
Unlocking Brand Engagement: The Impact of Lakme's Influencer Marketing Strategy on Instagram

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Abstract: Social media marketing has been growing rapidly and people are finding social media as a part of their daily life. Social media builds networking skills among people and this is used to spread information with less time and effort. Instagram being one among them has become more popular in recent years. Instagram is also used as a platform where marketing takes place. People are attracted to its features and the platform is gaining more users. Instagram marketers are using this platform as a means to connect with people and are doing businesses that are of great success. In this study, the most popular brand on Instagram, Lakme, has been taken for analysis and has been made empirically. A total of 219 responses have been collected from people using Instagram and regression analysis has been made among the three stages of marketing funnel and brand engagement. This study has found that Lakme has a significant relationship with brand engagement. All three stages, awareness, consideration, and conversion are positively influencing Lakme's engagement with Instagram users. Future studies can be done including influencers, who are playing a vital role when it comes to Instagram marketing.

Keywords: Awareness, Instagram marketing, Brand engagement, Marketing funnel, Influencer marketing.

INTRODUCTION:

Social media is making life easier by making everything possible sitting in the same place. Irrespective of age, gender, or any other factor social media plays a vital role in everyone's lives. People can't imagine their lives without social media after getting used to it. They are making the most use of it in their daily lives and these have become a part of sustaining. There are many social media platforms and people are open to choosing anyone among them of their own will. These platforms help them in various ways like building networks among family, friends, and colleagues, getting to know about society, current events or news, the market, etc. When knowing about the market helps marketers run their business online and also helps in many ways. Marketers learn to run their business online, get to know about customers' needs, and wants, what they think about the product/services, how far they got to know about the business, and a lot more about customers which in turn helps the marketers to run the business.

One among the social media is Instagram which has been growing up in the recent decade. Instagram has been gaining more users and people are getting addicted to it. Marketers are finding it a great opportunity and a platform to reach customers and exhibit their products or services. When a great way has been found there will be competition out there in Instagram. Many marketers are finding and coping with the market using a unique selling strategy. It's really important to stand out in the Instagram market among our competitors who are using Instagram in a great way to reach customers. Instagram not only helps reach customers, but it also helps marketers learn about what customers feel about their business.

These marketers learn all about customers. This way Instagram serves the purpose of marketers marketing through Instagram.

Brands are engaging directly with customers and knowing their thoughts on their products. These brands are competing with their competitors learning more about the wants of their customers, and gaining new customers. Looking at the successful business that they are exhibiting through Instagram other new customers are being attracted and are gaining trust. This way brands are making businesses possible through Instagram. It's a brilliant idea to use Instagram as a platform to reach customers and learn about them. Since most of the customers are addicted to Instagram it's obvious that they use Instagram in their daily life. The cosmetics industry is showing consistent growth in the market by marketing in retail stores across the countries. Multiple brands are manufacturing multiple numbers of products. The Indian cosmetics industry is being recognized for its hair care, skin care, and many other categories of products. According to the India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF), the cosmetic industry is growing globally by 4.3% Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) and is expected to reach US\$ 450 billion by 2025. It is expected that India's cosmetics, beauty, and grooming market will reach US\$ 20 by 2025.

This study examines the comparison of two most popular Indian cosmetic brands, Lakme and Sugar Cosmetics, which are carrying out their business on Instagram. The study aims to know about the brands and how they are influencing customers through Instagram. Their performance that attracts the customers which in turn creates goodwill among them is the core concept of this study.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following are a few authors who have done studies related to Instagram marketing. They have identified different relationships among variables which are insightful. These insights have been considered and implemented in the Study.

Bevan-Dye & Motaung, (2023) examined the perceived utility of Generation Y when it comes to Instagram celebrity influencers' fashion apparel content and purchase intentions and brand predispositions. The study has collected 334 responses from students who have registered in two universities in South Africa by structural equation modeling. The study's findings conclude that there is a significant role of celebrity influencers in Instagram fashion apparel and have discussed the necessity and the strategies engaged with Generation Y.

Macheka, Quaye, & Ligaraba, (2023) have done a study on female consumers intention on purchase who are young to identify the effects of the endorsement of the celebrity and the review of the customers online. This is an empirical study that collected 203 valid responses and was analyzed through structural equation modeling. The results show that all seven variables had a positive effect except two variables such as the attractiveness of the influencers who are celebrities on the consumers' attitude. The next one is the loyalty of the brand with the young female intentions of purchases of customers on beauty products. The study suggested the understanding of the reviews of online customers' especially female ones towards beauty products.

Al-Mu'ani, Alrwashdeh, Ali, & Al-Assaf, (2023) have done an empirical study that aims to examine the effect of social media influencers where brand attitude has been considered as a mediating variable on the purchase intention. A survey was conducted collecting 309 responses through the convenience sampling method in the year 2023. For the data analysis, SPSS and AMOS were used to examine the perfect fit. The variables used in this study are influencers attributed to the intention to purchase and the attitude toward the brand. The results conclude that the influencers' attribute has a significant impact on the attitude towards the brand.

Masri, Hamadneh, Al-Dmour, & Al-Okaily, (2023) have done an empirical study to know how far the future might replace humans as computer influencers in the digital world transformation. Data of 225 was collected through a random sampling method. Structural equation modeling was done to analyze the data and it is concluded that it is successful to replace computers in the place of humans when it comes to playing the role of influencers. The literature part of the study contributed insights into the endorsement of celebrity disclosure. The study also suggested the attributes of influencers to have an effective endorsement to the marketing managers.

Chen, Silaban, Hutagalung, & Silalahi, (2023) has done a study on the contribution of travelers' decisions when it comes to Instagram influencers. The survey collected 364 responses and used structural equation modeling and qualitative comparative analysis. The results suggest that the consumers are travelers who trust social media marketing and it is highly attractive. The study concludes that the trust of the consumers is positive towards the travel accounts in social media marketing. The study's literature contributes and lists managerial implications to create intentions of travel.

Park & Namkung, (2022) has done a study on the activities of marketing done on Instagram that affects the equity of the brand in the coffee industry. Brand equity has enlisted the awareness of the brand, the quality that is being perceived, the image of the brand that is being created, the love for the brand, and their reuse intention on Instagram. This is an empirical study that collected 358 responses from the consumers of coffee. The study used SPSS and AMOS to derive the results that show that the study used some of the dimensions such as the trends, interactions, entertainment patterns, and finally the customization of the products. The findings concluded that there is a significant relationship among the variables and suggest that Instagram marketing provides insights to marketers in the marketing field.

Gürşen, (2022) has done a conceptual study on how intellectual influencers are the ambassadors of the communication that's happening in the digital marketing world. In this study, influencer marketing is seen with a traditional point of view where the intellectual influencers and the communications that are happening are being noted. This study shows how influencer marketing is seen as a new dimension in the digital world.

Ahmad & Suyatna, (2020) have done a study on the influencers on Instagram who act upon the consumers with their intentions in purchase. The study identifies that these two have a mediating effect on brand equity. On the whole, this study aims to identify the Instagram's richness among the consumers. This is an empirical study collecting 537 responses from undergraduates from Kuala Lumpur. The results were obtained from the age group between 19 and 24. For analysis, structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to fit the hypothesis. The results show that there is a significant model fit that depicts the positive relationship among the variables such as the richness of Instagram, the engagement of the brand which is considered as social media richness, and the brand equity towards the intention of purchases of the consumers. The study concludes with the importance of the media richness that is used by Instagram as its business platform.

Research gap

From the above review of literature, it is identified that the authors have identified different variables like brand image, brand trust, brand awareness, celebrity endorsement, etc., but there is a limitation of the study where no author has concentrated on the stages of marketing funnel where brand engagement will play a key role. Thus this study aims to find the relationships between the stages of the marketing funnel that is awareness, consideration, and conversion with the brand environment. The study aims to consider Lakmé, one the leading Indian cosmetic brands on Instagram, the role played by Lakmé during the different stages of the marketing funnel that is Lakmé's brand awareness, consideration of the customers when it comes to Lakmé in Instagram and the conversion stage where customers purchase from Lakmé through Instagram. These three stages along with the brand engagement of Lakmé on Instagram have been studied in this research.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

From the above reviews of literature few research questions have been framed and the study has been moved further.

- How brand awareness is creating an impact on brand engagement?
- How is customer consideration expected to affect brand engagement?
- How is the effect of conversion expected to manifest in brand engagement?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

From the above research questions, the objectives of the study have been framed and are listed below.

- To find the impact of brand awareness on brand engagement
- To analyze the influence of customer consideration and brand engagement
- To examine the effect of conversion toward brand engagement

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

A few hypotheses have been developed from the research questions and objectives.

H1: Brand awareness has a positive impact on brand engagement

H2: Customer consideration has a positive impact on brand engagement

H3: Conversion has a positive impact on brand engagement

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:

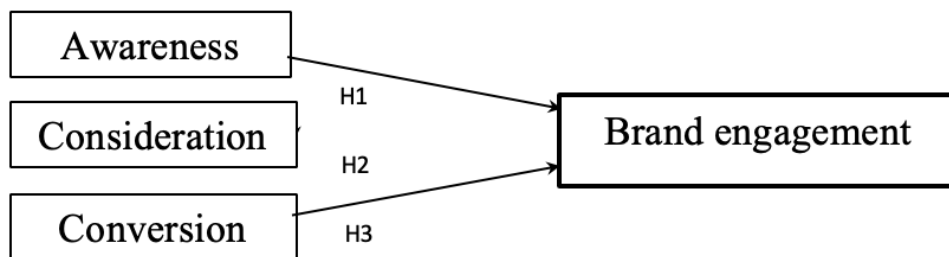


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Based on the research gap, a conceptual framework has been framed to know about the relationship between marketing funnel stages and brand engagement. The three stages of the marketing funnel are considered to be the independent variables, they are awareness, consideration, and conversion. The dependent variable in this model is the brand engagement of Lakmé in Instagram through influencer marketing.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to know the brand engagement of Lakmé's customers who follow Lakmé on Instagram and get influenced by their marketers who try to influence the brand in the heads of customers. They use Instagram as a mode or platform to reach customers and attain the three stages of the marketing funnel, that is awareness of the brand, consideration of buying it, and the final stage conversion which results in sales of the product. This result answers the questions of how Lakmé's brand awareness is creating an impact on brand engagement, how customer consideration is expected to affect brand engagement, and finally how the effect of conversion is expected to manifest in brand awareness.

This study is an empirical study collecting responses using structured questionnaires. The sampling method used in this study is convenience sampling. This was done by creating a Google form that was circulated among Instagram users to collect primary data. The Scopus database was used to collect articles and papers regarding the same study. A total of 219 samples were collected to analyze and find the answers to the research questions.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

A study on the brand engagement of Lakmé in Instagram through Influencer marketing has been done collecting 219 valid responses. Data collection has been done by circulating questionnaires and analysis has been done using SPSS 16.0. The statistical tools used here are percentage analysis and multiple regressions.

Table 1 Demographic Factor of the Respondents

Factors	Dimensions	Percentage
Age	18-26	70.3%
	27-42	20.5%
	43-59	9.1%
Gender	Female	91.9%
	Male	8.1%
Source of income	Salary	63.9%
	Business	25.6%
	Dependent	10%
Family monthly income	Up to 2,00,000	47.9%
	2,00,001 – 3,00,000	25.6%
	3,00,001 – 4,00,000	9.1%
	Above 4,00,000	17.4%
Educational Qualification	Schooling	0.5%
	Diploma	0.9%
	Bachelor's degree	32%
	Master's degree	64.8%
	Doctorate	1.8%
Frequency	Multiple times a day	70.8%

	Once a day	1.8%
	A few times a week	25.1%
	Rarely	0.9%
	Never	1.4%
Weekly duration	Less than 1 hour	10.5%
	1-2 hours	4.6%
	3-5 hours	19.2%
	6-10 hours	26.5%
	Over 10 hours	39.3%
Number of Accounts Followed	0-100	15.5%
	101-300	5.5%
	301-500	36.5%
	501-1000	41.6%
	1001 and above	0.9%
Shopping behavior	Have made purchases directly using Instagram	65.3%
	Explore products on Instagram but purchase on a different platform	19.2%
	Rarely or never make purchases based on Instagram content	15.5%
Engagement with sponsored content	Always	51.6%
	Often	13.7%

Sometimes	26.5%
Rarely	4.1%
Never	4.1%

From the above table, it is analyzed that 70.3% of the respondents fall under the age of 18-26, 20.5% under 27-42, and 9.1% under 43-59. Female respondents are of 91.9%, male respondents are of 8.1%. The respondents who get a salary are 63.9%, business people are 25.6%, and those who are dependent are 10%. People's family income range up to 2,00,000 are of 47.9%, 2,00,001-3,00,001 are of 25.6%, 3,00,001-4,00,001 are of 9.1%, above 4,00,000 are of 17.4%. The respondents who have done only their schooling are 0.5%, Diploma are of 0.9%, Bachelor's degree is of 32%, Master's degree is of 64.8%, doctorate are of 1.8%. The frequency of usage of Instagram for multiple times a day is 70.8%, once a day is 1.8%, a few times a day are of 25.1%, rarely are of 0.9%, and never are of 1.4%. The weekly duration spent on Instagram for less than 1 hour is 10.5%, 1-2 hours are 19.2%, 3-5 hours are 19.2%, 6-10 hours are 26.5%, and over 10 hours are 39.3%. The number of accounts followed by the respondents from 0-100 is 15.5%, 101-300 are 5.5%, 301-500 are 36.5%, 501-1000 are 41.6%, and 1001 and above are 0.9%. The shopping behavior of the respondents who have made purchases directly using Instagram (65.3%, who explore products on Instagram but purchase on different platforms 19.2%, who rarely or never make purchases based on Instagram content 15.5%. The respondents who engage with sponsored content always are 51.6%, often are of 13.7%, sometimes are of 26.5%, rarely are of 4.1%, and never are of 4.1%.

Table 2 Reliability statistics

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Awareness	.979	7
Consideration	.979	9
Conversion	.985	8
Brand engagement	.971	16

From the reliability analysis made with the number of items, Cronbach's Alpha was found for each item. For awareness variables with 7 items, Cronbach's Alpha was found to be .979. Similarly, for the consideration variable with 9 items the Cronbach's Alpha was .979, for the conversion variable with 8 items the Cronbach's Alpha was found to be .985 and finally the brand engagement variable with 16 items the Cronbach's Alpha was found to be .971. The Cronbach's Alpha found from the collected respondent's data seems to be both reliable and valuable.

MULTIPLE REGRESSION

Multiple regression is a statistical method to measure the significance and impact of two or more independent and dependent variables on the outcome. The goal of analyzing the outcome is to get the best-fitting linear equation that depicts the relationship between the variables that helps researchers come to a conclusion and predict future studies in variable research areas. Here the dependent variable is brand engagement (Y) and the independent variables are awareness (X1), consideration (X2), and conversion (X3).

Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.843a	.711	.707	.33709

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.420	.205		2.047	.000
	Awareness	.708	.060	.681	11.840	.000
	Consideration	.308	.044	.338	6.999	.000
	Conversion	.167	.044	.182	3.838	.000

The multiple correlation coefficients (R) .843 depict a strong positive correlation between the variables. This has measured the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the variables. The coefficient of determination also known as the R squared value shows the ratio of the variance of the dependent variable which is found from the independent variables. The R square value here is .711 which is approximately 71.1% is the variance found with the dependent and independent variables. The significance is observed at a 1% level.

The multiple regression equation takes the form:

$$Y = 0.420 + 0.708X_1 + 0.308X_2 + 0.167 X_3$$

For the intercept representing the value Y is 0.420. When the predictor variables (X1, X2, and X3) are zero, the expected value Y is 0.420.

For X1 - Awareness the coefficient variable is 0.708. This means that for a unit value increase in awareness, the expected value Y will increase by 0.708 units and the remaining predictor values will remain the same.

For X2- consideration the coefficient variable is 0.308. This means that for a unit value increases in consideration the expected value Y will increase by 0.308 units and the remaining predictor values will remain constant.

For X3- conversion the coefficient variable is 0.167. This means that for a unit value increases in conversion the expected value Y will increase by 0.167 units and the remaining predictor values will remain constant.

The positive coefficients indicate a positive relationship that the dependent variable tends to increase. From the above analysis, it is evident that all three independent variables have a strong positive relationship with the dependent variable and the awareness variable is stronger than the other two variables with the dependent variable.

FINDINGS

The result depicts that there is a positive influence of brand engagement (dependent variable) with the marketing funnel namely awareness, consideration, and conversion (independent variable). From the above three variables, it is found that awareness has the strongest and most positive relationship with brand engagement. Lakmé being the most popular Indian brand on Instagram has created a positive awareness among users of Instagram. Users feel that Lakmé is more predictable and identifiable. By identifying the brand, customers decide whether to buy the product or not. From the result, it is evident that the users of Instagram feel that Lakmé exhibits their products more attractively than customers tend to think or consider buying or not. On Instagram, there are numerous products available and they make use of the platform more efficiently. The ultimate aim of the brand is to make sales and it is found that Lakmé is making strong sales that are the last stage in marketing funnel conversion. Thus by satisfying or having a positive impact on the three stages of the marketing funnel, Lakmé is performing well on Instagram and making use of the social media platform more effectively.

Lakmé being a world-popular brand has a consistent yet successful marketing strategy that works best for it. Lakmé chose Instagram as a platform to market their products and perform a sound marketing strategy. There are lots of other products that belong to the cosmetics industry that are fighting to compete in the market and beat Lakmé. Lakmé being the most popular brand with the most number of followers is responsible for consistent, active, and responsive marketing. Since Lakmé is gaining a lot of customers, it is their responsibility to satisfy the needs and wants of them. Thus by doing so, they will make their customers loyal and their sales will flourish.

IMPLICATIONS

This study implies great insights into the market, brands, and consumers. The brands identify the impact relating to the four stages of the marketing funnel. It also identifies the unique buying proposition in the market, which helps in future business activities to meet success. This study also implies a major implication to brands where it helps in knowing how the customers are being turned into brand ambassadors. When it comes to influencers they get to know about the brands and their marketing strategies that are being played by them using influencers in Instagram. They also get to know what the actual consumers think about them. They also identify their roles and responsibilities in the market and that helps them to build it more ethically. The customers who are being influenced by the influencer on Instagram get to know about the tactics played on them and they make better decisions by knowing them. This also inculcates the idea of sustainable consumption in customers where they understand the pros and cons of pro-sustainable behavior in the market. Thus these are the implications that the study has identified.

CONCLUSION

Instagram is a platform where social media marketing is taking place. Marketing of a brand will help to reach customers and they end up buying the products. The cosmetic industry has been playing an important role in marketing themselves on Instagram. The most popular Indian cosmetics brand, Lakmé has a powerful customer base. They have attained a position on Instagram by engaging with customers. Thus by engaging with customers, they can make their marketing a successful one. Brand engagement of Lakmé is a successful one as they attain awareness among customers, they consider whether to buy or not, and they buy their products. In this study, there is a limitation in adding a decision stage to the marketing funnel, where we will know exactly what customers are thinking about the marketing of the products. Brand engagement is necessary for brands to reach customers and make them loyal with the help of the four stages of the marketing funnel. Certain brands don't satisfy customers as they don't focus on which stage they are losing their customers. This will lead to less information about the needs and wants of the customers and end up not satisfying them. Thus to ensure a great brand engagement with the customers, they have to be driven across the marketing funnel with a high level of satisfaction.

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