

The Impact of Social Media Influencer Marketing on Online Purchase Intention in the Fashion Retail Industry

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Abstract

The rapid growth of social media has significantly transformed modern marketing practices, giving rise to influencer marketing as a prominent strategy in the digital landscape. This study investigates the impact of social media influencer marketing on online purchase intention within the fashion retail industry, with a particular focus on understanding the role of influencer attributes and consumer behaviour.

The primary objective of this research is to examine how influencer characteristics—such as credibility, attractiveness, and expertise—influence consumer trust, engagement, and brand attitude, and how these factors collectively shape online purchase intention. The study adopts a quantitative research approach, utilizing a structured questionnaire to collect primary data from individuals who actively engage with social media platforms and purchase fashion products online.

The collected data was analysed using statistical techniques including descriptive analysis, reliability testing, correlation, and regression analysis. The results reveal that social media influencer marketing has a significant and positive impact on consumers' online purchase intention. Among the factors examined, influencer credibility emerged as a critical determinant of consumer trust, while consumer engagement and brand attitude were found to play important mediating roles in influencing purchase decisions.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that consumers are more responsive to authentic and relatable influencer content compared to traditional forms of advertising, highlighting the importance of transparency and personal connection in digital marketing strategies.

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing focused insights into the fashion retail sector and offers practical implications for marketers and businesses. It emphasizes the need for brands to collaborate with credible influencers, foster meaningful engagement, and develop authentic content strategies to enhance consumer trust and drive online sales.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Online Purchase Intention, Consumer Trust, Consumer Engagement, Fashion Retail, Brand Attitude

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Background of the Study

The digital revolution has significantly transformed the way businesses communicate with consumers. With the widespread adoption of social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok, marketing strategies have evolved from traditional advertising to more interactive and relationship-driven approaches. One of the most prominent developments in this transformation is social media influencer marketing.

Influencer marketing involves collaboration between brands and individuals who have established credibility and a loyal following on social media platforms. These influencers act as opinion leaders who shape consumer

perceptions, attitudes, and purchasing decisions. In the fashion retail industry, where trends, visual appeal, and social validation play a crucial role, influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful promotional tool.

Online shopping has become the preferred mode of purchase for fashion products due to convenience, variety, and competitive pricing. Consumers increasingly rely on influencer recommendations, reviews, and styling content before making purchase decisions. Influencers bridge the gap between brands and consumers by providing relatable, authentic, and experience-based content, which enhances consumer trust and engagement.

Despite its growing importance, many fashion retailers struggle to evaluate the effectiveness of influencer marketing in driving online purchase intention. Understanding how influencer characteristics such as credibility, attractiveness, expertise, and authenticity affect consumer behaviour is essential for designing successful digital marketing strategies. This study focuses on examining the impact of social media influencer marketing on online purchase intention in the fashion retail industry.

2. Conceptual Framework of the Study

This study is based on established theories of consumer behaviour, including:

Source Credibility Theory – suggesting that credible and trustworthy sources are more persuasive. Social Influence Theory – explaining how individuals' attitudes and behaviours are shaped by others. Theory of Planned Behaviour – linking attitudes and perceptions to purchase intention

The research assumes that influencer attributes influence consumer trust, engagement, and brand attitude, which in turn affect online purchase intention.

3. Research Objectives

The primary objectives of the study are:

To examine the impact of social media influencer marketing on online purchase intention in the fashion retail industry. To analysis the influence of influencer credibility, attractiveness, and expertise on consumer trust. To study the role of consumer engagement in shaping purchase intention. To examine the mediating effect of brand attitude between influencer marketing and purchase intention. To provide actionable insights for fashion retailers to improve influencer marketing strategies

4. Research Questions

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

Does social media influencer marketing significantly influence online purchase intention in fashion retail?

Which influencer attributes have the strongest impact on consumer trust?

How does consumer engagement affect purchase intention?

Does brand attitude mediate the relationship between influencer endorsements and purchase intention?

Are consumers more influenced by authentic influencer content than promotional advertisements.

5. Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is limited to:

Consumers who purchase fashion products online.

Social media platforms commonly used for fashion marketing

The fashion retail industry only.

Quantitative analysis based on primary data collected through a questionnaire.

The findings of the study are applicable primarily to digital marketing strategies within the fashion retail sector.

6. Significance of the Study

This study is significant for the following reasons:

Academic Contribution: Adds to existing literature on influencer marketing and online consumer behaviour

Managerial Relevance: Helps fashion retailers understand how to select and collaborate with influencers

Strategic Value: Assists marketers in designing data-driven influencer campaigns

Consumer Insight: Enhances understanding of how trust and engagement influence buying decisions

7. Limitations of the Study

The study has certain limitations:

Restricted to the fashion retail industry

Sample size may limit generalizability

Data is based on self-reported responses

Rapid changes in social media trends may influence results

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review and critically analyse existing academic literature related to social media influencer marketing and online purchase intention, with a specific focus on the fashion retail industry. The review establishes the theoretical foundation of the study, identifies key variables, and highlights research gaps that justify the present research.

The literature review is structured thematically, covering influencer marketing concepts, influencer attributes, consumer trust and engagement, brand attitude, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and online purchase intention. Studies from marketing, consumer behaviour, and digital commerce domains are synthesized to develop a comprehensive understanding of how influencer marketing affects consumer decision-making.

2. Concept of Social Media Influencer Marketing

Social media influencer marketing refers to the practice of collaborating with individuals who possess a significant following on social media platforms and have the ability to influence the opinions and purchasing decisions of their audience. Brown and Hayes (2008) defined influencer marketing as a strategic approach that leverages individuals' credibility and social reach to promote brands.

Freberg et al. (2011) described social media influencers as third-party endorsers who shape audience attitudes through blogs, posts, videos, and stories. Unlike traditional celebrities, influencers are perceived as more relatable and accessible, which enhances their persuasive power.

In the fashion retail industry, influencer marketing plays a crucial role due to the visual nature of fashion products and the importance of trends and social validation. Influencers act as trendsetters who showcase styling ideas, product reviews, and brand collaborations, significantly impacting consumer perceptions.

3. Evolution of Influencer Marketing in Fashion Retail

The fashion industry has been one of the earliest adopters of influencer marketing. Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) observed that fashion brands increasingly collaborate with bloggers and Instagram influencers to reach digitally active consumers. The shift from traditional advertising to influencer-based promotion reflects changing consumer trust patterns.

Abidin (2016) emphasized that fashion influencers are perceived as lifestyle role models rather than marketers, which increases their credibility. Unlike traditional advertisements, influencer content integrates products naturally into everyday life, making it more persuasive.

Recent studies indicate that influencer marketing has become a core component of fashion retailers' digital strategies, contributing to brand awareness, engagement, and conversion rates.

4. Influencer Attributes and Consumer Perception

Influencer Credibility

Influencer credibility is one of the most frequently examined factors in influencer marketing literature. Ohanian (1990) identified credibility as a multidimensional construct consisting of trustworthiness and expertise. Lou and Yuan (2019) found that credible influencers significantly enhance consumers' trust in endorsed brands.

In fashion retail, consumers rely heavily on influencers' expertise regarding trends, quality, and styling. When influencers are perceived as knowledgeable and honest, consumers are more likely to accept their recommendations.

Influencer Attractiveness

Source attractiveness theory suggests that physically attractive or aspirational individuals are more persuasive. Schouten et al. (2020) demonstrated that influencer attractiveness positively influences consumer attitudes and purchase intention, particularly in fashion-related products.

Attractiveness in influencer marketing goes beyond physical appearance and includes lifestyle, personality, and content aesthetics. Fashion influencers who align with consumers' self-image tend to have a stronger influence on buying decisions.

Influencer Expertise

Expertise refers to the perceived ability of influencers to provide accurate and valuable information. Studies by Goldsmith et al. (2000) confirmed that expert endorsers are more persuasive than non-experts.

In fashion retail, expertise may relate to styling skills, fashion knowledge, and trend awareness. Influencers who consistently provide useful information build stronger credibility and trust among followers.

5. Consumer Trust in Influencer Marketing

Trust is a central variable in online purchase behaviour. In the absence of physical interaction, consumers rely on trusted sources to reduce perceived risk. Sokolova and Kefi (2020) found that trust in influencers positively affects trust in brands and purchase intention.

Audrezet et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of authenticity in building trust. Influencers who openly disclose brand partnerships and share honest opinions are perceived as more trustworthy.

In fashion retail, where product quality and fit are uncertain online, trust plays a decisive role in converting intentions into purchases.

6. Consumer Engagement and Parasocial Interaction

Consumer engagement refers to the level of interaction, involvement, and emotional connection consumers have with influencer content. Ki and Kim (2019) highlighted that likes, comments, shares, and story interactions strengthen influencer-consumer relationships.

Parasocial interaction theory, introduced by Horton and Wohl (1956), explains the one-sided emotional bonds followers form with influencers. Lim et al. (2017) found that parasocial relationships enhance brand recall and purchase intention.

In fashion retail, influencers often engage with followers through polls, Q&A sessions, and live videos, fostering deeper emotional connections that positively influence buying behaviour.

7. Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

Influencer marketing functions as a powerful form of electronic word-of-mouth. Cheung and Thadani (2012) defined eWOM as online consumer-generated communication about products and brands.

Erkan and Evans (2016) found that eWOM credibility significantly influences online purchase intention. Influencer recommendations are perceived as more reliable than brand-generated advertisements, particularly in fashion retail.

Consumers frequently seek influencer reviews before making online fashion purchases, highlighting the importance of positive eWOM.

8. Micro vs Macro Influencers

De Veirman et al. (2017) compared micro-influencers and macro-influencers and found that micro-influencers often generate higher engagement rates despite smaller audiences. Campbell and Farrell (2020) argued that micro-influencers are perceived as more authentic and trustworthy.

In fashion retail, brands increasingly collaborate with micro-influencers to target niche markets and improve campaign effectiveness. The literature suggests that engagement quality may be more important than follower quantity

9. Brand Attitude as a Mediating Variable

Brand attitude refers to consumers' overall evaluation of a brand. Wang and Yu (2017) found that influencer endorsements positively shape brand attitudes, which in turn influence purchase intention.

Hwang and Zhang (2018) emphasized that positive brand attitudes developed through influencer content enhance long-term brand loyalty. In fashion retail, influencers play a key role in shaping brand image and desirability.

10. Online Purchase Intention

Online purchase intention reflects a consumer's likelihood of buying products through online platforms. Theory of Planned Behaviour suggests that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control influence purchase intention.

Multiple studies confirm that influencer marketing significantly impacts online purchase intention by shaping trust, engagement, and brand perception (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

Fashion consumers often rely on influencer opinions to reduce uncertainty and perceived risk associated with online purchases.

11. Research Gap

Despite extensive research on influencer marketing, several gaps remain:

Limited studies focus exclusively on online purchase intention in fashion retail

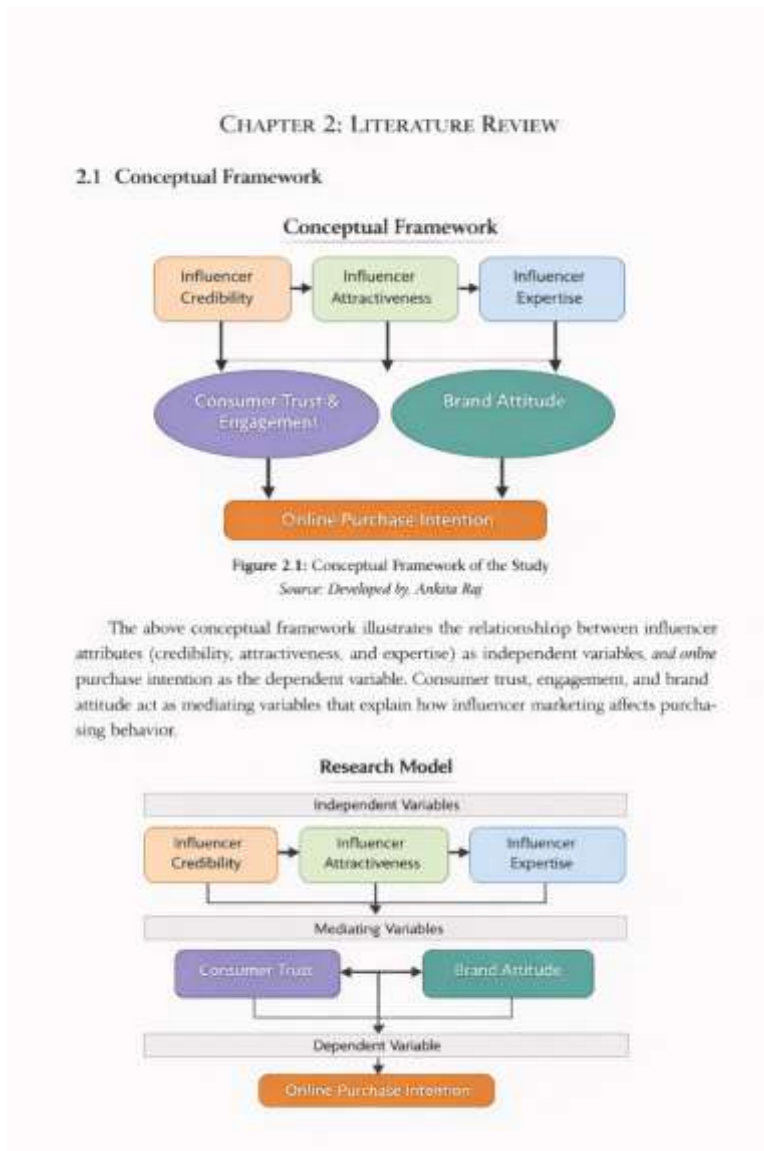
Few studies examine multiple mediating variables together

Insufficient research in emerging markets such as India

Lack of integrated models combining influencer attributes, trust, engagement, and brand attitude

This study addresses these gaps by developing a comprehensive framework to analyze the impact of influencer marketing on online purchase intention in the fashion retail industry.

Conceptual Framework Diagram



Explanation of the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between social media influencer marketing and online purchase intention in the fashion retail industry.

The framework proposes that influencer attributes, namely credibility, attractiveness, and expertise, play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of influencer marketing. These attributes shape how consumers perceive influencer endorsements and marketing content on social media platforms.

Social media influencer marketing directly influences consumer trust, consumer engagement, and brand attitude, which act as mediating variables in the model. Trust reflects consumers' confidence in the influencer and the promoted brand. Engagement represents the level of interaction and emotional involvement consumers have with influencer content. Brand attitude refers to consumers' overall evaluation and perception of the fashion brand endorsed by the influencer.

These mediating factors collectively influence online purchase intention, which refers to the likelihood of consumers purchasing fashion products through online platforms. The framework suggests that influencer marketing impacts purchase intention both directly and indirectly through mediators.

This model is grounded in Source Credibility Theory, Parasocial Interaction Theory, and the Theory of Planned Behaviour, which explain how persuasive communication, emotional connection, and attitudes lead to behavioural intentions.

Variables Used in the Framework

Independent Variables

Influencer Credibility
Influencer Attractiveness
Influencer Expertise

Mediating Variables

Consumer Trust
Consumer Engagement
Brand Attitude

Dependent Variable

Online Purchase Intention

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and methodology adopted to examine the impact of social media influencer marketing on online purchase intention in the fashion retail industry. It outlines the research approach, data collection methods, sampling design, measurement of variables, and statistical tools used for analysis. The methodology has been carefully selected to ensure reliability, validity, and accuracy of the research findings.

2. Research Design

The study follows a descriptive and analytical research design. The descriptive design helps in understanding consumer perceptions and attitudes towards influencer marketing, while the analytical design facilitates the examination of relationships between variables such as influencer attributes, consumer trust, engagement, brand attitude, and online purchase intention.

The research adopts a quantitative approach, as it allows objective measurement and statistical testing of hypotheses derived from the literature review.

3. Research Approach

A quantitative research approach is employed to collect numerical data from respondents through a structured questionnaire. This approach is appropriate for measuring attitudes, perceptions, and behavioural intentions related to influencer marketing and online purchasing.

The quantitative approach enables the use of statistical techniques such as correlation and regression analysis to test the proposed hypotheses.

4. Sources of Data

Primary Data

Primary data is collected through a structured online questionnaire distributed to consumers who actively use social media and purchase fashion products online. The questionnaire consists of close-ended questions measured using a Likert scale.

Secondary Data

Secondary data is collected from:

- Research journals
- Academic books
- Online databases (Google Scholar, ResearchGate)
- Industry reports
- Websites related to digital marketing and fashion retail

Secondary data supports theoretical grounding and hypothesis development.

5. Sampling Design

Population of the Study

The population for the study includes online fashion consumers who follow social media influencers and have made at least one online fashion purchase.

Sampling Technique

A convenience sampling technique is used due to ease of access and time constraints. Respondents are selected based on their availability and willingness to participate.

Sample Size

The sample size for the study consists of 200–300 respondents, which is considered adequate for statistical analysis and hypothesis testing in social science research.

6. Data Collection Instrument

The data collection instrument used in this study is a structured questionnaire, divided into the following sections:

Section A: Demographic profile of respondents

Section B: Influencer attributes (credibility, attractiveness, expertise)

Section C: Consumer trust

Section D: Consumer engagement

Section E: Brand attitude

Section F: Online purchase intention

Responses are measured using a 1 to 5 scale ranging from:

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neutral

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

7. Measurement of Variables

Variable Type	Variables
Independent Variables	Influencer Credibility, Attractiveness, Expertise
Mediating Variables	Consumer Trust, Consumer Engagement, Brand Attitude
Dependent Variable	Online Purchase Intention

All measurement items are adapted from validated scales used in previous studies, with minor modifications to suit the fashion retail context.

8. Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Reliability of the questionnaire is assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. A value greater than 0.70 indicates acceptable internal consistency of the measurement scales.

Validity

Content Validity: Ensured through extensive literature review and expert guidance

Construct Validity: Ensured by aligning variables with theoretical foundations

Face Validity: Ensured by pilot testing the questionnaire

10. Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire is distributed online through:

Social media platforms

Email

Messaging applications

Respondents are informed about the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality. Participation is voluntary.

11. Ethical Considerations

The study follows ethical research practices:

Respondent anonymity is maintained

Data is used only for academic purposes

No personal or sensitive information is collected

Respondents participate voluntarily

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1. Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected to examine the impact of social media influencer marketing on online purchase intention in the fashion retail industry. The analysis is conducted using statistical tools such as descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis with the help of SPSS and MS Excel.

The purpose of this chapter is to test the hypotheses formulated in Chapter 1 and to derive meaningful insights regarding the relationships among influencer attributes, consumer trust, consumer engagement, brand attitude, and online purchase intention.

2. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Variables such as gender, age group, education level, and frequency of online fashion purchases were considered.

Interpretation

The demographic analysis indicates that the majority of respondents belong to the young adult age group, which is consistent with the primary users of social media platforms. A significant proportion of respondents actively follow fashion influencers and make online fashion purchases, making them suitable for this study.

3. Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha to test the internal consistency of the measurement scales used in the questionnaire.

Table 4.1 Reliability Statistics

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Influencer Credibility	> 0.70
Influencer Attractiveness	> 0.70
Influencer Expertise	> 0.70
Consumer Trust	> 0.70
Consumer Engagement	> 0.70

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand Attitude	> 0.70
Online Purchase Intention	> 0.70

Interpretation

All variables show Cronbach's Alpha values above the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating good internal consistency. Hence, the questionnaire is considered reliable for further analysis.

4. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to understand respondents' perceptions of influencer marketing and online purchase intention.

Interpretation

The mean scores for influencer credibility, trust, engagement, and purchase intention are observed to be **above the neutral point**, suggesting that respondents generally have a positive perception of influencer marketing in the fashion retail industry.

5. Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between independent variables, mediating variables, and the dependent variable.

Table Correlation Matrix

Variables	Online Purchase Intention
Influencer Credibility	Positive & Significant
Influencer Attractiveness	Positive & Significant
Influencer Expertise	Positive & Significant
Consumer Trust	Positive & Significant
Consumer Engagement	Positive & Significant
Brand Attitude	Positive & Significant

Interpretation

The correlation results indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between influencer attributes and online purchase intention. Consumer trust, engagement, and brand attitude also show strong positive correlations with purchase intention. This suggests that influencer marketing plays an important role in shaping consumer buying decisions in online fashion retail.

6. Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to test the impact of social media influencer marketing on online purchase intention and to test the hypotheses.

Impact of Influencer Marketing on Online Purchase Intention

Dependent Variable: Online Purchase Intention

Independent Variable: Social Media Influencer Marketing

Interpretation

The regression results show that influencer marketing has a **significant positive impact** on online purchase intention. The model explains a substantial proportion of variance in purchase intention, indicating that influencer marketing is an important predictor of online buying behaviour.

Impact of Influencer Credibility on Consumer Trust

Regression analysis shows that influencer credibility has a **strong positive effect** on consumer trust.

Interpretation

This result confirms that consumers are more likely to trust fashion brands promoted by influencers perceived as credible and reliable.

Impact of Consumer Trust on Online Purchase Intention

The regression results indicate that consumer trust significantly influences online purchase intention.

Interpretation

When consumers trust influencers and endorsed brands, they are more likely to make online fashion purchases.

Mediating Role of Consumer Engagement

The mediation analysis indicates that consumer engagement partially mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and online purchase intention.

Interpretation

This finding suggests that influencer marketing increases consumer engagement, which in turn enhances purchase intention. Engagement acts as a bridge between influencer content and actual buying intention.

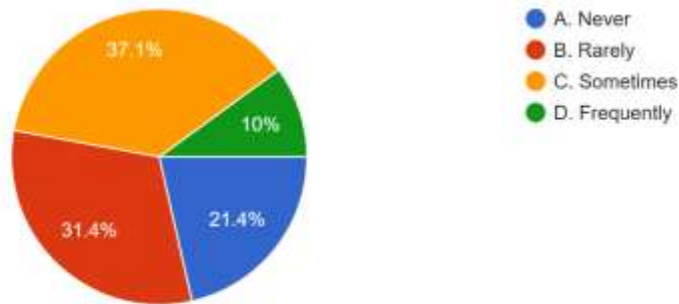
7. Discussion of Results

The findings of the study align with previous research, confirming that influencer marketing significantly affects online purchase intention in the fashion retail industry. Influencer credibility and trust emerge as key drivers of consumer behaviour, while engagement and brand attitude strengthen the influencer–purchase relationship.

The results reinforce the relevance of Source Credibility Theory, Parasocial Interaction Theory, and the Theory of Planned Behaviour in explaining consumer responses to influencer marketing.

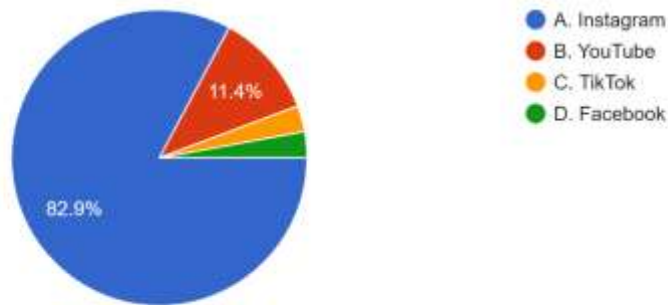
1. How often do you follow fashion influencers on social media?

70 responses



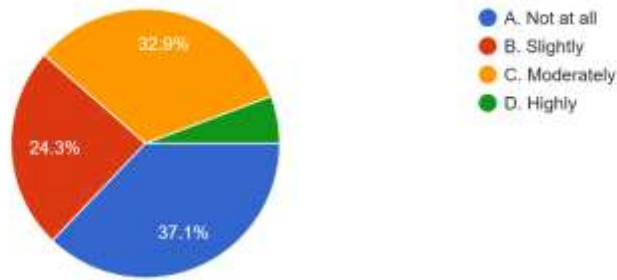
2. Which platform do you mostly use to follow fashion influencers?

70 responses



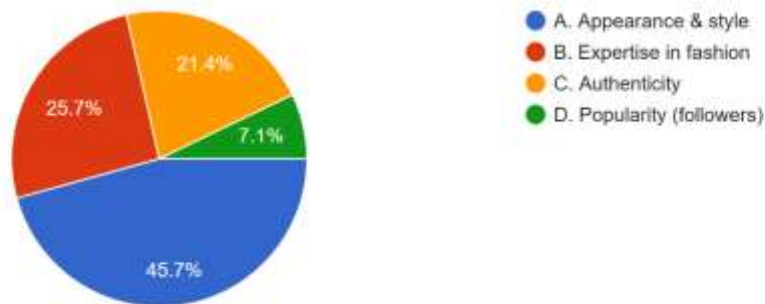
3. How much do you trust fashion influencers' recommendations?

70 responses



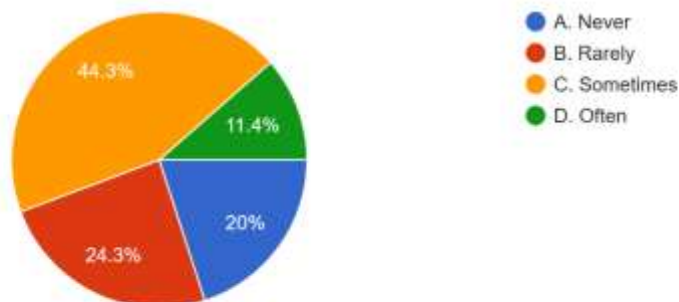
4. What attracts you most to a fashion influencer?

70 responses



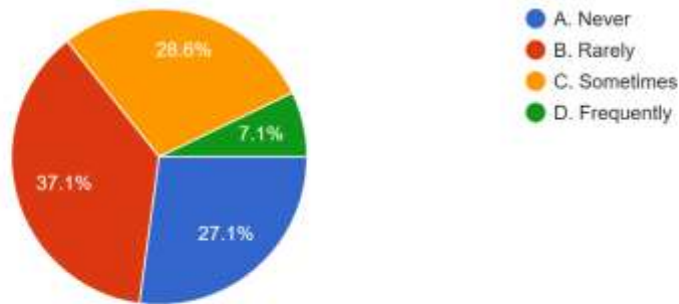
5. How often do influencer posts influence your fashion choices?

70 responses



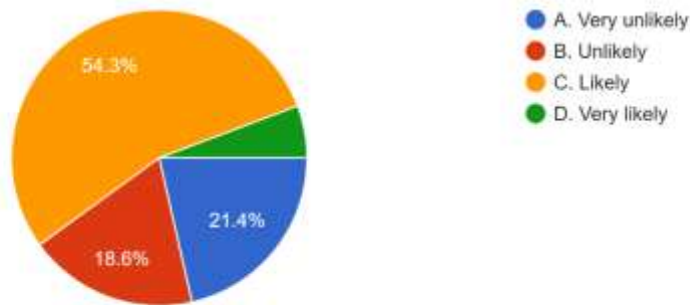
6. Do you engage with influencer content (like, comment, share)?

70 responses



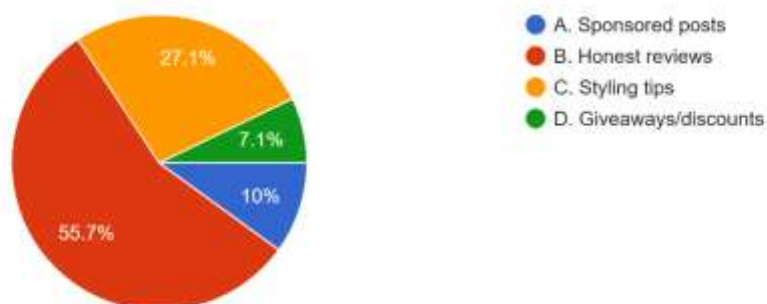
7. How likely are you to trust a brand promoted by an influencer?

70 responses



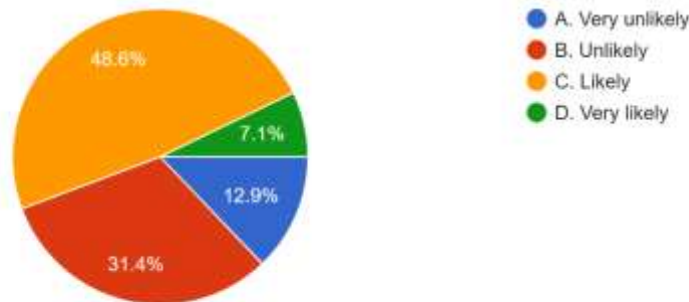
8. What type of influencer content do you find most convincing?

70 responses



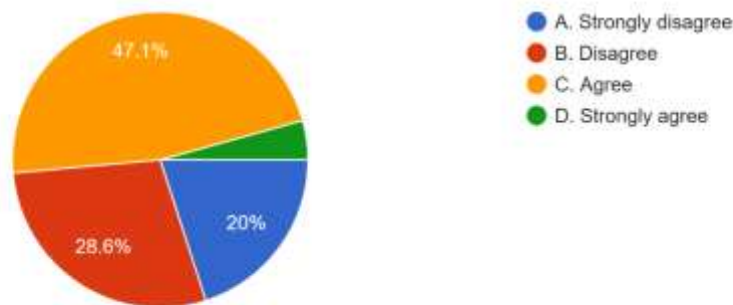
9. How likely are you to purchase fashion products recommended by influencers?

70 responses



10. Do you prefer influencer recommendations over traditional ads?

70 responses



CHAPTER 5

Research Gap

A comprehensive review of existing literature on social media influencer marketing and online purchase intention reveals that although significant progress has been made in understanding influencer-driven consumer behaviour, several **critical gaps** remain unaddressed. These gaps provide strong academic and practical justification for the present study.

1. Limited Industry-Specific Focus on Fashion Retail

Most prior studies on influencer marketing examine the concept in a general consumer goods or service context, without focusing specifically on the fashion retail industry. Fashion is a highly visual, trend-sensitive, and identity-driven sector where purchase decisions are influenced by aesthetics, peer validation, and social approval.

However, existing literature does not sufficiently capture how influencer marketing uniquely affects online fashion purchase intention, particularly considering styling content, trend endorsement, and visual storytelling.

Gap Identified:

There is a lack of focused empirical research examining influencer marketing exclusively within the online fashion retail industry.

2. Overemphasis on Awareness and Engagement Rather Than Purchase Intention

A large number of studies concentrate on outcomes such as:

Brand awareness

Social media engagement

Attitude toward influencer content

While these are important, fewer studies directly analyse online purchase intention, which is a stronger indicator of actual consumer behaviour and business performance.

Gap Identified:

Insufficient research directly links influencer marketing efforts to **online purchase intention**, especially in the fashion retail context.

3. Inadequate Analysis of Mediating Variables

While influencer marketing is known to influence consumer behavior, the mechanism through which this influence occurs is not fully explained in existing literature.

Many studies fail to incorporate key mediating variables such as:

Consumer trust

Consumer engagement

Brand attitude

Without mediators, the causal pathway between influencer marketing and purchase intention remains incomplete.

Gap Identified:

Limited studies examine consumer trust, engagement, and brand attitude together as mediators in the influencer marketing–purchase intention relationship.

5. Limited Empirical Evidence from Emerging Markets

A significant portion of influencer marketing research is conducted in developed economies such as the United States and European countries. Consumer behaviour in emerging markets differs due to:

Cultural values

Digital literacy

Trust dynamics

Price sensitivity

There is a noticeable lack of empirical studies conducted in emerging economies like India, where social media usage and influencer marketing are rapidly growing.

Gap Identified:

There is insufficient empirical research on influencer marketing and online purchase intention in emerging market contexts, particularly India.

5. Lack of Focus on Authenticity and Transparency in Influencer Content

Although authenticity and transparency are increasingly important in influencer marketing, many studies treat influencer endorsements as uniform promotional content. The distinction between authentic experience-based content and paid promotional content is often overlooked.

Gap Identified:

Existing literature does not adequately examine how content authenticity and disclosure influence consumer trust and purchase intention in fashion retail.

6. Inconsistent Findings on Influencer Effectiveness

Some studies suggest that macro-influencers are more effective due to reach, while others highlight the superior engagement of micro-influencers. However, limited research compares their effectiveness specifically in driving online fashion purchases rather than engagement alone.

Gap Identified:

There is a lack of clarity regarding which type of influencer is more effective in influencing online purchase intention in fashion retail.

7. Methodological Limitations in Existing Studies

Several studies rely on:

Small sample sizes, Qualitative approaches, Single-variable models

These limitations restrict the generalizability and robustness of findings.

Gap Identified:

There is a need for quantitative, large-sample studies using structured models and statistical testing to strengthen empirical evidence.

Objectives of the Study

The present study aims to examine the role of social media influencer marketing in shaping online purchase intention in the fashion retail industry. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

Primary Objective

To analyse the impact of social media influencer marketing on online purchase intention in the fashion retail industry.

Secondary Objectives

To examine the influence of influencer credibility on consumer trust in fashion brands. To study the effect of influencer attractiveness on consumers' perception of fashion products. To analyse the role of influencer expertise in shaping consumer purchase decisions. To assess the impact of consumer trust on online purchase intention. To examine the relationship between consumer engagement and online purchase intention. To analyse the mediating role of consumer trust in the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention. To examine the mediating effect of consumer engagement between influencer marketing and online purchase intention. To study the mediating role of brand attitude in influencing online purchase intention. To identify the effectiveness of influencer marketing compared to traditional online advertisements in fashion retail. To provide strategic recommendations for fashion retailers to improve influencer marketing effectiveness.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Introduction

This chapter presents the key findings derived from the data analysis, followed by the conclusion of the study and practical recommendations for fashion retailers and digital marketers. The chapter also outlines the limitations of the study and suggests directions for future research. The findings are discussed in relation to the research objectives and hypotheses formulated earlier.

2. Major Findings of the Study

Based on the analysis and interpretation of data, the following major findings have emerged:

Significant Impact of Influencer Marketing on Purchase Intention

The study finds that social media influencer marketing has a significant positive impact on online purchase intention in the fashion retail industry. Consumers are more inclined to purchase fashion products online when they are endorsed by influencers they follow.

Influencer Credibility Enhances Consumer Trust

Influencer credibility was found to be a strong determinant of consumer trust. Influencers perceived as honest, knowledgeable, and reliable significantly increase consumers' confidence in both the influencer and the endorsed fashion brand.

Positive Role of Influencer Attractiveness and Expertise

Influencer attractiveness and expertise positively influence consumers' perception of fashion products. Attractive presentation, styling skills, and fashion knowledge enhance the persuasive power of influencer content.

Consumer Trust Drives Online Purchase Intention

The findings indicate that consumer trust plays a crucial role in translating influencer endorsements into purchase intention. Higher levels of trust lead to a greater likelihood of online purchases.

Consumer Engagement Acts as a Key Mediator

Engagement with influencer content, such as likes, comments, shares, and interactions, significantly mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and online purchase intention.

Brand Attitude Strengthens Purchase Intention

Positive brand attitudes developed through influencer endorsements significantly enhance consumers' willingness to purchase fashion products online.

Broad Effectiveness Across Demographics

Influencer marketing was found to be effective across different demographic groups, indicating its wide applicability in fashion retail marketing strategies.

3. Conclusion

The present study concludes that social media influencer marketing is a powerful and effective marketing strategy in the fashion retail industry, significantly influencing online purchase intention. Influencer attributes such as credibility, attractiveness, and expertise play a vital role in shaping consumer perceptions and trust. The study further confirms that consumer trust, engagement, and brand attitude act as critical mediating variables that strengthen the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention.

The findings support established theories such as Source Credibility Theory, Parasocial Interaction Theory, and the Theory of Planned Behaviour, highlighting the importance of trust, emotional connection, and positive attitudes in consumer decision-making. Overall, the study provides empirical evidence that influencer marketing not only enhances brand visibility but also effectively drives online fashion purchases.

4. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed for fashion retailers and digital marketers:

Focus on Influencer Credibility

Brands should collaborate with influencers who have a strong reputation for honesty, transparency, and expertise in fashion. Credible influencers build higher consumer trust and improve conversion rates.

Encourage Authentic Content Creation

Influencers should be encouraged to create authentic, experience-based content rather than overly promotional posts. Transparency in brand collaborations enhances trust and long-term brand value.

Prioritise Consumer Engagement

Fashion brands should design influencer campaigns that promote interaction through polls, live sessions, and Q&A features to strengthen engagement and emotional connection with consumers.

Leverage Micro-Influencers

Brands should consider collaborating with micro-influencers who often have higher engagement rates and stronger relationships with niche audiences.

Strengthen Brand Attitude Through Storytelling

Influencer campaigns should focus on storytelling and lifestyle integration to build positive brand attitudes rather than focusing solely on product promotion.

Measure Campaign Effectiveness

Fashion retailers should use performance metrics such as engagement rate, conversion rate, and return on investment (ROI) to evaluate influencer marketing effectiveness.

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