Consumer attitude to influencer marketing

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Introduction

Influence marketing is a popular term refers to social media marketing where businesses collaborate with individuals who have a significant following on social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and others to promote their products or services. The goal is to leverage the influencer's influence, trust, and reach among their followers to drive brand awareness, engagement, and sales. (Sheikh, 2023) From a marketing perspective, influencer marketing can be seen as a type of endorsement marketing where influencers use their credibility and social capital to promote a brand.

Influencer marketing typically involves a mutually beneficial partnership between the brand and the influencer, where the influencer creates and shares content featuring the brand's products or services with their followers. The content can take various forms, such as social media posts, videos, blogs, podcasts, etc.

Influencers can be categorized into three types: nano, micro, and macro-influencers. Nanoinfluencers have the smallest following of 1,000-10,000, micro-influencers have a following of 10,000-100,000, while macro-influencers have a following of over 100,000. Influencer marketing has gained significant popularity in recent years due to the rise of social media platforms and the increasing trend of consumers seeking recommendations from trusted sources rather than traditional advertising. It effectively allows businesses to reach their target audience and build brand credibility and trust.

I. Overview of influencer marketing

A. Brief history and evolution of influencer marketing

Influencer marketing has its roots in celebrity endorsements and word-of-mouth marketing, but its evolution has been closely tied to the rise of social media platforms. Influencer marketing has a long history, in fact the term "influencer marketing" itself gained popularity around the early 2010s as this form of marketing started to gain traction. (Kim & Kim, 2021) The practice continued to evolve as more platforms emerged, regulations and guidelines were established, and influencer marketing platforms and agencies emerged to facilitate collaborations between brands and influencers. Historically speaking, the concept of influencers marketing started from the practices where brands sign endorsements deal with celebrities to promote their products or services. Those deals depend on influence and credibility of these individuals to sway consumers behaviours. Later, in the mid-2000s, begin the social media age like Facebook and YouTube. People started to created content that based around people interest and gain of followers. Few years later, birth of writing and creating Blog. People often express their thoughts and feeling on blog and share with everyone on the internet. It gains lots of popularity and people started to create blog for fashion, traveling experience, food and more. Brands would see this opportunity to set up deals with famous bloggers to write a blog about their product. Later, there is a major shift in influencer marketing. Rather than reading blog, people prefer visual content. They turn to platform like YouTube for content. The visual version of blog was called "vlog" was created. Instead of people reading from a person journal, they watch videos instead. There are travel, food, fashion, and even daily life vlog. Nowadays, a short video such as Instagram story, Tik Tok, YouTube short are on the trend. They provide much more content and a short video from 3 seconds to 90 seconds.

B. Types of influencer marketing

There are many types of influencers marketing:

- Sponsored content: This is the most common form of influencer marketing, in which an influencer creates content promoting a product or service in exchange for payment.
- Product placement: In this type of influencer marketing, a product or service is featured in an influencer's content, without necessarily being the focus of the content.
- Affiliate marketing: In this model, an influencer promotes a product or service and receives a commission for every sale made through their unique affiliate link.
- Brand ambassadorship: This is a longer-term partnership in which an influencer becomes an official representative or spokesperson for a brand, promoting their products or services. (Top 8 Types of Influencer Marketing Campaigns With Examples, n.d.)

Currently there are a variety of online platforms where businesses can choose to advertise their product through their desired influencers. Business can choose their ideal types of influencers marketing that align with their business goals or plan. Selecting the right type of influencer who helps boost their product image and percept the audience.

C. Key players in the influencer marketing industry

There are several key players who have emerged as prominent platforms and agencies. The most popular platform is Instagram, which has over 2.5 million users. (Ruby, 2023) YouTube is also considered one of the most used platforms, especially among teens and young adults. Additionally, TikTok has gained immense popularity in recent years, particularly among younger audiences. The platform's short-form videos have created a new wave of influencers, and brands have started leveraging TikTok influencers for their marketing campaigns. Facebook is also a giant influencer in this digital industry that has been popular since 2008. Beside these few social media platforms, there are also digital marketing agencies that focus on identifying the right influencers, negotiating partnerships, and strategizing influencer campaigns.

II. Benefits of influencer marketing

A. Increased brand awareness and exposure

Increasing brand awareness is a fundamental objective of marketing efforts aimed at making a brand more recognizable and familiar to consumers. (Ali and Alquda 2022) It involves exposing the target audience to the brand and its key messages in order to enhance recognition and recall. One effective strategy for increasing brand awareness is through influencer marketing. By collaborating with influencers who have established audiences, brands can leverage their reach and influence to introduce and promote their brand to a wider audience. The influencers act as brand ambassadors, sharing their experiences and endorsing the brand's products or services, thus increasing exposure, and creating positive associations between the influencer and the brand. This exposure enhances consumers' knowledge of the brand, its offerings, and its unique value proposition.

Influencer marketing provides an opportunity for targeted exposure, allowing brands to reach specific audiences with precision. Influencers often specialize in particular niches or cater to specific demographics, meaning brands can strategically select influencers whose followers align with their target market. This targeted approach ensures that brand messages and content are seen by individuals who are more likely to be interested in and engaged with the brand. Through collaborations with influencers, brands gain access to their engaged and loyal followers, who are receptive to the influencers' recommendations. As a result, the brand becomes more visible and familiar within the influencer's community, effectively increasing brand awareness among the intended audience.

Additionally, influencer marketing offers the advantage of authenticity and engagement. Influencers are skilled content creators who produce genuine and relatable content, often tailored to their audience's interests and preferences. By collaborating with influencers, brands can tap into their creativity and storytelling abilities to create authentic and engaging content that resonates with the audience. This content has the potential to capture attention, spark interest, and leave a lasting impression on consumers. Through compelling narratives, product reviews, or demonstrations, influencers create content that not only increases brand recall but also generates positive associations and emotional connections with the brand. As consumers engage with this content, share it with their networks, and participate in conversations around the brand, brand awareness is further amplified, extending the brand's reach and impact.

In conclusion, increasing brand awareness through influencer marketing involves leveraging influencers' reach and influence to expose the brand to a wider audience. By strategically selecting influencers who align with the brand's target market, brands can achieve targeted exposure, ensuring that their messages reach individuals who are more likely to be interested in their offerings. The authenticity, engagement, and creativity of influencers help create compelling content that captures attention, generates positive associations, and leaves a lasting impression on consumers. Through repeated exposure and positive experiences shared by influencers and their followers, brand awareness is enhanced, making the brand more recognizable, memorable, and influential among the target audience.

B. Higher engagement and conversion rates

Higher engagement and conversion rates are crucial metrics in evaluating the effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns. Influencers possess a unique ability to influence the opinions, attitudes, and behaviors of their followers. (Atiq et al. 2022) Through their expertise, authenticity, and relatability, influencers establish trust and credibility, making their recommendations more persuasive. The social influence theory suggests that individuals are more likely to conform to the actions and recommendations of influential individuals. When influencers endorse a brand or product, their followers are inclined to engage with the content and consider the recommended offerings, leading to higher engagement and conversion rates.

Furthermore, Influencers cultivate relationships with their followers, creating a sense of identification and community. The social identity theory explains that individuals seek to establish and maintain positive social identities by associating themselves with groups or individuals they admire or relate to. By engaging with influencers, followers develop a sense of identification, aligning themselves with the influencer's values and interests. This sense of belonging and shared identity fosters higher engagement levels as followers actively participate in discussions, share content, and interact with the brand. Consequently, this heightened engagement translates into higher conversion rates as followers are more motivated to act on the influencer's recommendations.

Additionally, Influencers excel at creating compelling content that evokes emotions and tells captivating stories. Emotional appeals are known to enhance consumer engagement and increase the likelihood of conversion. Through storytelling techniques, influencers create narratives that resonate with their audience's aspirations, desires, and challenges. This emotional connection captures the attention and interest of followers, leading to increased engagement with the content. As followers become emotionally invested in the influencer's journey or experiences with the brand, they are more inclined to take the desired action, resulting in higher conversion rates.

Moreover, Authenticity is a critical factor in influencer marketing success. Influencers are perceived as genuine and trustworthy sources of information. Their ability to create user-generated content further reinforces authenticity and encourages engagement. User-generated content, such as reviews, testimonials, or product demonstrations, provides social proof that the brand's offerings are valuable and reliable. Followers are more likely to engage with this content, as it represents real experiences and endorsements. The involvement of followers in creating and sharing user-generated content fosters a sense of ownership and loyalty, ultimately leading to higher conversion rates.

In conclusion, higher engagement and conversion rates in influencer marketing are driven by the social influence and persuasion of influencers, the establishment of relationships and identification with the

influencer's community, the emotional connection and storytelling techniques employed, and the authenticity and user-generated content that engenders trust and social proof. By leveraging these factors, brands can effectively harness the power of influencer marketing to drive engagement and convert followers into loyal customers.

C. Greater reach and access to niche audiences

Greater reach and access to niche audiences is a significant advantage of influencer marketing. Influencers often have established audiences that align with specific niches or demographics. By collaborating with influencers whose followers match the brand's target market, brands can tap into these niche audiences. (Lee et al. 2021) The alignment between the influencer's content and the brand's offerings ensures that the marketing messages reach individuals who are genuinely interested in the brand's products or services. This targeted approach allows brands to optimize their reach and engage with a highly specific and relevant audience, increasing the chances of resonating with and capturing the attention of niche consumers.

Furthermore, influencers are often regarded as subject matter experts within their niches. They have developed credibility and trust with their followers through consistent content creation and expertise in their chosen fields. When brands collaborate with influencers operating in niche markets, they can benefit from the influencer's authority and trustworthiness. The endorsement and recommendations from niche influencers carry more weight with their dedicated audience, as their expertise is seen as authentic and reliable. This trust enhances the brand's credibility among the niche audience, facilitating greater reach and access to the specific target market.

Additionally, Micro-influencers, who have smaller but highly engaged followings, play a crucial role in reaching niche audiences. These influencers often focus on specific interests, hobbies, or local communities, catering to a well-defined niche. Collaborating with micro-influencers allows brands to achieve hyper-targeting, reaching a niche audience that may be overlooked by broader marketing efforts. Micro-influencers have a strong connection with their followers and are more accessible, enabling brands to establish a more personalized and intimate relationship with their target audience. This personalized approach strengthens the brand's reach within the niche community and helps create brand advocates among the loyal followers of micro-influencers.

In summary, influencer marketing provides brands with a greater reach and access to niche audiences through careful influencer selection, audience alignment, niche expertise, and micro-influencer collaborations. By targeting influencers who have established credibility within specific niches, brands can tap into the trust and authority built by influencers with their dedicated followers. This approach allows brands to expand their reach to a relevant and engaged audience, increasing the likelihood of resonating with and capturing the attention of niche consumers who are more likely to be interested in the brand's offerings.

III. Criticisms and challenges of influencer marketing

A. Lack of transparency and authenticity

Today, one of the problems of influencer marketing can be the lack of transparency and authenticity.

Authenticity is one of the most important qualities consumers look for in influencer marketing. Indeed, being authentic means being true to oneself, honest and sincere in one's actions, feelings or words. In order to trust, consumers look for someone who is trustworthy and therefore authentic. In the past, some influencers have been suspected of buying followers or likes to gain visibility and influence. In addition, some influencers promote brands or products that do not match their personality or values. This can have a negative impact on consumer confidence as they will not understand why the influencer is promoting a particular brand and will therefore damage the influencer's credibility. In conclusion, consumers no longer believe influencers because they lack authenticity in their approach.

Transparency is another issue in the world of influencer marketing. Consumers are looking for people who are sincere and whom they can trust. They can quickly lose trust if they don't agree with the way influencers do things or if they don't like what they say. For example, consumers appreciate it when influencers mention whether they are partnered with a brand. This shows the transparency of the influencer and promotes greater trust. Unfortunately, this information is not always mentioned.

In conclusion, the credibility, authenticity, and transparency of influencers are key factors in the relationship between influencers and consumers. This is why it is necessary to choose the right influencer to present the product/brand. If the consumer loses trust in the influencer, this will have an impact on sales.

B. Difficulty in measuring effectiveness

One of the challenges of influencer marketing is to measure the results of the marketing campaign. Measuring the effectiveness of a campaign provides a better understanding of the results. In the context of influencer marketing, it allows the brand to see if the influencer chosen to feature a brand's product is having an impact on their followers.

The results can be calculated in different ways, such as the number of clicks, shares, subscriber gain for the advertiser, website traffic, engagement in the publication, sales increase.... Unfortunately, there are no precise figures to measure the success of the campaign, so how do you know if the traffic really comes from the influencer? To overcome this problem, brands have found a simple solution: the promo code. Indeed, setting up a discount code directly linked to the influencer allows to better measure the results. It works as follows: when a customer buys on a website, he can add a discount code. This discount code tells the brand which influencer the customer went through to get a discount code. The brand can then calculate how many customers each influencer has brought.

To conclude, there are many tools to measure the results of a marketing campaign, but influencer marketing remains one of the biggest challenges for marketing professionals.

C. Potential for influencer fatigue

To explain what oversaturation means, it is a phenomenon of overabundance of content or information in a particular field. Oversaturation leads to consumer fatigue. Indeed, consumers can feel overwhelmed or exhausted by information overload.

In the field of influencer marketing, consumers start to become weary. Indeed, influencers are becoming more and more numerous and influential on social networks thanks to their popularity. However, consumers are tired of seeing the same products and brands presented by all influencers. When the consumer starts to become insensitive, this phenomenon is called "influencer fatigue". Exposing "too much" information can reduce the impact of marketing. Especially when no single influencer stands out from the others.

To maintain their influence and relevance, influencers need to offer content that stands out to continuously attract consumers. Indeed, it is important to diversify the brands and products offered as well as the format while remaining true to themselves.

To conclude, over-saturation leads to the risk of consumer fatigue towards influencers. This is why it is important to adapt the appropriate strategy to mitigate this problem.

V. Factors influencing consumer attitudes towards influencer marketing.

There are several factors that can influence consumer behaviour towards influence marketing. We will look specifically at influencer marketing on social networks. With *56%* of the population active on social networks, influencers can have a strong impact on consumers. According to Statista, the *most used social networks* in 2023 are Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp and Instagram. However, not all consumers are equally active on social networks. Influencer marketing will have a different impact depending on demographics, personal values and beliefs and previous experiences.

A. Factor 1 : Demographics

Age is an important factor for social network users. According to *Statista*, the penetration rate of social networks in France in 2022 varies from 79% for 18-24 year olds to 27% for those aged 70 and over. This shows that the impact of marketing influencers will be different depending on the target.



Generation Z (1997-2012) mainly uses Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat. Generation Z trusts social networks and influencers. They turn to social networks for information rather than traditional media. They look for reliable and personalized sources. This means that it is important to gain the trust of Generation Z. Millennials (1981-1996) use Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. According to GlobalWebIndex, they spend an average of 2.34 hours per day on social networks. A large proportion of millennials use social networks to shape their identity. 38% of them say they post messages on social networks to "make themselves look good to others" according to a Bankrate report in 2022. Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and LinkedIn are the media used by Generation X (1965-1980). Generation X has a significant impact on online shopping. In fact, the share of Gen Xers who search and buy products on social media increased by 32% between 2015 and 2019. It would therefore be interesting to develop more content for this high purchasing power generation. Finally, baby boomers and older generations (1946-1964) mainly use Facebook and WhatsApp. They tend to have a positive attitude towards social networks. Indeed, according to security.org, more than 80% of them say that social media improve their lives.

To conclude, it is important to pay more attention to the age of the target. This will allow us to choose the right marketing influencer that will address the right target and on the right social network.

We have observed that age can have an impact on the behavior of users on social networks. However, gender can also have a role to play. Indeed, some platforms are more used by women and others by men.

	FACEBOOK	INSTAGRAM	TWITTER	YOUTUBE	SNAPCHAT	тікток
WOMEN	44%	54%	31,5%	45,8%	57,5%	60%
MEN	56%	46%	68,5%	54,2%	42,5%	40%

Here is a summary table that shows gender in relation to the different social networks. (Data from 2021)

We can see that Facebook, Twitter and Youtube are preferred by men while Instagram, Snapchat and Tiktok would be more used by women. This shows that it is important to choose your influencer marketer carefully as depending on the platform they use, they will have a greater impact on men or women.

B. Factor 2 : Personal values and beliefs

A second factor that influences consumers' attitudes towards marketing influencers are personal values and beliefs.

Values and beliefs are two concepts that govern our behavior and attitudes. They can affect our attitudes, perceptions, personality, character, and behavior. The main difference between these two concepts is that values are "principles, ideals or standards of behavior", while beliefs are "convictions that we generally accept as true".

Personal values can influence consumer behavior. Indeed, a consumer who shares the same values as an influencer will more easily trust the influencer. For example, if a consumer values sustainability and the environment, they are more likely to turn to an influencer who recommends products with these same values.

In addition, beliefs can influence consumers towards marketing influencers. Indeed, a consumer who believes that influencers are paid to promote brands and products will not necessarily trust and consider the advice and recommendations of these influencers.

In conclusion, personal values and beliefs can strongly affect how consumers perceive marketing influencers and the products they recommend. It is important for brands and influencers to understand these factors and take them into account.

C. Factor 3 : Previous experiences

Finally, we will look at how past experiences with marketing influencers can affect consumer behavior towards them.

Firstly, if a consumer has had a positive experience with a marketing influencer, they are more likely to trust influencers. For example, if they have purchased a product recommended by the influencer and are satisfied with the brand and quality of the product, they are likely to trust influencers again and purchase other products recommended by them. Furthermore, if the consumer trusts an influencer because they see themselves in what they say, they are more likely to follow that influencer's future advice.

On the other hand, if a consumer has had a negative experience with a marketing influencer, they may find it harder to trust again. For example, they may have purchased a product recommended by an influencer. However, they are not at all satisfied with the product they purchased and do not feel that they bought the product they were shown. This type of consumer is unlikely to trust influencers again as they have been disappointed at some point. Furthermore, if the consumer has been disappointed by the behavior of an influencer, they will find it more difficult to follow that influencer's future advice.

In conclusion, past experiences have an impact on consumers' attitudes towards marketing influencers. Therefore, it is important for brands and influencers to ensure that experiences and feedback are positive to avoid disappointing consumers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, influencer marketing is becoming increasingly important. An influencer marketer is a person who collaborates with a brand to promote a product. For a brand, using an influencer marketer allows it to increase the visibility of the brand, to have a better engagement from consumers and a greater reach. However, there are several challenges to be faced: a lack of transparency and authenticity, the difficulty of measuring effectiveness and the risk of influencer fatigue. We have also observed that certain factors influence consumers' attitudes towards influencers, such as demographics, personal values and beliefs, and past experiences.

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Name and surname of the student, personal number:

Lou Debarre

Roth Monivongsa