

## CONSUMER AWARENESS ON ETHICAL AFFILIATE MARKETING IN SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TAMILNADU

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### ABSTRACT

A timely, inclusive and ethical marketing technique can not only bolster productivity and growth but also serve as a catalyst. In this data-driven business world, innumerable marketing techniques through the customers and market. One such recent trend is Affiliate marketing, which is a process of establishing the product & service by a third party in a digital way like blog, social media or websites. The publisher who acts as an affiliate gets a sizeable commission. The affiliate market works in the process of getting a commission, sharing an ads or link on the own websites, customer clicks the ad or link, action of purchase and finally the payment transaction from the customer. Here the ethical affiliate marketing is the follow up of principles of fair trade, payment, transparency and accountable of both customer and affiliates. The challenges or the ethical issues faced by the manufacturer are finding a right affiliate partner and the ways and means to effectively manage the brand. This emerging marketing technique has already established itself in every notable brand where the web traffic is largely directed to such marketers. Thus an urging need has arisen to know the consumer awareness about the ethical affiliate marketing and an earnest attempt has been made to evaluate the same.

### INTRODUCTION

In this data-driven business world, innumerable marketing techniques through the market. One such recent trend is Affiliate marketing, which is a process of establishing the product & service by a third party in a digital way like blog, social media or websites. The publisher who acts as an affiliate gets a sizeable commission. The affiliate market works in the process of getting a commission, sharing an ads or link on the own websites, customer clicks the ad or link, action of purchase and finally the payment transaction from the customer. Here the ethical affiliate marketing is the follow up of principles of fair trade, payment, transparency and accountable of both customer and affiliates. The challenges or the ethical issues faced by the manufacturer are finding a right affiliate partner and the ways and means to effectively manage the brand. This emerging marketing technique has already established itself in every notable brand where the web traffic is largely directed to such marketers. Thus an urging need has arisen to know the consumer awareness about the ethical affiliate marketing and an earnest attempt has been made to evaluate the same.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To study the awareness level of ethical affiliate marketing.
2. To identify the ethical challenges faced by the manufacturer to reach consumers.
3. To determine the effectiveness of ethical affiliate marketing among consumers.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was carried out in southern district of Tamil Nadu. A sample of 200 respondents was selected based on simple random sampling. A well structured questionnaire comprising detailed aspects of the questions was used as the research tool. The respondents who reside at the four districts of southern Tamil Nadu namely Tirunelveli, Tuticorin, Kanyakumari, Tenkasi were contacted. Both Primary and Secondary data were used. SPSS software version 26 was used to analyze the collected data. Chi-square test and Correlation test were applied.

**HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY**

**1. Relationship between factors determines buying behavior of consumer and the awareness level of consumer**

H<sub>0</sub> = There is no significant relationship between factors determines buying behavior of consumer and the awareness level of consumer.

H<sub>1</sub> = There is significant relationship between factors determines buying behavior of consumer and the awareness level of consumer.

Factors determines buying behaviour * level of awareness									
Cross tabulation									
			Factors determine buying behaviour					Total	
			Brand image	Spl offer	review	Blog & SEO	Social media ads		
Level awareness of	Higher	Count	6	6	9	9	7	37	
		Expected Count	5.9	5.7	7.8	8.1	9.4	37.0	
	High	Count	5	5	6	9	10	35	
		Expected Count	5.6	5.4	7.4	7.7	8.9	35.0	
	Moderate	Count	10	6	9	11	17	53	
		Expected Count	8.5	8.2	11.1	11.7	13.5	53.0	
	Less	Count	6	9	12	9	11	47	
		Expected Count	7.5	7.3	9.9	10.3	12.0	47.0	
	None	Count	5	5	6	6	6	28	
		Expected Count	4.5	4.3	5.9	6.2	7.1	28.0	
	Total		Count	32	31	42	44	51	200
			Expected Count	32.0	31.0	42.0	44.0	51.0	200.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.610 <sup>a</sup>	16	.992
Likelihood Ratio	5.650	16	.991
Linear-by-Linear Association	.062	1	.804
N of Valid Cases	200		

Degrees of Freedom (df) = (r-1) \* (c-1) = (5-1) \* (5-1) = 4 \* 4 = 16

χ<sup>2</sup> table value at 5% level of significance for 16 df = 26.296

From the above table, it is evident that the H<sub>0</sub> is accepted. Therefore there is no significant relationship between factors determines buying behavior of consumer and the awareness level of consumer.

**2. Relationship between ethical challenges faced by manufacturer and the effectiveness of affiliate marketing.**

H<sub>0</sub> = There is no significant relationship between ethical challenges faced by manufacturer and the effectiveness of affiliate marketing.

H<sub>1</sub> = There is significant relationship between ethical challenges faced by manufacturer and the effectiveness of affiliate marketing.

Ethical challenges * effectiveness of affiliate marketing Cross tabulation								
		Effectiveness of affiliate marketing					Total	
		S.D.	D	N	A	S.A.		
Ethical challenges	Consumer privacy	Count	9	7	6	7	9	38
		Expected Count	8.9	7.6	6.6	8.2	6.6	38.0
	Copyright infringement	Count	7	8	6	6	6	33
		Expected Count	7.8	6.6	5.8	7.1	5.8	33.0
	Personal info security	Count	13	8	8	11	7	47
		Expected Count	11.0	9.4	8.2	10.1	8.2	47.0
	Ads on ethical websites	Count	9	8	8	13	6	44
		Expected Count	10.3	8.8	7.7	9.5	7.7	44.0
	Using social media influencers	Count	9	9	7	6	7	38
		Expected Count	8.9	7.6	6.6	8.2	6.6	38.0
	Total	Count	47	40	35	43	35	200
		Expected Count	47.0	40.0	35.0	43.0	35.0	200.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.319 <sup>a</sup>	16	.994
Likelihood Ratio	5.185	16	.995
Linear-by-Linear Association	.124	1	.725
N of Valid Cases	200		

Degrees of Freedom (df) = (r-1) \* (c-1) = (5-1) \* (5-1) = 4 \* 4 = 16

$\chi^2$  table value at 5% level of significance for 16 df = 26.296

From the above table, it is clear that the  $H_0$  is accepted. Therefore there is no significant relationship between ethical challenges faced by manufacturer and the effectiveness of affiliate marketing.

### FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study finds that the consumers have moderate level of awareness on factors of brand image, special offer, customer review, blogs post & SEO, social media ads. The main ethical issue faced by the manufacturer is personal information security have the strongest effectiveness of affiliate marketing. Also, the study further reveals that the consumers are afraid of misuse of personal information and they prefer purchasing through the channel of affiliate marketers.

### SUGGESTIONS

- ❖ The brands should come forward in highlighting their ethical affiliate marketing practices in all platforms so as to garner a wider reach among the targeted consumers.
- ❖ The futuristic vision with regard to the ethical affiliate marketing should also be made known to the masses.
- ❖ Since the awareness level about ethical affiliate marketing is from moderate to low, aggressive propaganda can be undertaken.
- ❖ The Government should take pertinent measures to accentuate the ethical marketing practices to the general public.

## **CONCLUSION**

The present study has analysed the consumer awareness about the ethical affiliate marketing. The study revealed that awareness about the ethical affiliate marketing is still in its infant stage and needs to be effectively increased to reap the benefits of the same. In order to make significant strides towards it, right impetus should be given and scrupulous adherence to ethical practices to be checked time and again. It can be rightly concluded that, a seismic shift to creating awareness about the ethical affiliate marketing is the need of the hour.