The role of Influencer Marketing in shaping Consumer Decision

Asif Iqbal
University Of Management and Technology, Lahore
Saima Aslam
University Of Management and Technology, Lahore
Abdul Saboor
University Of Management and Technology, Lahore

Abstract

The narrative evaluation analyzed the significant impact that marketing influencers have on customers' inclination to make a purchase through social media. Regarding relaxation The inquiries regarding the influence of influencers on consumer buying behavior through social media have been raised, and the resolutions to these three inquiries have been provided in the chronological sequence in which they were formulated. Marketing influencers utilize social media as a method of engaging with and exerting influence over clients. This decision is driven by two variables. Due to technical progress and the widespread availability of the Internet, people nowadays are growing more reliant on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram. Moreover, social media is the paramount platform for effectively engaging with customers across all age groups, encompassing both younger and older consumers. It also offers extensive coverage of diverse marketing aspects, facilitating smooth connections and interactions with the target audience. The three fundamental qualities possessed by social media influencers are expertise, attractiveness, and reliability. These characteristics empower them to exert a significant influence on consumers' purchasing inclinations. Expertise is the comprehensive understanding and information that influencers possess about items, which greatly influences the perception and decision-making of their followers. Attractiveness, encompassing both physical appeal and charisma, significantly influences client perceptions of influencers and the products they endorse. To summarize, the perceived credibility of an influencer plays a crucial role in assessing the usefulness of the information they present in their endorsements. The correlation between confidence in influencers and the inclination to make a purchase highlights the significance of trustworthiness in shaping consumer choices.

Introduction

The world of marketing and consumer behavior has undergone a significant transformation, with influencers emerging as the most prominent manifestation

of this change. Currently, marketing exerts an indisputable impact on customer buying choices. These influential marketers, who serve as inspiring examples with significant social media audiences, have become influential agents, impacting not just consumer decisions, but also the complete customer experience. The aim of this narrative review is to analyze the significant influence that marketing influencers exert on contemporary consumers' purchasing choices through the utilization of social media. This analysis incorporates a range of research, case studies, and publications. The objective is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the topic, elucidating the rationale and methodology that underlie its importance. The present cohort resides in an epoch characterized by the prevalence of digital technology and social media, with digitalization becoming an essential component of their everyday existence. The current generation is generally known as Generation Z and Generation Alpha refer to those born during a time of significant technological advancements, such as the advent of the Internet, cellphones, and social media. Generation Z include those born between 1995 and 2009, while Generation Alpha includes those born between 2010 and 2024 [1].

Currently, this generation has developed the challenging tendency of becoming dependent on social media. An opinion survey performed in the United States in 2022 revealed that 54% of adolescents between the ages of 13 and 17 believed that relinquishing social media would be challenging. In addition, it is projected that by 2022, nearly all adolescents will possess a smartphone, representing a 22% increase compared to the period of 2014-2015. Moreover, a staggering 97% of adolescents indicate that they utilize the internet on a daily basis [2]. In addition, as per a recent poll [3] conducted by the Reuters Institute in 2023, 30% of participants from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany indicated that social media serves as their main outlet for news. This indicates that their inclination to acquire information and news via social media, as opposed to traditional newspapers or television news, is currently at its highest level. Due to the expansion and potential offered by digital marketing, influencer marketing has transformed into a very efficient strategy that can be employed by firms across various product domains.

Literature Review

"Influencer marketing" is the practice of establishing a partnership between popular social media users, sometimes referred to as "social influencers," and brands in order to endorse and advertise the brands' products or services [4]. In addition, these social influencers, who primarily consist of digital artists, provide their followers with top-notch content that encourages interaction,

learning, and amusement. They act as influential figures on the internet, initiating conflicts, establishing trends, and stimulating curiosity among their followers. Effective influencer marketing enables firms to enhance their exposure to novel youthful demographics while concurrently fostering trust with their clientele. The projected growth rate for the influencer marketing industry is 29%, resulting in a total value of $21.1 billion in 2023, compared to $16.4 billion in the preceding year. Businesses achieve a return on investment (ROI) of $5.2 for each dollar invested in influencer marketing. The uppermost 13% of organizations produce a return of $20 or greater for each dollar expended. Furthermore, a significant proportion of companies, namely 67%, employ Instagram as a platform for influencer marketing. With the rise in popularity of influencer marketing and the growing visibility of Facebook and Instagram as social media platforms, brands have augmented their financial commitment to influencers on these platforms.

By 2023, the majority of marketers, specifically 76.7%, will employ Instagram as their primary platform for influencer marketing. This will be followed by Facebook at 58%, TikTok at 50%, YouTube at 44.2%, Twitter at 25.5%, and Snapchat at 18%. Instagram is the predominant platform for influencer marketing. Therefore, it is crucial to possess a comprehensive understanding of the intricate connections that exist between marketing influencers and contemporary consumers. Consequently, this contributes significant insights to the marketing profession and imparts valuable lessons to businesses, marketers, and advertisers who navigate a perpetually evolving environment.

The trustworthiness of influencers empowers them to sway the purchasing decisions of their intended audience. The year 2017. De Veirman et al. highly value a dependable taster. With the decline of traditional advertising, influencers are now advocating for various issues to their followers and beyond (De Veirman et al., 2017). In the past. A study was conducted to assess the impact of Instagram's disclosure advertising on customers' ability to recognize advertisements by examining the influence of using ordinary language in influencer posts. Evans et al. (2017) state that it possesses a high degree of user-friendliness. Transparency is essential for establishing customer trust. A range of 1,500 to 150,000 customers who have been exposed to micronutrients exhibit increased awareness of and preference for promoted products. Research conducted by Kay et al. (2020) and Britt (2020) has revealed

that the inclusion of the "disclosure" hashtag by a micro-influencer has a positive impact on sales.

Zhang et al. (2016) found that user content matching has a significant impact on both message retransmission and content. The study conducted by Martínez-López et al. in 2020 revealed that the commercial aspect of an influencer's message diminishes trust and confidence. Enhanced transparency enhances the credibility of vloggers and influencers, hence bolstering the authenticity of their endorsements. Chapple et al. (2017) found that lifestyle vloggers are regarded as credible and have a significant impact. Zhang et al. (2016) and Hendriks (2020) found that the discovery received less engagement in the form of likes and comments when it was linked to the promotion of alcoholic beverages. Prior studies have indicated that there is no differentiation between the act of revealing information and the promotion of meals that are suitable for children. Coates et al. (2019) argue that the achievement of SMI hinges on the adoption of diverse attitudes. In a study conducted by Kim et al. (2020), it was found that the collaboration between influencers and products leads to an enhancement in product attitude. Moreover, there were a correlation between sponsorship statements and opinions towards the product.Overwhelming evidence suggests that a higher number of social media followers can enhance the success of a company or influencer. Research has been conducted to evaluate social media accounts and influencers by analyzing the correlation between the number of likes a post receives and the intended audience. In addition, it was found that both high and low like-to-follower ratios had negative effects on social media marketing, leading to decreased perceptions of influence (Vries, 2019).

Influencer marketing is increasingly favored by brand marketers because it offers a more cost-effective and relatable alternative to celebrity marketing. Based on a study conducted by Jin et al. in 2019, influencers are regarded as more reliable and positive about the suggested firm compared to celebrities. Trivedi et al.'s 2020 study reveals that marketing professionals employ influencers, rather than celebrities, to assess people' purchasing intentions. Although social media is gaining popularity, the potential influence it will have on advertising and marketing remains uncertain. Advertising experts were surveyed about the changing impact of social media on marketing. As per the study's results, advertising experts perceive that influencer marketing is gaining popularity. However, the strategy's effectiveness can be limited due to a lack of guidance and clear objectives (Childers et al., 2019). According to multiple experts, the public harbors skepticism towards influencers, especially

those who focus on cosmetics, and they seldom perceive their message as trustworthy. The study conducted by Konstantopoulou et al. in 2019 revealed that those who follow beauty influencers on Instagram are more inclined to place trust in them following a favorable interaction.

Mega influencers are individuals who have at least one million followers and receive 3-6 percent of all engagements on their posts. This category encompasses individuals who engage in acting, artistic pursuits, athletic endeavors, and the use of social media platforms. Despite having the largest reach, their overall impact on driving brand-related actions is the lowest Is considered. Macro influencers are individuals who have a follower count ranging from 10,000 to 1 million and exhibit an average engagement rate of 5% to 25%. This category encompasses journalists, bloggers, and executives. Both their impact within specific categories and their exceptional topical relevance have garnered them significant renown. Style and way of life are exemplifications of such factors. Micro influencers refer to individuals such as employees and customers who possess a follower count ranging from 500 to 10,000, with each post receiving an engagement rate of 25 to 50%. It is their duty to ensure the highest level of brand resonance and relevance, using their firsthand knowledge of the brands and the quality of their professional connections. Shah, Aziz, Jaffari, Wari, and Ejaz (2012) provide a definition of purchase intention as the cognitive behavior linked to the desire to obtain a particular brand. As stated by Kotler and Armstrong (2010), customers' buying choices involve an intricate process that includes their intention to make a purchase. Despite Spears and Singh.

According to Ghosh (2004), "purchase intention" refers to an individual's deliberate purpose to actively buy a specific brand. Ghosh adds that it is vital to understand the buyer's intention to make a purchase in relation to consumer behavior, which may be utilized to forecast the buying process. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2010), the consumer decision process consists of five steps: identifying a need, seeking for information, assessing possibilities, making a purchasing decision, and continuing to behave after the purchase. Once they've established that they require a specific product or service, they start seeking for information from a range of sources, both internal and external. Following a survey of the available options, consumers tend to form attitudes that are depending on the unique purchasing circumstance and the individual consumer. Furthermore, when it comes to building these attitudes, the opinions of their family members, friends, opinion leaders, internet reviews, and blogs will all play a role in defining the ranking of these businesses and

their desire to buy. If a buyer has a positive attitude toward a product, they may intend to acquire it. As a relevant point of reference, Chen (2007) discovered that a good attitude about products pushed by social media influencers is more likely to impact the choice to acquire the product. The definition of attitude, as stated by the originator, is a learned and comprehensive assessment of an item (such as a person, place, or situation) that has an impact on one's thoughts and behaviors (R.M.Perloff, 2003). He underscores the societal dimension of attitudes, asserting that attitudes are shaped through interpersonal engagement and are subsequently generated.

During the initial stages of a review, individuals often have a proclivity to produce ideas pertaining to various subjects or individuals. In the field of marketing, it is of utmost importance because when there is a need for a shift in consumer behavior, marketers make efforts to bring about that change by exerting influence on attitudes (R.M. Perloff, 2003). Several social psychologists claim that attitude is primarily associated with affect, which can be defined as either positive or negative emotions (Cacioppo, Harkins, & Petty, 1981; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). This is in spite of the fact that attitude might manifest as emotion, cognition, or consolidation.

Researchers such as Fishbein and Ajzen (1980), MacInnis and Jaworski (1989), and Petty and Cacioppo (1986) have established information processing models to forecast customer attitudes when they are exposed to information. Brown and Stayman (1992), Haley and Baldinger (2000), and Mitchell and Olson (1981) have conducted studies demonstrating that attitudes towards advertisements play a crucial role in shaping attitudes towards the advertised product or brand. These findings highlight the mediating effect of attitudes towards advertisements on advertising effectiveness. Similarly to how favoring a compelling message or a source of information can result in a favorable disposition towards the product or brand mentioned in the message or website, the research study proposes that consumers' attitudes towards information in online consumer reviews impact their attitudes towards both the product being reviewed and the influencer delivering the reviews.

Research Objective

The article's objectives align with three open research questions, which aim to provide insights into the current condition of affairs. The level of comprehension of the covered subjects.

- The primary objective is to demonstrate the efficacy of social media as a tool for marketing influencers to influence the purchasing decisions of modern customers.

- The second objective of the study is to examine the characteristics of social media influencers that impact users' purchasing intentions in contemporary times.
- To demonstrate the influence that marketing influencers have on consumers' purchasing decisions by utilizing social media.
  Research questions
- In what manner may influencers leverage social media to exert influence on purchasing decisions?
- What are the behavioral patterns exhibited by customers?
- What specific traits do social media influencers have that impact the buying decisions of contemporary consumers? This is the second research question (RQ2) that will be examined.
- The extent to which marketing influencers influence buyer purchasing decisions is significant.

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Methodology

The approach for this narrative review study was developed systematically to ensure clarity. The evaluation aims to determine the extent of its coverage, as well as achieve its three specific goals. The objective of this study is to investigate the influence of marketing influencers on consumers' purchase intentions through social media. The study aims to examine the attributes of marketing influencers and their impact on customer behavior. Regarding the search methodology, a thorough strategy is employed, which entails utilizing an academic database like Google Scholar, journals, books, and other pertinent resources. In order to comprehensively examine the essence of social media influencer marketing and its impact on consumer purchase intentions, specific search terms and keywords such as "social media," "influence of influencer marketing," and "consumer purchase intentions" were deliberately selected. Only studies that investigated the correlation between marketing influencers and consumer purchase intention were considered, based on specific criteria for inclusion. This held true irrespective of the industry or product. Studies that did not specifically examine the influence of influencers on purchase intention or were not relevant to the topic of the study were excluded according to the criteria outlined in the previous sentence. The findings were synthesized using a narrative synthesis approach, which facilitated the identification of significant themes and patterns across multiple investigations. A coherent narrative was

created by arranging the information to reflect the various ways in which marketing influencers on social media affect client purchase behavior.

Results and Discussion

The purpose of this section is to provide a thorough examination and discussion of the results, while also addressing the research questions, in order to clarify the study's objectives and aims. A. What elements enhance the effectiveness of social media as a tool for influencers to impact customer decision-making? Petrosyan forecasts that the worldwide user population of social media will exceed 4.59 billion in 2023 and is projected to approach six billion by 2027 [8]. Social media platforms have become a crucial element of daily online engagements. As of October 2023, Facebook is the social network with the largest global monthly active user base, exceeding 3 million people. WhatsApp and Instagram have more than 2 million members each, after Facebook [9]. The figures indicate that there is a significant increase in the usage of social networks among young teenagers, who are becoming an important consumer group in the current market.

In October 2021, Dixon performed a study in the United Kingdom and found that 91 percent of individuals aged 15 to 16 used social media, while 87 percent had their own profile. A 2023 survey revealed that somewhat more than 50% of American adolescents allocate a least of four hours daily to utilizing various social media platforms, with an average of 4.8 hours spent on several social media sites. This remark emphasizes the substantial reliance of contemporary consumers on social media platforms, as well as the widespread integration of social media into their daily habits. According to Chakraborty (12), social media offers influencers an opportunity to employ storytelling and engagement to alter perceptions, sway decisions, and incite actions by leveraging the trust of their devoted audience. The paper by Chakraborty was published in the same year. Social media platforms, due to their dynamic nature, extensive reach, and abundant opportunities for interaction, provide a great venue for influencers to exhibit their work [12]. Every post, story, and live session provides influencers with the chance to actively interact and engage with their audience. Marketing has three unique attributes that are unmatched by any other medium: connectivity, engagement, and customer data. Social media is the only platform that have this power. After careful analysis, it becomes clear that influencers have compelling motivations to prioritize social media advertising as a method of engaging with their audience.

B. What particular characteristics do social media influencers possess that impact customers' predisposition to make purchases in the present era?

According to Ohanian's [13] source credibility hypothesis, the impact of an influencer endorsement relies on the perceived credibility of the influencer. The credibility of an influencer can be evaluated by taking into account their personality, the strength of their arguments, and the alignment of their values with the product they are advocating [14]. The main determinants of an influencer's success are advantageous attributes, a persuasive justification, and an innate compatibility with the product. Expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness have a beneficial impact on consumer perceptions of endorsement messages and firms [15]. The term "expertise" refers to an individual's extensive knowledge and skill in a specific product [16]. The information propagated by these influencers significantly shapes the comprehension of the subject matter among their followers. The source's level of proficiency greatly impacts their capacity to influence audience behavior. Individuals who obtain information from a trustworthy source exhibit higher levels of compliance in comparison to those who acquire information from a less knowledgeable source [13].

A strong association exists between the perceived skill of a social media influencer and their efficacy. Consumers assess the proficiency of influencers [17] while deciding whether to accept or decline recommended products or services. Competency pertains to a consumer's perception of a social media celebrity's ability to deliver authentic material, as defined by [18]. According to Baker and colleagues [19], attractiveness is a combination of sensuality, facial and physical beauty, and other traits related to a person's appearance. Taillon et al. [20] found that the way people look affects how they view influencers. Studies suggest that the attractiveness of social media influencers increases the probability of consumers adopting marketing for products that are promoted by these influencers. Consumers are more influenced by endorsements from influencers who have a strong appeal to them, resulting in a greater impact on their impressions. The findings corroborate the research conducted by Azkiah and Hartono [21], which confirmed that the attractiveness of influencers had a positive impact on customer attitudes towards product marketing, consequently influencing consumers' willingness to make a buy. The trustworthiness attributed to influencers directly influences purchasing intentions, as it establishes the expected value of the information conveyed in their recommendations [22]. Pornpitakpan (23), Gunawan, and Huarng (24) are researchers who have discovered a positive association between the credibility of a source and the likelihood of making a purchase. The credibility of the source is closely linked to how the recipient perceives the source's integrity,

genuineness, or veracity [25]. Differences in trust levels towards social media platforms and influencers are expected to arise based on the particular product being promoted [26]. The key determinants of trustworthiness are the perceptions of honesty, integrity, and plausibility, rather than the assessment of an endorser's competence, which is contingent upon their perceived knowledge [27]. Ohanian [13] defines it as the consumers' sense of influencers' authentic aim to provide reliable statements. According to the results of a 2018 poll conducted by FullScreen and Shareable [28], 50% of persons aged eighteen to twenty-four trust the information supplied by their influencers, while 40% have more trust in influencers than in brand promotion. This highlights the need of trustworthiness in the influencer's role.

The older generations, particularly Millennials, depend on influencers and followers to obtain trustworthy information regarding fashion trends and companies, subsequently influencing their purchasing decisions [29].

C. what is the magnitude of marketing influencers' influence on customer purchasing decisions?

Request Number 3 As a result of the swift expansion of social media, influencer marketing has emerged as an essential component of organizations' marketing strategy [30]. Influencer marketing is a deliberate marketing approach in which a firm carefully chooses and encourages online influencers to interact with their social media followers [30, 31]. According to a recent study, influencer marketing is a burgeoning marketing tactic that is both powerful and cost-effective. This is because buyers do not perceive it as advertising. Regarding the definition, modern customers no longer view influencer marketing as a traditional kind of advertising.

Specifically, as customers become more cautious, influencer marketing has the ability to influence consumer behavior and increase sales, making them valuable assets in a company's digital marketing strategy [32]. According to a specialist from Mintel, 45% of the population aged 16 to 34 in Germany and 47% in the United Kingdom have made a purchase from a social media influencer they follow. Additionally, half of the persons in the United Kingdom who follow influencers seek their advice before making a purchase. Furthermore, influencers has the capacity to gradually gain the trust and assurance of consumers, establishing themselves as a reputable and influential someone whose audience depends on and attentively follows [33]. According to a study, around 35% of customers in the United Kingdom believe that the social media influencers they follow has knowledge and experience in the issues they discuss [34]. Moreover, an astonishing 35% of young Germans aged 16 to 34,

who follow influencers, maintain the conviction that these influencers sincerely advocate for and encourage the things they advertise.

Furthermore, Verplancke and Gelati [36] argue that influencers have a substantial impact on customers' purchasing decisions. This is accomplished by spreading information about personal purchases and endorsing products on social media platforms, which then influence the decisions made by individuals in regard to their followers. Consumers regard influencers as reliable, knowledgeable, and usually attractive because of their affiliation with them. As a result, purchasers develop a psychological connection with the influencers [36]. Yang and Ha [37] conducted a study which found that when consumers develop a strong parasocial relationship with influencers, their persuasive skills decrease. As a result, this increases the likelihood of buyers making a purchase. According to Dr. Chan [39], the term "social media influencer" is commonly used in marketing to describe the rapid expansion of influencer marketing on social networks. This clearly demonstrates the significant influence that influencer marketing holds.

Conclusion

The narrative evaluation analyzed the significant impact that marketing influencers have on customers' inclination to make a purchase through social media. Regarding relaxation The inquiries regarding the influence of influencers on consumer buying behavior through social media have been raised, and the resolutions to these three inquiries have been provided in the chronological sequence in which they were formulated. Marketing influencers utilize social media as a method of engaging with and exerting influence over clients. This decision is driven by two variables. Due to technical progress and the widespread availability of the Internet, people nowadays are growing more reliant on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram. Moreover, social media is the paramount platform for effectively engaging with customers across all age groups, encompassing both younger and older consumers. It also offers extensive coverage of diverse marketing aspects, facilitating smooth connections and interactions with the target audience. The three fundamental qualities possessed by social media influencers are expertise, attractiveness, and reliability. These characteristics empower them to exert a significant influence on consumers' purchasing inclinations.

Expertise is the comprehensive understanding and information that influencers possess about items, which greatly influences the perception and decision-making of their followers. Attractiveness, encompassing both physical appeal and charisma, significantly influences client perceptions of influencers and the

products they endorse. To summarize, the perceived credibility of an influencer plays a crucial role in assessing the usefulness of the information they present in their endorsements. The correlation between confidence in influencers and the inclination to make a purchase highlights the significance of trustworthiness in shaping consumer choices.

Lastly, the conclusion asserts that influencer marketing exerts a substantial influence on client buying choices, and this influence is seen in contemporary marketing strategies. The emergence of social media has given rise to influencer marketing, which is a potent and cost-efficient strategy that deviates from traditional advertising preconceptions held by consumers. After establishing trust and credibility with consumers, many people consider them to be authorities in their respective domains. Research indicates that influencers exert a substantial influence on customers' decision-making processes. In order to achieve this, they utilize social media platforms to share suggestions for products and disclose their own personal purchases. This enables their followers to develop a sense of trust, competence, and connection with the influencer. Moreover, studies have demonstrated that buyers who have a robust parasocial relationship with influencers are more likely to make purchases due to their limited recognition of persuasive tactics. This observation illustrates the substantial influence that influencer marketing has on customer behavior.

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