

An Analysis on Emerging of De-Influencing and Its Impact on Consumer Trust and Brand Perception

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ABSTRACT:

This study examines the growing concept of de-influencing in digital marketing and its impact on consumer trust and brand awareness. With the increasing exposure to influencer content, consumers have become more critical and selective in their purchasing decisions. De-influencing, which focuses on discouraging unnecessary purchases and promoting transparency, has emerged as a response to declining trust in influencer marketing. The study is based on primary data collected from 120 respondents using a structured questionnaire. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, chi-square, t-test, and ANOVA were used. The findings reveal that de-influencing enhances consumer awareness, increases critical thinking, and influences trust levels. The study concludes with suggestions for brands and influencers to adopt transparent and ethical strategies.

Key words: De-influencing, brand awareness, purchase decision, ethical strategies

INTRODUCTION:

Digital marketing has undergone significant transformation with the rise of social media platforms. Influencer marketing has become one of the most effective tools for promoting products and services. However, over-commercialization and repetitive promotions have reduced consumer trust. As a result, a new trend known as de-influencing has emerged, where influencers provide honest reviews and sometimes discourage product purchases.

De-influencing focuses on transparency, authenticity, and consumer awareness. It plays a vital role in shaping consumer perception and encouraging rational decision-making. This study analyses how de-influencing affects consumer trust and brand awareness in the digital environment.

NEED OF THE STUDY:

In recent years, consumers have been increasingly exposed to influencer marketing, which has led to growing scepticism and reduced trust in promotional content. As a result, de-influencing has emerged as a new trend that focuses on honesty and transparency. This study is needed to understand how de-influencing influences consumer trust and brand perception. It also helps to identify changing consumer behaviour and provides insights for brands to adopt more ethical and effective marketing strategies.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

In recent years, consumers have become more aware of promotional strategies used by influencers. The rise of de-influencing has changed how consumers evaluate products and brands. While it builds trust through transparency, it also creates uncertainty for brands. Therefore, it is necessary to study how de-influencing influences consumer trust and brand perception.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To analyse consumer perception towards de-influencing content on social media.
2. To examine the impact of de-influencing on consumer trust and brand awareness.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study is based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire using Google Forms. The sample consists of 120 respondents selected using convenience sampling. The target population includes social media users.

Statistical tools used:

- Simple Percentage Analysis
- Chi-square Test
- T-test
- ANOVA

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Penttinen et al. (2026) studied the impact of de-influencing on consumer trust and purchase intention. The findings show that de-influencing reduces scepticism and improves influencer credibility, as audiences perceive them as more honest. It also increases trustworthiness and future purchase intention. However, it may reduce the effectiveness of sponsored content when influencers contradict earlier promotions. The study suggests further research on long-term effects and influencer–brand relationships.

Bhutani, Tanya (2025) “How Consumer Scepticism Fuels the De-Influencing Trend on Social Media” This study shows that as consumers—especially Gen Z and Millennials—become more sceptical of influencer marketing, they are less likely to trust promotional content. Based on Instagram analysis and influencer interviews, it finds that people now prefer honesty and transparency, which is boosting the de-influencing trend. The study concludes that brands need to be more authentic to keep consumer trust.

Bansal (2025) examined consumer trust and brand value in India’s influencer ecosystem. The study found a gap between consumer expectations and brand strategies, where consumers value authenticity while brands focus on performance metrics. It also revealed that younger audiences are more influenced by social media. The study suggests aligning brand strategies with consumer expectations and exploring platform-specific effectiveness.

OVERVIEW OF DE-INFLUENCING AND ITS IMPACT

De-influencing

De-influencing is a form of social media content where influencers critically evaluate products and may discourage their purchase. It focuses on transparency, honesty, and consumer awareness, helping audiences make informed decisions and avoid impulsive buying.

Emergence of De-Influencing

The trend has grown due to increasing consumer scepticism and fatigue toward excessive promotional content. As influencer marketing became highly commercialized, audiences began demanding more authentic and experience-based content.

Forms of De-Influencing Content

De-influencing includes critical reviews, product comparisons, and ethical discussions related to sustainability and pricing. Interactive features such as comments and polls further enhance engagement and credibility.

Role of Social Media Platforms

Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok play a major role in spreading de-influencing content. Their wide reach and interactive nature help in building trust and influencing consumer opinions.

Consumer Trust and Credibility

Consumer trust is influenced by authenticity, transparency, and peer validation. De-influencers are often considered more trustworthy as they provide unbiased and experience-based opinions, strengthening long-term trust.

Impact on Brand Perception

De-influencing can negatively affect brand image through criticism, but it also creates opportunities for brands to improve transparency. Brands that respond positively to feedback can maintain or even enhance consumer trust. De-influencing encourages rational decision-making by making consumers evaluate product quality, price, and usefulness. Emotional factors such as trust and fear of regret also influence purchase decisions.

Implications for Marketing

The trend highlights the need for ethical and transparent marketing strategies. Brands must collaborate with credible influencers, engage with feedback, and focus on authenticity to build long-term relationships.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS:

SIMPLE PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS:

		Frequency	Percent
Age of Respondents	18 – 24	79	65.8
	25 - 34	32	26.7
	35 – 44	9	7.5
	45 and above	0	0
	Total	120	100
Gender	Male	48	40
	Female	72	60
	Total	120	100
Education	School level	0	0
	Under graduate	52	43.3
	Post graduate	68	56.7
	No formal education	0	0
	Total	120	100
Occupation	Student	70	58.3
	Employee	45	37.5
	Business	1	0.8
	Unemployed	4	3.3
	Total	120	100
Social media platform	Instagram	49	40.8
	You tube	46	38.3
	Facebook	19	15.8
	Twitter(X)	6	5
	Total	120	100

Usually noticed sponsored influencer promotion on social media	Sponsored post	44	36.7
	Product demonstration	25	20.8
	Brand collaborations	38	31.7
	Giveaway campaigns	13	10.8
	Total	120	100
Noticed De-influencing content online	Product warnings	18	15
	Negative reviews	56	46.7
	Brand comparisons	40	33.3
	Alternative suggestions	6	5
	Total	120	100
Factors making negative reviews believable	Product defects shown	19	15.8
	Long-term usage	46	38.3
	Detailed explanation	34	28.3
	Comparison evidence	21	17.5
	Total	120	100
Reaction to sponsored promotion	Creditability decline	13	10.8
	Brand suspicion	48	40
	Review comparison	42	35
	Promotion avoidance	17	14.2
	Total	120	100

GARRETT RANKING

Reasons for watching influencer product content

Factors	Rank Given by Respondents					Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	
Product Information	57	21	16	13	13	120
Entertainment Value	12	40	26	19	23	120
Trend Awareness	15	20	46	24	15	120
Discount Offers	30	7	19	41	23	120
Brand Recommendations	6	32	13	23	46	120
Total	120	120	120	120	120	

Percent Positions and Garrett Values

Formula	Calculated Value	Garrett Value
$100(1-0.5)/5$	10	75
$100(2-0.5)/5$	30	60
$100(3-0.5)/5$	50	50
$100(4-0.5)/5$	70	39
$100(5-0.5)/5$	90	24

Garrett Calculation Table

Factors	R1 ×7 5	R2×60	R3×50	R4×39	R5×24	Total	Average	Rank
Product Information	4275	1260	800	507	312	7154	59.62	I
Trend Awareness	1125	1200	2300	936	360	5921	49.34	II
Entertainment Value	900	2400	1300	741	552	5893	49.11	III
Discount Offers	2250	420	950	1599	552	5771	48.09	IV
Brand Recommendations	450	1920	650	897	1104	5021	41.84	V

INTERPRETATION:

The ranking shows that **product information** is the most important factor influencing respondents, securing the first rank with the highest average score (59.62). This indicates that people primarily rely on clear and detailed information before making decisions. **Trend awareness** (49.34) and **entertainment value** (49.11) follow closely, suggesting that respondents are also influenced by current trends and engaging content. **Discount offers** rank fourth (48.09), showing that price incentives matter but are not the top priority. Finally, **brand recommendations** (41.84) rank last, indicating that respondents rely less on brand suggestions compared to other factors.

ANOVA

Relationship between occupation and the Level of agreement of De-influencing

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Influencer promotions provide useful product information	Between Groups	13.271	3	4.424	2.773	.045
	Within Groups	185.054	116	1.595		
	Total	198.325	119			
De-influencing videos help identify product disadvantages	Between Groups	5.557	3	1.852	1.538	.208
	Within Groups	139.743	116	1.205		
	Total	145.300	119			
Honest negative reviews increase trust in influencers	Between Groups	7.582	3	2.527	2.945	.036
	Within Groups	99.543	116	.858		
	Total	107.125	119			
Frequent sponsored promotions reduce trust in influencers	Between Groups	16.874	3	5.625	5.852	.001
	Within Groups	111.493	116	.961		
	Total	128.367	119			
Negative influencer reviews affect brand image	Between Groups	12.546	3	4.182	3.968	.010
	Within Groups	122.254	116	1.054		
	Total	134.800	119			
De-influencing content influences purchase decisions	Between Groups	4.899	3	1.633	1.224	.304
	Within Groups	154.693	116	1.334		
	Total	159.592	119			

INTERPRETATION:

The ANOVA results show that some statements have significant differences among groups, as their p-values are less than 0.05. For example, “Influencer promotions provide useful product information” (F = 2.773, p = 0.045), “Honest negative reviews increase trust” (F = 2.945, p = 0.036), and “Frequent sponsored promotions reduce trust” (F = 5.852, p = 0.001) are statistically significant. Similarly, “Negative influencer reviews affect brand image” (F = 3.968, p = 0.010) also shows significant variation among groups. These values indicate that respondents differ in their opinions on trust, credibility, and brand perception. However, “De-influencing videos help identify disadvantages” (F = 1.538, p = 0.208) and “De-influencing content influences purchase decisions” (F = 1.224, p = 0.304) are not significant. This means respondents have similar views on these aspects.

T-Test:

Relationship between Gender and the Level of Agreement of De-influencing

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Influencer promotions provide useful product information	Male	48	3.71	1.458	.210
	Female	72	3.65	1.177	.139
De-influencing videos help identify product disadvantages	Male	48	3.67	1.155	.167
	Female	72	3.97	1.061	.125
Honest negative reviews increase trust in influencers	Male	48	3.94	.861	.124
	Female	72	3.83	1.007	.119
Negative influencer reviews affect brand image	Male	48	4.10	1.096	.158
	Female	72	4.10	1.050	.124
Frequent sponsored promotions reduce trust in influencers	Male	48	4.17	1.098	.158
	Female	72	4.08	1.004	.118
De-influencing content influences purchase decisions	Male	48	3.90	1.225	.177
	Female	72	3.89	1.120	.132

INTERPRETATION:

The group statistics show that male and female respondents have similar opinions, with only slight differences in mean values. Males (3.71) slightly agree more than females (3.65) that influencer promotions provide useful information. Females (3.97) agree more than males (3.67) that de-influencing videos highlight product disadvantages. Males (3.94) show slightly higher trust than females (3.83) in negative reviews. Both genders equally agree that negative reviews affect brand image (4.10). Males (4.17) and females (4.08) agree that frequent promotions reduce trust. Both also show similar responses on purchase decisions (3.90 and 3.89). Overall, gender does not significantly affect perception.

Age of the Respondent * Most viewed influencer content type Crosstabulation				
	Most viewed influencer content type			
	Product reviews	Lifestyle content	Fashion/beauty	Technology

Age of the Respondent	18-24	15	39	13	12
	25-34	4	4	11	13
	35-44	1	1	0	1
Total		20	44	24	26

CHI-SQUARE:

Case Processing Summary						
	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Age of the Respondent * Most viewed influencer content type	120	100.0%	0	0.0%	120	100.0%

Age of the Respondent * Most viewed influencer content type Crosstabulation			
Count			
		Most viewed influencer content type	Total
		Others	
Age of the Respondent	18-24	0	79
	25-34	0	32
	35-44	6	9
Total		6	120

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	97.834 ^a	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	57.411	8	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	26.031	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	120		

INTERPRETATION:

The Chi-square test shows a significance value (p-value) of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This indicates that there is a highly significant relationship between age of the respondents and the most viewed influencer content type. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and it can be concluded that age influences the type of influencer content preferred by respondents.

FINDINGS:

SIMPLE PERCENTAGE AND FREQUENCY ANALYSIS:

1. The majority of the respondents (65.8%) belong to the 18–24 age group.
2. The majority of the respondents (60%) are female.

3. The majority of the respondents (58.3%) are students.
4. The majority of the respondents (56.7%) are postgraduates.
5. The most of the respondents (35%) earn between ₹20,000 – ₹30,000.
6. The majority of the respondents (40.8%) prefer Instagram as the social media platform.
7. The most of the respondents (36.7%) prefer sponsored posts as a form of influencing.
8. The majority of the respondents (46.7%) are influenced by negative reviews.
9. The most of the respondents (38.3%) prefer long-term usage reviews.
10. The majority of the respondents (40%) feel brand suspicion towards sponsored promotions.

GARRETT RANKING:

1. The findings highlight that trust is mainly driven by honesty and clarity rather than just presentation or demonstration.

ANOVA:

1. The analysis proves that trust-related perceptions vary across groups, while general opinions on de-influencing content remain consistent.

T-TEST

1. H0 - There is no significant difference between male and female respondents regarding their perceptions of influencer promotions, de-influencing content, consumer trust, and brand perception.

SUGGESTION:

1. Brands should focus on transparency and authenticity.
2. Influencers should provide honest and balanced reviews.
3. Companies must engage with consumer feedback actively.
4. Ethical marketing strategies should be adopted.

CONCLUSION:

De-influencing has emerged as an important trend in digital marketing. It promotes transparency, builds trust, and encourages informed decision-making. While it challenges traditional marketing strategies, it also offers opportunities for brands to improve credibility. The study concludes that de-influencing significantly influences consumer trust and brand awareness, making it a vital aspect of modern marketing.

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