

Social Media and Purchase Intentions of Gen Z: Role of Social Media Influencers

Mohanad Mohammed Sufyan Ghaleb*

Department of Management, College of Business, King Faisal University, Al-Ahsa 31982, Saudi Arabia. Email: mghaleb@kfu.edu.sa

Waleed Abdulrahman Alawad

Assistance Professor, Department of Business Administration, College of Business and Economics, Qassim University, Buraidah 51452, Saudi Arabia. Email: waoad@qu.edu.sa

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Abstract

This study seeks to explore the mediating and moderating effects of engagement with influencer content and social media usage on the relationship between influencer marketing variables and purchase intentions among university students, specifically those belonging to generation Z. A survey questionnaire was used to collect data from a sample of 328 students. The university students were selected due to their significant representation of Generation Z. A total of 500 survey questionnaires were distributed, and 328 complete questionnaires were returned and used for analysis. According to the study, engagement with influencer content acts as a significant mediator between factors such as information value, emotional response, influencer credibility, and purchase intentions. Moreover, the extent of social media usage on Instagram played a significant moderating role in the relationship between specific influencer marketing variables and purchase intentions, both in social and professional contexts. The study found that Instagram usage was the primary factor influencing consumer behaviour and purchase intentions. The study's findings highlight the significant impact of engaging with influencer content and social media on university students' purchase intentions. The study recommends that marketers and advertisers reassess their influencer marketing strategy, placing emphasis on both engagement and the social media patterns of their target audience. This study examines the influence of influencer content engagement and social media use on consumer behaviour and purchase decisions among university students, who are a significant portion of Generation Z. It expands on existing theory by exploring the mediating and moderating effects of these factors.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Engagement, Social Media Usage, Generation Z, Purchase Intentions.

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Introduction

Social media influencers wield significant influence among Generation Z. The Gen-Z generation values authenticity, favoring realistic and natural content over flawless ones. Gen Z is highly committed to diversity and desires representation of their age group across various forms and identities. Short-form video content, such as TikTok and Instagram Reels, is highly engaging for the Troika generation. A study on the role of media ([Hanifawati et al., 2019](#)) finds that social media influencers have a more significant impact on millennials and Gen Z than celebrities and social leaders. This statement is particularly applicable to teenagers in the Gen Z age group who heavily rely on the internet and social networks ([Vitoria Fernández, 2019](#)). Social media influencers have a distinct impact on Generation Y and Generation Z. For Generation Z, their friends and peers are the most influential individuals ([Nyikos, 2021](#)). Celebrities, opinion leaders, and friends or peers have a significant influence on high-end fashion items for Gen Zs, with friends and peers having the greatest impact ([Sun et al., 2022](#)). Activists who integrate sustainable development or social justice objectives into their work often receive support from devoted fan bases. Generation Z actively engages with influencers who use features like polls, question prompts, and challenges, highlighting the importance of interaction. Contrary to the current popularity of Instagram and TikTok, the preferences of Generation Z can indeed fluctuate on a daily basis. Individuals who become proficient at utilizing platform innovations and staying informed about current trends tend to maintain their popularity. Feedback is crucial as it significantly influences consumer behaviour, particularly among Gen Z who often rely on influencer recommendations instead of traditional advertisements.

"Influencer content engagement" refers to the degree of activity and participation on social networks where users directly react to the content that influencers share. Interactions between users can occur through various means, such as likes, comments, shares, and direct messages (DMs). The influencer's content is evaluated based on the level of participation, response, and customisation. Research on engagement with influencer content has identified key factors. [Bentley et al. \(2021\)](#) found that the cultural distance between influencers and their followers influences the frequency of engagement. A stronger connection between individuals leads to increased engagement. [Firat \(2023\)](#) found that posts containing promotion incentives and event information are more likely to engage audiences, while posts with brand information tend to engage less. [Nguyen et al. \(2020\)](#) showcased the effectiveness of social media influencers in marketing communication by highlighting their capacity to sway consumer purchasing decisions through their large following and established trust with their fans. ([Tafesse & Wood, 2021](#)) investigates the influence of influencers, finding that a larger number of followers and higher content volume have a detrimental impact. However, influencers' specific areas of interest further influence the positive association between their content and follower count. Your role as a mediator for social media influencers would entail

facilitating and improving their interactions. Establishing effective communication channels, promptly addressing audience feedback and inquiries, and producing content that aligns with their values and interests can foster a strong connection with the audience. Furthermore, you can assist influencers in managing their engagement challenges, including dealing with negative comments and difficult audiences.

There can be significant variations in the extent to which different populations, regions, and individuals utilise social media, especially platforms like Instagram. Instagram remains a highly popular social media platform worldwide, with an immense user base in the billions. Instagram is a versatile platform that offers entertainment, inspiration, information, and updates. Research has revealed numerous effects that arise from various aspects of individuals' lives. According to [Firat \(2023\)](#), the level of Instagram usage plays a significant role in promoting conspicuous consumption, particularly in relation to social status, social power, and associating with specific friends. Based on [\(Knežević & Erceg, 2024\)](#), it was found that teenagers who actively use Instagram tend to have a higher need for social connection, which in turn impacts their overall self-esteem. In a study conducted by [Fan et al. \(2023\)](#), it was found that Instagram plays a significant role in shaping the information consumption habits of young people. The study revealed that the specific features and motives of users can greatly influence how they perceive the information presented on the platform. In summary, social media fatigue in young people, particularly caused by excessive use of Instagram, was influenced by the overwhelming amount of information they encountered.

The study and the framework suggest that various factors, including the amount of information conveyed and how users engage with that information, influence the success of sponsored posts on Instagram. When it comes to sponsored posts, one important factor to consider is the emotional response of users when they come across this type of content. Due to their genuine nature, reputable sponsored posts tend to gain trust and approval from users, leading to increased engagement and conversion rates. The nature of social media platforms influences users' perceptions and levels of engagement with sponsored Instagram posts. The interactive features of the relevant platform, such as quizzes, polls, and swipe-up links, make it easier to engage with sponsored posts. Therefore, in order to provide insight into these influential factors and their interplay, contemporary research examines mediator and moderator variables. By delving into the dynamics of interaction among various features on social media platforms, experts can effectively enhance the impact of branded content on Instagram.

Literature Review and Hypothesis

A recent study on social media examined the relationship between influencers and users' opinions of sponsored posts. The findings revealed that users' perception of

influencers greatly influences their perception of sponsored content, which ultimately impacts their likelihood to make a purchase (Ishani & Seock, 2020). The connection between the genuineness of sponsored content and how it is perceived in terms of entertainment, credibility, and annoyance is influenced (Ishani et al., 2020). Various factors contribute to the credibility of sponsored posts, including the language used to promote products or services. Expertise in the field and the duration of the review. In one-sided messages, the lack of sponsorship disclosure can have a negative impact on brand attitude and influencer credibility. On the other hand, the credibility of Instagram influencers and brands enhances the effectiveness of promotional posts. A sponsored post on Instagram should be informative, touching, and credible. It should provide the audience with valuable information while also evoking positive emotions. Honesty and accuracy are essential in maintaining credibility, especially when it comes to disclosing sponsorship and accurately representing the promoted product or service. In addition, the inclusion of more Instagram posts will enhance their visual appeal and narrative, capturing the attention of users.

The decision to focus on influencer content is crucial due to the increasing impact of influencer marketing on modern advertising strategies. It is likely that the term "engagement" encompasses various types of interactions, such as likes, shares, comments, or the overall time spent per reviews. These acts of participation in the content can provide insights into the level of interest and intensity of consumer involvement, as well as the extent of their impact. Most importantly, understanding the influencer's expertise, their genuine nature, and the models of match-up and meaning transfer are critical factors in making purchase decisions (Siqi & Yee, 2021; Yu & Kim, 2020). Research indicates that the extent of brand involvement can influence the level of customer sentiment and purchase intentions (Siqi et al., 2021). Ultimately, the credibility of influencers and the level of customer interaction play a significant role in shaping purchase intentions, with customer involvement being the most influential factor (Zaman et al., 2023). According to a recent study by Hawkins and Saleem (2024), trust in an influencer plays a critical role in mediating the relationship between influencer-brand fit and purchase intention. This also considers influencer credibility and consumers' green consumption values. The value of influencer content, particularly its informative nature, plays a significant role in influencing purchase intentions (Wibowo & Indrawati, 2024). However, the impact of influencer marketing on consumer behaviour can be intricate. Exposure to an influencer's content may lead to self-discrepancies, which can subsequently influence consumers' emotions, thoughts, and actions.

H1: Engagement with influencer content (attachment) mediates relationship informativeness and Purchase Intentions.

Consumers' emotional reactions to advertisements or their attitude towards a promoted post are often referred to as "affective responses." For example, the content

may elicit emotions such as happiness, joy, belief, or disbelief. It is critical to consider consumers' affective responses, as emotions have a significant impact on perceptions and subsequent decision-making, such as the intention to make a purchase. The characteristics of influencers, such as credibility, intimacy, and expertise, along with meeting consumer needs, have a positive impact on the connection to influencers and the flow of content, ultimately increasing purchase intention (Kwak & Yoh, 2021). Studies have indicated that the entertainment value and credibility of influencers have a positive impact on customer engagement and purchase intention (Ao et al., 2023). Chandra and Kurniawati (2024) presents additional evidence supporting the notion that a follower's emotional attachment influences their tendency to make impulse purchases. Homophily, social presence, and physical attractiveness are factors that contribute to the follower attachment. In Leite et al. (2024), the significance of content quality and trust is emphasised in relation to the power of persuasion, brand attitudes, and purchase intentions, particularly among Generation Y. Lastly, a prior research highlights the importance of parasocial relations and credibility in the beauty industry when it comes to influencing purchase intentions.

H2: Engagement with influencer content (attachment) mediates relationship between Attribute towards sponsored post (Affective) and Purchase Intentions.

The credibility feature refers to how consumers perceive the reliability, expertise, and integrity of the knowledge presented in influencer content. This would involve assessments of various aspects, such as the influencer's knowledge about the product and service, the clarity of the sponsorship agreement, and the overall honesty of the content. Understanding consumers' perceptions of credibility is critical, as it has a direct impact on their attitudes and behaviours towards the content and the endorsed brand. In a study conducted by Sesar et al. (2022), it was shown that the disclosure of influencer advertising can greatly enhance personal credibility, leading to increased brand awareness and purchase intentions. Studies on the connection between influencer content, credibility, and purchase intentions reveal key findings in this area of research. According to Febrianti et al. (2024), there are several factors that greatly influence a customer's intention to make a purchase. These include interactive orientation, parasocial relationships, and product engagements.

H3: Engagement with influencer content (attachment) mediates relationship between Credibility and Purchase Intentions.

The choice of which social media platform to focus on is crucial, as it holds significant influence in the realm of influencer marketing. Instagram's popularity among influencers stems from its visually appealing interface and large user base, which allows them to showcase their content, services, or products effectively. In a study conducted by Kumar et al. (2023), it was found that the qualities of influencers such as expertise, reliability, and attractiveness have a significant impact on purchase intention. This impact is further influenced by the loyalty of their followers. Ishani et

al. (2020) highlighted the significance of perceived value in shaping influencer attitudes and purchase intentions. These factors serve as crucial mediators, connecting entertainment, credibility, and irritation. Finally, Kemeç and Yüksel (2021) highlighted the importance of influencer credibility in building brand trust, which in turn affects the process of making purchase decisions.

H4: Engagement with influencer content (attachment) mediates relationship Type of social media platform (Instagram) and Purchase Intentions.

Moderating Role of Social Media Usage

Probably, the term "social media usage for socialising" describes how people use Instagram to connect with individuals in their personal network, such as family, friends, and other users. This may involve engaging with various online content, such as browsing through posts, interacting with your friends' posts by liking and commenting, sending direct messages, or participating in group conversations. According to de Vasconcelos et al. (2020), there is a correlation between Instagram frequency, perceived usefulness, and ease of use, which affects the intention to make a purchase. The influence of marketing influencers and the quality of information on purchase intentions has been shown to increase, as demonstrated by Halim et al. (2020). In conclusion, Haji et al. (2023) emphasises the significance of content vividness in increasing purchase intentions through social media. The level of perceived usefulness, relevance, and credibility of information provided by an Instagram influencer post is known as informativeness. This could include factors such as the clarity of product descriptions or the inclusion of useful tips or recommendations, as well as the overall excellence of the information provided.

Influencers endorsed or recommended content on Instagram can elicit emotional responses in consumers through sponsored posts. In this context, the narrative content may trigger emotions such as excitement, joy, confidence, doubt, or any other mental state. Socialising with friends, engaging in conversations, staying informed about personal lives, and interacting with other users' content could all be part of this. The relationship between social media influencer characteristics, such as trustworthiness and expertise, and purchase intentions is mediated by brand familiarity (Kareem & Venugopal, 2023). The influence of Instagram influencers on the purchasing intentions of Generation Z women is mediated by brand image, particularly among women (Tamara et al., 2021). Moreover, the level of audience engagement on Instagram is positively associated with purchase intentions (Huang et al., 2022). Affective responses towards sponsored posts on Instagram refer to the emotional reactions or feelings evoked by the advertised content. These feelings can range from positive emotions such as excitement, trust, or admiration to negative emotions such as scepticism or distrust.

Persons who frequently engage with Instagram may be more susceptible to their

emotional responses towards sponsored posts, leading to heightened intentions to make purchases. Conversely, people who do not frequently use Instagram for socializing may be less susceptible to the influence of emotional reactions toward sponsored content, resulting in weaker purchase intentions. These activities may involve contacting friends, engaging in conversations, sharing personal updates, and participating in social network content. [Pandey and Rajashekarreddy \(2021\)](#) examined the behavioural attributes of social media usage that have a direct impact on consumer purchase intention. [Martín-Consuegra et al. \(2018\)](#) further investigated the influence of social media on the relationship between brand credibility, brand image, and purchase intention. According to [Wibowo et al. \(2024\)](#), the affective customer engagement, amusement, and information components of Instagram ads had a greater impact on purchase intentions. However, credibility did not show a significant effect. Moreover, [Tirtayani et al. \(2024\)](#) asserts that the connection between social media advertising and purchase intentions can be partially influenced by habit. Social media addiction was identified as a complicating factor in the relationship between purchase intentions and social media.

Credibility, as used here, refers to the trustworthiness, credibility, and validity that influencer information presented in Instagram posts should have. Such examinations may include assessing the influencer's proficiency in the promoted product or service, the accuracy of the sponsorship agreement, the believability of the entire content, and other factors in the same category. Instagram is known for its visual-oriented platform where users can share photos, videos, and stories. Instagram also serves as a platform for influencer marketing, where brands hire celebrities to promote their products and brands. The relationship between Instagram usage and buying intentions is complex and multifaceted. Nevertheless, [Herzallah et al. \(2022\)](#) found in a recent study that factors like trust and ease of purchasing do not significantly influence purchase decisions. However, the study did identify a few variables, such as gender, age, and experience with Instagram, that moderate this connection. [Amornpashara et al. \(2015\)](#) found that various factors impact purchasing intention. These factors include entertainment message, inclination, commercial advertising, aspirational group, and perceived ease of use. [Christano et al. \(2024\)](#) conducted a study on the influence of Instagram Shop FP on consumers' intentions to purchase. The study focused on the role of interactivity and hedonic motivation as key factors.

In this case, the platform type refers to Instagram. Instagram's visually oriented nature widely recognises it as one of the top platforms for sharing photos, videos, and stories. In addition, this platform serves as a significant avenue for influencer marketing. Numerous individuals choose to follow influencers who promote various products and services. These activities can take the form of networking with coworkers or industry professionals, sharing professional updates or content, searching for jobs, or simply following accounts that are relevant to one's profession or field of interest. Social media users' level, particularly in relation to their professional activities,

influences the relationship between the informativeness of content on Instagram and purchase intentions (Seyedi et al., 2021). We widely recognise that the quality of information, the act of seeking information, and familiarity all significantly influence purchase intentions on Instagram (Wirani et al., 2020). Consumers assess the audience of influencer content based on the significance, pertinence, and trustworthiness of the information shared on Instagram by influencers. One way to accomplish this is by assessing the calibre of product descriptions, the presence of helpful tips, and the availability of additional information.

Influencers' endorsements influence consumers' emotional reactions towards sponsored posts on Instagram. These emotional responses can range from positive ones like pleasure, trust, or admiration to negative ones like reluctance or distrust. Research has produced varying viewpoints on the impact of social media usage on people's attitudes towards sponsored posts and their likelihood to make a purchase. Siqi et al. (2021) asserts that brand engagement mediates the relationship, whereas scholars discovered that two-sided messages significantly impact influencer authenticity and post effectiveness. In a recent study, Matin et al. (2020) examined the relationship between influence marketing, information quality, and the decision to purchase. The study emphasised the importance of social media involvement in building trust and its influence on the intention to buy. In a study conducted by Bandara et al. (2022), it was discovered that social media users tend to view influencers as attractive, knowledgeable, and reliable. Additionally, the research found that customer attitudes and the desire to mimic influencers play a role in influencing customer purchasing behaviour.

H5: Level of social media usage (Instagram for socializing) moderates' relationship between informativeness and Purchase Intentions.

H6: Level of social media usage (Instagram for socializing) moderates' relationship between Attribute towards sponsored post (Affective) and Purchase Intentions.

H7: Level of social media usage (Instagram for socializing) moderates' relationship between Credibility and Purchase Intentions.

H8: Level of social media usage (Instagram for socializing) moderates' relationship between Type of social media platform (Instagram) and Purchase Intentions.

H9: Level of social media usage (Instagram for professional use) moderates the relationship between informativeness and Purchase Intentions.

H10: Level of social media usage (Instagram for professional use) moderates' relationship between Attribute towards sponsored post (Affective) and Purchase Intentions.

H11: Level of social media usage (Instagram for professional use) moderates' relationship between Credibility and Purchase Intentions.

H12: Level of social media usage (Instagram for professional use) moderates' relationship between Type of social media platform (Instagram) and Purchase Intentions.

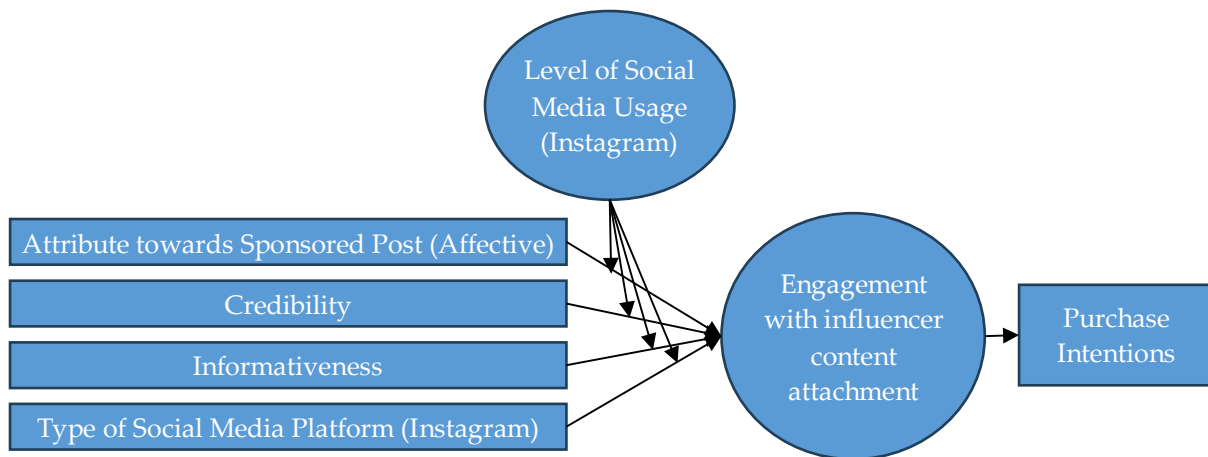


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework.

Methodology

The methodology for this study involved collecting data from a sample group of 328 students who were enrolled in a university. The reasoning was founded on the belief that the majority of them fit into the category of the Gen Z phenomenon. Given the unique characteristics and behaviours of this generation, it is worth exploring these aspects as potential research topics. In total, 500 survey forms were distributed to university students. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed in a focused effort to reach a large number of students at the higher educational institution. However, it is important to acknowledge that the response rate of 328 completed questionnaires reflects the individuals who willingly participated and had the chance to be involved in the study. The response rate indicates the effectiveness of the survey distribution method and provides insight into the audience's level of engagement. The completed questionnaire provided valuable data for the analysis phase of the project.

Data Analysis and Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics.

Constructs	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
(INF)-IV	3.29	0.754	1	5
(ATSPA) -IV	3.01	0.760	1	5
(CRE) -IV	2.97	0.851	1	5
(TSMPI) -IV	2.66	0.800	1	5
(EWICA)	3.47	0.834	1	5
(PI)-DV (EWICA)- Mediator	3.21	0.769	1	5
(LSMU)-Moderator	3.11	0.699	1	5

Overall, the results suggest satisfactory convergent validity for most constructs. The factors like INF (Informativeness), ATSPA (An attribute of the Affect that is toward

the Sponsored Post), CRE (Credibility), TSMPI (Type of Social Media Platform Influence), EWICA (Engagement with the Influencer Content), PI (Perceived Influence), and LSMU (Level of the Social Media Usage) are indicators for a good among others (7), satisfactory standardized variance (over 0.7, for example). (1) A positive 1-factor construct was indicated through a statistically significant factor loading (0.63), good average variance extracted values (above 0.5), and reasonable communalities (above 0.40).

Discriminant Validity

The concept of discriminant validity emphasises the distinction between constructs and their unique conceptual foundations. In addition to the table diagonal, there are VIF values for all items. The VIF value of 1 suggests that there is no multicollinearity present among the constructs in the model. This implies that the construct's correlation with the others in the model is not perfect. In exploratory factor analysis, the values that are not on the diagonal show the correlations (squared Pearson correlation coefficients) between groups of constructs. These are also known as factor loadings.

Structural Model Results

The R-square values in the structural model results table demonstrate the extent to which the independent variables can predict the respective endogenous variables by explaining the variance. The R-square values in the structural model results table indicate the extent to which the independent variables account for the variance in predicting the respective endogenous variables. The endogenous variable and the coefficient of determination are represented by R. The value of EWICA (Engagement with Influencer Content) is 0.697. This suggests that 69 fields of the data matrix are incorporated into the model, allowing the independent variables to collectively account for them. Content created by influencers shows a 7% variation in user engagement. A higher R-Square value indicates that the model has a stronger ability to explain the variation in engagement levels among the predictors. The R-Square score is 0.264, which is determined by the internal variable PI (Perceived Influence). Thus, the independent variables accounted for 26% of the variance. The impact of others' opinions accounted for 4% of the variance. The FIF has a lower R² value compared to EWICA, but the latter still demonstrates a significant explanatory power.

Table 2: Convergent Validity.

	Loadings	Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
INF0	0.468	0.764	0.811	0.884
INF1	0.964			
INF2	0.648			

INF3	0.791			
INF4	0.764			
INF5	0.822			
INF6	0.837			
ATSPA0	0.649	0.869	0.884	0.794
ATSPA1	0.766			
ATSPA2	0.739			
ATSPA3	0.699			
CRE0	0.647	0.884	0.890	0.867
CRE1	0.587			
CRE2	0.701			
TSMPI0	0.734	0.798	0.819	0.947
TSMPI1	0.799			
TSMPI2	0.834			
TSMPI3	0.867			
TSMPI4	0.807			
TSMPI5	0.694			
TSMPI6	0.739			
TSMPI7	0.766			
TSMPI8	0.847			
TSMPI9	0.724			
TSMPI10	0.648			
TSMPI11	0.697			
TSMPI12	0.764			
TSMPI13	0.733			
TSMPI14	0.847			
TSMPI15	0.869			
TSMPI16	0.947			
TSMPI17	0.815			
TSMPI18	0.891			
EWICA0	0.761	0.844	0.866	0.769
EWICA1	0.844			
EWICA2	0.760			
EWICA3	0.733			
EWICA4	0.894			
PI0	0.699	0.794	0.819	0.880
PI1	0.764			
PI2	0.734			
LSMU0	0.891	0.806	0.838	0.761
LSMU1	0.947			
LSMU2	0.875			

Table 3: Discriminant Validity.

	VIF	INF	ATSPA	CRE	TSMPI	EWICA	PI	LSMU
(INF)-IV	1.68							
(ATSPA) -IV	2.36	0.354						
(CRE) -IV	2.48	0.256	0.497					
(TSMPI) -IV	3.94	0.467	0.546	0.449				
(EWICA)- Mediator	2.38	0.401	0.648	0.560	0.447			
(PI)-DV	-----	0.335	0.215	0.269	0.547	0.440		
(LSMU)-Moderator	-----	0.297	0.299	0.378	0.601	0.314	0.254	

Table 4: R –Square.

Endogenous Variable	R Square
EWICA	0.697
PI	0.264

Mediating Effect Results

The Mediating Influence (MI) that occurs from Informativeness (INF) to Perceived Influence (PI) through Engaging with Influencer Content (EWICA) plays a significant role, as indicated by a coefficient estimate of $p = 0.040$. Similarly, the affective attribution towards sponsored posts (ATSPA) from EWICA's EWICA through EM to PI has a direct impact on PI, which in turn affects PI. The coefficient yield, which was statistically significant ($p < 0.000$), indicates the mediating effect of CRE (credibility) on PI through EWICA. The mediation role of TSMP on PI through EWICA is given significant consideration, resulting in a coefficient estimate of 0.223. There was a notable correlation ($p = 0.013$) found between the use of social media and the extent of anti-social behaviour. Based on the findings, it is evident that influencer engagement (EWICA) plays a significant role in the relationships between the independent variables (INF, ATSPA, CRE, and TSMP) and perceived influence (PI). This study supports the proposed mediating pathways.

Table 5: Mediating Effect Results.

	BETA	Standard Error	T statistics	P values	Decision
INF -> EWICA -> PI	0.124	0.015	2.64	0.040	Accepted
ATSPA -> EWICA -> PI	0.264	0.034	1.99	0.019	Accepted
CRE -> EWICA -> PI	0.318	0.040	3.54	0.000	Accepted
TSMP -> EWICA -> PI	0.223	0.039	4.69	0.013	Accepted

Moderating Effect Results

The following table illustrates the analysis of the moderator effect, showcasing how LSMU (Levels of Social Media Usage) impacts the relationship between the

independent variables (INF, ATSPA, CRE, TSMP) and mediator (EWICA - Engagement with Influencer Content).

The role of LSMU (socializing) in regulating the relationships of INF, ATSPA, CRE, and EWICA is dismissed due to the non-significant p-values observed for all pathways.

However, it is worth noting that LSMU (socialising) plays a significant role in moderating the connection between TSMP and EWICA, as indicated by a p-value of 0.014.

Regarding LSMU (professional), the influence on the connections between INF, CRE, TSMP, and EWICA is considered, and the associated p-values are found to be statistically significant. The values are 0.010, 0.013, and less than 0.001, respectively.

The findings highlight the importance of social media usage, especially in professional settings, as a factor that influences the relationship between certain independent variables (INF, CRE, TSMP) and influencer content engagement (EWICA). This suggests the need to take into account social media users with varying usage patterns when studying user behaviour.

Table 6: Moderating Effect Results.

	Beta	Standard Error	T statistics	P values	Decision
LSMU (Socializing) -> INFO -> EWICA	0.046	0.011	1.11	0.067	Rejected
LSMU (Socializing)-> ATSPA -> EWICA	0.116	0.024	1.67	0.055	Rejected
LSMU (Socializing) -> CRE -> EWICA	0.214	0.019	1.58	0.081	Rejected
LSMU (Socializing) -> TSMP -> EWICA	0.131	0.044	2.67	0.014	Accepted
LSMU (Professional) -> INFO -> EWICA	0.261	0.028	3.47	0.010	Accepted
LSMU (Professional)-> ATSPA -> EWICA	0.347	0.058	1.70	0.094	Rejected
LSMU (Professional) -> CRE -> EWICA	0.106	0.048	2.99	0.013	Accepted
LSMU (Professional) -> TSMP -> EWICA	0.142	0.044	3.28	0.000	Accepted

Discussion

This study demonstrates that engagement has expanded the connection between

various factors such as information, emotional responses, and influencer credibility that ultimately influence the consumer's final purchase decision. It is evident that influencer content has a significant impact on consumer behaviour and can potentially increase purchase intention through active engagement. Furthermore, it is evident that the utilisation of Instagram, whether for socialising or professional purposes, plays a moderating role in the relationship between various factors and the intention to make purchases. This highlights the importance of carefully considering social media usage patterns when designing influencer marketing campaigns. The study also emphasises the significance of selecting social media platforms, particularly Instagram, for influencer marketing. Studies have shown that Instagram has a significant impact on consumer behaviours and purchasing attitudes, making it a valuable platform for implementing marketing campaigns with the help of social media influencers. Previous studies in the field of influencer marketing have backed the research findings.

Mediation Hypotheses

H1: The study provided evidence that engagement with the influencer's content acts as a link between the informative nature of the content and the likelihood of making a purchase. According to the study findings, consumers are more inclined to engage with influencer content when it is informative. Increased customer interaction often leads to a greater likelihood of making a purchase. Thus, credibility and reliability of influencer material enhance its informativeness, leading to increased interaction with the content and subsequently higher purchase intentions. The study found that consumers are more engaged when the influencer's content is useful. Engagement serves as a mediator that positively influences the relationship between informativeness and purchase intentions, bridging the gap between the two. Engaging with educational influencer content increases consumer purchase intentions.

H2: The study supports this hypothesis by finding that engagement with influencer content acts as a mediator, linking consumers' affective responses to sponsored posts with their purchase intentions. The study found a positive correlation between favourable attitudes towards sponsored advertisements and customer engagement with influencer content. This subsequently enhances the likelihood of their purchase, thereby positively influencing their purchase intentions. A positive emotional reaction to sponsored posts by users leads to increased consumer interaction with influencer content. The level of engagement plays a significant role in mediating the relationship between affective responses generated by sponsored posts and purchase intention. Customers who are attracted to an influencer's content due to a positive emotional connection with a sponsored post are more likely to make a purchase.

H3: The hypothesis was confirmed by the study, which showed that the level of consumer engagement with influencer content affects the relationship between influencer credibility and consumer purchasing behaviour. The findings indicate that perceived credibility of an influencer positively influences consumer behaviour,

leading to increased interaction and content search. Customer interest has a positive impact on their purchasing behaviour. Users are more likely to engage with content produced by influencers when they perceive them as reliable. Engagement mediates the relationship between influencer credibility and purchase intentions, resulting in a positive influence. Consumers are more likely to develop a purchase intention if the influencer's content fosters trust and engagement.

H4: This study supports the hypothesis that consumer purchase intentions are influenced by their interaction with influencers on social media platforms, specifically Instagram. The study found that influencer content on Instagram has a significant positive impact on consumers' purchasing decisions. The interaction between Instagram and influencers significantly impacts consumer behaviour. Engagement acts as a facilitator in bridging the connection between Instagram usage and purchase intentions. More engagement with influencer content on Instagram cause buyers to build more purchase intentions towards the brand. Thus, it is important that influencer content not only provide useful information, but also generate affective response, enhance influencer credibility, and use social media effective in inspiring consumers to make a purchase.

Moderation Hypotheses

H5: The hypothesis was rejected as the study found no significant moderation effect of social media usage (specifically Instagram for socialising) on the relationship between being informative and purchase intentions. The study found no significant relationship between the extent of social media usage for socialising on Instagram and the influence of educational information provided by influencers on purchase intentions. Therefore, this question was also excluded. The data did not indicate a moderating effect of social media usage for socialising on the relationship between informativeness and brand influencer. The informativeness of influencer content has a positive impact on user attractiveness towards influencer content. Consuming influencer content has a positive impact on purchase intentions.

H6: The hypothesis was rejected due to the absence of suggestive evidence regarding the moderating effect of social media usage (specifically Instagram for socialising) on the relationship between affective response towards sponsored posts and purchase intentions. The study did not find a significant relationship between the use of Instagram for socialising purposes and the correlation between attitudes towards advertisements and buying intentions. The hypothesis was rejected. The data indicated that there was no significant relationship between the use of social networking for socialising and the user's affective responses to posted advertisements, as well as their level of interaction with influencer content. Positive reactions to influencer post promotions have a positive impact on engagement with these posts. Engaged consumers are more likely to develop purchase intentions after interacting with influencer content.

H7: The researchers found no significant moderation effect of Instagram usage on the relationship between influencer credibility and purchase intentions, leading them to reject the hypothesis. The study found no significant correlation between the use of Instagram for socialising and the relationship between influencer credibility and purchase intentions. Ultimately, this hypothesis was not validated. The study found no significant moderating effect of social media usage for socialising on the relationship between the credibility of influencers and engagement with influencer content. The authenticity and reliability of influencers contribute to increased engagement with their content. The positive influence of influencer engagement on purchase intentions has been observed.

H8: The hypothesis was supported as the research demonstrated a significant moderation effect of social media use (specifically Instagram for socialising) on its association with purchase intentions. The study found that the duration of time adolescents spent on Instagram for socialising influenced the relationship between Instagram usage and purchase intentions. The study found that the increased social mobility offered by social media platforms, such as Instagram, enhances the connection between Instagram usage and the intention to make purchases. The study found strong evidence of a social moderating effect of social media use for socialising on the association between Instagram usage and purchase intention. The use of Instagram is positively associated with individuals' engagement with influencers. Engaging with influencer content positively influences the intention to make a purchase.

H9: The study provided evidence supporting the presence of a moderation effect between the extent of social media usage (specifically Instagram for professional purposes) and the relationship between information association and purchase motivation. The study found that the use of Instagram by influencers for commercial purposes influenced the relationship between the informativeness of content and the likelihood of purchasing on Instagram. More importantly, the informative use of social media for work purposes has been found to enhance the positive relationship between informativeness and buying intention. The study found that using social media for professional purposes can significantly influence the relationship between informativeness and purchase intentions. The level of engagement with an influencer's posts is positively affected by the informational content of their postings. High customer purchase intention is associated with favourable engagement with influencer content.

H10: The hypothesis was not supported as the study found no significant moderation effect of high or low levels of Instagram usage for professional purposes on the correlation between mood disposition and purchase intent. The study found no significant relationship between using Instagram for professional purposes on social media and the emotional state of sponsored posts or the intention to make a purchase.

This assumption was disproven. The study found no significant moderation effect of social media use on the relationship between affective feedback and customer engagement with social media personalities, specifically for professional purposes. A positive attitude towards advertorials can empower the influencer's audience with their content. The engagement of customers with influencer content positively influences their purchase intentions.

H11: The hypothesis was accepted due to the significant moderation effect of social media usage on the relationship between influencer credibility and shopping intentions. The study found that the use of social media for business purposes on Instagram mediated the relationship between an influencer's credibility and the intention to purchase.

H12: The hypothesis is supported due to its alignment with rational theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence. The claim suggests that the relationship between the type of content on Instagram (personal vs. professional) and purchase intentions varies depending on the level of professional use of the social media platform. Individuals who utilise Instagram more frequently and for professional purposes may exhibit distinct purchase intentions compared to those who use it less frequently or for personal reasons. The hypothesis proposes that the relationship between the type of content on Instagram (personal vs. occupational) and purchase intentions may differ depending on the extent of social media usage for professional purposes. Therefore, individuals who utilise Instagram primarily for professional purposes may possess distinct purchase intentions compared to those who use it less frequently or for personal motives.

Implications

This study extends the existing literature by examining the mediating and moderating effects of social engagement and social media usage on consumer behaviour and purchase intentions. The study's findings align with previous research, indicating that engaging with influencer content significantly impacts consumers' purchase intentions during their decision-making process. Furthermore, the findings regarding the impact of social media usage on influencer marketing variables and purchase motivations align with existing research in this field. This study offers novel theoretical perspectives on influencer marketing by examining the mediating and moderating effects of engagement and social media usage on consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions. The results hold significant implications for marketers and advertisers, aiding in determining the effectiveness of influencer marketing, its impact on consumer engagement and purchase intentions, among other factors. This study, however, has limitations. The result could serve as a foundation for future research, thereby expanding the number of contributors in the field of marketing. This study examines the influence of influencers on consumer purchasing motivation by analysing their

content engagement. The statement highlights the importance of consumer engagement with influencer content in shaping consumer buying behaviour. This study examines the role of influencer involvement in influencing variables such as information, emotion, credibility, and consumers' purchase intention. Influencer content has a direct impact on consumer behaviour and also helps to increase purchase intentions through engagement. This study reveals that social media usage on Instagram, encompassing both personal and professional aspects, plays a moderate role in influencing purchase intentions. This statement emphasises the importance of considering general social media trends when developing an influencer marketing strategy. This case emphasises the significance of platform selection, specifically Instagram, for influencer marketing campaigns. Instagram has the ability to influence consumer decisions and shape purchase intentions.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The study's findings may not be applicable to all consumer groups or product types. The study focuses on a specific social class and product category, which may limit the generalizability of its findings. The study utilised a cross-sectional design, which limited the ability to establish causality. Future research may utilise longitudinal or experimental designs to investigate causal relationships between factors. The study relied on self-reports, indicating the potential presence of social desirability bias. Future studies may consider utilising objective measures, such as behavioural data, to assess engagement and purchase intentions. The study focused on a set of variables related to this particular marketing approach. Future research should investigate trust, perceived value, and brand loyalty as additional factors to enhance the understanding of consumer behaviour in the influencer marketing ecosystem.

Future research should employ a longitudinal design to address gaps in knowledge regarding the long-term effects of engaging with influencer content on consumer behaviour and purchase intentions. Experimental studies can establish causal links between influencer marketing variables and consumer behaviour. Comparative studies can be conducted to benchmark influencer marketing across different social media platforms and demographic segments. The upcoming studies will investigate additional factors that influence the relationship between influencer marketing properties and consumer behaviour. The role of trust, perceived value, and brand loyalty could be further explored. Qualitative research methods, such as interviews or focus groups, can be employed to gain a deeper understanding of consumers' attitudes towards influencer marketing.

Contribution

This study contributes to the existing knowledge on influencer marketing theory by demonstrating the mediating and moderating effects of engagement and social media use on consumer decision making and purchase intentions. The research findings hold

theoretical value for marketing and advertising professionals seeking to utilise influencer marketing to improve customer engagement and purchasing intentions. This study employs modern statistical methods to examine the intricate relationships between variables that influence the effectiveness of influencer marketing. This study contributes to the expanding body of literature on influencer marketing by providing empirical evidence that influencer content has the ability to influence consumer behaviours and purchase intentions.

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Appendix: Measurements Scales

Attribute towards Sponsored Post (Affective)

1. *I think sponsored post are entertaining*
2. *I think sponsored post make me happy*
3. *I think sponsored post make me pleased*
4. *I think sponsored post are a pleasure to view*

Tran and
Nguyen (2020).

Purchase Intentions

1. *I believe Influencers are trustworthy*
2. *I believe Influencers are only concerned about himself/herself*
3. *I believe Influencers are truthful*

Informativeness

1. *Instagram is a good source of product information*
2. *Instagram supplies relevant product information*
3. *Instagram provides timely information*
4. *Instagram is a good source of up-to-date product information*
5. *Instagram makes product information immediately accessible*
6. *Instagram is a convenient source of product information*
7. *Instagram supplies complete product information*

Ishani (2019).

Credibility

1. *Influencer sponsored post is credible*
2. *Influencer sponsored post is trustworthy*
3. *Influencer sponsored post is believable*

Type of Social Media Platform (Instagram)

1. *“Upon Instagram chatting, calling, sharing links, liking links is the wastage of time for youth.*
2. *Use of Instagram deteriorating our social norms*
3. *Instagram is necessary for youth now a day.*
4. *Instagram is affecting negatively on study of youth.*
5. *Instagram promotes unethical pictures, video clips and images among youth.*
6. *Negative use of Instagram is deteriorating the relationship among the countries.*
7. *Instagram is becoming a hobby of youth to kill the time.*
8. *Instagram have positive impact on youth.*
9. *Instagram deteriorate the social norms and ethics among youth.*
10. *Instagram is playing essential role for betterment of society*
11. *Instagram is creating awareness among youth for new trends.”*
12. *Instagram is creating awareness among youth for new trends.”*
13. *“Instagram is the source to get knowledge and information,*
14. *Instagram is useful to connect the people all over the world.*
15. *Instagram is useful to connect the people all over the world.*
16. *Instagram is essential for youth to get learning and skills.*

Shabir et al.
(2014).

17. Instagram is playing a key role to create political awareness among youth.
18. Instagram is a facilitator to advertise and search business for youth.
19. Instagram is a latest form which is connecting the gender and families especially youth.
20. Instagram is a great facilitator to create awareness among youth to develop global cultural.
21. Use of Instagram affects indirectly on play grounds and physical activities in youth."

Engagement with influencer content (attachment)

1. I am bursting with energy when I interact with my influencer
2. If my influencer doesn't post for some time, I get worried
3. I miss my influencer when they are not posting
4. My days wouldn't be the same without my influencer
5. Positive feelings about my influencer come to mind regularly

Levesque and
Pons (2023).

Level of Social Media Usage

I often use instagram
For socializing

- Never
- once a month
- once a week
- once a day

Whyte and
Hennessy
(2017).

For professional use

- Never
 - once a month
 - once a week
 - once a day
-