

# Influencer marketing: A pathway to the strategic thinking towards private label brands – A theoretical study

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**Abstract** -Private label brands are increasingly seeking effective strategies to differentiate themselves and gain a competitive edge. One such strategy that has gained significant attention is influencer marketing. The study explores the potential of influencer marketing as a pathway to strategic thinking for private label brands. Influencer marketing leverages the popularity and influence of individuals who have a strong following on social media platforms. Use of influencers, private label brands can tap into their established market base and effectively communicate their brand message. The study analyzes the different types of influencers, their roles, attributes, the specific benefits, potential risks and strategies, effect on purchase intention and strategic thinking on private label brands. The outcome of the study helps private label brands to enhance brand awareness, engage with their target audience, and ultimately drive sales. The outcomes highlight that influencer marketing can serve as a powerful tool for private label brands to establish brand credibility, increase consumer trust, and foster a sense of authenticity. This paper concludes with practical recommendations and guidelines for private label brands to develop a strategic approach towards influencer marketing and maximize its potential as a pathway to success in the competitive marketplace.

**Index Terms:** Influencer Marketing, Strategic Thinking, Private Label Brands, Social Media, Purchase Intention

## I. Introduction

In today's digitally connected world, the rise of social media has given birth to a new form of marketing known as influencer marketing. Influencer marketing has become a powerful strategy for businesses to reach their target audience and promote their products. The innovative approach leverages the influence and popularity of individuals, known as influencers, who have amassed a significant following on various social media platforms. Influencer marketing is a dynamic and rapidly evolving field that involves collaborations between brands and influencers to create engaging and authentic content. Unlike traditional advertising methods, which often rely on direct promotion, influencer marketing taps into the trust and credibility that influencers have built with their audience. These influencers are considered experts in their niche and have the ability to sway the purchasing decisions of their followers through their recommendations and endorsements (Ibrahim et al. 2020).

The power of influencer marketing lies in its ability to leverage the relationship influencers have established with their followers. On account of partnering with influencers who align with their brand values and target audience, businesses can tap into a pre-existing community of engaged individuals. It not only increases brand awareness but also enables companies to build trust and credibility with their potential customers. Influencer marketing allows brands to humanize their products by presenting them in an authentic and relatable way, creating a more personal connection with consumers (Khan and Saima, 2020). The key rewards of influencer marketing are its ability to reach highly targeted audiences. Influencers often specialize in specific niches or industries, allowing businesses to tailor their marketing efforts to reach the most relevant audience. For instance, a fitness apparel brand may collaborate with fitness influencers who

have a dedicated following of health-conscious individuals. The targeted approach ensures that the brand's message reaches the right people, increasing the likelihood of conversion and generating a higher return on investment.

Moreover, influencer marketing has proven to be particularly effective in reaching younger demographics who are increasingly resistant to traditional advertising. Millennials and Gen Z, in particular, place a high value on authenticity and peer recommendations (Kadam et al., 2021). Through utilizing influencers who resonate with these demographics, brands can tap into the influential power of social media personalities and capture the attention of these hard-to-reach audiences. Influencer marketing allows brands to seamlessly integrate their products into the influencer's content, making it feel like a genuine recommendation rather than a blatant advertisement. Influencer marketing has emerged as a game-changer in the marketing landscape, providing brands with a powerful tool to connect with their target audience in an authentic and engaging way (Zhou et al., 2021). Due to collaborating with influencers, businesses can leverage the trust and influence these individuals have cultivated, ultimately driving brand awareness, customer engagement, and sales. As social media continues to dominate our daily lives, influencer marketing is likely to remain a prominent strategy for brands looking to stay relevant and build meaningful connections with their consumers.

## **II. Statement of the Problem**

In the present highly competitive business landscape, private label brands face numerous challenges in establishing themselves and gaining market share. Traditional marketing approaches may not be sufficient to effectively differentiate private label brands from their competitors. As a result, there is a need to explore alternative strategies that can provide a pathway to strategic thinking for private label brands. One such strategy that has gained significant attention is influencer marketing. However, despite its growing popularity, there is a lack of comprehensive research that specifically examines the impact of influencer marketing on private label brands. Therefore, a clear statement of the problem is the need to understand the role and effectiveness of influencer marketing as a pathway to strategic thinking for private label brands and its implications for brand differentiation, consumer engagement, and overall business success.

## **III. Need for the Study**

The need for this study arises from the increasing importance of private label brands in the retail industry and the emerging influence of social media influencers in shaping consumer behavior. Private label brands are seeking innovative strategies to differentiate themselves and establish a strong presence in the market. Influencer marketing offers a unique opportunity for private label brands to leverage the popularity and credibility of influencers to reach their target audience effectively. However, there is a gap in knowledge regarding the specific benefits, challenges, and best practices of influencer marketing for private label brands. Understanding the impact and potential of influencer marketing as a pathway to strategic thinking is crucial for private label brands to develop effective marketing strategies, build brand awareness, engage with consumers, and drive sales (Campbell and Farrell, 2020). Therefore, this study aims to address the need for comprehensive research on the role and implications of influencer marketing for private label brands.

## **IV. Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the understanding of how influencer marketing can serve as a pathway to strategic thinking for private label brands. Investigating the impact of influencer marketing on strategic thinking of private label brands, can provide valuable insights and recommendations for private label brands seeking to enhance their marketing strategies. The outcomes of the study can help private label brands identify the key factors for successful influencer marketing campaigns, such as influencer selection, content creation, campaign planning, and performance

measurement. Moreover, the study can contribute to the academic literature on influencer marketing by focusing specifically on its implications for private label brands, filling the existing research gap. Ultimately, the outcomes can guide private label brands in leveraging influencer marketing as a strategic tool and empower them to effectively compete and thrive in the competitive marketplace.

## V. Literature Review

Social media influencers often establish a sense of connection with their followers through virtual interactions, leading followers to perceive them as authentic figures in their respective fields (Kim and Kim, 2022). The perception of authenticity enhances the persuasive power of influencers' product endorsements and brand advertisements, as followers develop a strong association with the influencer and view their recommendations as trustworthy (Hanafiah and Irwansyah, 2022). When it comes to influencer marketing, consumers form their own beliefs about the reasons behind their favorite influencers' promotion of a product and evaluate whether both the influencer and the brand align with social acceptability (Wang and Lee, 2021). However, followers may exhibit skepticism towards brands that are socially unacceptable, despite their favorite influencers endorsing them, and vice versa (Xu and Kim, 2021). To foster a sense of psychological proximity, social media influencers employ digital cues, such as using similar language styles and displaying shared interests, which contribute to the development of para-social relationships with their followers (Piranda et al., 2022). Additionally, followers who engage directly or indirectly with their favorite influencers on a frequent basis often report stronger para-social relationships with the influencers (Belanche et al., 2021).

Strategic thinking in influencer marketing for private label brands involves identifying the right influencers who align with the brand's values and target audience (Krywalski and Moreira, 2020). Private label brands can identify influencers who have a strong influence within their niche or industry. These influencers can help position the private label brand as a trusted and credible alternative to national brands, showcasing the quality and value of their products through genuine recommendations and endorsements (Lal and Sharma, 2021). Influencer marketing allows private label brands to tell their story and build a narrative that resonates with their target audience (Mishra and Tyagi, 2015). Proper collaboration with influencers who have a genuine interest in the brand or its product offerings, private label brands can create compelling content that showcases the unique aspects of their brand and products (Lim et al., 2017). Through storytelling, private label brands can humanize their offerings, evoke emotions, and create a sense of connection and loyalty among consumers (Chauhan et al., 2013). The main motive of influencer marketing for private label brands is the ability to generate user-generated content and encourage consumer engagement (Nurhandayani et al., 2019). When influencers promote private label brand products, their followers are more likely to share their experiences and opinions through social media posts, reviews, and comments (Sudha and Sheena, 2017). The user-generated content not only amplifies the brand's reach but also serves as social proof, demonstrating to potential customers the positive experiences and satisfaction associated with the private label brand's products (Kaur and Sharma, 2018).

## VI. Purpose and Methods

The main purpose of study is to theoretically assess the role of influencers, their attributes, benefits, strategies of influencer marketing, effect of influencer marketing on purchase intention of customers with regard to private label brands. Furthermore, the study adopts a theoretical research approach to explore the influencer marketing as a pathway to strategic thinking for private label brands. Therefore, research methodology for the study involves a comprehensive theoretical coverage towards various facets of influencer marketing.

## VII. Outcomes

### VII.1. Types of Influencers

Influencers come in various types, each with their own unique characteristics, audience, and content focus. There are different types of influencers commonly found in the influencer marketing landscape, these are, macro-influencers, micro-influencers, nano-influencers, celebrities, industry experts, content creators and social activists. Macro-influencers are typically individuals with a large following, often numbering in the hundreds of thousands or even millions. They have established themselves as influential figures and have the potential to reach a broad audience and often collaborate with major brands. Micro-influencers have a smaller but highly engaged and niche-specific following, they tend to focus on specific interests and have a close-knit community of followers. Micro-influencers are known for their high engagement rates and authentic connections with their audience.

Nano-influencers have a small but highly dedicated following, usually ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand followers. They are valued for their authenticity and relatability, as they have a more personal connection with their followers. Celebrity influencers are well-known individuals who have gained fame through traditional media, such as actors, musicians, athletes, or TV personalities. Their large following is usually a result of their established celebrity status. Industry experts or thought leaders are influencers who have established themselves as authorities in specific fields or industries. They possess extensive knowledge, experience, and expertise, making their opinions and recommendations highly valued within their respective domains. Content creators are influencers who focus on creating specific types of content, such as video creators, photographers, bloggers, or podcasters. Social activist influencers are individuals who use their platforms to advocate for social or environmental causes. They focus on raising awareness, promoting positive change, and influencing their audience to take action (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2014).

### VII.II. Role of Influencers in Promoting Private Label Brands

The role of influencers in promoting private label brands is crucial in today's digital landscape. Influencers have emerged as powerful online personalities with a significant impact on consumer behavior and brand perception (Zak and Hasprova, 2020). Influencers often play several key roles in their promotion.

*Brand Advocacy:* Influencers act as brand advocates for private label brands, endorsing and promoting their products to their followers. Persuading their credibility and trustworthiness, influencers can effectively communicate the unique value propositions and benefits of private label brands to their audience.

*Reach and Exposure:* Influencers have a vast and engaged following on social media platforms. Influencers helps private label brands to tap into these existing communities and gain exposure to a wider audience. The expanded reach helps private label brands increase brand visibility and generate awareness among potential consumers.

*Authenticity and Trust:* Influencers are known for their authentic and genuine communication style. Their followers trust their opinions and recommendations, perceiving them as credible sources of information. When influencers endorse private label brands, it adds an element of authenticity and trust, which can positively impact consumers' perceptions and attitudes towards the brand.

*Targeted Marketing:* Influencers often have a specific niche or target audience they cater to. It allows private label brands to align with influencers whose audience aligns with their target market. Partnering with influencers whose followers match their ideal customer profile, private label brands can effectively target and engage with their desired consumer segments.

*Consumer Engagement:* Influencers facilitate direct interaction between private label brands and their target consumers. Through comments, likes, shares, and direct messages, influencers encourage their followers to engage with the brand, ask questions, and provide feedback. This two-way communication helps private label brands build stronger relationships with their audience and gather valuable insights for product improvement and innovation.

*Sales Generation:* The influence of social media influencers can lead to increased sales for private label brands. When influencers promote a private label brand's products, their followers are more likely to make purchase decisions based on the influencer's recommendation. It can result in higher conversion rates and revenue growth for the brand.

Influencers have a significant role in promoting private label brands, able to connect with audiences, generate trust, and create engaging content makes them valuable partners for private label brands looking to increase their market share and establish a distinctive brand identity in the digital space.

### ***VII.III. Attributes of Influencers***

Influencers possess various attributes that contribute to their effectiveness in influencer marketing. These attributes include, authenticity, expertise and knowledge, engagement and connection, reach and audience, relatability, trendsetting and innovation. They maintain a genuine and transparent relationship with their followers, sharing their real experiences, opinions, and recommendations. The authenticity builds trust and credibility, making influencers influential voices in their respective niches. Influencers typically have expertise and in-depth knowledge within their chosen niche or industry. They establish themselves as authorities in specific subject areas, providing valuable insights, advice, and recommendations to their followers. Their expertise enhances their influence and the impact of their endorsements. Successful influencers actively engage with their followers and build meaningful connections. They foster a sense of community and responsiveness, often initiating conversations and encouraging interaction through comments, likes, and direct messages. Such engagement strengthens the influencer's relationship with their audience, making their recommendations and endorsements more influential.

Influencers have a significant reach on social media platforms, often boasting large followings. Their audience consists of individuals who are genuinely interested in their content and opinions. The size and composition of an influencer's audience contribute to their ability to disseminate brand messages effectively and reach the target market of private label brands. Influencers possess relatability, allowing them to connect with their followers on a personal level. They often share aspects of their daily lives, struggles, and successes, making them relatable figures (Jiradilok et al., 2014). The relatability fosters a sense of trust and likability, increasing the influence they have over their audience's purchase decisions. Influencers are trendsetters within their niches, often introducing new ideas, products, and trends to their followers. They have a knack for staying ahead of the curve and showcasing innovative offerings. Their ability to shape consumer preferences and introduce new concepts contributes to their influence and impact. These attributes collectively contribute to the success of influencers in influencer marketing. Private label brands can leverage these attributes to identify suitable influencers who align with their brand values, target audience, and marketing objectives, maximizing the effectiveness of their influencer marketing campaigns.

### ***VII.IV. Benefits of Influencer Marketing***

Influencer marketing offers several distinct benefits to private label brands.

*Product Visibility and Reach:* Partnership with influencers allows private label brands to tap into their existing follower base and gain exposure to a larger audience. The expanded reach helps increase brand visibility, ensuring that the brand's products are seen by a wider audience, including potential new customers.

*Trust and Authenticity:* Influencers are seen as relatable figures and trusted sources of information by their followers. When influencers endorse a private label brand, it adds an element of authenticity and trust to the brand's reputation. This association can positively influence consumer perception, as they perceive the brand as credible and trustworthy.

*Niche Targeting:* Influencers often specialize in specific niches or have a particular audience demographic. Partnering with influencers whose followers align with the target market of a private label brand allows for precise targeting. It ensures that the brand's message reaches the intended audience, increasing the likelihood of meaningful engagement and conversions.

*Social Proof and Product Endorsements:* Influencers' recommendations and endorsements carry weight and act as social proof. When influencers showcase or review a private label brand's products, it can influence consumer purchase decisions. The positive perception of the influencer can transfer to the brand, fostering trust and encouraging consumers to try the private label offerings.

*Cost-Effective Marketing:* Influencer marketing can be a cost-effective strategy for private label brands, especially compared to traditional advertising channels. Alliance with influencers often involves negotiation, and the costs can vary depending on the influencer's reach and engagement. However, compared to traditional advertising methods, influencer marketing can offer a higher return on investment due to its targeted approach and ability to leverage the influencer's existing audience.

Influencer marketing provides private label brands with increased visibility, trust, targeted audience engagement, storytelling capabilities, social proof, user-generated content, and cost-effective marketing opportunities (SanMiguel et al., 2018). These benefits contribute to the overall success and growth of private label brands in a competitive market landscape.

### **VII.V. Strategies of Influencer Marketing**

There are several influencer marketing strategies are highly effective for promotion of private label brands.

*Giveaways and Contests:* Influencers can unite with private label brands to host giveaways and contests, where their followers have the opportunity to win exclusive products or experiences. The strategy generates excitement, encourages engagement, and amplifies brand awareness. Therefore, demanding participants to engage with the private label brand's social media accounts, share the content, or tag friends, the brand can benefit from increased visibility and reach.

*Product Reviews and Recommendations:* Influencers can create content centered around reviewing and recommending private label brand products. They can showcase the quality, functionality, and value of the products through their personal experiences, highlighting the unique selling points that differentiate the private label brand from competitors. Ensuring authentic and unbiased feedback, influencers can build trust with their audience and encourage them to try the private label brand's offerings.

*Unboxing and First Impressions:* Influencers can generate excitement and anticipation by creating unboxing videos or sharing their first impressions of the private label brand's products. The strategy allows viewers to see the packaging, presentation, and initial reactions, creating a sense of authenticity and curiosity. It can be particularly effective in showcasing new or innovative products.

*Collaborative Content Creation:* Influencers can collaborate directly with the private label brand to co-create content that aligns with their audience's interests and the brand's values. It can include product demonstrations, tutorials, or creative challenges that feature the private label brand's products. Involvement

of the influencer's audience in the content creation process, it fosters engagement and strengthens the connection between the brand and its consumers.

*Lifestyle Integration:* Influencers can seamlessly integrate the private label brand's products into their daily lives and showcase how they fit within their lifestyle. Integration of the products into their content, such as fashion looks, home decor setups, or recipe creations, influencers can demonstrate the versatility and practicality of the private label brand's offerings. The strategy helps consumers visualize how the products can enhance their own lives.

*Social Media Takeovers:* Influencers can take over the private label brand's social media accounts for a day or a specific campaign, sharing content directly with the brand's audience. The strategy allows influencers to bring their unique perspective and creative style to the brand's platforms, introducing themselves to a new audience and generating fresh engagement. It also strengthens the association between the influencer and the private label brand.

*Influencer-Curated Collections:* Private label brands can collaborate with influencers to create exclusive, influencer-curated collections. Influencers can use their expertise and personal style to curate a selection of products from the brand that resonates with their audience. The strategy creates a sense of exclusivity and uniqueness, while leveraging the influencer's influence and credibility to drive interest and sales.

*Affiliate Marketing:* Affiliate marketing involves influencers promoting a brand's products through personalized referral links or discount codes. Influencers earn a commission or receive incentives for each sale or conversion generated through their unique affiliate links. The strategy incentivizes influencers to actively promote the brand and drive conversions, making it a performance-based approach to influencer marketing.

*Brand Ambassadors:* Brands can establish long-term partnerships with influencers who become brand ambassadors. Brand ambassadors are influencers who consistently promote and endorse a brand over an extended period. They often align closely with the brand's values and lifestyle. Brand ambassadors play a crucial role in building brand loyalty, fostering a sense of authenticity, and establishing a strong connection between the influencer and the brand's audience.

*Testimonials:* Testimonials are powerful marketing tools that feature positive feedback and personal experiences from satisfied customers. They serve as social proof, providing evidence to potential customers that a product or service has delivered value and met expectations. Testimonials often include specific details about the customer's experience, highlighting the benefits, quality, and effectiveness of the product or service. Showcasing authentic testimonials, businesses can build trust, credibility, and confidence among their target audience, influencing their purchasing decisions and fostering customer loyalty.

Proper use of these strategies, influencers can effectively promote private label brands, increase brand awareness, and build strong connections with their audience (Pardo et al., 2022). Each strategy offers a unique approach to showcasing the brand's products and values, allowing for diverse and engaging influencer marketing campaigns.

## ***VII.VI. Effect of Influencer Marketing on Purchase Intention***

Influencer marketing has a significant impact on forming purchase intention towards private label brands. The influence and trust of social media influencers, private label brands can effectively shape consumer perceptions and drive purchasing decisions. Several key factors contribute to the effect of influencer marketing on purchase intention. Firstly, influencers serve as opinion leaders who possess expertise and credibility in specific niches. When influencers endorse private label brands and share positive experiences with their followers, it creates a sense of reliability and authenticity. Consumers perceive this endorsement as a valuable recommendation, which influences their purchase intention

towards the endorsed private label brand. Secondly, influencer marketing taps into the power of social proof. As influencers showcase their use of private label products, their followers observe this behavior and are more likely to follow suit. The social proof provided by influencers helps shape consumer attitudes and enhances purchase intention. Seeing others' positive experiences with the brand increases confidence and reduces perceived risks, leading to a greater willingness to purchase (Hermanda et al., 2019).

Thirdly, influencer marketing facilitates personalized and relatable communication. Influencers often engage in interactive and conversational exchanges with their followers, building a sense of community. Incorporating private label brand messaging into their content, influencers create a relatable connection, making consumers feel personally connected to the brand. The personalized communication strengthens purchase intention as consumers perceive the brand as more relevant to their needs and aspirations (Chopra et al., 2017). Fourthly, influencers play a role in providing informative and educational content about private label brands. Through tutorials, reviews, and demonstrations, influencers showcase the features, benefits, and value of the brand's products. The information-rich content helps consumers make informed purchase decisions. The educational aspect of influencer marketing enhances purchase intention by providing consumers with the necessary knowledge and understanding to evaluate and select private label offerings.

Fifthly, the perceived congruence between influencers and private label brands influences purchase intention. Consumers often follow influencers who align with their lifestyle, values, or interests. When influencers endorse private label brands that resonate with their followers' preferences, it creates a sense of alignment and compatibility. The congruence enhances purchase intention as consumers perceive the brand as a natural fit within their personal identity and aspirations. Lastly, influencer marketing fosters engagement and trust. Influencers often encourage their followers to actively engage with the brand through comments, likes, and shares. This interaction builds a relationship of trust and loyalty. As consumers engage with the brand through influencer-led conversations, their purchase intention is reinforced. The engagement and trust established through influencer marketing create a favorable perception of the private label brand, leading to an increased likelihood of purchase (Alalwan, 2018). Influencer marketing significantly influences purchase intention towards private label brands by leveraging the influencers' expertise, social proof, relatable communication, informative content, congruence, and fostering engagement and trust. Understanding and strategically utilizing these factors can help private label brands harness the power of influencer marketing to drive consumer purchase decisions and achieve their marketing goals.

### ***VII.VII. Influencer Marketing to Strategic Thinking for Private Label Brands***

In recent years, influencer marketing has emerged as a pathway to strategic thinking for private label brands. Private label brands, also known as store brands or retailer brands, are products that are exclusively marketed and sold under the retailer's own label. Influencer marketing offers a unique opportunity for private label brands to differentiate themselves from national brands and build a strong connection with their target audience. Private label brands can leverage the influencers' credibility and reach to enhance brand awareness, showcase product quality, and foster consumer trust. Influencer marketing enables private label brands to break through the cluttered marketplace and capture the attention of their desired consumer base. Partnering with influencers who resonate with their target audience, private label brands can leverage the influencers' existing fan base and engagement to gain exposure and generate interest. Influencers provide an authentic voice that consumers trust, allowing private label brands to convey their unique value propositions and differentiate themselves from national brands in a compelling and relatable manner (Crnikovaite, 2019).

Furthermore, influencer marketing offers private label brands the opportunity to gather valuable consumer insights and feedback. Through closely monitoring and analyzing the influencer collaborations, private label brands can gain a deeper understanding of consumer preferences, needs, and pain points. Such information can be used to refine product offerings, develop new product lines, and tailor marketing



strategies to better meet the demands of their target audience, ultimately driving growth and success for the private label brand. Influencer marketing has become a strategic pathway for private label brands, providing them with a unique platform to enhance brand awareness, differentiate from national brands, and build consumer trust. Relationship with influencers, private label brands can tap into the influencers' credibility and reach to create authentic connections with their target audience. Strategic thinking in influencer marketing involves selecting the right influencers, crafting compelling narratives, generating user-generated content, and gathering valuable consumer insights. As the landscape of marketing continues to evolve, influencer marketing will likely remain a powerful tool for private label brands looking to establish their place in the market and foster long-term customer loyalty (Hudders et al., 2020).

The strategic thinking of social media influencers when partnering with private label brands involves careful consideration of several key aspects. Firstly, influencers assess the brand's values, reputation, and positioning to ensure alignment with their own personal brand. They strategically evaluate whether the partnership will enhance their credibility and maintain authenticity in the eyes of their followers. The consideration is crucial to maintain trust and ensure a seamless fit between the influencer and the private label brand. Secondly, influencers engage in audience analysis and segmentation as part of their strategic thinking process. They closely examine the demographics, preferences, and behaviors of their audience to determine if it aligns with the target market of the private label brand (Gajanova et al., 2020). Therefore, recognizing their audience's needs and interests, influencers can craft content that resonates with their followers, making the brand's messaging more compelling and relevant. The strategic approach helps influencers maximize engagement and drive conversions for the private label brand.

Lastly, influencers strategically plan their content creation and storytelling to effectively showcase the private label brand. Influencers consider the tone, format, and style that best suit their audience's preferences, making the content more engaging and authentic. Influencers leverage their storytelling skills to create narratives around the brand, emphasizing its unique selling points and benefits. The strategic approach ensures that the influencer's content aligns with their personal brand and maintains the interest and attention of their followers, ultimately benefiting the private label brand (Agung et al., 2021). Largely, the strategic thinking of social media influencers when collaborating with private label brands involves aligning with brand values, understanding the audience, and creating compelling content. Therefore, influencers can establish meaningful partnerships that drive brand awareness, engage consumers, and contribute to the success of private label brands in the competitive market landscape.

### ***VII.VIII. Potential Risks in Influencer Marketing***

Influencer marketing, while effective, carries potential risks that brands should be aware of and actively manage. Influencers who promote products that do not align with their personal brand or values can undermine authenticity. It can erode trust among their followers and lead to a negative perception of the brand. There is a risk that influencers may engage in inappropriate or controversial behavior, make offensive statements, or become embroiled in scandals. Influencers resort to fraudulent practices, such as buying fake followers or engagement to artificially inflate their social media metrics. It can mislead brands into partnering with influencers who do not possess a genuine and engaged audience. Influencer marketing is subject to advertising regulations that require influencers to disclose their partnerships and sponsored content transparently. Non-compliance with these disclosure requirements can result in legal and reputational issues for both the influencer and the brand. Influencers may have a reputation or image that does not align with the brand's desired image or target audience (Anand et al., 2020). A reputation mismatch can lead to confusion or negative associations for the brand. To mitigate these risks, brands should conduct thorough research and vetting of influencers, establish clear contractual agreements that include authenticity clauses, monitor influencer activities and performance, and maintain open lines of communication.

## VIII. Discussions

The discussion revolves around the key outcomes and implications of influencer marketing as a pathway to strategic thinking for private label brands. Influencer marketing offers private label brands a powerful tool for standing out in a crowded marketplace. Influencers help the brands to leverage their unique personalities, expertise, and niche audiences to create a distinct brand image. The strategic thinking allows private label brands to differentiate themselves from competitors and attract a loyal consumer base who resonates with the influencer's values and lifestyle. Influencer marketing facilitates direct engagement between private label brands and consumers. The influence and relationship built by influencers with their followers, brands can establish trust and credibility. The authentic and relatable nature of influencer content fosters a sense of connection and engagement, leading to increased consumer trust and loyalty towards the brand.

Influencers have extensive reach and influence on social media platforms. Collaborating with influencers enables private label brands to tap into their established follower base, expanding brand visibility and awareness. The influencer's endorsement serves as a powerful form of word-of-mouth marketing, reaching a wider audience and increasing the brand's exposure. Influencer marketing has a significant impact on shaping consumer behavior and purchase decisions. The social proof and authenticity conveyed by influencers positively influence consumers' purchase intention towards private label brands, fostering increased sales and brand loyalty. To effectively leverage influencer marketing as a pathway to strategic thinking, private label brands need to adopt a strategic approach in influencer selection, campaign planning, and performance measurement. It includes defining clear objectives, identifying relevant influencers aligned with the brand's values, and establishing metrics to measure campaign effectiveness. Ongoing evaluation and optimization of influencer marketing strategies are crucial for long-term success.

## IX. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the role of influencer marketing as a pathway to strategic thinking for private label brands. Influencer marketing offers unique opportunities for brand differentiation, consumer engagement, and increased brand awareness. Through the authentic and relatable content created by influencers, private label brands can enhance consumer trust and influence purchase behavior. Strategic planning and performance measurement are essential for effectively leveraging influencer marketing, ensuring alignment with brand objectives and achieving desired outcomes. Through influencer marketing, private label brands can tap into the power of social media influencers to establish their brand identity, engage with consumers, and drive business growth. However, it is important for brands to carefully select influencers who align with their brand values and target audience. Future research can explore the evolving landscape of influencer marketing, including emerging platforms and trends, and examine the long-term effects of influencer partnerships on private label brands. Overall, influencer marketing presents a valuable pathway for private label brands to strategically position themselves in the competitive market landscape and foster long-term success.

## X. Practical Recommendations

The following are the practical recommendations and guidelines to help private label brands navigate influencer marketing. Defining specific goals will guide influencer selection, content creation, and performance measurement. Conduct thorough research to identify influencers who align with brand values, target audience, and industry. Consider factors such as their reach, engagement rates, authenticity, and previous brand collaborations. Long-term partnerships can result in more effective collaborations and foster greater brand loyalty among influencers and their audiences. Establish key performance indicators relevant to objectives, such as engagement rates, reach, conversion rates, and sales attribution. Utilize tracking tools and analytics platforms to assess the effectiveness of influencer collaborations. Therefore, following these practical recommendations and guidelines, private label brands can develop a strategic approach towards

influencer marketing, maximize the impact of their collaborations, and achieve their marketing objectives effectively.

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