AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE DEPENDENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ON THE DIGITAL INFLUENCERS TO GAIN RELIABILITY AS A PROMOTIONAL TOOL

SHROMONA NEOGI

Alliance School of Business, Alliance University, Bangalore, India. Email: shromonan@gmail.com

SAYANTAN MUKHERJEE

Alliance School of Business, Alliance University, Bangalore, India.
Email: sayantanmukherjee256@gmail.com

AJAY VERMA*

School of Applied Sciences and Languages, Vit Bhopal University, Sehore, M.P, India.
*Corresponding Author Email: ajai.varma1729@gmail.com

Abstract

The study focuses on the growing digital influencers, positioning among the target audience, and their capability to endorse the social media platforms, i.e., Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Pinterest, etc., as a reliable medium of promotions for the brands. A mixed research methodology has been adopted to link the study with the existing literature in the domain and validate them with statistical analysis. The attitudinal data is collected from the metropolitan cities of India through 5 point Likert scale administered questionnaire. Generation Z is the sampling unit of the study. The research findings suggest that an individual digital influencer's role is mediating consumers' willingness to adopt online buying behavior and the reliability of social media platforms as a good marketing tool. Brand awareness among the target audience is also a powerful catalyst to enhance social media marketing. Brands should be more concerned about engaging influencers based on their content innovation, credibility, followings, and reliability among the followers on different social media platforms.

Index Terms: Digital Influencers, Social Media Marketing, Gen. Z consumers, Online Buying, Mediation Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Influencer marketing substantially grew due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Gerlich, 2022). During the pandemic, almost one-third of members of Generation Z reported that content makers gave them a feeling of community (Sun et al., 2022). Influencer marketing has expanded by 470% over the past few years due to the desire to attract Gen Z consumers and create a virtual experience (*Discover New Leads and Brand Growth with Influencer Marketing*, 2022). The study has been conducted to understand the reliability of social media as a promotional tool and the role of the individual digital influencers therein.

The proliferation of social media marketing has provided consumers with more options, making social media influencers indispensable for cutting through the noise and establishing authentic connections with consumers (Suharto et al., 2022). Brands engage in influencer marketing since it benefits the brands, customers, and influencers. Social media has already significantly influenced consumer purchase decisions (Aria, M.,

Cuccurullo, C., D'Aniello, L., Misuraca, M., & Spano, 2022). The research demonstrates that the COVID-19 epidemic has undoubtedly established a new standard of living. Things will likely never be quite the same again, despite many of us starting to travel again, going out more, and maybe even venturing back into the office. The epidemic has altered our perspectives on many topics, including public health, eating, and shopping (Nafees et al., 2021).

In the context of the mediating role of the individual digital influencer in catalyzing consumers' willingness for online buying, it has been seen that various studied factors played a crucial role in diversifying the social media space as a marketing medium. The genuineness, credibility, and openness of an influencer's content and the transparency of their persona are all aspects of authenticity, which helps the brand to position in the mind of the target consumers through efficient influencers (AlFarraj, O., Alalwan, A. A., Obeidat, Z. M., Baabdullah, A., Aldmour, R., & Al-Haddad, 2021). The relationship of trust that exists between influencers and their audience is strengthened through authenticity. Trust and credibility are built when an influencer is seen as authentic and forthright in their actions and statements. Because authentic influencers are considered trustworthy sources of information and recommendations, their content is perceived to have a higher value and is more likely to be trusted. Authentic influencers make themselves more approachable to their audiences by exposing their actual self, including the flaws and vulnerabilities that come along with them (Lou, 2022). By disclosing genuine experiences and feelings, they establish a more profound connection with their target audience. The capacity to relate to others helps to cultivate a sense of community and gives followers the sense that they are understood and supported (Masuda, H., Han, S. H., & Lee, 2022). Genuine influencers typically have a good awareness of the people they are trying to reach and can cater to that audience's specific requirements and interests. They produce content relevant to their audience, resulting in a community that is more active and devoted to them. If you follow genuine influencers, you will increase the likelihood of receiving content that is both relevant and important to you (Kapitan, S., van Esch, P., Soma, V., & Kietzmann, 2022). Real influential individuals are open and honest about their partnerships, sponsored material, and any possible biases they may have. They are transparent about any instances in which they endorse a product or accept payment in exchange for their suggestions. This transparency empowers their audience to make well-informed judgments and contributes to the upkeep of integrity within the influencer marketing ecosystem (Ye, G., Hudders, L., De Jans, S., & De Veirman, 2021). They frequently use their platforms to advocate for positive social change, spread awareness, and support critical social causes that they believe in. They use their sincerity to inspire and push their followers to take action, whether contributing to a philanthropic cause, adopting more sustainable practices, or raising awareness about mental health issues (Issac, A. P., Mathew, A. O., & Sriram, 2022).

The above-discussed traits have helped them gain consumer confidence and spur more than a random video/reel/influencer promoting a product or service. The reliability of the influencer is a crucial factor in enhancing the consumer's willingness to adopt social

media as a marketplace and thereby creating the desire to make virtual buying decisions which have been studied through the research objectives:

RO_1: To study the significance of brand awareness among consumers, the influence of specific digital influencers, and different renowned social media (YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest) in enhancing consumers' willingness for online buying.

RO_2: To study the mediating role of a specific digital influencer in promoting social media to be adopted as a booming marketplace and enhance virtual buying.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Role of Brand Awareness in enhancing consumers' purchase intention: Increased customer desire to make a purchase is directly correlated to increased levels of brand awareness. When consumers know a brand and have information about the products or services offered, it positively influences deciding which products or services to purchase (Orogun & Onyekwelu, 2019). When selecting what to buy, brand awareness aids consumers in remembering and recognizing a specific brand. Consumers are more inclined to view a brand as a feasible choice during their decision-making process when they are familiar with it. This familiarity fosters a sense of trust and confidence in the brand, which may increase the likelihood that consumers will purchase (Melović, B., Jocović, M., Dabić, M., Vulić, T. B., & Dudic, 2020). In the eyes of customers, it helps establish credibility and trust. Customers view a brand as reliable and trustworthy when they know it, its reputation, and its presence on the market. Their intention to buy is affected by this favorable view since they are more inclined to pick a trusted brand over unproven competitors. Consumers' perceptions of higher quality might be influenced by brand recognition. Consumers prefer to identify a brand with positive attributes like quality, inventiveness, and dependability when they are aware of it and the goods or services it offers. They are more likely to select a brand that provides better value due to this sense of quality, which can substantially impact their buying intention. It gives one a commercial competitive advantage. The possibility that a brand will be considered during the decision-making process rises when consumers are more aware of it than their rivals (Ansari, S., Ansari, G., Ghori, M. U., & Kazi, 2019). The brand can stand out from the competition and positively impact consumers' purchasing intentions when brand awareness is raised. Consumer brand loyalty is boosted by increasing brand awareness(Darley, W. K., Blankson, C., & Luethge, 2010). Customers are more likely to become brand loyalists when they know a brand and enjoy using its goods or services. Repeat purchases and an increased propensity to suggest the brand to others are both influenced by brand loyalty. Therefore, brand awareness is essential for sustaining and boosting existing customers' purchase intentions.

Digital Influencers and Online Buying: Digital influencers, also known as social media influencers, are essential in increasing online purchasing and driving customer purchase intent. Digital influencers frequently have a devoted following of interested and trustworthy fans (Ibáñez-Sánchez, S., Flavián, M., Casaló, L. V., & Belanche, 2021). Their target

audience perceives them as approachable persons who provide genuine recommendations and reviews. When an influencer recommends a product or service, followers trust their judgment and are more inclined to buy the recommended things. Trust and authenticity can improve online purchasing by bridging the gap between brands and consumers. They can introduce new products and brands to their target audience. They frequently display and review various products, including those that are less well-known or not generally available. Influencers build curiosity and excitement among their followers by highlighting these products and sharing their personal experiences, which leads to increased online purchasing. Influencers' recommendations of a specific product or brand can significantly impact customer purchase intent. Their recommendations serve as social proof, encouraging customers that the product is worthwhile. Many consumers rely on influencer recommendations for direction, particularly when confronted with many options in the internet marketplace (Klein, A., & Sharma, 2022). Digital influencers are masters of narrative and content creation. They use their platforms to convey personal stories and experiences with a product or brand. Influencers develop an emotional connection with their audience by weaving narratives around the things they support. This emotional involvement can impact online purchasing decisions by making things more relatable and enticing. Digital influencers primarily operate on social media platforms with a significant following and presence. These platforms give influencers direct access to a large audience, making reaching out to potential customers simple (Dastane, 2020). Influencers use channels such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and blogs to promote items, offer unique discount codes, and work with brands on special promotions. Their online presence and ability to communicate with their audience in real time create a favorable climate for online purchasing. Influencers frequently encourage their followers to share their own product-related experiences. This user-generated content expands the brand's reach and influence even further. When prospective buyers see great reviews and comments from other customers, it reaffirms their purchase intent and increases their confidence in completing an online purchase.

Usage of Social Media Platforms as a Marketplace: Social networking tools have become essential to marketing plans for companies of all sizes. They are a low-cost option to reach a big audience, engage customers, and raise brand awareness (Kaushik, 2016). They facilitate building brand presence, content sharing, promotions, audience engagement, targeted advertising, and influencer partnerships. They offer powerful analytics tools that provide insights into audience demographics, engagement metrics, content performance, and ad campaign efficacy. This information enables organizations to assess the effectiveness of their social media initiatives, discover patterns, and make informed decisions to improve their marketing tactics (Coates et al., 2020). Businesses promote their brand stories, values, and unique selling propositions by building accounts on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Consistent branding across platforms aids in developing brand awareness and trust among the target audience.

Instagram as a marketplace: Instagram has developed from a social media platform to a popular marketplace for businesses to exhibit and sell their goods and services (Hu, K., & Fu, 2021). It provides company profiles tailored to enterprises and brands. These profiles include features and tools that improve the buying experience, such as product tags, shopping stickers, and a "Shop" tab on the profile. Businesses may promote their products and make them easily discoverable for potential buyers by creating a business profile. Companies can use Instagram's product tagging functionality to tag products in their posts and stories. Users can read details, pricing, and a direct link to purchase the product on the business's website by tapping on a tagged product (Barker, 2018). Product tagging enables easy product discovery and a smooth transition from browsing to purchase. Businesses can use the Instagram Shop feature to create a virtual storefront within the app. Businesses can curate product groupings to make browsing and exploring their offers easier for visitors. Instagram Shop offers customers a visually appealing and convenient buying experience, boosting the likelihood of purchasing. Businesses can make their posts and stories shoppable by tagging products and adding shopping stickers. These clickable tags or stickers connect consumers to the product page, allowing them to purchase with just a few taps. Shoppable posts and stories enable businesses to exhibit their products and attract impulse purchases (Vieira et al., 2019).

Instagram Checkout is a tool that allows users to make their purchases without being routed to another website. Users may make subsequent purchases with just a few taps after entering their payment and delivery information (Wielki, 2020). Instagram Checkout simplifies the purchasing experience, lowering friction and increasing conversion rates. Many businesses use Instagram influencer marketing to promote their products and reach a larger audience. Businesses may tap into their fan base and harness their influence to generate sales by engaging with influencers (Chopra et al., 2021). Influencers can generate sponsored content highlighting the products, delivering genuine recommendations, and demonstrating their use. Instagram offers insights and analytics for company profiles, allowing them to measure data like post reach, engagement, and click-through rates. These insights give helpful information for optimizing marketing campaigns, understanding customer behavior, and fine-tuning product offerings (Wielki, 2020).

Facebook as a marketplace: Facebook has a powerful marketplace function that allows businesses to list and sell things on the site directly. Facebook Marketplace is a component of the Facebook platform where users can buy and sell products in their local area. Businesses can create product listings, establish prices, provide descriptions, and include photographs (Janathanan & Nizar, 2018). Businesses can utilize the Marketplace to access many local users searching for products or browsing through various categories. Facebook Shop is a feature that allows businesses to set up a custom online store on their Facebook Page (Thilina, 2021). Businesses can display their products, categorize them, write descriptions, and establish prices. Businesses may utilize Facebook Shop to deliver a seamless shopping experience without requiring consumers to leave the Facebook platform. Users can explore products, add them to their carts, and purchase directly from Facebook. Businesses may tag products in Facebook posts,

making it easier for people to find and buy them (Janathanan & Nizar, 2018). Businesses can also construct product catalogs that feature information such as pricing, descriptions, and photographs. These catalogs can be linked to Facebook advertisements, allowing businesses to promote their products to a specific audience while driving visitors to their Facebook Shop or another website. Facebook Messenger can be connected with the marketplace, allowing businesses to communicate with prospective buyers, answer queries, and negotiate rates straight from the platform (Berne-Manero & Marzo-Navarro, 2020). Messenger will enable companies to communicate with clients and close deals and quickly. Businesses can use Facebook's ad features to target specific audiences based on demographics, interests, and behaviors. Businesses can boost the visibility of their items and contact potential customers interested in their offerings by running tailored adverts (Dwivedi et al., 2020). Ad campaigns can increase revenue and brand exposure by driving people to the Facebook Shop or an external website. Facebook analytics and insights are available for company pages, allowing companies to measure metrics such as post reach, engagement, and click-through rates (Janathanan & Nizar, 2018). These insights assist firms in understanding the effectiveness of their market activities, identifying trends, and optimizing their marketing strategy. Businesses may engage with potential consumers and cultivate connections by joining relevant Facebook Groups or creating their communities. Engaging with members of these communities, sharing excellent material, and promoting products can help increase interest and drive sales.

YouTube as a marketing facilitator: While YouTube is best recognized as a video-sharing platform, it may also be used to promote and sell items and services. YouTube is a great place to showcase products and their features and benefits. Businesses can produce entertaining movies that promote their products or services, explain how they function, share client testimonials, and solicit feedback (Morris, M. and Anderson, 2015). These movies assist potential clients in understanding the value and functionality of the offerings, ultimately leading to a purchase. YouTube creators can do affiliate marketing by promoting items or services in their videos. Affiliate links can be included in video descriptions, or creators might use specialized tools such as YouTube's Merch Shelf feature (Nandagiri & Philip, 2018). The creator receives a commission when viewers click on these links and make a purchase. This enables businesses to promote and sell their products by leveraging the impact and reach of renowned YouTube creators. Businesses can develop sponsored content with YouTube influencers or creators to advertise their products or services. Influencers can promote products in their videos by providing reviews, tutorials, or sharing personal experiences. Sponsored videos allow brands to access a larger audience while benefiting from the authority and trust that influencers have built with their viewers (Xiao et al., 2018). Cards and End Screens are interactive elements on YouTube that allow businesses to market their products directly within videos. Companies can use these capabilities to provide clickable links or call to action that directs visitors to their website or online store, where they can make a purchase. Creators and businesses on YouTube may develop and sell branded items directly on the site. Merch Shelf on YouTube allows producers to display their stuff, such as t-shirts, mugs, or accessories, alongside their videos (Coates et al., 2020).

Viewers can purchase by clicking on the merchandise links, converting their support for the creator into a transaction. Businesses may now hold live shopping events or product debuts on YouTube thanks to new tools. These live streams can highlight new products, conduct demonstrations, offer limited-time deals, and interact with viewers in real time via live chat (Boerman, S. C., & Van Reijmersdal, 2020). Live shopping events instill a sense of urgency and exclusivity among viewers, prompting them to buy during the event. TrueView, pre-roll, and display ads are among the advertising alternatives available on YouTube (Masuda et al., 2022). Businesses can use tailored advertisements to reach specific audiences based on demographics, interests, and viewing habits. This advertising can generate leads and prospective purchases by driving traffic to the company's website, online store, or landing page.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the study design has been kept a mix of quantitative and qualitative research. The qualitative phase helped determine the study determinants, frame the questionnaire, and select the sampling technique (convenience sampling) and unit best suited for the study. A 5-point Likert scale administered questionnaire was floated to the Gen.Z population, mainly from the metropolitan cities of India (Kolkata, Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru). 347 samples from different cities were collected through a survey Google form floated over several social media handles and e-mails. The collected data was analyzed with the help of R software (Version 4.2).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the research objective, the significance of the determinants from the research model was statistically tested. The mediation analysis (Model 6) is carried out to understand the role of the influence of an individual opinion leader who the consumer is following as well as the brand awareness to popularize the social media space as a marketplace and subsequently affecting the behavior of the target segment towards online buying intention and adoption. The theory of Planned Behaviour clearly states that the purchase intention leads to adopting any phenomenon (Belanche et al., 2021).

Brand awareness as a mediator

R^2 value	Adj R^2 value	F Value	p-value
0.725	0.698	1.357	0.026

Brand awareness is impacted by the influence of the different social media handles (Adj. R^2 value – 0.698, $p < 0.05$).

Model	Coeff.	p-value	ULCI	LLCI	Mediation
Constant	3.80	0.0029	6.24	1.36	Significant
Influence by Instagram	0.793	0.0400	0.50	0.03	Significant
Influence by YouTube	0.218	0.009	-0.11	-0.55	Significant
Influence by Facebook	0.093	0.586	0.438	-0.25	Insignificant

The specific influence of Facebook on brand awareness is seen to be insignificant. In contrast, the p-value, ULCI – LLCI (non-zero range), determines the significance of other two popular social media platforms, i.e., YouTube (C.I. - 95%, p = 0.009 < 0.05, -0.11 to -0.55) & Instagram (C.I. – 95%, p = 0.04 < 0.05, 0.50 to 0.03).

Influence from the individual opinion leader/digital influencer

R^2 value	Adj. R^2 value	F Value	p-value
0.565	0.531	0.869	0.0055

The influence of the opinion leader is getting impacted by the effect of the different social media handles (Adj. R^2 value – 0.531, p < 0.05).

Model	Co.eff.	p-value	ULCI	LLCI	Mediation
Constant	2.226	0.018	-0.16	-0.21	Significant
Influence by Instagram	0.793	0.043	-0.10	-0.18	Significant
Influence by YouTube	0.218	0.009	-0.11	-0.55	Significant
Influence by Facebook	0.093	0.786	0.3591	-0.27	Insignificant
Brand awareness	0.1232	0.023	-0.03	-0.18	Significant

The specific influence of Facebook on influence by specific influencers is seen to be insignificant. In contrast, the p-value, ULCI – LLCI (non-zero range) determines the significance of other two popular social media platforms and brand awareness, i.e., YouTube (C.I. - 95%, p = 0.009 < 0.05, -0.11 to -0.55), Instagram (C.I. – 95%, p = 0.04 < 0.05, -0.10 to -0.18) & Brand Awareness (C.I. – 95%, p = 0.023 < 0.05, -0.03 to -0.18).

Effect on Consumers' Willingness for online consumption

R-value	R^2 value	F Value	p-value
0.3457	0.299	1.08	0.0386

The Influence of Insta, Youtube, and Individual Influencers on consumers' willingness is highly evident as a determinant and, obviously, the Brand awareness level of the target audience (p-value = 0.038 < 0.05).

Model	Coeff.	p-value	ULCI	LLCI	Mediation
Constant	2.56	0.006	4.39	0.73	Significant
Influence by Instagram	0.122	0.007	-0.30	-0.61	Significant
Influence by YouTube	0.082	0.033	-0.31	-0.45	Significant
Influence by Facebook	0.093	0.642	0.438	-0.25	Insignificant
Influence by specific digital influencers	0.06	0.004	-0.13	-0.27	Significant
Brand awareness	0.09	0.007	-0.09	-0.27	Significant

The mediation component ULCI – LLCI range is non-zero except for the Facebook influence, which determines that Gen. Z primarily relies on YouTube and Instagram through the influence of specific opinion leaders who the particular person follows.

Direct and Indirect effect of X on Y post to bootstrapping

Effect	S.E.	t-value	p-value	ULCI	LLCI
0.122	0.09	1.33	0.18	-0.06	-0.30

It can be seen that the p-value of direct effect after mediator inclusion becomes insignificant. It determines that there is full mediation in the phenomenon and the brand awareness and the influence by specific digital influencers is impacting the consumer willingness for online buying.

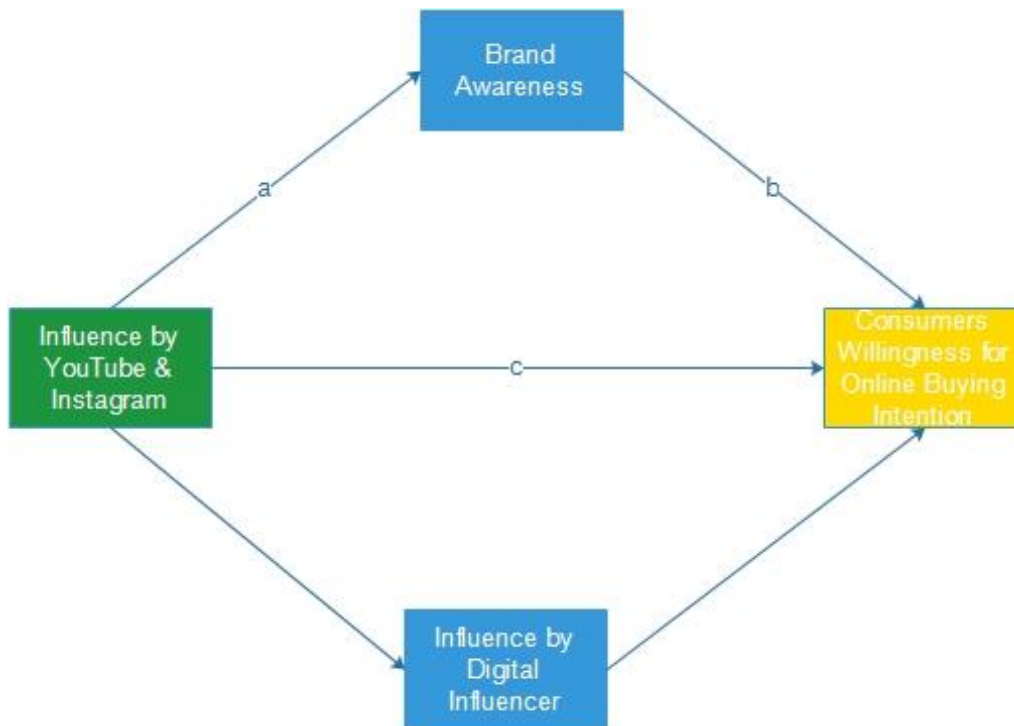|	Effect	Boot SE	Boot ULCI	Boot LLCI
Total	0.027	0.03	-0.10	-0.52
Ind1	0.020	0.02	-0.08	-0.42
Ind2	0.005	0.01	-0.05	-0.32
Ind3	0.002	0.20	-0.02	-0.20

Figure 1: Mediation Model

CONCLUSION

The individual digital influencer has a significant dominance in the mind of the consumers (Gen. Z), which is facilitated by different social media platforms. While strategizing social media marketing by the brands, it is crucial to understand the genre of the business and the taste & preferences of the target segment to select the right influencer to promote their product/services. Social media can also be used to enhance brand awareness; in turn, good brand awareness among the consumer will help the brand connect more

effectively. It facilitates the decision-making to strategize brand association with the ideal digital influencer and consumer to enhance the willingness for online buying.

References

1) AlFarraj, O., Alalwan, A. A., Obeidat, Z. M., Baabdullah, A., Aldmour, R., & Al-Haddad, S. (2021). Examining the impact of influencers' credibility dimensions: attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise on the purchase intention in the aesthetic dermatology industry. *Review of International Business and Strategy*.

2) Ansari, S., Ansari, G., Ghori, M. U., & Kazi, A. G. (2019). Impact of brand awareness and social media content marketing on consumer purchase decision. *Journal of Public Value and Administrative Insight*, *2*(2), 5–10.

3) Aria, M., Cuccurullo, C., D'Aniello, L., Misuraca, M., & Spano, M. (2022). Thematic Analysis as a New Culturomic Tool: The Social Media Coverage on COVID-19 Pandemic in Italy. *Sustainability*, *14*(6), 3643. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/su14063643

4) Barker, S. (2018). *A Comprehensive Guide to Instagram Influencer Marketing*. Convinceandconvert.

5) Belanche, D., Casaló, L. V., Flavián, M., & Ibáñez-Sánchez, S. (2021). Understanding influencer marketing: The role of congruence between influencers, products and consumers. *Journal of Business Research*, *132*, 186–195. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.03.067

6) Berne-Manero, C., & Marzo-Navarro, M. (2020). Exploring how influencer and relationship marketing serve corporate sustainability. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, *12*(11).

7) Boerman, S. C., & Van Reijmersdal, E. A. (2020). Disclosing influencer marketing on YouTube to children: The moderating role of para-social relationship. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *10*, 3042.

8) Chopra, A., Avhad, V., & Jaju, and S. (2021). Influencer Marketing: An Exploratory Study to Identify Antecedents of Consumer Behavior of Millennial. *Business Perspectives and Research*, *9*(1), 77–91. https://doi.org/10.1177/2278533720923486

9) Coates, A. E., Hardman, C. A., Halford, J. C. G., Christiansen, P., & Boyland, E. J. (2020). "It's Just Addictive People That Make Addictive Videos": Children's Understanding of and Attitudes Towards Influencer Marketing of Food and Beverages by YouTube Video Bloggers. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *17*(2). https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17020449

10) Darley, W. K., Blankson, C., & Luethge, D. J. (2010). Toward an integrated framework for online consumer behavior and decision making process: A review. *Psychology & Marketing*, *27*(2), 94–116.

11) Dastane, O. (2020). Impact of Digital Marketing on Online Purchase Intention: Mediation Effect of Customer Relationship Management. *Journal of Asian Business Strategy*, *10*(1), 142–158. https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.1006.2020.101.142.158

12) *Discover New Leads and Brand Growth with Influencer Marketing*. (2022). Big Commerce.

13) Dwivedi, Y. K., Ismagilova, E., Hughes, D. L., Carlson, J., Filieri, R., Jacobson, J., Jain, V., Karjaluoto, H., Kefi, H., Krishen, A. S., Kumar, V., Rahman, M. M., Raman, R., Rauschnabel, P. A., Rowley, J., Salo, J., Tran, G. A., & Wang, Y. (2020). Setting the future of digital and social media marketing research: Perspectives and research propositions. *International Journal of Information Management*, *July*, 102168. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102168

14) Gerlich, M. (2022). Micro-influencer marketing during the COVID-19 pandemic: New vistas or the end of an era? *Journal of Digital and Social Media Marketing*, *9*(4), 354–370.

15) Hu, K., & Fu, F. (2021). Evolutionary Dynamics of Gig Economy Labor Strategies under Technology, Policy and Market Influence. *Games*, *12*(2), 49.

16) Ibáñez-Sánchez, S., Flavián, M., Casaló, L. V., & Belanche, D. (2021). Influencers and brands successful collaborations: A mutual reinforcement to promote products and services on social media. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 1–18.

17) Issac, A. P., Mathew, A. O., & Sriram, K. V. (2022). Drivers of purchase intention-hedonic or utilitarian values? A case of Indian electric car market. *International Journal of Business Excellence*, *27*(2), 202–219.

18) Janathanan, C., & Nizar, N. A. (2018). Impact of digital marketing on consumer purchase behaviour; A case study on Dialog Axiata with specific reference to social media marketing. *APIIT Business, Law and Technology Conference*, 11.

19) Kapitan, S., van Esch, P., Soma, V., & Kietzmann, J. (2022). Influencer marketing and authenticity in content creation. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, *30*(4), 342–351.

20) Kaushik, R. (2016). Digital Marketing in Indian Context. *IJCEM International Journal of Computational Engineering & Management*, *19*(May), 2230–7893.

21) Klein, A., & Sharma, V. M. (2022). Consumer decision-making styles, involvement, and the intention to participate in online group buying. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *64*, 102808.

22) Lou, C. (2022). Social media influencers and followers: Theorization of a trans-parasocial relation and explication of its implications for influencer advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, *51*(1), 4–21.

23) Masuda, H., Han, S. H., & Lee, J. (2022). Impacts of influencer attributes on purchase intentions in social media influencer marketing: Mediating roles of characterizations. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *174*, 121246.

24) Masuda, H., Han, S. H., & Lee, J. (2022). Impacts of influencer attributes on purchase intentions in social media influencer marketing: Mediating roles of characterizations. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *174*(September 2021). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.121246

25) Melović, B., Jocović, M., Dabić, M., Vulić, T. B., & Dudic, B. (2020). The impact of digital transformation and digital marketing on the brand promotion, positioning and electronic business in Montenegro. *Technology in Society*, *63*, 101425.

26) Morris, M. and Anderson, E. (2015). 'Charlie is so cool like': authenticity, popularity and inclusive masculinity on YouTube. *Sociology*, *49*(6), 1200–1217.

27) Nafees, L., Cook, C. M., Nikolov, A. N., & Stoddard, J. E. (2021). Can social media influencer (SMI) power influence consumer brand attitudes? The mediating role of perceived SMI credibility. *Digital Business*, *1*(2), 100008. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.digbus.2021.100008

28) Nandagiri, V., & Philip, L. (2018). Impact of Influencers from Instagram and Youtube on their Followers. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Modern Education*, *4*(1), 61–65.

29) Orogun, A., & Onyekwelu, B. (2019). Predicting Consumer Behaviour in Digital Market : A Machine Learning Approach. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology*, *Hauser 2007*, 8391–8402. https://doi.org/10.15680/IJIRSET.2019.0808006

30) Suharto, Junaedi, W. R., Muhdar, H. M., Firmansyah, A., & Sarana. (2022). Consumer loyalty of Indonesia e-commerce SMEs: The role of social media marketing and customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Data and Network Science*, *6*(2), 383–390. https://doi.org/10.5267/j.ijdns.2021.12.016

31) Sun, Y., Wang, R., Cao, D., & Lee, R. (2022). Who are social media influencers for luxury fashion consumption of the Chinese Gen Z? Categorisation and empirical examination. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, *26*(4), 603–621. https://doi.org/10.1108/JFMM-07-2020-0132

32) Thilina, D. K. (2021). Conceptual Review of Social Influencer Marketing on Purchase Intention; Dynamics in Fashion Retail Industry. *Sri Lanka Journal of Marketing*, *7*(0), 25. https://doi.org/10.4038/sljmuok.v7i0.48

33) Vieira, V. A., de Almeida, M. I. S., Agnihotri, R., da Silva, N. S. D. A. C., & Arunachalam, S. (2019). In pursuit of an effective B2B digital marketing strategy in an emerging market. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *47*(6), 1085–1108. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-019-00687-1

34) Wielki, J. (2020). Analysis of the role of digital influencers and their impact on the functioning of the contemporary on-line promotional system and its sustainable development. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, *12*(17). https://doi.org/10.3390/su12177138

35) Xiao, M., Wang, R., & Chan-Olmsted, S. (2018). Factors affecting YouTube influencer marketing credibility: a heuristic-systematic model. *Journal of Media Business Studies*, *15*(3), 188–213. https://doi.org/10.1080/16522354.2018.1501146

36) Ye, G., Hudders, L., De Jans, S., & De Veirman, M. (2021). The value of influencer marketing for business: A bibliometric analysis and managerial implications. *Journal of Advertising*, *50*(2), 160–178.

Tianjin Daxue Xuebao (Ziran Kexue yu Gongcheng Jishu Ban)/
Journal of Tianjin University Science and Technology
ISSN (Online):0493-2137
E-Publication: Online Open Access
Vol: 57 Issue: 02:2024
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.10700287

Feb 2024 | 493