Influencer Marketing: Popularity of Brand Posts Among Youth using Instagram in Guwahati, Assam

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Abstract: Influencer marketing involves companies working with online influencers to promote their products. Other influencer marketing collaborations are less concrete; influencers have massive online and social media followings. Some people have hundreds of thousands (if not millions) of followers. It is still likely that many of them will appear to be ordinary people. They may have just a thousand followers, or even fewer in some cases. Nevertheless, they will have established their reputation as industry experts. Depending on their field of expertise, these are the ones who produce the most interesting social postings. They publish the most beautiful content and create the most exhilarating movies, and host the most interesting and informative online debates. The purpose of this thesis is to explore how popular Instagram influencers are, to study the efficiency of influencer marketing in promoting a particular product, and its future in the marketing sector. In addition, the study attempts to investigate customers' review behaviours, desired qualities of influencers, and the reasons behind their activities. We employed an objective technique that combined qualitative and quantitative data to achieve the study's goal. The information was acquired through a questionnaire and Interviews with the influencers. Influencer marketing is most effective when top influencers and story specialists are perceived as trustworthy and credible. Furthermore, it was discovered that influencers have significant influences on consumer behaviour when it comes to information search and alternative recognition.

Keyword: Brand post, Influencer Marketing, Instagram, social media, Youth

I. INTRODUCTION

The use of influencers as a marketing strategy has become increasingly popular for brands to reach their target audiences, particularly among young people on Instagram. Influencer marketing has grown in popularity because people trust recommendations from people they know or admire more than traditional advertising. Due to its visual appeal and large number of active users, Instagram has become a particularly popular platform for influencer marketing. Many young people use Instagram as a source of inspiration and to keep up with the latest trends. Regarding Instagram influencer marketing, firms often collaborate with influencers who have a substantial following and a high engagement rate.

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These influencers create content that showcases the brand's products or services, encouraging their followers to try them out. The success of influencer marketing campaigns can be measured by the engagement rate, reach, and sales generated by the campaign. Influencer marketing, when executed effectively, can be a powerful strategy for businesses to reach their target audience and establish brand recognition. However, it's important to note that not all influencer marketing campaigns are successful. Some campaigns may appear inauthentic or overly promotional, which can turn off the audience. Influencer marketing campaigns must be carefully planned and executed in a way that resonates with the audience and aligns with the brand's values to be successful.

Social media influencers are increasingly crucial in determining customer behaviour and driving industry growth. The term "influencer" refers to an individual who has a substantial following on social media platforms and can influence their followers' views, beliefs, and purchasing decisions. These are some examples of how social media influencers have contributed to market growth: Brand awareness - By showcasing products or services to their followers, influencers can help generate brand awareness. Influencers can promote new items to a larger audience and increase interest in them through their social media postings. Consumer trust: Influencers are frequently seen as genuine and trustworthy sources of information. When they recommend a product, their followers are more inclined to believe it and buy it. Targeted marketing: Influencers cater to a specific niche or audience. Influencers whose followers align with the brand's target audience can help brands connect with potential customers. Sales and money: By endorsing items and services through their postings, influencers may generate sales and revenue. By offering a discount coupon or affiliate link, influencers may motivate their followers to make a purchase. Influencers can also stimulate market innovation by providing new products or services that appeal to their followers. Brands can leverage the insights of influencers to develop new products that cater to the needs of their target audience. Overall, social media influencers play a vital role in market growth by helping brands reach a wider audience, building consumer trust, and driving sales and revenue. As social media continues to evolve, the role of influencers is likely to become even more critical in shaping consumer behaviour and driving market growth.

Indian brands and Instagram influencers work simultaneously to achieve their respective goals. Influencers help brands promote their products or services to a larger audience, while brands help influencers monetize their social media presence [6].

Here's how Indian brands and Instagram influencers work together: Brands identify influential people. Brands search for influencers who have a following that matches their target audience. To identify potential influencers, they may use tools such as influencer marketing platforms or social media monitoring tools [7][8][9]. Influencers produce content: Once a brand has identified an influencer, they will collaborate to create content that promotes the brand's products or services. This includes native advertising, product reviews, and giveaways. Influencers post content: To maximise visibility, the influencer will share the content on their Instagram feed, tagging the company and adding applicable hashtags. Influencers enhance brand awareness: By showing the audience that supports the company, influencers assist to raise brand awareness among their followers. This can help the company reach a larger audience and increase sales. Brands track performance: Brands will track the performance of the influencer's posts to measure the campaign's success. They may utilise data such as engagement rates, clicks, or conversions to assess the Effectiveness of the campaign. Overall, Indian brands and Instagram influencers collaborate to achieve their respective goals, with influencers promoting brands and brands utilising influencers' social media presence to reach a broader audience.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Recently, influencer marketing has proven to be an effective tool for brands to reach their target audiences on social media platforms. In recent years, Instagram has become one of the most popular platforms for influencer marketing, particularly among younger generations. The primary objective of this literature review is to look at existing research on the efficiency of Instagram influencer marketing, specifically the effect of such marketing on brand popularity among young users. Young consumers' perception of brands is positively affected by influencer marketing on Instagram, according to a study by Kim and Ko (2020) [1]. According to a study of 370 Instagram users aged 18 to 29, young consumers are influenced by the perceived trustworthiness and expertise of influencers [4][5]. The influence of Instagram influencers on young adults' purchasing intentions was also examined by Jin and Phua (2019) [2]. Researchers surveyed 408 young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 and found that Instagram influencers have a positive influence on purchase intentions among young individuals. Influencers' perceived authenticity and trustworthiness were also significant predictors of purchase intentions. The study questioned 321 young customers aged 18 to 34 years and found that Instagram influencer marketing has a favourable impact on young consumers' perceived luxury and social standing of fashion businesses. Yet, some studies have found that influencer marketing can have a detrimental effect on brand perception. Wang and Kim (2021) [3For example, [investigators] investigated the impact of Instagram influencers on brand attitude and purchase intention among young customers. The study polled 406 young customers aged 18 to 25 and found that Instagram influencers have a positive influence on brand opinion, but not on purchase intention. Overall, existing research suggests that influencer marketing on Instagram may be a successful approach for firms to reach young customers and enhance their popularity with them. Yet, organisations must carefully select the correct influencers who are seen by their target audience as trustworthy, sincere, and competent.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Is Instagram influencer marketing effective in increasing brand knowledge and popularity among young people?
- How do young people perceive and respond to branded material pushed by influencers on Instagram, and how does this influence their purchasing decisions?
- Is influencer marketing more effective than other kinds of advertising in terms of young engagement?

A. Research Gap

While celebrity endorsements have become increasingly popular in recent years, there remains a need for research on the effectiveness of influencer marketing across various age groups, particularly among youth. Several studies have been conducted to investigate the impact of influencer marketing on customer behaviour. However, few have examined the popularity of brand postings on Instagram among young people. A possible study could investigate how the features of influencers, such as their follower count, engagement rate, and perceived authenticity, impact the popularity of brand posts on Instagram. The popularity of brand postings on Instagram may be influenced by the features of the influencer, such as their follower count, engagement rate, and perceived authenticity. The type of material promoted, such as user-generated content, product placement, or sponsored posts, may also influence the popularity of brand posts among Instagram's youth.

B. Research Objectives

- To look at the efficacy of Instagram influencer marketing in improving brand awareness and popularity among young people.
- To investigate young people's views and reactions to marketed content promoted by Instagram influencers, as well as how this effects their purchase decisions.
- To evaluate the efficacy of influencer marketing in engaging young people with other forms of advertising.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The primary research technique was employed, as the researcher opted for a quantitative research approach. To examine the goals and research topics, a survey was run. The Guwahati university students were given a standardised questionnaire. The survey's sample consisted of 200 people, and 119 of them, or responders, fell within the age range of 18 to 27 years old. Snowball sampling was utilised as part of the information-gathering process. The population being studied develops like a rolling snowball, hence the term "snowball" for this method. Because the researchers choose the sample or study participants rather than randomly drawing them, not everyone in the population has an equal chance of being selected. (Gaurav Garg and CRKothari, 2019)

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V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

A pilot study was conducted with 230 respondents, out of which 119 responses were considered. The analysis of the responses has been conducted using both inferential and descriptive methods. The survey questionnaire was distributed both physically and online, using Google Forms.

1. Frequency Distribution for Age Group

Table 1. 1 Age Group

Particulars	Frequency	Percent
18-21	62	52.1
22-24	35	29.4
25-27	10	8.4
28 and above	12	10.1
Total	119	100

Table 1 In response to the question it shows that out of 119 respondents, majority of 52.1% belongs to the age group of '18-21', followed by 29.4% ' 22-24', 8.4 % belonged to '25-27' rest 28 and Above '10.1%'The table above represents the age group of the respondents.

2. Frequency Distribution for Gender

Table 1. 2 Gender

Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Male	41	34.5
Female	78	65.5
Others	00	00
Total	119	100

Table 2 shows that out of 119 respondents, the majority of 65.5% of respondents were 'Female'. In contrary, as, 34.5 % were' Male' and no 'Others' were found. The table given above highlights the frequency and percentage of the respondents.

3. Frequency Distribution for How often do you use Instagram?

Table 1. 3 How Often Do You Use Instagram?

Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Daily	108	90.8
Once a week	2	1.7
Occasionally	5	4.2
Thrice a week	4	3.4
Total	119	100

Table 3. In response to the question of how often they use Instagram, most respondents, around 90.8%, use it daily. The remaining 1.7%, 4.2%, and 3.4% use it once a week. Occasionally, Thrice a week respectively. The table above represents the frequency with which youth use the social media platform.

4. Frequency Distribution: Do you follow any Instagram Social Media Influencers?

Table 1. 4 Do You Follow any Instagram Social Media Influencers?

Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Yes	73	61.3
No	35	29.4
Maybe	11	9.2
Total	119	100

Table 4 In response to the question of if they follow any social media influencers on Instagram, where majority of respondents that is around 61.3% responded 'yes' while 29.2% opted for 'no', rest quite a handful 9.2 % choose 'Maybe'.

5. Frequency Distribution for Acquired Merchandise or Services after Hearing about it from an Instagram Influencer.

Table 1. 5 Acquired Merchandise or Services

Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	23	19.3
Agree	25	21.0
Neutral	9	7.6
Disagree	43	36.1
Strongly Disagree	19	16.0
Total	119	100

Table 5 from the above question shows that around 36.1% of the respondents' disagree', while 16% 'disagreed' with the statement. On the contrary, 21% 'Agree', 19.3% 'Strongly Agreed' to the statement that Purchased a product or service based on a recommendation from an influencer on Instagram. According to the survey, 52.1% of respondents disagreed that they had purchased a product or service based on a suggestion from an Instagram influencer.

6. Frequency Distribution for Social Media Influencers on Instagram is Honest and Transparent about the Products and Services they Promote

Table 1. 6 Social Media Influencers on Instagram Are Honest and Transparent

Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	22	18.5
Agree	22	18.5
Neutral	6	5.0
Disagree	43	36.1
Strongly Disagree	26	21.8
Total	119	100

Table 6 from the above question it could be seen that around 36.1% 'Disagree' that social media influencers are honest and transparent about the products or service they promote on such platform which is the Instagram. Followed by 21.8% 'Strongly Disagree. On the contrary, around 18.5% for both 'Agree' and 'Strongly Disagree', and quite a handful opted for' Neutral', that is 5%. This study concludes that 57.9% of respondents believe social media influencers are honest and transparent about the products or services they promote on these platforms.

7. Frequency Distribution for Instagram Posts from Brands is Entertaining

Table 1. 7 Instagram Posts from Brands Are Entertaining

Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	17	14.3
Agree	67	56.3
Neutral	3	2.5
Disagree	26	21.8
Strongly Disagree	6	5.0
Total	119	100

Table 7 from the above question it could be seen that around 56.3% 'Agree' to the statement, followed by 14.3% 'Strongly Disagree'. On the contrary, 21.8% 'Disagree' while 5% 'Strongly Disagree. The study concludes that 70.6% of respondents believe Instagram posts from brands are more entertaining than those from any other currently available medium.

8. Frequency Distribution for Unfollowing a brand on Instagram Because Their Posts Were Irrelevant or Uninteresting

Table 1. 8 Unfollowed a Brand on Instagram

Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	18	15.1
Agree	64	53.8
Neutral	00	00
Disagree	14	11.8
Strongly Disagree	23	19.3
Total	119	100

Table 8 from the above question shows that around 53.8% of the respondents unfollowed the influencers when they found the posts to be irrelevant or uninteresting—followed by 15.1% who 'Strongly Agree' to the above statement, while 19.3% 'Disagree', 11.8 'Strongly Disagree' and no responses were received for 'Neutral' option. The study concludes that 68.9% of respondents agreed that they have unfollowed influencers when they found their posts to be irrelevant or uninteresting.

9. Frequency Distribution for Brands Can Better Collaborate with Influencers on Instagram to Make Their Content More Appealing to Youth

Table 1. 9 Brands Can Better Collaborate with Influencers on Instagram

Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	42	35.3
Agree	48	40.3
Neutral	5	4.2
Disagree	12	10.1
Strongly Disagree	12	10.1
Total	**119**	**100**

Table 9 from the above question indicates that approximately 40.3% agree that brands can improve their collaboration with influencers on Instagram to make their content more appealing to young people. Followed by 35.3% 'Agree', 10.1% 'Disagree', and 10.1% 'Strongly Disagree' with the statement. Quite a handful, 4.2% opted for 'Neutral' response. The study concludes that 75.6% of respondents believe brands can improve their collaboration with influencers on Instagram to make their content more appealing to young people.

10. Frequency Distribution for Influencers on Instagram Has a Significant Impact on Youth Culture and Trends

Table 1. 10 Influencers on Instagram Have a Significant Impact

Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	23	19.3
Agree	67	56.3
Neutral	4	3.4
Disagree	19	16.0
Strongly Disagree	6	5.0
Total	**119**	**100**

Table 10 from the above question shows that 56.3% agree with the statement that influencers on Instagram have a significant impact on youth culture and trends. While 19.5% 'Strongly Agree', followed by 16% 'Disagree', and 5% 'Strongly Disagree', the remaining 3.45% opted for 'Neutral'. The study concludes that 75.6% of users believe influencers on Instagram have a significant impact on youth culture and trends.

11. Frequency Distribution for Influencer Marketing has Changed the Way Firms Sell their Products

Table 1. 11 The Rise of Influencer Marketing has Transformed Brands

Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	40	33.6
Agree	46	38.7
Neutral	8	6.7
Disagree	9	7.6
Strongly Disagree	16	13.4
Total	119	100

Table 11 from the above question shows that 38.7% 'Agree' to the statement, while 33.6% 'Strongly Agree', On the contrary, 13.4% ' Strongly Disagree' to the statement above, while 7.6% ' Disagree'. The rest, 6.7%, opted for Neutral. The study concludes that 72.3% agreed that Influencer marketing has changed the way firms sell their products.

12. Frequency Distribution for Frequency Distribution Influencer Marketing on Instagram Differs from Traditional Forms of Advertising

Table 1. 12 Influencer Marketing on Instagram Differs from Traditional

Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	21	17.6
Agree	58	48.7
Neutral	8	6.7
Disagree	20	16.8
Strongly Disagree	12	10.1

Table 12 from the above question shows that 48.7% 'Agree' to the statement, while 17.6% 'Strongly Agree', on the contrary, 16.8% 'Disagree', while 10.1% 'Strongly Disagree'. Quite a handful opted for 'Neutral'. The study concludes that around 66.3% of respondents feel that Influencer marketing on Instagram differs from traditional forms of advertising.

VI. MAJOR FINDINGS

- It was found that around 52.1% of respondents disagreed that they had purchased a product or service based on a suggestion from an Instagram influencer.
- 57.9% of the respondents feel that social media influencers are honest and transparent about the products or services they promote on such platforms.
- 70.6% of the respondents think that Instagram posts from brands are entertaining than any other medium at present.
- 68.9% agreed that they have unfollowed the influencers when they found the posts were irrelevant or uninteresting.
- 75.6% of the respondents feel that brands can better collaborate with influencers on Instagram to make their content appealing to youth.

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- 75.6% of the users feel that Influencers on Instagram have a significant impact on youth culture and trends.
- 72.3% agreed that the rise of influencer marketing has transformed the way brands market their products.
- 66.3% of respondents feel that Influencer marketing on Instagram differs from traditional forms of advertising.

VII. CONCLUSION

The increasing popularity of social media platforms, such as Instagram, has had a significant impact on corporate marketing methods. Influencer marketing has evolved as a popular method for firms looking to reach their target demographic, particularly young people on Instagram, in recent years. The theory behind influencer marketing is that people trust recommendations from individuals they know or appreciate more than traditional advertising. Influencer marketing has gained popularity due to its visual appeal and the large number of active Instagram users. However, while Instagram influencers are seen to influence youth culture and trends, not all respondents follow their recommendations. This emphasises the importance of influencers maintaining openness, relevance, and engagement in their content to appeal to their audience effectively. They must create authentic and relatable content that resonates with their followers and aligns with the brand's values. Brands also need to optimise their collaborations with influencers to ensure that their campaigns are successful and effectively appeal to the youth demographic. Influencer marketing on Instagram is seen as distinct from traditional advertising. Unlike traditional advertising, influencer marketing is based on building relationships between the influencer and their audience. This type of marketing leverages the influencer's brand and their connection with their followers. Influencers are viewed as individuals who have a unique perspective and voice, and their followers often see them as role models. As a result, influencer marketing campaigns can feel more personal and authentic, making them more effective in reaching younger audiences. In conclusion, influencer marketing on Instagram is a dynamic and evolving landscape within the digital marketing sphere. It differs from traditional advertising, relying instead on establishing relationships between influencers and their followers. For businesses to effectively appeal to the youth demographic, they must optimize their collaborations with influencers, ensuring that their campaigns resonate with the audience and align with the influencer's values. At the same time, influencers must maintain transparency, relevance, and engagement in their content to ensure that they effectively engage with their followers.

IMPLICATION

The impact of social media platforms like Instagram on the marketing strategies of businesses, and the emergence of influencer marketing as a popular strategy to reach target audiences, particularly young people on Instagram. It emphasises that influencer marketing is based on the idea of trust and relationships between the influencer and their audience, resulting in more authentic and relatable content that resonates with followers. However, not all respondents necessarily make purchases based on influencer recommendations, highlighting the need for influencers to maintain transparency, relevance, and engagement in their content. Brands must optimise their collaborations with influencers to effectively appeal to the youth demographic, while influencers must align with the brand's values and maintain authenticity. The paragraph suggests that influencer marketing is an evolving landscape within digital marketing, relying on building relationships with followers and leveraging personal brands to reach younger audiences effectively.

FUTURE SCOPE

Influencer marketing on Instagram is expected to continue growing as social media usage increases and younger generations become the primary consumers. Brands will likely continue to use influencer marketing as a means of reaching their target audience, particularly on Instagram, due to its visual appeal and active user base. However, the key to the success of influencer marketing will be in the ability of influencers to maintain transparency, relevance, and engagement with their followers while also aligning with the brand's values. As the digital marketing landscape continues to evolve, influencer marketing is likely to become more sophisticated and refined, with brands and influencers collaborating to create campaigns that are both effective and authentic. Additionally, advancements in technology may enable more targeted influencer marketing strategies, utilising data and analytics to pinpoint the most effective influencers for specific demographics and interests. Overall, the future of influencer marketing on Instagram appears promising, and it is likely to remain a vital tool for businesses seeking to reach the youth demographic.

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