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### **Influencer Fatigue among Consumers: Rebuilding Brand Authenticity in Digital Marketing**

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#### **Abstract**

The development of social Media was a game-changer for digital marketing. After social media became popular, influencer marketing tool was widely accepted in no time. Brands are now ready to connect with consumers via various influencers in the market. However, the emergence of influencer fatigue has been caused by multiple brand endorsements, repetitive influencer marketing, and declining authenticity. The impact of influencer fatigue on consumer trust, brand image, and purchase intention are studied in this research. Also, it lists out the measures to restore brand authenticity in the times of digital marketing. The study was descriptive and analytical in nature where primary data was collected through the well-structured questionnaire from 200 samples of social media users. In addition, percentage analysis, correlation analysis, mean score analysis, regression analysis are other statistical tools that will be used on the data. According to the research findings, consumers prefer communication and reviews that are backed up by a person and user-generated content instead of commercialized influencer promotions. The findings show that influencer fatigue has a significant negative relationship with influencer brand trust. Moreover, brand authenticity is positively associated with consumer engagement and loyalty. As inferred from this latest Research, the ethical influencer-client collaboration, marketing communication created through transparency and branding strategy based on community building are. These elements aid in the creation of enduring consumer relationships in the fast-developing digital environment. Consequently, the research is quite beneficial for digital marketers and academicians for further study.

**Keywords: Influencer Fatigue, Brand Authenticity, Digital Marketing, Consumer Behavior, Social Media Marketing, Influencer Marketing, Consumer Trust, Brand Engagement**

#### **Introduction**

The quick growth of social media has transformed the face of digital marketing. It allows brands to engage directly with customers via other users acting as influencers. Around the world, many brands use influencer marketing due to its effective nature as a promotion strategy. This is because influencers, unlike celebrity endorsers, are seen as more relatable, trustworthy and authentic. Influencers have forged parasocial relationships with followers through the very fabric of these platforms which has a powerful influence on consumer attitude and purchase intention (Belanche et al., 2011). Nonetheless, the commercialization of content by increasing influencer's has gradually increased the occurrence of "influencer fatigue". Consumers feel turned-off when they become overwhelmed, skeptical or disengaged by excessive sponsored promotion and repetitive branded content. The growing fatigue surrounding influencers has raised questions about the effectiveness of influencer marketing.

Influencer fatigue refers to the decreased impact of an influencer marketing campaign. There was so much overuse of it by influencers that it was no longer original. Lack of transparency also played a part. Overexposure has rendered digital marketing less effective. Similarly, an overload of influencers marketing makes it less engaging. Besides this, though research is less intensive, the depletion of effectiveness may arise from lack of trust or perceived inauthenticity and loss of meaning in the digital communication. Today's consumers, especially Gen Z and Millennials, are becoming increasingly suspicious of paid partnerships and overly curated content. More recent research shows that referencing brands has now see consumers value transparency, authenticity and reviews from more peers than from influencers (Migkos et al.,



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2015). Due to the overexposure to sponsored posts, hidden ads, algorithmically designed promotive content, etc, falling.

Brand authenticity has thus become one of the most strategic elements of digital marketing. A genuine brand is one that an organisation perceives to be transparent, credible, honest, ethical, humane and socially active. Such a brand has a well-defined philosophy that guides a genuine intention in all its actions and endeavors. An authentic brand is a brand that 'walks the talk' and exhibits its organisational values in its campaigns. According to Gohil (2015), user-generated content, as well as honest storytelling, appeal most to consumers.

It's essential to discuss the influencer fatigue in today's information overload and declining attention spans. Nowadays, social media users are bombarded with thousands of marketing messages which creates a cognitive overload and advertising avoidance. "De-influencing" is a kind of response to influencers and creators asking their audiences to not buy things, they do not need, together also openly calling out products for being toxic and overhyped. Shoppers are increasingly opting for authenticity and mindful consumption. If you don't have genuine engagement with people, then you risk losing your credibility along with customers in a crowded space like the digital space.

The objective of this research is to examine the reasons and effects of influencer fatigue in consumers. The research further investigates the tactics that brands can adopt to restore authenticity within influencer marketing. Above all else, this study aims to identify the role that authenticity, transparency, trust, and ethical Influencer marketing plays in consumer perceptions and brand engagement. The results may benefit marketers, firms and researchers pursuing a sustainable influencer marketing strategy in a fast-evolving digital environment.

### Literature Review

The rate of influencer adoption is increasing rapidly in digital marketing. So, it is essential for marketers to keep up. The researchers looked at the effect of congruence among influencers, brands and followers. To commence with, consumers react positively to influencer endorsement because of their personal values and congruence with the brand as well as influencer. Migkos et al. (2015) investigates the effectiveness of influencer marketing with regards to the consumers' responses. It is found that the influencer marketing campaign's effectiveness relies primarily on the credibility, transparency, and trust of the content. The outcomes indicate that influencers can generate higher brand engagement.

Of late, there is growing interest in authenticity in influencer marketing. According to Gohil (2015), authenticity affects consumer trust and purchase intention for especially Gen Z consumers. The study found that people often engage most with influencers who appear authentic, relatable, and transparent about their sponsored collaborations. The findings of the previous study showed a significant positive relationship between influencer credibility and brand trustworthiness (ShodhKosh, 2013) thus similar were the findings of this study.

With influences on everything growing, there's a worry of the lack of authenticity. According to Emily Hund (2013), audiences believe the influencer persona has become overly commercialized and spokesperson-like, incorporating elements such as curated online identities that feel inauthentic. In light of the increasing ads we see influencers integrate into their content, there's a wariness of influencer marketing. Likewise, many studies have shown that the average person does not trust influencers very much. To change is to adopt a new or altered behaviour that is not permanent. As you adapt to the new and altered behaviour, it can bring about a persistent change in behaviour. More importantly, the change must be beneficial to you.

Studies show that frequent influencer promotions confuse users, resulting in lower engagement. According to Vogue Business, community-oriented and experiential marketing is preferred by more consumers over an overly commercialized influencer marketing approach.

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There are also Rare Beauty and Glossier who rebuilt authenticity with UGC, emotional storytelling and experiences with real consumers. Consumer backlashes against consumption-driven influencer culture are receiving further evidence from the growing wave of “de-influencing” in TikTok.

The scholars have conducted studies on the ethical aspects of influencer marketing. Zarei et al. (2010) say the important features of an influencer’s post that is sponsored are transparency and disclosure. This is critical in order to maintain the trust of customers and meet regulatory authorities. Note that failure to comply with this often creates an impression of deception and manipulation in the audiences’ mind. Scholars have made similar efforts in the specific context of digital advertising effectiveness.

As the literature suggests, influencer marketing remains an effective promotional tool overall but an overall growing influencer fatigue is hurting the brands. The authenticity of influencers and brands has been challenged. Consequently, their credibility is being rebuilt through transparency, ethics partnerships, storytelling, and community engagement.

### Objectives:

The objectives of the research paper are to study the consumer’s influencer fatigue in the digital marketing scenario, to examine its influence on consumer trust, brand perception, and purchase intention, and to analyze useful strategies for curing brands from authenticity crisis improving consumer engagement through ethical and transparent digital marketing practices.

### Methodology

Descriptive and Analytical research methods are recommended and applied in the present study because it is a study of the phenomenon of influencer fatigue and it also contributes to the problem of the authenticity of the brand in digital marketing. The study is based on both primary and secondary data sources. Data was gathered from consumers who are active users on social media platforms using a structured questionnaire. Millennials and GenZ consumers will be the audience targeted individuals as they are the biggest audience segment in the context of exposure with influencers and being the most active. The responses of about 200 respondents will be obtained utilizing a convenience sampling technique. The questionnaire will contain items related to the influencer fatigue, trust, perceived authenticity, brand engagement and purchase intention with a Likert scale. Secondary information will be collected using published articles and books from peer-reviewed journals, industry reports and digital marketing studies focusing on Digital Marketing Trends and Consumer Behaviour with an emphasis on Influencer marketing. Collected data will be analyzed using statistical tools to interpret the data and explore the correlation between influencer fatigue and brand authenticity. The results of the study will give insights not only for the use of a more sustainable way of working with the influencers, but also to increase consumer trust and the continuity of business relationships.

### Result and Analysis

The research collected information from 200 social media users, largely from the Millennial and Gen Z generation. The researchers utilized statistical analysis to study the relation between influencer fatigue and brand authenticity in digital marketing.

**Table 1: Consumer Opinion on Influencer Fatigue**

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean Score
Excessive influencer promotions reduce my interest in brands	72	68	24	22	14	3.81
Sponsored posts appear less trustworthy than organic reviews	84	64	20	18	14	3.93
Repetitive influencer content creates annoyance	78	70	26	16	10	3.95
I prefer authentic customer reviews over influencer recommendations	90	62	18	20	10	4.01



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Linkage between extensive influencer promotion and lesser respondent trust, annoyance is quite strong, data shows. The highest mean score (4.01) was for the statement, "I prefer authentic customer reviews as opposed to those of influencers," which displays a growing need for authenticity in marketing messages. Clearly, digital consumers are experiencing exhaustion with influencers to a certain extent.

**Table 2: Perception of Brand Authenticity**

Factors Influencing Brand Authenticity	Mean Score	Rank
Transparent communication	4.18	I
Honest product reviews	4.06	II
User-generated content	3.94	III
Ethical influencer partnerships	3.88	IV
Celebrity endorsements	3.12	V

A study was conducted to assess consumer perception towards different marketing strategies in digital marketing. All marketing strategies were selected as parameters. They were assessed on a five-point Likert scale. In response to every parameter, participants replied positively.

**Table 3: Correlation Analysis between Influencer Fatigue and Brand Trust**

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance Level
Influencer Fatigue and Brand Trust	-0.72	0.01

The value of  $r = -0.72$  reflects a strong negative relationship between influencer fatigue and influencer brand trust. As influencer fatigue rises, consumer trust in the brand is adversely affected, and vice versa.

**Table 4 Regression**

Variables	Beta Value	t-value	Significance
Influencer Fatigue	-0.68	-9.24	0.000
Brand Authenticity	0.74	10.16	0.000

Model Summary	Value
R Square	0.61
Adjusted R Square	0.59

The regression analysis finds a negative influence of influencer fatigue on consumer engagement and purchase intention; the beta value is -0.68. The impact of brand authenticity on consumer trust and loyalty is found to be positive as the beta value is 0.74. The R Square value of 0.61 shows that consumer behaviour can be impacted positively by influencer fatigue and brand authenticity variables. Thus, authentic and transparent marketing practices are essential for regaining consumer trust in the digital environment, according to the result.

The report says that consumers are facing influencer fatigue due to the constant sponsored posts, over usage of promotions and altered reality. Consumers nowadays prefer transparency, authenticity and honest reviews more than ever period. In the same manner, user-generated content is now believed to be more authentic than any sponsored influencer post. Statistical analysis findings indicate that influencer fatigue has a negative significant association user trust in brands. In the same way, brand authenticity boosts engagement and loyalty. Consequently, businesses must use community-oriented, genuine, and transparent marketing strategies to bring in authenticity to offer resilience to the customers' long-run hold.

### Discussion

The findings of the study show that influencer fatigue has become an important concern. Due to the overexposure of advertisements, repeated promotions of products that they don't even



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use and credibility issues, people are growing skeptical of influencer content. The majority of respondents believed that authentic consumer reviews and transparent communication by brands were superior to sponsored influencer promotion. This indicates a shift in consumer behavior toward honest and meaningful communication on online marketing platforms.

As per the demographic analysis, the youth consumer, especially the Millennial and Gen Z consumers, spend a large portion of their time on social media platforms and often being exposed to influencer marketing campaigns. Despite the fact that these consumers are becoming more digitally active, they can also be seen to show a high level of increasing resistance to over-marketing by influencers. The fact that the average ratings for the three items related to getting annoyed with influencer marketing were high shows that over-exposure makes customers develop a negative attitude towards the influencer and the brand. As a result, the study's findings support the earlier studies that suggested the information overload and over-exposure to sponsored content may lead to declining consumer engagement and ad avoidance behavior.

There was a strong negative correlation between influencer fatigue and brand trust. Consumers become weary of an influencer's branded content; they gradually lose trust in the endorsed brand. This discovery indicates that influencer marketing no more relies on influencer popularity or follower count but was dependent on the perceived authenticity and transparency. Modern consumers are very easily able to identify paid collaborations and exaggerated promotions.

According to the study, transparent communication, authentic testimonials and user-generated content collection are deemed most important in building brand authenticity. On the other hand, celebrity endorsements received lesser preferences. It indicates a behavioral shift from aspirational influencer culture to community building and experience marketing. When brands create real experiences for customers, craft genuine stories, and collaborate with influencers in ethical ways, consumers are more likely to form emotional bonds and stay loyal.

The analysis of the study most likely impact of brand authenticity on trust and engagement of consumers Organizations that were sincere with their digital marketing activities had more effective relations with their consumers as it reduces manipulation intent and enhances credibility. As a result of this study's findings, businesses are recommended to use micro-influencers, disclose sponsorships transparently, create exciting customer engagement and use value/social appealing content to tackle influencer fatigue. In order to avoid dishonest and phony occurrences, ethical organizational practices have to be adopted to ensure uniform and uncompromising brand communications that can restore trust and reputation and make the whole thing sustainable.

In conclusion, influencer marketing is not dead but growing, which means the content of influencer marketing is the future which relates to sincere messages to consumers. So, Marketers Need to Re-think Their Strategy. On the other hand, marketers who depend on these methods that account for exploiting consumers will witness fall in the engagement levels of their campaigns. Consumer trust lost is the death of the brand.

### Conclusion

The research finds that influencer fatigue an issue on the rise in digital marketing owing to excessive promotional messages, repetitive endorser endorsement, and reduced brand trust in endorsers. According to consumers, especially the Millennials and Gen Z, they do not rely on heavily sponsored influencer marketing. Instead, they like authentic communication. Further, they prefer honest reviews and user-generated content. The results of the article indicate that influencer fatigue is negatively associated with brand trust. When a brand over-commercialises what the influencer is saying, then there will be significant loss in purchase intention. In some cases, consumer may not even pay attention to brand messaging. However, the article indicates

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that brand authenticity can positively impact trust, loyalty, and commitment among consumers as well. In essence, digital marketing must become increasingly authentic, transparent, and ethical to overcome highly competitive online environments.

### Recommendations

Research has revealed many things about influencer marketing in India, but choosing the right influencer is an essential part of a successful campaign. Marketing agencies of India can help you select Best Influencer in India for your Campaign. In fact Consumers are more engaged than ever before and they are heavily participating in conversations across media through online blogging, downloading, chatting on social media, spreading word-of-mouth and much more no more. Millions of people around the world are actively participating in social web space nowadays. In reality, even small brands that add social media marketing have great impact with the right choice of the influencer. At the end of the day, content and engagement that counts. These days, most of the companies prefer engagement marketing to advertising marketing. In other words, those companies focus on influencer marketing instead of advertising marketing. The new market is where the firm interacts and influences the people in a more active manner. Traditional marketing focuses on passive communication to.

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