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Role of Influencer–Brand Fit in Shaping Consumer Trust and Buying Behavior in the Beauty Industry

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Abstract

In the modern beauty industry, influencer marketing has appeared as a strong strategy that helps to shape up the purchase decisions and perceptions of consumers. Central to the efficacy of this approach is "Influencer-brand fit" referring to the perceived congruence between image, value, expertise of influencer and the brand they are endorsing. The role of Influencer–Brand Fit in Shaping Consumer Trust and Buying Behavior in the Beauty Industry is examined in this study. The role of influencer-Brand fit to shape trust of consumers and buying behavior in the beauty industry. The role of influencer-brand fit is vital in marketing, which means the image, value and audience of influencer must match genuinely with the boosting authenticity, credibility of brand, as well as trust of customers making substantial effect on engagement, brand awareness and buying intentions. Digital platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok have grown in popularity, where influencers have appeared as a strong representative for beauty industry. A sample of 333 was collected to find the result of the study. The factors of the study are Building Customer Trust, Enhanced Brand Credibility, Shaping Purchase Intention, and Influencer-Brand Fit and Consumer Perception.

Keywords: Influencer marketing, skincare products, brand loyalty, social media influencer, Consumer Purchase Behaviour.

Introduction

India's cosmetic or beauty industry is expanding rapidly, it is encouraged by rising disposable income, mounting rate of urbanization, and growing youth population. At the same time, India's beauty industry has experienced a noteworthy shift in behavior of consumers as an outcome of explosive expansion of social media. Behavior of consumers is no longer driven by traditional methods of marketing. Rather, platforms of social media have become strong and influencing that makes a big effect on how consumers see and use cosmetics by endorsing beauty products and business social media influencers makes high impact on buying intentions of their followers. Influencer marketing holds significant control over consumer behavior, its influence varies that depends on research habits of an individual and how influencers are perceived in terms of credibility. Such insights can be capitalized by partnering strategically with influencers who connect genuinely with their target audience and deliver clear, and informative content empowering customers during the process of decision-making (**Bhuttani & Raj, 2023**). In beauty industry, influencer marketing revolves around development of personal relations with customers by authentic reviews of products, testimonials and tutorials. The rising influence of social media that shapes consumer behavior transforming how brands communicate with audience, mainly in skincare and beauty industry. Social media platform like TikTok, YouTube and Instagram are leading in digital marketing, loyal following are developed by influencers, their recommendations are very influencing for brands as well as customers. A beauty product is a highly customized product category, social media influencers sharing their skincare routine, experience with products, and tips on lifestyle help in shaping preferences of consumers, making contribution towards sustained brand engagement.

Customers developing emotional bond with influencers are possibly to trust their suggestions over time leading to sustained engagement with brand and repeated purchasing. It is highly essential in beauty industry, where customers usually stick to products and routines suitable to them. While influencer

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marketing offers considerable benefits, it sometime brings challenges, mainly to maintain authenticity as industry become more commercialised **(Rauf & Siddiqi, 2024).** The appearance of social media platform has transformed the landscape of marketing drastically all over the world. With its visual-centric interface and wide reach, Instagram has become more than just an app for photo-sharing, it has now become a strong tool for advertising, branding, and influencing behaviour of consumers. In the past few years, brands of beauty industry have moved from traditional methods of advertising to social media and influencer marketing for attracting and engaging target audience. Social media influencers are individual who have strong base of followers with perceived expertise or appeal in particular niche becoming main opinion leaders influencing the choice of consumers. In context of India, where rising number of millennials and Gen Z depend on social media for discovery of product and lifestyle inspiration, social media influencers have shaped the preferences of consumers significantly. Whether it is promoting ethnic clothes during festival season or introduction of latest fashion wear, social media influencers drive trends and influence the buying decisions of customers in a more direct way compared to traditional way of advertising. Therefore, understanding the role of such social media influencers in impacting consumer behavior has become important for marketers, strategists of brands as well as researchers **(Gadhiya & Sidapara, 2025).**

The rising impact of social media on consumer behavior has transformed the way how companies communicate with customers, mainly in beauty, cosmetics and skincare industry. Influencers, using their online presence for promotion of products and developing the trust of customers are some of major forces behind this transformation. Preferences of customers for skincare products are influenced significantly by social media influencers. The main factor improving the efficacy to influence customer behavior are engagement, authenticity and trustworthiness. Brands must focus on developing genuine relations with influencers while using influencer marketing, it produces real content, and interact actively with target market. Influencers develop devoted following in social media platforms that are at the lead of digital marketing. As an outcome, their recommendations make a substantial effect on customers as well as companies **(Mandal & Gupta, 2025).** Interaction between brand and customer has been reshaped by social media, with influencer marketing appearing as a dominating promotional strategy in beauty industries. The outcome shows expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness making significant impact on buying intention that in turn impact buying behavior significantly. Moreover, buying intention was found to be mediating the association between expertise and trustworthiness with consumer behavior. The findings highlight the vital role of influencer credibility to shape consumer decision-making providing practical insights for beauty brands for enhancing engagement and conversion through authentic and strategic influencer partnership. Attractiveness of influencer makes contribution to shape purchase intention, although its impact on buying behavior is more complicated and not completely mediated by buying intention. Buying intention becomes an essential mechanism to mediate the association between expertise and trust and buying behavior, it confirms that trust and knowledge of influencer are vital elements to motivate customers to take actions **(Pracoyo & Ariyanti, 2025).**

Literature Review
Sharma & Yuvraj (2025) studied that from the last few years, using social media has been transformed completely between behavior of people, mainly in terms of beauty industry. Influencer marketing is known as a the highly remarkable tactics that brands are using these days to reach target audience. Influencer marketing is a process to get people on social media platforms for promotion of products and services for sale. For skincare and beauty products, where customer behavior is usually dictated with personal experience, aesthetics, and peer endorsements, influencer marketing surely works wonders. Influencers of social media are considered to be real in comparison to traditional celebrities. Thus, they have become biggest in terms of endorsement determining preferences of consumers. The emphasis of beauty industry

is on individual beauty and personal identity creating an ideal setting for analysing how influencer marketing shapes up the behavior of consumers.

Sindhu (2025) stated that in this digital era, interaction between business and consumer has been completely transformed by enabling digital engagement and discovery of products. Influencer marketing has become a trend which is driven by the rapid growth of users of social media platform. The method of traditional advertising is transformed by leveraging individuals with large following for the promotion of brands. It increases the trust as well as credibility, and attract customers effectively through customized certifications. The beauty industry is increasing the variety of products and innovations. It is getting benefitted by influencer marketing. Mainly to promote new organic products. The outcomes shows that Instagram as a social media platform is being highly preferred for engaging content. An important role is played by online ratings and reviews in making purchase decisions. Usually, customers prefer to purchase in person but depend on online ratings and reviews as a guide before making any beauty product.

Jain & Ritu (2025) found that these days influencer marketing has become essential element of modern business strategies, making significant impact on brand visibility, brand loyalty and customer engagement. It has also appeared as a strong tool in the beauty industry, it shapes perceptions of customers, their trust and attitude as well as buying decisions. Customers possibly trust influencers and feel confident in buying are known as the crucial element that drives customer behavior. Looking at multiple influencers doing promotion of a product increase the level of trust, but the perceived quality of the product does not always lead top buying. It is suggested by the findings that influencer marketing is highly effective when it is transparent, customer-centric and genuine. Influencer's trust and building of confidence are considered as highly influencing elements that drives consumer's purchasing. Brands also concentrate on leveraging credible influencers and develop genuine relations with customers for enhancing trust, loyalty as well as long-lasting buying behavior.

Susmitha & Sultana (2025) revealed that brands must prioritize getting partnered with credible influencers for improving trust of customers and purchase intentions. Brands must concentrate on creation of communicative and involving content for strengthening relations with customers. Ensuring that influencers match with the image and values of the brand is important for authenticity. To improve engagement, brands must be motivated to design campaigns for promotion of active communication, like products demonstrations, live Q&A sessions, and user-generated contests that would develop deep connections between consumer and influencer. It is equally essential to ensure powerful brand alignment by selecting influencers whose values and images reflect seamlessly the essence of beauty brand, thus improve authenticity and reduce influencer's credibility, engagement and brand alignment.

Awati, Suryawanshi & Koppal (2024) highlighted that influencer marketing is a branch of modern marketing where in business approach influencers of social media for promotion of brand. It is a branch of digital marketing where people have a strong base of followers on social media platform using the power of social media for compelling audience towards purchasing a particular brand. Social media is not just a source of re-creation anymore, but it is also a strong space of marketing which is driven by influencers. Social media influencers have a reach that in turn assist the businesses with wide brand exposure. The number of people to use social media is rising with time as well as influencers.

Iqbal, Zaman & Alam (2024) revealed that influencers of social media platform are being used on large level as a type of marketing strategies by brands, because of its speed with which they can attain followers trust. They are considered as a new twist on opinion leaders; their followers are stimulated by them and highly impact their behavior and attitude. By making use of social exchange theory and its basic principle of reciprocity, this work examines if basic features of an influencers can work as an inter-personal asset in the process to attain trust of followers. If the dependence of followers in beget loyalty of influencers to

digital creator, and whether favourable result is because of advertising. It is shown by the outcome that source of credibility and attractiveness were found to be considerable in development of relational trust. Furthermore, it is shown by the findings that materialism intercedes the association among the exposures to social media influencers and purchase intentions. The outcome highlights the significant consequences for strategic application of influencer marketing by recommending rising understanding of persuading process for shaping the dynamics of influencers and followers. Such understandings make additions to present works related to social media influencers as well as materialism at the same time providing useful suggestions to influencers along with brands to improve their strategies proficiently.

Comicho et al. (2025) stated that it depends on how people observe social media influencers make positive or negative effect on business industry. Majority of time, the basis for the business firm to choose an influencer would be their credibility, popularity, appearance and behavior are some of the qualities that a costumer looks for. The company's image, on the negative side, also gets impacted when some particular issue occurs with the influencers. Cooperating with effective influencer can improve visibility of brand effectively and recognition among the target audience. It also assists in building an engaged following as people usually follow their influencers and brands they are endorsing. Recognition of such potential and choosing an influencer matching with the image of the brand and target audience improves brand awareness and develop trust between brand and customers. However, finding the influencer can be challenging because of some factors.

Garg & Bakshi (2024) studied that rising use of digital platforms has made influencer marketing a cost-effective method of marketing, mainly for products are being consumed by young generation. Among other products like fashion and beauty products and cosmetics, whose online marketing has developed a particular influencer category and are called as "beauty vloggers." By applying the model of source credibility, this work examines whether these vlogger's attribute of credibility assist customers in building trust towards them and if the trust of followers leads to required results of marketing.

Sharathkumar & Sowmya (2025) highlighted that credibility of influencers make significant impact on enhancement of trust of customers driving brand engagement and buying decisions, eventually develops positive brand perception. Trust appears as a vital mediator, it links credible influencers to actions of customers, while ethical transparency in content which is sponsored that reinforce the credibility. Social media influencers in this digital era have re-defined dynamics of customer and brand, exerting extraordinary power for shaping the attitude, preferences, and buying behavior through curated authenticity and narratives driven by trust. As an intermediary between customers and brands, these social media influencers include their personal stories with commercial content, it creates a paradigm shift from traditional methods of advertising to relational communicative marketing.

Kochhar (2025) stated that digital influencers have appeared a main opinion leader shaping perception of customers, their attitude, and buying intentions through authentic, credible and engaging content. It is revealed by the findings that authenticity and credibility of influencers make substantial impact on trust of their customers, that eventually make powerful and positive impact on buying intentions. Investigation provides empirical evidences from emerging economy offering practical implications for customers, marketers, and policymakers.

Objective
To explore the Role of Influencer–Brand Fit in Shaping Consumer Trust and Buying Behavior in the Beauty Industry

Methodology

333 participants were surveyed from people using different product type. The method of sampling was "Random sampling" for collection of data and examination was done by "Explanatory Factor Analysis" for results.

Findings

Table 1 demonstrates demographic details, it shows that 51.35% are Male, 48.64% are female. Looking at the age, 35.14% are between 25 to 30 years of age, 37.54% are between 30 to 35 years of age, and 27.32% are above 35 years of age. With regards to Product type, 32.74% are skin care products, 33.93% are makeup & cosmetic products and 33.33% are Hair care products.

Table. 1 Respondent's Details

Variables	Participants	Percentage
Gender		
Male	171	51.35%
Female	162	48.64%
Total	**333**	**100**
Ages in years		
25 to 30	117	35.14%
30 to 35	125	37.54%
Above 35	91	27.32%
Total	**333**	**100**
Product type		
Skin Care products	109	32.74%
Makeup & cosmetics products	113	33.93%
Hair care products	111	33.33%
Total	**333**	**100**

"Factor Analysis"
"KMO and Bartlett's Test"

Table. 2 "Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy"

"Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy"		.761
"Bartlett's Test of Sphericity"	"Approx. Chi-Square"	5911.629
	df	91
	Significance	.000

"KMO and Bartlett's Test", value of KMO is .761 (Table 2).

Table 3 "Total Variance Explained"

"Component"	"Initial Eigenvalues"			"Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings"		
	"Total"	"% Of Variance"	"Cumulative %"	"Total"	"% Of Variance"	"Cumulative %"
1.	6.347	45.338	45.338	**3.876**	27.689	27.689
2.	2.568	18.346	63.684	**3.633**	25.952	53.641
3.	2.074	14.814	78.498	**2.427**	17.333	70.974
4.	1.265	9.034	87.532	**2.318**	16.557	**87.532**
5.	.556	3.971	91.502			
6.	.399	2.849	94.351			
7.	.195	1.391	95.742			
8.	.160	1.141	96.883			
9.	.154	1.102	97.985			
10.	.108	.768	98.753			
11.	.067	.480	99.234			
12.	.047	.336	99.570			
13.	.035	.249	99.819			
14.	.025	.181	100.000			

The four factors contribute towards explaining total 87.532% of variance. Variance explained by Building Customer Trust is 27.689%, Enhanced Brand Credibility is 25.952%, Shaping Purchase Intention is 17.333%, and Influencer-Brand Fit and Consumer Perception is 16.557%. (Table 3).
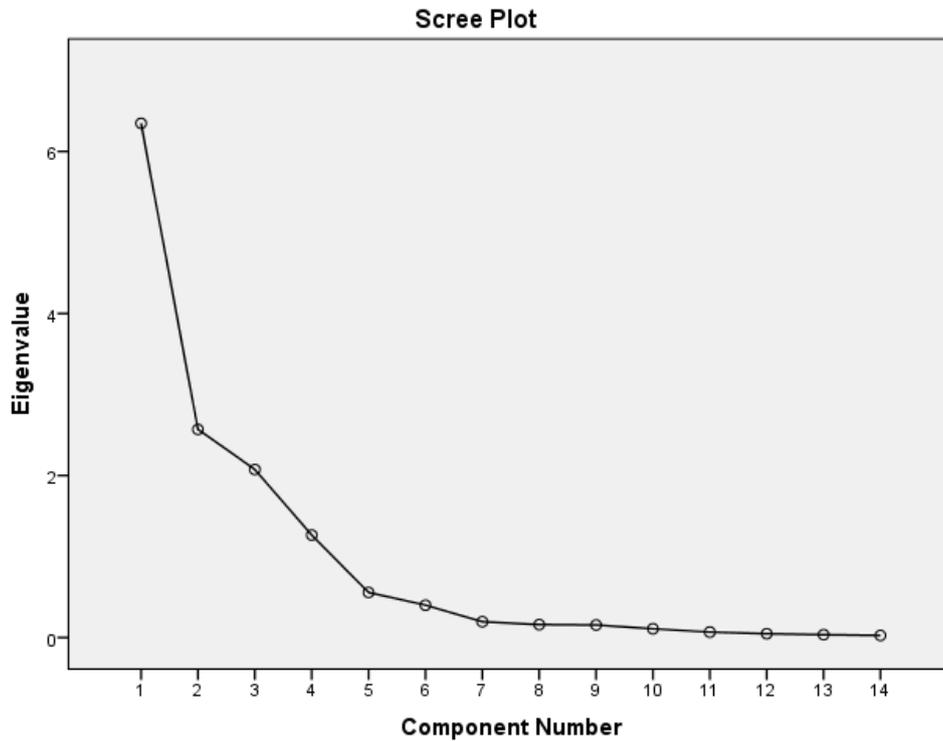
"Scree Plot"

Table. 4 "Rotated Component Matrix"

S. No.	Statements	Factor Loading	Factor Reliability
	Building Customer Trust		**.948**
1.	Influencers act as trusted opinion leaders, provide honest reviews	.957	
2.	Trusted reviews reduce uncertainties related to beauty products like skincare, and cosmetics	.904	
3.	Influencers consistently provide transparent and reliable reviews	.852	
4.	Consumers are more likely to trust influencers and endorsed brand	.844	
	Enhanced Brand Credibility		**.962**
1.	Influencer endorsement works as social proof, especially in saturated beauty market	.961	

2.	It enhances the reliability of consumers on the endorsed brand	.904	
3.	It helps in getting aligned with current beauty products and market trend	.898	
4.	Influencers often enjoy credibility due to closer engagement with followers	.875	
	Shaping Purchase Intention		**.868**
1.	Influencers influence buying intention by showing product usage and tutorials	.911	
2.	Influence buying by sharing personal experience results	.856	
3.	Content reduces perceived risks and increases purchase confidence	.745	
	Influencer-Brand Fit and Consumer Perception		**.834**
1.	A Strong Influencer-Brand fit enhances message effectiveness	.928	
2.	Endorsement appears more genuine to consumers	.927	
3.	Trust and persuasion increase significantly	.646	

Factors of the study and its related variables

The first factor of the study is Building Customer Trust, the variables it includes are Influencers act as trusted opinion leaders, provide honest reviews, Trusted reviews reduce uncertainties related to beauty products like skincare, and cosmetics, Influencers consistently provide transparent and reliable reviews, and Consumers are more likely to trust influencers and endorsed brand. The second factor is Enhanced Brand Credibility, its variables are Influencer endorsement works as social proof, especially in saturated beauty market, Influencer endorsement works as social proof, especially in saturated beauty market, It helps in getting aligned with current beauty products and market trend, and Influencers often enjoy credibility due to closer engagement with followers. Shaping Purchase Intention is the third factor, its variables are Influencers influence buying intention by showing product usage and tutorials, Influence buying by sharing personal experience results, and Content reduces perceived risks and increases purchase confidence. Last and fourth factor is Influencer-Brand Fit and Consumer Perception, the variables are A Strong Influencer-Brand fit enhances message effectiveness, Endorsement appears more genuine to consumers, and Trust and persuasion increase significantly.

Table 5 "Reliability Statistics"

"Cronbach's Alpha"	"Number of Items"
.896	14

Total reliability of 14 items that includes variables for Factors exploring the "Role of Influencer–Brand Fit in Shaping Consumer Trust and Buying Behavior in the Beauty Industry" 0.896 (Table 5).

Conclusion

The online space has not just seen the rising global opinion leaders but has also observed the evolution of social media influencers making significant impact on the diverse and wide audience. As social media platform is evolving continuously and user base is expanding, the dynamic association between social media influencers and followers highlights the transformative power of such digital opinion leaders to shape consumer behavior. The rising social media and influencers has revolutionised the way brands are marketing and promoting their products to customers and make buying decisions. The findings further shows that trusts of consumers act as a critical mediating mechanism between influencer-brand fit and purchase intention. High level of fits develops trusts by signalling honesty, expertise and genuine product usage, which in turn positively influence attitude towards the brand and increase the likelihood of purchase. The factors of the study are Building Customer Trust, Enhanced Brand Credibility, Shaping Purchase Intention, and Influencer-Brand Fit and Consumer Perception.

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