


Chapter 8


Digital Influencers in Global Marketing: Strategies, Challenges, and Cultural Adaptation

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ABSTRACT

The rise of digital influencers has transformed global marketing, reshaping consumer behavior, brand loyalty, and cultural engagement. This chapter explores the evolution of influencer marketing, its impact on consumer trust, and the challenges brands face in leveraging influencers effectively. Through qualitative analysis of secondary data, the study highlights key trends, including the shift toward micro- and nano-influencers, the importance of authenticity, and the role of cultural adaptation in global campaigns. Findings reveal that long-term influencer partnerships, transparency, and data-driven strategies enhance credibility and ROI, while misalignment and ethical lapses—as seen in cases like Fyre Festival—can damage brand reputation. The chapter concludes with actionable recommendations, including prioritising authentic collaborations, adopting localised strategies, and integrating

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emerging platforms like TikTok and Twitch. These insights provide marketers with a roadmap for harnessing influencer marketing's potential in an increasingly digital and fragmented media landscape.

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of digital influencers has revolutionised global marketing, positioning them as pivotal players in contemporary brand strategies. Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have enabled influencers to bridge the gap between brands and consumers, fostering trust and engagement through personalised, relatable, and authentic content. This chapter employs a systematic qualitative analysis of existing literature to explore the evolution and impact of influencer marketing, with a focus on its role in shaping consumer behaviour, building trust, and driving brand loyalty. The primary objectives are threefold: to trace the historical development of influencer marketing, to analyse its impact on consumer trust and behaviour across industries through thematic analysis, and to examine emerging trends and cultural dynamics to derive practical implications. By addressing these facets through a rigorous analytical lens, the chapter moves beyond description to provide evidence-based insights and strategic recommendations for leveraging digital influencers in global marketing, particularly as traditional advertising struggles to resonate with tech-savvy audiences seeking authenticity.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter is grounded in a robust qualitative methodology based on a comprehensive secondary data analysis. To ensure a systematic and credible exploration, data was collected from a curated selection of peer-reviewed research papers, academic book chapters, industry reports, and credible news articles. Academic databases such as Sage, Elsevier, and Google Scholar were prioritised, supplemented by targeted web searches for contemporary industry insights. A structured keyword search strategy was implemented using core terms including “digital influencers,” “influencer marketing,” “consumer trust,” “brand loyalty,” “authenticity,” and “regional dynamics.” The analytical procedure involved a systematic qualitative content analysis where the collected literature was meticulously coded for key themes and concepts. These codes were then grouped into broader analytical themes—such as historical evolution, influencer attributes, and cultural dynamics—to identify patterns, relationships, and contradictions. This process ensured a critical synthesis of

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