



FEMALE INFLUENCERS: ANALYSING THE SOCIAL MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF FEMALE SUBJECTIVITY IN INDIA

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Abstract: In a quickly transforming social, economic and cultural context, there is now a strong focus on the interrelations between media and gender to produce new forms of subjectivity, imaginaries and models of action. The current market is the one evolving in the growing presence of Generation Z, a rapidly growing group of consumers. Influencers are persons respected in their communities, who have a large group of committed supporters and audience. The diversity of Indian culture makes it perfect for women to convey their culture and use it as an accurate medium to bring out fashion, culture, food, travel and other varied interests. Although the concept of influencer marketing seems to be closely related to the dynamic development of social media, its history dates back to a few centuries earlier. There are several categories of digital influencer based on different characteristics. Women influencers play a significant role in the present digital landscape.

We live in an age of innovation, where digital technology is providing solutions to problems before we have even realized we needed them. We see it all around us every day, as we find new ways to eat, travel, work and shop.

Introduction

In a quickly transforming social, economic and cultural context, there is now a strong focus on the interrelations between media and gender to produce new forms of subjectivity, imaginaries and models of action. The fast spread of digital media and social media has made this scenario more complex, since it has multiplied the possible role models and also the surveillance mechanisms with which, especially women have to deal. In fact, this mechanism engages girls to align the image shared through social media with others' expectations, whether it is the peer group to which they belong or the followers spread across the different platforms.

Role of Women

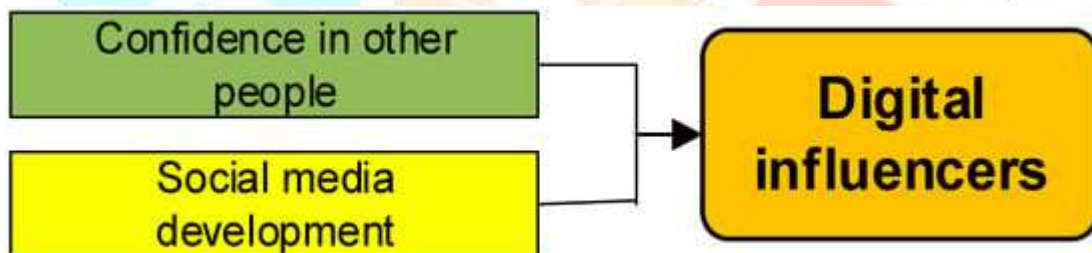
Our Past President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam said, "When women are empowered, a stable society is secured". Women are no longer regarded as submissive or secondary to males in all aspects of life practically. It has now been thoroughly demonstrated that women can perform any job as well as, if not better than males.

Like Beyonce sang, "Who runs the world, girls?" We have now arrived at a situation where women are self-sufficient wealth generators and are equal to males in terms of talents and performance in a variety of disciplines.

The current market is the one evolving in the growing presence of Generation Z, a rapidly growing group of consumers. This is a generation that does not know reality without the Internet. This generation is referred to as “the first generation of true digital natives. “ This generation requires a completely different marketing approach. In the new market situation, when promoting products, services or brands has never been so difficult, organizations have begun to look for alternative methods of influencing consumers. It is a practice that takes advantage of renowned online users, who are able to influence consumers’ attitudes and decision making processes in favour of brands or ideas. This form of marketing has become the fastest growing trend in recent years and such campaigns and posts have increased tremendously from 2015 onwards. A study done in recent years by Mckinsey in India shows that 80% of consumers will consider a new brand based on the recommendation of a key influencer. This has the deepest impact on the thought processes and preference patterns of Generation Z. According to the Harvard Business Review, 19% of American consumers bought goods or services in 2018 as a result of the recommendations of a digital influencer. This percentage amounted to 36% for consumers who are below 25.

Who Is An Influencer ?

Influencers are persons respected in their communities, who have a large group of committed supporters and audience. It is also seen that they very often create their own specific content to build their reputation. In an elaborate manner, influencer is an opinion leader, popular in a wider or higher group of regular recipients, who inspires, engages and convinces the public to make specific choices such as those related to shopping, nutrition etc. They are like a micro celebrity with a large number of followers who are this social capital to gain access to financial resources. This concept has dramatically grown over the recent few years and its use has doubled from 2016 to 2022.



In an era when women are struggling for wage equality, work life balance and gender parity, one fast evolving business is dominated by women; Social media. Women are more likely than men to post personal information and are predominantly, the majority of Face book, You Tube and Instagram users.

The diversity of Indian culture makes it perfect for women to convey their culture and use it as an accurate medium to bring out fashion, culture, food, travel and other varied interests. It is absolutely reassuring to see women enjoying their best lives. So many of them create social media material without even leaving their homes. Organizations perceive these influencers as opinion leaders, mediating in the distribution of information and facilitating it’s dissemination to online followers. They are becoming spokespersons or ambassadors for their brands.

History

Although the concept of influencer marketing seems to be closely related to the dynamic development of social media, its history dates back to a few centuries earlier. They date back to 1760s, the pioneer being Josiah Wedgwood, who produced ceramics for the British Royal Family followed by other important figures who appeared in the 19th and 20th centuries. Undoubtedly, the emergence of social media has dramatically changed the ways in which consumers communicate and create bonds, both among themselves and with brands.

Typology

There are several categories of digital influencer based on different characteristics: Based on number, influencers can be

1. Celebrities (over 5 million)
2. Mega Influencers (1 million – 5 million)
3. Top Influencers (over 500 thousand)
4. Macro Influencers (100 – 500 thousand)
5. Middle Level Influencers (20 – 100 thousand)
6. Micro Influencers (less than 20 thousand)
7. Nano Influencers (1 – 10 thousand)

According to their motivation to take action, influencers may be categories as:

Idols – These are the people who are highly recognizable and popular. They focus mainly on themselves, intertwining other political, social etc. topics into their messages.

Experts – These are recognized as authorities in a given field due to their knowledge or skills and include industry specialists, consultants, reviewers or testers.

Lifestylers – These are the people who get involved in discussions about life style and leisure activities. Their content is mainly related to fashion, beauty, lifestyle and leisure activities.

Activists – These are mostly internet users interested in such topics as environmental protection, minority rights or feminism.

Artists – These are people focusing on creating material with high aesthetic and visual appeal. They deal with a variety of aspects such as travel, nature, architecture etc.

Influencers can be categorized according to the communication platform they use. Bloggers, Youtubers, Facebookers, Instagramers, Twitters, Snapchatters or Tik Tokers can be distinguished within this group.

Influencers can also be divided into active and passive influencers. The former includes those who are targeted by companies to promote their products or services. The latter encompasses those who are not directly targeted by companies.

Important Statistics

1. 86% of Women use Social Media for Purchasing Advice
2. 77% of Influencers monetizing their content are females.
3. More Women than Men follow influencers across age brackets
4. Women are more likely to try a product via Influencers.
5. Woman dominate deal flow
6. 71% of Pinterest users are female and 40 % of Pinterest Users use Research Brands Products
7. 68% of Women say they are responsible for Holiday Shopping.

Conclusion

Women influencers play a significant role in the present digital landscape. They often use their influence to raise awareness about important social issues such as gender equality, mental health, body positivity and environmental sustainability. Such influencers create online communities where people can connect and these communities can be especially important for women who may be isolated or marginalized. Their presence and influence contribute to a more diverse, inclusive and empowered digital landscape.

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