AN ANALYTICAL STUDY ON IMPACT OF INSTAGRAM INFLUENCERS ON CONSUMER BUYING DECISION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MOBILE HANDSETS

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Abstract:

Instagram is a meta platform an American based company which helped to share videos and picture on large scale via internet. Influencer is a person, who has an ability to change the views or decision of the prospective viewers. Present study is conducted to analyzed impact of influencers of social networking websites on the purchase decision of the prospective customers. To achieve the desire objectives of the present study fifty one responses have been collected with the help of closed ended questionnaire. The study reveals that there is a positive correlation between social media influencers and purchase decision of customer. Marketers need to be focused on the active involvement of highly impacted influencers for the growth of the revenue of the company.

Keywords:
Instagram, Social, Networking, Influence, Preference

Introduction:
Instagram influencers not only built a strong position on social networking platforms but also in a position to impact on their followers' choice, thought process, likes and purchasing decisions regarding goods and services. Most of them are well known in the particular segment such as fashion, beauty, fitness, travel, or food etc. In the recent years influencers have played a major role in the marketing activities of the businesses. In this context influencers helps marketers by creating attractive contents regarding products, which can help to attract and retain the customers and ultimately leads to increment of sales and revenue of the businesses.

According to the number of followers, influencers may be categorized in group such as micro, small, medium and large. Number of followers are varying from 1000 to 10 lakhs. As the number of followers grows, their ability to impact on the sales and revenue of the businesses also change significantly. Most of the marketers wants to engage with those influencers, who have enormous followers.

Although social media networking influencers have better ability to attract and engage the target audiences, however some of them are criticized for doing paid or sponsored promotion of goods and services, so instead of relying blindly on them, the social media networking regulations have come into picture to protect the larger interest of the consumers and to avoid unfair and monopolistic trade practices of the businesses.

Now a days social networking media become integral part of individuals and also become important in the marketing activities of the companies. Social media and influencers are grown parallel and they are dependent on each other however, rate at which influencers have grown is significantly differs. Now it becomes most sought-after tool of digital marketing.

Social networking media means, those online platforms which are not only helps individual to connect with each other's in the virtual domain but also enable to share images, text messages, videos, do voice calls and other creative things. Some of the most famous social networking sites are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, WhatsApp and YouTube, amongst the others. Social networking media was started with the cause to reduce the time and place barriers between the individual but now its role has not only limited to that but it has become a vibrant online platform to get engage with the large number of target audience for the precise marketing and promotion of goods and services of the companies. There are several factors which have impacted on the consumer buying decision. In case of mobile handsets there are number of factors which have played crucial role such as –

Brand image and reputation: Consumers are often drawn to well-known and reputed brands when about to purchase mobile handset. Brands with a strong reputation for quality, innovation, and reliability may be more likely to attract target customers.

Product specifications: Prospective consumer may be influenced by the different specifications of the products, such as longer battery life, bigger screen, wide ultra pixel camera and latest processor etc., the availability of any other special feature like 5G connectivity can become prime influencer in the process of product buying decision.

Price: In the process of purchase decision making regarding mobile handset a price plays major role. However, consumers are willing to pay higher price for latest and updated product but they still look after affordable price range, which may be fulfill their requirements.

Feedback of consumers: Post purchase feedback can significantly be impacted on prospective purchase decision of the product. Positive review and recommendations from may sway a consumer's decision in favor of a particular brand.

Marketing and advertising: Marketing and advertising can play a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions and preferences of mobile handset. Effective marketing campaigns that highlight a mobile handset's unique features, benefits, and unique selling points may attract consumers to targeted brand.

Overall, consumer buying behavior of mobile handsets is influenced by a number of factors, including brand reputation, features and specifications, price, user reviews and recommendations, and marketing and advertising. As mobile technology continues to evolve and new features and capabilities are introduced, it is likely that these factors will continue to shape consumer preference and purchasing decision.

Review of Literature:

Lee and others (2022) studied the motives of consumer who followed influencers on Instagram. Researchers done analytical study with the aim to know why consumers followed influencers on Instagram? and their motive behind following particular influencers on Instagram. Researchers reveals that trust factor has played an important role in the following of particular influencer on Instagram. Factors such as trustworthiness, consumerism, affection, envy and

attraction have significantly impacted on consumers' choice of particular influencers on Instagram. Researchers found that influencer positively impacted on the consumers choices or selection of particular product or services and also it has impacted on the overall sales of the company.

Pop and others (2022) conducted a study on influencers impact on travel decisions of prospective travelers. Study aims to know the impact of travel vloggers on the decision making of prospective travelers. Researchers found that in the entire decision-making process of travel, trust has played a vital role between choice of influencer and impact on the decision making. Information provided by the influencer have drastically impacted the travel decision making of travelers. There is a positive correlation between influencer and travel decision of the consumers. Study concluded that marketers in the travel industry need to be focused on the positive image development of a particular travel plan, destination etc. for this purpose they can engage popular influencers which will help to attract customers.

Gupta and others (2020) examined the impact of social media with special reference to Instagram on the consumer buying behavior. Study conducted to understand what factors have impacted on the consumer's buying decisions? also emphasized on trustworthiness of information available on Instagram. Study found that Instagram is not only limited to uploading and circulate a particular picture but it has crossed all boundaries in networking marketing. Techno savvy marketers have successfully engaged with popular influencers for promotion and marketing of their goods and services. Study reveals that Instagram has played a positive role in the dissemination of information regarding goods and services, so marketers need to plan their marketing activities accordingly.

Kay and others (2020) conducted a study on micro and macro type of influencers of Instagram. Study aims to know the effect of micro and macro influencers on the product sales with reference to sponsored marketing. Study reveals that with the growing use of internet and social media platforms for the purpose of marketing and promotion of goods and services and its impact on the consumers buying decision, intervention of policy makers becomes essential to protect the interest of the consumers. So, the government has declared certain norms regarding the disclosure of paid / sponsored marketing activities on social media platforms. Study concluded that compared to micro influencers who disclosed sponsored marketing activities, sales of that product has increased than macro influencers who does not disclose any sponsorships.

Zak and Hasprova (2020) elaborated the role of influencers in the buying decision of consumers. Study conducted with the aim to know what are the factors impacted on the consumers buying behavior, also understand the role of influencers in buying behavior. Study reveals that the role which were played by the opinion leaders in the global marketing arena, now played by social media influencers. There are number of factors of influencers such as communication skill, presentation, attitude, attire etc., have impacted on the consumer buying behavior. Study revelas that there is a positive relation between influencer and consumers buying decision. Study found that marketing and promotion of goods and services with the help of influencers have significantly impacted on overall sales of the company.

Objectives of the study:

To understand the concept of social networking media and social networking influencers.

To understand the impact of Instagram influencers on the purchase decision of mobile handset.

Research Methodology:

To justify the objectives of the present study, researchers have under taken descriptive methodology of research.

Type of Research:

To understand and fulfill the objectives of the present study, researchers have selected descriptive type of research to complete the study.

Sources of Data:

For systematic completion of the present study and able to cope up with the objectives of the study, researchers have collected data with the help of primary as well as secondary sources of data.

Sample Size:

To complete the present study in time bound manner and to avoid the vagueness of the findings, researchers have bound themselves to fifty-one respondents as a sample size.

Sampling Method:

Random sampling methodology of data collection has been used by the researchers for the present study.

Area of Study:

Mumbai city which is demarcated from Mahim to Churchgate, has selected for the smooth collection of data and completion of the present study.

Data Analysis:

Table 1.1 Respondents Gender Distribution.

Sr. No.	Gender	No of Respondents	Percentage
01	Male	32	62
02	Female	19	37

Source: - Compiled by researcher

Table 1.1 shows the gender distribution of respondents for a given study. The table includes the number of respondents and the percentage of respondents that identify as male or female. There are 51 respondents in the study. Of those respondents, 32 (62%) identified as male, while 19 (37%) identified as female. No other gender options were given in the table.

Table 1.2 Respondents preference to mobile handset.

Sr No.	Mobile Handset Company	No of Respondents	Percentage
01	Apple	30	58.8
02	Nokia	05	9.8
03	One Plus	03	5.8
04	Samsung	08	15.7
05	Vivo	02	3.9
06	Xiaomi	03	5.9

Source: - Compiled by researcher

Table 1.2 shows the respondents' preference for particular brand of mobile handset. The table includes the number of respondents and the percentage of respondents that prefer a particular brand. There are 51 respondents in the study. Of those respondents, 30 (58.8%) preferred Apple mobile handset, while Nokia was the second most preferred brand with 5 (9.8%) respondents. One Plus was preferred by 3 (5.8%) respondents, Samsung by 8 (15.7%) respondents, Vivo by 2 (3.9%) respondents, and Xiaomi by 3 (5.9%) respondents.

Table 1.3 Respondents preference to influencers attributes on Instagram.

Sr No.	Attributes of Influencers	No of Respondents	Percentage
01	Attitude	03	5.9
02	Communication Skills	10	19.6
03	Explanation of Products	20	39.2
04	Attire	02	3.9
05	Selection of Brands	15	29.4
06	Attraction	01	1.9

Source: - Compiled by researcher

Table 1.3 shows the attributes of influencers on Instagram that respondents preferred. The table includes the number of respondents and the percentage of respondents that preferred a particular attribute. There are 51 respondents in the study. Of those respondents, 20 (39.2%) preferred influencers who provided clear explanations of products, while 15 (29.4%) preferred influencers who carefully selected the brands they promoted. Communication skills were important for 10 (19.6%) respondents, while only 3 (5.9%) respondents felt that an influencer's attitude was an important attribute. Attire was preferred by 2 (3.9%) respondents, and only 1 (1.9%) respondent felt that an influencer's level of attraction an important attribute.

Table 1.4 Total time spend by respondents for watching information of influencers on Instagram.

Sr No.	Time Slot	No of Respondents	Percentage
01	Less than hour	39	76.5
02	One to two hours	10	19.6
03	More than two hours	02	3.9

Source: - Compiled by researcher

Table 1.4 shows the total time spent by respondents for watching information of influencers on Instagram. The table includes the number of respondents and the percentage of respondents that spent a particular amount of time. There are 51 respondents in the study. Of those respondents, 39 (76.5%) spent less than an hour watching information of influencers on Instagram. 10 (19.6%) respondents spent one to two hours, while only 2 (3.9%) respondents spent more than two hours watching information of influencers on Instagram.

Table 1.5 Respondents preferred time period to watch influencers information on Instagram.

Sr No.	Time Period / Slot	No of Respondents	Percentage
01	Before Noon	08	15.7
02	Early in the Evening	11	21.6
03	During Night	25	49.1
04	Any time in a day	07	13.7

Source: - Compiled by researcher

Table 1.5 shows the preferred time period for respondents to watch influencers' information on Instagram. The table includes the number of respondents and the percentage of respondents that preferred a particular time period. There are 51 respondents in the study. Of those respondents, 25 (49.1%) preferred to watch influencers' information during the night. Early in the evening was the second most preferred time period with 11 (21.6%) respondents, followed by before noon with 8 (15.7%) respondents. Only 7 (13.7%) respondents preferred to watch influencers' information at any time in a day.

Table 1.6 Respondents reliability on the information of influencers of Instagram.

Sr No.	Reliable Scale	No of Respondents	Percentage
01	Normal	07	13.7
02	More than normal	11	21.6
03	Average	13	25.5

| 04 | Above Average | 09 | 17.6 |
| 05 | Highly | 11 | 21.6 |

Table 1.6 shows the level of reliance of respondents on the information of influencers on Instagram. The table includes the number of respondents and the percentage of respondents that relied on the information of influencers to a particular degree. There are 51 respondents in the study. Of those respondents, 11 (21.6%) relied on the information of influencers on Instagram more than normal, while 11 (21.6%) respondents relied on the information highly. Thirteen (25.5%) respondents have an average level of reliance, while 9 (17.6%) respondents have above-average reliance. Only 7 (13.7%) respondents have a normal level of reliance on the information of influencers.

Table 1.7 Impact of Instagram influencers on purchase decision of mobile handset.

Sr No	Impact of Instagram Influencers	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
01	Helps in identification of mobile handset	39	07	03	01	01
02	Helps in sharing of information of mobile handset	37	09	02	02	01
03	Helps in evaluation of different alternatives of mobile handsets	47	01	01	01	01
04	Helps in purchase decision regarding mobile handsets	41	01	01	07	01
05	Helps in post purchase needs of mobile handsets	31	09	05	05	01

Table 1.7 shows the impact of Instagram influencers on the purchase decision of mobile handsets. The table includes the number of respondents who strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the impact of Instagram influencers on various aspects related to the purchase of mobile handsets. There are 51 respondents in the study. Of those respondents, 39 (76.5%) strongly agreed that Instagram influencers help in the identification of mobile handsets, while 37 (72.5%) agreed that they help in the sharing of information related to mobile handsets. Almost all respondents (47, or 92.2%) agreed that Instagram influencers help in the evaluation of different alternatives of mobile handsets, and 41 (80.4%) agreed that they help in the purchase decision regarding mobile handsets. Regarding post-purchase needs of mobile

handsets, 31 (60.8%) respondents agreed that Instagram influencers help, while 9 (17.6%) respondents disagreed, and 5 (9.8%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Findings:

1. 68% respondents preferred I phone

2. 39.2% preferred influencers who provided clear explanations of products.

3. 76.5% spent less than an hour watching information of influencers on Instagram.

4. 49.1% preferred to watch influencers' information during the night.

5. 25.5% respondents have an average level of reliance on information provided by influencers.

6. 92.2% agreed that Instagram influencers help in the evaluation of different alternatives of mobile handsets

Conclusion:

Social media influencers have proved their immense power of marketing and impact on the purchase decision of prospective customers. As per the demographic segregation of customers of mobile handsets between male and female, male respondents mostly followed the social media influencers. Before making decision to purchase a particular handset, they have mostly watched or rather we would say that they follow the best influencers from the particular segment of the mobile handset. In the dynamic era of global competition and efforts to retain a customer base, has once again underlined the importance of effective digital marketing channels. Instagram influencers have significantly impacted on the purchase decision of customers. Mobile handset and its technical features are bit complicated to understand. Here the marketers need to emphasis on simplification and make it easy understand the same, so it will help to attract and turned prospective customer into loyal one.

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