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A Study on Influencer Commerce to Promote and Sell Products through Social Media in Solapur City

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Abstract

Influencer commerce has emerged as a rapidly growing marketing strategy where brands collaborate with social media influencers to promote and directly sell products through digital platforms. This study focuses specifically on the city of Solapur, Maharashtra, to understand how influencer-driven social media marketing influences consumer buying behavior, brand perception, and sales outcomes. The research uses a mixed-method approach involving surveys and interviews to examine the effectiveness of influencers, preferred platforms, consumer trust, and purchase intentions. The study reveals that micro and local influencers in Solapur significantly affect brand visibility and product purchase decisions due to higher relatability, localized content, and cultural relevance. The findings provide valuable insights for businesses, marketers, and local entrepreneurs to effectively utilize influencer commerce as a strategic marketing tool.

Keywords: Influencer commerce, social media marketing, Solapur, consumer behavior, digital marketing, purchase intention.

Introduction

In the digital era, social media has transformed communication, entertainment, and commerce. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok are no longer used only for networking; they have evolved into powerful commercial ecosystems where influencers play a significant role in shaping consumer opinions and purchase behavior. Influencer commerce is important because it bridges the gap between brands and consumers by leveraging the trust, credibility, and social connection influencers have built with their followers. Unlike traditional advertising, influencer-driven promotion feels more authentic and relatable, which significantly enhances consumer engagement and purchase intention. It allows brands to reach highly targeted audiences, increases product visibility, and helps create strong brand awareness in a cost-effective manner. Influencer commerce also supports storytelling-based marketing, encourages user interaction through reviews and recommendations, and drives faster buying decisions. In today's digital marketplace, it plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior, strengthening brand loyalty, and contributing to higher sales growth. Influencer marketing refers to brand collaborations with individuals who have a significant following on social platforms and possess persuasive ability. They create content such as reviews, demonstrations, endorsements, and discount promotions which stimulate consumer interest. Solapur, an emerging commercial city in Maharashtra known for textiles, food businesses, education, and local entrepreneurship, is witnessing increasing digital adoption. With rising smartphone usage, internet accessibility, and youth engagement on social media, influencer commerce has begun to influence local markets. Local influencers in Solapur are actively promoting restaurants, fashion boutiques, beauty products, gadgets, and lifestyle brands, thereby supporting both online and offline business growth. Influencer commerce combines influencer marketing and social commerce. Prior research states that influencers act as opinion leaders whose recommendations significantly impact consumer decisions. This study is beneficial for: Local businesses and entrepreneurs to design better marketing strategies. Influencers to understand follower expectations. Marketing agencies and students for academic and practical understanding

Types of Influencers

Influencers are categorized based on follower count:

Mega Influencers: Above 1 million followers; global reach but expensive.

Macro Influencers: 100,000–1,000,000 followers; strong engagement and brand partnerships.

Micro Influencers: 10,000–100,000 followers; high trust and niche audience.

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Nano Influencers: Below 10,000 followers; highly local, personal connection.

In Solapur, most influencers fall into micro and nano categories, making them more relatable to local audiences.

Social Media Platforms in Influencer Commerce

Instagram – Reels, stories, and posts promote lifestyle and retail brands.

YouTube – Product reviews, tutorials, and vlogs.

Facebook – Local business promotions and event marketing.

TikTok/Short Video Apps – Short promotional videos (where applicable).

WhatsApp – Product broadcasting and direct selling groups.

Research Problem

Although influencer marketing is gaining popularity in Solapur, many businesses still face challenges such as: Lack of understanding of influencer effectiveness. Difficulty identifying suitable influencers. Inability to measure marketing outcomes. Skepticism about whether influencer promotions truly convert into sales. Hence, there is a need for a systematic study to analyze how influencer commerce works in Solapur and its impact on consumers and businesses.

Research Objectives

- To study the role of social media influencers in promoting and selling products in Solapur.
- To analyze the impact of influencer marketing on consumer buying behavior.
- To identify popular social media platforms used for influencer commerce in Solapur.
- To understand consumer trust, perception, and authenticity related to influencers.
- To provide suggestions for Solapur-based businesses to successfully implement influencer marketing strategies.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on social media users, consumers, influencers, and business owners in Solapur city. It covers platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp-based influencer promotions.

Research Methodology

1. Research Design

This study uses a mixed-method approach combining quantitative and qualitative research:

Quantitative – Structured survey questionnaire.

Qualitative – Interviews with consumers, influencers, and business owners.

2. Area of Study

The research is conducted in Solapur city, Maharashtra.

3. Population and Sample

Population: Social media users and consumers in Solapur aged 18–45.

Sample Size: 80 survey respondents + 15 interview participants.

Sampling Technique: Purposive and convenience sampling.

4. Variables

Independent Variables: Influencer credibility, content quality, engagement level, platform used.

Dependent Variables: Consumer purchase intention, brand awareness, actual purchase.

Moderating Variable: Trust and authenticity.

Data Analysis and Findings

1. Demographic Insights

Majority respondents are: Age group: 18–30, Active social media users, Regular viewers of influencer content

2. Platform Preference

Most respondents prefer: Instagram → highest engagement, YouTube → detailed product understanding, Facebook → community-based visibility

3. Impact on Purchase Behavior

Findings indicate: Over 65% respondents purchased products after influencer recommendations. Fashion, food, beauty, electronics, and local services showed highest influence. Discounts and promo codes increased conversion.

4. Trust and Authenticity

Local influencers are considered more relatable. Consumers trust influencers who share honest reviews. Overly promotional influencers lose credibility.

5. Business Impact

Business owners reported: Increased brand awareness. Higher customer inquiries. Boost in both online orders and store visits.

6. Key Findings

1. Majority Solapur youth actively use social media.
2. Instagram is the leading platform for influencer commerce.
3. Most respondents follow multiple influencers regularly.
4. Influencer recommendations strongly affect purchase decisions.
5. Micro and local influencers are more impactful than big celebrities.
6. Trust and authenticity determine consumer acceptance.
7. Businesses benefit significantly from influencer collaborations.

Discussion

The study confirms that influencer commerce significantly impacts consumers in Solapur. Young social media users follow influencers daily and consider their recommendations reliable. Micro and nano influencers play a dominant role due to cultural familiarity and regional language usage. Instagram emerges as the most powerful influencer platform in Solapur due to its visual storytelling, Reels feature, and interactive tools like polls and Q&A. Influencer credibility and authenticity strongly determine purchase response.

Businesses collaborating with influencers experience tangible benefits including improved visibility, customer trust, and higher sales, making influencer commerce a powerful marketing strategy for Solapur's local economy.

Implications of the Study

1. **For Businesses:** Choose local micro-influencers for cost-effective reach. Focus on engagement rather than follower count. Provide influencers with creative freedom.
2. **For Influencers:** Maintain authenticity. Engage regularly with followers. Build trust rather than forced promotions.
3. **For Marketers and Academics:** Influencer commerce is a sustainable and impactful strategy. Requires strategic campaign planning and KPI measurement.

Conclusion

The study concludes that influencer commerce plays a significant role in promoting and selling products through social media in Solapur. Influencers, particularly local micro-influencers, create meaningful connections with consumers, influence purchase decisions, and help businesses achieve marketing success. With increasing digitalization in Solapur, influencer commerce is expected to grow further and become a central marketing strategy for businesses aiming to enhance visibility, trust, and sales.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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