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IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISION IN FASHION AND BEAUTY INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how social media influencers shape consumer purchase decisions within the fashion and beauty industry, focusing on a digitally engaged demographic. Utilizing a structured quantitative survey with 300 Indian consumers aged 18–35, it investigates how influencer attributes impact consumer behavior. The research emphasizes two critical constructs – influencer credibility and parasocial relationships – as foundational to developing trust and persuasion. These psychological mechanisms influence how consumers evaluate endorsements and integrate influencer advice into their purchase journeys. This positions influencers not merely as content creators but as key actors in digital brand-consumer dynamics.

The findings reveal strong positive correlations between influencer credibility, emotional connection, and purchase intention. High-quality, engaging content and strong product-influencer alignment enhance consumer trust and responsiveness. Authenticity and expertise reinforce message effectiveness. Together, these factors amplify the impact of influencer marketing in the digital space.

By integrating Source Credibility and Parasocial Interaction theories, the study offers a robust framework for understanding influencer marketing outcomes. It provides actionable insights for brands to enhance engagement by aligning with authentic, relatable influencers. The findings highlight the need for data-driven, platform-specific strategies to foster loyalty and drive conversions.

KEYWORDS: Social media, Influencer marketing, Fashion industry, Beauty industry, Consumer purchasing decision.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the exponential growth of social media platforms has fundamentally transformed the way brands interact with consumers, particularly in the fashion and beauty industry. With platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok becoming central to daily life, social media influencers have emerged as powerful intermediaries who shape consumer perceptions, preferences, and purchase decisions. These influencers, who often possess a significant follower base and high engagement rates, have redefined traditional marketing by offering relatable, authentic content that resonates with audiences on a personal level.

As digital ecosystems continue to evolve, understanding consumer behavior within this landscape has become crucial for marketers. Unlike traditional advertising, influencer-driven content often blends personal endorsement with brand messaging, making it both persuasive and trustworthy in the eyes of consumers. This paradigm shift raises important questions about the extent to which influencers affect purchasing behavior—especially in industries where aesthetics, trends, and personal identity play a pivotal role.

In the digital age, marketing has undergone a fundamental transformation, with social media becoming a dominant platform for brand-consumer interaction. Central to this shift is the rise of social media influencers (SMIs)—individuals who build credibility and relatability through consistent online content. In industries like fashion and beauty, influencer marketing has become a powerful strategy to drive brand awareness, engagement, and consumer purchase behavior (Saha, 2024).

Unlike traditional advertising, which relies on one-way communication, influencer marketing emphasizes authenticity, personalization, and peer-like interaction—qualities that strongly resonate with Millennials and Gen Z consumers (Wang & Lee, 2021). Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube now enable influencers to set trends, review products, and shape how consumers evaluate and buy fashion and beauty items (Thu Vo, 2023).

The effectiveness of influencer marketing is supported by theories like the Source Credibility Model (Ohanian, 1990) and Parasocial Interaction Theory, which highlight how attributes such as attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness impact consumer attitudes and intentions (AlFarraj et al., 2020; Gomes et al., 2022). In the beauty sector, influencers often serve as relatable experts, influencing both purchasing decisions and identity formation (Abraham et al., 2022). Emotional connection and perceived similarity are also critical, especially among Gen Z audiences (Selimi, 2023).

Moreover, influencers are increasingly being recognized for their role in promoting sustainable consumption. Through value-based storytelling, they can inspire mindful fashion choices and bridge the gap between sustainability awareness and actual consumer behavior (Fariz & Winarsih, 2025; Stark & Nazari, 2025).

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However, not all outcomes are positive. Over-commercialization, lack of transparency, and perceived inauthenticity can diminish trust and engagement (Wang & Lee, 2021), while ethical concerns arise in areas like counterfeit promotion (Renganathan et al., 2025).

Despite extensive research on influencer credibility, parasocial relationships, and platform dynamics, there remains a lack of holistic understanding of how these factors collectively influence consumer purchase decisions—particularly in the fashion and beauty industry. Existing studies often isolate these elements, overlooking the complex interplay between demographic-specific preferences and platform-specific features. As a result, there is limited insight into how different consumer segments respond to influencers across various social media platforms, and how these responses translate into actual purchasing behavior.

This study seeks to bridge that gap by analyzing the combined effects of influencer characteristics, audience engagement patterns, platform-specific features, and demographic variables on purchase decisions. It aims to uncover not only the immediate effects of influencer marketing but also its long-term implications for brand loyalty and consumer retention. By doing so, the research offers a more integrated and comprehensive framework for understanding digital consumer behavior in the fashion and beauty landscape.

The paper will begin with a thorough review of the literature on influencer marketing, parasocial interaction theory, and platform affordances. It will then detail the research methodology, present and analyze the findings, and discuss the theoretical and managerial implications. The study aspires to offer valuable insights for marketers, brand managers, and businesses striving to craft more targeted and effective influencer strategies tailored to specific consumer segments and platforms.

OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze the combined impact of influencer credibility, parasocial relationships, and platform-specific features on consumer purchase decisions in the fashion and beauty industry.
2. To investigate the long-term effects of social media influencer engagement on sustained consumer purchasing behavior and brand loyalty in the fashion and beauty industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The proliferation of social media platforms—especially visually driven ones like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok—has fundamentally reshaped consumer behavior in the beauty and fashion industries. These platforms allow users to interact with rich, user-generated content that not only entertains but also informs and influences purchasing decisions (Chan, 2022). Social media influencers, particularly those with niche expertise and authenticity, have emerged as key opinion leaders. Their ability to develop parasocial relationships—one-sided emotional bonds formed by audiences—enhances the perception of credibility and relatability, especially in beauty and fashion domains where personal identity and aesthetics are central (Zhou et al., 2024). Influencer credibility, often defined by trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness, significantly correlates with consumer purchase intention and brand loyalty (Coutinho et al., 2023).

Micro-influencers, due to their perceived closeness and engagement with followers, often enjoy higher trust and can be more effective in converting interest into purchase than traditional celebrities (Hassan et al., 2021). The psychological mechanism underpinning such influence can be explained through theories such as social proof, where individuals adopt behaviors endorsed by others, especially when those others are perceived as relatable or knowledgeable. The theory of planned behavior further illuminates how influencers shape attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, thereby impacting consumer intentions (Hoang & Hua, 2024). Moreover, parasocial interactions enhance a follower's loyalty and willingness to imitate influencers' choices, particularly when content aligns with aspirational lifestyles (Zhou et al., 2024; Chan, 2022).

Brand perception is no longer shaped solely by corporate messaging; rather, it is co-constructed through dynamic consumer-influencer interactions on social media. Personalized and interactive content fosters stronger consumer engagement, which in turn enhances brand equity (Bakri, 2023). Consumers now seek out influencers for authentic product recommendations, often perceiving their content as more trustworthy than traditional advertisements (Mahlakaarto & Suanse, 2024). This authenticity, paired with strategic product placement and storytelling, plays a crucial role in shaping not just consumer preferences but also their identities and emotional connections to brands. Consequently, influencer marketing has evolved into a powerful digital persuasion strategy, driven by relational dynamics and cognitive-emotional mechanisms that redefine modern consumerism in beauty and fashion. The growing ubiquity of social media platforms—particularly Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok—has transformed the landscape of consumer behavior in the beauty and fashion industry. These platforms have become influential arenas where consumers encounter curated content that shapes their perceptions, preferences, and purchasing decisions (Liu, 2023). TikTok, for instance, has emerged as a powerful marketing tool, enabling beauty influencers to engage followers through authentic, short-form videos that blend entertainment with product endorsements. Research indicates that trust and engagement built through influencer content can significantly influence purchasing behavior, especially when influencers are perceived as credible and relatable (AlFarraj et al., 2020; Liu, 2023).

Influencers, especially micro-influencers, play a crucial role in this dynamic by bridging the gap between brands and consumers. Their relatability and perceived authenticity make them more trustworthy than traditional celebrities, often resulting in stronger consumer engagement and brand loyalty (Selimi, 2023). According to Paço and Oliveira (2017), blogs and social media posts crafted by influencers foster two-way communication, enhancing consumer-brand relationships. The

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effectiveness of influencer marketing is rooted in psychological constructs such as the theory of planned behavior, where influencers affect attitudes, perceived norms, and behavioral intentions (Huynh, 2020), as well as the social proof heuristic, where individuals adopt the opinions of those they admire or follow (Hoang & Hua, 2024).

Moreover, parasocial relationships—where followers develop one-sided emotional bonds with influencers—further amplify the persuasive power of influencer content. Consumers often perceive influencer recommendations as more authentic and personal, making them more receptive to promoted products (Stark & Nazari, 2025). This sense of connection enhances brand perception and leads to increased consumer loyalty and advocacy (Fariz & Winarsih, 2025).

Finally, engagement on social platforms goes beyond passive consumption. It includes likes, comments, shares, and direct interactions, all of which contribute to shaping brand equity and purchase intent (Alalwan et al., 2020). As demonstrated by multiple studies, including those by Liu (2023) and AlFarraj et al. (2020), credibility dimensions—trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness—are pivotal in influencing attitudes and intentions toward beauty and fashion products. Collectively, the literature highlights that social media influencers are not only key marketing agents but also pivotal cultural intermediaries shaping consumer identity and behavior in the digital age. The rise of social media platforms—particularly Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok—has significantly transformed consumer behavior in the beauty and fashion industries by reshaping how individuals discover, engage with, and ultimately purchase products. These platforms have become powerful tools for user-generated content and peer influence, particularly among Millennials and Generation Z consumers, who rely heavily on visual content and digital peer reviews to guide their purchasing decisions (Abraham et al., 2022; Likhareva & Kulpin, 2018). Influencers, especially micro-influencers, play a crucial role in this transformation due to their perceived authenticity and relatability. Unlike traditional celebrities, micro-influencers often engage in two-way communication with followers, fostering a sense of trust and intimacy that significantly impacts consumer decision-making (Wang & Lee, 2021; Gomes et al., 2022).

A number of studies highlight that the credibility of influencers—comprising trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness—is positively correlated with consumer purchase intention (Gomes et al., 2022; Fadiora, 2024). Moreover, parasocial relationships, where followers form emotionally invested, one-sided bonds with influencers, contribute to increased loyalty and consumer imitation of influencers' preferences (Stark & Nazari, 2025). This dynamic is further explained by the Theory of Planned Behavior, which posits that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control shape consumer intentions and behaviors (Handrimurtjahjo et al., 2022). Similarly, Self-Determination Theory has been used to reveal that relatedness and perceived similarity with influencers enhance intrinsic motivation to purchase (Renganathan et al., 2025).

Consumer engagement and brand perception are also deeply influenced by social media interactions. Interactive content—such as tutorials, reviews, and behind-the-scenes posts—enhances perceived product value and strengthens brand-consumer relationships (Vo, 2023). Research also shows that visual content by influencers, when organically integrated and free from overt sponsorship cues, yields higher acceptance and engagement rates (Wang & Lee, 2021). As such, influencer marketing has become one of the most effective strategies in driving brand awareness, shaping consumer identities, and fostering loyalty in the digital age (Kondort et al., 2023; Ben Cheikh et al., 2022). Collectively, this growing body of literature underscores the multidimensional influence of social media and digital opinion leaders on modern consumer behavior in fashion and beauty sectors.

Conceptual Framework

Influencer Credibility → Consumer Purchase Intention

The relationship between influencer credibility and consumer purchase intention is grounded in Source Credibility Theory (Hovland et al., 1953), which posits that message persuasiveness depends heavily on the source's perceived credibility. In the context of social media, influencers are considered credible when they demonstrate expertise in fashion and beauty, are seen as trustworthy, and maintain authenticity in brand partnerships. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) further explains that in low-involvement contexts like browsing social media, consumers rely on peripheral cues—such as source credibility—rather than deep evaluation. Thus, even without thorough product research, consumers are inclined to trust and act on recommendations from credible influencers.

Parasocial Relationship Strength → Consumer Purchase Intention

The strength of parasocial relationships also influences purchase intention, as explained by Parasocial Interaction Theory (Horton & Wohl, 1956). This theory describes how audiences form one-sided emotional bonds with media figures, which social media intensifies through frequent, personal content. Consumers who feel they “know” an influencer are more likely to trust their product endorsements. Social Influence Theory (Kelman, 1958) further supports this through the concept of identification—where individuals adopt the behaviors of those they admire. In fashion and beauty contexts, such parasocial connections make consumers more receptive to purchasing endorsed products.

Content Quality and Engagement as Mediator

Content quality and engagement mediate the relationship between influencer credibility and purchase intention, as supported by the Information Adoption Model (Sussman & Siegal, 2003). High-quality, engaging content—visually appealing, informative, and emotionally resonant—enhances message credibility and effectiveness. Media Richness Theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986) also suggests that richer, more interactive content improves communication, increasing the likelihood of message adoption. Consequently, even credible influencers may fail to drive purchases if their content lacks

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quality and engagement, while compelling content can significantly strengthen credibility's persuasive effect.

Product Fit and Relevance as Moderator

The alignment between the influencer and the promoted product moderates the impact of parasocial relationships on purchase intention. According to the Match-Up Hypothesis (Kamins, 1990), endorsement effectiveness increases when there's a strong congruence between the influencer's persona and the product. Product Placement Theory (Russell, 2002) supports this by noting that contextual congruence enhances persuasion. Therefore, even strong parasocial ties may not lead to purchase intent if the product appears misaligned with the influencer's image, while a strong fit reinforces trust and persuasiveness.

Consumer Purchase Intention as Outcome

Consumer purchase intention serves as the outcome variable, reflecting the combined influence of credibility, parasocial relationships, content quality, and product fit. Based on the Consumer Decision Journey model (Court et al., 2009), modern purchase behavior is nonlinear and influenced by multiple touchpoints. Influencers shape several stages of this journey: they introduce products during consideration, deepen emotional engagement through parasocial ties, provide evaluative content, and validate authenticity through product fit. These dynamics collectively shape the consumer's intent to purchase, offering a comprehensive theoretical basis for this research model.

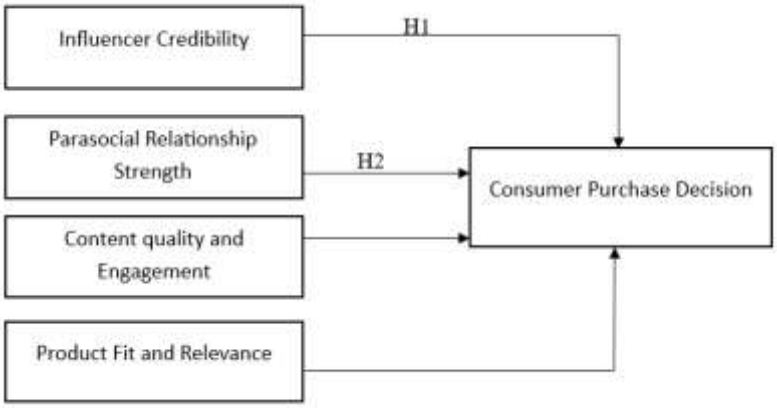


Fig 1 - Model of the study

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The following Research Hypotheses are formulated to test the objectives:

H1: There is a significant relationship between the level of influencer credibility and consumer purchase decisions in the fashion and beauty industry.

H2: There is a significant impact of parasocial relationships between consumers and influencers on their purchase behavior in the fashion and beauty sector.

Summary of the hypothesis

Hypothesis	Relationship	Results
H1	Influencer Credibility ⟶ Purchase Decision	Positive
H2	Parasocial Relationship ⟶ Purchase Decision	Positive

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design to systematically examine the influence of social media influencers on consumer behavior within the beauty and fashion industry. Quantitative research is suitable for testing hypotheses and identifying statistical relationships between variables, making it ideal for exploring how influencer-related factors affect consumer purchase decisions. The design focuses on analyzing how independent variables like influencer credibility and parasocial relationship strength impact consumer behavior. Influencer credibility refers to the perceived trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness of the influencer, while parasocial relationship strength captures the one-sided emotional connection consumers feel toward influencers.

To better understand how these influences translate into consumer actions, the study introduces a mediating variable that combines content quality and engagement. This variable reflects both the perceived value of the influencer's content such as creativity, authenticity, and relevance and the level of consumer interaction with it, including likes, comments, shares, and overall responsiveness. It is hypothesized that when influencers produce high-quality content that generates strong engagement, the effect of their credibility and the strength of parasocial relationships on consumer decisions is significantly enhanced.

Additionally, the research design incorporates a moderating variable, namely product fit and relevance, which examines the degree to which the promoted product aligns with the

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influencer's usual content or personal brand. A strong fit between the influencer and the product is expected to strengthen the impact of the independent variables on consumer decision-making. Finally, the dependent variable in this study is the consumer purchase decision, which refers to the consumer's intention to buy or actual purchase behavior as influenced by exposure to social media influencer content.

Overall, this research design allows for a comprehensive understanding of how influencer attributes, content dynamics, and contextual relevance interact to shape consumer behavior in the digital beauty and fashion marketplace. The structured, data-driven nature of the quantitative design ensures the findings will be empirically valid and applicable to real-world marketing strategies.

2. Sampling Method

The target population for this research includes individuals between the ages of 18 and 35 who are active users of social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok and follow content related to beauty and fashion. This demographic is considered highly responsive to influencer marketing and is therefore ideal for the study.

A non-probability purposive sampling technique has been adopted for participant selection. This method allows the researcher to intentionally select individuals who fit specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives. By targeting users who actively engage with social media influencers in the beauty and fashion sector, the study ensures data is collected from a population most likely to be influenced by such online content.

To ensure diversity, the sample includes participants from urban and semi-urban areas, across genders, and with varying income and educational levels. The intended sample size is 300 respondents, which is deemed sufficient for statistical analysis and hypothesis testing.

3. Data Collection Methods

The study utilizes primary data collection through a structured online questionnaire designed using Google Forms. This method is selected for its efficiency, scalability, and ability to reach a wide, digitally active audience within the defined demographic. The questionnaire is carefully constructed to measure the key variables outlined in the research framework and is segmented into six main sections to ensure clarity and logical flow.

The first section collects demographic information, including age, gender, income level, and educational background. This information aids in categorizing respondents and analyzing patterns across different consumer segments.

The second section focuses on Influencer Credibility, capturing consumer perceptions regarding the trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness of influencers. Respondents are asked to rate their agreement with statements such as "Fashion and beauty influencers I follow seem honest about the products they promote." and "I consider influencers reliable sources of product information."

The third section measures Parasocial Relationship Strength, assessing the extent of emotional and psychological connection consumers feel with influencers. Sample items include "I follow influencers because I feel emotionally attached to them" and "I miss seeing content from certain influencers if they don't post regularly."

The fourth section evaluates Content Quality and Engagement, combining user perceptions of content value (e.g., creativity, relevance, authenticity) with their level of interaction (e.g., liking, commenting, sharing). Statements may include "The content shared by influencers is informative and useful" and "I often engage with influencer posts by liking or commenting."

The fifth section addresses Product Fit and Relevance, which examines how well the promoted products align with the influencer's personal brand and the interests of the audience. Respondents will respond to items such as "The products promoted by influencers usually match their personality or content style" and "I find the promoted products relevant to my preferences."

The sixth and final section assesses Consumer Purchase Intention, capturing the likelihood of consumers making purchase decisions influenced by social media content. This includes statements like "I have bought a product after seeing an influencer's recommendation" and "I have developed brand loyalty toward products endorsed by my favorite influencers."

The questionnaire uses 5-point Likert scale responses (ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) to ensure quantifiability and enable detailed statistical analysis. The form is distributed digitally via social media platforms, academic networks, and online communities where the target demographic—social media users aged 18–35—are most active. This approach allows for efficient, real-time data collection while maintaining relevance to the study's focus on online consumer behavior.

4. Data Analysis Techniques

Following data collection, the dataset is thoroughly cleaned and coded to ensure consistency and accuracy. The analysis is conducted using quantitative techniques that align with the research objectives and the structure of the questionnaire. The first step involves performing descriptive statistics, including measures such as mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis. These statistics help summarize demographic characteristics and understand general trends in the responses. They also assist in assessing the distribution and normality of the data, which is critical for determining the suitability of further statistical tests.

To assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales, reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha is conducted for each construct—such as influencer credibility, parasocial relationship strength, content quality and engagement, product fit and relevance, and consumer purchase intention. A

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Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.7 is considered acceptable, indicating that the items within each scale reliably measure the intended concept.

Correlation analysis is then employed to examine the strength and direction of relationships between key variables. This includes identifying whether constructs like influencer credibility and parasocial relationship strength are positively associated with consumer purchase intention. Correlation coefficients help establish preliminary associations that inform deeper inferential analysis.

To test the formulated hypotheses and determine the significance of the relationships among variables, the study uses hypothesis testing techniques, which may involve t-tests or regression-based analysis depending on the nature of the hypothesis. These tests allow the researcher to evaluate whether observed relationships are statistically significant and support the theoretical framework of the study.

Together, these analytical techniques provide a robust empirical foundation for drawing meaningful conclusions about the influence of social media and influencers on consumer behavior in the beauty and fashion industry.

5. Tools and Instruments Used

The following digital tools are used throughout the research process:

Google Forms: For creating and distributing the survey questionnaire, as well as for initial data collection and basic response analysis.

Microsoft Excel: Used for organizing raw data, performing basic calculations, generating charts, and preliminary statistical functions.

Python (with libraries such as Pandas, NumPy, Matplotlib, Seaborn, and SciPy): Used for advanced data analysis, hypothesis testing, and data visualization. Python's automation and efficiency make it ideal for handling large datasets and producing graphical representations that support the findings.

These tools are chosen for their accessibility, analytical strength, and ability to produce accurate and visual outputs that enhance research presentation.

6. Limitations of the Methodology

Despite its strengths, the methodology is subject to the following limitations:

Sampling Bias: The use of purposive sampling means that the results may not be fully generalizable to the entire population of beauty and fashion consumers, particularly those outside the 18–35 age group or those who are less active on social media.

Self-Reported Data: Responses are based on participants' self-perception and may be affected by biases such as social desirability or recall error.

Digital-Only Approach: The online mode of data collection excludes individuals who may be influenced by offline or hybrid influencer strategies but do not actively engage online.

Limited Qualitative Insight: While quantitative data is effective for measuring and comparing variables, it may not capture deeper psychological motivations or emotional factors influencing consumer behavior, which qualitative methods like interviews or focus groups could explore.

DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics

Question	Mean	Median	Standard deviation	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis	Mode
Q1	3.686667	4.0	0.954739	1	5	-0.265314	-0.645883	4.0
Q2	3.686667	4.0	0.910064	1	5	-0.387075	-0.242993	4.0
Q3	3.633333	4.0	0.891556	1	5	-0.293508	-0.361031	4.0
Q4	3.653333	4.0	0.950175	1	5	-0.293410	-0.705456	4.0
Q5	3.626667	4.0	0.869757	1	5	-0.271527	-0.276807	4.0
Q6	3.603333	4.0	0.960415	1	5	-0.273943	-0.476239	4.0
Q7	3.670000	4.0	0.896537	1	5	-0.169567	-0.724867	4.0
Q8	3.650000	4.0	0.936531	1	5	-0.183528	-0.621527	4.0
Q9	3.636667	4.0	0.927825	1	5	-0.202542	-0.681748	4.0
Q10	3.633333	4.0	0.928311	1	5	-0.316415	-0.703580	4.0
Q11	3.680000	4.0	0.879495	1	5	-0.248156	-0.335197	4.0
Q12	3.666667	4.0	0.961929	1	5	-0.242935	-0.686033	4.0
Q13	3.690000	4.0	0.877382	1	5	-0.159544	-0.681972	4.0
Q14	3.636667	4.0	0.909623	1	5	-0.183184	-0.506791	4.0
Q15	3.666667	4.0	0.889678	1	5	-0.240121	-0.516506	4.0
Q16	3.686667	4.0	0.915395	1	5	-0.207433	-0.647676	4.0
Q17	3.590000	4.0	0.854987	1	5	-0.007987	-0.644393	4.0
Q18	3.586667	4.0	0.979295	1	5	-0.233921	-0.761850	4.0
Q19	3.660000	4.0	0.980274	1	5	-0.218542	-0.770443	4.0
Q20	3.623333	4.0	0.965001	1	5	-0.218562	-0.708563	4.0

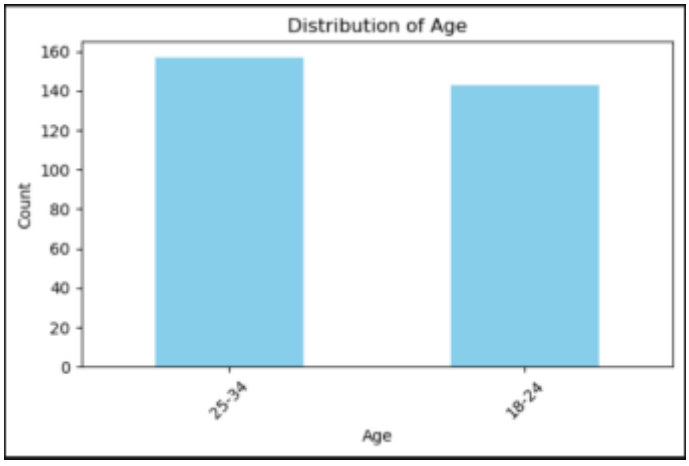
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Q21	3.646667	4.0	0.929895	1	5	-0.245858	-0.553745	4.0
Q22	3.690000	4.0	0.921991	1	5	-0.247807	-0.753582	4.0
Q23	3.656667	4.0	0.917384	1	5	-0.260229	-0.576243	4.0
Q24	3.676667	4.0	0.910064	1	5	-0.253064	-0.587234	4.0
Q25	3.676667	4.0	0.942559	1	5	-0.229954	-0.621733	4.0

Interpretation

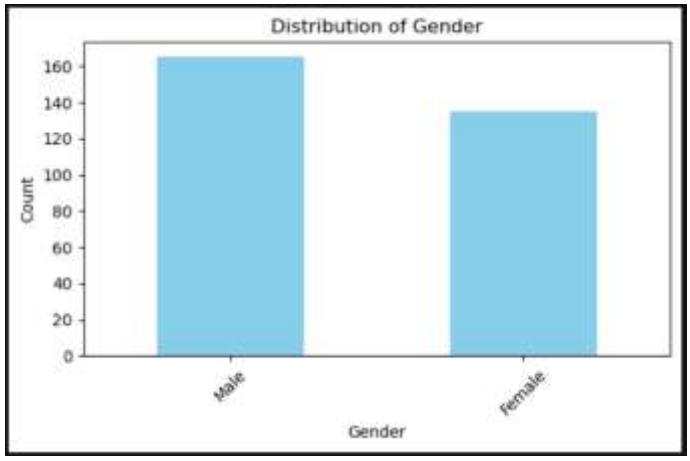
The descriptive statistics reveal a consistent pattern of moderate positive responses across all 25 Likert questions. The combination of means above the midpoint (3.59-3.69), consistent median and mode values of 4, negative skewness values (-0.008 to -0.39), and platykurtic distributions (kurtosis ranging from -0.24 to -0.77) indicates that respondents generally agree with the statements but do so with moderate, rather than extreme, conviction. The relatively similar standard deviations (0.85-0.98) suggest comparable levels of consensus across most questions, though specific items show slightly higher variation in responses. Questions Q13 and Q22 received the strongest agreement (means of 3.69), while Q17 and Q18 had the lowest agreement (means of 3.59). Overall, the data shows a predominantly positive response pattern with moderate consensus among participants.

Fig 2: Distribution of Age



The bar graph for age distribution shows that respondents are divided into two age groups: 25-34 years and 18-24 years. The 25-34 age group has a slightly higher count (approximately 155 respondents) compared to the 18-24 age group (approximately 143 respondents). This suggests that the sample primarily consists of young adults and early-career professionals, with a slightly higher representation of those in their late twenties to early thirties. The absence of other age groups indicates that the survey may have been specifically targeted at younger demographics, possibly due to their higher engagement with the subject matter being studied.

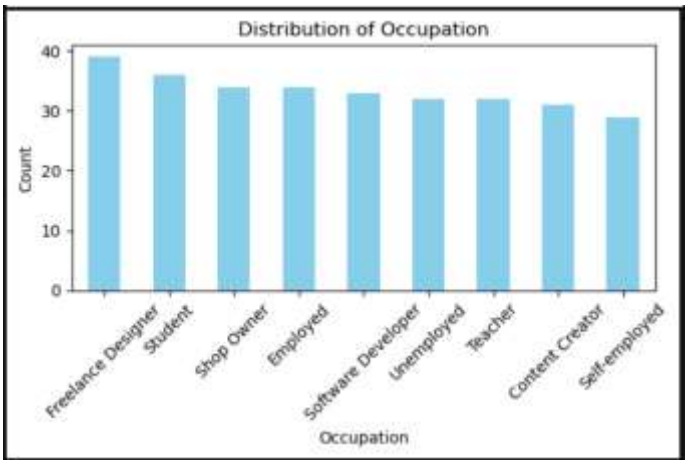
Fig 3: Distribution of Gender



The gender distribution shows that males represent a higher proportion of the sample (approximately 165 respondents) compared to females (approximately 135 respondents). This creates a male-to-female ratio of roughly 55% to 45%. This slight gender imbalance might influence the interpretation of results, especially if the topic being studied has gender-related variations in behavior or preferences. The data appears to be binary in its representation of gender, as no other gender categories are displayed in the graph.

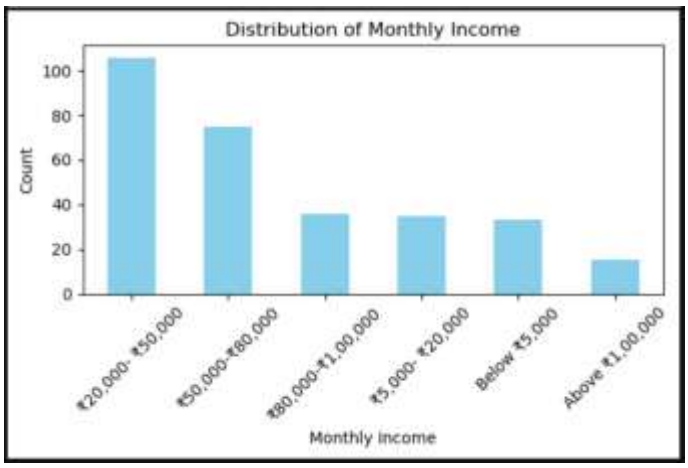
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Fig 4: Distribution of Occupation



The occupation distribution reveals a diverse professional background among respondents, with nine different occupation categories represented. Freelance Designers form the largest group (approximately 39 respondents), followed by Students (approximately 36 respondents). Other occupations include Shop Owners, employed individuals, Software Developers, Unemployed individuals, Teachers, Content Creators, and Self-employed individuals, each with counts ranging from approximately 29 to 35 respondents. The relatively even distribution across occupational categories suggests a sample that captures perspectives from various professional backgrounds, with a slight emphasis on creative and independent professions.

Fig 5: Distribution of Monthly Income



The monthly income distribution displays a right-skewed pattern, with the highest concentration of respondents in the lower income brackets. The largest group is those earning ₹20,000-₹50,000 monthly (approximately 105 respondents), followed by those earning ₹50,000-₹80,000 (approximately 75 respondents). The middle-income brackets (₹80,000-₹100,000 and ₹5,000-₹20,000) each have approximately 35 respondents, while the "Below ₹5,000" category has approximately 33 respondents. The smallest group is those earning "Above ₹100,000" (approximately 15 respondents). This distribution reflects a sample that primarily represents low to middle-income earners, which aligns with the younger age demographic and the mix of occupations including students and freelancers.

Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha)

Section	Cronbach's Alpha
Influencer Credibility	0.8858
Parasocial Relationship	0.8787
Content Quality	0.8807
Product Fit	0.9000
Purchase Intention	0.8940
Overall (all 25 questions)	0.9758

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Interpretation

The Cronbach's Alpha values indicate excellent internal consistency reliability across all measurement sections. Individual sections show strong reliability with values between 0.8787-0.9000, exceeding both the acceptable (0.7) and good (0.8) thresholds for social science research. Product fit demonstrates the highest consistency (α=0.9000), while the remaining sections maintain similarly strong reliability. The overall alpha of 0.9758 for all 25 questions reflects exceptionally high instrument reliability, though this value (>0.95) may suggest some item redundancy. These results confirm the survey instrument reliably measures consumer perceptions of social media influencers.

3. Correlation Analysis

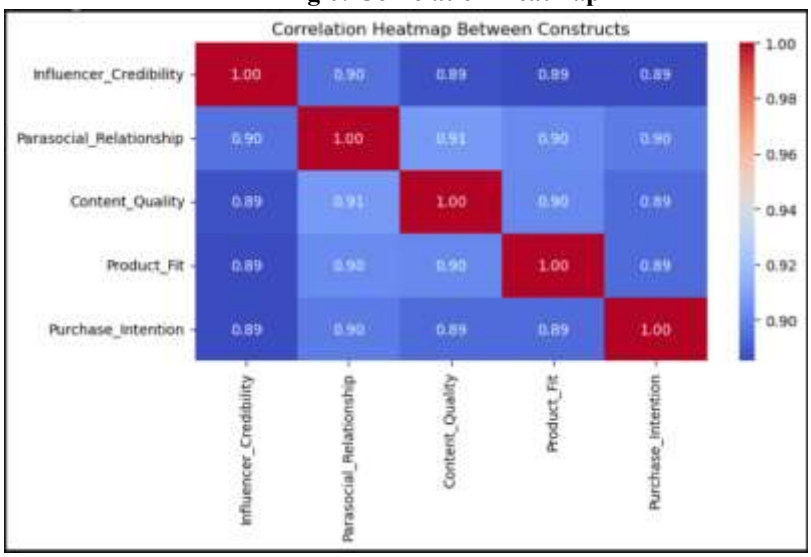
Variables	Influencer Credibility	Purchase Intention
Influencer Credibility	1.000000	0.885112
Purchase Intention	0.885112	1.000000

Variables	Parasocial Relationship	Purchase Intention
Parasocial Relationship	1.000000	0.897738
Purchase Intention	0.897738	1.000000

Variables	Content Quality	Purchase Intention
Content Quality	1.000000	0.89358
Purchase Intention	0.89358	1.000000

Variables	Product Fit	Purchase Intention
Product Fit	1.000000	0.893612
Purchase Intention	0.893612	1.000000

Fig 6: Correlation Heatmap



Interpretation

The correlation heatmap confirms and expands upon the correlation tables, showing exceptionally strong positive relationships among all five constructs in the study. While the previous tables showed only the relationships between each independent variable and Purchase Intention, the heatmap reveals all intercorrelations between variables.

Parasocial Relationship shows the strongest correlation with Purchase Intention (r=0.90), consistent with the earlier finding (r=0.897738), confirming that consumers' perceived personal connections with influencers have the greatest impact on buying decisions. Influencer Credibility, Content Quality, and Product-Fit all maintain very strong correlations with Purchase Intention (r=0.89), closely matching the values in the individual correlation tables.

The heatmap additionally reveals high intercorrelations among the independent variables themselves. The strongest relationship exists between Parasocial Relationship and Content Quality (r=0.91), followed by correlations between Parasocial Relationship and both Influencer Credibility and Product-Fit (r=0.90).

These consistently high correlation values (all ≥0.89) suggest that while each construct contributes significantly to Purchase Intention, they may not be entirely distinct from one another, potentially indicating some conceptual overlap in how consumers perceive these different aspects of influencer marketing.

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Anova

ANOVA Table for H1 (Influencer Credibility)				
	Sum of squares	**df**	**F**	**PR(>F)**
C (Purchase Frequency Score)	0.631317	3.0	4.939469	0.002315
Residual	12.610650	296	_	_

Interpretation: Influence of Purchase Frequency on Influencer Credibility
The results revealed a statistically significant effect of purchase frequency on influencer credibility, F= 4.939, p = 0.0023. This indicates that consumers who purchase at different frequencies perceive influencer credibility differently. In other words, how often a consumer makes purchases significantly influences their evaluation of an influencer's trustworthiness, expertise, and overall credibility. Therefore, the hypothesis (H1) is supported.

ANOVA Table for H2 (Parasocial Relationship)				
	Sum of squares	**df**	**F**	**PR(>F)**
C (Purchase Frequency Score)	0.745108	3.0	5.160102	0.001721
Residual	14.247259	296	_	_

Interpretation: Influence of Purchase Frequency on Parasocial Relationship
A separate ANOVA test was run to assess whether purchase frequency influences the strength of parasocial relationships that consumers form with influencers. The findings indicated a statistically significant difference, **F= 5.160, p = 0.0017**, suggesting that levels of purchase frequency significantly impact the extent to which consumers feel emotionally connected or personally engaged with influencers. This means that consumers who purchase more or less frequently tend to form parasocial relationships with varying intensity. As a result, the hypothesis (H2) is also supported.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	**Variables**	**Correlation (r)**	**p-value**
H1	Influencer Credibility ⟶ Purchase Decision	0.8654	0.0023
H2	Parasocial Relationship ⟶ Purchase Decision	0.8636	0.0017

Interpretation
H1: Influence of Credibility on Purchase Decision
Correlation (r): 0.8654, p-value: 0.0023
There is a statistically significant relationship between the level of influencer credibility and consumer purchase decisions in the fashion and beauty industry.
Conclusion:
Reject Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no relationship between credibility and purchase decision.
Accept Alternate Hypothesis (H_1): Credibility significantly influences purchase decision.
H2: Influence of Parasocial Relationship on Purchase Decision
Correlation (r): 0.8636, p-value: 0.0017
There is a statistically significant impact of parasocial relationships between consumers and influencers on their purchase behavior in the fashion and beauty sector.
Conclusion:
Reject Null Hypothesis (H_0): Parasocial relationships do not affect purchase decisions.
Accept Alternate Hypothesis (H_2): Parasocial relationships significantly influence purchase decisions.

FINDINGS

The study uncovered several significant insights into how social media influencers shape consumer purchase behavior in the fashion and beauty industry. First, influencer credibility emerged as a crucial factor driving trust and purchase intent. Attributes such as trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness enhanced the influencer's perceived reliability, making consumers more inclined to act on their recommendations. Closely linked to this was the power of parasocial relationships—emotional, one-sided bonds between followers and influencers—which showed the strongest correlation with purchase intention. Consumers who felt a personal connection with influencers were more likely to trust their suggestions and emulate their consumption patterns.

Another important finding was the role of content quality and engagement. Visually appealing, informative, and authentic content not only attracted more interaction but also strengthened the persuasive impact of the influencer. This supports the idea that compelling content acts as a bridge between credibility and consumer action. Furthermore, product fit and relevance significantly reinforced the influencer's effectiveness. When the endorsed product aligned well with the influencer's personal brand and content style, it amplified trust and message acceptance. Conversely, a poor fit reduced the impact, even in cases where parasocial bonds were strong.

Lastly, the study revealed some demographic variation in responsiveness. Consumers aged 25–34 and those within the mid-income bracket were particularly receptive to influencer

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marketing efforts, suggesting that this group may be more engaged with digital content and more willing to explore influencer-endorsed fashion and beauty products.

SUGGESTIONS

To maximize the impact of influencer marketing, brands should prioritize partnerships with credible and relatable influencers who demonstrate authenticity, expertise, and alignment with brand values. Emotional engagement through storytelling and personal narratives should be leveraged to strengthen parasocial relationships and enhance consumer loyalty. It is essential to ensure that promoted products align naturally with the influencer's persona to maintain authenticity and trust. High-quality, platform-specific content—such as short-form videos for Instagram and in-depth reviews on YouTube—should be used to boost engagement. Lastly, a balanced mix of micro and macro influencers can help brands reach diverse audience segments while maintaining cost-effectiveness and relatability.

CONCLUSION

This research confirms that social media influencers play a pivotal role in shaping consumer purchase decisions in the fashion and beauty industry, primarily through the mechanisms of credibility and emotional connection. The integration of parasocial interaction theory and source credibility theory provides a holistic framework for understanding digital consumer behavior. Content quality and product relevance act as key enablers in this process, bridging the gap between endorsement and action.

The findings underscore the necessity for brands to adopt a strategic, consumer-centric approach when engaging with influencers. Rather than merely relying on follower counts, marketers should assess emotional resonance, credibility, and contextual fit. As social media continues to evolve, brands that adapt their influencer strategies to align with consumer expectations and platform dynamics will be better positioned to foster loyalty and drive sustained growth in the fashion and beauty sectors.

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