Determinants of Influencer Credibility and Platform Credibility to Understand the Effectiveness of Indian Fashion Influencers

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ABSTRACT

The concept of influencer marketing refers to the use of selected influencers to create and promote branded content to the influencer's followers and the brand's selected target market. Fashion influencers on social media are the main transmitters of information to their network and play a successful new fashion diffuser. However, some influencers are proven to be more successful in doing so. Therefore, this paper aims to understand the factors pertaining to source credibility and platform credibility in determining influencer effectiveness on social media. A huge number of variables have been identified during the literature review for this study. The research design of the present study has been 'quantitative' and attempts to bring empirical findings. A structured questionnaire has been used to collect data from 367 respondents through a purposive sampling method and analyzed using SEM. This research study presents the findings and elaborative results in the context of India. Implications and recommendations of research are further discussed in the context of emerging markets.

1. INTRODUCTION

The solution to a changing world is innovation. Companies have been forced to implement creative product design and marketing communication approaches because of the evolving nature of brand and customer relationships and the ever-increasing clutter. A successful communication strategy goes a long way toward ensuring the long-term viability of a brand (Brown et al., 2008; Lee & Kim, 2020). The communication networks enabled the brands to interact with their customers and involvement with the community (Hudson & Hudson, 2013).

The marketing ethos is to create content that can communicate and react to the target market over a long period. The decline in the use of conventional media and the growth of social networks have substantially affected knowledge and artistic content accessed and viewed by people (Kumar et al., 2010). Consumers are becoming more knowledgeable and, as a result, more critical of advertising messages as a result of increased digitization. Social media use is common among Millennials and the younger generation (Gottfried and Shearer, 2016). Consequently, it is increasingly necessary to get information from social media sites.

The emergence of social media has provided an opportunity for brands to communicate with consumers more transparently and organically. The use of social media brand influences is on the rise, and it has emerged as one of the most significant marketing trends of 2017 (Talavera, 2015). Influencer marketing refers to how powerful people help to transfer ideas online and offline (Lee & Kim, 2020; Forbes.com). Social media influences are digital or web celebrities who have a large number of followers across one or more social media sites and wield significant control over their followers (Agarwal et al., 2020). These online personalities are experts in a variety of fields, including travel, food, fashion, and lifestyle, among others.

Consequently, the idea of influencer marketing refers to the use of chosen influencers to build and/or endorse advertised content to the influencer's fans and the brand's target market (Yodel, 2017). Compared to the content created by a brand itself, content produced by an influencer is regarded as more authentic and organic (Talavera, 2015). According to the Influencer Marketing Global Survey Report (2019), consumers often share the content published by the influencers with friends and family, thereby increasing the audience reach, eWOM and increasing brand awareness. Entertainers and Fashion/beauty influencers are the top two most followed influencer categories.

Marketers need to look at influencers as part of the ecosystem and should include them in the mainstream. Various authors in the past (Woods, 2016; Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017) have investigated the different factors that make influencer marketing effective. De Veirman et al., (2017) suggested that the "followers '/followees' ratio" that the influencer has and the type of product being promoted should be of prime consideration when developing an influencer marketing strategy on Instagram. Over the last few years, the influencer marketing industry has continued to expand. The impact of influencers needs to be studied keenly, especially in the context of an emerging economy. Emerging economies like India are still characterized by a need to touch and feel in a consumption context (Talavera, 2015). Given that India has one of the largest millennials, targeting them through web-based platforms has become imperative to branding success. There have been papers developed in the past that have explored the roles of influencers in the age of social media (Woods, 2016). Very few of these papers have looked at the concept of influencer marketing in an emerging economy like India. This paper analyses the factors driving the influencer's effectiveness in India, which is also quite similar to the situation in other emerging economies in Asia. The authors have also tried to present a rare conceptual model in the literature presently available on the subject.

This paper tries to understand two important variables and their roles in the effectiveness of an influencer in emerging economies. The authors, through secondary research, have understood that even though influencers are using a lot of different web-based platforms, not every platform is equally effective in creating a positive impact on the consumers. Thus, the authors have undertaken to study the impact of the credibility of platforms used for promotions on the followers and their ultimate purchase intentions. Given the premium that consumers in emerging markets put on trust and familiarity, this paper investigates the role of influencer's credibility on the consumer's psyche. The paper presents an overview of influencer marketing in terms of its concept and emergence as a new and effective tool for brand communication. The authors then present the relevant findings from the review of the literature and the concept of influencer and platform credibility. The paper then takes the readers through the problem statement and presents the hypotheses undertaken in this study. After discussing the methodology adopted for this study, the authors finally present the analysis and the relevant findings.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Influencer marketing is a strategy of promotion and marketing that utilises prominent individuals or opinion leaders to drive consumers' brand awareness and/or their market-related decisions (Brown et al., 2008; Scott, 2015). The influencer's innate characteristics play a fundamental part in alluring brands and marketers to persuade them closely. Therefore, the attractiveness of influencer marketing is mounting exponentially. Influencer marketing is a form of marketing in which advertisers and brands pay influencers to create and promote their advertised content to their fans, the target market (Yodel, 2017). Influencer followers claim that influencer-created content is more organic, authentic, and meaningful than brand/firm-created marketing contact (Talavera, 2015). The influencer's inherent characteristics are crucial in convincing brands and marketers to pay close attention to them. One benefit is that marketers can choose more affordable influencers than the huge fees necessary to sign one or more renowned celebrity endorsers (Till et al., 1998).

Furthermore, most social media influencers have already developed themselves by specialising in a particular field, such as technology, fashion, or travel. This suggests that when influencers partner with brands relevant to their fields of expertise, customers are more likely to trust their opinions (Till et al., 1998). Influencer marketing yielded eleven times the ROI of conventional ads, according to the same post (Nandagiri & Philip, 2018). However, the situation is very different in emerging markets such as India and Africa, where many research findings are not produced. The benefits and drawbacks of influencer marketing have been discussed extensively, but mostly in a global context. Despite being the world's second-largest country in terms of smartphones and internet usage, India has a small share of the global influencer marketing industry. Influencers are the latest opinion-makers who create content for brands on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, and other social media to gain a following and brand awareness. They also generate positive electronic word of mouth and create customer engagement (Rani & Shivaprasad, 2018; Rani et al. 2021).

Many scholars believe that in Social Media Influencer marketing, confidence and perceived credibility may impact the efficacy of the campaign (Lee & Kim, 2020). Bruns (2020) suggested a model to understand how perceived authenticity and trust are linked to purchase intent. With the advent of increased Internet infrastructure and an increased share of social media users, the state of social media marketing and influencer marketing in India is rapidly expanding (Lim, et. al, 2017). Influencers in different stages of the customer decision process in the fashion industry are examined in another study conducted in the Indian context on fashion and lifestyle items. Text-based content from influencers was the most trustworthy source of information for young Indian women (Handa & Khare, 2013; Sudha & Seena, 2017). The fake follower issue has arisen due to the rise of influencers as new opinion leaders through social media, and its implications for influencer marketing must be understood. In an empirical setting, Hu et al. (2015) find that a monopolist recruiting a limited number of influencers will reduce sales unpredictability. Non-traditional celebrities with large follower counts are considered more likeable and trustworthy, according to studies including Jin and Phua (2014), Djafarova and Rushworth (2017), and De Veirman et al. (2017). They have a huge impact on consumer product engagement and purchase intent.

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Bandura proposed social learning theory (SLT) in 1977 (Bandura & Walters: 1977), and it has since been widely used in the fields of advertising and promotional communication. People learn through observing others, according to this belief. It supports the concept that people are driven to act or behave in a specific manner as a result of their direct or indirect social contacts (Bandura & Walters: 1977). This concept has been used in previous marketing research to explore how socialisation agents such as family, friends, and celebrities impact customer consumption behaviour (Lee & Kim, 2020). This study proposes social learning theory as a contextual framework for understanding how social

media influencers alter customer behaviour and perception and how this influence affects sales. The notion of SLT is that individuals learn new behaviour through observation from others. If individuals observe positive, desired outcomes in the observed behaviour, they are most likely to imitate and adopt the same behaviour by themselves. In this study, the influencers act as the person being observed and show positive/negative outcomes of the product through their content. They, in return, influence the behaviour of followers as they learn from the influencers they follow.

3.1 Influencer's Credibility and Social Media Platform Credibility

Previous researchers have investigated factors that contributed to the effectiveness of influencer marketing across various contexts (e.g., Colliander and Dahlen 2011; De Veirman et al., 2017; Djafarova and Rushworth 2017; Johansen et al., 2017; Woods 2016). The Bruns Intention by model concept is that Social Media Influencer Marketing is driven to purchase intention when consumers perceive an Influencer as authentic. The literature suggested that some of the key factors were influencer credibility and trust in the influencer. The model also describes how consumers gain confidence in Influencers when they believe them to be genuine and how trust contributes to purchase intent. The study investigated the effects of perceived source confidence, experience, product match-up, and brand meaning transfer on customer attitude and purchasing intention.

With the emergence of technology that helps create similar offerings, brands are likely to lose out on the uniqueness of their offering. The same is true not only for physical products but also in the case of services today. As more corporations are equipped with emerging technologies that help them create similar offerings, brands and services are commoditized. In such situations, it becomes imperative for brands to invest in marketing campaigns that help create a psychological difference in the consumer's mind (Xiao et al., 2018; Lee & Kim, 2020). Trust and credibility play an important role in brand creation. Companies are thus exploring avenues to establish a credible and long-lasting relationship with the target market. Companies have started forging relationships with their customers through celebrities whom the customers follow. The emergence of social media has created an opportunity for brands to connect with their customers by investing in a relationship with popular social media influencers. As the literature review has revealed, customers tend to trust messages and communication from their liked and followed social media personalities than directly from the company's side (Xiao et al., 2018; Lee & Kim, 2020). Hence it becomes important to analyze the factors that influence such marketing success. It becomes important to explore why certain influencers are more successful and what factors help deliver a message to a successful and long-lasting member. After undertaking an in-depth literature review, this paper presents a model to unearth the elements that ensure both the influencer's and platform's credibility, impacting the customer's purchase intentions and knowledge about the brand. The review of existing publications revealed that influencers have the highest impact in the fashion segment as many consumers like to copy the lifestyle of the influencers by indulging in things that these influencers seem to use as a part of their life.

Evans (2017) discovered that endorsers outside of their respective expertise fields could indirectly damage consumers' perceptions, resulting in negative purchasing intentions. Second, the attractiveness of social media influencers as a source of information failed to affect consumers' purchasing intent. The findings backed up a previous study by Colliander and Dahlen (2011), which found that physical attractiveness influences consumers' perceptions of source legitimacy. Till et al. (1998), argued that attractiveness is not a powerful dimension for generating buying activity because there is a poor logical relation between an attractive endorser and purchasing intent.

The product match-up of social media influencers was found to be important with purchasing intention and customer attitude. The product match-up hypothesis established that an endorser's product-related messages must be consistent to achieve a successful advertising outcome (Lim et al., 2017). Furthermore, various endorsement works of literature have highlighted the value of the product or brand congruence with its endorser as a primary criterion for advertising success (Brown et al., 2008;

Carrillat et al., 2013). In this report, millennials' perceptions of product congruency with social media influencers significantly affected their purchasing intent. Chakraborty and Bhat (2018) looked at the relationship between source credibility and brand awareness indirectly, finding that online reviews' source credibility and review quality were significant predictors of consumers' perceived review credibility, which influenced brand knowledge and purchase intentions. The current study wants to see whether influencer reputation directly impacts brand awareness and purchasing intent in this review.

According to literature, social media influencers' value transfer positively impacts consumers who connect the symbolism associated with endorsers and the endorsed brands. These consumers are more likely to perceive and pass brand meanings, resulting in increased purchases of the endorsed brands (Sudha & Seena, 2017). According to this study, respondents were more likely to embrace meanings from brands supported by social media influencers they saw as similar to themselves or whom they respected. Hence, the authors suggest that influencer's personal/source characteristics improve Influencer's overall effectiveness:

**H1:** Influencer's credibility has a significant positive relation with Influencer's effectiveness.

Several studies, including those by Cortland (2017) and Phua et al. (2017) found that social media users are wary of marketing ads in their feeds because the site was designed to foster relationships rather than sell goods. Furthermore, it will be important to learn how social media as a medium affects influencer marketing reputation. In the context of social media influencers, where attitude plays a significant role in mediating the fit between a product and influencers, this phenomenon makes sense (Lim et al., 2017). Factors influencing YouTube influencer marketing credibility: a heuristic-systematic model was established where the insightful importance of influencer-generated material, influencer's trustworthiness, attractiveness, and similarity to followers positively affect followers' trust influencers' branded posts, which in turn influence brand awareness and purchase intentions. YouTube is a perfect media outlet for implementing influencer marketing campaigns due to the rise of influencer marketing. The findings show that user perceptions of information credibility on YouTube are influenced by trustworthiness, social impact, claim consistency, and information participation. The authors suggest the following hypotheses, keeping in mind the significance of the influencer's network complexities that improve the Influencer's overall effectiveness:

H2: Platform Credibility has a significant positive relationship with the Influencer's effectiveness.

Influencers have altered the fundamentals of marketing communication and how consumers process knowledge. Identifying the factors that affect the source reputation of fashion product influencers and the network credibility of social media platforms could raise awareness of influencer marketing in India As a result, the analysis will investigate the relationship between the following independent variables and influencer effectiveness. The proposed hypotheses are summarised in Fig. 1.

The hypothesis of a positive relationship between consumer attitude and purchasing intent was shown to be correct. The ultimate goal of influencing a person's decision to buy a certain product is highly subjective to that person's beliefs (Hudson and Hudson, 2013). According to the findings of this report, respondents who have a positive attitude toward social media influencers are more likely to want to buy the influencers' Similarly, this result corroborated previous research by Hudson and Hudson (2013) and Chakraborty et al. (2018), which found that perceptions have a positive effect on purchasing intent. Finally, customer attitude is significantly mediated by the relationship between source attractiveness, product match-up, and meaning transfer. The following proposed conceptual model for the study will be tested using various statical tools and applications.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Influencer's effectiveness
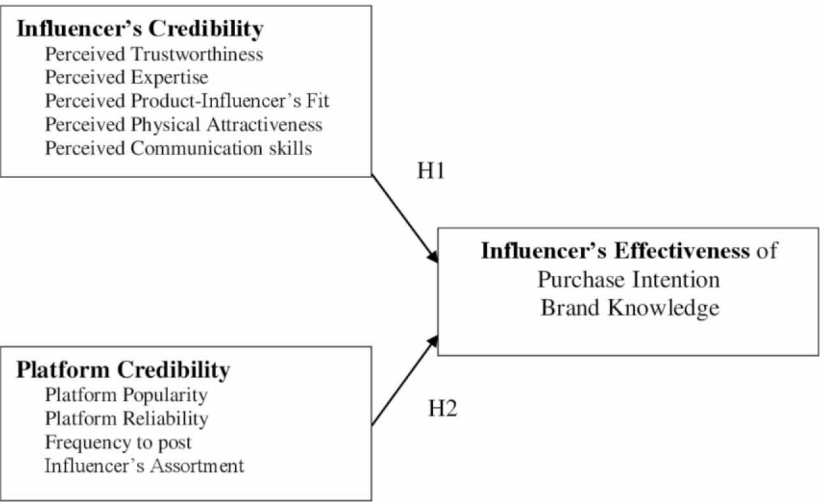
4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employs a systematic research design method to present empirical results on influencer credibility measures. A standardised questionnaire was used for this research study since quantitative research was designed to collect data using the e-survey process. The items on the questionnaire were taken from previous research studies that measured the credibility of influencers' sources and platforms. The items for the scale of source credibility are taken from McCroskey & Teven (1999); Bhattacherjee & Sanford (2006) and modified in the present context. Few items were adopted from Dedeoglu et al. (2019). The items of platform credibility are adopted from the previous study by Zha et al. (2018). The instrument used in this study had 24 items, and they were measured on a 5-point Likert scale to capture the responses from participants. The study measures the five dimensions of influencer's credibility: Perceived Trustworthiness, Perceived Expertise, Perceived Product-Influencer's Fit, Perceived Physical Attractiveness, and Perceived Communication skills of the influencer. Also, there are four dimensions of platform credibility i.e. popularity of platform/site, reliability of Platform/site, frequency to post, and presence of other popular influencers, included in the study for measurement. The Dependent variables are Purchase intention and Brand knowledge which are indicated in constructed instruments of measurement.

The said measurement scale pooled items from the previous existing scale, and therefore a preliminary approach to testing this scale is executed with the help of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and further confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The EFA examination using principal component analysis supports the constructs of the measurement model proposed three iterations (eigenvalue >1). In the final results, 2 items in the questionnaire were dropped due to cross-loadings. Then, CFA was performed to assess the scale properties of the measurement model and again obtained satisfactory results to establish the model's validity. Factor analysis revealed a three-factor solution accounting for 69.1% of the total variance. Each indicator loaded on the expected factor.

4.1 Data Collection

There are over 462 million internet users in India, with 200 million of them using social media. India is the world's second-largest online economy, after China. 66% of Internet users use social media sites daily in urban India. Users of social media are often subjected to ads from social media influencers. Influencer-created content is preferred over ads because it is detailed and

objective-oriented (Nandagiri & Philip, 2018). The research samples are "any Indian internet users on social media who follow one or more fashion influencers". Surveying this population has not been easy as Indian social media users were 310 million in 2018 (statista.com). The 216 million users on social media are interested in fashion products, and approximately 1 out of 3 users follow influencers on any social media platform. Therefore, the sampling frame is 72 million Indians on social media who follow one or more fashion influencers, mostly micro-influencers (Żyminkowska, 2019).

Further, the structured questionnaire for this study has been circulated through social media posts to the potential samples. The questionnaire was distributed using a purposive sampling technique to reach the right respondents. The famous fashion influencer's/micro-influencer information was obtained from the official report (Pragati, 2019) and then the email address of followers through the comment box was taken. Further, the survey instrument has been shared via email and mobile numbers. A total of 381 respondents' data of qualified participants have been received over two weeks, out of which 367 respondents' data has been further considered for analysis.

Further, the multivariate analysis will be applied to understand the relationship between latent and measured variables of the measurement model. This method is preferred for the study because estimating multiple interrelated independent variables can be understood as the dependent variable in a single analysis. Therefore, the study has analyzed the data by Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to test the developed hypotheses. The SPSS software of version 22.0 has been used for all the basic analysis, and AMOS 21.0 version has been used for CFA and SEM Models.

5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The theoretical foundation of this research leads to hypotheses and data has been collected to examine the proposed hypothesis of the study. First, data preparation has been undertaken by identifying missing data, analyzing outliers, calculating standard deviation and descriptive statistics of individual items & individual responses. The test of Kaiser-Meyer-olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's test of Sphericity has been performed to measure sample adequacy. The KMO value (0.81) and a significant chi-square value indicated that factor analysis has been appropriate for analysis.

Once the data has been adequately prepared for analysis, the model evaluation has been carried out. All the exogenous variables have been measured using a 5-point Likert scale, whereas a different 5-point Likert scale is used to measure endogenous variables. During the common method variance analysis, the largest variance explained by the first factor was 45.73% of the total variance explained. This result signifies no common method bias (CMB) in the data set; therefore, the analysis can be further taken (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Podsakoff and Organ, 1986). The models were compared via chi-square tests to control CMB, which demonstrated that the former was superior to the later. Therefore, common method bias was not a concern for this study, further supporting the two-dimensional structure.

The data sets which have been retained for the final analysis of the proposed model are 367. The table below represents the demographic profile of respondents. From Table 1, it is evident that the majority of respondents are Female (57.2%) of the age group 16-25 (45.2%), having a Graduation degree (45.5) as their dominant educational qualification. The data also indicate that the most popular social media platform to follow fashion influencers is Instagram and Facebook followed by youtube. This demographic data helps the researcher understand that this study can be generalised on which category of the population.

The demographic measure constituted the first section of the research instrument, followed by the proposed Independent variables and additional variables. The latent variables have been measured based on a previously validated scale. Therefore the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) has been conducted to know the total variance extracted. The items of Influencer's credibility, Platform

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondent

Demography		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	157	42.7
	Female	210	57.2
Age (in years)	16-25	166	45.2
	26-35	128	34.9
	36 & above	73	19.9
Educational qualification	Under-Graduate	117	31.9
	Graduate	167	45.5
	Post-Graduate or above	83	22.6
Which social media Platform do you follow fashion product influencers (Select multiple as applied)	Instagram	242	65.9
	Facebook	132	36.0
	YouTube	216	58.9
	Blog Post	124	33.8
	Others	31	8.4
Which type of review do you prefer to follow	Detailed Video	99	27.0
	Short Video	146	39.8
	Picture and text description	102	27.8
	Plain Text reviews	18	4.9
	Audio	2	0.5

Credibility, and Influencer's Effectiveness fall into three extractions, explaining the total variables extracted as 69.1, which is acceptable for further CFA & SEM.

Before the model estimates, each sub-construct undergoes a CFA analysis. Many of the items with a high P-value were investigated further for model estimates. The results of SEM were obtained using AMOS software and are presented below. In this analysis, the two independent constructs 'Influencer's source credibility (SC)' and 'Platform/Site Credibility (PIC)', as well as the dependent variable 'Influencer's Effectiveness (IE),' met all of the criteria, with all loadings exceeding 0.5 and adequate composite reliability (CR). Average Variance Exacted (AVE) has been reported greater than 0.5 which is suitable for the given model (Hair et al., 2009). This allows an understanding of the correlation for the indicator variable of a construct. As a result, all constructs met the reliability and convergent validity requirements. Table 2 represents the data systematically.

The fitness of the model has been tested and indicated on different values. The final model for source credibility exhibits the chi-square divided by the degree of freedom ratio, giving the value of 2.50, which is a good acceptable fit. Also, the absolute fit parameter value, like root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), is 0.064, which is below the recommended cut-off level but acceptable in range. The incremental fit parameters, namely the comparative fit index (CFI), give 0.98, which Bentler, 1990 recommends. The normal fit index (NFI) is 0.96. The values are given in Table 3 exhibit fitness indicators that imply the conceptual framework. Most of the observed data set values are ranged with model fit recommended values and provide sufficient evidence that the fit between the measurement model and data is acceptable.

The structure of the model under consideration is represented in the Figure 2. All the standardized values are represented in the structural model. This indicates that the model under consideration is significant.

Table 2. Internal consistency and Reliability of the study construct

Construct	Indicator	Item Name	Loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
Influencer's Credibility (SC)	Perceived Trustworthiness	PT	0.706	0.612	0.83	0.873
	Perceived Expertise	PE	0.739			
	Perceived Product-Influencer's Fit	PF	0.598			
	Perceived Physical Attractiveness	PA	0.633			
	Perceived Communication skills	PC	0.631			
Platform Credibility (PIC)	Popularity of Platform/site	PP	0.502	0.591	0.81	0.882
	Reliability of Platform/site	PR	0.977			
	Frequency to post	FP	0.498			
	Presence of another popular influencer	IA	0.986			
Influencer's Effectiveness (IE)	Purchase Intention	CPI	0.855	0.724	0.79	0.85
	Brand Knowledge	CBK	0.886			

Table 3. Model Fit Indices

Statistics	Suggested Values (Gefen et al. 2000)	Value achieved
Chi-square/d.f	< 5.0	2.502
RMSEA	<= 0.60	0.64
NFI	> 0.90	0.96
TLI	>= 0.95	0.97
CFI	>= 0.95	0.98
GFI	> 0.80	0.95
AGFI	> 0.80	0.92

Table 4 represents the regression weights of all the variables is represented along with P values. The regression values stand significant in all cases. The regression value of SC (Source Credibility) on IE (Influencer's effectiveness) is significant ($p < .001$). PIC (Platform Credibility) on IE (Influencer's effectiveness) is also significant ($p < .001$). The variables of source credibility that is PT (Perceived Trustworthiness), PE (Perceived Expertise), PF (Perceived Product-Influencer's Fit), PA (Perceived Physical Attractiveness), PC (Perceived Communication skills) estimates stand significant stating positive relation between endogenous variables and exogenous variables. The factors of Platform credibility also positively signify the relationship with the PP (Platform Popularity), PR (Platform Reliability), FP (Frequency to post) & IA (Influencer's Assortment).

The level of R square (co-efficient of determination) has been assessed in the case of hypotheses testing. 'Influencer's credibility' construct accounts for 42% of the variance in explaining Influencer's
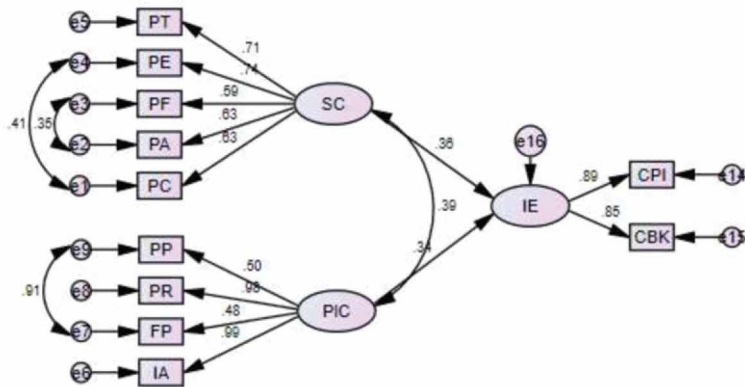
Figure 2. SEM Structure of Model

Table 4. The Regression Weightage of Model

Regression Output			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P Value
IE	<---	SC	0.417	0.079	5.287	***
IE	<---	PlC	0.262	0.043	6.148	***
PC	<---	SC	1			
PA	<---	SC	0.997	0.115	8.669	***
PF	<---	SC	0.987	0.12	8.224	***
PE	<---	SC	1.13	0.085	13.28	***
PT	<---	SC	1.028	0.111	9.257	***
IA	<---	PlC	1			
FP	<---	PlC	0.442	0.043	10.219	***
PR	<---	PlC	0.992	0.023	43.476	***
PP	<---	PlC	0.458	0.042	10.879	***
CPI	<---	IE	1			
CBK	<---	IE	1.086	0.081	13.419	***

Note: IE (Influencer's effectiveness), SC (Source Credibility), PIC (Platform Credibility), PT (Perceived Trustworthiness), PE (Perceived Expertise), PF (Perceived Product-Influencer's Fit), PA (Perceived Physical Attractiveness), PC (Perceived Communication skills), PP (Platform Popularity), PR (Platform Reliability), FP (Frequency to post) & IA (Influencer's Assortment)

effectiveness. Whereas, the 'Platform credibility' construct accounts for 27% of the variance in explaining the Influencer's effectiveness. Together, they account for 69% variance in explaining the dependent variable, i.e Influencer's effectiveness. The value presented in the table below is sufficient to support the hypotheses of this research paper. Finally, this presentation demonstrates that the data analysis is sufficient to prove that the Influencer's credibility and Platform credibility have been significant in predicting the Consumer's Purchase intention in the context of the Fashion industry's influence.

The study revealed a significant positive effect of Perceived Trustworthiness, Perceived Expertise, Perceived Product-Influencer Fit, Perceived communication skills and Perceived Physical Attractiveness on source credibility. There is significant evidence even to conclude that Popularity of

Table 5. Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Effect	Decision
H1	Influencer's credibility has a significant positive relation with Consumer's Purchase intention.	0.417	Supported
H2	Platform Credibility has a significant positive relation with Consumer's Purchase intention.	0.262	Supported

Platform/site, Reliability of Platform/site, Frequency to post and Presence of another famous influencer, shape-up the platform credibility for influencer's marketing. Overall, the source and platform credibility directly affect the 'Purchase intention' and 'Brand knowledge of consumer'. Therefore, it can be concluded that influencers should exhibit the qualities of Trust, Expertise, good-fit with the product, commendable communication skills, & attractive physical appearance, which indicate credibility in the source for a fashion product. The finding also indicates that consumers prefer the popularity & reliability of social media sites along with the frequency to post by many influencers' as credible platforms for influencers. Finally, perceived source credibility and perceived platform credibility signify purchasing intention and enhance the consumer's brand knowledge.

6. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY

This study is the first to elucidate the effect of source credibility and platform credibility in the context of influencers of emerging markets like India. By examining the influencers market from a comprehensive perspective, this study has extended the application of considering the factors pertaining to source credibility and platform credibility, which influence the purchase intention of consumers. The proposed hypothesized model investigated the potentials of Trust, Expertise, good-fit with the product, admirable communication skills & attractive physical appearance of influencers on the effectiveness of influencer's marketing. The result of this study suggests that influencers generated post's informative value and their attractiveness ensures credibility. Our findings explore the attributes of trust and expertise as the most impactful variable to establish the source dimension within an influencer's credibility model. Our findings showed that influencers' trustworthiness, attractiveness, and perceived product-fit positively affect their followers follower's belief in influencer branded posts which are in line with the findings of perceived studies like Djafarova & Rushworth (2017) & Lou & Yuan (2019). This study also contradicts the results of Lee & Koo (2015), which examines the relationship of source credibility on social media influencers with purchase intention and found the relationship insignificant for all the variables of source credibility. It is noteworthy that the physical attractiveness of influencers was a non-significant factor in most of the previous examinations. However, in the context of fashion influencers, the factor of physical attractiveness is important to shape the credibility of influencers.

The finding indicates the dimension of platform credibility through the variables pertinent to the platform's reliability, the popularity of the platform, frequency of influencer's posts and an assortment of many similar influencers. There are many social media platforms present in India for Influencers. But the study indicates that the sites that are more popular among consumers, perceived as reliable, many other influencers are present to choose from and frequently do post about fashion products are considered superior to see influencer's posts like Instagram (Rebelo, 2017). It reinforces the research findings of other researchers in this field (Chou et. al, 2015; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Zha et. al, 2018). The social learning theory often strengthens the field of influencer effectiveness. Human behaviours are learned from the environment through the observation learning process. Influencers are powerful in creating an effect on consumers who follow them. This paper is one of the rare few

attempts to put source and platform credibility together to determine its relationship with purchase intention and brand knowledge.

6.1 Implications of the Study

The investigation has theoretical as well as practical implications. The study's findings, in theory, expand existing literature on influencer marketing by investigating how various aspects such as influencer credibility and platform credibility may influence the success of this brand's marketing by impacting purchase intention. The Social learning theory adoption proves that customers learn new behaviour through observation from influencers and as influencer's credibility increases positive outcomes in the observed behaviour of those who follow them, it implies imitating and adopting the purchase intention. Furthermore, the study's findings provide theoretical insight for the persuasive knowledge of the social learning model by demonstrating how influencers help followers learn about fashion products.

This study offers marketers a few practical implications in selecting social media influencers for their marketing program from the managerial perspective. The limitations of modern marketing communication and ineffective mass media have given rise to unreliability among brand-endorsed communication. Consumers are looking for those sources of communication that they find independent and reliable at this point in time. Influencers are those opinion leaders on social media who are extremely effective in brand knowledge and positive attitude formation. Entrepreneurs and practitioners can utilize this framework to tap the potential of social media influencers. Particularly, the firms selling less-differentiated brands can target the micro-influencers to reach their target market segment. These influencers have also been taken as an alternative to avoid costly celebrity endorsement and help to deeply connect local and niche markets to approach product diffusion in urban and rural markets. While considering an influencer's marketing program for fashion products in India, marketers can consider influencers who are good fit for the product, perceived as trustworthy, knowledgeable, attractive and possess good communication skills to gain a competitive advantage. Besides, managers can choose the social media platform that is more popular, reliable and encompasses an assortment of other fashion influencers to gain more effectiveness in their influencer marketing program. This study can also be useful for micro-influents who want to expand their followers and look for sustainable growth as fashion influencers on social media.

Some limitations of this research work are highlighted in this section. First, although this study considers several factors related to influencer and platform credibility, other factors such as message credibility and content quality can be found and included in future research. According to studies, other variables such as message credibility, receiver motivation, and receiver personality characteristics may all play a role in an influencer's effectiveness. Second, fashion influencers on social media sites are taken into account in evaluating influencer effectiveness. Limiting the scope was important to keep the current study focused, but it also made it difficult to parse the results to other forms of influencers. Physical appearance, for example, is a major factor in increasing source credibility, but it may not be as important in the cases of other influencers. As a result, this study can be applied to other product categories and different cultural settings. Finally, this research aims to develop a basic theoretical model that can explain the factors that affect influencer effectiveness. Influencers and their followers are becoming more prevalent. Influencer marketing is a field of study that will need more time and effort from potential researchers to provide valuable information and aid in developing a focused strategy for influencers in the future. Future researchers can study the combined effect of influencers with advertising messages in impacting product purchase intention.

7. CONCLUSION

The principal aim of the research paper was to investigate the effect of Influencer's credibility and platform's credibility on consumer purchase intention in the context of fashion influencers. Influencers

play the role of catalysts in the marketing program's effectiveness; however, this effect depends on the consumer's perceived credibility of the influencer. The result shows that an influencer's credibility and platform credibility are significant in purchasing intention and following a fashion influencer on social media. These findings add to the literature in three ways. First, the analysis of fashion influencers on social media complements knowledge by providing information on factors influencing influencers' effectiveness. Second, the analysis of these relationships between source credibility, platform credibility, and Consumer purchase intention can be strategically utilized by marketers as an innovative tool to market fashion products in India. Third, the study provides the foundation for potential research in the field of study. Overall, it is virtually impossible to ignore the collective wisdom in social media-originated by influencers of all types that's why influencers marketing can be considered a cost-effective and more efficient way to market products in the fashion sector.

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