

**ROLE OF INFLUENCER MARKETING IN ELECTRONIC  
WORD OF MOUTH AND PURCHASE INTENTION OF THE  
DIGITAL CONSUMER**

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DIGITAL CONSUMER**

by

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## ***Dedication***

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*I dedicate this entire work to my little angels, Sumer and Sargun, for bringing all the joy on this rollercoaster of ups and downs. Your contribution is indispensable and precious. All of your good luck hugs made this possible!*

## **Certificate**

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**Role of Influencer Marketing in Electronic Word of Mouth and Purchase Intention of the Digital Consumer**” being submitted by **Ms. Anshika Singh Tanwar** to the **Indian Institute of Technology Delhi** for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** is a bonafide record of the research work carried out by her under my supervision and guidance. The thesis work, in my opinion, has reached the requisite standard, fulfilling the requirements of the said degree. The results contained in the thesis have not been submitted, in part or full, to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree or diploma.

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Anshika Singh Tanwar

## **Abstract**

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Influencer marketing (IM) has steadily grown in the past decade as a strategy utilised by digital marketers for spreading brand messages with the help of social media influencers (SMIs). The present study addresses the role of IM based on different constructs identified from literature and theories. A systematic literature review was conducted with the help of content analysis (TCM approach) and bibliometric analysis to understand the latest research front of IM.

It was found that more established research was needed to understand the impact of digital consumers' exposure to online content, their persuasion knowledge, their interaction with SMI content and the experience of the SMI recommendations. This formed the basis of the first research objective, where the social media usage pattern, past knowledge of SMI content, digital consumer interaction, and experience with SMIs were identified.

Literature indicated that the two primary goals of IM effectiveness were behavioural intention to spread eWOM about SMI content and impact on purchase intentions. However, more exploration was needed to uncover the factors and their inter-relationships impacting these end goals of IM. Additionally, it was examined that there is a lack of application of theories and models to study the effectiveness of IM goals of brand awareness and impacting purchase intention. Hence, the present study utilised a theoretical basis while forming the two proposed models connecting different constructs. The effect and interrelationship of the constructs of each of the two models were examined by the statistical analysis for this study in objectives two and three respectively.

Specifically, the first model investigated role and effects (direct and indirect) of cause of social media usage, consumer distrust, need fulfilment and persuasion knowledge towards the behavioural intention of the digital consumer. Model 1 involved mediator roles of need fulfilment and persuasion knowledge. The results indicated that need fulfilment mediates two relationships between consumer distrust and behavioural and between persuasion knowledge

and intention to spread eWOM. The second model investigated the role and effects (direct and indirect) of credibility of source (SMI), engagement, the effectiveness of SMI content, digital consumer attitude towards SMI and parasocial interaction towards purchase intention of the SMI.

Model 2 investigated the mediating roles of engagement and effectiveness of SMI between the credibility of the source and digital consumer attitude and that of parasocial interaction between the credibility of the source and purchase intention. Based on the synthesis of the research findings, this study gives detailed insights which are likely to play a role in impacting the two IM goals under study. Furthermore, the results of this study are expected to broaden the application of different theories and models when applied to IM. Practically, the present study presents propositions and recommendations for digital marketers for effective IM-based campaigns and collaborations.

## सारांश

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इन्फ्लुएंसर मार्केटिंग (IM) पिछले एक दशक में सोशल मीडिया इन्फ्लुएंसर (SMI) की मदद से ब्रांड संदेशों को फैलाने के लिए डिजिटल मार्केटर्स द्वारा उपयोग की जाने वाली रणनीति के रूप में तेजी से बढ़ी है। वर्तमान अध्ययन साहित्य और सिद्धांतों से पहचाने गए विभिन्न निर्माणों के आधार पर आईएम की भूमिका को संबोधित करता है। आईएम के नवीनतम अनुसंधान मोर्चे को समझने के लिए सामग्री विश्लेषण (टीसीएम दृष्टिकोण) और ग्रंथमितीय विश्लेषण की मदद से एक व्यवस्थित साहित्य समीक्षा की गई।

यह पाया गया कि डिजिटल उपभोक्ताओं के ऑनलाइन सामग्री के संपर्क, उनके अनुनय ज्ञान, एसएमआई सामग्री के साथ उनकी बातचीत और एसएमआई सिफारिशों के अनुभव के प्रभाव को समझने के लिए अधिक स्थापित शोध की आवश्यकता थी। इसने पहले शोध उद्देश्य का आधार बनाया, जहां सोशल मीडिया उपयोग पैटर्न, एसएमआई सामग्री का पिछला ज्ञान, डिजिटल उपभोक्ता संपर्क और एसएमआई के साथ अनुभव की पहचान की गई।

साहित्य ने संकेत दिया कि आईएम प्रभावशीलता के दो प्राथमिक लक्ष्य एसएमआई सामग्री के बारे में ईडब्ल्यूओएम फैलाने और खरीद के इरादे पर प्रभाव के व्यावहारिक इरादे थे। हालांकि, आईएम के इन अंतिम लक्ष्यों को प्रभावित करने वाले कारकों और उनके अंतर-संबंधों को उजागर करने के लिए और अन्वेषण की आवश्यकता थी। इसके अतिरिक्त, यह जांच की गई कि ब्रांड जागरूकता के आईएम लक्ष्यों की प्रभावशीलता का अध्ययन करने और खरीद के इरादे को प्रभावित करने के लिए सिद्धांतों और

मॉडलों के अनुप्रयोग की कमी है। इसलिए, विभिन्न निर्माणों को जोड़ने वाले दो प्रस्तावित मॉडल बनाते समय वर्तमान अध्ययन ने एक सैद्धांतिक आधार का उपयोग किया। इस अध्ययन के लिए क्रमशः दो और तीन उद्देश्यों में सांख्यिकीय विश्लेषण द्वारा दो मॉडलों में से प्रत्येक के निर्माण के प्रभाव और अंतर्संबंध की जांच की गई थी।

विशेष रूप से, पहले मॉडल ने सोशल मीडिया के उपयोग, उपभोक्ता अविश्वास, आवश्यकता पूर्ति और डिजिटल उपभोक्ता के व्यवहारिक इरादे के प्रति अनुनय ज्ञान के कारणों की भूमिका और प्रभाव (प्रत्यक्ष और अप्रत्यक्ष) की जांच की। मॉडल 1 में आवश्यकता पूर्ति और अनुनय ज्ञान की मध्यस्थ भूमिकाएँ शामिल थीं। परिणामों ने संकेत दिया कि पूर्ति की आवश्यकता उपभोक्ता के अविश्वास और व्यवहार के बीच और अनुनय ज्ञान और ईडब्ल्यूओएम फैलाने के इरादे के बीच दो संबंधों की मध्यस्थता करती है। दूसरे मॉडल ने स्रोत (एसएमआई) की विश्वसनीयता, जुड़ाव, एसएमआई सामग्री की प्रभावशीलता, एसएमआई के प्रति डिजिटल उपभोक्ता रवैया और एसएमआई के खरीद इरादे के प्रति पैरासोशल इंटरैक्शन की भूमिका और प्रभाव (प्रत्यक्ष और अप्रत्यक्ष) की जांच की।

मॉडल 2 ने स्रोत की विश्वसनीयता और डिजिटल उपभोक्ता के रवैये और स्रोत की विश्वसनीयता और खरीद के इरादे के बीच पैरासोशल इंटरैक्शन के बीच जुड़ाव और एसएमआई की प्रभावशीलता की मध्यस्थता की भूमिका की जांच की। शोध निष्कर्षों के संश्लेषण के आधार पर, यह अध्ययन विस्तृत अंतर्दृष्टि प्रदान करता है जो अध्ययन के तहत दो आईएम लक्ष्यों को प्रभावित करने में भूमिका निभाने की संभावना है। इसके अलावा, इस अध्ययन के परिणामों से आईएम पर लागू होने पर विभिन्न

सिद्धांतों और मॉडलों के आवेदन को व्यापक बनाने की उम्मीद है। व्यावहारिक रूप से, वर्तमान अध्ययन प्रभावी आईएम-आधारित अभियानों और सहयोग के लिए डिजिटल विपणक के लिए प्रस्ताव और सिफारिशें प्रस्तुत करता है।

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## **Acronym Index**

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IM - Influencer Marketing

SMI - Social Media Influencers

SM - Social Media

UGC - User Generated Content

SMM - Social Media Marketing

eWOM - Electronic Word of Mouth

WOM - Word of Mouth

PSI - Para Social Interaction

PSR - Para Social Relationship

PSA - Para Social Attachment