

## The Impact of Social Media Influencers on Consumer Behavior: A Comparative Analysis Across Different Industries

Dr. Zaeem Yasin<sup>1</sup>, Shamail Zehra<sup>2</sup> & Rimsha Batool<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

*This study investigates the profound effects of online social marketing on consumer behaviour in purchasing Beauty & Fashion, Health & Fitness, Technology, and Travel industries, influenced by social media influencers. Rooted in Social Influence Theory, this research explores how online social marketing strategies affect consumers' purchase intentions through a quantitative approach employing a survey method. An online questionnaire was administered to 500 respondents of all age groups, selected via convenience sampling. The findings shed light on the significant effects of online social marketing on consumer's perceptions and behaviours regarding purchase decisions. This research critically reviews existing social marketing literature, specifically focusing on the trust of social media influencers and the reliability of the products they are marketing through their content. Additionally, it identifies key research gaps and proposes a forward-looking research agenda. These insights contribute to our understanding of the dynamic relationship between online social marketing by social media stars and consumer purchase intention, offering valuable implications for academia and industry stakeholders in Pakistan's social media industry and the purchase decisions of the public affected by the marketing tactics of influencers.*

**Keywords:** Social Media, Influencers, Consumer Behaviour, Purchase, Fashion

### Introduction

This study would encompass the increasing importance of social media influencers in contemporary marketing tactics. It would review how users are now more prospective to turn to social media influencers for advice and insight. The introduction should also stress the need to comprehend how influencer marketing affects consumer decision-making in various industries and the possible variations in efficacy depending on industry features. It would also highlight how crucial it is to

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<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Mass Communication, Lahore College for Women University. Email: zaeem.yasin@lcwu.edu.pk

<sup>2</sup> Lecturer, Department of Mass Communication, Forman Christian College University Lahore. Email: shamailzehra@fccollege.edu.pk

<sup>3</sup> Department of Mass Communication, Lahore College for Women University.

conduct a comparative analysis to spot trends and insights that can guide more focused and successful marketing strategies across various industries (Blanche et al., 2021).

Social media has significantly altered how professionals in communication management collaborate with content creators. Due to the conventional media's declining power, the industry was compelled to modify its communication tactics for the new digital landscape, which resulted in the industry losing many of its stakeholder relationships to "new agents" operating on the periphery of the industry (Gillin, 2008).

According to the 2019 Influencer Marketing Report (SocialPubli, 2019), the biggest challenge for PR practitioners is determining which SMI is suitable and consistent with their organization. This research aims to discover how public relations professionals view SMIs as necessary, what methods they employ to find them, and how having social media expertise and performing well in communication roles affects their interactions with these new players. The network gatekeeper identification theory is its foundation (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008).

### **Rationale of the Study**

Numerous persuasive elements in modern marketing and consumer research drive the decision to examine how social media influencers affect customer behaviour. First, people's habits for consuming information, making judgments about what to buy, and interacting with brands have changed significantly due to social media's explosive growth and widespread use. Because of their capacity to build sizable, active followings, social media influencers have become influential players in this market, able to sway the opinions and preferences of their followers. Knowing influencers' strategies to exert their influence whether it is via relatability, honesty, or knowledge provides essential insights into the dynamics of modern consumer behaviour. Furthermore, influencers offer a unique avenue through which brands may successfully engage with focused audiences as personalized and targeted methods become increasingly critical in digital marketing tactics. This study examines the effects of different influencer types (macro versus micro-influencers) on multiple product categories and demographics. The goal is to deliver sellers actionable insights that will assist them in optimizing their strategies and increasing consumer engagement and conversion rates. The report also discusses the ethical issues and legal difficulties that arise from influencer marketing strategies, adding to the conversation about openness, customer confidence, and industry norms. In conclusion, this work aims to contribute to the theoretical understanding of digital marketing while offering valuable suggestions that might guide strategic decision-making, when social media-driven customer behavior is paramount (Chan, 2022).

### **Literature Review**

Influencer advertising has developed in popularity over the last few years. An SMI is a known someone in a particular industry who has a substantial following and the ability to impact others via their reach and sincerity. Companies are working together and using SMIs to connect with their aim consumers, build brand awareness,

enhance brand perception, and boost sales. Trademarks work with SMIs on social media platforms to promote novel stuff or a business's appeal. Surveys show that Taobao and Tmall, two of the most well-known Chinese e-commerce sites, are among the most popular ones that use influencer marketing extensively. Concurrently, over 50% of US retailers collaborate with advocates to interact with virtual audiences. Even with this success, there are still a lot of obstacles to overcome in choosing the best SMI for a marketing promotion. Marketers, therefore, need to understand the influencer referral effect and consumer awareness. This study determines the effectiveness of SMIs on followers' selective imitation. Comparing to SMIs with traditional celebrity endorsers, purchase intent is increased, and followers' persuasion knowledge is decreased (Chan, 2022)

In the travel business, the emerging impact of SMIs is shifting customer behaviour. In influencer and tourism promotion, trust is a grave constituent that builds and sustains fertile, persistent associates between businesses and consumers. This research emphasizes evaluating the function of consumer journey constructs in facilitating the interrelationship between SMI trust and the magnitudes of consumer journeys. It uses consumer expedition theory to elucidate the influence of SMI confidence on consumer travel policymaking. With Smart PLS analysis, according to the research gathered, customer confidence in SMIs influences travel decisions favourably at every process stage. SMIs are an effective marketing tool, and their dependability also plays a critical role in shaping travelers' destination preferences (Pop, Săplăcan, Dabija, & Alt, 2022).

This research observes how SMIs distress the purchasing behaviour of Indonesian Generation Z through a quantitative technique. The varied group consisted of 450 individuals aged from 16 to 24 and included a variety of genders, socio-economic credentials, and geographic locations. The outcomes show that SMIs significantly affect people's purchasing decisions, as 85% of participants reported. People use SM for two hours daily, with Instagram accounting for 75% of the overall usage. Product and lifestyle reviews accounted for most content categories (65%), underscoring the importance of authenticity. While financial openness (22.5%) and inconsistent brand endorsements (30%) undermined confidence, transparency (72.5%) and authenticity (67.5%) were key factors in fostering trust. Eighty percent of users found sponsored material to be highly effective, and sixty percent of users favoured genuine relationships. The regression study revealed strong positive associations ( $R\text{-squared} = 0.754$ ) between sponsored content, customer behaviour, and influencer involvement. The results provide important insights for marketers navigating Indonesia's influential Gen Z landscape (Erwin, Saununu, & Rukmana, 2023).

Scientists and marketers have been very engrossed in the advent of SMIs in the last decade. Scholars endeavour to comprehend the impact of influencers on consumer behaviour, whereas marketers sway influencers as a factor in their approach

to accomplishing marketing goals. This study's writers tried to compile and comprehend how social media influencers impact customer engagement. This systematic review of the literature provides a complete overview of prior studies on social media influencers and customer engagement. Up until June 5, 2021, publications published in journals indexed by Scopus, Web of Science, and the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) were reviewed for this study. To comprehend such engagement, the authors determined and theorized the antecedents, choices, and results of consumers' involvement with SMIs. The study deals with a comprehensive conceptual outline that can be applied in the future to verify and test the influence of SMI marketing initiatives on consumer interaction. Additionally, marketers may use this framework as a starting point to create successful influencer marketing campaigns for brand promotions. The review brings the issue to a close by underlining previous investigations' ideas, research methods, and historical background (Pradhan, Kishore, & Gokhale, 2023).

This work aims to probe how the reliability elements of SMIs—their dependability, attraction, and information—affect customers' behaviour, including their purchasing intentions and attitudes toward businesses. The theoretical underpinnings of the prior research on social media influencer marketing and social learning theory serve as the foundation for this suggested theoretical framework. For this experimental work, information has been gathered from Pakistani customers who follow SMIs that publish and suggest fashion-linked goods. Of the 149 people whose data was obtained, 135 were legitimate respondents. The findings indicate that the reliability of SMIs positively influences consumers' attraction toward brands and their intent to buy. Furthermore, the study is significant for SMI in the fashion and style industry since it permits them to comprehend the factors that engender followers' commitment to them and how that loyalty shows up in their actions (Baig & Shahzad, 2022).

This investigation was conducted to explore practical conclusions about the influence of SMIs' characteristics on consumer involvement and buying intention. Eight exact characteristics homophily, knowledge, product analogy, reliability, trustworthiness, entertainment value, informative value, and attractiveness were identified by the researchers as traits of social media influencers. This analysis synthesizes 176 effect sizes from 62 separate trials using a cumulative sample of 22,554 individuals. The results exhibited a moderate to high association between the characters and consumer involvement and buying intention. Of all the factors, the study determined that the entertaining value of SMIs had a durable association with buyer involvement. It was also discovered that influencer credibility is the most important element influencing buy intention. Through the objective definition of interaction routes and effect sizes, this study presents a novel approach to reduce variation in influencer marketing research (Ao, Bansal, Pruthi, & Khaskheli, 2023).

Despite being popular and useful for vendors, little is known about the socio-psychological factors influencing consumer's decision to follow SMIs. This study identified unique customer incentives for subsequent SMIs on Instagram and scrutinized its relationship with materialism and significant customer behaviour conclusions. e.g., trust in SMIs' brand-linked content and regularity of buying SMI-endorsed items. Four reasons were found to follow influencers on Instagram based on survey data: genuineness, envy, materialism, and creative inspiration, all of which had different effects on reliance and manifestation of purchases. Additionally, a significant correlation was found between the four reasons and materialism, a significant individual difference variable, certain that functioned as a crucial intermediaries between materialism and purchase behaviour. Future study directions in this emerging field are suggested, along with managerial and theoretical implications for advertisers and marketers (Lee, Sudarshan, Sussman, Bright, & Eastin, 2022).

Influencer advertising on SM has received a lot of responsiveness recently. The expansion of parasocial relationships (PSRs) between influencers and admirers has been the subject of various studies. PSR has been studied extensively but hasn't often been compared to other widely used relationship marketing frameworks. This investigation aimed to establish a research model around the concept of persuasion. Examine the relative weight of the PSR. The study looked at three features trustworthiness, perceived expertise, and PSR as well as three attributes physical beauty, social attractiveness, and attitude homophily as the basis of buying intention. Information was provided by survey respondents who watched YouTube advertisements featuring influencers before purchasing goods or services. The research findings indicate that PSR had a considerably beneficial impression on buying intentions compared to alternative categorizations. There was a substantial correlation between the three personality traits. In addition, how consumers perceived the influencers they saw greatly impacted PSR's expansion. The poll indicates that personal traits and influencer kinds are critical to consider while improving social media influencer marketing initiatives (Masuda, Han, & Lee, 2022).

Social media technologies make Consumer-initiated social commerce possible, which motivates influencers who mould the buying habits of their followers. Few studies have looked at the active resource incorporation that SMIs and customers generally do to participate in the deal revolution in social trade. This qualitative research, which involves two organizations and the influencers, looks into how social media influencers are changing their roles and integrating resources into their service innovation. The paper presents a paradigm that distinguishes the resource integration behaviours supporting the communicator and innovator roles as the two main influencer roles. It also explains how the affordances of social media expertise support these behaviours and the innovation outcomes that follow. It accomplishes this by referencing technology affordance theory and service-dominant reasoning. We add to the body of knowledge and exercise in customer-led service origination in the growing

social world by concentrating on the technology-led procedures of SMIs' involvement in service novelty (Wu, Nambisan, Xiao, & Xie, 2022).

Businesses are exhausting social media influencers as a more successful modern marketing strategy to sway customers' intentions and attitudes. This work explores the impact of various influencer traits on the attitudes and intentions of consumers. This study also looks at vloggers' moderating role as a newly developed marketing tool. To accomplish this study's main goal, data from TikTok users is gathered using a quantitative research methodology. TikTok has grown in popularity as a global web platform for short films. Using the PLS-SEM approach throughout the analysis phase, the findings demonstrate a strong impact of the proposed research model, except for the moderating role and the effect of source relatability on customer sentiment. The study's conclusions had unexpected ramifications and were consistent with prior research. Still, they also filled a knowledge gap in the field by combining many variables never before studied in one cohesive framework in a novel way (Kurdi, Alshurideh, Akour, Tariq, AlHamad, & Alzoubi, 2022).

This study's goal is to provide a comprehensive framework based on previous research on digital influencers (DIs) and consumer purchase intentions, describing the relationship between choices and decision criteria. The main objective of this article is to evaluate how DIs affect consumers' intent to make purchases by developing an integrated knowledge-based system (KBS). The basis of the proposed KBS is the ambiguous analytic hierarchy process (AHP), which creates a connection between DI fundamentals and their whole influence on consumer purchase intents. It is possible to assess DI performance with the use of a KBS. It illustrates the relationship between decisions based on factors and criteria for evaluating different variables, highlighting DIs' useful role in shaping consumer intent to purchase organic skincare products. Marketing managers and other decision-makers would find the suggested KBS useful in evaluating how DIs affect consumers' purchase inclinations.

Additionally, decision-makers would receive a wealth of information from this research on influencer marketing and other important factors that significantly impact client buy intentions. Using KBS and the fuzzy AHP methodology concerning the influencer effect is novel. No previous study has examined how Internet influencers affect consumers' intentions to purchase organic skincare. Additionally, by connecting options and selection criteria, the KBS provides a comprehensive and all-encompassing approach to researching influencers' impact on cost per impression (CPI) (Khan, Rashid, Rasheed, & Amirah, 2023).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The present study drawn from Social Influence Theory, emphasizing social factors and sources to examine how influencers shape consumer behaviour across varied industries.

Social influence is the alteration of what an individual or group would have done differently if they had not been subjected to this influence. The notion of social

influence offers significant insights into how social media influencers affect retail consumer behaviour. This idea holds that people are influenced by the deeds, attitudes, and mannerisms of others, particularly by those whom they consider to be reliable and comparable to themselves. Influencers on social media are very powerful because of their perceived knowledge, sincerity, and relatability. Influencers who propose things or advocate brands are often regarded as important and trustworthy by their followers. This phenomenon stems from the idea of informational social influence, which holds that people follow the beliefs or behaviours of others because they consider other people to be more informed than they are. In addition, influencers frequently use normative social influence to model desirable lifestyles for their followers to aspire to (Pérez & Mugny, 2018).

### **Research Methodology**

There was a quantitative approach implemented in the research since this approach was enabled the researcher to gather some numerical data that were later analyzed through the use of mathematical and statistical methods in order to obtain accurate results. There were three mediating variables in the study: engagement, brand perception and purchase intention. The independent variables included Social media influencers, post frequency as well as influencer type adopted from Bergkvist and Zhou (2016). Surveys were used to provide the information in an orderly manner. The research examined the relationships between the variables using survey method. A self – administered questionnaire containing 28 questions composed by relevant previous research was used. The online one was identified as the best means of conducting the survey. Responses were obtained online by sending Google form link through various digital platforms.

### **Research Hypotheses**

- H<sub>1</sub>:** Social media influencers significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions.
- H<sub>2</sub>:** The perceived authenticity of social media influencers moderates the relationship between influencer presence and consumer purchasing behaviour.
- H<sub>3</sub>:** Social media influencers have a more substantial impact on the purchasing behaviour of younger consumers compared to older consumers.

### **Population of the Study**

People who have access to an internet connection, know about the SM applications, regularly use them, and are obligated to follow Pakistani SMIs in the fashion and beauty niche make up the study's demography. As the information was collected via an online survey, a filter question was incorporated into the questionnaire to ascertain whether the participants shared the previously mentioned demographic traits: "Do you follow any social media influencers?"

Sampling Technique

To test the hypothesis, Pearson correlation was conducted to explore the assumptions of multiple regression. The sample size was adequate. Likewise, the data was screened for outliers and identified outliers were removed. The multi-collinearity assumption is also met because all the variables are associated. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019) state that these methods are most frequently used when gathering information through online surveys. As a result, these methods were chosen to facilitate and improve the reliability of the segmented population data collection process (Pallant, 2020). Extensive literature suggested that the nonprobability convenience sampling approach is suitable for analyzing consumer behaviour affected by social media influencers. The current investigation employs a non-probability convenience sampling methodology to establish a meaningful nexus between the purchasing behaviour of consumers and the realm of social media influencers.

Sample Size

The sample scope for this research is 500 social media users whose opinions were taken from May 2024 to July 2024. This population was chosen based on the researcher’s assessment as a form of convenience sampling.

Statistical Analysis

Hypotheses Testing

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Social media influencers significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions.

Table 1: Influence - Purchasing \* Purchase Cross Tabulation

|                        |     | Purchase |     | Total |
|------------------------|-----|----------|-----|-------|
|                        |     | No       | Yes |       |
| Influence - Purchasing | No  | 101      | 77  | 178   |
|                        | Yes | 73       | 249 | 322   |
| Total                  |     | 174      | 326 | 500   |

Table 2: Chi-Square Tests

|                       | Value   | df | Asymptotic<br>Significance<br>(2-sided) | Exact Sig. (2-<br>sided) | Exact Sig. (1-<br>sided) |
|-----------------------|---------|----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square    | 58.647a | 1  | .000                                    | .000                     | .000                     |
| Continuity Correction | 57.155  | 1  | .000                                    |                          |                          |
| Likelihood Ratio      | 57.973  | 1  | .000                                    | .000                     | .000                     |
| Fisher's Exact Test   |         |    |   | .000                     | .000                     |
| N of Valid Cases      | 500     |    |   |                          |                          |

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 61.94.



*b. Computed only for a 2x2 table*

The cross-tabulation between "Influence - Purchasing" and "Purchase" reveals a significant relationship between social media influencers and purchasing behaviour. Specifically, 249 out of 322 people influenced by social media reported making a purchase, compared to 77 out of 178 people not influenced.

The Chi-Square Tests provide evidence of a strong association between these variables:

Pearson's Chi-Square value is 58.647 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a statistically significant relationship at the 0.05 level. The continuity Correction value is 57.155 with a p-value of 0.000, which further supports the significance of the relationship. Likelihood Ratio shows significance with a value of 57.973 and a p-value of 0.000. Fisher's Exact Test shows that a p-value of 0.000 confirms the significance of the association, even in smaller samples. The data strongly suggests that individuals influenced by social media are significantly more likely to make purchases than those not. The consistently low p-values across tests reinforce the robustness of this association.

## Hypothesis 2

**H<sub>2</sub>:** The perceived authenticity of social media influencers moderates the relationship between influencer presence and consumer purchasing behaviour.

**Table 3: Beauty\_TR \* Purchase Cross Tabulation**

|           |        | Purchase |     |       |
|-----------|--------|----------|-----|-------|
|           |        | No       | Yes | Total |
| Beauty_TR | Always | 15       | 66  | 81    |
|           | Mostly | 59       | 160 | 219   |
|           | Never  | 38       | 20  | 58    |
|           | Rarely | 62       | 80  | 142   |
| Total     |        | 174      | 326 | 500   |

**Table 4: Chi-Square Tests**

|                     | Value   | df | Asymptotic<br>Significance (2-<br>sided) | Exact Sig. (2-<br>sided) |
|---------------------|---------|----|--|--------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square  | 44.460a | 3  | .000                                     | .000                     |
| Likelihood Ratio    | 44.075  | 3  | .000                                     | .000                     |
| Fisher's Exact Test | 43.628  |    |  | .000                     |
| N of Valid Cases    | 500     |    |  |                          |

The cross-tabulation between "Beauty\_TR" (trust in beauty-related content) and "Purchase" investigates the relationship between trust in beauty-related content and the likelihood of making a purchase.

Always: Of the 81 respondents who always trust beauty-related content, 66 made a purchase. Mostly: Among the 219 respondents who mostly trust beauty-related content, 160 made a purchase. Never: Out of 58 respondents who never trust beauty-related content, only 20 made a purchase. Rarely: Among 142 respondents who seldom trust beauty-related content, 80 made a purchase.

The Chi-Square test results are as follows:

Pearson's Chi-Square value is 44.460 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a significant association between trust in beauty-related content and purchasing behaviour. Likelihood Ratio test also displays significant results with an assessment of 44.075 and a p-value of 0.000. Fisher's Exact Test shows a p-value of 0.000, further confirming this relationship's significance.

There is a statistically significant association between the level of trust in beauty-related content and the likelihood of purchasing. Respondents who always or mostly trust beauty-related content are significantly more likely to purchase than those who rarely or never trust such content. The consistently low p-values across all tests underscore the strength of this association.

**Hypothesis 3**

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Social media influencers have a stronger impact on younger consumers' purchasing behaviour than older consumers.

**Table 5: Age \* Purchase Cross Tabulation**

|       |    | Purchase |     |       |
|-------|----|----------|-----|-------|
| Age   |    | No       | Yes | Total |
|       |    |          |     |       |
|       | 18 | 8        | 12  | 20    |
|       | 19 | 2        | 3   | 5     |
|       | 20 | 18       | 37  | 55    |
|       | 21 | 4        | 11  | 15    |
|       | 22 | 23       | 32  | 55    |
|       | 23 | 11       | 24  | 35    |
|       | 24 | 14       | 31  | 45    |
|       | 25 | 5        | 20  | 25    |
|       | 26 | 12       | 18  | 30    |
|       | 27 | 8        | 27  | 35    |
|       | 28 | 13       | 22  | 35    |
|       | 29 | 3        | 2   | 5     |
|       | 30 | 21       | 24  | 45    |
|       | 31 | 29       | 46  | 75    |
|       | 32 | 3        | 17  | 20    |
| Total |    | 174      | 326 | 500   |

**Table 6: Chi-Square Tests**

|                     | <b>Value</b> | <b>df</b> | <b>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</b> | <b>Exact Sig. (2-sided)</b> |
|---------------------|--------------|-----------|--|-----------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square  | 15.676a      | 14        | .334                                     | .b                          |
| Likelihood Ratio    | 16.351       | 14        | .292                                     | .b                          |
| Fisher's Exact Test | .b           |           |  | .b                          |
| N of Valid Cases    | 500          |           |  |                             |

The cross-tabulation between "Age" and "Purchase" examines whether the respondents' age groups influence their purchasing behaviour.

Ages 18 to 32 are represented in this data, with varying numbers of purchases across the age groups. For example

Age 20: 18 did not purchase, while 37 did.

Age 31: 29 did not purchase, while 46 did.

Other age groups show similar distributions.

Pearson Chi-Square Value 15.676 with 14 degrees of freedom (df).

Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) is 0.334, above the common significance threshold of 0.05.

Likelihood Ratio 16.351 with 14 df and a significance value of 0.292, also above 0.05.

Fisher's Exact Test Results are not provided (b indicates a lack of applicability or calculation).

Association between Age and Purchase:

The Pearson Chi-Square test yields a p-value of 0.334, indicating no statistically significant relationship between age and purchasing behaviour in this sample. In other words, age does not significantly influence whether respondents purchase.

The Likelihood Ratio supports this finding with a similarly non-significant p-value (0.292).

Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is no relationship between age and purchasing behaviour.

Alternative Hypothesis (H): There is a relationship between age and purchasing behaviour.

Given that the p-values are larger than 0.05, we failed to reject the null hypothesis. It suggests that age does not have a statistically significant effect on whether respondents make a purchase.

The analysis shows no significant relationship between age and purchasing behaviour among the respondents. Therefore, according to the data presented, age does not appear to be a decisive factor in whether an individual decides to make a purchase.

## **Discussion and Analysis**

The outcomes of this study indicate that Social Media Influencers (SMIs) significantly enhance consumers' purchase behaviour, and this is due to the following of social media stars, the trustworthiness of the public, and loyalty towards the brand that SMIs are promoting. Thus, market trends shift towards the products marketed by SMIs compared to traditional purchase methods. This finding highlights the potential to increase purchases and facilitate complex concept buying, as suggested by the celebrity, more than any other product.

This fact is also evident from the literature that the market trend shifts towards the products promoted by celebrities. New methods of communicating advertisements are being studied due to the progress of SM applications. The marketing industry's rapidly developing marketing instrument is SMI advertising. Due to the increasing demand for SMI in the marketing sector, thorough research of the variables inducing the validation communications provided by the influencers is necessary. Further research is urged since, despite some studies looking into the grounds and consequences of SMI marketing (Aw & Chuah, 2021). It is essential to do in-depth research on how SMI, the centre of influencer marketing, impacts consumer behaviour (Vrontis, Makrides, Christofi, & Thrassou, 2021).

It is still unknown how the perceived validity of these SMIs impacts consumers' opinions of the firm and their willingness to buy (Bowden, 2022). Thus, this research aimed to investigate how followers' attractiveness towards the brand and their desire to buy is influenced by the three reliability levels of professed competence, professed trustworthiness, and professed attractiveness. This work looked at how these reliability characteristics influence followers' trustworthiness in the brand, which in turn influences their purchasing intention and attraction towards the brand, in addition to the followers' attitude towards the brand and their intention to purchase. The overall findings of this work demonstrated that the three reliability levels had a substantial and strongly favourable impact on followers' trustworthiness in the influencers, their assertiveness towards the business, and their aspiration to buy.

According to Lee, Shi, Cheung, Lim, and Sia (2011), the study leaned significantly on social influence theory. It advocated for an alternative theory focussing on the regulating impact of social influence. In contrast, considerable literature emphasises the direct outcome of social influence on online buying behaviour among customers. Specifically, we investigated the potential influence of positive remarks from SMIs in online conversation forums on customers' choices to buy online. A study was conducted wherein the treatment group was mandated to peruse affirmative statements on products promoted by celebrities. It has been discovered that favourable social influence strengthens the association between attitudes and beliefs toward shopping. Our alternative theory offers a fresh perspective on the intricate mechanisms by which social influence affects online shoppers' choices.

Social media assistance for electronic business is now widely used. The goal is to look at impulsive purchasing activity and significant consumer behaviour that can potentially be economically valuable. Pay particular attention to the effect of peers. According to social influence theory, there are two ways to understand how peers might alter a consumer's behaviour: normative and informative. Additionally, it is suggested that social support and source trustworthiness serve as the preconditions for the influencing processes in this situation. It is shown that peer knowledge and dependability are highly connected with both types of social influence that can affect a consumer. Additionally, sharing emotional and informational social support among consumers significantly promotes social influence (Hu, Chen, & Davison, 2019).

In light of the discussion around situational involvement purchase, the characteristics of respondents and the things they purchase lead to situational engagement, which may even surpass lasting involvement. Zhu, Mou, and Benyoucef (2019) have observed that long-term engagement is entangled with influencer's promotion and behavioural incentives, which may lead to different outcomes depending on influencers' profiles and product attributes. The association between advertising participation and acquisition purpose is mediated by situational involvement, as this study confirms. In particular, the results highlight consumers' purchase behaviour in the connection between buying intention and advertising engagement.

The findings of this study are evident from all the hypotheses as proved by the respondents. The Frequency distributions provide a comprehensive overview of various demographic and behavioural characteristics of 500 individuals. The age distribution shows a diverse range, with the most represented ages being 31 (15%) and 20 and 22 (11% each). Gender distribution is nearly the same, with a minor female majority (51.4%). Most individuals use social media daily (77.2%) and prefer platforms like YouTube (31.2%) and Instagram (25.4%). Regarding time spent on social media, 39.4% spend more than two hours daily. Influences of social media are significant, with 64.4% indicating it affects them and 44.4% considering influencers slightly trustworthy. Content preferences vary, with health and fitness (30.8%) and technology (26.8%) being the most popular. Purchasing behaviour influenced by social media is notable, with 30.8% rarely influenced. Trust in transactions and technology is moderate, with 40% seldom trusting transactions. Most respondents (67.6%) believe social media can mislead. Strict regulations are followed by 35.2%, and significant impacts are felt by 49.6%. Most unfollowed SM influencers due to misinformation (66.4%), and 84.8% see influencers as income sources. Most respondents (77.4%) recommend products due to social media, and 65.2% purchase based on these recommendations.

From the conclusion of **H<sub>1</sub>**, a strong and statistically significant correlation exists between respondents' likelihood of purchasing and how frequently social media influences their decisions. Compared to respondents who are rarely or never

influenced, individuals who allow social media to influence their choices constantly or mainly increase the likelihood that they would make purchases. The extremely low p-values further support the strength and importance of this link in every test.

From the findings of **H<sub>2</sub>**, the chance of making a purchase and the degree of trust in beauty-related content are statistically significantly correlated. Compared to respondents who seldom or never trust such content, those who permanently or primarily trust beauty-related content are substantially more likely to make purchases. The continuously low p-values demonstrate the robustness of this link in every test.

Similarly, the likelihood of making a purchase is statistically significantly correlated with consumers' trust in influencers' transparency. Compared to respondents who seldom or never trust influencer transparency, those who always or mostly trust it are substantially more likely to make purchases. The extremely low p-values further support the strength and importance of this link in every test.

The findings of **H<sub>3</sub>** show a statistically significant correlation between the likelihood of making a purchase and the impression of age impact. In particular, compared to those who do not, those who think their age influences their purchasing behavior are more likely to purchase. The significant p-values imply that perceptions of age substantially impact purchasing decisions.

## **Conclusion**

This study has delved into the intricate interplay among various social media consumer involvement, namely Social Media Influencer (SMI) presence, the authenticity of influencers, the trustworthiness of influencers, and engagement of influencers within the unique context of consumer purchase behaviour. The research has validated all hypotheses and unearthed significant theoretical and practical implications, thereby donating to the existing knowledge in consumer behaviour, particularly among Pakistani social media users. It was revealed that SMIs are trustworthy in the publicity of the product. Most social media users follow and buy the products SMIs endorse. Most of the time, such products are genuine and marketed by SMIs. The age and gender of the social media user do not affect the purchase intention. The findings of this study have advanced our theoretical understanding of the underlying mechanisms governing consumers' intentions to purchase Beauty & Fashion, Health & Fitness, Technology, and Travel industry as marketed by SMIs. Specifically, the research has revealed that advertising involvement exerts positive influences on situational involvement, which, in turn, correlates positively with purchase intention.

Further findings have more theoretical relevance. i.e., the perceived credibility component of social media influencers that is, their considered attractiveness and perceived expertise has a favourable impact on followers' devotion towards them. The most important aspect affecting the followers' loyalty was perceived skill. Second, attitudes towards the brand and purchase intentions positively correlated with all three credibility aspects. Another significant contribution is the

study's ability to convincingly confirm the mediating impact of followers' devotion to social media influencers between credibility characteristics and attitudes towards businesses and purchase intention. This suggests that SMIs viewed as reliable by their followers have more devoted fans and are more likely to favour followers' intentions to make purchases and attitudes towards the business.

These results have ramifications not only for marketers but also for SMIs, who should recognize the significance of the credibility dimensions and how these elements affect the loyalty of their followers. Because the results showed that followers' loyalty to businesses boosts their purchase intentions and favourable attitude towards them, perceived credibility is a key factor in fostering followers' loyalty. To increase the efficiency of the ads and generate better results, social media influencers who wish to pursue a career in social media influencer marketing must establish themselves as a reliable source in the eyes of their followers.

Outcome has more theoretical applicability. First, the apparent reliability component of SMIs their professed competence, beauty, and trustworthiness—has a favourable impact on followers' devotion towards them, which is consistent with the body of current research. The most important aspect affecting the followers' loyalty was perceived skill. Second, each of the three has a significant favourable impact. The buy intention and attitude towards the believability factors were shown to trademark. This work also has a noteworthy influence by successfully verifying the mediation role of the devotion of the SMIs' followers between the aspects of trustworthiness, the intention to buy, and the attitude towards the brands. Thus, it may be concluded that social media users who view influencers as credible have more devoted followers and are more likely to have a favourable impact on followers' attitudes about the company and their desire to purchase.

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