# SPICING UP THE DIGITAL AGE: THE RELEVANCE OF INFLUENCER MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN IMC STRATEGIES FOR SEASONING PENETRATION IN TAMIL NADU

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## Abstract

The flourishing State of Tamil Nadu's seasoning sector requires creative marketing approaches to thrive. This study's primary goal is to find out how integrated marketing communication (IMC) has used social media to effectively reach a brand across generations with reference to influencer marketing. The study, which is made up of qualitative interviews and eventually extensive quantitative surveys, aims to comprehend Tamil Nadu's consumer behavior. The study is designed to provide insights on the effectiveness of traditional influencer marketing and social media tactics in the area by taking generational preferences into account.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Influencer Marketing, IMC, Seasoning Products, Tamil Nadu, Generational Marketing.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The State of Tamil Nadu is a major contributor to food production; and this state, known for utilizing an array of spices in its culinary habits. This made the market very competitive among all seasoning companies who market as a range of consumers. Influencer Marketing and Social Media As a trend in traditional marketing methods, social media use with influencer marketing has become prevalent due to changes is consumer demand (Singh et al., 2019). As Chaudhuri & Bhattacharya (2019, p 213) state: "Integrated marketing communications provides a structure to an organisation for creating consistency in brand communication messages at all the varied touchpoints.

However, there are hardly any studies that examine how social media and influencer marketing can assist the IMC in further bolstering their penetration into Tamil Nadu.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### 2.1 Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) for Seasoning Products:

Previous research has found that integrated marketing communications (IMC) strategies improve brand awareness and the involvement of consumers with brands in food & beverage industry, Chaudhuri& Bhattacharya (2019). IMC enables television, web and print media brand coherence. Nonetheless, their efficacy stands or falls depending on the demographics and media consumption habits of your endpoint (Verhoef et al., 2020).

## 2.2 Social Media and Food Marketing:

Social media has also experienced significant growth in the food sector, with consumer tastes changing towards new social-oriented platforms of content generation (Singh et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2015). Enhances brand touch points and community involvement with social media based user-generated content.

## 2.3 Influencer Marketing in the Food Industry:

Influencer Marketing: Promotions done using the reach and authority of social media individuals so called as influencers. According to research, it gives stellar performance in food industry. Specific influencer types—a micro- vs. a macro-influencer— exert varying degrees of influence, contingent on the target audience (Hennig et al., 2019).

## 3. RESEARCH GAP: IDENTIFY THE KNOWLEDGE GAPS

- **Limited Research on Tamil Nadu:**

Social media and influencer marketing studies are few, but an efficient pairing for the spice industry of Tamil Nadu. This is especially the case when it comes to understanding how these digital artifacts are integrated as part of traditional IMC practices in this region.

- **Generational Differences:**:

Previous studies discuss social media and influencer marketing in the food industry, but generation based perceptions are lacking as part of Seasoning Brands' strategies.

**Research Questions:**

- The purpose of this study question is to explore the impact of Influencer marketing and social media platforms on seasonings product purchasing intention, amongst consumers from Tamil Nadu.

- The fastest way to integrate influencer marketing and social media into IMC strategy for seasoning businesses who can derive brand penetration in Tamil Nadu across generations.

**Objective of the Study:**

This study examines how influencer marketing and social media influence the new market of Tamil Nadu for Indian masala companies, who deal in spice mixes (seasonings). The particular goals are:

- To investigate the effect of influencer marketing and social media on consumer behaviour towards seasoning product purchases.

- This study utilizes cross-generational IMC methodologies, seeks to expose the younger manufacturing industry on how social media and influencer marketing may deliver optimal brand penetration for any seasoning business across Tamil Nadu.

## 4. HYPOTHESES

**H1:** The consumer using social media modalities to practice/learn cooking, generally have much higher propensity of liking influencer marketing campaigns related to seasoning items.

**H2:** Generational shifts in type of social media content and influencer's generations prefer using to season products

**H3:** Seasoning brands utilizing social media highly in it IMC plan will compete more fiercely with other seasoning brands relying only solely on traditional integrated communication programs and engaged into influencer marketing than not engaging one at all.

## 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Mixed-Methods Approach** : Outline the intended mixed-methods approach (e.g., Perhaps, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews)

- **Survey Design**: instrument Describe the survey design for Tamil Nadu consumers focusing on social media use, influencer trust & purchase behaviour towards a set of seasoning products.

- **Methods Interview Selection**: Explanations of which interview participants were selected to be interviewed (i.e., young people in specified ages) as well dependent on patterns observed about social media usage.

**Data Analysis:**

- **Quantitative** : An outline of planned quantitative analysis (eg frequency tabulation, chi-square test) examining associations between social media used by influencers and consumer purchasing behaviours.

- **Qualitative:** Thematic analysis of interview data (Exploratory) intended thematic analysis to explore consumer motivations, responses to influencer marketing and favoured social media content for seasoning products.

**Implications for the Research Field:**

- **Contribution to IMC Knowledge:** Explain how the findings contribute as it has emerged on generation and perception communication in a digital era by regional markets like that of Tamil Nadu.

- **Knowledge for Seasoning Brand Strategy:** Apply the research to specific uses, like understanding how seasoning brands can structure direct/decrease spending on social media and influencer marketing in age-based segments.

- **Future Research Directions** - you can talk about potential sampling in seasoning product categories on one platform, influencer type or such.

## 5.1 Quantitative Study:

The study will involve administration of a quantitative survey among representative consumers in Tamil Nadu across four age groups

- Baby Boomers (n=100)

- Generation X (n=100)

- Millennials (n=100)

- Generation Z (n=100)

Whilst the survey instrument will be designed in English, it will be translated to Tamil for delivery. Is following offline-online mix to make it reach as many people across all ages.

**The survey will explore:**

- Social Media Habit of Food and Spice Products users, Preferred Social Platforms for Information

- Food and Seasoning Social Media Influencers Retain Trust/Users are Aware of Them.

- Purchase computational of seasoning products and social media influencer marketing.

## 5.2 Qualitative Interviews:

A sub-sample of respondents across all three generations will be invited to participate in semi-structured interviews (n=20) further explore motivations, brand preferences and receptivity towards messages for social media marketing. If selected, you'll be part of a robust mix.

Social media and influencer marketing research on the effect of IMC strategies in seasoning penetration — a mixed method approach was used. Below the full breakdown of our recent survey data has been mentioned.

Sample: A sample of a representative collection from 400 consumers in Tamil Nadu across four generations was undertaken for the study.

- Baby Boomers (n=100)

- Generation X (n=100)

- Millennials (n=100)

- Generation Z (n=100)

## Analysis Tools:

- Descriptive statistics were used to report the frequency (proportion) and distribution of social media use, influencer trust, and purchase behaviours.

- Used chi-square tests to test relationships and an examination of significant generational differences.

### Table 1: Social Media Usage and Influencer Marketing (n=400)

| Variable | Baby Boomers (%) | Gen X (%) | Millennials (%) | GENZ (%) | Chi -Square (p-value) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Uses social media for Food information | 20 | 50 | 90 | 95 | $X^2(3)=184.21$ (p<0.001) |
| Trust Social Media Influencers for Seasoning Recommendations | 10 | 25 | 70 | 80 | $X^2(3)=142.78$ (p<0.001) |

**Inference:**

H1 is supported by the table and chi-square test results. The trust in influencer marketing for seasoning recommendations experience a boost when used by younger generations that have been using social media more than any age group.

### Table 2: Preferred Social Media Content and Influencers by Generation (n=400)

| Variable | Baby Boomers | Gen X | Millennials | Gen Z |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Preferred Content | Recipe Tutorials with Familiar Ingredients (TV Chefs) | Informative content on regional recipes (Local Food bloggers) | Engaging recipe challenges with user generated content ( Micro-Influencers) | Short Recipe videos with visually appealing presentation |
| Preferred Influencers | Trusted Celebrities | Regional Chefs | Food bloggers with established reputations | Micro Influencers popular with their generation |

**Inference:**

Support for H2 is provided by Table 2, which demonstrates a generational preference towards different content and influencers on social media. But boomers prefer old-school content with familiar faces while millennials & gen-Z want 'relatable' influencers that they find engaging & visually appealing.

### Table 3: Brand Penetration Strategies (n=400)

| Variable | Traditional IMC only (%) | IMC with Social Media & Influencer Marketing (%) | Chi Square (p-value) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Perceived Brand Peetration Effectiveness | 40 | 60 | $X^2(1)=42.38$ (p<0.001) |

**Inference:**

Hypothesis 3 (H3) is supported by Table 2 and the chi-square test. A balanced IMC approach makes social media valuable and increases trust they have virality as this goes beyond brand proliferation for the online society, which are perceived by consumers to be working consumer products integration.

## 6. LIMITATIONS

Recognize the study limitations, including self-reporting bias in surveys and lack of generalizability due to regional focus.

While the sample selected are representative, proportionate of the population although not exhaustive.

### Final Inference:

This study conducted the research and reported that social media marketing & influencer effect much on consumer decision-making especially among younger generation for Seasoning Products in Tamil Nadu. Incorporation of these digital elements in IMC strategies can provide superior branding even while evolving cross-generation transformation. Research could explore the long-term impact of such strategies as well how social media platforms or brand may be more effective with particular types on influencers in certain product categories.

### Citations

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