Role of Social Media Influencers in Affiliate Marketing in Coimbatore City

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Abstract:

Affiliate marketing has become one of the fastest-growing promotional methods in the digital world, and social media influencers now play a major role in shaping how people discover and buy products. Today, consumers spend a large part of their time on platforms like Instagram, YouTube and Facebook, where influencers regularly share reviews, recommendations and promotional codes. Because of this, influencers have become an important bridge between brands and customers . This study focuses on understanding how social media influencers contribute to the success of affiliate marketing in Coimbatore. It looks closely at consumer attitudes, their preferred social media platforms, and the factors that make an influencer believable and trustworthy. Key characteristics such as expertise, authenticity, transparency, personal experience with products and the style of content they create are examined to see how each influences consumer interest. The study also explores how these characteristics impact people's likelihood to click on affiliate links or make purchases through influencer promotions. To carry out the research, a descriptive design was used. Primary data was collected from 54 active social media users in Coimbatore through a structured questionnaire. The survey included questions related to social media usage habits, past experiences with influencer promotions, trust levels and purchase behaviour. Their responses help identify how influencer credibility and content approach affect buying decisions in the local context. The goal of this study is to show Coimbatore brands that better affiliate strategies start with better relationships. By prioritising influencers who are trusted and relatable experts rather than just famous faces, brands can see significantly better results."

Keywords: Affiliate marketing, social media influencers, consumer buying decisions, credibility, authenticity. Trust, Transparency. Expertise, personal experience.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of the internet and social media has completely transformed the way businesses promote their products and services. Traditional advertising methods such as television, newspapers, and billboards are gradually being replaced by digital marketing strategies that are more interactive, cost-effective, and measurable. Among these modern techniques, affiliate marketing has emerged as one of the most popular and performance-based promotional tools. In affiliate marketing, individuals or content creators promote products through unique links or discount codes and earn a commission for every successful sale or action generated through their efforts.

Influencers on social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp have emerged as significant players in affiliate marketing as a result of these platforms' expansion. Influencers are individuals who have built a loyal audience by consistently creating content in specific niches such as fashion, beauty, technology, fitness, food, or lifestyle. When compared to conventional advertisements, followers frequently have the impression that their opinions and recommendations are more relatable and trustworthy. As a result, consumers increasingly depend on influencer reviews, unboxing videos, tutorials, and personal experiences before making online purchase decisions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In recent years, social media influencers have become an important part of digital marketing, especially in affiliate marketing, where products are promoted through links and discount codes in exchange for commission. Many brands and businesses, including small and medium enterprises, are increasingly investing

in influencer-based affiliate marketing to reach their target audience. However, despite its growing popularity, there is limited clarity on how effective influencer-driven affiliate marketing actually is in influencing consumer purchase decisions, particularly at a local level such as Coimbatore. Consumers today are exposed to a large number of influencer promotions across various social media platforms. This often creates confusion regarding the credibility, authenticity, and trustworthiness of influencer recommendations. Some consumers may feel that influencers promote products mainly for financial benefit, which can reduce trust and affect buying behaviour. At the same time, brands face challenges in selecting the right influencers, platforms, and content strategies that can generate meaningful engagement and actual sales through affiliate links.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the present study is limited to understanding the role of social media influencers in affiliate marketing and its impact on consumer buying behaviour in Coimbatore city. The study focuses on active social media users who follow influencers and are exposed to affiliate marketing content on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp.The research examines key factors such as influencer credibility, authenticity, transparency, expertise, personal experience, and content style, and how these factors influence consumer trust, engagement, and purchase decisions. The study also analyses consumer preferences regarding social media platforms and their responsiveness to affiliate links and promotional codes shared by influencers. The scope is confined to primary data collected from 54 respondents in Coimbatore using a structured questionnaire. The findings are specific to the selected sample and geographic area and may not be generalised to other regions. However, the study provides valuable insights for local businesses, marketers, and influencers to improve affiliate marketing strategies within a regional context.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDYS

- To study how social media influencers promote products through affiliate marketing.
- To understand how influencers affect consumer buying decisions.
- To identify which social media platforms are most effective for affiliate marketing.
- To analyse consumer trust in influencer recommendations.
- To provide suggestions for improving affiliate marketing strategies in Coimbatore.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the systematic procedure adopted to conduct a study and analyse the collected data. This study uses a descriptive research design to examine the role of social media influencers in affiliate marketing and their impact on consumer buying behaviour in Coimbatore. Descriptive research is suitable for this study as it helps in understanding opinions, attitudes, and perceptions of consumers toward influencer-based affiliate marketing.

SOURCES OF DATA

The present study is based on both **primary data** and **secondary data**, which were collected to analyse the role of social media influencers in affiliate marketing and their impact on consumer buying behaviour in Coimbatore.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The data for the study were collected using a **structured questionnaire**. The questionnaire was designed to gather information regarding demographic details, social media usage patterns, exposure to influencer promotions, trust in influencer recommendations, and purchase behaviour influenced by affiliate marketing. The questionnaire was circulated through **Google Forms**, making it convenient for respondents to participate. The responses collected formed the basis for analysis and interpretation.

AREA OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in **Coimbatore city**, Tamil Nadu. Coimbatore was selected due to its rapid growth in digital adoption, increasing use of social media platforms, and active presence of influencers and online consumers. The findings of the study are limited to respondents residing in Coimbatore and reflect the local consumer perspective.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE AND SAMPLE SIZE

The study adopted a convenience sampling technique, as respondents were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate in the survey. This technique was considered suitable due to time constraints and ease of data collection. The sample size for the study consists of 54 respondents, who are active social media users and have exposure to influencer-based affiliate marketing.

PERIOD OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out over a period of three months, from January 2025 to March 2025. During this period, data collection, analysis, and interpretation were completed.

STATISTICAL TOOLS USED

Simple Percentage Analysis

Simple percentage analysis is one of the most commonly used statistical tools in descriptive research. It is used to convert raw data into percentages for easy understanding and comparison. This method helps inanalysing demographic variables such as age, gender, income, and usage patterns of social media.

PRIMARY DATA

Primary data refers to the data collected first-hand by the researcher for the specific purpose of the present study. In this research, primary data were collected directly from respondents to understand their perceptions, attitudes, and buying behaviour related to social media influencers and affiliate marketing.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

• The study is based on a small sample size of 54 respondents, which may not fully represent the entire population of social media users in Coimbatore.
• The research is confined only to Coimbatore city, and therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to other cities or regions.
• The study uses convenience sampling, which may lead to bias, as respondents were selected based on availability rather than random selection.
• The data collected is based on self-reported responses, which may be influenced by personal opinions, recall errors, or respondent bias.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

MKA Shahinoor Rahman Jahid (2024)[1]The increasing adoption of digital technologies has significantly transformed marketing practices in high-involvement industries such as real estate. With the rise of internet penetration, smartphone usage, and social networking platforms, consumers now rely heavily on digital channels for information search, evaluation, and decision-making. Social media marketing, affiliate marketing, and e-marketing have emerged as key tools influencing consumer purchasing behaviour, particularly in emerging economies like Bangladesh. This chapter reviews relevant literature related to these digital marketing tools and their influence on consumer purchasing decisions, with specific emphasis on the real estate sector.

Ahmad Rafiki, Sylvia Nabila Azwa Ambad, Nor Farradila (2024)[2]Abdul Aziz 2024 Singh et al. (2024), in their study on Indian SMEs published in the ABSCA series, examined the paradigm shift toward the adoption of social media and affiliate marketing. Their findings reveal that affiliate marketing significantly influences social media effectiveness and consumer buying intention. The study confirms strong interrelationships between social media engagement, affiliate-driven promotions, and purchase intention, emphasising that trusted intermediaries play a vital role in influencing consumer decisions.

Dr Sajjan Choudhuri, Dr Dilip Kumar, January (2023)[3] 3. Influencermarketing is identified as a subcategory of word-of-mouth marketing that relies heavily on trust. Charlesworth (2018) notes that influencers are perceived as "people like us," which increases their credibility, especially among younger

consumers. Res Militaris (2023) emphasises that influencer marketing is effective only when consumers trust the influencer's honesty and intentions.

Morgan Delkamp (2018)[4.] **In** today's society, internet connectivity has become easily accessible, enabling individuals and organisations to utilise digital platforms for a wide range of purposes. Digitalisation plays a vital role in the modern world by allowing instant global communication and rapid access to vast amounts of information. This digital transformation has significantly influenced business practices, especially marketing, as companies increasingly rely on online platforms to reach potential customers. With the growth of websites and social media platforms, businesses are now able to operate as e-commerce enterprises with minimal physical presence. E-commerce refers to the buying, selling, and exchange of goods and services through online platforms (Charlesworth, Esen & Gay, 2007). This digital business model is also applicable to the e-commerce company Jerone, which forms the basis of this thesis.

Arunesh Mathur, Arvind Narayanan, and Marshini Chetty (2018)[5]Endorsement-based advertising is one of many advertising strategies that allows Internet content creators, sometimes called influencers in marketing discourse, to monetise their content on social media platforms and blogs. Because such advertising often appears in conjunction with and is merged with content creators' non-advertising content, Internet users encountering these advertisements may not recognise them as such, and may be misled or deceived.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION
PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

Percentage analysis is one of the simplest and most commonly used statistical tools in research studies. It is used to convert numerical data into percentages, which helps in easy comparison and clear interpretation of results. In this study, percentage analysis has been used to analyse the responses collected through the Google Form questionnaire from 55 respondents in Coimbatore.

PERSONAL OUTLINE OF THE RESPONDENT
TABLE NO 1

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Instagram	31	57%
YouTube	13	24.1%
Facebook	7	13%
WhatsApp	3	5.6%
Less than 1 hour	15	27%
1-2 hours	18	33.3%
2-4 hours	7	13%
4 Above	14	25.9%
Never	11	20.4%
Rarely	12	22.2%
Sometimes	15	27.8%
Often	7	13%
Always	9	16.7%
Instagram	27	50%
Facebook	9	16.7%
YouTube	9	16.7%
Others	9	16.7%

Interpretation

Table 1 data indicate that Instagram is the most popular social media platform among respondents, followed by YouTube and Facebook. Most respondents spend 1–2 hours per day on social media, showing regular but controlled usage. Social media usage varies, with many respondents using it sometimes, while fewer use it often or always. Overall, Instagram emerges as the most influential platform compared to others.

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS DO YOU USE REGULARLY

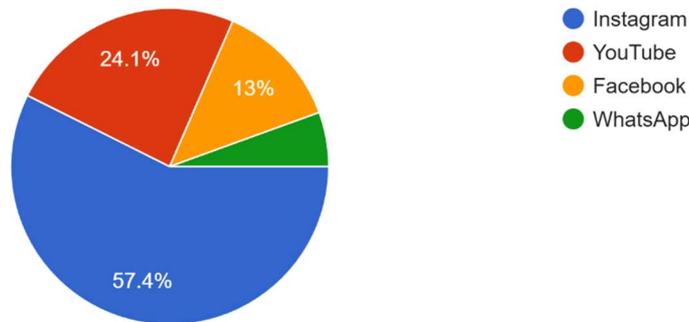Which social media platforms do you use regularly?
54 responses

TABLE NO 2

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Instagram	31	57%
YouTube	13	24.1%
Facebook	7	13%
WhatsApp	3	5.6%

Interpretation

Table 2 data shows that Instagram is the most popular platform with 57% of respondents, followed by YouTube (24.1%). Facebook (13%) has moderate usage, while WhatsApp (5.6%) is the least used platform.

AVERAGE TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA PER DAY

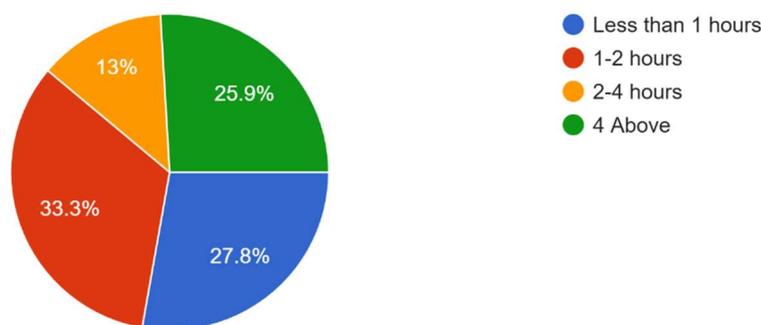Average time spent on social media per day
54 responses

TABLE NO 3

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Less than 1 hour	15	27%
1-2 hours	18	33.3%
2-4 hours	7	13%
4 Above	14	25.9%

Interpretation

Table 3 indicates that most respondents spend 1–2 hours (33.3%) on digital platforms, followed by less than 1 hour (27%). 25.9% of respondents spend more than 4 hours, while 13% spend 2–4 hours, showing varied usage levels among respondents.

Influencer recommendations affect your buying decision.

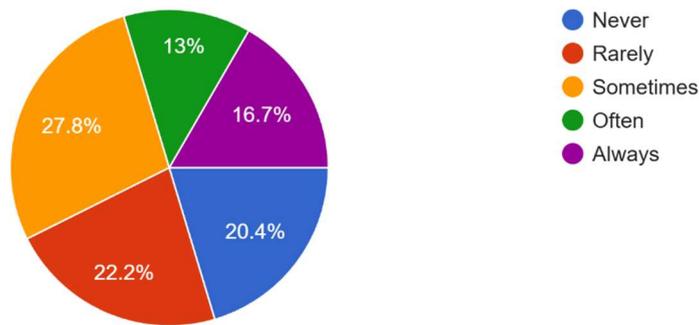How often do influencer recommendations affect your buying decision?
54 responses

TABLE NO 4

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Never	11	20.4%
Rarely	12	22.2%
Sometimes	15	27.8%
Often	7	13%
Always	9	16.7%

Interpretation:

Table 4 shows that most respondents sometimes (27.8%) engage in the given activity, followed by rarely (22.2%) and never (20.4%). Always (16.7%) and often (13%) represent a smaller proportion, indicating moderate overall engagement.

PLATFORM INFLUENCES YOU THE MOST FOR PURCHASES

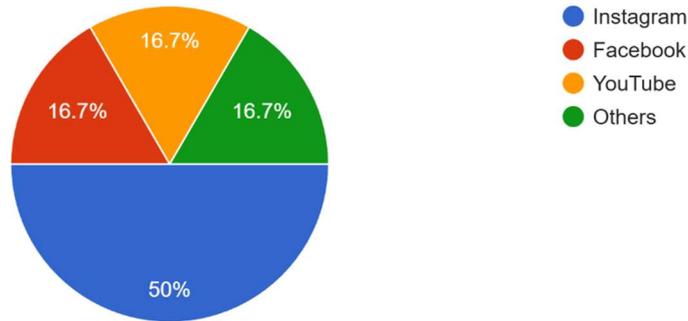Which platform influences you the most for purchases?
54 responses

TABLE NO 5

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Instagram	27	50%
Facebook	9	16.7%
YouTube	9	16.7%
Others	9	16.7%

Interpretation

Table 5 data shows that Instagram is the most preferred platform, with 50% of respondents. Facebook, YouTube, and other platforms are equally preferred, each accounting for 16.7%, indicating a balanced usage among the remaining options.

FINDINGS

The study found that a majority of the respondents belong to the 18–25 age group, indicating that younger consumers are more active on social media and more exposed to influencer content. Most of the respondents are students and employed individuals, showing higher engagement with digital platforms among these groups. Instagram emerged as the most frequently used social media platform, followed by YouTube, for following influencers and viewing affiliate marketing content. A large percentage of respondents spend more than two hours per day on social media, highlighting the strong influence of digital platforms on daily consumer behaviour. The findings reveal that many respondents are aware of affiliate marketing and have noticed influencers sharing product links and discount codes.

SUGGESTION

Influencers should focus on maintaining authenticity and honesty while promoting products. Sharing personal experiences and genuine reviews can help build stronger trust among followers. Brands and marketers should collaborate with relevant micro-influencers who have a loyal and engaged local audience, rather than only focusing on follower count. Influencers should clearly disclose affiliate links and paid promotions to improve transparency and maintain ethical marketing practices. Businesses should use Instagram and YouTube more effectively, as these platforms were found to have a stronger influence on consumer engagement and purchase decisions. Excessive promotional content should be avoided, as it may reduce audience trust. A balanced mix of informative, entertaining, and promotional content is recommended.

CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that social media influencers play a significant role in the success of affiliate

marketing in Coimbatore. With the increasing use of social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook, influencers have become an important source of product information and recommendations for consumers. The findings of the study show that a large number of respondents are aware of affiliate marketing and have interacted with influencer-shared links or discount codes002E

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