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IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER'S CREDIBILITY DIMENSIONS ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

An Empirical Study related to Influencer Marketing on
Pakistan's Fashion Industry

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate the impact of social media influencer's credibility dimensions (Trustworthiness, Attractiveness, and Expertise), in shaping consumer's behaviour (Purchasing intention of customers and customer's attitude towards the brand). This proposed theoretical framework is based on social learning theory and the theoretical implications of the previous literature which is related to social media influencer marketing. For this empirical study, the data has been collected from Pakistani consumers who are following social media influencers who share and endorse products related to the fashion industry. Data is collected from 149 individuals out of which 135 were valid respondents.

Results reveal that social media influencer's credibility dimension (Trustworthiness, Attractiveness, and Expertise) positively influence the customer's attitude towards the brands as well as the purchase intentions of the customers. In addition, the study has significance for social media influencers in the fashion and style sector in terms of understanding the factors of followers' devotion to them and the noticeable effects of followers' allegiance on their behaviour. This study adds to the literature on social media influencer marketing by demonstrating the importance of follower's perspective towards the social media influencers. Previous studies lack in providing the Pakistan perspective related to social media influencer marketing and this research attempts to fulfill that gap. Another important aspect of this study is that the pictures of influencers have been used to conduct this research.

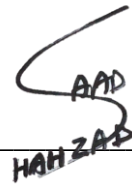
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Faizan Baig



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1 Introduction

This chapter illustrates the background of research, problem statement, research significance, research questions, research objectives, and how this study can play a part in helping practitioners and adding value to the literature. With recent advancements in technology and connectivity and the advent of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram people are highly connected. Information sharing has increased and particularly people started to observe the new trends disseminated through social media users known as content creators or “Social Media Influencers” or “Social Media Celebrities”. These social media users review and use famous brands for their followers for content generation and awareness. Mostly these reviews are on the request of the brands and companies pay these social media celebrities with the intention that it may help their respective brands in increasing their sales by targeting their followers. The present study focuses to explore this relationship in the setting of Pakistan, to understand how social media celebrities are impacting the purchase intentions of customers and as well as the attitude of the customers towards the brands.

1.1 Fashion Industry

Fashion is an ever-evolving industry not only in Pakistan but across the globe. On online platforms, fashion industry products i.e. cosmetics are extensively sold and consumers especially females can find a large number of products on these online platforms, therefore, they prefer to buy products online rather than by visiting physical stores. According to a report presented by Oberlo, fashion products are the second most sold products on e-commerce platforms and across the globe, individuals spent around 1,001 billion USD on fashion products purchase. Therefore, the brands need to provide or share credible information with their clients and attract more customers themselves. With the advent of social media platforms, a few individuals that are having followers in thousands are regarded as social media influencers and they are having a strong impact on the consumer's intentions to purchase products, therefore brands need to involve these celebrities in their campaigns to attract customers and enlarge their market pool segment. This research will be collecting data from the respondents who used social media platforms to buy fashion products in Pakistan and how social media celebrities impact their purchase intentions. Questionnaires have been used to collect data and then regression analysis will be adopted to test the hypothesis.

1.2 Research Background

It is widely accepted that an individual makes decisions about his or her everyday activities. Consumers make purchasing decisions on a daily basis (Kotler et al., 2012). This buying decision is the result of a long and continual process based on needs, usage requirements, and other significant factors (Alves et al., 2016). Other than these, family members, socioeconomic status or social dynamics, and groups all have an impact on purchasing desires. Individuals' purchase intentions have been seen to be influenced by social media personalities in recent years (Fernandes et al., 2016).

With the advent of social media platforms, every individual's means to receive information has changed. Apart from news, social media platforms are considered to be the best means for organizations to advertise their products and share information with potential customers (Jin, et al., 2019). When social media platforms were not available to customers, they got information regarding the product from the organization through traditional means and consumers directly accepted the message, but with the advent of social media platforms customers are no more passive readers, instead, they are the active participants, who can give reviews regarding different products and it became essential for the brands to provide quality products to the customers. At the same time, it became easy for brands to share information regarding their products with customers on social media platforms with ease as more than half of the world is using these platforms (Chetioui, et al., 2020). In 2020, 3.84 billion individuals are using internet social platforms and more than 50% of 3.84 billion are using social media platforms to search for products and services offered by the brands (Statista, 2020).

Instead of believing brands, the customer prefers to believe other customers' reviews regarding products and services offered by brands, and social media platform is best for this activity, as a huge number of customers are connected through online platforms (Lamberton & Andrew, 2016). Therefore, before making a purchasing decision, users search for the reviews and comments of the customer about a specific product and a service. Customers are more likely to share their experiences on a social media platform and give their opinions on social media platforms i.e. facebook, Instagram, etc. as well as on firms' websites and e-commerce platforms i.e. Taobao, Alibaba, and Amazon regarding the different products. These reviews enable new customers to decide on purchase and they also impact the attitude of customers. Reviews provided by the customers and any third party seem more reliable to the new users (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

This concept of involving social media celebrities in product endorsement is not new, when these social media platforms were not present firms were using actors and leaders in their advertisements to brand and market their products (Ford, 2018). But, with an increase in internet usage, and with the growing influence of social media platforms, social media celebrities have become more important than ever for companies to market their brands on online platforms (Ki, et al., 2020). Traditionally, leaders, sportsmen, and actors were famous for their roles in their respective fields, and at the same time, social media influencers (SMI) made efforts and emerged on social media platforms i.e. Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. (Swant, 2016). SMI are also having larger subscribers and followers as compared to actors, or sportsmen and their opinions regarding products and services are having a strong impact on their follower's behavior (De Veirman, et al., 2017). In a previous study, it is stated that social media influencers related to the fashion industry are having more impact on their customers as compared to other sectors (Langner, 2010). The impact of the social media influencers depends on several factors, for instance, the trustworthiness of the SMI is the crucial factor, then the way or method adopted by the influencer to share the product with customers also has a strong impact on customers' purchase intentions (AlFarraj, et al., 2021).

The rapid increase and expansion of influencers have necessitated additional research (Yea, et al., 2021). To this effect, the researchers are trying to address various issues by determining who the trend setters are, and which factors should be given utmost consideration while making the selection of influencers. Those factors could involve the popularity of the influencer, brand-fitness of the influencer, or the perceived credibility of influencers on social media. (Arrieta, et al., 2018). The purpose of this study is to add to the existing body of knowledge in this area. This study focuses on the areas or dimensions which would help in understanding the sources owing to the credibility of influencers and tries to uncover the most influential aspects in determining the purchase intention of followers.

1.3 Research Problem

In comparison to content supplied by companies, the information offered by social media celebrities is considered more accurate, and as a result, they have become a key information source (Forbes, 2016). According to one study, customers' purchasing decisions are influenced by their peers, family, and other trusted people (Sristava, 2007). In the world of marketing, purchase behavior has become a hot topic. Individuals' purchasing decisions are influenced by socioeconomic variables. In the last year, a new social element, namely the effect of social

media celebrities, has been observed to influence people's purchasing intentions (Alves et al., 2016).

Because of the rise in social media users, developing and emerging economies such as Pakistan are seeing influencer-follower relationships. People like Ukhano, Mooroo and Ali Peer Gul are called social media personalities because they generate material, spread it, and earn money from it. Aside from these, social media influencers make money by advertising products in their skirts, which viewers follow with eager anticipation and this has an effect on their purchasing intentions as well. According to the literature and market research, this issue has not been investigated in Pakistan in this way, thus this study aims to lay the groundwork by examining the role of social media celebrities in influencing consumer behavior.

1.4 Study Significance

Following an indepth study of the available literature, it appears that the majority of the studies are focused on traditional celebrities, with only a few studies focusing on social celebrities or content creators and their impact on consumer buying intent. As a result, this research adds to the existing literature on social media celebrities. This study attempts to add significance by including a Pakistani viewpoint on the role of social media celebrities in persuading people to buy. According to the research and market analysis, this phenomenon has not been studied in Pakistan in this way, thus this study will provide a Pakistani perspective on the subject.

Other than this, the outcomes will help organizations in devising strategies for analyzing and managing social media marketing and trends and controlling the negative effect of social media influencers on individuals. In this research study, the three dimensions of social media celebrity's credibility i.e., expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness have been adopted that will help the practitioner and managers in choosing the right influencer for their brands. Moreover, it will help managers, marketing heads in making policies related to engaging customers through effectively collaborating with the social media celebrities.

1.5 Research Objectives

In Pakistan, social media personalities have gained immense popularity in the last few years, and many have started to imitate their lifestyles and feel linked to them. As a result, it is vital to evaluate the connected aspects that may have an impact on users of social networking sites, as well as to investigate the SMI variables that influence their followers' degree of buying intent.

The following are the study goals to examine the influence of social media celebrities on customer purchase intentions, taking into account the discovered gap:

To examine the effect of social media celebrities' credibility on the purchase intentions of customers and its impact on the attitude of customers towards the brand.

1.6 Research questions

Based on the model which we are using as a benchmark for our study following is the research questions related to this study.

1. What is the impact of social media celebrity credibility dimensions impact on purchase intentions and attitudes towards brands?

1.7 Research Structure

This thesis is divided into six chapters which include an Introduction of the study, Review of Literature, Conceptual Model and development of the hypotheses, Research Methodology, Results and Interpretation, and Conclusion and Implications. The first chapter explains about the background and introduction of the concept and the reason behind conducting this particular research. Further, the second chapter would provide references from literature and a theoretical framework that would assist to draw a hypothesis. Chapter three, the conceptual model explains the research model and hypothesis formulation. The fourth chapter of methodology would cover entire aspects of the operations and instrumental design of study variables, it would involve the use of statistical tools and techniques to test the hypothesis by collecting data with the help of a survey conducted using a questionnaire. Moreover, in chapter five, the results section covers the interpretation and discussion of the hypothesis tested through statistical operations to draw inference and reported to understand the relationship between the study variables. Chapter six assesses the findings of research from the previous chapters. It consists of theoretical contributions and practical implications, limitations, conclusions, and future directions.

2 Literature Review

The relevant literature on social media influencer credibility dimensions, consumer attitude toward the brand, and buy intention is discussed in this chapter. All of them are briefly discussed based on the existing literature. Finally, a summary is offered in the concluding portion of this chapter.

2.1 Social Media Influence

Social networking promotes engagement, teamwork, and the sharing of content (Palmer et al., 2009). It consists of several forms, such as media-sharing websites, micro-blogs, blogs, social networks, review websites, and online forums (Malik et al., 2016). On these media platforms, both consumers, as well as enterprises, create content. In addition, when future buyers see Consumer-Generated Content (CGC) as more candid, unbiased, and trustworthy than the Firm Generated Content (FGC) (Herrero et al., 2015; Lo et al., 2019), learning how best it can emerge in a way that doesn't threaten their brand is highly critical for organizations. In addition to CGC's, the attractiveness and usefulness of the shared content are also essential and play a key role in motivating prospective buyers to interact with goods, services, or experiences, (Chen et al., 2015).

A social media influencer is a mainstream, prominent individual who promotes a brand's goods and services on social media networks. One can also describe the influencers on social media as a person who collaborate with followers in a particular industry. It is also a person who can influence the individual's transactions because of his authority or partnership with the target consumers (Xiang et al., 2010). He could have his blog with a credible audience or a social media site, providing his readers with unique interest content. Each enterprise's purpose is to attract experts to promote their goods. Studies show one can receive \$6.5 for every dollar invested in online marketing activities (Freberg et al., 2011). Instagram remains the most successful tool for reaching influencers - 87.1 percent of them called it their posts' key platform (Freberg et al., 2011). A social media influencer's definition goes beyond the number of followers one can draw to a website or social media network. The company's ability to establish trust with its core audience and improve it daily is vital for the organization (Lim et al., 2017).

While the use of electronic social media by influencers to impact the attitude of customers towards the brands and purchase intention is increasingly important, there is also a lack of academic studies on the production and usage of various online content types by social media

influencers. When deciding to purchase something social media is adopted by the customers (Bilgihan et al., 2016). Not only for the goods but social media is also important for the service-providing sector, with 500 million ratings and suggestions and 390 million frequent tourists, TripAdvisor makes details accessible to millions of travelers (Oliveirat et al., 2020). The massive amount of user-generated content (UGC), is the result. So, networking in media is becoming ever more critical for the products and as well as for the service development industry. Internet technology has reshaped the way people behave and how their attitudes and decisions are impacted by social media influencers. The CEO of the media platform “Facebook”- Mark Zuckerberg said: "People influence people. Nothing affects people more than a recommendation from a good friend. Practitioners in the services providing sector as well as from the product delivering sector are interested in learning why people are affected by others' views while considering a journey" (Pinto &Yagik, 2017).

Some of the very few studies particularly explored the impact of social media on consumers' purchase intentions and behavior towards the brands. Social media enable users to provide information regarding products and services provided by different companies (Filiert al., 2015; Thamet al., 2013). Moreover, in some studies at least, the position of social media seemed to confirm purchase intention and also impact the consumer behavior of customers towards brands (Bakr et al., 2013). This research is related to the fashion industry and in Pakistan as females extensively follow online social media celebrities and follow their opinion while making decisions related to buying from specific brands. Amna Ilyas, Laraib Raheem, Waliya Najib, Merium Pervaiz, and Ayesha Baig are some of the famous fashion Icons and individuals follow them to make best decision regarding brand selections. Laraib Rahim has 785,000 followers on Instagram where she shared information regarding brands and different products, similarly Amna Ilyas who has dark skin and is not much attractive but she is believed to be more credible, trustworthy and expert therefore 697,000 people follow her and take her suggestions seriously. Waliya Najib is another Fashion influencer and she is having more than a million followers on her Instagram account. Mariyum Pervaiz and Ayesha Baig are also famous fashion icons and they are having 1.5 million and 661,000 followers on Instagram. The pictures of these fashion icons are attached in the appendix.

2.2 Social Media Celebrities

Social media celebrities are third-party persons with a high social standing who have a significant social impact and influence their followers' attitudes through their content on social

media platforms (Freberg et al., 2011). These celebrities share their personal experiences and thoughts on various brands and items for which they were paid by companies to provide customers with real online feedback about the product or brand (Ong, 2019). Conventional celebrities and influencers are distinguished by the fact that celebrities are said to be created through traditional media, whereas influencers achieve high social standing by attempting to develop a true brand for themselves through their social network (Abidin, 2016).

2.3 Influencer Credibility

The credibility of the communicator is crucial in persuading the audience (Hovland et al., 1951). "Micro-endorsers" is a term used to describe social media celebrities. Endorsers usually play the same function in commercials as the source of the message does in the persuasive process. In prior studies, source credibility was utilized to assess the effect of the source on the message's productivity (Giffen, 1967). The influence of endorsers on customers was investigated in prior studies (Dwevidi et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2015). Expertise and trustworthiness are two predictors of source credibility, according to a study (Hovland, 1954). Several earlier studies have employed trustworthiness and attractiveness to determine the reliability of source expertise (Ohanian, 1990; Lafferty et al., 2000). Other characteristics, such as trustworthiness and likability, have been employed in earlier studies to assess source credibility (Keller, 1998; Clow et al., 2006). Expertise is a source's competence or qualification to make such claims on a given subject or issue, including the source's knowledge or abilities (McCroskey, 1966). The recipient's assessment of the source as trustworthy, genuine, or sincere is included in the source's trustworthiness (Giffin, 1967). Similarly, the likeness between the communicator and the receiver is referred to as the dimension of believability. The perceived appeal of the source, i.e. face, physical attractiveness, sensuality or sexuality, and liability of the source that conveys the message, is referred to as source attractiveness (Kahle et al., 1985).

Based on Munnuka, Uusitalo, and Toivonen (2016) this study uses three factors of credibility of the source, which consist of trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness.

2.3.1 Expertise

Expertise is defined as how well an individual knows about a product (Hovland et al., 1953). The listeners of the followers are significantly influenced by the information shared by these influencers. The receiver's behavior is influenced by the source's level of competence. Subjects

with a suitably expert source have more compliance than those with a less expert source (Ohanian, 1990).

The amount of perceived knowledge predicts the social media celebrity's productivity. Consumers consider expertise while deciding whether or not to adopt items or services that are suggested by influencers (Lou et al., 2019). Furthermore, expertise is defined as the capacity of a consumer's view of a social media star that he or she follows to provide authentic content (Babakus et al., 2014).

2.3.2 Attractiveness

Baker et al. (1977) defined attractiveness as face and physical beauty, as well as sensuality (Rogers, 1980). According to previous research on marketing and persuasion, appearance plays a crucial role in the first evaluation (Baker et al., 1977; Joseph, 1982; Usitalo et al., 2016). Attractiveness also includes unique individuals i.e. females with acid attacks also motivate the population and keep individuals following them and believing their opinions regarding brands.

2.3.3 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the faith that buyers have in a message source's capacity to make assertions that he or she believes are real (Ohanian, 1990). Characteristics of a person connected to acceptance, psychological safety, and a friendly atmosphere are pronounced as a consequence of trusting someone (Giffin, 1967).

2.4 Customers Behavior

Online behavior is defined as individual behaviors towards online products and services provided by the companies while making purchases. Buyer behavior refers to the buyer's perspective regarding a product while purchasing from an online source and this behavior can either be positive or negative. Research has identified behavior as a multi-dimensional entity that may be conceptualized in some ways (Li & Zhang, 2002). Different researchers and academics use different parameters to adjudge the behavior of the consumer. According to Gozukara et al. (2014), the first aspect of consumer behavior relates to the user's perception of a practical incentive, the incentives could include but are not limited to the quality of the product, marginal convenience, variety seeking, the comparative benefit of costs, time and effectiveness (Gozukara et al., 2014). The second aspect of consumer behavior is a hedonic motive related to happiness, fulfillment of fantasy, and enjoyment. The third is perceived ease

of use and utility, according to Baber et al. (2014). Another aspect related to consumers' perception is perceived risk while shopping online.

In the previous research, it is stated that trust is critical in building firm relationships among business-to-business and business-to-customers (Roseau et al., 1998; Dony et al., 2015). Further previous research states that social media influencers are vital for impacting consumers' behavior. Confidence also helps brands to establish deep-rooted relationships with end-user and build their faithfulness (Selnes, 1998). A recent report on social media trends indicated that they were found to be effective by 94 percent of marketers who used social media celebrities in their marketing campaigns and comparing it with the conventional way of advertising, marketing through influencers provides 11 times the return on investment (ROI) (Ahmad, 2018). With the advent of the latest e-commerce technologies, the communication between the brands and the consumers is being narrowed which allowed for getting more credible information about the brand's products and helps in making quick and right buying decisions (Telen, 2004). In 2009, research conducted by Lee stated that the information on social media which comes from a more credible source having expertise regarding specific products is more likely to impact the purchase intentions of customers (Lee, 2009).

2.4.1 Purchase Intentions

Purchasing intention is an important term and has been a core focus of numerous previous studies (Chandon et al., 2005; Dholokia et al., 2002; Morwitz, 2001). Purchasing intention is the probability of an individual's future decision to purchase a particular item at some particular time (Howard, 1963). Rather than considering purchase intention from a likelihood perspective, purchase intention is a consistent procedure according to some authors. Purchase intention is a consumer's mental state as he/she determines and chooses the number of things to buy at a particular time (Lankford et al., 1993).

Purchase intention is narrated as a person's probability of engaging in a specific behavior (Fishbein et al., 1975). Therefore, it is the chances of the willingness of the customer to make a purchase. Some authors described it as the chances of a customer to purchase goods (Dodds et al., 1991; Zeithaml, 1988).

So, after examining many different definitions of researchers, purchase intention can be defined as either a buyer's probability of purchasing a product or the decision-making involved when

buying an item. Predicting the future actions of buyers, particularly purchasing manners, is a basic part of prophecy and planning.

Furthermore, knowing purchase intention is a crucial consideration for organizations trying to acquire and maintain customers and improve the organization's chances for success and development, thereby boosting the interest of investors (Thang, 2008). As research showed that brands depend on consumers' desires pertaining to selecting a new product or replicating purchasing of existing items (Cornwell et al., 2005; Ngoc, 2009). One researcher conducted huge-scale research based on the connection between buying intention of customers and sales of grocery products, automobiles, and computer-related items. The research findings indicated that the intent of purchasing and sales related to food items, vehicles, and computer stocks have a positive relationship (Chandon et al., 2005).

2.4.2 Customers Attitude

Attitude is the behavior of an individual towards a specific object, and that attitude develops based on different experiences. Attitude is based on three components which are beliefs, an individual's feelings, and the intention of a person toward anything (Peter, 2018). From a marketing perspective, customer attitude refers to the idea of consumers having an opinion about the production values and how products help in satisfying the needs and demands of customers. Another research that was presented in 2012 states that the consumer's attitude is based on three components A, B, and C. A stands for the affect that shows what are the feelings of a customer about a product, and B stands for the behavior that defines how consumers use a product or how consumers react towards a product. In the last, comes C which defines what customers believe to be true about a specific product. All these components collectively define the customer's attitude toward a product (Madichie, 2012).

Consumer attitude is also defined as the combination of several processes that runs in the consumer's mind during the selection of a particular product, and while purchasing it, and the functionality of that product whether it satisfies the needs and the required demands of the customer (Solomon, 2010). Attitude is an internal state of an individual that changes with changing of surroundings, objects, or the people he/she is living with. According to another author, attitude is defined as an intrinsic property of an individual that changes with changing circumstances. An evaluation of the community or advertisement by a person is called an attitude (Solomon, 2010). These are the basic definitions of consumer attitude. Consumers'

attitude is used as the first independent variable of the study. From the literature, it is also noticed that attitude is a vast concept, and from every definition, it is concluded that the customer attitude is the difference in the behavior of an individual in different circumstances.

Consumers' attitudes are preferred by marketers and practitioners to understand behaviors. (Solomon et al., 2010). To influence the purchase intention of the customer the marketers must explore the attitudes of the customers about specific products. Consumers' perception is changing with the surrounding in which they are living (the world) (Schiffman et al., 2012). The research which was presented in 2004 by Webster and Keller stated that the consumption behavior of the customer is highly dependent on their attitude and that is why marketers need to analyze the customer attitude (Webster and Keller, 2004).

The customer makes their buying decision based on the brand image and the product value. Marketers need to create awareness amongst the consumers about the products, functionalities, and how their products can fulfill their needs and desires as it will change the attitude of the customer toward the brand's image and positively affect their purchase intentions (Iglesias et al., 2011). Consumers who are having needs and demands aligned with the brand's products are more loyal and build long-term relations, which result in repeated purchasing. So, from the literature mentioned above, we can conclude that it is important for marketing practitioners to understand the consumer's attitude before designing a product and a sensitization campaign in order to effectively influence purchase behavior.

Customers' attitudes are based on their perceptions regarding products and services provided by the companies. Word "perception" mean the experience that an individual gain through their senses. Perception is the experience that is gained from vision (Cherry, 2020). Consumer perception is the opinion of the customer about a brand, either negative or positive. In marketing, consumer perception is defined as the awareness of specific products among the customers, and awareness of the business. The term perception is more often used in psychology in which it is defined as the opinion-building process that depends on factors like interaction with the surroundings, and visual and taste experiences that one faces (Sheetz, 2014). According to another author, perception is defined as the result of the learning process of an individual (Evans et al., 2009). Our knowledge about people and our surroundings shapes our perceptions. Consumer perception is the opinion of consumers about a brand, and its products (Oliver, 1999).

When a customer experiences a brand it contributes toward defining the perception. Consumers' perception is formed based on interpretation of the products in the market (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990). The perception of a customer is affected by the marketing and the advertisement techniques that are adopted by the marketers. Advertisements that provide credible information to their customer and have a fun element in their marketing strategy form a good perception amongst customers about the brands that positively affect their buying intentions (Brakus et al., 2009).

Marketers need to design such strategies that positively affect the consumers' perceptions as the consumers' perceptions are directly related to the consumers' intentions to purchase from the company. Information provided in advertisements needs to be accurate and credible as it will create trust between the organization and customer relationship. Credible information helps in building a positive perception amongst the customers (Agrawal, 2016). With the advent of technologies, customers prefer to buy the product from online platforms and that's why it is needed for the organization to provide such an online platform so that it became easy for the customers to buy the product of their choice (Hasan, 2016). In 2019 it was reported that around 4.13 billion people are using social media platforms all across the world, that is why most organizations are using online platforms to share their product information to engage customers and to create awareness among customers. Information shared by the company on such platforms creates awareness among the customers and the credibility of the information affects the perception of the customers. In today's world where competition is intensive in the market, customers' needs and demands are changing exponentially and with the advent of technologies, they prefer to buy products that are easily accessible. A product that is easily accessible influences the customers' perception positively (Liu, 2007). Keeping in view the above discussion, it can be concluded that the consumers' perception regarding a particular brand highly contributes toward building the brand image and intention to purchase something from a particular brand.

2.5 Chapter Summary

After reviewing the literature, author have identified that social media influencer's credibility dimensions, i.e. (expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness) are the critical factor in shaping the consumer's loyalty towards brands, as well as the purchase intentions. Numerous previous studies have attempted to identify the impact of social media influencer's credibility dimensions impact on purchase intention and customer's attitude towards the brands and therefore based on

those researches author have designed the conceptual framework in which the impact of social media influencer's credibility dimensions will be analyzed on purchase intentions and customers attitude towards brands. Most of the previous studies that are related to influencers' impact on the purchase intention of customers are in developed countries like the United States of America and European countries but this study centers on collectivist society i.e., Pakistan which has never been done before. Moreover, the usage of photographs of the influencers to conduct this study is another unique aspect of this research study.

3 Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

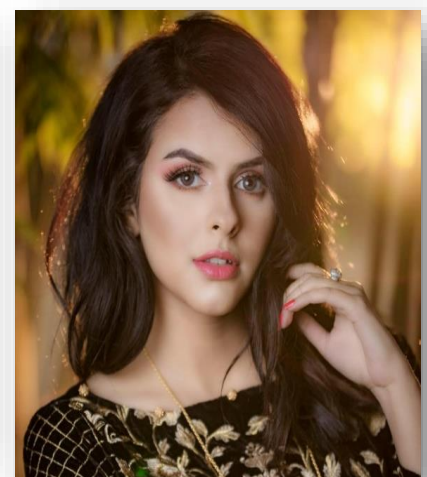
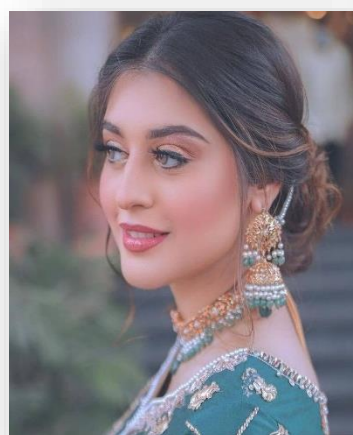
The first section of this chapter is a conceptual framework that briefly explains the study model of this research. The hypothesis development section demonstrates the relation among the variables that we have established for this study and the relevant evidence from prior research to construct a hypothesis. Based on these hypotheses, the data is then tested and inference is drawn, accordingly.

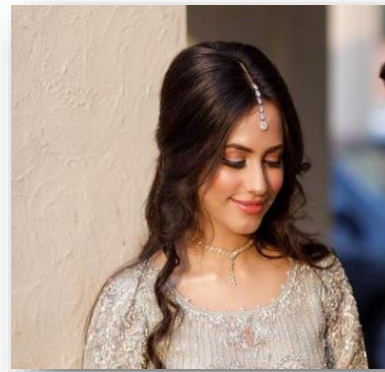
3.1 Conceptual Framework

The model explains the impact of social media celebrities' credibility dimension in shaping the attitude and customer purchase intention. In this study, we use three independent variables i.e., expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, and the dependent variable is purchase intention and customer attitude towards brands.

These three independent variables correspond towards the dimensions of source credibility or influencer credibility. Keeping in view the fact that in the previous research, some researchers have only used two dimensions of source credibility, this research uses three dimensions of credibility based on Munnuka and Uusitalo and Toivonen (Munnuka and Uusitalo and Toivonen, 2016). To the best of our knowledge, previous literature lacks the basic understanding of the mechanism through which the content of influencers and dimensions of social media celebrity's credibility affects purchase intention and customers' attitude toward brands. Therefore, this study fills this literature gap.

This research is of practical importance as well because it attempts to facilitate practitioners and marketing managers to involve social media influencers in their marketing campaigns to attract customers. Further, this research study is using the pictures of the social media influencers from the fashion industry which make this research more significant.





3.1.1 Theory

Bandura's theory of social learning has been used in a variety of domains, including marketing, communication, and influence. This theory serves as a theoretical basis for generating concepts about socializing agents that can forecast a client's consumption behavior (Chen, Wang, and Hung, 2015). This idea states that when a person interacts with socializing agents, whether directly or indirectly, he or she becomes motivated and engages in positive conduct (Chen, Wang, and Hung, 2015). Various previous researchers have used this idea to exhibit how diverse socializing agents such as celebrities, influencers, family, and friends impact consumer behavior. Conforming to the arguments stated above, the hypothesis which has been developed for this research study discusses how celebrities on social media impact customer behavior. This idea is presented as a contextual foundation for celebrity conceptualization, and that has a significant influence on audience attitudes and decision-making. Social learning theory is more adequate for this study as it focuses on credibility which is value-based and helps in giving awareness to users through engaging these internet celebrities which motivates the decision related to whether to buy the product or not. Hence, the social learning theory by Bandura is highly valid in explaining the proposed model and conceptualization.

Secondly, the theory of reasoned actions is also suitable for this research study. According to the best of our knowledge and after an in-depth analysis of the literature, we have concluded that there is an adequate amount of literature available on this topic, but on the other hand, the relevant literature on social commerce is still meager. However, the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by Ajzen and Fishbein has been accepted as it provides a background to analyze the psychological process of the relationships between the consumers' intentions, behaviors, and consumers' attitudes. An individual's beliefs affect his or her attitudes governing the behavior ultimately determining the intention to perform certain actions (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980).

Therefore, this study also uses the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) as an important theory to further elaborate on the perception of consumers' trust and purchase intention corresponding towards consumers' behavior. It is believed in TRA that the perception of an individual always results in actions dictated by his or her attitudes. By following this assumption, this research study views the credibility dimension as an individual perception affecting and governing the behaviors.

In social commerce, consumers can check the personal information or profiles, reviews, recommendations, and ratings of other consumers on social networking sites (SNS), so social commerce characteristics may influence the trust and behavior of consumers. To this effect, this research tries to understand the features of s-commerce which affect beliefs, social media influencers' credibility, behaviors of customers towards brands, and customers' purchase intentions. Previous studies declared that these factors influence consumer purchase intentions, and attitudes toward online business (e-commerce). Furthermore, previous studies measured various aspects and characteristics of s-commerce. For instance, Kim (2011) declared that the social commerce characteristics (e.g. social media influencers' reputation, and market share) affect the consumers' purchase intentions. Therefore this theory is also suitable to support the research model.

Whereas the Social Comparison Theory can also be applied to some extent as this theory is generally more suitable for the comparison of two cultures. Social comparison theory which was presented by Festinger (1954) addresses that people are used to comparing themselves when no standards are available (Festinger, 1954). This theory is supporting the social media credibility factor as when more than one organization is producing the same product, the people will buy the product with a good reputation and for this, they will tend to focus on the comparison process and word of mouth.

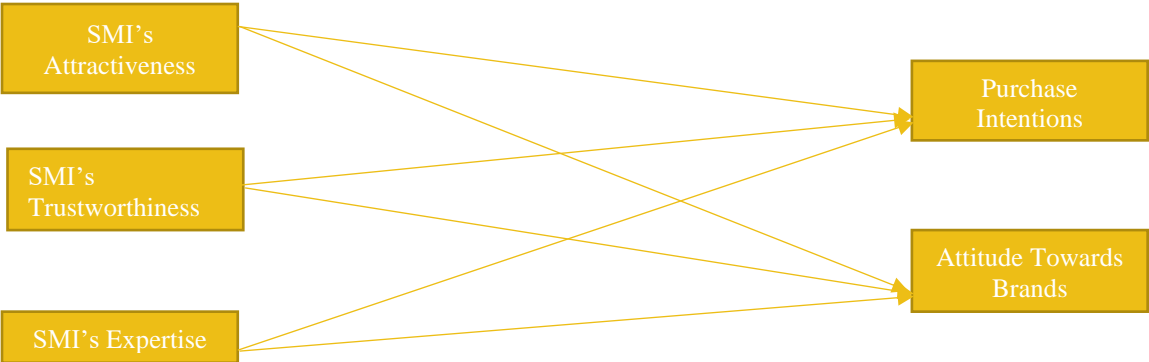


Figure 3- 1 Conceptual Framework

3.2 Hypotheses Development

This section will demonstrate the relationship between the independent and dependent variables keeping in view the prior sources of research to come up with a hypothesis and as mentioned before, data would be tested and inference would be drawn, accordingly.

3.2.1 The Relationship between Attractiveness and consumers' attitude toward brands, and Purchase Intention

According to another study, source knowledge along with attractiveness has a significant impact on consumer purchase intentions (Yi et al., 2013). As a result, social media superstars' can influence customer attitudes towards specific brands and the purchase intentions of the customers. To win consumer confidence and retain the customer for a longer period, these online superstars must maintain mastery of their content. As a result of previous research, it has been concluded that information or recommendations about brands and products which come from a source that is an expert, attractive with good skills and knowledge will have a positive impact on consumer's behavior toward brands (Till et al., 2000). Several past studies suggest a positive relationship between attractiveness, the physical beauty of the source, and buying behavior of customers (Erdogan, 1999; Grave, 2017). Similarly, previous researchers have also discovered a significant positive relationship between source attractiveness and purchase intention (Petty et al., 1983; Erdogan, 1999; Chaiken, 1979; Dion et al., 1972; Horai et al., 1974; Reingen et al., 1993; Shavitt et al., 1994). An attractive social media influencer can affect consumers with positive outcomes. Endorsers with attractive features can exert a positive attitude on consumers subsequently resulting in a purchasing intention (Till et al., 2000). Endorsers with attractive characteristics may therefore demonstrate a positive perception toward consumers and influence customer purchase intention (Pornpitakpan, 2004). Social media celebrities with amazing appeal and beauty can influence the intention of followers. Social media influencers with amazing appearances are more inclined to capture followers' attention. The attitude of customers toward the social media celebrity can be enhanced if the social media celebrity is physically attractive and appealing (Bardia et al., 2011).

Based on the arguments mentioned above it is hypothesized that:

H1a: Attractiveness of social media influencers is positively related to the purchase intentions of the customers.

H1b: Attractiveness of social media influencers is positively related to customers' attitudes towards the brand.

3.2.2 The Relationship between Trustworthiness, consumers' attitude toward brands, and Purchase Intention

If information or recommendation related to brand and products comes from a source who is believed or considered to be trustworthy that information is considered to be credible and consumers act differently according to the degree of risk and level of trust they have toward the information they obtained and when information or recommendation is credible, degree of perceived trust toward that information will be high and the customer will trust that information or recommendations (Shamhuyenhazva et al., 2016; Lou et al., 2019). On social media sites, these internet celebrities are considered to be opinion leaders because they achieve a high level of trust and appreciation from their followers (Mendoza, 2010). Influencers are commonly used to increase message authenticity and efficacy (Clow et al., 2006). If the influencer is believed to be trustworthy the information, he or she conveys has more authenticity and efficacy (Ohanian, 1990). Trustworthiness increases consumer confidence that the celebrity endorser is not engaging in opportunistic behavior (Gefen, 2000). Social media celebrity is considered to be more trustworthy compared to the content provided to customers by companies and thus these internet personalities become an increasingly important information source. These internet celebrities are perceived to be trustworthy and thus have a stronger effect on customer purchase decisions related to products and services (Abidin, 2016). From the previous research, it is stated that the trustworthiness of the social media celebrity has a significant impact on the trust that consumers have on them and on their content and posts (Lou et al., 2019). Thus, from past research, it can be founded that followers purchasing intent is highly impacted by the social media influencers' trustworthiness.

The most important credibility component influencing followers' behavior has been recognized as trustworthiness (Wiedmann, 2020). Selflessness, according to Walster et al. (1966), is the cornerstone of dependability. Consumers are more likely to respond positively to endorsers who are thought to be trustworthy than to endorsers who are thought to be less trustworthy (Walster et al., 1966). Whether the audience considers these celebrity endorsements as experts in their subject, trustworthy endorsers have stronger persuasive power (McGinnies & Ward, 1980). The most crucial factor contributing towards forming followers' attitudes about the recommended brand is the perceived trustworthiness of social influencers (Bhatt, et al., 2013).

Researchers discovered a link between followers' perceptions of social media influencers' trustworthiness and purchase intent and attitude toward the recommended company (Schouten et al., 2020).

Following the aforementioned ideas, the current study views social media influencers' trustworthiness as a key factor of their legitimacy in driving the purchase intentions of their social media followers. The current study hypothesizes that followers' attitudes toward fashion-related firms and their products are favorably influenced by social media influencers' perceived trustworthiness. As a result, the following is proposed in the study:

H2a: Social media celebrities' trustworthiness is positively related to the purchase intentions of the customers.

H2b: Social media celebrities' trustworthiness is positively related to customers' attitudes towards the brand.

3.2.3 The Relationship between Expertise, consumers' attitude toward brands, and Purchase Intention

Expertise is a source's competency or capacity to make remarks on a certain subject or issue based on their knowledge or abilities (McCroskey, 1966). If information or suggestions about a brand or product come from a source who is an expert with strong skills and knowledge about the brand or product, the information or recommendations will have a positive influence on the consumer, and the customer will accept the information or recommendations (Halvorsen et al., 2013). A source with high competence compared to one with little experience appeared to contribute towards ensuring favorable opinions about the endorser and the commercial proposition, according to the researchers (Braunsberger, 1996). It is further said that customers' attitudes, behavioral intentions, and actual behavior are influenced by source knowledge (McGinnies et al., 1980). Celebrities who are considered to be experts seem to be more persuasive and eligible to influence consumer buying behavior (Ohanian, 1991). Influencer expertise affects both the attitude and purchasing intention of followers (Till et al., 2000). Another researcher suggests that source expertise has a significant positive impact on purchase intention (Pornpitakpan, 2004). Influencers who are viewed as an expert can lead towards ensuring authenticity propelling their followers to the content so the acceptance level of the message is higher (Metzger et al., 2003). However, from the previous research, it can be

founded that the features of endorsers such as expertise have a significant impact on customer purchasing intentions.

In the field of digital marketing, being the key resource, endorsers play a critical role in projecting a positive image of businesses ultimately influencing customer behavior (Rebelo, 2017). These celebrities who are social influencers leverage their beauty, perceived trustworthiness, and perceived knowledge as a marketing tool to promote endorsed companies and boost persuasiveness (Aw & Chuah, 2021). The impact of social media influencers' trustworthiness has been progressively researched within influencer marketing since the advent of social networking sites (Boerman, 2020). According to previous research, the endorsers' perceived credibility and expertise have a significant influence on purchase intent and brand attitude. The amount of knowledge, abilities, and competencies of the influencers in a certain topic is referred to as expertise (McCroskey, 1966). Influencers' perceived competence has a beneficial impact on organizations as it positively influences followers' purchasing intentions (Lim, et al., 2017). The followers' view of the competence of social media influencers is a significant determinant of their attitude toward the recommended brand (Trivedi, 2020). In contrast to the above findings, Wiedmann in 2020, discovered a very low correlation between social media influencers' perceived knowledge, brand attitude, and followers' purchase intent.

Consumers use social media celebrity's experiences when deciding whether or not to accept the content (Valck et al., 2013). Expert social media celebrities can easily persuade clients to adopt their advice and information associated with the product (Liu et al., 2015). Those who supply material or advice linked to things in which they are an expert and have comprehensive knowledge are perceived as more authentic than those who share their opinions on goods in which they are not an expert. One researcher conducted interviews, and the results show that the amount of knowledge of Instagram users on product reviews offered by social media celebrities was influenced by their level of experience (Djafarova et al., 2017). The expertise of the source positively influences the purchase intentions of the consumers (Yi et al., 2013). These online superstars, on the other hand, must retain mastery through continuous learning and updating themselves to retain customers for a longer period and for sustaining confidence. So, based on the previous research, it is concluded that information or recommendations about brands and products which come from a source that is an expert and has good skills and knowledge will have a positive impact, and customers will remain loyal and trust that information or recommendations.

H3a: Expertise of social media influencers is positively related to the purchase intentions of the customers.

H3b: Expertise of social media influencers is positively related to customers' attitudes towards the brand.

4 Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the survey, data collection, and statistical methods to test the above-mentioned hypothesis and it is achieved by including data collection methods, tool and scale selection, and samples used to gather data. In the end, the researchers have conducted durability and validity checks to determine the model's reliability, accordingly.

4.1 Research Design

The purpose of the research design is to seek ways to respond to the research question at hand (Cooper et al., 2005). It would provide for us to define relationships among variables thus allowing us to reach at some inference and furthermore, the research design directs the user towards the selection of references and the necessary knowledge. (Wiersma et al., 2005). There are two approaches to testing the data: qualitative and quantitative. In this analysis, a quantitative approach is used for the said purpose. Moreover, cross-sectional sampling is important to study the features of observed events and investigate potential relationships between them (Leed et al., 2001). Therefore, utilizing a survey research design with statistical tools for analysis can be effective in identifying the association between entrepreneurial expectations and independent variables (Creswell, 2009). Convenience sampling and convenience-based data collection strategy have been used to collect data from social media users of Pakistan who follows social media influencers.

4.2 Sample and Data Collection

Empirical research generally requires data collection from a given sample utilizing appropriate instruments. To choose an appropriate sample and accurate instruments for the analysis to test variables in compliance with proven statistical techniques, a researcher may determine the essence of the study, its scale, and settings. The sample is a subset of the population and it allows the researcher to draw conclusions that are generalizable to the given population (Sekaran, 2006). So, the sample represents the population and enables a researcher to generalize its properties and characteristics to the entire population. However, in our case sampling is difficult to do because the total number of populations is not available. Thus, a non-probability sampling technique based on a conventional approach is suitable for this study.

The number of responses obtained influences research quality and peculiarity. If the survey is too small, the data collected may not be sufficient. Several methods exist in the literature to determine sample size. Hair et al (2010) suggest five respondents per variable/item of

measurement be evaluated as the lower limit but the most appropriate form of assessment is the 10:1 ratio (10 samples per subject) (Hair et al., 2010). Researchers have also suggested that each requirement should have at least 10 participants (Schreiber et al., 2006). In another method, Roscoe (1975) suggested a rule of thumb (Sekaran et al., 2010), that sample size should be greater than 30 and less than 500 and its size should be many times (preferably 10 or more times) as high as the number of variables in multivariate analysis. In this study Hair, et al (2010) approach to sample selection has been adopted.

$$\text{Sample Size}=10*(n \text{ number of overall measurements})$$

For data collection, we adopted the convenience data collection technique as it is difficult to trace the actual number of people who use social media or follow specific social media influencers. The structured questionnaire was designed and distributed electronically to collect responses. Approximately 149 questionnaires were retrieved through this mechanism, out of which 135 were complete. It indicates that the response rate is 90.6% approximately. An online form was developed and circulated amongst 4 online groups having total 149 participants and they were asked not to forward/spread this questionnaire further so that we can calculate the response rate. In the questionnaire, we first inquired from respondents do they follow these 5 influencers or not, in case yes, questionnaires were filled by the respondents and in the case of no, they simply did not filled the questionnaire. According to the report share by customerthermometer, when the response rate is higher than 50% that is acceptable, here in this research we are having a response rate of more than 90% which make this sample size effective.

4.3 Research Strategy

The present research adopts exploratory research nature to give answers to research questions and to test the formulated hypothesis. The in-depth literature analysis has provided specific linkages which helped in drawing hypotheses and identifying the relevant instrumentation. Furthermore, the convenience data collection method with non-probability sampling has been adopted.

4.4 Study Variables and Measurement

4.4.1 Independent Variables

In this study, we have used three independent variables i.e. expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness which are measured by the 7-point, Likert scale. These three dimensions of social media influencer credibility have further determinants which are as follows; Trustworthiness

has 4-items (Ohanian (1990) and Wiedmann and Mettenheim (2020), Expertise has 4-items (Chetioui, et al. (2019) and Ohanian (1990)., Attractiveness has 4-items (Wiedmann and Mettenheim (2020) and Jansom and Pongsakornrunsilp (2021).

4.4.2 Dependent Variable

The impact of social media influencer credibility on customer intention to buy products and services is captured by purchase intention which is the dependent variable in this study (Chetioui, et al., (2019). 5-item scale has been used to measure purchase intention.

The second dependent variable of this research study is the attitude of customers towards brands and to measure this, we have adopted questionnaires derived from (Chetioui, et al., 2019; Blanche, et al., 2021.)

5 Results and Interpretation

This chapter is based on two sections, results and the interpretation of the statistical analysis. It includes frequency, descriptive statistics, reliability, validity, correlation, and regression analysis. All of these are mentioned in this chapter.

5.1 Frequency Analysis

1) Gender

This research study contained 135 respondents, and out of these 135 respondents 89 were females, and 46 were male. Most of the respondents are female and only a few were males. The female contribution is 65.9% of the total study and 34.1% of males have contributed to this research study. More respondents are females as this research is mainly based on the fashion industry therefore females are larger in number.

Table 5- 1 Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Female	89	65.9	65.9	65.9
Male	46	34.1	34.1	100
Total	135	100	100	

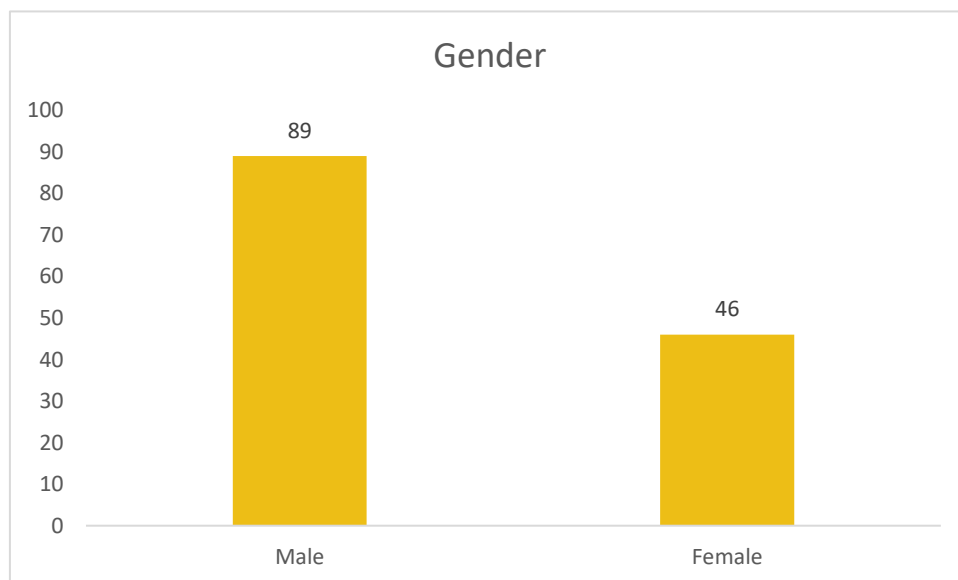


Figure 5- 1 Gender

2) Age

This research is based on consumers and age is one of the control variables used in this research. After analyzing the literature, and high-ranked journals, it is noticed that for consumer-oriented research authors have used age as one of the control variables therefore

age is added as a control variable. In the research questionnaires, we have divided the age group into 5 sections, out of 135 respondents 23 belong to the age group of 15-20 which corresponds to 17% of the total respondents. While the major respondents who contribute to this research study belong to the group of 21-25. 51 respondents belong to the 21-25 years age group which contributes 37.8% of the total respondent ratio. 21 respondents belong to the age group of 26-30 years old and it contributes around 15.6% of the age group. 23 respondents belong to 31-35 age group and it contributes around 17% to this research study. Out of 135, 17 individuals belong to the age group of over 35 which contributes around 12.6% toward the research study.

Table 5- 2 Age Group

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
15-20	23	17.0	17.0	17.0
21-25	51	37.8	37.8	54.8
26-30	21	15.6	15.6	70.4
31-35	23	17.0	17.0	87.4
35+	17	12.6	12.6	100
Total	135	100	100	

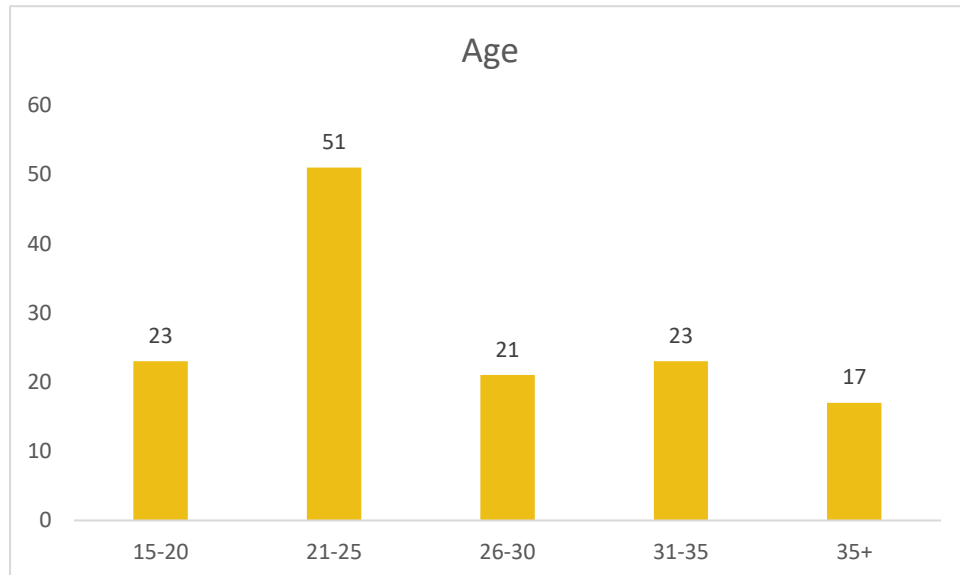


Figure 5- 2Age

3) Education

Another important control variable of this research study is education. After analyzing the literature, and high-ranked journals, it is noticed that for consumer-oriented research authors have used education as one of the control variables therefore education is added as a control

variable. This control variable is divided into 5 sections, that are matric, intermediate, bachelor, master's, and Ph.D. Out of 135 of 21 individuals were have matric level education, which contributes to 15.6 percent of the research study.42 individuals were having intermediates level education and which contribute to 31.1% of the individuals. Further, a bachelor's is another education level added in the research questionnaires, and out of 135, 41 individuals belong to bachelor's and which contributes to around 30.4% of this research study. 30 were having master's level education which contributes 22.2% of the research study, and only 1 were having Ph.D. education which contributes around .7 % of this research study. The table below is showing the percentage, valid percentage, frequency, and cumulative percentage of this research study.

Table 5- 3 Education

Education	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Matric	21	15.6	15.6	15.6
Intermediate	42	31.1	31.1	46.7
Bachelor	41	30.4	30.4	77.1
Masters	30	22.2	22.2	99.3
PhD	1	0.7	0.7	100
Total	135	100	100	

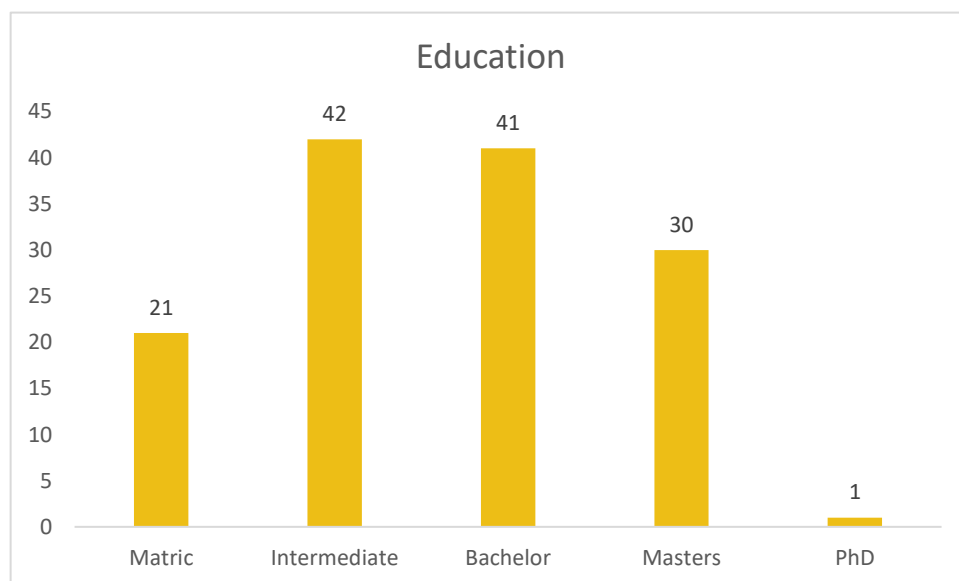


Figure 5- 3 Education

Which one is the most important characteristic to influence the consumer's behavior?

We have asked this question regarding the social media influencer’s credibility dimension i.e. trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise. 80% of the respondents admit trustworthiness is

the most important characteristic, 72% state expertise is more important while only 21% state attractiveness is important.

Table 5- 4 SMI Characteristics

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Expertise	97	72	72
Trustworthiness	108	80	80
Attractiveness	28	21	21

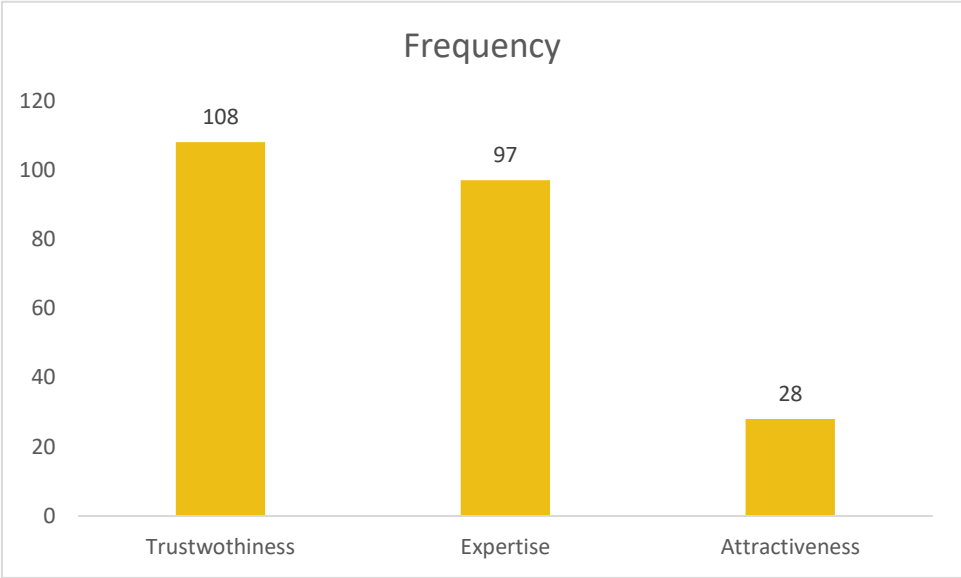


Figure 5- 4 SMI characteristics

5.2 Descriptive Study

The below tables exhibits the descriptive statistics of the research study. This research study contains a Likert scale of seven. From the table below it can be seen that the social media influencers’ expertise is having a mean of 5.7722 that states most the individual agreed that social media influencers’ expertise is a critical factor in shaping the purchase intentions and the attitude of the customers. The deviation of social media influencers’ expertise from the mean is 0.72949. Further, the social media influencers’ trustworthiness is having a mean of 5.8019 with a standard deviation of 0.79181. Again, these descriptive statistics sates that social media influencers are a critical factor in shaping the purchase intentions and the attitude of the customers. The third independent variable of this research study is the social media influencer’s attractiveness, the mean of this variable is 5.7944, which again states, that a social media influencer's attractiveness is a critical factor in shaping the purchase intentions as well as the attitude of the customers towards the brands. The deviation for attractiveness from the mean is 0.75549.

Table 5- 5 Descriptive Statistics

Predictor	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Expertise	135	1.00	7.00	5.7722	.72949
Trustworthiness	135	1.00	7.00	5.8019	.79181
Attractiveness	135	1.00	7.00	5.7944	.75549
Attitude	135	1.00	7.00	5.8272	.71267
Purchase Intention	135	1.00	7.00	5.7674	.91983
Valid N (listwise) 135					

5.3 Reliability

Before testing the designed hypothesis, the authors have checked the reliability. Based on the previous studies, Cronbach alpha is used to analyze the reliability of the research study. To ensure the reliability of the data set, the value of Cronbach alpha should be greater than 0.6 and from the table below it can be seen that the value of Cronbach alpha is greater than 0.6 which states the data set is valid.

Table 5- 6 Reliability

Predictors	Cronbach Alpha
SMI's Attractiveness	0.845
SMI's Trustworthiness	0.842
SMI's Expertise	0.825
Customers' Attitude Towards Brands	0.796
Purchase Intentions	0.906

5.4 Validity

The validity of the research study is analyzed based on the factor loadings and the composite reliability of the data set. To ensure that the data is valid, the value of composite reliability should be greater than 0.6. The table below is showing the reliability of the data set.

Table 5- 7 Validity

Variables	Items	Factor Loading	Composite Reliability
SMI's Attractiveness $\alpha = 0.845$	SMA1	.766	0.851
	SMA2	.837	
	SMA3	.865	
	SMA4	.842	
SMI's Trustworthiness $\alpha = 0.842$	SMT1	.844	0.812
	SMT2	.751	
	SMT3	.844	
	SMT4	.875	
SMI Expertise $\alpha = 0.825$	SMIE1	.865	0.841
	SMIE2	.799	
	SMIE3	.815	
	SMIE4	.811	
Customers Attitude Towards Brands $\alpha = 0.796$	CA1	.777	0.861
	CA2	.741	
	CA3	.814	
	CA4	.834	
Purchase Intentions $\alpha = 0.906$	PI1	.913	0.822
	PI2	.939	
	PI3	.854	
	PI4	.836	
	PI5	.761	

5.5 Correlation Analysis

1) Correlation between Independent variables and Attitude of customers towards Brands

This research study contains two dependent variables, the attitude of customers towards brands and the purchase intentions of the customers. The correlations table below is showing the relationship between the independent variables of this research study (Social media influencer's attractiveness, social media influencer's trustworthiness, social media influencer's expertise) and the first dependent variable which is customers' attitude towards brands. From the table below it can be seen that there is a strong correlation between customers' attitudes towards brands and social media influencers' attractiveness ($r = 0.746$, $p < 0.01$). Further, the table below states that there is a strong correlation between the second independent variable social media influencers' trustworthiness, and the attitude of customers towards the brand ($r = 0.961$, $p < 0.01$). The last independent variable of this research is social media influencers' expertise and the table below is showing the strong correlation between social media influencers' expertise and the attitude of customers towards the brand ($r = 0.772$, $p < 0.01$).

From the table below, the value states that the impact of independent variables is significant and positive on the attitude of the customers, so from the table below it can be concluded that

the social media influencers' attractiveness is positively and significantly related to the attitude of the customers towards brands which is one of the hypotheses of this research study. Further, the correlation states the strong, positive, and significance associated between social media influencers' trustworthiness and customers' attitudes toward the brands which is the second hypothesis of this research study and are supported by the respondents. In last it was hypothesized that social media influencers' expertise impact on the customer's attitudes towards a brand is positive and significant which is supported by the respondents.

Table 5- 8 Correlations (a)

Correlations				
	Attractiveness	Trustworthiness	Expertise	Attitude
Attractiveness	1	.770**	.774**	.746**
	135	.000	.000	.000
Trustworthiness	.770**	1	.783**	.961**
	135	.000	.000	.000
Expertise	.774**	.783**	1	.772**
	135	.000	.000	.000
Attitude	.746**	.961**	.772**	1
	135	.000	.000	.000
		135	135	135

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

2) Correlation between Independent variables and Purchase Intentions

The correlations table below is showing the relationship between the independent variables of this research study (Social media influencer's attractiveness, social media influencer's trustworthiness, social media influencer's expertise) and the dependent variable, which is customers' purchase intentions. From the table below it can be seen that there is a strong correlation between purchase intentions and social media influencers' attractiveness ($r = 0.781$, $p < 0.01$). Further, the table below states that there is a strong correlation between the second independent variable social media influencers' trustworthiness and Purchase intentions ($r = 0.761$, $p < 0.01$). The last independent variable of this research is social media influencers'

expertise and the table below is showing the strong correlation between social media influencers' expertise and purchase intention ($r = 0.790, p < 0.01$).

From the table below, the value states that the impact of independent variables is significant and positive on purchase intentions, so from the table below it can be concluded that the social media influencers' attractiveness is positively and significantly related to the purchase intentions, which is one of the hypotheses of this research study. Further, the correlation states the strong, positive, and significantly associated between social media influencers' trustworthiness and the respondent's support purchase intention, which is the second hypothesis of this research study and it. In last it was hypothesized that social media influencers' expertise impact on the purchase intention is positive and significant which is supported by the respondents.

Table 5- 9 Correlations (b)

	Attractiveness	Trustworthiness	Expertise	Purchase Intentions
Attractiveness	1	.770**	.774**	.781**
		.000	.000	.000
	135	135	135	135
Trustworthiness	.770**	1	.783**	.761**
	.000		.000	.000
	135	135	135	135
Expertise	.774**	.783**	1	.790**
	.000	.000		.000
	135	135	135	135
Purchase Intentions	.781**	.761**	.790**	1
	.000	.000	.000	
	135	135	135	135

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

5.6 Regression Analysis

H1: Social media influencers' attractiveness is positively related to the attitude of customers towards brands

From the table below it can be seen that the unstandardized beta value is positive (0.698) and the p-value is significant ($p = 0.000$). Therefore, the impact of social media influencers' attractiveness is positively related to the attitude of customers towards the brand.

Table 5- 10 Regression (a)

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.332	.790		1.686	.094
	Gender	-.033	.121	-.016	-.268	.789
	Education	-.009	.074	-.007	-.124	.901
	Age	.139	.233	.035	.595	.553
	ATTRACTIVE	.698	.057	.740	12.285	.000
	NESS					

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude towards Brand

H2: Social media influencer's trustworthiness is positively related to the attitude of customers toward the brand

From the table below it can be seen that the unstandardized beta value is positive (0.862) and the p-value is significant ($p = 0.000$). Therefore, the impact of social media influencers' trustworthiness is positively related to the attitude of customers towards the brand.

Table 5- 11 Regression (b)

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.612	.325		1.879	.062
	Gender	.004	.050	.002	.080	.936
	Education	-.011	.030	-.009	-.377	.707
	Age	.061	.096	.016	.640	.523
	Trustworthin	.862	.022	.958	38.952	.000
	ess					

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude towards Brand

H3: Social media influencer's expertise is positively related to the attitude of customers toward brand

From the table below it can be seen that the unstandardized beta value is positive (0.742) and the p-value is significant ($p = 0.000$). Therefore, the impact of social media influencers' expertise is positively related to the attitude of customers towards the brand.

Table 5- 12 Regression (c)

Coefficients ^a						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	.695	.763		.910	.364
	Gender	.014	.115	.007	.121	.904
	Education	-.043	.069	-.035	-.624	.534
	Age	.260	.220	.066	1.180	.240
	SMI Expertise	.742	.055	.759	13.460	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude towards Brand

H4: Social media influencers' attractiveness is positively related to the attitude of customers' purchase intentions

From the table below it can be seen that the unstandardized beta value is positive (0.932) and the p-value is significant ($p = 0.000$). Therefore, the impact of social media influencers' attractiveness is positively related to the attitude of customers' purchase intentions.

Table 5- 13 Regression (d)

Coefficients ^a						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	.416	.945		.441	.660
	Gender	.205	.145	.076	1.411	.161
	Age	-.028	.279	-.005	-.099	.921
	Education	-.108	.088	-.068	-1.224	.223
	ATTRACTIVE NESS	.932	.068	.766	13.721	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intentions

H5: Social media influencers' trustworthiness is positively related to the attitude of customers' purchase intentions

From the table below it can be seen that the unstandardized beta value is positive (0.863) and the p-value is significant ($p = 0.000$). Therefore, the impact of social media influencers' trustworthiness is positively related to the attitude of customers' purchase intentions.

Table 5- 14 Regression (e)

Coefficients ^a						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	.616	.967		.637	.525
	Gender	.260	.149	.097	1.744	.084
	Age	.033	.285	.006	.116	.908
	Education	-.171	.090	-.107	-1.906	.059
	Trustworthiness	.863	.066	.743	13.114	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intentions

H6: Social media influencers' expertise is positively related to the attitude of customers' purchase intentions

From the table below it can be seen that the unstandardized beta value is positive (0.971) and the p-value is significant ($p = 0.000$). Therefore, the impact of social media influencers' expertise is positively related to the attitude of customers' purchase intentions.

Table 5- 15 Regression (f)

Coefficients ^a						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	-.348	.930		-.374	.709
	Gender	.267	.141	.100	1.900	.060
	Age	.142	.268	.028	.528	.599
	Education	-.157	.085	-.098	-1.856	.066
	SMI Expertise	.971	.067	.770	14.458	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase intention

5.7 Summary

Table 5- 16 Summary

	Hypothesis	Supported/ Not Supported
H1	<i>Social media influencers' attractiveness is positively related to the attitude of customers towards brands</i>	Supported
H2	<i>Social media influencer's trustworthiness is positively related to the attitude of customers toward brand</i>	Supported
H3	<i>Social media influencer's expertise is positively related to the attitude of customers toward brand</i>	Supported
H4	<i>Social media influencers' attractiveness is positively related to the attitude of customers' purchase intentions</i>	Supported
H5	<i>Social media influencers' trustworthiness is positively related to the attitude of customers' purchase intentions</i>	Supported
H6	<i>Social media influencers' expertise is positively related to the attitude of customers' purchase intentions</i>	Supported

6 Discussion and Conclusion

This is the last chapter of this research study which contains the discussion of the results and the conclusion keeping in view the research questions, hypothesis, and statistical analysis of the study. In the second half author will be analyzing the practical and theoretical contributions of this research study.

6.1 Discussion

What is the impact of social media celebrity credibility dimensions (attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise) impact on purchase intentions and attitudes towards brands?

In this research, the three dimensions which have been used pertaining to social media influencers' credibility are attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise. The research question was “what is the impact of social media influencer's attractiveness on consumers' purchase intentions”. Attractiveness was described as facial, bodily beauty (Baker et al., 1977) and sexiness (Rogers, 1980). Previous literature on advertisement and persuasion suggested attractiveness as a significant factor in initial assessment (Baker et al., 1977; Joseph, 1982). Model of the attractiveness of source is also related to familiarity of the content provider and likeability of the communicator (McGuire, 1986). Familiarity relates to knowledge about the influencer through exposure and likeability refers to affection with the communicator because of physical looks, behavior, and other characteristics associated with him or her (Uusitalo et al., 2016). The previous researchers have used different dimensions of credibility. Some studies

included only two dimensions while some studies have only proposed three or four dimensions (Toivonen et al., 2016; Ohanian, 1990). Customer associations and perceptions for social media celebrities can be the most powerful factor affecting the attitude of the customer towards him or her. Quality interaction between the audience and the influencer and between the influencer and the product recommended by him or her can lead towards gaining customer attention and collectively all of this might proceed towards purchase of the product (Lien et al., 2014). Most of the influencers first try the product and then recommend the product to their followers. When some attractive social media influencers recommend products especially related to beauty and fashion, it can inspire prospective consumers to think that they will get the same appearance that social media influencers have through utilizing that product. As a consequence, the prospective customer gets attracted toward the product because they believe that the recommendations of social media influencers are authentic which is depicted in the shape of his/her physical attractiveness especially in case of beauty and fashion so this result in purchase of the product. Often, when a customer enters a retail shop, he or she will find the brand suggested by a social media influencers (Kapitan et al., 2015). Therefore, the social media influencers who is perceived to be more attractive has a stronger effect on consumer product choices (Abidin, 2016). This research also states that the social media influencers are having strong impact on the attitude of the consumers. According to the research presented by Lim and other available literature, social media influencers are having significant impact in positively shaping the consumers attitude towards brands (Lim et al., 2017) and our study results are consistent with this particular research and the available literature. Furthermore in 2020 another research which has been conducted by Singh, Xue, and Crisafulli confirms about the positive impact of social media influencer's credibility on the attitude towards brands (Singh et al., 2020). Our research is also in line with such earlier investigations.

Further, the results state that there is a positive and significant impact of social media influencers' attractiveness on the purchase intentions of the customers. This outcome is also aligned with several previous researches, for example, the study presented by Hajli and Shirazi in which it is stated that there is a strong association between social media influencers' credibility (attractiveness) and the purchase intentions of the customers (Hajli and Shirazi, 2021). Moreover, another research study which was presented by Lou and Yuan in 2019 in which the positive and significant impact of the attractiveness of social media influencers has been assessed and it is stated by the authors that influencers with attractiveness are more likely to affect the purchasing behavior of the customers (Lou and Yuan, 2019).

Trustworthiness is the second dimension of this research study and statistical results state that there is a positive and significant impact of trustworthiness on the consumer's purchase intentions as well as on the consumer's attitude towards brands. In 2021 AlFarraj and co-researchers have conducted research in which they have stated that when the sources are credible and effective it positively enhances the purchase intentions of the customers and also attracts the customers towards the brands (AlFarraj et al., 2021). Similarly, this output is in line with research presented by (Abdullah et al., 2020; Weismueller et al., 2020; Ahmad et al., 2019). The similarity between this research study and previous empirical pieces of evidence makes this research more significant. The third dimension adopted for this research study is the expertise of social media influencers and the results state that it has a strong positive and significant impact on the customer's behaviors. This result is again aligned with the research study presented by Saima and her co-researchers in 2020 (Saima et al., 2020).

6.2 Theoretical Implications

The practical implication of a study defines its value in terms of its implementation. This research has significant implications for both the local and international businesses which are working in Pakistan. The outcome indicates that through identifying relevant social media influencers related to the segment of the product or service, the firms and the managers will be able to effectively target prospective customers and can motivate them to buy the product or service. Each social media influencer in Pakistan has its own unique type of content and fan following. For example, Ukhano and Irrfan Junejo usually do travel and cultural vlogs. So, they are suitable for businesses that involve transportation or to promote tourism-related businesses. Through collaborating with the right influencer, awareness of the products or services and other offers can be widely shared which can highly contribute towards the brand equity. The personal credibility of a social media influencer is also an important factor that managers and policymakers can see while selecting a relevant SMI for marketing purposes. The SMI who is deemed as controversial and subsequent doubtfulness about content credibility can make a negative impact on the business. The organizations and marketing managers must also focus on this factor as well in countries like Pakistan where socio-cultural values are highly integrated and an influence of a negative person can create a negative rift. This study also provides some meaningful suggestions to social media influencers as well that are working in Pakistan to make them more effective. Besides expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness, social media influencers need to develop strong relationships and connections with their followers because,

in collectivist countries like Pakistan, customers trust the people that are closely associated with them, when they go for purchasing decisions. So, if the social media influencers are closely associated with their followers, it will increase the efficacy of their marketing message.

6.3 Critique

For this research study, we hypothesized that credibility dimensions; attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness are positively related to the consumer's behavior and statistical results state that there is a significant and positive impact of attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness on consumers' behavior but at the same time we have also asked the respondents that which of the dimension is most important to influence consumer's behaviors and 80% of the individuals stated that trustworthiness is a most critical factor and from these statistics, it can be stated that it is not important to be more attractive to impact the consumer's behavior, instead only having trustworthiness can lead to having a strong impact on the consumer's behaviors. Similarly, 72% of the respondents state that expertise is the second most critical factor to impact the purchase intentions and the attitude of the customers toward a brand. For instance, Amna Ilyas is a famous social media celebrity with dark colors but still, several consumers follow her and consider her suggestions as she seems more credible and has expertise regarding fashion products. Only 21% of the respondents state attractiveness is a critical factor to influence consumers and their behavior. Hence, this research study busts the conventional myth that in the fashion industry being attractive and good-looking is the only key to success. The changing dynamics have led to a paradigm shift that has entirely transformed commercial marketing. Furthermore, the violence against women mainly acid attacks and the role of acid-attack survival women in the fashion industry leads to a clue that facial attractiveness is not that powerful to create an impact on consumers.

Keeping in view all these facts, it can be concluded that being attractive does not mean that an influencer can impact the purchase intentions of the customers and their attitude towards brands.

6.4 Research Limitations

Similar to all research studies, there are certain limitations to this research study as well. The first limitation is related to the size of the sample. Building upon this research to conduct future studies, the sample size can be extended to 500 or more. Another limitation is the single-time response collection through the survey questionnaire. For further studies, the research can be modified by the introduction of experimental research design and longitudinal data collection techniques. Social media influencers can have a great impact on consumer trust and purchase

intentions, therefore, brands flock to these social media influencers in situations where the consumer is not familiar with the product or there are several similar competing products in the market. Accordingly, the moderating role of consumer product familiarity and competition intensity may be studied in future research. The addition of a few more considerable factors can help in further explaining the relationship between social media influencers and purchase intention. Correspondingly, future studies can take into consideration the socio-economic factors of consumers and their impact on purchase intention. Similarly, researchers can try to observe the relationship between a firm's market reputation, its CSR activities, and how SMI marketing impacts buying behavior.

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Appendix

We are studying at the Jönköping International Business School and carrying out a study on the “consumer’s behavior”, and this questionnaire is intended to facilitate our study. The study is for academic purposes and your responses will be treated with confidentiality. There are a few questions and can take about 05 to 10 minutes of your time. Thank you!

How old are you?

15-20

21-25

26 -30

31-35

35+

What is your gender?

Male

Female

What is your education?

Matric

Intermediate

Bachelor

Masters

PhD

Have you ever used online platform to purchase online?

Yes

No

Do you follow any social media influencers?

Yes

No

Do you follow these social media influencers from fashion industry?

Yes

No

Does they have the following aspects?

1. Attractiveness
2. Trustworthiness
3. Expertise

Which appeals you the most from the followings

4. Attractiveness
5. Trustworthiness
6. Expertise

Measurements of study construct

Expertise (Chetioui, et al. (2019) and Ohanian (1990)).

The social media influencer I follow is/are experts in their field	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The social media influencers I follow have great knowledge about their field	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The social media influencers I follow explain products through every perspective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The social media influencers I follow provide references based on their expertise	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Attractiveness (Wiedmann and Mettenheim (2020) and Jansom and Pongsakornrungsilp (2021)

The social media influencer(s) I follow is/are charismatic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The social media influencer(s) I follow is/are good-looking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The make-up social media influencer(s) I follow is/are beautiful/handsome	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The lifestyle of social media influencer(s) I follow is/are attractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Trustworthiness (Ohanian (1990) and Wiedmann and Mettenheim (2020))

The social media influencer(s) I follow is/are dependable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The social media influencer(s) I follow is/are honest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The social media influencer(s) I follow is/are reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The social media influencer(s) I follow is/are sincere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Purchasing Behaviour (Chetioui, et al., (2019))

I most frequently have intentions to purchase products advertised by the social media influencers I follow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I generally recommend products and/or services advertised by the social media influencers I follow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If I were shopping for a brand, the likelihood I would buy this brand recommended by social media celebrity is high.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The probability I would consider buying this brand recommended by social media celebrity is high.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If I were going to purchase a product, I would consider buying this brand recommended by social media celebrity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Attitude towards the brand (Chetioui, et al., 2019; Belanche, et al., 2021)

I do trust brands advertised by social media influencers I follow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Brands recommended by social media influencers are more reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have positive perception about brands endorse by influences	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have favorable opinions about the brands advertised by social media influencers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Social Media Celebrities



Laraib Rahim



Waliya Najib



Merium Pervez



Amna Ilyas



Ayesha Baig