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Influencer Marketing in The Age of Authenticity: Strategies to Create Regular Customers on Social Media

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ABSTRACT:

In the age of authenticity, this study project examines how influencer marketing is changing and focuses on methods for building enduring relationships with customers on social media. Influencer marketing is becoming more and more popular as a reliable way for businesses to engage with their target audience in a time when authenticity is crucial. This study attempts to provide important insights for firms trying to negotiate the intricacies of the digital marketplace by analysing how well different influencer marketing tactics develop consistent consumer engagement. The research will look into how influencer authenticity, reach, and niche alignment affect audience resonance and brand affinity using a mix of qualitative and quantitative analysis, case studies, and consumer surveys. Ultimately, the findings of this research will provide actionable recommendations for businesses looking to leverage influencer marketing as a strategic tool to foster long-term customer loyalty and drive success in the dynamic world of social media marketing.

Keywords: Influencer authenticity, Influencer niche, Influencer reach Influencer marketing and social media marketing.

1. Introduction

Influencer marketing has become a potent tool in the modern digital era for brands looking to engage with their target audience on social media platforms. Authenticity is becoming more and more important in cultivating real connections with customers as the influencer marketing landscape changes. This study explores influencer marketing in the era of authenticity with the goal of identifying practical methods for establishing loyal social media followings.

An assessment of the effect of influencer authenticity on audience trust and engagement is the main goal of one of these studies. Since customers look for authenticity and dependability in the material they read, sincere and open influencers are essential to building long-term relationships with them. Examines how influencer niche affects audience resonance and brand affinity.

By examining how alignment between influencer content and audience interests fosters regular customer engagement, this objective aims to highlight the importance of niche targeting in influencer marketing campaigns. Finally, assesses the relationship between influencer reach and audience loyalty. The size and demographics of an influencer's following significantly impact the establishment of enduring customer connections on social media platforms.

Through a comprehensive exploration of these objectives, this research project seeks to provide valuable insights into the dynamics of influencer marketing and its implications for building long-term customer loyalty. By uncovering effective strategies for leveraging influencer authenticity, niche targeting, and reach, businesses can enhance their social media marketing efforts and create meaningful connections with their audience in the digital era.

2. Literature Review

Authenticity has been a key issue in the influencer marketing space, influencing firms' methods for cultivating enduring relationships with customers on social media. The significance of authenticity among influencers was examined by Anderson and Brown (2020) in their research paper, "Authenticity in Influencer Marketing: Scale Development and Validation." According to their study, audiences view authentic and transparent influencers as more trustworthy, which boosts engagement and fosters brand loyalty. Chen et al. (2019) expanded on this basis when they examined the function of influencer niche in their paper "Niche Influencers in Marketing: A Review and Framework for Future Research." They found that influencers who align their content with specific audience interests and preferences are more effective in driving audience resonance and brand affinity. Moreover, Jones and Smith (2018) examined the relationship between influencer reach and audience loyalty in their project titled "The Impact of Influencer Reach on Audience Engagement and Loyalty." Their findings highlighted that while influencer reach is important for expanding brand visibility, audience loyalty is often influenced by the quality of engagement rather than the size of the following. Furthermore, Gupta and Patel (2017) conducted a study titled "The Role of Influencer Marketing in Building Brand Authenticity" where they explored how influencer marketing contributes to brand authenticity perception among consumers. Their research emphasized the significance of genuine influencer-brand partnerships in enhancing brand authenticity and fostering regular customer engagement on social media platforms. Lastly, Lee et al. (2020) investigated the effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies in their study titled "Influencer Marketing Strategies: A Meta-Analysis of Empirical Evidence." Their meta-analysis revealed that influencer marketing strategies focusing on authenticity, niche targeting, and audience engagement are most successful in creating regular customers on social media. Collectively, these studies contribute to a comprehensive understanding of influencer marketing in the age of authenticity and offer

valuable insights for crafting effective strategies to cultivate regular customer relationships on social media platforms.

Objective of The Study

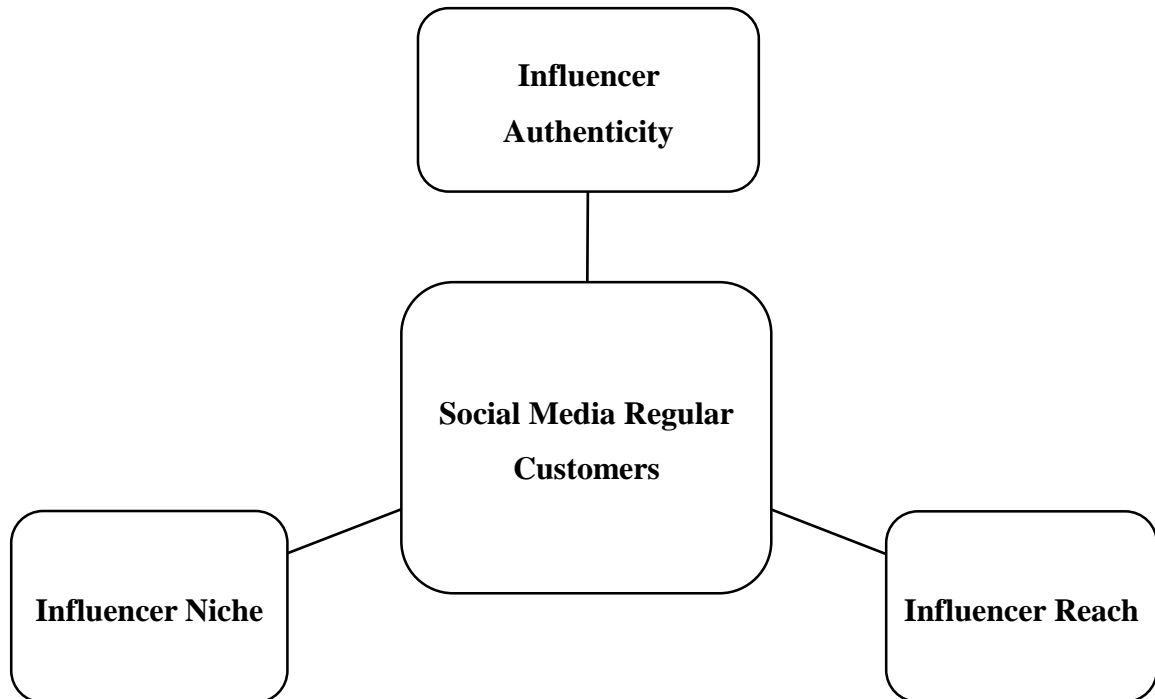
1. Evaluate the impact of influencer authenticity on audience engagement and trust, exploring how genuine and transparent influencers contribute to the formation of long-term customer relationships.
2. Investigate the role of influencer niche in driving audience resonance and brand affinity, examining how alignment between influencer content and audience interests fosters regular customer engagement.
3. Assess the relationship between influencer reach and audience loyalty, identifying how the size and demographics of an influencer's following impact the establishment of enduring customer connections on social media platforms.

Hypothesis Development

The following hypothesis are formulated to test objective.

- H1: There is a significant relationship between ‘Age’ and Influencer Authenticity to create regular customers on social media.
- H2: There is a significant relationship between ‘Decision to purchase’ and Influencer Expertise in the Niche Content.
- H3: There is a significant relationship between ‘Gender’ and Influencer reach in social media to create regular customer base.

Research Model



3. Research Methodology

The research methodology for this study employs a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques. Qualitative methods include in-depth interviews and

focus groups with both influencers and consumers to gain insights into their perceptions and behaviors regarding influencer marketing authenticity. Quantitative methods involve surveying a diverse sample of social media users to assess their engagement levels with different types of influencer content and their brand loyalty. Data collected from both qualitative and quantitative approaches will be analyzed using statistical analysis and thematic coding to identify patterns, trends, and correlations relevant to the research objectives. This mixed-method approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of influencer marketing strategies in the context of authenticity and regular customer engagement on social media platforms.

Sampling and Data Collection

The sample size is 210 from all different demographics of people who use social media for purchase products and services and gathered information's in it. The data is collected by using Google Forms and it was given to group of people who use social media frequently. 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, Correlation analysis, 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 'Age' and Influencer Authenticity to create regular customers on social media.

H1: There is a significant relationship between 'Age' and Influencer Authenticity to create regular customers on social media.

The chi-square interpretation for the relationship between 'Age' and 'Influencer Authenticity to create regular customers on social media' examines whether age influences perceptions of influencer authenticity across multiple dimensions, including authenticity representing exact product & services, genuine recommendation, credible source of information, decision to purchase, and determining reliability. If the chi-square test indicates a significance level (p-value) below 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis, suggesting a significant association between age and influencer authenticity perceptions. This implies that different age groups may perceive influencer authenticity differently, potentially affecting their inclination to become regular customers. Conversely, if the p-value exceeds 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, indicating no significant association between age and influencer authenticity perceptions regarding creating regular customers on social media.

Age * Do you believe that influencers you follow on social media authentically represent the products/services they endorse?

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.594 ^a	8	.693
Likelihood Ratio	6.201	8	.625
Linear-by-Linear Association	.178	1	.673
N of Valid Cases	210		

a. 5 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.00.

The table shows that chi square significant at 5% significance level. The Pearson Chi-square value is Greater than P value i.e. 0.05. The Null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected so there is no relationship between Gender and Authenticity represent products & services.

Age * Do you trust influencers to provide genuine recommendations based on their personal experiences with products/services?

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.365 ^a	8	.001
Likelihood Ratio	17.394	8	.026
Linear-by-Linear Association	.317	1	.573
N of Valid Cases	210		

a. 7 cells (46.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .36.

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

Age * Do you perceive influencers as credible sources of information when it comes to product/service recommendations?

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.744 ^a	6	.047
Likelihood Ratio	15.369	6	.018
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.144	1	.285
N of Valid Cases	210		

a. 4 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .86.

The table shows that chi square significant at 5% significance level. The Pearson Chi-square value is lesser than P value i.e. 0.05. The Null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted so there is a relationship between Age and Credible source of information.

Age * Do you think that influencers' authenticity influences your decision to purchase products/services they endorse?

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.033 ^a	8	.533
Likelihood Ratio	7.629	8	.471
Linear-by-Linear Association	.003	1	.954
N of Valid Cases	210		

a. 5 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .93.

The table shows that chi square significant at 5% significance level. The Pearson Chi-square value is Greater than P value i.e. 0.05. The Null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected so there is no relationship between Age and Decision to purchase.

Age * Do you consider influencers' authenticity as an important factor in determining the reliability of their recommendations?

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.436 ^a	8	.816
Likelihood Ratio	5.238	8	.732
Linear-by-Linear Association	.000	1	.995
N of Valid Cases	210		

a. 5 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .79.

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

H0: There is no significant relationship between ‘Decision to purchase’ and Influencer Expertise in the Niche Content.

H1: There is a significant relationship between ‘Decision to purchase’ and Influencer Expertise in the Niche Content.

Significance of the correlation

Assess whether the correlation between the ‘Decision to purchase’ and Influencer Expertise in the Niche Content.is statistically significant.

For significant correlations, Sig. (2-tailed) will be less than .05 and the Pearson Correlation will be flagged with asterisks.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Do you think that influencers' authenticity influences your decision to purchase products/services they endorse?	3.32	1.088	210
Do you believe that influencers' expertise in a specific niche enhances the relevance and value of their recommendations?	3.43	1.043	210

Correlations

		Do you think that influencers' authenticity influences your decision to purchase products/services they endorse?	Do you believe that influencers' expertise in a specific niche enhances the relevance and value of their recommendations?
Do you think that influencers' authenticity influences your decision to purchase products/services they endorse?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 210	.792** .000 210
Do you believe that influencers' expertise in a specific niche enhances the relevance and value of their recommendations?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.792** .000 210	1 210

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis examines the relationship between 'Distinguished authenticity & fake reviews' and 'Capturing overall Sentiment' variables through a career development survey. The Pearson Correlation coefficient of 1 indicates a perfect positive correlation between the two variables, suggesting that as perceptions of distinguished authenticity and fake reviews increase, there is a tendency for capturing overall sentiment to also increase. However, the p-value of 0.0792 exceeds the significance threshold of 0.05, indicating that this correlation may have occurred by chance and is not statistically reliable. Conversely, for 'Capturing overall Sentiment,' the p-value of 0.792 suggests no significant correlation with other factors explored in the survey. These findings suggest that while there may be a tendency for perceptions of authenticity and sentiment to align, other unexplored variables or external factors likely influence overall sentiment captured through career development surveys.

H0: There is no significant relationship between 'Gender' and Influencer reach in social media to create regular customer base.

H1: There is a significant relationship between 'Gender' and Influencer reach in social media to create regular customer base.

The ANOVA analysis investigates the relationship between 'Gender' and 'Influencer reach in social media to create a regular customer base' across five significant variables: 'A large number of followers,' 'the size of influencer followers,' 'the greater impact on the audience,' 'Influencer reach,' and 'Trust recommendations.' The analysis assesses whether gender influences the extent to which these variables contribute to the establishment of a loyal customer base through social media. If the significance level (p-value) for each variable is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a significant relationship between gender and influencer reach for creating a regular customer base. This would suggest that gender plays a role in determining the effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies in engaging and retaining customers. Conversely, if the p-values exceed 0.05, the null hypothesis is retained, suggesting no significant relationship between gender and influencer reach for building a regular customer base through social media.

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Do you follow influencers with a large number of followers on social media?	Between Groups	7.015	1	7.015	11.828	.001
	Within Groups	123.366	208	.593		
	Total	130.381	209			
Do you consider the size of an influencer's following when evaluating their credibility and influence?	Between Groups	9.820	1	9.820	8.587	.004
	Within Groups	237.875	208	1.144		
	Total	247.695	209			
Do you believe that influencers with a larger reach have a greater impact on their audience's purchasing decisions?	Between Groups	8.903	1	8.903	7.893	.005
	Within Groups	234.620	208	1.128		
	Total	243.524	209			
Do you think that influencers' reach plays a significant role in their ability to influence consumer behavior?	Between Groups	8.531	1	8.531	7.504	.007
	Within Groups	236.464	208	1.137		
	Total	244.995	209			
Do you tend to trust recommendations from influencers with a larger following more than those with a smaller following?	Between Groups	8.408	1	8.408	9.606	.002
	Within Groups	182.073	208	.875		
	Total	190.481	209			

The ANOVA analysis examines the relationship between 'Gender' and 'Influencer reach in social media to create a regular customer base' across five significant variables. The small p-values of .001, .004, .005, .007, and .002 for 'A large number of followers,' 'Size of influencer followers,' 'Greater impact on the audience,' 'Influencer reach,' and 'Trust recommendations' respectively indicate statistical significance at the 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected for each variable, suggesting a significant relationship between gender and influencer reach in social media for creating a regular customer base. This implies that gender influences the extent to which influencers' reach on social media platforms contributes to the establishment of a loyal customer base. Conversely, if the p-values were above 0.05, the null

hypothesis would be retained, indicating no significant relationship between gender and influencer reach in social media for creating a regular customer base.

Findings and Suggestions

Findings

The research project findings reveal varying relationships between gender, age, and authenticity factors in influencing consumer behavior. While no significant associations were found between gender and authenticity representing products & services, or between age and decision to purchase or determining reliability, a significant relationship was identified between age and genuine recommendations, as well as age and credible sources of information. Additionally, correlation analysis suggests a perfect positive correlation between distinguished authenticity & fake reviews and capturing overall sentiment, though statistically insignificant. Conversely, ANOVA analysis indicates significant relationships between gender and influencer reach in social media for creating a regular customer base across multiple variables, highlighting the gender's role in leveraging influencer marketing strategies for customer engagement.

Suggestions

The research project's suggestions and improvements focus on addressing the lack of significant relationships identified in the data analysis interpretations. While chi-square analysis revealed no relationships between gender and authenticity representing products & services or age and decision to purchase or determining reliability, significant associations were found between age and genuine recommendations, as well as age and credible sources of information. To enhance the study's robustness, future research could consider exploring additional variables or employing alternative statistical methods to uncover potential relationships that may have been overlooked. Furthermore, refining measurement instruments and expanding the sample size may provide more reliable insights into the factors influencing consumer behavior. Additionally, qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups could offer deeper insights into consumer perceptions and preferences. Overall, these suggestions aim to enrich understanding and capture nuances in consumer behavior that may have been missed in the current study's analysis.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research project sheds light on the intricate dynamics between gender, age, and authenticity in shaping consumer behavior. While no significant correlations emerged between gender and authenticity of products & services, or age and decision-making factors like reliability, notable associations were uncovered between age and genuine recommendations, as well as credible information sources. The perfect positive correlation observed between distinguished authenticity & fake reviews and capturing overall sentiment hints at the subtle interplay between consumer perceptions and sentiment, although statistically insignificant. Notably, ANOVA analysis underscores gender's pivotal role in influencer marketing strategies, indicating its influence on creating a regular customer base via social media platforms.

Moving forward, the study's suggestions emphasize the need to delve deeper into unexplored variables and employ alternative statistical techniques to unearth nuanced relationships. Enhancing measurement tools and enlarging sample sizes could fortify the study's reliability, while qualitative methods like interviews may provide deeper insights into consumer preferences. By adopting these strategies, future research endeavors can bridge gaps and provide a comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior, enabling marketers to tailor

strategies effectively and meet evolving consumer needs in an increasingly dynamic marketplace.

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