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The Influence of Fashion bloggers on Consumer Behavior: Exploring Credibility, Engagement, and Homophily among consumers in Lahore, Pakistan

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Abstract: *The fashion industry is a vibrant and globalized sector with a rich tapestry of style and culture. In recent years, the rise of fashion influencers has significantly impacted consumer behaviour. This study investigates the sway fashion bloggers hold over consumers' purchasing intentions, examining the dimensions of credibility, engagement, and homophily, with research objectives containing probing brand preferences, gauging the influence of bloggers' appearance, analyzing purchasing decisions based on recommendations, and scrutinizing the positive impact of homophily on consumer behaviour. By employing a survey research technique, this study collected responses from 700 respondents, comprising 411 females and 289 males, primarily sourced from Lahore, Pakistan. The data analysis involves correlation tests to explore the relationships between fashion bloggers' credibility, engagement, homophily, and consumers' buying intentions. The findings reveal significant correlations between these variables, indicating that fashion bloggers play a crucial role in influencing consumer behaviour. The study contributes to the understanding of the role of fashion bloggers in the contemporary marketing landscape and highlights the importance of considering bloggers' credibility, engagement, and homophily in marketing strategies. These findings stress the need for fashion brands to cultivate genuine connections with consumers through influencer collaboration, enabling them to develop more effective marketing strategies and strengthen brand loyalty in the digital landscape.*

Key Words: Fashion Influencers, Consumer behaviour, Engagement, Brand Preferences, Homophily, Pakistan

Introduction

The fashion industry is a vibrant and globalized sector with a rich tapestry of style and culture. In recent years, the rise of fashion influencers has significantly impacted consumer behaviour. Blogs, originating from "weblogs," are dynamic online platforms featuring conversational content, often managed by individuals or small groups (Alhalwachi, 2021). They contain more than just text and images, including layout, linkages, and publication speed. Integral to social media, blogs serve diverse purposes, from building relationships to sharing expertise and fostering communities. WordPress, a leading content management system, hosts millions of blogs worldwide. Blogs are categorized into individual and communal types, each influencing audiences differently (Jain & Meyers, 2022). Blogging, a prevalent form of online communication, offers accessibility and affordability, empowering diverse communities, as seen in language learning groups (Sano & Romão, 2022). The first blog, Links.net, emerged in 1994, marking the inception of a platform for sharing personal insights and experiences (Rettberg, 2014). Bloggers, including fashion, YouTube, travel, and food bloggers, wield significant influence, shaping brand perceptions and consumer behaviours within specific interest communities (Uzunoglu & Kim, 2014).

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Fashion bloggers are dedicated to discussing fashion and styling, epitomizing the globalization of fashion and information (Derashri & Gogia, 2019). Their influence surpasses that of local newspapers, which serve as intermediaries between businesses and consumers (Lewis & Santos, 2018). As the internet transforms the fashion industry, bloggers evolve in skill and influence, catering to digitally savvy and demanding consumers (Vincent Jaiwant, 2023). The fashion blogosphere, including independent and corporate sites burgeons, offers a valuable platform for diverse investigations (Kou et al., 2018). Credibility, a concept rooted in Greek philosophy and relevant in social media, reflects recipients' belief and trust in messages and messengers (Shahid et al., 2023).

Trust, distinct from credibility, entails confidence in dependability and reliability (Sbaffi & Rowley, 2017). Engagement encompasses cognitive, behavioural, and emotional involvement, yielding advantageous outcomes in various settings (Johnstone & Lindh, 2022). Homophily, driven by a desire to associate with like-minded individuals, shapes consumer conversations online (Acikgoz et al., 2023). Customers perceive bloggers' suggestions as credible due to the trustworthiness traditionally associated with bloggers, influencing brand choices and fostering emotional connections between followers and companies (Lewis & Santos, 2018). Fashion bloggers play a crucial role in influencing consumer buying intentions, which guide sales professionals in focusing their efforts effectively. Understanding buying intent is essential as it indicates consumers' willingness and ability to purchase products or services within a specific timeframe (Dangi et al., 2020). In marketing, buying intentions reflect consumers' specific plans or tendencies to make purchases based on their attitudes, preferences, and circumstances (Ajzen, 2018). Consumer behaviour, the study of how individuals engage in consumption and purchase activities, explores the actions and reactions of consumers under market conditions (Adel, 2023). A consumer, defined as someone who uses or avails of goods or services, can encompass various types, including end users and organizational consumers (Rubinstein, 2013).

In Pakistan, fashion bloggers have emerged as influential figures in the fashion industry. These bloggers, through their social media presence and dedicated blogs, have garnered significant followings and influence over consumer choices. Few bloggers have received recognition as fashion influencers, receiving awards like the 'Social Media Influencer' at the PISSA Awards 2020 (Adel, 2023). Fashion bloggers, through their content and engagement with followers, not only shape consumer perceptions but also contribute to building brand loyalty and trust. Their ability to connect with audiences on a personal level influences buying intentions, making them key players in the modern fashion landscape (McCormick, 2016). As the fashion industry continues to evolve, fashion bloggers will remain instrumental in guiding consumer choices and driving trends within the market. However, this study investigates the impact of influencers like Kinat Faisal, Memayal Attique, and Meriem Pervaiz and emerging figures like Niha J. Eiman, shedding light on how their diverse content and authentic representation resonate with consumers, shaping their purchasing intentions and preferences in the dynamic landscape of Pakistani fashion. For this purpose, a survey was carried out from 700 respondents, primarily sourced from Lahore, Pakistan. The findings reflect the correlation between the variables of the study and bloggers' influence on consumer behaviour.

Problem Statement and Key Objectives

This study seeks to address the gap in understanding the combined influence of credibility, engagement, and homophily (followers similarly) on consumer purchasing intentions in response to fashion bloggers' recommendations. While previous research has examined these factors individually, their collective impact remains unclear. By investigating how these variables interact within the context of fashion e-commerce, this study aims to provide insight into the mechanism driving consumer behaviour in the digital age. However, the following are the key objectives of this study.

- a. To explore the significant association between fashion bloggers's credibility and the consumers' purchasing intentions.
- b. To investigate whether there is a significant association between fashion bloggers's engagement and consumers' buying/purchasing intentions.
- c. To explore whether there is a significant association between fashion bloggers's homophily (similarity) and the consumers' buying/purchasing intentions.

Review of Literature

By analyzing and comparing different sources, a literature review helps the researcher to identify key themes, disagreements, and gaps in existing research (Luo et al., 2018). This sheds light on literature related to consumer behaviour, credibility, engagement and homophily. Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok have facilitated the rise of individuals as fashion bloggers, offering avenues for fame and influence. However, the manner in which fashion bloggers engage with consumers remains an underexplored research domain that needs attention. This study investigates the moderating influence of social networking on the relationship between opinion leadership and customer engagement. Specifically, it seeks to comprehend the impact of fashion bloggers on various dimensions of customer engagement and explore the mediating role of opinion leadership in the Pakistani fashion industry. Ahmad et al. (2023) find a significant influence of fashion bloggers on opinion leadership, with opinion leadership partially mediating the relationship between fashion bloggers and customer engagement behaviour.

Similarly, individuals can use social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok to become fashion bloggers and accrue fame. Social media influencers, characterized by their substantial followings on platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram, wield significant influence within specific niches such as food, travel, fitness, or fashion. By curating original content tailored to their chosen place, individuals have the opportunity to amass a loyal fan base and attain online popularity, thus evolving into social media influencers. This emergence of influencers has garnered interest in potential effective marketing instruments, fundamentally transforming the landscape of social media marketing (Ao et al., 2023). Homophily, the perceived similarity between influencers and their audiences, emerges as a crucial factor influencing customer value co-creation behaviour within the realm of influencer marketing on social media. In a study involving (910) respondents from the United States, findings reveal that homophily positively impacts customer value co-creation behaviour, thereby enhancing expected brand value and purchase intention. Furthermore, customer value co-creation behaviour plays a multi-mediating role, with para-social relationships moderating the relationship between homophily and customer participation behaviour, suggesting avenues for further research in influencer marketing (Sun et al., 2022). To foster consumer participation, marketers are advised to consider the determinants of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) persuasiveness and develop personalized marketing microblogs. Shen (2022) suggests that microblogs featuring brand names from market mavens may have limited interaction with consumers, thus recommending marketers employ diverse microblog content associated with various occasions to stimulate consumer interest and enhance consumer-brand relationships. Mainolfi and Vergura (2022) contribute to understanding the role of fashion bloggers in product acceptance processes, focusing on the influence of homophily, engagement, and credibility on buying intentions regarding fashion products recommended by bloggers. Their empirical study underscores the significance of homophily and greater blog involvement in driving intentions to purchase sponsored goods and propagate the fashion bloggers' influence.

Overall, social media influencers, particularly fashion bloggers, play an important role in marketing by introducing products to their audience, thereby influencing consumer purchasing decisions. With digital marketing burgeoning on platforms like Instagram and YouTube, where influencers predominantly operate, understanding the dynamics of influencer marketing becomes increasingly imperative for marketers seeking to supply this influential medium effectively. The influence of fashion bloggers on consumer buying intentions is linked with factors such as credibility and homophily (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). In the fiercely competitive fashion industry, branding plays an important role in establishing market presence and consumer trust. Fashion blogs emerge as significant players in disseminating information about the latest trends, brands, and collections, thereby shaping consumer perceptions. Technological advancements in online blogging platforms have further amplified their impact, enhancing their perceived usefulness and ease of use among readers (Foroudi et al., 2020). Corporate blogs, characterized by interactive communication features and a relaxed atmosphere, serve as conduits for fostering enduring relationships between brands and consumers. The type of content disseminated through corporate blogs plays a crucial role in shaping brand credibility, particularly content with an emotional appeal, which has been found to have a stronger impact on brand credibility than other content types (Kim et al., 2020).



Paid blog advertisements have a significant influence on consumer attitudes towards bloggers and the products they endorse. Consumers tend to perceive advertisements featuring creators similar to them as more authentic, less deceptive, and more trustworthy, thereby influencing their purchase intent (Tran, 2020). Fashion bloggers, as key opinion leaders in the industry, exert substantial influence over consumer purchasing decisions, particularly among fashion-sensitive individuals. Their ability to set and propagate fashion trends underscores their significance as emerging trendsetters in the fashion domain (Assis et al., 2020). Despite their growing influence, fashion bloggers have faced criticism from traditional media for alleged biases and commercial viability. However, their eagerness to adopt marketing techniques varies based on factors such as their level of advancement and business acumen (Koivisto, 2019).

Fashion-focused key opinion bloggers on various social media platforms are rapidly emerging as influential figures capable of shaping consumer apparel purchases by bridging fashion's evolution with everyday street style. Incorporating dynamic visual style trends from fashion bloggers into recommendation systems has shown promise, particularly among fashion-sensitive consumers (Zhang & Caverlee, 2019). As fashion bloggers evolve into opinion leaders in the digital realm, their influence on consumer behaviour warrants deeper investigation, particularly in terms of credibility and engagement dynamics. Despite their burgeoning influence, gaps persist in understanding consumer attitudes and purchase intentions influenced by bloggers' suggestions, particularly in non-Western contexts (Mainolfi and Vergara, 2022).

The impact of fashion blogs on consumer behaviour has intensified consumers' desire to purchase, as they are exposed to a plethora of stimuli (Derashri & Gogia, 2019). Consumers often turn to blogs as their initial source of information, and their perception of a brand can significantly shift after reading about it on a blog, particularly if it is recommended by the bloggers. Fashion bloggers wield considerable influence over consumers' attitudes towards brands and their purchasing decisions based on their recommendations, endorsements, and posts (Derashri & Gogia, 2019). In the realm of social media, fashion bloggers on platforms like Instagram play a significant role in the shopping behaviour of young female users (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Unconventional celebrities such as bloggers and Instagram personalities are perceived as more trustworthy and relatable by users than traditional celebrities, influencing their purchasing decisions (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). However, measuring a blogger's influence goes beyond their follower count, with engagement emerging as a crucial variable in assessing their impact (San Miguel & Sádaba, 2018). identified four major factors influencing customer purchasing intentions: cultural variables, social elements, individual traits, and psychological factors. Fashion blogs have significantly altered the decision-making process for purchasing fashion products, serving as a platform for consumers to express their personalities and moods (Rocamora, 2018). He explored that exposure to fashion blogs has increased consumers' desire to buy, highlighting the role of these platforms in shaping consumer behaviour. In the context of online brand communities (OBCs), customer engagement is crucial for building meaningful relationships with customers (Madhura & Niyaz Panakaje, 2022). Understanding different forms of customer engagement behaviour, such as complaining behaviour, word-of-mouth, and co-creation behaviour, contributes to a better understanding of marketing strategies in the fashion sector (Rupik.K., 2015). With the rise of the Internet, blogs have become a vital medium for communication, influencing consumer decisions and shaping the way people search for fashion information online (Cheng & Fang, 2015). The rise of fashion-related blogs has significantly impacted brand awareness, brand attitude, and purchase intention, particularly among women aged 18 to 35 (Keenan, 2015). As the number of bloggers continues to grow, it's evident that blogs have become a vital medium for expression and communication, with fashion-focused blogs exerting considerable influence on consumer behaviour. These blogs play a crucial role in shaping brand perceptions and driving purchase decisions, making them a viable option for businesses aiming to target specific demographics through collaborations with popular bloggers (Keenan, 2015).

Fashion bloggers, with their passion for the industry and growing expertise, have emerged as influential figures capable of shaping consumer behaviour (Halvorson et al., 2013). They stated that readers often rely on fashion blogs as their primary source of inspiration, leading to direct purchases influenced by blog content. The influence of fashion blogs extends beyond individual purchases, impacting public opinion and setting new fashion trends, thereby challenging traditional publishing models (Sedeke &

Arora, 2013). They investigated that fashion blogs operate within a dynamic online space, where designers and brands interact with consumers on a more personalized level. Despite the potential of social media and blogs to revolutionize the fashion industry's communication models, there remains hesitancy in fully leveraging this media.

The application of the two-step flow theory to the study of fashion bloggers' influence on consumer behaviour provides information dissemination and opinion formation in the digital age. In the context of the two-step flow theory, fashion bloggers serve as opinion leaders within their communities, akin to the opinion intermediaries described by Katz and Lazarsfeld. These bloggers possess credibility, expertise, and engagement, making them influential figures whose opinions and recommendations shape the attitudes and behaviours of their followers. The first step of the two-step flow theory involves opinion leaders receiving information from mass media. In the case of fashion bloggers, companies promoting their products can be seen as the mass media, disseminating messages through sponsored content or brand collaborations. Fashion bloggers then receive these messages and interpret them according to their own style, preferences, and expertise, thereby acting as filters or intermediaries between the mass media and their audience. The level of engagement between fashion bloggers and their audience represents the second step of the two-step flow theory. This engagement encompasses direct interaction, comments, discussions, and responses to the bloggers' content on social media platforms. Through this interpersonal communication, fashion bloggers convey their personalized interpretations of mass media messages to their followers, influencing their perceptions and behaviours. Homophily, the tendency for individuals to connect with others who are similar to them, plays a significant role in the second step of the two-step flow theory. Fashion bloggers, as opinion leaders, absorb information from mass media sources and reinterpret it based on their own style and preferences. This personalized interpretation resonates with followers who share similar tastes and preferences, enhancing the influence of fashion bloggers as opinion leaders. In this study, factors such as credibility, audience engagement, and the effect of homophily have been examined to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of fashion bloggers in bridging the gap between mass media messages and consumer decision-making processes.

Research Gap and Hypotheses

While the influence of fashion blogs on brand awareness, brand attitude, and purchase intention has been explored, there's a need for further research into the nature of business connections between bloggers and companies. Understanding the dynamics of these relationships, including the nature of collaborations and their impact on consumer behaviour, could provide valuable insights for both bloggers and businesses. However, there's a gap in research regarding the extent to which bloggers adhere to these principles and how they affect their influence on consumer behaviour. Investigating bloggers' authenticity and transparency in advertising could shed light on their credibility and the effectiveness of blog marketing strategies.

Much of the existing research focuses on Western contexts, particularly in countries like Ireland and the United States. There's a gap in comparative studies across diverse cultural contexts, such as Asian or Middle Eastern countries, where consumer behaviour and attitudes towards fashion may differ significantly. Conducting comparative studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of fashion blogs on consumer behaviour worldwide. However, many studies highlight the immediate influence of fashion blogs on brand awareness and purchase intention, but there's a lack of research on the long-term effects of blog exposure. Investigating how exposure to fashion blogs over time shapes consumer perceptions and behaviour could provide insights into the sustainability of blog marketing strategies. On the basis of the above literature, the following hypotheses have been formulated.

Hypothesis

H¹: There is a significant association between fashion bloggers' credibility and the consumers' purchasing intentions.

H²: There is a significant association between fashion bloggers' engagement and consumers' buying/purchasing intentions.



H³: There is a significant association between fashion bloggers's homophily (similarity) and the consumers' buying/purchasing intentions.

Methodology

The survey method for this research was employed to gather data from individuals across different age groups. The questionnaire includes demographic questions and covers the influence of fashion bloggers' credibility, engagement, and homophily on consumers' intentions toward buying/purchasing products. Seven hundred youngsters (411 females and 289 males) aged between 18 and 38 who purchase products and services based on fashion bloggers' recommendations filled out the survey. Respondents are selected through a purposive sampling technique.

The Rationale for Choosing Sample

The rationale for selecting both male and female participants, along with the specific age bracket of 18 to 38 years, in this study concerning the impact of fashion bloggers' credibility, engagement, and homophily on consumers' purchasing intentions is intricate. Incorporating both genders ensures a holistic understanding of consumer behaviour, given that fashion and lifestyle trends influence individuals of all sexes, potentially resulting in varying perceptions of fashion bloggers. This inclusive approach captures a variety of viewpoints, revealing gender-specific patterns, preferences, and actions, which contribute to more robust and widely applicable conclusions. Furthermore, the chosen age range of 18 to 38 years is significant due to the likelihood of these individuals being digital natives or proficient in online platforms frequented by fashion bloggers. Typically, this demographic engages extensively with social media, blogs, and digital influencers, possessing substantial purchasing power as they often belong to the employed population with disposable income allocated for fashion and associated items. Additionally, younger adults and those in their early to mid-adulthood tend to be more fashion-conscious and trend-savvy, rendering them more susceptible to following fashion bloggers and being influenced by their suggestions. This age group also experiences strong social identity and peer pressure, emphasizing the importance of fashion choices for self-expression and social communication.

However, the utilization of a survey methodology in this study enables the acquisition of quantifiable data from a large participant pool, facilitating statistical examination of the connections between fashion bloggers' characteristics and consumers' purchasing intentions. Through purposive sampling, individuals meeting the essential criteria for the study—those who make purchases based on fashion bloggers' endorsements—are selected, thereby enhancing the relevance and precision of the results. Surveys prove to be cost-efficient and capable of reaching a broad geographical audience, particularly when administered online, thus making them well-suited for investigating internet-savvy demographics like the 18 to 38 age group. Incorporating demographic inquiries in the survey aids in comprehending how factors such as age, gender, and other demographics intertwine with the influence of fashion bloggers, thereby providing deeper insights and enabling more tailored marketing approaches. By opting for this diverse and pertinent sample, the study endeavours to furnish valuable insights into the impact of fashion bloggers on consumer behaviour across varied segments, ultimately benefiting marketers, fashion influencers, and the fashion industry as a whole.

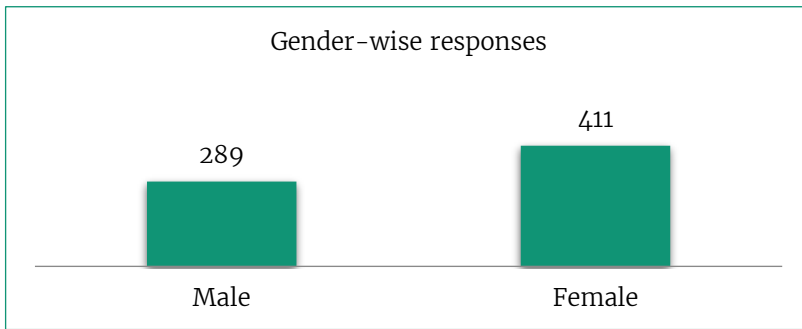
In this study, a questionnaire comprising 45 questions, including demographics and screening questions, was adopted. The questionnaire includes questions about credibility, engagement, intentions to buy, and homophily variables. Established scales, such as those developed by Neuliep & McCroskey, (1997) for credibility, Yang & Kang (2009) for engagement, Kusumasondjaja (2015) for homophily, and Mikalef et al. (2017) scale for intentions to buy, had been adapted for measurement. Each question is measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree". The questionnaire is presented in both English and Urdu to ensure respondents' comprehension.

Results and Discussion

The descriptive analysis of the sample comprising 700 individuals revealed the following distribution:

Figure 1

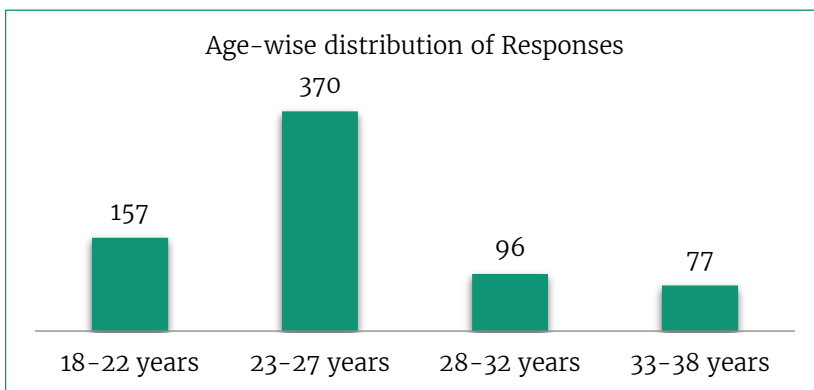
Gender-wise distribution of respondents



The majority of the sample identified as female, accounting for (58.7%) of the total respondents. Male respondents constituted (41.28%) of the sample. The total sample size was 700 individuals (Figure 1). The following figure illustrates the age distribution among the participants who took part in the survey.

Figure 2

Age-wise distribution of respondents



As depicted in the table, the majority of participants fall within the age group of 23-27 years, comprising (52.8%) of the total respondents. The age group of 18-22 years constitutes (22.4%) of the participants, followed by the age group of 28-32 years with (13.7%). The smallest proportion of participants (11%) falls within the age group of 33-38 years. However, the majority of participants, constituting (63.8%) of the total respondents, are students. Employed individuals make up (33.5%) of the participants, while the remaining (2.7%) are unemployed.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of responses

	Mean	Median	SD
Gender	1.47	2.00	.537
Age	1.75	2.00	.862
Occupation	1.43	1.00	.623
Knowledge about fashion bloggers?	1.20	1.00	.586
Stay updated about your favourite fashion bloggers.	1.55	1.00	.757
Are you connected with them on Social Media?	1.40	1.00	.594
Have you done online shopping?	1.40	1.00	.538

N = 700

The above table reflects the mean, median, and standard deviation values to provide a comprehensive understanding of the central tendency and variability within each demographic variable among the respondents. The table presents the mean, median, and standard deviation of demographic data collected



from 700 respondents across various variables related to fashion blogging and online shopping. For instance, regarding gender, the mean value is (1.47), indicating a slightly higher representation of males on average. The median value of 2 suggests that the median gender category is female. The standard deviation of (0.537) indicates moderate variability in gender representation among respondents. Similarly, for age, the mean age group is (1.75), with a median of 2.00, suggesting that most respondents fall into the younger age categories. The standard deviation of (0.862) indicates relatively high variability in the age distribution. However, the statistics for occupation, knowledge about fashion bloggers, staying updated about favourite fashion bloggers, being connected with them on social media, and engaging in online shopping follow a similar pattern of interpretation.

Hypotheses Testing

To test H^1 that there is a significant association between fashion bloggers's credibility and the consumers' purchasing intentions, the researchers have applied Pearson's Correlation test, and the following table presents an overview of the test.

Table 2

Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis of fashion bloggers' credibility and consumer purchasing Intention

	Variable	1	2
1	Purchasing intentions	1	.832**
2	Credibility	-	-

** $p < .01$

The above table illustrates the relationships between two variables: "Purchasing Intentions" and "Credibility." The correlation coefficient between "Purchasing Intentions" and itself is 1, which is expected since it represents the correlation of a variable with itself. The correlation coefficient between "Purchasing Intentions" and "Credibility" is 0.832, indicated by **. This value suggests a statistically strong and positive linear relationship between these two variables, purchasing intentions and credibility. According to Field (2013), when the p-value is less than 0.05, it indicates a statistically significant result. However, the H^1 that there is a significant association between fashion bloggers's credibility and the consumers' purchasing intentions is accepted.

The substantial correlation coefficient between "Purchasing Intentions" and "Credibility" suggests an association wherein higher credibility of a product or service corresponds to an increased likelihood of consumers intending to purchase it. This finding resonates with contemporary studies in consumer psychology, as demonstrated by the recent research of Williams et al., (2018), which corroborated the positive impact of perceived credibility on consumers' purchase intentions. Particularly in today's digital era, where online reviews and recommendations wield significant influence over consumer decision-making, credibility emerges as a key driver of purchasing behaviour. Nevertheless, while this correlation underscores the pivotal role of credibility in shaping purchasing intentions, it is imperative to acknowledge potential limitations and nuances. Notably, recent investigations by Segova (2020) shed light on situations where overstated claims of credibility may evoke scepticism among consumers, consequently diminishing their purchasing intentions. Therefore, while credibility undoubtedly holds sway over consumer choices, marketers must exercise prudence in their messaging and prioritize authenticity to sustain consumer trust and foster positive purchase behaviours. In the context of hypothesis testing, these correlation findings lend empirical support to H^1 , which posits a significant association between fashion bloggers' credibility and consumers' purchasing intentions. This aligns with the growing recognition of credibility's role in shaping consumer behaviour, particularly within the dynamic realm of fashion blogging and influencer marketing. The strong positive correlation observed further emphasizes the imperative for fashion bloggers to cultivate and uphold credibility as a cornerstone of their influence, thereby nurturing favourable consumer attitudes and driving purchasing decisions.

To test H^2 , There is a significant association between fashion bloggers's engagement and consumers' buying intentions; the researchers have applied Pearson's Correlation test, and the following table presents an overview of the test.

Table 3

Pearson's correlation coefficient between fashion bloggers' engagement and consumer's purchasing intentions

	Variable	1	2
1	Intentions to Buy	1	.773**
2	Engagement	-	-

$p < .01, p < .05$

The following table shows the correlation coefficient (r) between intentions to buy and engagement of fashion bloggers is .773, indicating a strong positive correlation between these two variables. The correlation is statistically significant at the $p < .01$ value (**), which supports the H², suggesting that there is indeed a correlation between fashion bloggers' engagement and consumers' intentions to buy, while H₂ is also accepted.

The findings of our study reveal a significant positive correlation between intentions to buy and engagement of fashion bloggers ($r = 0.773, p < .01$). This strong correlation suggests that as engagement with fashion bloggers increases, so do consumers' intentions to buy. This aligns with previous research indicating the influential role of fashion bloggers in shaping consumer behaviour (Nash, 2019). Thus, our results support H², affirming the presence of a correlation between fashion bloggers' engagement and consumers' intentions to buy. The strong correlation coefficient ($r = 0.773$) highlights the relationship between the variables. This substantial correlation implies that a considerable proportion of the variance in consumers' intentions to buy can be explained by their engagement with fashion bloggers. This finding is consistent with recent studies highlighting the impact of social media influencers on consumer purchase decisions (Zak & Hasprova, 2020). Consequently, our study provides empirical evidence bolstering the argument that fashion bloggers play a crucial role in driving consumer purchasing behaviour, reinforcing the notion that H² is indeed valid. However, our results support the notion of a significant positive correlation, so it's essential to acknowledge potential limitations and alternative interpretations. One consideration is the possibility of reverse causality. Although our study identifies a strong correlation between fashion bloggers' engagement and consumers' intentions to buy, it remains plausible that individuals with higher intentions to buy are more likely to engage with fashion bloggers rather than the other way around (Brown et al., 2024).

Table 4

Correlation matrix between intentions to buy and homophily

	Variable	1	2
1	Intentions to Buy	1	.837**
2	Homophily	-	-

$(r = 0.837, p < .01)$

Table 4.4 reflects that the correlation coefficient (r) between intentions to buy and homophily of fashion bloggers is .837, indicating a strong positive correlation between these two variables. The correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (**), which supports the (H³), suggesting that there is indeed a correlation between fashion bloggers' homophily and consumers' intentions to buy.

This study reveals a significant positive correlation between intentions to buy and the homophily of fashion bloggers ($r = 0.837, p < .01$), emphasizing the pivotal role of social similarity in influencing consumer behaviour. This finding aligns with literature that highlights the significance of homophily across various human interactions, including consumer preferences and purchase decisions (Cho et al., 2022). Thus, our findings support H³, indicating a correlation between fashion bloggers' homophily and consumers' intentions to buy. The substantial correlation coefficient ($r = 0.837$) underscores the strength and consistency of the observed relationship in our study. This strong correlation implies that consumers are more likely to align their purchasing decisions with fashion bloggers who share similar characteristics or interests. Such results echo recent research highlighting the role of social identification and self-expression in shaping consumer-brand relationships (Bai et al., 2021). However, the results of the



“relationship between variables” and their real-world impact may vary based on contextual contexts such as industry dynamics and consumer segmentation (Raghunathan & Corfman, 2006). Therefore, while our findings underscore the relevance of homophily in influencer marketing, caution is warranted in extrapolating these findings across diverse consumer cohorts and product categories.

Pearson coefficient Correlation test was applied to see the relationship among all independent and dependent variables (intention to buy, credibility, engagement, and homophily). The following table shows a summary of the test applied.

Table 5

Pearson Coefficient of Correlation among all variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Intention to buy	2.03	1.36	-			
2. Credibility	3.65	0.66	-.815**	-		
3. Engagement	3.79	0.63	.738**	.763**	.-	
4. Homophily	3.35	1.05	.739**	.787**	.744**	-

Table 4.5 presents descriptive statistics and the correlation matrix for the variables under investigation: Intention to buy, Credibility, Engagement, and Homophily. The mean intention to buy score is 2.03 with a standard deviation of 1.36, the mean credibility score is 3.65 with a standard deviation of 0.66, the mean engagement score is 3.79 with a standard deviation of 0.63, and the mean homophily score is 3.35 with a standard deviation of 1.05. However, for intention to buy strong negative correlation with Credibility ($r = -0.815$, $p < .01$), while a strong positive correlation with Engagement ($r = 0.738$, $p < .01$) and a strong positive correlation with Homophily ($r = 0.739$, $p < .01$) was found. On the other hand, for homophily, a strong positive correlation with Intention to buy was ($r = 0.739$, $p < .01$), while a strong positive correlation with Engagement ($r = 0.763$, $p < .01$) and strong positive correlation with Homophily ($r = 0.744$, $p < .01$) was found.

The preceding finding of the study provides a comprehensive depiction of the variables' means and standard deviations, explaining the central tendency and variability inherent within each variable. Through the correlation matrix, insights into the magnitude and directionality of associations among variable pairs are revealed. Particularly noteworthy is the robust positive correlation observed between Intentions to buy and both engagement and homophily, indicating that heightened engagement with fashion bloggers and perceived social affinity with them coincide with increased intentions to make purchases. Conversely, a strong negative correlation is evident between intention to buy and credibility, implying that the diminished credibility of fashion bloggers is linked to elevated intentions to make purchases. Moreover, credibility displayed a pronounced negative correlation specifically with Intentions to buy, signifying heightened intentions to make purchases and perceived social affinity with them. Lastly, homophily demonstrates robust positive correlations between the intention to buy and engagement, emphasizing its influential role in shaping consumer behaviour and fostering engagement with fashion bloggers.

Conclusion

Fashion bloggers have emerged as powerful influencers in the digital age, wielding significant influence over consumer preferences and purchasing decisions. This study focused on the influence of fashion bloggers' credibility, engagement, and homophily on consumer behaviour. This study contributes significantly to the growing body of research on influencer marketing and consumer behaviour by investigating the relationships between fashion bloggers' characteristics and consumers' purchase intentions. Through a thorough examination of variables such as credibility, engagement, and homophily, this study unearthed underlying mechanisms that drive consumer behaviour within the realm of influencer marketing. The findings highlight the profound impact of fashion bloggers' attributes on consumers' purchase intentions. Particularly, researchers identified a positive correlation between consumer engagement with fashion bloggers and their intentions to make purchases. This suggests that as consumers interact more extensively with fashion influencers, their propensity to engage in purchasing behaviours is heightened. Furthermore, this study uncovered a noteworthy positive correlation between

consumers' perceptions of homophily with fashion bloggers and their intentions to buy. This implies that consumers are more inclined to connect with influencers who mirror their own characteristics or interests, thereby amplifying their intentions to make purchases. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge a significant finding from this study—the strong negative correlation between the credibility of fashion bloggers and consumers' purchase intentions. This highlights the delicate balance between perceived credibility and consumer actions, hinting that excessively high levels of credibility may inadvertently lead to decreased purchase intentions, potentially due to heightened consumer scepticism. Overall, our research sheds light on the dynamics of influencer marketing and fashion influencers' characteristics and consumer behaviour. Moreover, our findings hold practical implications for fashion brands looking to refine their engagement strategies and foster genuine connections with consumers through influencer collaborations. Addressing the research questions, the discussion investigated the dynamics between fashion bloggers and their audience. It explores how bloggers' credibility influences consumer trust and purchase decisions, the role of engagement in fostering meaningful connections with followers, and the positive effects of homophily on consumer perceptions and intentions. In conclusion, fashion bloggers wield considerable influence in shaping consumer behaviour, serving as trusted guides and trendsetters in the digital landscape. Their credibility, engagement, and reliability with their audience are pivotal factors driving consumer preferences and purchasing decisions. As influencer marketing continues to evolve, brands must recognize the significance of aligning with authentic and engaging influencers to cultivate meaningful connections with consumers and enhance brand visibility and loyalty.

The study drew upon theoretical frameworks such as the two-step flow theory and their uses to provide deeper insights into the mechanisms through which fashion bloggers influence consumer behaviour. These frameworks helped contextualize the findings and shed light on the interpersonal dynamics and motivations underlying consumer engagement with fashion bloggers. The conclusion of this study, which underscores the significant influence of fashion bloggers on consumer behaviour, aligns closely with the principles of the two-step flow theory. Developed by sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld in the 1940s, the two-step flow theory posits that information flows from mass media to opinion leaders, who then disseminate this information to the wider population. In the context of our study, fashion bloggers can be seen as modern-day opinion leaders who serve as intermediaries between brands and consumers. These findings highlight the importance of fashion bloggers' credibility, engagement, and homophily in influencing consumers' purchase intentions. These influencers act as opinion leaders within their respective niches, curating content, providing recommendations, and shaping trends that resonate with their audience. In this study, researchers observed that consumer engagement with fashion bloggers and perceptions of homophily with these influencers were positively correlated with intentions to buy. This indicates that consumers are more likely to trust and be influenced by fashion bloggers who they perceive as credible and relatable.

Our study exploring the influence of fashion bloggers on consumer behaviour in Lahore, Pakistan, faces several limitations. Firstly, our sample may exhibit biases, potentially not fully representing the diverse demographics and consumer behaviours prevalent in Lahore. Additionally, the findings might lack generalizability beyond this specific context due to the unique cultural and societal factors influencing fashion preferences and consumer habits. We must also be cautious about inferring causality from our correlations, as various complex factors may contribute to consumer decisions. Moreover, relying on self-reported data introduces the possibility of social desirability bias, affecting the credibility of our results. The ever-changing landscape of fashion trends and consumer preferences emphasizes the time-sensitive nature of our study, highlighting the need for continuous research to accurately capture evolving patterns.

Recommendations

To mitigate these limitations, we suggest several approaches to strengthen the validity and significance of our research. Firstly, diversifying our sample to encompass a broader range of demographics and consumer segments can mitigate biases and provide more comprehensive insights into consumer behaviour. Furthermore, conducting comparative studies across different regions and cultures can help contextualize our findings and identify universal versus context-specific trends. Employing longitudinal research designs and advanced statistical techniques can help unravel the complexities of causality and



better capture the dynamic nature of consumer behaviour over time. Additionally, employing mixed-method approaches, such as combining self-report data with observational or experimental measures, can offer a better understanding of the factors driving consumer decisions. Lastly, fostering collaborations with local stakeholders, such as fashion brands and influencers, can not only enrich our research but also facilitate the translation of our findings into actionable insights for the fashion industry in Lahore and beyond.

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