EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF INSTAGRAM INFLUENCER TRAITS ON FOOD ENTHUSIASTS' PERCEPTIONS IN AMRAVATI CITY

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how Instagram influencers affect food loving consumers purchasing decisions. Specifically, it examines the role of influencer credibility, focusing on attractiveness and trustworthiness, and investigates gender differences in influencer effectiveness. The research adopts a descriptive approach using Survey based data collection to provide deeper insights into consumer psychology and digital marketing strategies. The findings highlight the significant role of influencer endorsements in shaping consumer preferences, particularly among younger demographics. the study identifies key elements that enhance influencer impact, such as engagement strategies, authenticity, and audience interaction. The results demonstrate that influencers who actively communicate with their followers through comments, live sessions, and personal stories are more likely to build trust and drive consumer action. Additionally, the research sheds light on how brand collaborations with influencers contribute to consumer awareness and brand loyalty. These insights provide valuable guidance for businesses aiming to optimize their influencer marketing strategies.

Keywords: Instagram influencers, food consumers, attractiveness, trustworthiness, purchase intention, digital marketing

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has significantly reshaped marketing strategies, offering brands innovative ways to reach and engage their target audience. Among the various social media platforms, Instagram has emerged as a dominant force in influencer marketing, particularly within the food industry, where visually appealing content plays a crucial role in influencing consumer decisions. Influencers on Instagram curate aesthetically pleasing food content, leveraging high quality images, engaging storytelling, and interactive features to connect with their followers. Their recommendations hold considerable sway over consumers, often surpassing traditional advertisements in effectiveness.

An Instagram influencer is an individual who has built a significant following on the platform and uses their credibility, personality, and content to influence the opinions and behaviors of their audience. These influencers leverage their expertise, aesthetics, and engagement strategies to create impactful digital content that resonates with their followers. Their influence extends beyond mere promotion, as they establish deep connections with audiences through consistent interaction and relatable storytelling. Brands recognize their potential in shaping consumer preferences, making influencer collaborations an integral part of modern marketing strategies.

In recent years, influencer marketing has gained prominence due to its ability to build trust and authenticity among consumers. Unlike conventional advertisements, which may be perceived as biased or overly promotional, influencer endorsements often come across as more relatable and genuine. Consumers develop social relationships with influencers, viewing them as trustworthy figures whose recommendations align with their personal preferences. Consequently, brands increasingly collaborate with influencers to boost engagement and enhance brand perception.

The credibility of an influencer is largely determined by their perceived trustworthiness and attractiveness. Influencers who exhibit high levels of authenticity, reliability, and audience engagement tend to have a stronger impact on consumer behavior. While attractiveness enhances the visual appeal of content and draws consumer attention, trustworthiness fosters loyalty and confidence in the influencer's recommendations. Studies have shown that influencers perceived as genuine and knowledgeable generate higher engagement rates, leading to greater influence over consumer purchase decisions. This study seeks to analyze the impact of Instagram influencer traits specifically attractiveness and trustworthiness on food loving consumers. Additionally, it examines how gender differences among influencers affect consumer perceptions and decision making. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for businesses looking to optimize their digital marketing strategies and maximize influencer collaborations.

Moreover, the study explores the effectiveness of various influencer driven digital marketing strategies, such as brand collaborations, promotional campaigns, and viral food trends. By evaluating consumer responses to these strategies, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the evolving landscape of social media marketing in the food industry.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. **Marta Figueiredo Rebelo (2017):** This study explores the perception of the credibility of the influencer followed by the consumers on Instagram and how it affects their purchase intentions. More specifically, this paper explores some of the leading factors of credibility, specifically attractiveness and trustworthiness, to establish which among them is most influential over purchase intentions. the study examines gender-based differences, revealing that female consumers are more likely than males to be influenced by trustworthiness. Utilizing scales by Ohanian (1990) and Dodds, Monroe & Grewal (1991), the quantitative exploratory study garnered data from 285 active Instagram users who follow an influencer. Findings are invaluable to brands and marketers alike, in this regard regarding the impact influencer credibility has on the consumer behavior and buying decision.

2. **Miss Phutthiphansa Hanjeerapanya (2017):** This research will examine the effect of the food bloggers on the consumer decision making process in choosing the restaurant in Bangkok while monitoring the latter's interaction at each step of that process. This article uses descriptive study methods, such as observation, in-depth interviewing, and case studies, to find out in which points a consumer undergoes interaction with contents of the food bloggers from acquiring recommendations and information for selecting products until deriving inspiration through photography in post-purchase stages for validating experience. The key finding of this study demonstrates that food bloggers highly influence customer behavior through serving credible sources for information and through visual source reference. The study will help fast-food business owners and new market entrants in the understanding of the preference of Thai consumers to strategize accordingly and make products which appeal to the needs of the local market.

3. **Journal of Gastronomy, Hospitality and Travel (JOGHAT) (2020):** This research explores how recommendations from food influencers on Instagram impact consumers' intention to purchase food products and services. Focusing on the perceived usefulness of influencers' recommendations, the study investigates its direct effect on consumers' purchase intentions and attitudes toward these products. Additionally, it examines whether consumers' attitudes mediate the relationship between perceived usefulness and purchase intention. Through a survey of 394 participants, findings show that the perceived value of influencer recommendations positively impacts attitudes and, in turn, purchase intentions. These insights suggest that food brands and businesses can benefit significantly from collaborations with influencers to drive consumer engagement and intent to buy.

4. **Sanaz Saghati Jalali (2021):** This study explores how Instagram influencers' ecofriendly activities impact their followers' intention to engage in green consumption. With rising environmental concerns linked to consumption behaviors, social media especially Instagram has become a significant platform for raising awareness about sustainable practices. This research develops a conceptual model examining how influencers' green content, including eco-conscious posts and green word of mouth (WOM), shapes followers' green attitudes and consumption intentions. Additionally, it proposes that follower credibility perception moderates the relationship between influencers' green WOM and green consumption intention. By identifying key factors influencing green consumption, this study offers valuable insights for promoting environmentally conscious behaviors through social media.

5. **Gita Fitri Rizky Zaharani, Nurrani Kusumawati, Fitri Aprilianty (2021):** This study investigates how micro influencers on Instagram, particularly within the food industry, affect brand image and consumer purchase intentions, with a focus on small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the culinary sector. As SMEs often need cost-effective marketing strategies, this research examines how perceived influencer qualities such as attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness enhance brand image and drive purchase intention. Using a quantitative approach, data from 251 followers of the micro influencer @awlaparr were analyzed, revealing that trustworthiness and brand image significantly impact purchase intentions. Findings suggest that SMEs can effectively leverage food related micro influencers as a key component of their digital marketing strategy to strengthen brand image and encourage consumer purchases.

6. **G.T. Puspita, H. Hendrayati (2024):** This research examines the impact of food blogger reviews on Instagram as a decision-making aid for consumers selecting culinary options in Bandung. Recognizing the popularity of food bloggers among food enthusiasts, the study aims to determine the partial and combined influence of these reviews on consumer purchase decisions. Using a quantitative, descriptive approach, data were gathered from 100 Instagram users in Bandung who follow food bloggers. Through multiple linear regression analysis, findings indicate that factors like review content and blogger consumer interaction significantly affect consumer choices. Results highlight that food blogger reviews play a notable role in shaping purchasing decisions, providing valuable insights for businesses in Bandung's culinary industry.

3. OBJECTIVE

1. To study effect of age and gender of Instagram influencer on food loving consumers.
2. To analyze effect of different personality traits of Instagram influencer on perceptions and purchase decisions of food loving consumers.
3. To analyze the influence of communication skills of Instagram influencers on consumer engagement, trust, and purchase decisions of food loving peoples.

4. METHODOLOGY

This research employs a combining surveys and structured interviews. A sample of 100 food loving consumers from Amravati City was surveyed to gauge their perceptions of influencer credibility and its impact on purchase intentions. The study also included in depth interviews with selected respondents to understand the underlying motivations behind their engagement with food influencers.

Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical tools such as regression analysis and correlation tests, while qualitative insights were categorized thematically. The inclusion of gender based comparative analysis provides a nuanced understanding of how male and female influencers differ in their impact on consumer decisions.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Influencer Credibility and Consumer Trust

Trust is a crucial determinant in online purchasing behavior. Studies indicate that consumers are more likely to engage with influencers they perceive as authentic and reliable. The attractiveness of an influencer also contributes to their persuasive power, particularly in visual driven industries like food and beverages.

Survey results indicated that 72% of respondents reported higher trust in food influencers who share personal experiences and behind the scenes content.

Gender Differences in Influencer Effectiveness

Research has shown that male and female influencers exhibit varying levels of effectiveness in influencing consumer behavior. Female influencers are generally perceived as more relatable and authentic, often engaging more deeply with their audience through personal storytelling. In contrast, male influencers tend to be viewed as authoritative figures, providing factual and expertise driven content.

Survey findings support this, with 64% of respondents indicating a preference for female influencers when seeking food recommendations due to their higher perceived authenticity. Meanwhile, 59% of respondents considered male influencers more reliable when providing detailed insights about food quality and nutritional value. This distinction underscores the need for brands to align influencer partnerships with their marketing objectives.

The Role of Visual Appeal in Food Marketing

Instagram's algorithm favors visually striking content, making high quality food images and videos essential for engagement. Respondents indicated that well-curated images, video storytelling, and influencer engagement (e.g., Q&A sessions, polls) significantly impacted their decision to follow recommendations.

Statistical Findings

The following table presents key insights derived from the survey responses:

Factor Analyzed	Percentage of Respondents
Trust in influencers' recommendations	72%
Influence of visual appeal on decision	68%
Engagement with influencers (likes, comments)	81%
Impact of influencer's trustworthiness	74%
Purchase decision influenced by social media ads	66%

These results confirm that influencer credibility, particularly trustworthiness and visual appeal, significantly impacts consumer purchase decisions.

6. FINDINGS

This study provides valuable insights into the influence of Instagram influencers on food loving consumers in Amravati City. The findings indicate that influencer credibility, particularly trustworthiness and attractiveness, plays a crucial role in shaping consumer preferences and purchase intentions. Consumers are more likely to engage with influencers who

share personal experiences, provide genuine recommendations, and maintain active interaction through comments, polls, and live sessions. The study also highlights that visual appeal significantly impacts consumer engagement, as high quality images and well curated content enhance the overall appeal of food influencers.

Furthermore, gender differences in influencer effectiveness are observed, where female influencers are perceived as more relatable and emotionally engaging, while male influencers are often seen as more authoritative and informative. This distinction suggests that brands should strategically collaborate with influencers based on their target audience and marketing objectives. Additionally, influencer marketing proves to be more effective than traditional advertising, as consumers tend to trust influencers' recommendations over brand generated promotional content. The data analysis supports these findings, demonstrating a strong correlation between influencer credibility and consumer decision making.

7. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that influencer credibility is a key driver of consumer behavior in the food industry. Marketers should focus on selecting influencers with high trustworthiness and visual appeal to optimize their campaigns. Additionally, Gender based differences in influencer effectiveness should be considered in marketing strategies to maximize engagement. Future research can explore additional factors such as influencer expertise, brand partnerships, and consumer sentiment analysis to further understand decision making processes in digital food marketing.

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