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EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER MARKETING ON BRAND AWARENESS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS IN COIMBATORE CITY

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ABSTRACT
This study examines the effect of social media influencer marketing on brand awareness among college students in Coimbatore city. With the rapid growth of digital communication technologies, social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook have become important marketing tools that allow brands to interact directly with consumers. College students represent one of the most active groups of social media users, making them an important target segment for influencer-driven marketing strategies.
The study adopts a descriptive research design and uses primary data collected through a structured questionnaire from 100 college students. Convenience sampling was used to select respondents, and percentage analysis was applied to interpret the data. The results indicate that social media influencer marketing significantly improves brand awareness among college students by increasing brand recognition, recall, and familiarity. The findings also show that Instagram is the most influential platform for brand promotions, followed by YouTube.
The study concludes that influencer credibility, engaging content, and frequent exposure to social media advertisements play an important role in shaping brand awareness among students. Therefore, brands targeting youth markets should strategically collaborate with influencers and focus on interactive social media campaigns to strengthen brand visibility and engagement.
KEYWORDS: *Social Media Marketing, Influencer Marketing, Brand Awareness, Digital Marketing, College Students*

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed the way businesses communicate with their consumers. In the past, traditional marketing methods such as television advertisements, newspapers, and radio were the primary tools used by organizations to promote products and services. However, the emergence of the internet and social media platforms has created new opportunities for businesses to reach consumers in a more interactive and personalized manner.

Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and X (formerly Twitter) have become powerful communication channels where brands can engage directly with consumers. These platforms allow companies to share promotional content, interact with audiences, and build strong relationships with customers. As a result, social media marketing has become an essential component of modern marketing strategies.

Among various marketing strategies used on social media, influencer marketing has gained significant popularity. Influencers are individuals who have built a large following on social media platforms and have the ability to influence the opinions and behaviors of their audience. Brands collaborate with influencers to promote their products and services through reviews, tutorials, and lifestyle content.

College students are among the most active users of social media. They spend a considerable amount of time browsing content, interacting with peers, and following influencers. This constant exposure to social media content makes them more likely to encounter brand-related messages and promotional campaigns.
Brand awareness refers to the ability of consumers to recognize and recall a brand when making purchasing decisions.

This study focuses on examining the effect of social media influencer marketing on brand awareness among college students in Coimbatore city. Understanding this relationship is important for marketers who aim to design effective promotional strategies targeting young consumers.

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2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Several studies have examined the relationship between social media marketing and brand awareness. Aaker (1991) defined brand awareness as the ability of consumers to recognize and recall a brand under different circumstances. According to Aaker, brand awareness is a fundamental component of brand equity.

Keller (1993) explained that brand awareness consists of two dimensions: brand recognition and brand recall. Brand recognition refers to the ability of consumers to identify a brand when exposed to it, while brand recall refers to the ability to remember a brand when thinking about a product category.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined social media as internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Their study emphasized that social media platforms enable organizations to communicate directly with consumers and increase brand visibility.

Mangold and Faulds (2009) identified social media as a hybrid promotional tool that combines traditional marketing and word-of-mouth communication. They concluded that consumers rely heavily on peer-generated content and recommendations when evaluating brands.

De Veirman, Cauberghe, and Hudders (2017) studied the impact of Instagram influencers and found that influencers with a large number of followers can increase brand visibility. However, credibility and relevance were found to be more important than follower count.

Lou and Yuan (2019) examined influencer marketing and consumer trust. Their research indicated that informative and entertaining influencer content positively influences brand awareness and consumer attitudes.

These studies highlight the growing importance of social media marketing and influencer promotions in shaping brand awareness among young consumers.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the most influential social media platforms used by college students for brand-related information.
2. To examine the level of brand awareness created through social media influencer marketing among college students.
3. To analyze how influencer characteristics such as credibility, popularity, and expertise affect brand awareness.
4. To study the role of social media influencers in promoting brands among college students.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a descriptive research design to understand how social media influencer marketing affects brand awareness among college students.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of twenty questions. The questionnaire was distributed to college students from different departments. Secondary data were obtained from academic journals, books, research articles, and online sources related to social media marketing and brand awareness.

A convenience sampling method was used to select respondents who were easily available and willing to participate in the study. The sample size consisted of 100 college students. The independent variable of the study is social media influencer marketing, while the dependent variable is brand awareness among college students.

The collected data were analyzed using percentage analysis and simple statistical interpretation. Tables and charts were used to present the results clearly.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The analysis of the collected data reveals several important insights regarding the influence of social media marketing on brand awareness among college students.

The majority of respondents belong to the age group of 18–20 years, indicating that young students form the largest segment of social media users in the study. Female respondents constitute a slightly higher proportion compared to male respondents.

Instagram was identified as the most frequently used social media platform among students, followed by YouTube and WhatsApp. This suggests that visual content platforms play an important role in influencer marketing.

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A large proportion of respondents reported spending three or more hours daily on social media. This high level of engagement increases the likelihood of students encountering influencer promotions and brand-related content.
The results also indicate that many students are able to recognize brands through logos seen on social media. Furthermore, a majority of respondents agreed that influencer recommendations improve their awareness of new brands.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that influencer marketing plays a significant role in increasing brand awareness among college students.

6. FINDINGS

- Most college students actively use social media platforms.
- Instagram is the most preferred platform for influencer content.
- Influencer promotions significantly improve brand recognition and recall.
- Students spend considerable time on social media each day.
- Influencer credibility increases trust and familiarity with brands.

7. SUGGESTIONS

- Brands should collaborate with influencers who have strong engagement and credibility.
- Instagram and YouTube should be prioritized for campaigns targeting college students.
- Micro-influencers can be effective in building trust among young consumers.
- Brands should create creative and interactive content such as reels and short videos.

8. CONCLUSION

The study examined the effect of social media influencer marketing on brand awareness among college students in Coimbatore city. The findings clearly indicate that social media platforms play a significant role in shaping students' awareness and perception of brands.

Influencer marketing allows brands to communicate with young audiences in a relatable and engaging manner. Through product reviews, sponsored posts, and social media campaigns, influencers help consumers recognize and remember brands more effectively.

The results demonstrate that influencer marketing has a positive relationship with brand awareness. Platforms such as Instagram and YouTube were identified as the most influential in promoting brands among students.

In conclusion, social media influencer marketing is an effective promotional strategy for brands targeting young consumers. Companies should strategically collaborate with credible influencers and create engaging digital content to strengthen brand visibility and consumer engagement.

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