, spanning from superstars to micro-influencers with a tiny but highly involved following, are increasingly used to market apparel goods. One of the sectors that has used influencer marketing techniques the most to promote its goods is the apparel business. Influencers have been working with apparel businesses to produce sponsored tweets, product evaluations, and other promotional material for social media.

Although influencer marketing has become a crucial component of the marketing strategy for the apparel business, its capacity to change customer behavior is still not fully understood. In order to better understand how influencer marketing affects customers in the apparel business, this research will look at its effects. This research seeks to shed light on how consumer decision-

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making is influenced by influencer marketing in the apparel sector by analyzing customer attitudes and perceptions towards it.

The clothing industry is very competitive, and businesses are always looking for methods to set themselves apart from rivals. Influencer marketing in the clothing sector depends on a number of variables, including the trustworthiness of the influencer, interaction with the target audience, and the caliber of the content. Consumers' views toward influencer marketing in the apparel business are also affected by their age, gender, and socioeconomic standing, among other things. For instance, younger consumers are more apt than elder consumers to participate in influencer marketing efforts.

The research will also look into the efficiency of various influencer marketing techniques for advertising apparel goods, including influencer collaboration, user generated content, and meme advertisement. The variables influencing customer trust and authenticity in influencer marketing efforts will also be looked at in the research. This study seeks to offer insights for apparel businesses and marketers on how to create efficient influencer marketing strategies that can improve brand awareness, boost sales, and increase customer engagement by examining these research questions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, the effectiveness of influencer marketing has been widely discussed in the literature in the context of social media marketing. In particular, influencer marketing in the apparel industry has gained significant attention from scholars. For instance, in their study on Instagram influencer marketing, **Rana and Khalid (2018)** found that influencer marketing positively influenced consumers' purchase intentions for apparel products. Similarly, in their research on the effectiveness of influencer marketing on Instagram, **Chu, and Kim (2018)** reported that influencer marketing had a significant impact on consumers' perceived value of apparel products. Furthermore, **Hasan and Saidin (2020)** explored the role of trust in the influencer-consumer relationship and its impact on consumers' attitudes and behaviors toward apparel brands. They found that trust played a significant role in building a positive relationship between influencers and consumers. These studies suggest that influencer marketing can be an effective strategy for apparel brands to reach and engage with consumers on social media platforms. In addition, some studies have also investigated the factors that can influence the effectiveness of influencer marketing in the apparel industry. For example, **Zhang et al. (2021)** compared the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing on consumer attitudes towards apparel products on WeChat, a popular social media platform in China. Their study found that influencer marketing was more effective than celebrity endorsement in enhancing consumers' attitudes towards apparel products. Moreover, **Kim and Ko (2020)** examined the impact of the match-up between the influencer and the apparel brand on consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions towards the brand. Additionally Influencer trust **Abdullah and Razak's study from (2021)** examined the effect of customer confidence in influencers on their intentions to buy clothing goods and discovered that trust had a large

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positive impact on consumers' intentions to buy. For attractiveness a research by **Abidin and Zain (2021)** discovered that social attractiveness significantly improved customers' perceptions of clothing brands pushed by Instagram influencers. For social reference **Ahmad and Khawar's study (2021)** looked at the influence of influencer references on customers' inclinations to buy clothing goods and discovered that direct references had a higher impact than indirect references.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To understand how consumer trust in influencer affect their likelihood of purchasing apparel from a brand promoted by that influencer.
2. To identify social attractiveness on influencer does have a positive significant impact on purchase decision towards apparels.
3. To analyze the influencer reference in direct or indirect influence of consumer buying behavior.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The following hypothesis are formulated to test objective.

H1: There is a significant relationship between 'Gender' and influencer trust in purchasing apparel on social media.

H2: There is a significant relationship between 'age' and social attractiveness by influencer in purchase decision.

H3: There is a significant relationship between 'buying behavior' of consumers and social reference by influencer.

RESEARCH MODEL

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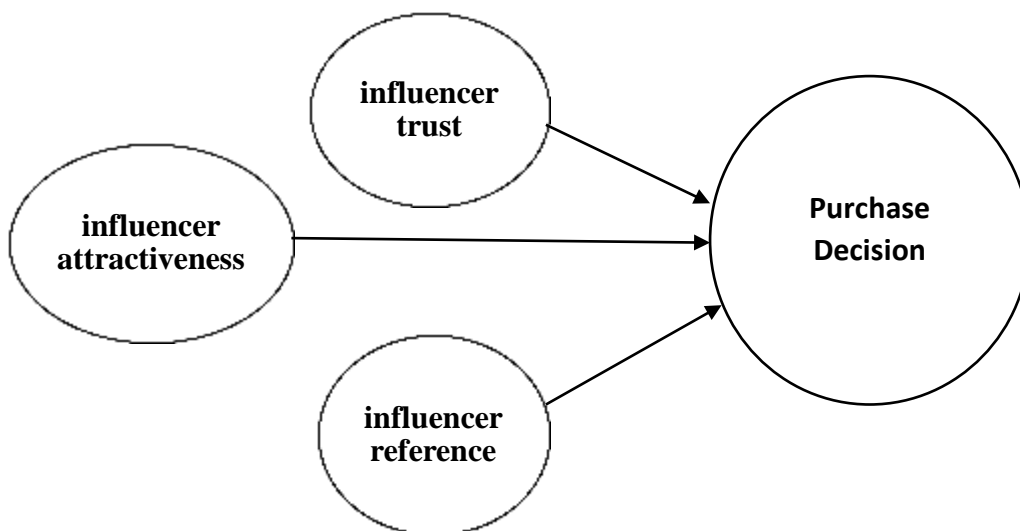
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Due to the lack of a pre-defined issue but the potential for substantial insight into a given scenario, the study was carried out experimentally. It is not the goal of the study to offer definitive proof, but rather to improve scholars' comprehension of the issue. Gaining knowledge and understanding for future research is the main goal.

SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION

The sample size is 214 from all different demographic people who use social media regularly and follow at least one influencer in their social media. Sampling method adopted here is 'cluster sampling'. The data is collected by using google forms and it was provided to people who follow social media influencers. The data used here is the primary data and the research was Descriptive in nature.

TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS

Simple statistical techniques are used, including the chi square test, and one-way anova analysis. These were carried out with the help of software like SPSS software.

DATA ANALYSIS AND MAJOR FINDINGS

H0: There is no significant relationship between 'Gender' and influencer trust in purchasing apparel on social media.

H1: There is a significant relationship between 'Gender' and influencer trust in purchasing apparel on social media.

The hypothesis of the study is "There is a significant relationship between 'Gender' and influencer trust variable like Comment section, previous experience, friends' referral, consistent engagement and demo". To test this hypothesis, data was collected from a sample of consumers who follow influencers on social media and purchase apparel brands. The collected data was analyzed by using one way anova.

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
I see the "comments section" before making the purchase decision.	Between Groups	6.981	1	6.981	8.543	.004
	Within Groups	173.230	212	.817		
	Total	180.210	213			
I trust the influncer because i "already purchased" apparel	Between Groups	10.483	1	10.483	8.474	.004
	Within Groups	262.251	212	1.237		

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brand from the same influencer.	Total	272.734	213			
I trust the brand because of my "friends referred" in social media.	Between Groups	21.553	1	21.553	28.852	.000
	Within Groups	158.372	212	.747		
	Total	179.925	213			
I believe influencer because they are "consistently engage" with the audience.	Between Groups	2.623	1	2.623	1.958	.163
	Within Groups	284.055	212	1.340		
	Total	286.678	213			
I trusted the brand because influencer demo it on social media post.	Between Groups	4.884	1	4.884	3.748	.054
	Within Groups	276.293	212	1.303		
	Total	281.178	213			

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used in the experiment to compare 'Gender' and Influencer trust. Let the P value be 0.05. Since the significance value in variables like Comments section, previous experience and friend's referral is lesser than the P Value 0.05. Hence Null hypothesis was rejected and Alternative hypothesis was accepted. We infer that there will be a significant relationship between Gender and Comments section, previous experience and friend's referral. Variables like Consistent engagement and demo are lesser then 0.05.It shows that there is no relationship between Gender and Consistent engagement and demo.

H0: There is no significant relationship between 'age' and social attractiveness by influencer in purchase decision.
H1: There is a significant relationship between 'age' and social attractiveness by influencer in purchase decision.
The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between age and social attractiveness variables like more followers, viral share, star personality, current trend and consistent performance by influencers in the context of purchase decisions related to apparel brands on social media. The hypothesis of the study stated that there is a significant relationship between age and social attractiveness by influencer in 4 variables of purchase decisions related to apparel brands on social media. Consumer age plays a crucial role while purchasing apparels through influencer marketing. The age group of 18 – 35 are taken as a sample based on who use social media regularly and follow at least one influencer. Chi square test is used to compare the observed value with expected outcome. Let the P value will be 0.05.

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Age * the influencer that i followed in social media have "more followers" base.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.340[a]	8	.721
Likelihood Ratio	6.517	8	.590
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.460	1	.227
N of Valid Cases	214		

a. 7 cells (46.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .17.

The table shows that chi square significant at 5% significance level. The Pearson Chi-square value is greater then P value i.e 0.05. The Null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected so there is no relationship between Age and more followers for purchasing.

Age * I got influenced by the influencer because there post content is "Viral share" in social media.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	203.841[a]	48	.000
Likelihood Ratio	162.484	48	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	38.137	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	214		

a. 52 cells (80.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .11.

The table shows that chi square significant at 5% significance level. The Pearson Chi-square value is lesser then P value i.e 0.05. The Null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted so there is a relationship between Age and Viral share for purchasing.

Age * I got attracted by the influencer because they are "star personality" in their field.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	422.735[a]	48	.000
Likelihood Ratio	372.057	48	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	127.524	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	214		

a. 53 cells (81.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .24.

The table shows that chi square significant at 5% significance level. The Pearson Chi-square value is lesser then P value i.e 0.05. The Null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted so there is a relationship between Age and star personality for purchasing.

Age * I thought that the influencer are going with the "current trend".

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	450.221[a]	48	.000
Likelihood Ratio	352.651	48	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	130.835	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	214		

a. 50 cells (76.9%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .15.

The table shows that chi square significant at 5% significance level. The Pearson Chi-square value is lesser then P value i.e 0.05. The Null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted so there is a relationship between Age and current trend for purchasing.

Age * I got attracted by the influencer as they are "consistent performance ".

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	248.488[a]	48	.000
Likelihood Ratio	167.746	48	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	60.866	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	214		

a.   52 cells (80.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .15.

The table shows that chi square significant at 5% significance level. The Pearson Chi-square value is lesser then P value i.e 0.05. The Null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted so there is a relationship between Age and consistent performance for purchasing.

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H0: There is no significant relationship between 'buying behavior' of consumers and social reference by influencer.

H1: There is a significant relationship between 'buying behavior' of consumers and social reference by influencer.

In the present study, we investigated the relationship between the buying behavior of consumers and social reference by influencers in the context of apparel brands on social media. The hypothesis of the study stated that there is a significant relationship between the buying behavior of consumers and social reference by influencer in 3 variables.

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Do you think that "influencer Collaborative" content is more attractive?	Between Groups	23.635	4	5.909	4.736	.001
	Within Groups	260.739	209	1.248		
	Total	284.374	213			
Do you think that "Meme advertisement" from influencer post is highly attractive?	Between Groups	7.163	4	1.791	1.247	.292
	Within Groups	300.071	209	1.436		
	Total	307.234	213			
Do you think that "User Generated Content" by influencer in social media makes you to purchase.	Between Groups	9.674	4	2.418	1.746	.141
	Within Groups	289.504	209	1.385		
	Total	299.178	213			
Do you got attracted by the "social media live" by influencer for promoting new apparels in live.	Between Groups	57.315	4	14.329	14.841	.000
	Within Groups	201.788	209	.965		
	Total	259.103	213			
Do you influenced by "Interactive Quizzes " posted by influencer in social media.	Between Groups	69.775	4	17.444	19.021	.000
	Within Groups	191.665	209	.917		
	Total	261.439	213			

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The findings of our study support this hypothesis, indicating that buying behavior of consumers has a significant influence on social reference variables like Influencer collaborative, meme ads, user generated content, social media live and interactive quizzes by influencers. Specifically, our results showed a significant association between buying behavior and social reference by influencer, indicating that consumers who engage in more favorable buying behaviors towards apparel brands are more likely to rely on social reference by influencers in their purchase decision-making process.

Social reference is the way to expand the reach in the social. More reach will help influencer to promote apparels which leads to purchase. ANOVA is used here to test whether the relationship between Purchase Decision via Social reference. Hence the outcome in Influencer collaborative, social media live and interactive quizzes shows the value which is lesser than the P value 0.05. Hence Null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted so there is a significant relationship between Purchase decisions via social reference variables like Influencer collaborative, social media live and interactive quizzes. And variables like meme ads and user generated content indicates no relationship between Purchase decisions via social reference.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS
FINDINGS
The study found that gender plays a significant role in the level of consumers trust have in influencer marketing especially in Comments section, previous experience and friend's referral. And also, it shows that age has a significant influence on the social attractiveness like viral share, star personality, and current trend by influencers in purchase decisions. Younger consumers tend to be more influenced by social attractiveness when it comes to purchasing apparels on social media. And finally it reveals that consumers' buying behavior is significantly influenced by social reference like Influencer collaborative, social media live and interactive quizzes in social media.

SUGGESTIONS
1. Apparel brands should tailor their influencer marketing strategy based on the gender of their target audience. Especially when deals with demo post and consistent engagement. Which shows negative impact among audience.
2. Influencer Niche personality and follower base has to be improved with more positive comments since it directly leads to purchase decision of apparels in social media.
3. Apparel brands should prioritize their meme advertisement and User generated content in their influencer strategy. Consumers will not trust influencers who have more user generated content and unmatched meme ads, leading to higher levels of interest and reference.

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CONCLUSION

This study focused specifically on social media clothing purchases to investigate the effects of influencer marketing on consumer behavior. The research hypotheses were put to the test, and the findings showed that there is a significant correlation between gender and influencer trust when buying clothing on social media, age and social attractiveness of an influencer when making a purchase decision, and consumer purchasing behavior and social reference by the influencer.

According to the research, gender is a significant factor in how consumers see influencer marketing and how much they trust influencers when making garment purchases on social media. The study also demonstrates that age has a significant role in defining influencers' degree of social attractiveness, which affects customers' purchasing decisions. The efficiency of influencer marketing is also significantly influenced by consumer behavior, with influencers' social references being a key factor for consumers.

Overall, the study's findings shed light on the function of social media influencer marketing in the garment sector as well as the variables that affect customer behavior. These findings have repercussions for marketers and companies trying to use influencer marketing for social media clothing sales.

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