

Vocal For Local: Role of Digital Influencers in Promoting Products in the Consumer Market



Dr Meenakshi Kharb

Assistant Professor, Management Education & Research Institute, New Delhi

ABSTRACT: In the age of digitization, consumers are tuned to their mobile's phones, it is imperative to study the role of influencers in promoting local business. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi also added the term ATAMANIRBHAR BHARAT on 17 May 2022, which means self-reliance. We Indians again need to proliferate, 'The Swadeshi Moment' and make our country self-reliant in almost every walk of life. 'Be Indian, Buy Indian' needs to be instilled in the minds of the Indian consumers with spirit of love towards the nation. (Atamanirbharbharat, 2022)

This Government initiative to be 'Vocal for Local', create awareness and encourage to the local retailers. This will help lot of Indian companies which are having strong consumer base and presence in Indian market has started integrating 'vocal for local' themes across all marketing drives. The focus is on the promoting the products with a strong message of 'Made in India'. The concept of Vocal to Local, is promoting Indian products in the Indian markets through persuading marketing so that the Indian consumers imprudent behaviour can be tested. (Srivastava, 2020)

Influencers generate a lot of engagement with their content. Digital marketing influencers are the persons who are considered experts within their niche and endorse various products and carry out promotions for brands and their clients. They have a dedicated social following that has been built with time and trust. The objective of the paper is to explore and review the role of influencers in Indian consumer market.

KEYWORDS: Vocal for Local, Digital Influencers, consumers, Perception

INTRODUCTION

Influencer marketing is a relatively new digital marketing tactic that uses famous people or other influential people to spread the word about a company or product on social media. Influencer marketing is a very effective strategy, whether it involves a product endorsement or simply a brand mention.

Although many people might mistakenly believe that influencer marketing and celebrity endorsement is the same thing, influencer marketing actually penetrates more specialised markets thanks to micro-influencers. Micro-influencers are those who have a small fan base, usually fewer than 50,000. (Middleton, 2023)

It is possible to describe influencer marketing as the practice of locating and engaging people who have influence for the purpose of participating in a brand's campaign to improve reach, sales, or engagement over a particular target audience or medium. Influencer marketing is a development of the basic idea of word-of-mouth advertising that concentrates on a social setting and is carried out in a more expert manner. It is a method of connection development that might be highly beneficial for businesses looking to increase their audience and win them over with trust and sincerity.

(Verma, 2021) The study by Thinking Hat on the meaning of the term "Vocal for Local" and how consumers perceive it was done through a digital platform. The target audience consisted of nearly 1800 consumers in the 18 to 50 age range from five major cities. According to the study's findings, 75% of customers comprehended the terms, yet there was some ambiguity and widespread misinformation. Due to marketing efforts, people were unable to distinguish Indian businesses from foreign ones.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Opinion leaders are defined by **Rogers (1995)** as socially active individuals who are linked to one another within the social system. This definition can be applied to the online world as well. Digital opinion leadership is actually seen as primarily a social activity that involves maintaining a carefully designed public persona for the benefit of a fan base, and maintaining popularity by constant fan management (Marwick & boyd, 2011).

Vocal For Local: Role of Digital Influencers in Promoting Products in the Consumer Market

(Ryan, 2014) According to Ryan, SMIs are the key influencers online. They use the power of the internet to promote the virtues of goods and companies they like as well as to disparage those they find lacking. Blogs, podcasts, forums, and social media platforms can all be used for it. As a result, they have the general public's virtual ear online. SMI, according to (Freberg, 2011), is an impartial third-party supporter that uses social media and other digital channels to influence target audience opinions.

(M Sudha, 2017) The rise of influencer marketing has helped brands understand that there needs a shift of focus. As people trust influencers more than any brand for the promotion of a product, direct marketing is not as effective anymore as it was in the past, which creates the need for the assessment of a branded content strategy. And it gets even more challenging when trying to target the younger generation, as millennial are more demanding for the advertised content they get exposed to. In fact, they don't even get convinced from the traditionally popular celebrities, as 70% of them prefer non-celebrity influencers for product endorsements. This means that in order to reap the rewards of a successful campaign using an influencer, a firm beginning with influencer marketing has to understand its audience.

(Hermawan, 2019) Empirical studies have revealed that the role of influencers helps to build trust between brands and consumers, where the influencer acts as a third party who bridges communication between the two. (Biaudet, 2017). Integrity, an action that aims for goodness and knowledge are means to build trust between influencers and their followers in communicating brands in the fitness industry sector (Baranow, 2019)

However, Pöyry et al. (2019) go further and assert that it is a techno social practise in which social media influencers constantly deal with the pressure to be likeable, credible, and interesting for their fans as well as economically profitable and, at the same time, they must assimilate and adapt to new technologies.

In his Independence Day speech in 2020, Prime Minister Modi stated that "Vocal for local" should be the way of thinking in a free India. If we don't show our appreciation for locally produced goods, they won't have the chance to improve and won't be encouraged. The phrase "local for global" is an extension of this one, suggesting that Indian native products should have a global audience and appeal.

In the research study, comparing the information from the outcomes of international research studies and the quantitative online research there are certain conclusions. The findings of the poll showed that some products might profit more from influencer marketing than others.

According to the Digital News Report Ireland 2020, a study was conducted at Oxford University, concluded that Gen Z in Ireland considering the use of social media as their primary source for news consumption, growing by three percentage points in five years (Niamh et al., 2020). Moreover, there is a higher level of social media use for news among 18-24 year olds, and smartphones are used by 71% of Gen Z as their main device for accessing news, and this has increased by 18% points over five years.

(Hasprova, 2020) The survey's results demonstrated that some products may benefit more than others from influencer marketing than others. When it comes to purchasing apparel, footwear, cosmetics, and, shockingly, services, influencers will have the biggest impact. People still primarily rely on other considerations to make their purchases of food, jewellery, and technology, but it's possible that influencer marketing could have an impact on those decisions as well.

(Institute, 2021) In order to develop influencers, TikTok established a \$1 billion Creator Fund. The TikTok Creator Fund was introduced by the site in 2020 to support creators who want to use TikTok to support their livelihood. This fund, which rewards TikTokers for spreading joy to huge audiences, requires creators to have up to 100,000 video views over the course of a month in order to qualify. Over the next three years, the \$200k initial investment in the fund is anticipated to increase to \$1bn in the United States. Their objective is to create a force of influencers who can support themselves through brand collaborations, sponsorships, and representation agreements.

The goal of this scholarly contribution is to systematise knowledge regarding the role of influencers as opinion leaders in the social media ecosystem in order to pinpoint their contribution towards the consumer decision making process.

The objective of this scientific contribution is the systematisation of knowledge about the position and responsibilities of influencers as opinion leaders in the social media environment in order to identify their typology, influence factors, and the intensity of their impact on the consumer decision-making process.

Many researchers say that the SMIs exert an interference power over people, mainly shaping and transforming people's opinions, as well as influencing their purchase decision-making process or just influencing people to buy, exposing them to brands' logos and advertisements (Glucksman, 2017; Kalu, 2019). Some influencers have millions of followers and when they act on their massive number of followers, they have the ability to influence a large part of public opinion, transforming behaviors, changing attitudes, interfering in people's personality and identity and mostly giving rise to consumer products and creating brand awareness

Vocal For Local: Role of Digital Influencers in Promoting Products in the Consumer Market

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of the paper is to explore and review the role of influencers in Indian consumer market. The consumer market is widely influenced by social influencer's presence in social media.

METHODOLOGY

This paper uses the literature review as a research technique to lay the groundwork for knowledge advancement, contrast ideas, outline insights, thoroughly review the subjects, and generate insights on the key issues. (Webster & Watson 2002).

Regular searches were done on electronic journal databases such as JSTOR, Emerald, Sage, Research Gate, Google Scholar, as part of the review of the literature. The following criteria were used in the selection of articles: Peer review is a requirement, as are the amount of citations, the relationship between the abstract's keywords and the paper's subject, and the validity and dependability of the research methodologies.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the paper is to identify the gap between the existing researches. (M Sudha, 2017) Consumer decision-making according to Philip Kotler is used as a model. New insights can be gleaned by gathering data from the perspective of consumers. Indicators of how potential readers can access the influencers of the decision-making process are another goal of the investigation. Since it focuses primarily on the impact that blogs have on purchasing behaviour, all retailers should be aware of this research in order to comprehend how the opinions of others can change the behaviour patterns of contemporary consumers.

(Amar Kumar Verma, 2021) Indian companies like Amul, Dabur, Godrej, and Tata are lending pride to 'made in India' ethos gives an uncountable edge to local Indian brands. Small corporations pivoting to start producing essentials like hand sanitizers, ventilators and mask.

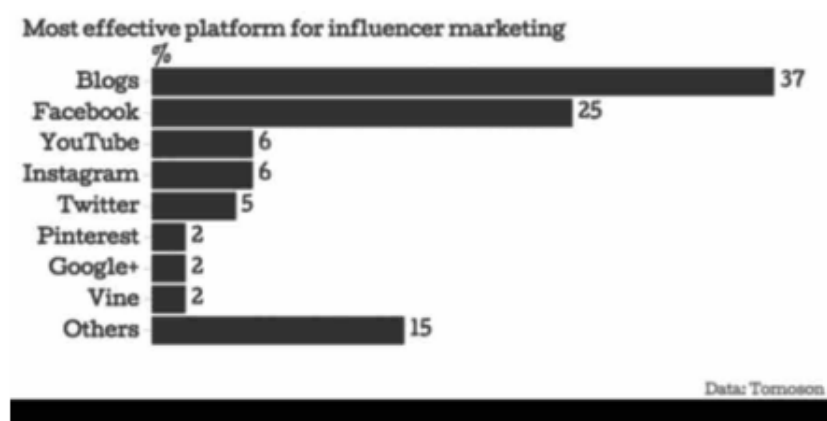


Fig-2 Effective platform for influence marketing

Source : Data - Tomoson

CONCLUSION

The digital revolution have completely changed the way consumers and marketers communicate with each other as more of social media platforms are added to connect and facilitate communication process. (Glucksman, 2017) Researchers believed that the Social Media Influencers play a vital role in shaping and transforming people's opinions, as well as influencing their purchase decision-making process or just influencing people to buy, exposing them to brands' logos and advertisements (Glucksman, 2017; Kalu, 2019). Some influencers have millions of followers and when they act on their massive number of followers, they have the ability to influence a large part of public opinion, transforming behaviors, changing attitudes, interfering in people's personality and identity and mostly giving rise to consumer products and creating brand awareness.

Additionally, research by Wang, Chunling, and Yujie (2012) and others has supported the significance and influence of peer communication through social media in terms of purchasing decisions and online activity. More recently, Sherman, Payton, and Hernandez (2016) discovered through fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) scanning that teenagers were more likely to respond favourably to, or like, Instagram photos depicted with many likes than photos with few likes, demonstrating the influence of virtual peer endorsement. In conclusion, researchers and psychologists have expressed alarm and caution over the harmful effects that social media influencers have on teenagers (W, 2020)

Vocal For Local: Role of Digital Influencers in Promoting Products in the Consumer Market

REFERENCES

- 1) (2022). Atamanirbharbharat.
- 2) Amar Kumar Verma, A. K. (2021, May). Vocal for Local. Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research, 8(5).
- 3) Freberg, K. G. (2011). Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perception of personality. Public Relations Review, 37, 90-92.
- 4) Glucksman, M. (2017). The Rise of Social Media Influencer Marketing on Life style Branding: A case study of Luice Fink. Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in communication, 8(2), 77-87.
- 5) Hasprova, S. Z. (2020). The role of influencers in the consumer decision-making process. International Scientific Conference Globalization and its Socio-Economic Consequences 2019 , 74, pp. Volume 74, 2020.
- 6) Hermawan, D. (2019). Influencer Marketing in Digital Era: Does it really works? International Journal of Management of Management, Entrepreneurship, Social Science and Humanities, 3(2), 50-67.
- 7) Institute, D. M. (2021, Oct 19). 20 Surprising Influencer Marketing Statistics. Social Media Marketing.
- 8) M Sudha, K. S. (2017, July- September). Impact of Influencers in Consumer Decision Process: The Fashion Industry. SCMS Journal of Indian Management.
- 9) Middleton, A. (2023, January 11). The Role of Influencers in Consumer Purchasing Decisions. JEFF BULLAS.
- 10) Ryan, D. (2014). Understanding Digital Marketing: Marketing strategies for engaging the digital generation. Kogan Page Limited.
- 11) Srivastava, D. S. (2020). BEING VOCAL FOR LOCAL BRANDS: A NEW MANTRA OF SUCCESS FOR FMCG. In B. M. University (Ed.), National Multidisciplinary E-Conference on Opportunities and Challenges for Indian Business, (pp. 1-9). Surat.
- 12) Vandana Verma in Voices. (2022). How Indian brands are rooting for influencer marketing in 2022. Times of India.
- 13) Verma, A. k. (2021, May). VOCAL FOR LOCAL. (JETIR, Ed.) Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research, 8(5).
- 14) W. (2020). Frontiers in Psychology.



There is an Open Access article, distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits remixing, adapting and building upon the work for non-commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.