

The Power of Influencer Marketing in Reframing the Cultural Identity of Geographical Indication (GI) Products

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ABSTRACT:

Geographical Indication (GI) products are recognised for their cultural heritage and authenticity, but they also face difficulties in modern markets. In the current trend, influencer marketing has a powerful characteristic for engaging more audiences through storytelling. It has emerged as a tool for reframing the cultural identities of GI products for a broader customer base.

Objectives: In the domain of GI products, it first examines how influencers contribute to the reshaping of cultural identity. In order to determine what appeals to and engages consumers, it also investigates consumer preferences about influencer marketing. Third, it looks at how consumer perceptions of GI goods are influenced by influencer marketing. These goals work together to demonstrate how influencer marketing links cultural legacy to contemporary consumer behavior.

Methodology: The study employed purposive sampling and structured questionnaires to obtain quantitative data specifically from Gen Z participants. To analyze the data, correlation analysis and one-way ANOVA tests were employed, enabling the examination of relationships and the assessment of the impact of influencer marketing on consumer attitudes toward GI products.

Finding: The results demonstrate that influencers play a pivotal role in connecting cultural heritage with evolving consumer expectations, reinforcing authenticity and cultural pride. Yet, the issue of misrepresentation emerges as a critical challenge.

Implications: The paper concludes that influencer marketing is essential for promoting and raising awareness of GI products, aligning with their culture and supporting sustainability. But implications highlight the need for careful collaboration between influencers, producers, and policymakers to ensure GI products retain their cultural identity while thriving in modern markets.

KEYWORDS:

Influencer Marketing, Cultural Heritage, Geographical Indication, Consumer, Perception

1.Introduction

Geographical Indication (GI)

Geographical Indication (GI) products are signs of cultural inheritance, a regional, unique identity. Representing the craftsmanship, traditional knowledge, and specific resources of specific regions. These products carry significant cultural and economic worth, since they frequently represent the lifestyle and customs of the people who produced them. As of present, statistics of IP India 658 total of GI products registered in India under the GI Act 1999. Despite their distinctiveness, many GI products struggle to gain visibility, consumer recognition, and market appeal in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. From a Consumer Culture Theory point of view, materials like handicrafts, GI products, and indigenous goods are cultural treasures with symbolic values, historical tales, and regional pride rather than just commodities. Consumers' desire for authenticity, cultural preservation, and ethical responsibility is reflected in their use of such items.

Influencer Marketing

In recent days, influencer marketing has become a trend in an effective marketing method in pushing the business and influencing the customer opinion, with their talent and content easily connecting the public to create awareness among a greater number of people. They also emerged as cultural ambassadors to bridge the gap between tradition and modern consumer preferences. Influencers also use various social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook to attract customers through narrating stories, creating content, and developing emotional connections to increase the value of the products.

Digital platforms, such as social media evaluations, influencer endorsements, and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), are key components of social influence in today's marketplaces. Social impact increases perceived authenticity, builds trust, and legitimizes consumption choices for culturally embedded items like Geographical Indication (GI) products. Customers use social cues to lower perceived risk, particularly when assessing expensive, traditional, or unknown heritage items.

Brand trust, emotional attachment, readiness to pay a premium, and purchase intention are all positively impacted by perceived authenticity. Authenticity perception serves as a mediator

between cultural value and customer behavior in the context of GI goods.

Gen Z, or Generation Z, is the generation of people born between 1997 and 2012. They are also known as Zoomers/digital natives because they grew up with the internet, smartphones, and technology. They will be the present and upcoming customers and play a vital role in the market.

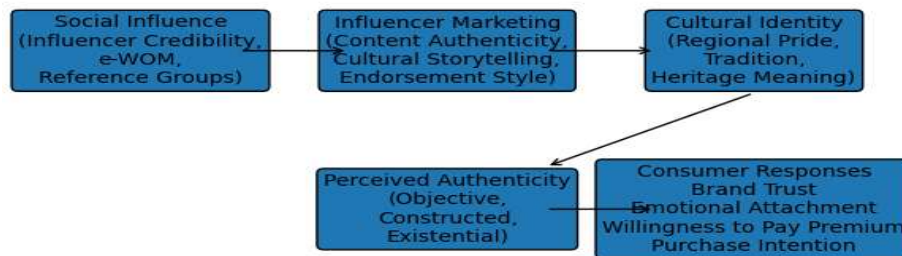


Figure1: Influence Marketing, reforming the cultural identity

2. Review of Literature

Chiara bartoli (2020) This paper discusses the challenges faced by contemporary societies' economic growth, environmental, and social issues as a part of sustainable development. It also highlights the importance of business strategies' impact on sustainability development and gender diversity. The exploratory method is used to investigate reality. It uses purposeful sampling to identify small and medium enterprises in Italian ground source heat pump, data collected through semi-structured interviews with firm founders or owners.

Marina Leban and Benjamin G. Voyer (2021). This paper explores the phenomenon of influencer marketing and its role in marketing communication to build brands. The study also emphasises the role and challenges faced by the influencer, and it also addresses the legal and ethical considerations. It also discusses how influencers utilise the digital platform. It includes case studies that illustrate the practical implications. Researchers highlight the significant impact of influencers on consumer behaviour.

Pramod Lamsal, Krishna Prasad Pant, and Lalit Kumar (2013). This paper analyses the 1749 marketing message of the GI product advertisement from 1989 to 2008 to focus on

advertising strategies. A tailored methodology was developed based on Resnick and Stern's approach. Study found GI products' future promotion contains that visual element and subheadlines.

Yatish Joshi, Weng Marc Lim, Khyati Jagani, Satish Kumar(2023). This paper conducts a systematic literature review on 214 social media influencers. This study employs a multi-method systematic literature review using bibliometric content analysis. Study concludes that consumerism is crucial for business survival and growth. The main limitation of the study is that it mainly focuses on the qualitative evaluation construct. The study suggested that understanding consumer behaviour is essential to engage more with marketing strategies.

Zofia Saternus, Cristina Mihale-Wilson, and Oliver Hinz (2024). This paper investigates the impact of various advertising disclosure strategies on both influencer marketing and its outcome. This study focuses on two field experiments, an online survey, which used attitude towards brand and purchase intention. The study highlights the importance of aligning marketing strategies to maintain trust and long-term engagement.

Lennart A. Braatz(2017). This paper investigates influencer marketing on Instagram and highlights its impact on consumer decision-making influenced by Social Network Sites and Electronic Word of Mouth. The study also examines consumer response, including purchase intention and source of trustworthiness. The study involved 266 university students. The study suggested effective message design strategies for effective influencer marketing.

Papaioannou Eugenia(2020). The paper contributes to the understanding of influencer marketing's emergence in the Greek marketplace, particularly in the food and beverage industry. It investigates consumer perception at different levels, like micro and macro, to assess their attractiveness, authenticity, and credibility. It also highlights the importance of digital marketing in influencing consumer and purchase decisions. It provides insights into the effectiveness of marketing strategies, which help organisations remain competitive in the market. A questionnaire was utilised to collect data on consumer perceptions. Simple random samples were used; a reliable sample size is 134, and data analysis was conducted through SPSS.

Johan Grafström, Linnéa Jakobsson & Philip Wiede (2018). The study found that millennials' attitude towards influencer marketing is significantly influenced by various factors, such as alignment of promotions and trustworthiness of the influencer's message. Research has shown that maintaining a high level of trust and valuable insight is important to engage effectively with millennial consumers. Gender differences were found, as males do not follow many influencers; instead, they suggest podcasts for targeting this demographic. Semi-

structured interviews are conducted using an interview, non-probability sampling, specifically snowball sampling, to select the focus group.

Tomer Broude. The paper discusses the relationship between international trade law and cultural protection, particularly for GIs for food and wine products. This study employs qualitative analysis of the relationship between international trade law and cultural protection. It used a critical evaluation method. It additionally discusses the implications of legal measures in international trade law for cultural protection.

Zdenka KADEKOVA – Maria HOLIENČINOVA(2018) This paper identifies the role of influencers in affecting consumer decisions, categorising them into celebrities, industry experts, and bloggers. It also investigates the impact of influencers on consumer behaviour, especially among Gen Y and Z, aiming to identify differences in their response. Research employs both theoretical and empirical approaches. A questionnaire survey was conducted to gather data on audience preference regarding TV promotion, targeting active users of Ukrainian TV channels. The nonparametric Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to evaluate the preference of social networks by age generation.

Daniel Hermawan (2020). The paper contributes to understanding the phenomenon of influencer marketing in the digital era. It identifies different types of influencers and characteristics of consumers who follow them, emphasising the emotional connection between influencer and their followers. This research includes qualitative methods specifically utilising pentad analysis to explore interconnected concepts of human action and motivations. This analysis focuses on act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose. Data collection was purposive sampling. The study highlights the importance of understanding the characteristics of both influencer and follower to maximise marketing impact.

Statement of problem

Geographical Indication (GI) products are intrinsically tied to cultural heritage, embodying the historical narratives, craftsmanship, and natural resources unique to specific regions. Despite their distinctive identity, many GI products encounter difficulties in achieving recognition within increasingly competitive markets. Limited consumer awareness and weak resonance with contemporary audiences remain persistent challenges. Within this context, influencer marketing emerges as a potentially transformative mechanism, capable of bridging the divide between traditional heritage products and modern consumer expectations. However, the effectiveness of influencer marketing in reframing and reinforcing the cultural identity of GI products has not been sufficiently examined in existing scholarship. This study therefore investigates the role of influencers in enhancing awareness, fostering cultural pride, and

preserving the authenticity of GI products, while simultaneously positioning them within the dynamics of modern consumption.

2. Research Question

- ❖ What strategy does an influencer use to effectively represent cultural heritage?
- ❖ What are the preferences of customers regarding marketing strategies?
- ❖ How does an influencer shape the consumer attitude?

3. Objectives of the Study

- To study the role of influencers in reshaping cultural identity.
- To know the consumer preferences on influencer marketing
- To examine the influencer marketing impact on consumer attitude towards GI products.

Hypothesis

H1: Influencer marketing positively impacts consumer attitude towards G I products.

H0: Influencer marketing does not impact consumer attitude towards GI Products.

4. Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to analyze the data. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires administered through surveys among Generation Z respondents using a random sampling technique. Secondary data were sourced from scholarly journals, previous research studies, official websites, and other relevant academic publications.

Statistical tool

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed to analyze the data systematically. Descriptive statistics, particularly frequency analysis, were used to examine the demographic profile of the respondents. To understand consumer preferences toward influencer marketing, relevant descriptive measures were applied. Furthermore, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to assess the impact of influencer marketing on consumers' attitudes toward Geographical Indication (GI) products.

Limitation of the study

This study is limited to the analysis of three specific social media platforms—Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook—to examine their influence on consumers. Additionally, the study is confined to a limited sample size of 100 respondents selected using a convenience sampling technique, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings.

5. Analysis and Interpretation

Table 5.1: Demographic Information: Gender

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	40	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Female	60	60.0	60.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The gender distribution of respondents in the study consists of 40% males and 60% females out of a total sample size of 100. This indicates a higher representation of female respondents.

Table 5.2: Demographic Information: Age

Age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	19	14	14.0	14.0	14.0
	20	48	48.0	48.0	62.0
	21	19	19.0	19.0	81.0
	22	15	15.0	15.0	96.0
	23	2	2.0	2.0	98.0
	25	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 5.3. A: Demographic Details Age Statistics

Statistics		
Age		
N	Valid	100
	Missing	0
Mean		20.5100
Median		20.0000
Mode		20.00
Std. Deviation		1.16771
Minimum		19.00
Maximum		25.00

The table presents the statistical summary of the age variable for a sample of 100 respondents.

The mean age is 20.51 years, indicating the average age of participants. The median age is 20 years. The mode, which represents the most frequently occurring age, is also 20 years. The standard deviation is 1.16771, showing a relatively low variation in age among respondents. The minimum age recorded in the sample is 19 years, while the maximum age is 25 years.

Table 5.4: Demographic Information: Education

		Education			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Degree	86	86.0	86.0	86.0
	Post Graduation	11	11.0	11.0	97.0
	Others	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The table shows the educational background of 100 respondents. Most of them (86%) are pursuing a degree, while 11% have pursuing post-graduation. A small group (3%) falls into other education categories.

Table 5.5: Demographic Information: Occupation

		Occupation			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Student	95	95.0	95.0	95.0
	Employee	5	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The table highlights the distribution of respondents based on their occupations. A significant majority, accounting for 95%, are students, while a small minority, representing only 5%, are employees. This data indicates that the respondent group is predominantly composed of students, with employees forming a much smaller proportion

Table 5.6: Demographic Information: District

		District			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Ramanagar	12	12.0	12.0	12.0
	Bagalkot	1	1.0	1.0	13.0
	Kolar	1	1.0	1.0	14.0
	Banglore Urban	84	84.0	84.0	98.0
	Bangalore Rural	1	1.0	1.0	99.0
	Tumakuru	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The table presents the distribution of respondents by district. Most respondents, 84%, are from Bangalore Urban, followed by 12% from Ramanagar. The remaining respondents are from Bagalkot, Kolar, Bangalore Rural, and Tumkur, each contributing 1% to the total.

Table 5.7: Familiarity with Geographical Indication (GI) products.

Familiarity					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	68	68.0	68.0	68.0
	No	32	32.0	32.0	100.0
Total		100	100.0	100.0	

The table provides insight into the respondents' familiarity with GI products. A majority, accounting for 68%, are familiar with GI products, while 32% of respondents are not aware of them. This indicates that a significant portion of the respondents recognise GI products, though a notable percentage still lacks awareness.

**Table 5.8: Influencer plays a significant role in shaping cultural identity:
Social Media Influencers' storytelling campaigns promoting GI products**

Culturalidentity					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	22	22.0	22.0	22.0
	Agree	41	41.0	41.0	63.0
	Neutral	33	33.0	33.0	96.0
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows the frequency of consumer input towards the role of social media influence in shaping cultural identity. As per the respondents of the study, 41% of respondents agree that social media influencer storytelling campaigns promote GI products. 22% of respondents strongly agree with the same. Only 4% of respondents disagree.

Table 5.9: Consumer preferences are significantly influenced by influencer marketing strategy: Platforms are most associated with influencers promoting GI products

		Platform			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Instagram	74	74.0	74.0	74.0
	YouTube	21	21.0	21.0	95.0
	Facebook	5	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total		100	100.0	100.0	

The above table highlights that consumer preferences are significantly influenced by influencer marketing strategies using social media platforms. The table shows that Instagram is most associated with influencers promoting GI products, which is 74%. YouTube platforms play a second important role in influencing GI products promotion, with 21%. Facebook is the least popular, as per the respondents, that is 5%.

H0: Influencer marketing does not impact consumer attitude towards GI Products.

H1: Influencer marketing positively impacts consumer attitude towards GI products.

Table 5.10: Hypothesis Testing with Correlation Test

		Correlations	
		Impact Perception	Specific Aspect
ImpactPerception	Pearson Correlation	1	.284**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	100	100
SpecificAspect	Pearson Correlation	.284**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	100	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The findings of the hypothesis test utilizing a correlation analysis are shown in Table 9. The results show a strong and statistically significant correlation between customer perceptions of GI products and influencer marketing. The connection generated a Pearson coefficient of 1, with a significance value of 0.004. The data support the association at a 99% confidence level because the significance criterion was set at 0.01. These results offer strong evidence in favor of the theory that influencer marketing significantly affects how consumers see GI goods.

Table 5.11: ANOVA Testing

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.324	3	2.441	6.766	.000
Within Groups	34.636	96	.361		
Total	41.960	99			

The dependent variable in the one-way ANOVA study was consumer attitude, whereas the independent factors were cultural narratives and history, aesthetic presentation, influencers' personal experiences, and discounts or promotional offers. The test yielded a significance value of 0.000, below the predetermined cutoff of 0.01. Because of this outcome, the alternative hypothesis must be accepted and the null hypothesis must be rejected. As a result, the results offer compelling statistical proof that influencer marketing significantly and favorably affects customer perceptions of GI products.

Findings

A study found that social media is becoming more and more important in promoting GI (Geographical Indication) products. Results demonstrate that 68% of respondents are aware of GI products, indicating a good level of consumer awareness. But still, there is a need to enhance the awareness about GI products, especially among Gen Z. 74% of respondents associate Instagram with influencers who actively promote these products, making it the most popular medium. Furthermore, 41% of respondents concur that social media influencer-led narrative campaigns significantly increase the visibility and attractiveness of GI products.

Suggestions

The public needs to be made aware of GI products and their cultural identity. One of the finest ways to persuade the current generation of consumers about GI products is through influencer marketing by narrating stories.

Even though consumers believe influencer marketing works, the government needs to try to provide authentic material on official websites. The store needs to embrace and enhance social media platforms in the quickly growing digital landscape and provide an opportunity to increase sales by attracting Gen Z.

6. Conclusions

Raising awareness of Geographical Indication (GI) products and their cultural identities is critical for protecting heritage and encouraging sustainable consumer behaviour. Influencer marketing, particularly storytelling, has been developed as an effective strategy for engaging

and informing modern customers about GI products. As consumers place more faith in influencer endorsements, the government must make proactive efforts to ensure the validity of the material delivered through such marketing techniques. Authorities may increase consumer trust and generate long-term demand for GI goods by providing correct information to reputable influencers and promoting verifiable narratives, thereby contributing to cultural and economic growth.

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