

Impact of Consumer's Attitude towards Social Media Influencers on Purchase Intention

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ABSTRACT

Understanding influencer marketing is the necessity of the hour. The dimensions of influencer are nearby grown thrice since 2019. The dimension of influencer marketing in India stood at 55 billion Indian rupees with yearly growth rate of 20%. The prediction as per statista states that by the year 2027, influencer marketing size to be near to approximately 107 billion Indian rupees. There is rise in number of studies on this topic as the dimension is continuously expanding. Present study examines the role of attitude of consumer toward social media influencer's on consumer purchase intention and brand attitude. It also intends to determine the impact of attitudes of consumer toward SMI on purchase intentions. Collection of data is done from 600 respondents from North India. Subsequent to the data collection, it is examined using the technique of factor analysis by applying CFA, EFA and SEM. This study illustrates positive impact of consumer's attitude towards Social media influencer's on consumer purchase intention. It has been found that attitude of consumer towards social media influencers significantly affect the purchase intentions of consumers. The findings of study help advertisers and marketers in the industry to know how influencer marketing helps consumer purchase intention. They also allow marketers to know the attitude of consumers toward SMI and therefore better choose influencers capable of making purchase intentions among existing and potential customers.

Keywords Social media influencers, Attitudes toward the influencer, Brand attitude, Influencer marketing, Purchase intention, Social media

Introduction

Over the previous several decades, the boom of World Wide Web (WWW) and social media blogs, social networks and platforms of media sharing have led to the expansion of user generated content, a global community and publishing of consumer viewpoint. This resulted into the increasing demands for the companies to generate affirmative user-driven content which would spread easily within the existing and potential buyers. In today's world the most effective manner of sharing experiences, advices and ideas to the customers over the internet at a low cost is via blogging which the marketers are using the most with the help of the influencers. Influencers are the peoples who have credibility and power to affect the buying decision of intended audience through their expertise, experience and knowledge on a particular area. Influencers serve as an effective tool to consistently encourage and persuade others through frequent posts and articles about different topics on various social media channels. Influencer marketing is the manner in which, an individual who have the power and credibility to impact over a specific intended audience, is identified and are chosen to be a part of a brand's campaign to boost the sales and ultimately produce revenue of the brand. While purchasing a product, the millennials are more sensitive to peer's advice, so social media works as an ideal tool to connect them with the influencers. Consumers trust the influencers over any brand in terms of

promotion of a product. For the companies, it really becomes even more difficult as the millennials don't get convinced by the conventional celebrity advertisement; instead they prefer non celebrity influencers for product endorsement through reviews and feedbacks given by the users based on their individual knowledge and experience with the product.

Influencer marketing offers several methods of collaboration between bloggers and brands. Amongst all social media platforms, Instagram is the most effective platform for fashion brands to link directly with their existing and potential customers. Marketers can effectively target existing and potential customers by partnering with influencers to promote the brand with special discount codes.

Review of literature

Spears, N., & Singh, S. N. (2004) conducted a study to rectify shortcomings observed in the measurement of advertisement, purchase Intention and brand attitude by developing valid measures. To achieve this, two complete sets of items that tap above domains were generated from the literature. First of all, the exploratory phase was used by reducing the number of items to identify a meaningful set of factors. Then, the confirmatory phase provided a more impressive test of the factors identified in the first phase. The third phase examined the relationship among attitude of consumers towards advertisement, purchase Intention and brand attitude.

Smith, D., Menon, S., & Siva kumar, K. (2005) examines the effect of recommendations on consumer decision making during online shopping. Proof from two empirical studies indicates that many online consumers look for and welcome suggestions. These findings recommend that irrespective of personal characteristics of peer recommender's, consumers accept the peer recommendations as a heuristic for decision-making. Findings also recommend that consumer preference for editorial versus peer suggestions depends on the specific nature of the consumer's shopping objective: utilitarian or hedonic. Further, recommender's perceived expertise raises the level of trust among consumers and consequently affects their attitudes towards their purchase intention.

Amos, C., Holmes, G., & Strutton, D. (2008) provides a summary of the relationship between effectiveness in advertising and celebrity endorser source effects. The nonparametric test (Kruskal-Wallis) is used to identify the most influential celebrity endorser source effects on effectiveness. The role of celebrity/product fit, interaction effects, study setting, sample type, and country of study are also included as moderators. Results found that negative celebrity information can be incredibly harmful to an advertising campaign. The source credibility model appears to capture the three most influential source influences on brand attitudes, attitudes towards the advertisement and purchase intentions.

Gillin (2008) states that the "new influencers" are beginning to tear at the marketing fabric as it has lasted for a century, eventually giving rise to a new marketing style that is characterized by community and conversation. Social media is quickly becoming a core channel for sharing information. This study says that social media are changing the manner, the consumers think about social media and influencers, but even more companies adopt social media influencers, they are still in trouble of finding effective metrics for deciding who the most impactful players are.

Schiffman & Kanuk. (2010) mentioned that the consumer made the purchase decision is affected by several measurements, namely (1) the measurement of culture and sub culture, has the most affect and is the most extensive in the behavior of audience so that marketers can know the effect of culture, sub-culture, and social class of consumers; (2) social measurement is required to be considered while

making a marketing strategy because these factors can influence consumer responses; (3) personal measurements, which consist of the economic situation, age and stage of life cycle, self-concept, occupation, lifestyle and personality influence the consumer on what is purchased; and (4) psychological measurement, include, perception, motivation, learning and beliefs and attitudes also affect the choice of consumer purchases.

Booth. & Matic. (2011) says that in the world of social media, professionals are finding new ways to converse with their existing and potential customers. This new channel of marketing helps to engage with influencers one on one. With the rapid expansion of bloggers and their rising power as influencers for media and consumers alike, examining and assessing the most influential one, will be a vital part of any social media campaign. This paper identifies the “new somebodies” who are the influencers creating a higher level of brand awareness for companies.

Glucksman (2017) says that influencers who promote a lifestyle brand are interactive, confident, and authentic in their content on social media, are most successful in interacting with target audience. The use of influencers for promoting the lifestyle brands has broken the wall between the brand, the consumer, and followers via social media content. Through this research, it is clear that SMI marketing has, in fact, transform the methods of brands interact with customers in a positive way.

Gadalla, E., Liu, R., Martin, F., & Supatchaya, N. T. (2019, September) conducted a study on credibility of social media influencers, social media usage and purchase intention. The results showed that credibility has much more positive relationship with cognitive and affective responses including normative and informative social influences. Among all, credibility has the maximum influence on affective response. Thereby, social media followers increase their willingness to buy with cognitive response.

Khwaja, M. G., Zaman, U., & Butt, A. H. (2022) carried out a study to find factors influencing the buying behavior of the consumers towards online shopping during pandemic with regards to apparel industry. The data was collected from 287 online apparel shoppers. Structural equation modelling (SEM) technique was applied for finding cause and effect relationships among the constructs. The study provided fresh proofs about role of digital influencers and their impact on customers' buying behaviors towards online shopping during pandemic.

Coutinho, F., Dias, A., & Pereira, L. F. (2023) carried out a study to study the role of influencer credibility towards consumers' attitude, brand equity and purchase intentions. The results recommend that credibility of social media influencers and brand equity both have a positive influence on consumers' buying behavior and they are positively interrelated.

Garg, M., & Bakshi, A. (2024) conducted a study on beauty vloggers' attributes (expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness) that build trust towards consumers and consequently, leads to increased buying intention. Moreover, beauty vloggers engage in encounters that are parasocial to increase closeness with their intended audiences, influencing consumer behavior. The findings show that beauty vloggers' credibility qualities help in influencing consumer buying behavior. The findings also show that trust partially effect the credible attributes of beauty vloggers and consumers' buying intention. The results also reveal that customers' buying decisions might be effected by repeated parasocial interactions of beauty vloggers.

Khan, A., Khan, Z., & Nabi, M. K. (2024) finds the relationship between online purchase behavior and trust on social media influencers, along with the mediating role of influencers' post credibility. Data collected from 417 respondents of Jaipur, India. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was applied to investigate the hypotheses. The data reveals that trust in SMIs put a positive and significant effect on post credibility and online purchase behavior. Moreover, a strong and positive correlation was found between the purchase intention and post's credibility. Additionally, positive and significant relation was mediated by the credibility of the post between online purchase intention and trust in SMIs.

Need and significance of the study

Influencer marketing is on the continuous and rapid rise. Its worldwide market size has increased more than thrice between 2017 and 2020, from 3 billion to 9.7 billion U.S. dollars alone in the past three years. Moreover, as per the report of Statista 2021, it is more than twice between 2019 and 2021, from 6.5 billion to 13.8 billion U.S. dollars alone in the next three years. Again, in 2023, Influencer marketing dimensions has grown to 21.2 billion US dollars (Statista 2024). There is an imperative need of research to find the effect of influencer marketing on buying behavior of consumers in India. In a latest report, TapInfluence (2019) stresses that as compared to other traditional advertising channels; influencer marketing can create 11 times more return on investment. This study is related to buying behavior of apparels by getting effected from Social media influencers. It is important to understand that how society effect consumers in their choice of products. So, the current study will give a extensive view as to what are the most important factors which influence the customers towards social media influencers. The aim of the study is also to investigate the role of influencers in shaping the consumers purchase intentions and their attitude towards the brands. With the increase in urbanization, per capita income and change in lifestyle of the Indian consumers, the mindset of spending money on fashion related articles such as apparel is growing significantly.

Therefore, if designers, manufacturers and retailers of fashion apparel can identify buying behavior patterns of intended consumers, they may be more capable to attract and maintain their intended consumer group. Thus, the purpose of the research is to study the factors influencing attitude towards social media influencers and their effect on buying behavior and brand attitude. Moreover, marketers need to know the demographic, psychographic, behavioural, interest and attitudinal intent characteristics of consumers towards influencer marketing so that they can apply these information and data to make personalised experiences.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the present study are as follows;

- To understand the concept of influencer by review of past studies
- To study the attitude of consumers towards social media influencers
- To find the impact of attitude towards social media influencers on purchase intention of consumers.

Research methodology

This research aims to study the consumer's intentional behavioral in context to influencer marketing. Keeping this in mind the have adopted Descriptive Research Design. Cross sectional study related to a particular point of time is conducted and which is adopted in descriptive research designs. This study is quantitative in nature. Disproportionate sampling technique is used to gather data as 200 from Haryana (100 from each district), 200 from Punjab (100 from each district) and 200 from Chandigarh (U.T.), respectively. Moreover, Snowball sampling technique (nonprobability method) is used for the

study as there is no specified statistics about the people/consumers following influencers. Data is gathered from the structured questionnaire taking the pre-defined scale after checking the reliability and validity of the scale for the present study and taking the statements which will cover all the objectives of the study. The respondents who are of 18 years and above (who follows social media influencer's atleast from past six months) are taken for this study. Secondary data is also used from sources such as books, reports, newspapers, journals, magazines etc.

Measurement and analysis

The study examines the relationship between attitude of consumers towards social media influencers and their buying behavior with regards to apparels. A measurement scale was adapted in order to identify the impact of the consumer's attitude towards social media influencers in forming attitude towards brand. The adapted scale was taken from the standardized scale **Chetioui, Y., Benlafqih, H., & Lebdaoui, H. (2020)** and **Hsu, C. L., & Lin, J. C. C. (2013)** for attitude towards SMI and buying behavior respectively. All the above-mentioned constructs were measured with 5-point likert scale as 1 - Strongly Disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly Agree. In our research we have applied Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

Ha: There is significant impact of Consumers' attitude toward the influencer on buying behavior

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Firstly, to check reliability we have used cronbach alpha. The value of scale after applying cronbach's alpha is 0.879 which is above the standard limit of 0.6 (**Cronbach, 1990**) and this is a very good indicator. We have computed correlation matrix as shown in **Table 1.1**. The values of correlation vary from 0.273 to 0.775 with a range 0.502 and the mean correlation is 0.474. this indicates that in order to proceed with factor analysis, there is a sufficient correlation. Factor analysis is performed with varimax rotated, Principal Component Analysis.

Table 1.1: Correlation Matrix

	ASMI1	ASMI2	ASMI3	ASMI4	PI1	PI2	PI3	PI4
ASMI1	1.000							
ASMI2	.709	1.000						
ASMI3	.659	.701	1.000					
ASMI4	.502	.518	.429	1.000				
PI1	.311	.395	.339	.375	1.000			
PI2	.341	.456	.309	.440	.600	1.000		
PI3	.303	.325	.273	.366	.624	.754	1.000	
PI4	.382	.414	.277	.418	.589	.775	.686	1.000

Inter item correlation: Mean= .474, Minimum= .273, Maximum= .775, Range= .502, Max/Min= 2.837, Variance= .025, N= 8.

Total Variance Explained and Naming of Factors

To find out the measurement of the attitude of consumers towards influencer marketing and to reach to the specified objective, nine statements were merged into two factors. The rotated sums of squared loadings results show that the total variance explained by two factors was 73% which is considered good for the applying factor analysis and its results. At least 50% of the total variation should be

explained by the components that were retrieved (Malhotra and Dash 2013). The table 1.2 shows the Eigen values which ranges from 1.507 to 4.333 and the individual % of variance and cumulative variance explained by each factor is given.

Factor Loadings and Cronbach’s Alpha Results

As per the study of Hair et al. (2006), the average factor loadings of all the items should be above 0.5. The table 1.3 shows factor loadings of our study is within the range of 0.675 to 0.884 which is above the upper limit of 0.5

Total Variance Explained

Table 1.2
Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.333	54.159	54.159	4.333	54.159	54.159	3.074	38.428	38.428
2	1.507	18.841	73.000	1.507	18.841	73.000	2.766	34.572	73.000
3	.589	7.361	80.361						
4	.474	5.930	86.291						
5	.340	4.248	90.539						
6	.320	3.998	94.537						
7	.259	3.234	97.771						
8	.178	2.229	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Factor Analysis Results for Social Media Influencer Marketing (Varimax Rotated Results and Scale Reliability)

Table 1.3 Rotated Component Matrix
Rotated Component Matrix

		Factors	
		Purchase Intention	Attitude towards Social Media Influencers
PI3	I generally recommend products/services advertised by social media influencers I follow	.877	
PI2	I will frequently buy product advertised by the fashion influencer in future	.876	
PI4	I intend to keep on purchasing the products advertised by social media influencers I follow	.850	
PI1	I find purchasing product advertised by the fashion influencer to be worthwhile	.755	
ASMI1	I believe that influencers serve as fashion models for me		.861
ASMI3	I believe that influencers I follow provide new deals about different products and services		.859

ASMI2	I believe that influencers I follow present interesting content		.856
ASMI4	I believe that social media influencers are reliable source of information and discovery		.605
	Cronbach's Alpha	0.891	.847
	Mean	13.01	14.860
	S.D	4.092	3.623
	Eigen Value	4.333	1.507
	% of Variance	38.428	34.572
	Cumulative % Variance	38.428	73

Purchase Intention

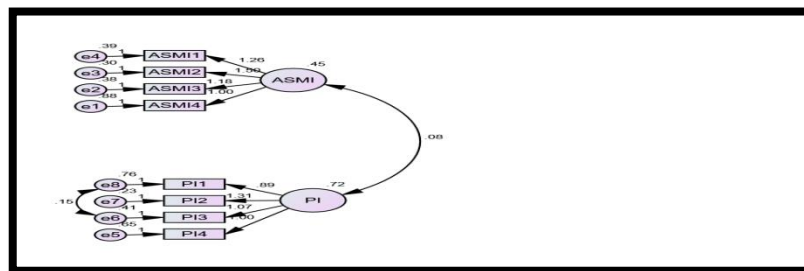
This factor explains purchase intentions/buying behaviour of 38.428% of the total variance explained. It includes the statement which shows that how the consumer intentions of purchasing apparels are affected from social media influencers. The factor loadings range from .755 to .877 and cronbach’s alpha of this factor is 0.891. It covers 4.333 of the Eigen value. The item to total correlation ranges from .665 to .817 and inter item correlation ranges from .589 to .775.

Attitude towards Social Media Influencers

This factor explains attitude towards Social Media Influencers of 34.572% of the total variance explained. It includes the statements which show the view point of consumers towards SMI’s. The factor loadings range from .605 to .861 and cronbach’s alpha of this factor is 0.847. It covers 1.507 of the Eigen value. The item to total correlation ranges from .544 to .771 and inter item correlation ranges from .429 to .709.

STRUCTURE EQUATION MODELING (SEM)

Confirmatory factor analysis



Measurement model

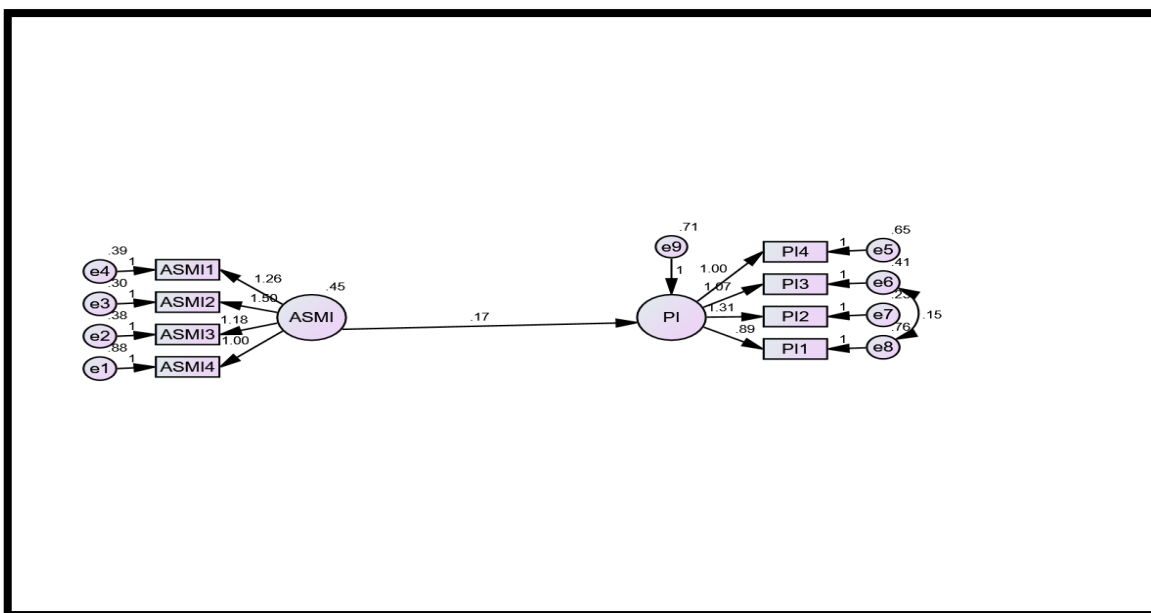
SPSS and AMOS were used to test the measurement model of the study. First of all, Cronbach alpha is used to test the reliability of survey data which is above the upper limit of 0.6 (Cronbach, 1990). Discriminant and convergent validity is tested by average variance extracted and composite reliability which is above the upper limit (Table 1.4). (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 1.4 convergent validity and discriminant validity

Constructs	Items	Standardized Regression Weights	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Explained
	ASMI1	.805	.847	.853	.596

Attitude towards Social Media Influencers	ASMI2	.877			
	ASMI3	.791			
	ASMI4	.582			
Purchase Intention	PI1	.656	.891	.873	.635
	PI2	.919			
	PI3	.820			
	PI4	.725			

Therefore, measurement model shows adequate internal consistency, discriminant validity and convergent validity. The model fit was considered acceptable up to the recommended threshold limit by **hair et al., 2010**. The chi-square/Degree of freedom value for the measurement model is 4.540, GFI= 0.968, RMSEA=0.077, CFI= 0.973. The measurement model is extremely significant as it validates the strong unidimensionality of the scales used in the measurement model in order to achieve this objective.



Structural Model

Testing of the Hypothesis

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) helped in finding the factors that were crucial for developing structural model. The structural model developed using SEM analysis reveals the result that whether the specific independent construct has a significant effect on dependent construct or not. It also helps in understanding how much effect each factor has on the dependent variable. **Table 1.5** shows positive consumer attitude towards social media influencer and significant effect on buying behavior (0.128, p<0.05). Thus hypothesis (Ha) is accepted.

Table 1.5 Path Analysis using Structural Equation Modeling

Hypothesis	Structural Path	Standardised Regression weights	P value	Hypothesis
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					(95% confidence level)
Ha	There is significant influence of Consumers' attitude toward the influencer on purchase intention.	PI <--- ASMI	.132	.005	Significant Relation (Accepted)

Findings of study

The findings support hypothesis Ha which describes that consumer's attitude towards social media influencer has a positive and significant effect on buying behavior. This means that attitude of consumer towards influencer is a direct predictor of purchase intention. Consumers are more likely to have strong buying intention for the product suggested by influencers, if they have positive attitude towards them. Using well-liked influencers results in positive attitudes towards the product/brand and therefore to higher buying intention. This finding supports the previous studies by **Bergkvist et al (2016)** and **Cooke and Sheeran (2004)** which focuses that the relationship between intentions and attitude of consumer is usually more consistent if consumers are highly involved.

Limitations and future research

In spite of the interesting practical and theoretical implication of this study, it is still subject to some limitations. First of all, the data used was gathered using nonprobability method of convenience snowball sampling. The use of nonprobability sampling method can be criticized, yet in our study the adopting of probability sampling technique was not feasible. Secondly, the study was carried out with consumers of only one developing country (i.e. India). In order to overcome social, cultural and economic disparities, similar studies can be conducted in other contexts for comparison of outcomes. Lastly, it would be interesting if qualitative study will be conducted to find the impact of Social media influencers on consumers buying intention in future research. Qualitative research accepts more probing and thus different results might be accomplished.

Conclusions

The contribution of this research study was to identify the consumer's attitude towards Social media influencers and find the effect of consumer's attitude towards influencers and purchase intention. Our research presents a new structure for identifying the main factors effecting Social media influencers' fellowship and consumer buying behavior. Based on a sample data of 600 respondents, we empirically affirmed that a large share of the variation in the buying comes from positive attitudes toward Social media influencers. This indicates that consumers are more likely to buy a product that has been suggested by popular influencers. Finally, our results recommend that consumer's attitude towards social media influencers have a significant effect on their purchase intention. This research study further boosts the body of the literature by knowing perception consumers' towards Social media influencers and their effect on purchase intentions and behaviors. The findings are of significant importance to the continuous discussion concerning influencer marketing and how influencers shape perception of brands and buying behavior through their endorsements.

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