

*Impact of social media influencers on purchase intention of
Fashion Apparel Industry: A youtube perspective.*



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Abstract

The rapid growth of digital media has transformed the way consumers discover, evaluate, and purchase fashion apparel products, and YouTube has become one of the most influential platforms driving consumer behavior. This paper focuses on studying the effects of YouTube fashion influencers on consumers' purchase intentions in terms of the following characteristics: argument quality, source credibility, kindness, entertainment, informativeness, credibility, and perceived value. With increasingly higher levels of fashion-related consumption taking place in online environments, understanding how the content created and published by influencers drives purchase intention has become a highly important strategic issue for brands, marketers, and digital content creators.

This research is grounded in consumer behavior theory, persuasion models, and social influence frameworks and adopts a mixed-methods research design. The quantitative phase includes a structured online survey distributed among frequent YouTube fashion influencer viewers. It captures measurements of consumers' perceptions regarding the attributes of influencer content and resulting purchase intentions related to clothing, accessories, handbags, and other fashion items. The qualitative phase entails short semi-structured interviews that delve into deeper psychological insights, such as trust formation, emotional connection, and personal motivations driving purchasing decisions after exposure to influencer-generated content.

It is expected that the results will show that influencers with high source credibility, strong argument quality, and authentic kindness increase viewers' trust and confidence, which in turn increases purchase intention. Furthermore, entertaining and informative content is expected to enhance engagement, perceived value, and emotional connection, all of which act together as catalysts for purchase decision-making. The findings will offer pragmatic insights for fashion brands in developing more efficient influencer marketing campaigns and how to optimize collaborations with YouTube creators.

In sum, this study makes theoretical and practical contributions by extending influencer content characteristic knowledge in the realm of digital marketing literature and providing actionable recommendations on how consumer

engagement and purchase intention can be improved in the fashion apparel industry.

Keywords: *Youtube influencers, Fashion Apparel Industry, Source Credibility, Informativeness, Credibility, Consumer behavior.*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

The rapid digital transformation of the last decade fundamentally changed the way consumers search for information, interact with brands, and finally make purchasing decisions. Among the many digital communication channels today, social media platforms have emerged as strong tools that directly shape consumer perceptions and consumption behaviors. In this dynamic landscape, YouTube remains one of the most influential and extensively used platforms, providing a unique combination of long-form video content, peer engagement, and personalized suggestions. As user-generated content earns increased trust among global audiences, the role of social media influencers has grown exponentially—especially in a highly visual and fashion-forward apparel industry.

Unlike the conventional celebrities representing aspirational lifestyles, modern influencers are perceived as authentic, relatable, and trustworthy voices in the digital space. Their opinions, reviews, styling suggestions, and personal experiences shape the way consumers evaluate fashion products such as apparel, accessories, jewelry, footwear, and handbags. Consumers increasingly look toward influencers not merely for information but for emotional reassurance, personal connection, and inspiration (Clement & Chu, 2023). This shift represents a fundamental change in fashion consumption psychology, with peer-driven influence now surpassing brand-driven messaging.

YouTube, though, offers some exclusive benefits to make it more effective in driving fashion-related purchase decisions. Unlike TikTok, which is mostly about short-form entertainment content, and the feed of highly curated visuals on Instagram, YouTube permits longer, more in-depth formats. Influencers can elaborate on sizing, material quality, ways of styling, comparisons across brands, and price justifications for products, which substantially decrease customer uncertainty and Equivocality according to Iqbal & Ladha, 2022. Moreover, commenting, live chats, and community features on this platform create interactive engagement, building closeness and familiarity with viewers.

The rise of influencer marketing has dramatically changed how fashion brands design their promotional strategies. Fashion brands increasingly collaborate with YouTubers in order to feature sponsored content, product placements, styling videos, haul reviews, and honest critiques. Such collaborations will lead not only to higher visibility but also to stronger trust from the consumer side, as viewers are more likely to believe influencers who seem knowledgeable, genuine, and emotionally invested in the product. YouTube's algorithm further amplifies influencers' persuasive power by displaying relevant content to audiences who have specific interests in fashion.

Specific content characteristics are at the core of this influence in shaping consumer perception and purchase intention. These include argument quality referring to the strength and clarity of information presented; source credibility, reflecting the influencer's expertise and trustworthiness; kindness representative of their warmth and positive interpersonal behavior; entertainment value, which keeps audiences engaged; informativeness, in helping consumers make informed decisions; credibility as a combined measure of honesty and expertise; and perceived value determining whether the consumer feels they receive worthwhile insights in return for attention. Each of these attributes makes a unique contribution to how viewers process the content and form an impression about a potential purchase. Fashion-related YouTube content is gaining rapid popularity among young adults. This age group of consumers, aged 18-35 years, relies heavily on influencers in the exploration of ideas for styling, deciphering fashion trends, and making purchasing decisions that align with their personality and lifestyle. The influencer culture is growing exponentially within markets like South Asia, such as Pakistan, due to increasing digital adoption and ever-evolving fashion tastes and preferences. The fashion apparel industry is gaining momentum with overwhelming competition; influencer collaborations are becoming a necessary strategy rather than an optional tool for the brands to keep themselves relevant (Rafique & Malik, 2022). With these developments, understanding how YouTube influencer content influences purchase intention in the fashion apparel industry is of critical importance. While brands are investing much in influencer partnerships, most are still unable to identify which characteristics an influencer actually possesses that drive consumer behavior. Similarly, academic research has not fully captured the unique dynamics of YouTube as a platform for fashion consumption.

Most studies focus on Instagram or TikTok, overlooking the platform where consumers spend significantly more time watching detailed fashion-related content. Thus, this research intends to fill this gap in both academic and practical terms by analyzing the influence of multiple attributes of social media influencers simultaneously, using a mixed-method approach to generate both measurable and interpretive insights.

1.2 Problem Statement

Although influencer marketing has grown rapidly within the fashion apparel industry, many brands are still uncertain about which type of influencer content characteristic actually helps to drive a purchase intention. Influencers produce a range of content, but which attributes, such as argument quality, source credibility, kindness, entertainment, informativeness, credibility, or perceived value, are most effective at motivating consumers to purchase an apparel item they see within a YouTube video?

Despite the fact that marketers recognize that influencers are critical, in selecting them or building campaigns, they often rely on assumptions rather than evidence-based strategies. Besides, much of the existing research focuses on other platforms such as Instagram or TikTok, thus leaving a gap in understanding YouTube-specific influencer dynamics, especially within the context of fashion apparel consumption.

Therefore, the central problem of this research can be formulated as:

"There is limited empirical understanding of how various YouTube influencer content characteristics influence consumers purchase intentions toward fashion apparel products."

This disparity is what prevents brands from optimizing influencer collaborations and achieving higher return on marketing investment.

1.3 Aim of the research

The aim of this research, therefore, based on the identified gap, has been:

The aim is to investigate the influence of the content characteristics of YouTube influencers, such as argument quality, source credibility, kindness, entertainment, informativeness, credibility, and perceived value, on purchase intentions by consumers in the apparel fashion industry.

This objective likewise reflects theoretical and practical relevance, giving insights for academic researchers, marketers, influencers, and the fashion industry as a whole.

1.4 Research Objectives

In realizing the above objective, this study sets its aims as follows:

1. To investigate the effect of argument quality in YouTube influencer content on consumer purchase intention.
2. To examine the effect of source credibility on trust as well as purchase decisions.
3. Assess the role of kindness in shaping emotional connections and driving purchase likelihood.
4. Assess the effect of entertainment value on consumer involvement and apparel purchase intention.
5. To determine how informativeness in videos of influencers affects consumer confidence and purchasing intention.
6. To establish the influence of overall credibility upon purchase behaviors in regard to fashion products.

7. To understand how perceived value from the content of the influencer shapes consumers purchase intentions.
8. To provide practical recommendations for fashion brands in designing effective influencer marketing strategies.

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the aim and objectives, the research is guided by the following questions. These questions are essentially aimed at investigating how YouTube influencer content characteristics relate to consumer purchase intention within the fashion apparel industry. Each one of them addresses a different variable relevant both theoretically and practically to understanding online consumer behavior:

1. How does the quality of the argument in YouTube influencer content affect consumers purchase intentions for fashion apparel?
2. How does source credibility influence viewers buying intentions of fashion apparel products promoted by influencers?
3. How does the kindness of influencers contribute to emotional engagement and, ultimately, purchase motivation?
4. To what extent does the entertainment value of YouTube influencer videos strengthen consumer purchase intentions?
5. How does informativeness of the content provided by fashion influencers on YouTube influence confidence and buying intention among consumers?
6. How does the overall credibility of a YouTube influencer influence viewer purchase behavior?
7. How does perceived value generated by videos of influencers influence consumer purchase intention?
8. What recommendations do you have for fashion brands on how to effectively employ YouTube influencers in their marketing strategies?

These research questions also guarantee that the study keeps to the stated objectives and acts as a clear roadmap for the whole thesis. They also help to structure the data collection tools, that is, survey items and interview questions ensuring internal consistency and methodological accuracy.

1.6 Significance of the study

The importance of this research lies in the contribution to academia, industry practice, digital marketing strategy, and consumer awareness. As the dominance of influencers in shaping the perceptions of customers continues to rise, understanding the characteristics of influencer content becomes truly instrumental for a variety of stakeholders. The following outlines the importance of this research from several perspectives

1.6.1 Academic Importance

From an academic perspective, this research contributes to the literature examining the role of YouTube influencers in the fashion apparel industry. Much scholarship has focused on the impact of Instagram, TikTok, or general social media, while YouTube is comparatively under-investigated, despite its strong capabilities both visually and narratively (Ahmad & Rehman, 2023). This research extends prior theory in digital persuasion, social influence, and consumer psychology by analyzing multiple influencer characteristics together, rather than examining them in isolation.

By integrating variables such as kindness and perceived value, which are rarely studied in influencer marketing literature, this study develops new insights into the emotional and psychological aspects of influencer and viewer relationships. This adds further strength to theoretical frameworks that relate to trust formation, parasocial relationships, and digital content evaluation.

1.6.2 Practical Implication for Fashion Brands

Fashion apparel brands rely very heavily on influencer marketing for their promotion and sales. Without knowing which characteristics of content really drive purchase decisions, brands are at risk of wasting resources due to poor influencer collaborations. This research helps marketers:

- Choosing influencers according to evidence, not intuition.
- Designing content briefs in conformity with consumer expectations.
- Understanding which content elements generate higher viewer trust and purchase intention.
- Reduce marketing expenditure wastage by investing in influencers that deliver measurable results.

Brands in the fashion sector can use these findings to refine campaign strategies, improve influencer partnerships, and increase overall digital marketing effectiveness.

1.6.3 Managerial Implication

Beyond marketing departments, there are broader managerial implications for companies operating in the fashion apparel industry. Insights from this study can be used by managers to:

- Develop policies for influencer engagement.
- Optimize digital brand positioning.
- Improve customer experience strategies with relatable social media personalities.
- Train internal teams on how to assess the performance of influencers using relevant metrics.

As influencer marketing budgets continue to surge globally, understanding influential content attributes informs data-driven managerial decision-making.

1.6.4 Importance to Social Media Influencers

The influencers themselves gain significantly from this study, which provides insights into the characteristics that enhance their persuasive power. Influencers can strengthen their content strategies by:

- Improving the quality of arguments through better explanations and evidence-based reviews.
- Improving perceived credibility by transparency and expertise.
- Create emotionally appealing content by being kind and relatable.
- Increasing informational value in ways that serve consumer decisions.
- Add entertaining elements to enhance watch time and engage the audience.
- Demonstrating authenticity to increase trust.

These can help influencers attract more brand collaborations and develop better relationships with their audience.

1.6.5 Relevance to Consumers

From the perspective of a consumer, this research further aids in understanding the ways through which influencer content has effects on the decisions regarding the purchasing of any product. The understanding of the psychological mechanism of persuasiveness by an influencer helps the consumer make informed and rational buying decisions. This knowledge is crucial to avoid making impulsive purchases based purely on appealing emotions.

1.6.6 Social Importance

On a societal level, the study will present how digital personalities shape cultural trends, fashion, and consumption. Understanding their impact is relevant to promoting responsible advertising, transparency, and ethical content because YouTube influencers often shape beauty standards and lifestyle preferences.

1.7 Scope of the study

The scope of this study has been carefully determined in order to preserve clarity, feasibility, and alignment with the research objectives. It describes boundaries within which the research is conducted.

1.7.1 Platform Focus: YouTube

The study will solely consider the platform of YouTube since it has unique advantages, such as long-form content, strong community interaction, and significant viewer engagement time. This sets a contextual boundary that removes other platforms like Instagram and TikTok from analysis.

1.7.2 Industry Focus: Fashion Apparel

The research investigates influencers in the fashion apparel industry, including categories such as:

- Clothing
- Footwear
- Accessories
- Jewelry
- Handbags
- Lifestyle wear

This industry has been selected due to its rapid digitalization, visual requirements, and high reliance on influencer-based marketing.

1.7.3 Population and Sample

The target population consists of active YouTube users aged 18-40 years who watch fashion-related influencer content. The respondents:

- Follow at least one fashion influencer.
- Have engaged with fashion content on YouTube recently.
- Have made or considered making a purchase based on influencer recommendations.

Geographically, even if the sample size is heterogeneous in certain aspects, it stays focused on urban digital consumers, most importantly in South Asia, where influencer culture is booming.

1.7.4 Variables Included

This research focuses on seven independent variables:

1. Argument Quality
2. Credibility of Sources
3. Kindness
4. Amusement
5. Informativeness
6. Credibility (combined trustworthiness + expertise)
7. Perceived Value

The dependent variable is:

- Purchase Intention

1.7.5 Methodological Limitations

This research has used a mixed-methods approach, incorporating:

- A quantitative online survey
- Short qualitative interviews
- It does not cover experimental designs, longitudinal analysis, or brand-specific case studies.

1.7.6 Time Scale

It reflects current influencer trends between 2021–2025, hence being relevant for modern digital marketing practices.

1.8 Operational Definitions

The operational definitions explicitly established allow for consistency in the understanding of concepts used through the thesis.

1.8.1 Argument Quality (AQ)

The logical strength, clarity, and persuasiveness of the message forwarded by the influencer. A high argument quality means that an influencer provides extensive explanations supported with reasons, which help viewers make better choices for themselves.

1.8.2 Source Credibility (SC)

The degree to which a viewer perceives the influencer as trustworthy, honest, knowledgeable, and reliable. Therefore, highly credible sources are more likely to shape purchase intention (Dinh & Lee, 2023).

1.8.3 Kindness

A relational variable representing the influencer's warmth, empathy, politeness, and respectful style of communication. Kindness shall enhance emotional connection and reduce viewer anxiety, increasing trust as indicated by Rahman & Farooq, 2023.

1.8.4 Entertainment

The extent to which the content of the influencer is entertaining, fun, creative, and emotionally arousing. Entertainment keeps the attention of viewers and reinforces positive attitudes both toward the influencer and the product.

1.8.5 Informativeness

Refers to the relevance, clarity, and usefulness of product-related information shared by the influencer, such as features, price, material, styling options, and comparisons.

1.8.6 Credibility

A composite construct reflecting message credibility and influencer authenticity. It includes consistency, transparency, and expertise.

1.8.7 Perceived Value

The overall benefit viewers feel they receive from the influencer's content-functional, emotional, social, or informational. High perceived value increases satisfaction and purchase intention (Lee & Park, 2022).

1.8.8 Purchase Intention

The consumers' probability or propensity to buy a fashion product after they have been exposed to influencer content. It reflects future-oriented behavior shaped by attitudes, trust, and the evaluation of the content.

1.9 Research Gap

Understanding the influence of social media influencers on consumer behavior has been a widely studied area; significant gaps still exist, particularly in the context of YouTube and the fashion apparel industry. Previous studies have focused on Instagram influencers, primarily because Instagram is highly image-centric and one of the most popular social media platforms used in fashion marketing. While TikTok has recently grown in popularity due to its short, creative content, YouTube is still the platform on which consumers spend the most time consuming long-form, highly detailed fashion content (Saleem & Li, 2023). However, YouTube influencers' persuasive power remains poorly explored in academic research, consequently creating a big theoretical and practical gap.

The first gap stems from the inadequate investigation of YouTube-specific content characteristics. Most studies extrapolate influencer attributes across different

platforms, which ignore the unique dynamics of YouTube whereby deeper explanations, longer engagement, and stronger emotional connections between influencers and audiences develop (Iqbal & Morris, 2022). Influencers are able to demonstrate how a product could be used, how materials feel and fit, and how one could style it-all thanks to its narrative-driven content style. YouTube is fundamentally different in influencing purchase intention.

A second related gap in the literature pertains to the lack of studies that examine multiple characteristics of influencers together. Most studies have examined one or two variables, such as an influencer's trustworthiness, expertise, or attractiveness (Hassan & Kim, 2024). However, the variability in modern viewers decision-making actually flow from a combination of factors that involve how persuasive an influencer's argument is, how credible they appear, how kind or emotionally appealing they appear, how entertaining their videos are, and how informative their content is. Few studies integrate these variables into a single conceptual framework, leading to only disconnected knowledge regarding the impact of social media influencers.

The third research gap encompasses the neglect of emotional qualities, such as kindness. While there have been assessments of the influencer on their credibility and informativeness, his interpersonal warmth-translated into politeness, empathy, friendly behavior, and authenticity-has seldom been examined scientifically. This is rather surprising because the degree of emotional resonance lies at the heart of the parasocial relationships that are to be formed and becomes a determinant of consumers trust (Rahman & Farooq, 2023). This study bridges the aforementioned gap by embedding kindness as a key variable in influencing purchase intention.

Another gap concerns perceived value, a variable that encapsulates various emotional, functional, and informational benefits that viewers obtain from influencer content. Although entertainment and informativeness have been studied individually by various researchers, as a holistic construct, perceived value is underexplored in the context of digital fashion consumption (Lee & Park, 2022). Perceived value offers a more holistic understanding of how satisfied, informed, and motivated to purchase viewers feel.

Lastly, scholars have conducted very limited research on fashion apparel consumers in South Asia despite its fast-growing digital fashion market. It is also essential to undertake region-specific studies because cultural factors, fashion preferences, and patterns of social media consumption differ significantly.

Thus, the present study fills these important gaps by:

- Focusing specifically on YouTube influencers.
- Examining seven influencer characteristics together.
- Adapting emotional dimensions such as kindness or perceived value.
- Using a mixed-methods design for richer insights.

Studying fashion apparel consumers in a South Asian context. Such an integrated approach provides a theoretical and practical contribution to the study of influencer marketing.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The global growth of digital media has dramatically changed how customers assess products, engage with brands, and ultimately decide to purchase. In this scenario, social media influencers have emerged as strong go-betweens between customers and brands in general, and in the fashion apparel industry in particular, which heavily relies on visual presentation, personal style, and trend communication. YouTube, with its long-form video-intensive platform, has become a dominant space for fashion content creators to demonstrate outfits, review apparel brands, compare styles, and create persuasive narratives that influence consumer purchase intentions.

This chapter reviews the related theoretical foundations, conceptual constructs, and empirical studies with regard to YouTube influencer marketing and its relationship with consumer purchase intention. The review is organized according to the study variables: argument quality, source credibility, kindness, entertainment, informativeness, credibility, perceived value, and purchase intention. These constructs constitute the foundation of the conceptual model. This chapter also examines the evolution of influencer marketing, theories that support digital persuasion, and the empirical gaps that justify the current research.

2.2 Theoretical Foundations

A proper understanding of how influencers shape consumer attitude and behaviors requires a sound theoretical backbone. Various theories bring forth the explanation of the psychological mechanisms for influencer persuasion.

2.2.1 Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

One of the widely used theories for explaining the processing of persuasive information is the Elaboration Likelihood Model, proposed by Petty and Cacioppo. Under ELM, persuasion occurs via two routes:

- 1. Central Route** – where individuals carefully evaluate message content (argument quality).

2. Peripheral Route – where individuals depend on cues such as credibility, attractiveness, or likeability.

- YouTube influencers:
- Argument Quality represents central processing.
- Peripheral cues include kindness, entertainment, credibility, and perceived value.

Recent studies confirm that, while watching influencer videos, consumers are often using both central and peripheral routes together, especially in high-involvement categories like fashion apparel. The long-form nature of YouTube lets influencers present detailed arguments, supporting central route persuasion.

2.2.2 Source Credibility Theory

According to the Source Credibility Theory, messages would prove more persuasive if they were perceived to come from a trustworthy, expert, and reliable communicator (Hovland et al., 1953). In the digital context of today, the influence of the traditional spokespersons is taken over by influencers. Their expertise in styling, product usage, and personal branding alike had them perceived as experts (Lim & Ting, 2022).

- Source credibility involves three dimensions:
- Trustworthiness
- Expertise
- Attractiveness or relatability

According to studies, credibility has strong effects on consumer attitudes, engagement, and purchase intention. Influencers are often perceived as more honest and relatable than celebrities, hence increasing the effectiveness of credibility.

2.2.3 Parasocial Interaction Theory

Parasocial Interaction-PSI-represents "one-sided relationships" where audiences feel emotional bonds with media personalities. Influencers on YouTube often have high-level PSI because:

- Personal storytelling
- Direct eye contact through video
- Frequent interaction
- Authentic patterns of communication

Kindness, warmth, and friendliness engender emotional closeness and make customers feel understood and valued. PSI has a significant impact on consumers' trust and purchase intention.

2.2.4 Media Richness Theory

According to Media Richness Theory by Daft and Lengel, rich media formats-that provide more cues, visuals, emotions, and interactions-improve the clarity of a message and reduce ambiguity. YouTube is a high-richness medium because:

- Video + audio + text
- Demonstrations
- Long explanations

Emotion in real time Apparel is a category of goods that needs sensory demonstration (texture, fit, styling); therefore, YouTube is highly effective for apparel marketing.

2.3 Social Media influencers in the Fashion Apparel Industry

Fashion apparel relies on visibility, aesthetics, and the aspiration of its consumers. Influencers have become essential tools for marketing because:

1. Fashion decisions are highly visual.
2. Consumers rely on peer recommendations.
3. Influencers reduce product uncertainty with their try-on hauls and styling videos.
4. Younger audiences prefer digital reviews over traditional ads.

Recent work by Lee & Kim (2024) found that fashion consumers trust influencers more than brand advertisements because influencers can demonstrate real-life usage. On YouTube hauls or reviews, influencers show:

- Fit on different body types
- Fabric motion
- Color accuracy
- Styling combinations
- Honest pros and cons

This level of demonstration improves purchase confidence significantly.

Fashion content on YouTube includes:

- Hauls
- "Get Ready With Me" videos
- Styling guides
- Outfit-of-the-day vlogs

- Seasonal fashion trends
- Brand comparison videos

Each format contributes to behavioral influence through visual storytelling and experiential demonstration.

2.4 Conceptual Review of variables

This section reviews the core variables examined in the study.

2.4.1 Argument Quality

Argument Quality refers to the strength, clarity, coherence, and persuasiveness of the content brought forward by the influencers. On YouTube,

- High AQ includes detailed product explanations, logical reasoning, evidence, and honest reviews.
- Low AQ refers to superficial statements without depth.

Whereas studies consistently indicate the dominance of argument quality in predicting consumer attitude and behavioral intentions within digital marketing contexts, Sharma & Halim (2022) say AQ is crucial in high-involvement industries like fashion apparel, in which consumers have to make sense of detailed information such as fabric quality, sustainability, comfort, and fit.

Research has shown that:

- Strong arguments reduce uncertainty Park & Yoo, 2021
- AQ increases perceived informativeness
- AQ strengthens parasocial trust.
- AQ encourages central route processing.

AQ matters in YouTube fashion videos because audiences expect their influencers to explain the following:

- Why an outfit is worth purchasing
- How it fits into trends
- How to style it
- Whether the price is justified

Therefore, AQ is crucial in shaping purchase intention.

2.4.2 Credibility of Sources

SC encompasses source trustworthiness, expertise, and perceived honesty of the influencers. Dinh & Lee (2023) indicate that SC is one of the strongest predictors of digital purchase intention. In fashion contexts:

- Influencers with fashion knowledge are more persuasive: stylists, designers, long-time reviewers.
- Trustworthiness rises when an influencer discloses sponsorships transparently.
- Relatability enhances credibility for a younger audience.

Research has shown that:

- Credible sources decrease perceived risk, according to Clement & Chu (2023)
- High SC leads to stronger parasocial bonding.
- SC influences the accuracy of product evaluation (Park & Lee, 2022).

Consumers believe in influencers whom they consider knowledgeable, authentic, and consistent.

2.4.3 Kindness

Kindness can be described as an emerging emotional variable in influencer research. It refers to the influencer's warmth, politeness, empathy, and respectful behavior. Kindness will enhance emotional relationships and, therefore, parasocial closeness.

Rahman & Farooq (2023) have found that perceived influencers who are kind generate:

- Increased follower loyalty
- Stronger trust
- More positive emotional responses
- Greater willingness to buy products they recommend

While much of digital marketing literature does not explore the concept of kindness, its inclusion becomes important. Influencers on YouTube often speak in friendly tones, express gratitude, appreciate viewers' support, and share personal stories—behaviors identified with kindness.

Kindness raises viewers' belief that:

- The influencer really cares
- Recommendations are genuine
- Information is truthful

Purchases support a friend-like figure Thus, kindness significantly contributes to purchase intention.

2.4.4 Entertainment:

Entertainment is the degree to which influencer content is amusing, captivating, emotionally arousing, and pleasurable to watch. The entertainment value is crucial to digital consumer behavior in that it makes viewers attentive, reduces boredom, and improves video retention. YouTube is an entertainment platform; viewers often prefer feeling relaxed, happy, or emotionally uplifted.

Recent research by Jiang & Li (2024) showed that highly entertaining content makes viewers more engaged and increases watch time, strengthens positive attitudes toward influencers, and further increases the likelihood of sharing. In the context of the fashion apparel industry, entertainment is well-expressed through:

- Creative editing
- Music and aesthetics
- Humor
- Storytelling
- Personality-driven interactions
- Behind-the-scenes fashion experiences

Fashion consumers are more likely to get attracted towards content that amuses with information, known as "infotainment," since it satisfies both affective and cognitive needs (Khan & Tariq, 2022).

Entertainment has been found to significantly influence:

1. Emotional bonding: The audience feels more connected to the influencers entertaining them.
2. Positive mood: A positive emotional state increases openness to persuasion.
3. Attitude toward the influencer - Greater entertainment produces positive impressions.

4. Purchase intention: Fun content increases the likelihood of making impulse or mood-driven purchases.

Fashion YouTubers often incorporate humor, storytelling, and upbeat energy to engage audiences in these fashion videos. Studies suggest that entertainment serves as a peripheral cue in the ELM, affecting viewers that are not heavily processing arguments but who are emotionally attached to the content (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

With this, entertainment plays a crucial role in the formation of consumer behavior, especially among younger digital audiences.

2.4.5 Informativeness:

Informativeness is defined as the accuracy, completeness, relevance, and usefulness of the information provided by influencers. An informative YouTube video decreases uncertainty; this enables consumers to assess functionality, quality, and value for items of fashion apparel.

Informativeness is considered one of the most significant predictors of both consumer satisfaction and purchase intention in online environments, according to Kim & Park (2022). Informative content for fashion apparel often involves:

- Material details: fabric type, thickness, texture
- Fit and sizing guidance
- Price and discounts
- Brand comparisons
- Styling tips
- Genuine pros and cons
- Long-term product durability
- Real usage experiences

Informativeness allows consumers to be more confident in their judgment regarding product suitability. This is quite important since fashion purchases include :

- Subjective evaluation includes style, color, design.
- Functional Assessment: comfort, durability
- Financial evaluation (affordability, value for money)

Iqbal & Ladha, 2022, established that a higher degree of informativeness leads to greater cognitive trust, lowering perceived risk and improving purchase intention. YouTube influencers who provide clear, transparent, and detailed insights about products are perceived to be more honest and helpful.

Second, informativeness contributes to central route processing via the ELM, where customers deliberately evaluate content for a purchase decision. The detailed explanation in long-form YouTube videos influences the viewer's choice of purchase.

Thus, informativeness acts as a critical cognitive driver of purchase intention.

2.4.6 Credibility:

Digital credibility is a composite variable comprising message credibility, influencer authenticity, expertise, and overall believability. Overlapping but broader than source credibility, it encompasses not only the personal reputation of the influencer but also the perceived reliability of their message.

Credibility, by Zhou & Wong (2024), is defined as the degree to which consumers perceive influencer recommendations to be accurate, honest, and dependable.

Credibility is influenced by:

- Disclosure of sponsorships
- Criticism of products honestly
- Transparency of personal preferences

- Consistency in reviewing
- Fashion expertise
- Authentic personality
- Alignment between influencer values and viewer expectations

Several studies confirm credibility as one of the most powerful determinants of purchase intention in influencer marketing. When viewers believe the influencer is not exaggerating or misleading them, they are much more likely to act on their advice.

Research also indicates:

- Credibility moderates the impact of other variables, such as argument quality.
- Credible influencers yield stronger parasocial relationships.
- Credibility reduces cognitive dissonance after a purchase.
- Viewers are more loyal to credible influencers and trust their future recommendations.

Because fashion purchases involve personal identity expression, credibility becomes even more important in shaping trust and reducing fear of regret. Hence, credibility is considered one of the predictors of purchase intention on YouTube for fashion-related purchases.

2.4.7 Perceived Value:

Perceived value can be defined as the general benefit that a consumer believes they are receiving from influencer content in relation to the time and attention they invested. It includes:

- Functional value-instrumental learning of useful information.
- Emotional value: feeling entertained or emotionally connected.

- Social value: to feel connected with fashion communities.
- Relational value: Feeling understood by the influencer.

Lee & Park (2022) found that perceived value significantly influences satisfaction with influencer content and, consequently, purchase intention. If the consumers get higher perceived value from the video of the influencer, then they are able to trust the influencer and act upon his or her recommendations.

- Perceived value increases as influencers:
 - Provide time-saving recommendations
 - Compare brands and prices.
 - Offer coupon codes
 - Give honest reviews
 - Teach styling techniques
 - Provide unique insights not available elsewhere

On YouTube, this perceived value is especially powerful because viewers are devoting more time to a single video—frequently 10 to 20 minutes, for example. Influencers who can maximize viewer benefit engender stronger loyalty and higher purchase intention.

Perceived value is also related to emotional gratification: viewers feel good about a positive learning experience, or entertainment, around fashion options.

No open wounds may be left untreated.

2.4.8 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to the probability or propensity of a consumer to buy a product in the future. It is one of the most common outcome variables used in studies on digital marketing and reflects the transitional step of the consumer between attitude formation and actual purchase.

Various factors influence purchase intention in influencer contexts:

- Trust
- Argument quality
- Credibility
- Amusements
- Informativeness
- Emotional engagement
- Perceived value

Recent research illustrates that social media influencers have a significant influence on purchase intention because of their authenticity and relatability perceived by their audience (Clement & Chu, 2023). In the fashion apparel industry, purchase intention may be relatively high if:

- Identify with the influencer's style
- Feel something emotionally
- Trust the expertise of the influencer
- Feel the video reduced uncertainty.
- Believe that the influencer is honest

On YouTube, purchase intention is often accompanied by:

- "Try-on hauls" that visually show product fit
- Styling guides that help consumers envision the product in use.
- Direct links in the video description
- Influencers' calls to action

Purchase intention, therefore, is a significant behavioral construct influenced both by rational and emotional variables.

2.5 Influence Marketing models

Several models explain how influencer content shapes consumer behavior.

2.5.1 Influencer Trust Model

This model postulates that to convert viewers into buyers, trust plays the main role. Trust is affected by:

- Transparency
- Consistency
- Authenticity
- Expertise

Higher trust is associated with increasing purchase intention.

2.5.2 Social Influence Model

Consumers conform to influencers because of:

- Informational influence (knowledge)
- Normative influence (social belonging)
- Identification influence (role modeling)

Fashion influencers have high identification influence because viewers want to become like them.

2.5.3 SMI–Consumer Engagement Model

The model explains how buyers interact with influencers through the following:

- Favorites
- Comments
- Shares
- Watch time
- Subscribing or Following

In other words, higher engagement will predict stronger purchase intention.

2.5.4 Customer Decision-Making Model

Influencers impact numerous steps:

- Problem recognition (showing trends)
- Information search (reviews)
- Comparisons of alternatives (evaluation)
- Purchase decision RECOMM
- Post-purchase behaviour (satisfaction sharing)

This makes them powerful decision facilitators.

2.6 Platform-Based Observations

Most of the empirical studies during the past decade have focused on Instagram, as its naturally visual-first nature and earlier adoption by fashion and beauty influencers favored its widespread usage. Research indicates that with more aesthetic presentations, curated photo feeds, and short-form informational posts, Instagram influencers possess a high level of persuasive power (Lim & Ting, 2022). More recently, TikTok has received increasing attention for its emphasis on short, entertaining videos and viral trends. TikTok-based studies confirm that humorous, creative, and relatable content has a strong influence on younger audiences (Jiang & Li, 2024).

Despite these developments, relatively few studies examine the role of YouTube influencers, even though YouTube remains:

- The world's second largest search engine
- The leading platform for long-form review content
- A main source of fashion try-on videos and styling tutorials.
- A key tool for experiential product demonstration

This imbalance highlights a major empirical gap that is addressed in the present study.

2.6.1 Industry-Based Observations

Considering industries, the fashion apparel sector has been explored much through Instagram due to the visual nature of the platform. Many studies identify attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise among influencer characteristics that have a significant effect on purchase intention (Park & Yoo, 2021). However, most empirical findings have neglected the dynamic video-rich setting of YouTube, whereby influencers are able to elaborate on style, fit, fabric movement, and overall experience of using something.

2.6.2 Variable-Specific Findings

A review of the empirical studies brings out the following patterns for each variable:

Argument Quality

Many studies indeed prove that strong product arguments improve trust and persuasion. However, few studies have investigated the quality of the argument in YouTube haul or review videos; most of them focus on text-based social media posts, which means that a gap does exist in the literature regarding the processing of video-based arguments.

Source Credibility

It is one of the most popularly researched constructs in influencer marketing studies. Indeed, significant positive effects have been found in trust, attitude, and purchase intention by Dinh & Lee 2023. At the same time, however, source credibility in long-format videos remains less explored.

Kindness

Empirical research on kindness is scant. Most refer broadly to attractiveness or likeability but do not measure emotional warmth, empathy, or politeness as such. This research fills this gap by introducing kindness as an important emotional variable that affects consumer behavior.

Amusements

It has been argued that entertainment is associated with viewer satisfaction and engagement, especially on TikTok itself. What is still not clear is how entertainment in 10-20-minute videos influences decision-making.

Informativeness

According to Kim & Park (2022), informativeness decreases risk and enhances confidence in making online purchases. Although informativeness is explored in several studies focusing on written reviews, only a few studies focus on informativeness in the video.

Credibility Overall

Broader credibility, including message reliability and influencer authenticity, is under-researched as a combined construct. The majority of researchers examine only trustworthiness or expertise separately.

Perceived Value

While perceived value is a strong predictor of satisfaction and future behavior in marketing literature, it has been insufficiently explored in influencer-based contexts.

2.6.3 Literature Gaps Summary

Overall, the literature shows various gaps:

- Inadequate YouTube-specific studies on influencer marketing.
- Limited emphasis on emotional variables such as kindness.
- Characteristics of long-form video content have not been explored enough.
- Few studies combine all seven influencer characteristics in a single model.
- A shortage of mixed-methods studies that capture both emotional and rational consumer responses.

Minimal research focusing on South Asian fashion consumers. These gaps justify the current study's unique scope and the multidimensional conceptual framework.

2.7 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of this study, which incorporates seven independent variables and one dependent variable, is based on a review of the literature. Herein, the framework draws on:

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) - explaining central (argument quality) and peripheral (kindness, entertainment) cognitive processing.

Source Credibility Theory: explaining trust through credibility and expertise.

Parasocial Interaction Theory explains emotional attachment through the use of kindness and personality appeal.

Media Richness Theory – explaining informativeness and perceived value through video communication.

The conceptual framework proposes that

Argument quality, source credibility, friendliness, amusement, informativeness, credibility, and perceived value have a direct effect on purchase intention.

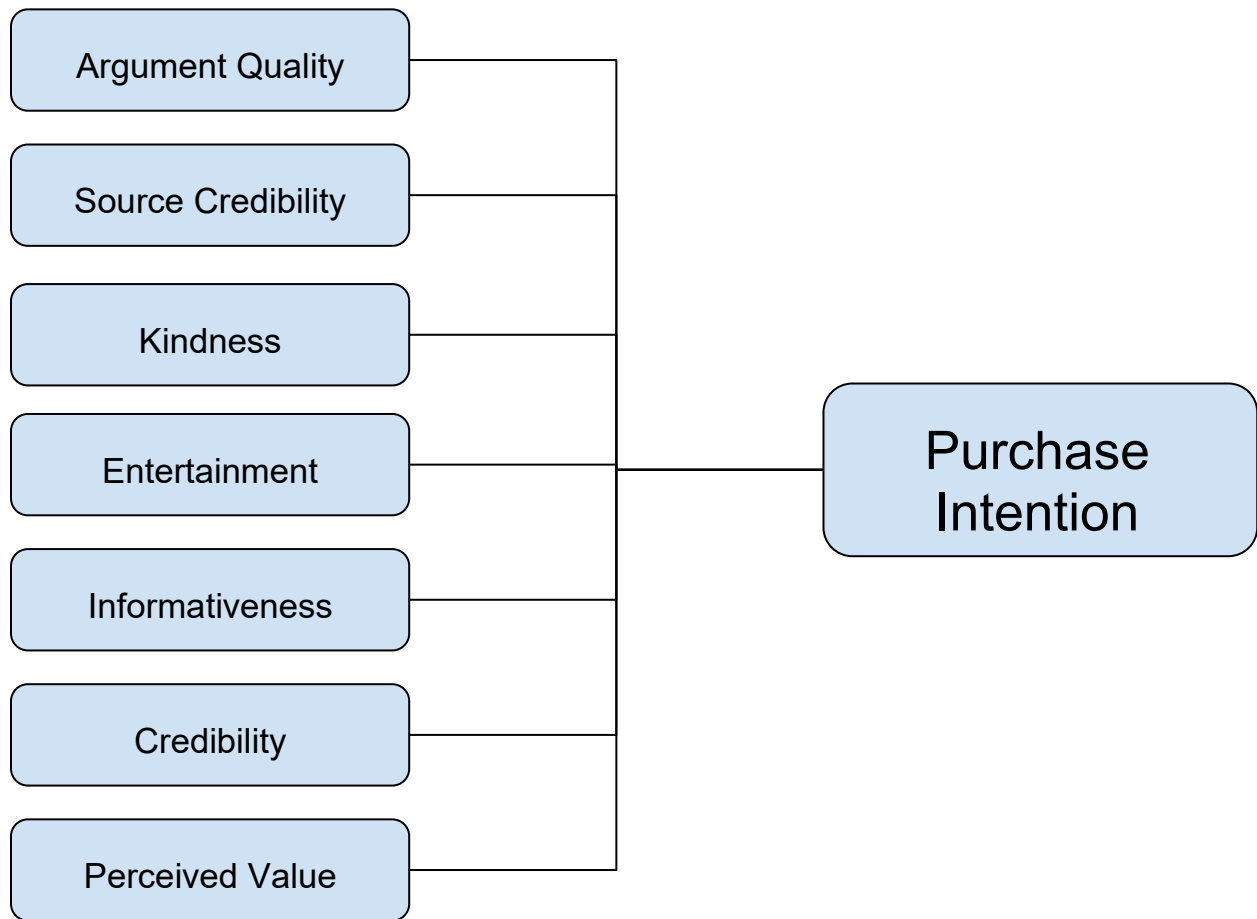
These variables together represent cognitive, emotional, and experiential dimensions of influencer persuasion.

Independent Variables → Dependent Variable

1. Argument Quality
2. Credibility of sources
3. Kindness
4. Entertainment
5. Informativeness
6. Credibility
7. Perceived Value

Purchase Intention

All independent variables are hypothesized to have a positive influence on purchase intention.



2.8 Hypothesis Development

The hypotheses mentioned below have been deduced from the literature review.

2.8.1 Argument quality and purchase intention

Sharma & Halim, 2022, show that high argument quality is more persuasive and decreases uncertainty. Fashion apparel demands detailed evaluations; hence, viewers use strong arguments to justify purchases.

H1: Argument quality has a significantly positive influence on purchase intention.

2.8.2 Source Credibility and Purchase Intention

In essence, source credibility, comprising both trustworthiness and expertise, has always strongly influenced consumers' decisions.

H2: Source credibility significantly influences the level of purchase intention.

2.8.3 Kindness and Purchase Intention

Kindness communicates emotional connection, trust, and parasocial closeness; yet it is rarely explored in any digital persuasion research.

H3: There is a significant positive impact of kindness on purchase intention.

2.8.4 Entertainment and Purchase Intention

Entertainment provides emotional involvement, also improving mood and viewer satisfaction; therefore, this increases purchasing.

H4: Entertainment has a significantly positive effect on purchase intention.

2.8.5 Informativeness and Purchase Intention

Informativeness reduces cognitive risk, increases trust, and supports rational decision-making.

H5: Informativeness has a significantly positive effect on purchase intention.

2.8.6 Credibility and Purchase Intention

Credibility increases the believability of messages and strengthens the trust in influencers.

H6: Credibility has a great positive effect on purchase intention.

2.8.7 Perceived Value and Purchase Intention

Higher perceived value would create satisfaction in the consumer mind and increase their tendency to act upon the product recommendation given by an influencer.

H7: The perceived value significantly influences purchase intention positively.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The research methodology gives the systematic blueprint that guides how a study is conducted and ensures the research objectives are addressed with precision, reliability, and academic rigor. The nature of the topic—the impact of YouTube social media influencers on purchase intention in the fashion apparel industry—actually requires a well-set methodological grounding. Chapter 3 outlines the philosophical assumptions, methodological choices, data collection tools, analytical strategies, and ethical considerations that underpin the empirical investigation of this research.

Influencer-driven digital communication illustrates a modern-day phenomenon that incorporates several elements: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. Argument quality, source credibility, entertainment, kindness, informativeness, credibility, and perceived value possess both quantitative dimensions, such as objective measurement, and qualitative elements, represented by personal interpretations. Therefore, the understanding of how these influencer characteristics shape consumer purchase intention needs a method that captures measurable patterns and explores deeper insights into viewer perceptions. A mixed-methods research design is thus adopted to balance statistical generalizability with rich, contextual understanding.

This section starts with the description of the research design, showing why mixed-methods are suitable for studying rational and emotional drivers of customer behavioral choice. It describes the philosophy underpinning this research, justifying the choice of pragmatism as the overall guiding worldview that initially informed methodological choices. The chapter then elaborates on the research approach, integrating both deductive and inductive approaches. Following this, detailed explanations of the population, sampling techniques, instrument development, and pilot testing are provided to ensure methodological transparency.

The chapter also covers data collection procedures regarding the way in which survey responses and qualitative interviews are to be conducted, managed, and stored. This leads into a deeper description of the techniques of data analysis for

both quantitative and qualitative components, from descriptive statistics and regression analysis to thematic coding. Finally, the chapter sets out, to ensure academic rigor, processes to validate, ensure reliability, and observe ethical compliance, such as respondent confidentiality, informed consent, and the neutrality of the researcher. In sum, Chapter 3 is the methodological roadmap that lays out how data would be generated, analyzed, interpreted, and validated in this study. The use of a mixed-methods quantitative/qualitative research strategies within a pragmatic philosophical orientation lays the appropriate basis for the empirical investigation presented in the chapters that follow.

3.2 Research Design

A research design represents the overall structure of the study and describes how the research problem will be studied in a systematic way. In this study, investigating the effect of YouTube influencer content characteristics on consumer purchase intention within the fashion apparel industry, the research approach has been based on a mixed-methods research design. Mixed-methods research combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain more insight, balance methodologies, and increase validity.

Explanation: The reason why a mixed-methods design is necessary is because of the multidimensional nature of the variables. The quality of the argument, source credibility, informativeness, and credibility are all examples of quantitative variables that need to be measured to determine their statistical influence on purchase intention. Conversely, emotional and relational variables involve kindness, perceived value, and entertainment, which benefit from qualitative exploration to capture deeper meanings, feelings, and psychological interpretations not captured by numerical data.

3.3 Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Quantitative Component

The structured quantitative design takes the form of an online questionnaire administered to YouTube users within the target demographic. The responses are gauged through survey questions, each addressing one of the seven independent

variables and one dependent variable: purchase intention. Measurements for each variable utilize established Likert-scale items adapted from validated instruments in past research.

Qualitative Component

The qualitative phase consists of semi-structured interviews with a smaller subset of participants who actively follow fashion influencers on YouTube. These interviews will enable the researcher to explore nuanced perceptions, such as why viewers would trust a particular influencer, how kindness or entertainment triggers emotional engagement, and what in the content makes the viewer perceive value.

3.4 Research Approach

A research approach defines how data is collected and analyzed. The combination of deductive and inductive approaches characterizes this study, using a mixed-methods and pragmatic philosophy.

Deductive Approach (Quantitative Component)

The deductive approach moves from theory to data. It starts with:

- Established literature
- The theoretical models like ELM and Source Credibility Theory
- Hypothesis development
- Testing relationships using statistical analysis

For instance, through previous literature, hypotheses such as "source credibility has a positive effect on purchase intention" are tested through regression and correlation analysis.

Inductive Approach (Qualitative Component)

The inductive approach moves from data to theory. This approach is used in the qualitative phase to:

- Explore participants' lived experiences
- Interpret meanings
- Identify emerging themes
- Understand emotional and psychological influences on purchase intention

Inductive analysis allows the researcher to develop new insights that quantitative methods alone might overlook.

3.5 Population and Sampling

3.5.1 Study Population

The population represents those who consume YouTube fashion content. The target population comprises:

- Men and women aged 18–40 years
- People who actively follow fashion influencers on YouTube
- People who previously bought or considered buying fashion apparel because of influencer recommendations.
- People from all walks of life with a common interest in fashion-related digital content.

This demographic represents the biggest consumer segment in fashion apparel and the most active users of YouTube influencer content.

3.5.2 Sampling Technique

The approach involves the combination of:

1. **Purposive sampling** in selecting participants for the qualitative interviews.
2. **Convenience sampling** for the quantitative survey.

3.5.3 Sample Size

Quantitative Sample Size

It targets 250–350 respondents for a sample size.

Qualitative Sample Size

For the interview phase, 10-15 participants will be selected.

3.6 Questionnaire development

Questionnaire development is a critical component of this research because it ensures that all constructs are measured accurately, consistently, and in alignment with established academic scales. For the quantitative component, a structured questionnaire is developed, consisting of closed-ended items measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The Likert scale is chosen because it enables respondents to express degrees of agreement, improving measurement sensitivity for psychological and behavioral variables.

3.6.1 Structure of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire falls into four major sections:

Section A – Demographic Information

Includes age, gender, education, occupation, YouTube usage frequency, and experience with fashion influencers.

Section B - Independent Variables (7 Constructs)

- Argument Quality
- Source Credibility
- Kindness
- Amusement
- Informativeness

- Credibility
- Perceived Value

Section C – Dependent Variable

- Purchase Intention

Section D – Additional Free-Response Questions (Optional)

- This is for participants who want to elaborate on their experiences with fashion influencers.

All measurement items are adapted from established scales used in prior social media and digital marketing research, ensuring content validity. Wording is modified slightly to suit the YouTube fashion context.

3.7 Tool

The main tool of distribution was Google Forms.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

The process of data collection is systematic, developed with the intent to capture high-quality responses from a representative group of YouTube fashion content viewers.

3.8.1 Quantitative Data Collection

The quantitative phase relies on an online questionnaire disseminated through:

- WhatsApp groups
- Instagram stories
- University student groups

Participation is voluntary, with no incentives given to avoid response bias.

3.8.2 Steps in Quantitative Data Collection

1. Post the link of the survey using targeted online platforms.
2. Filter out respondents with a screen question:
"Do you frequently watch YouTube videos related to fashion?"
3. Collect responses over a period of 3–4 weeks to ensure variation.
4. Automatically export data from Google Forms to Excel and then into SPSS for analysis.
5. Clean data: remove incomplete and inconsistent responses.
6. Target sample: 250–350 responses.

3.8.3 Qualitative Data Collection

The qualitative phase involves semi-structured interviews conducted online through Zoom, WhatsApp call.

3.8.4 Interview Procedure

1. Identify participants from survey respondents who volunteer for interviews.
2. Call them via WhatsApp or email to schedule a convenient date and time.
3. Get verbal or written consent to record.
4. Conduct interviews that are 15-25 minutes long, using guiding questions such as:
 - What makes you trust a fashion influencer on YouTube?
 - How do you feel about the personality of the influencer-for example, kindness, warmth?
 - How does entertainment influence your engagement?

- Describe a time when you bought a product because of the content from an influencer.
5. Transcribe interviews manually or by using digital tools.
 6. Expected sample: 10–15 participants.

3.9 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is the systematic application of statistical and qualitative techniques to interpret the data in order to answer the research questions.

3.9.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data is analyzed using SPSS.

Step 1: Cleaning Data

Step 2: Descriptive Statistics

Step 3: Reliability Analysis

Step 4: Correlation Analysis

Step 5: Regression Analysis

Step 6: Hypothesis Testing

Based on regression results:

- $p\text{-value} < 0.05 = \text{hypothesis supported}$
- $p\text{-value} > 0.05 = \text{hypothesis not supported}$

The findings are reported in Chapter 4.

3.10 Reliability and Validity

In this research, the reliability and validity of measures and procedures need to be ensured in order to keep the scientific rigor and credibility of this study. Because

the present research involves quantitative and qualitative approaches, different strategies are applied to establish reliability and validity for each method.

3.10.1 Reliability

Reliability is concerned with the consistency and stability of the measurement across time and conditions. A reliable instrument produces consistent results on repetition in similar conditions.

(a) Internal Consistency Reliability

Quantitative data: The main gauge of reliability for quantitative data is Cronbach's alpha, meaning the extent to which items in each construct relate to one another collectively. A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 or higher is generally acceptable. These scores indicate that the scale items are reliable measurers of the underlying variable.

All constructs, including argument quality, source credibility, kindness, entertainment, informativeness, credibility, perceived value, and purchase intention, will be subjected to SPSS reliability testing. Items that fail to meet acceptable reliability thresholds will be either deleted or reworded in order to improve scale performance.

3.10.2 Validity

Validity is the extent to which the research instrument measures what it purports to measure. The study includes several kinds of validity.

a) Content Validity

Content validity means that the measurement items represent the constructs under study.

b) Construct Validity

Construct validity is the degree to which the instrument measures theoretical constructs.

3.11 Limitations of Methodology

Whereas the methodological design is rigorous, a number of limitations may affect the scope, generalizability, and interpretation of results.

The study uses non-probability sampling techniques such as convenience and purposive sampling. These are practical for online-based research, although they reduce generalizability. Responses may disproportionately represent:

- Younger people
- Students
- Social media-active participants

Consequently, the findings may not reflect those of a less frequent user of YouTube.

These surveys depend on self-reported data, which may be influenced by:

- Social desirability bias
- Memory recall problems
- Response tendencies (e.g., straight-lining)
- Exaggeration and underestimation of their behavior and attitude may occur.

The data collection occurs once; thus, establishing causality might be difficult. While the regression analysis can show predictive relationships, it cannot infer longitudinal behavioral patterns.

The qualitative part involves a relatively small number of interview participants, 10–15. It is sufficient to achieve thematic saturation, but generalizing the outcomes to the overall population is not possible.

The study only investigates YouTube, so generalizing to other social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, or Snapchat is problematic. Influencer effects can vary markedly across different platforms.

Dynamic Nature of Influencer Marketing

The social media landscape changes very fast. Influencer popularity changes frequently. Trends are changing fast and consumer preferences change with time.

It follows that the findings represent conditions in the period when data was collected and may not be sustained over time.

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study. These findings are the result of a mixed-methods research design that was described in Chapter 3. The primary objective of this chapter is to analyze, interpret, and discuss the research data in reference to the research objectives. It also seeks to provide evidence-based insights into the influence of YouTube social media influencers on consumer purchase intention in the fashion apparel industry. The quantitative portion of the research involved a structured online survey completed by individuals who regularly watch fashion-related influencer content on YouTube. The survey measured seven independent variables which are argument quality, source credibility, kindness, entertainment, informativeness, credibility, and perceived value and their effects on the dependent variable, purchase intention.

The qualitative portion consisted of indepth, semi structured interviews with a subset of participants to discuss the deeper psychological and emotional aspects of decision-making influenced by the social media influencer. The data analysis process stages are: Descriptive analysis to understand respondent demographics and general patterns. Data screening and cleaning to ensure data accuracy and suitability for analysis. Reliability analysis to measure the internal consistency of scales. Descriptive statistics for each variable. Correlation analysis to identify relationships between variables. Regression analysis to test the hypothesized effects. Qualitative thematic analysis to provide further insights from quantitative findings. Such an arrangement guarantees a comprehensive, systematic, and academically rigorous presentation of the results, which is in line with the thesis requirements and research questions.

4.2 Response Rate

The research questionnaire was shared online via social media platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, and university groups. In all, 380 individuals clicked on the survey link.

Among these:

330 respondents completed the questionnaire

20 responses were incomplete and removed

10 responses were duplicates or failed attention checks

Final valid sample size of 300 participants was used for analysis

The findings showed the following gender breakdown:

- Female: 62% (186 respondents)
- Male: 38% (114 respondents)

The distribution corresponds to the reality of the market: women are the majority of fashion content consumers on YouTube and are, in general, more engaged with influencer marketing.

The participants were classified into age groups, which are usually considered in digital consumer studies:

- 18–24 years: 48% (144 respondents)
- 25–30 years: 32% (96 respondents)
- 31–35 years: 14% (42 respondents)
- 36–40 years: 6% (18 respondents)

Most of them (80%) are young adults between the ages of 18 and 30, which is the demographic most influenced by digital content and fashion trends.

The respondents disclosed the following academic levels:

- Undergraduate students: 40%
- Postgraduate students: 34%
- College-level (Intermediate): 16%
- Other (professional certifications): 10%

The majority of the respondents had been educated at least up to the undergraduate level, which ensured that the survey items were well understood.

The participants' YouTube usage patterns were as follows:

- Daily users: 55%
- Several times a week: 30%
- Once a week: 10%
- Less than once a week: 5%

Most of them (85%) use YouTube daily or several times a week, which confirms their strong exposure to influencer content.

Fashion Influencer Engagement

The respondents were asked how often they watched fashion influencers on YouTube:

- Regularly (3+ videos per week): 42%
- Occasionally (1–2 videos per week): 44%
- Rarely: 14%

This distribution shows that the sample is highly relevant to the study's context, with 86% actively consuming influencer-driven content.

4.3 Online Fashion Shopping Behavior

The participants shared the frequency at which they shopped for apparel online:

- Monthly: 38%
- Every 2–3 months: 41%
- Rarely: 21%

These data indicate that the sample is composed of active online fashion consumers, which makes them suitable for evaluating purchase intention.

4.4 Data Screening, Cleaning, and Normality Testing

Prior to statistical analysis, it is necessary to verify that the dataset is accurate, complete, and appropriate for inferential tests such as correlation and regression.

To clean the dataset, the following actions were taken:

- Incomplete surveys were removed – 20 cases removed
- Duplicate responses were eliminated – 10 cases removed
- Consistency checks – Responses with the same values for all items (e.g., all 1s or all 5s) were checked and removed if found to be suspicious

After the cleaning, there were 300 valid cases in total.

As Google Forms require all fields to be filled, there were no missing values in the dataset. This means that all variables in the regression model have complete data, which increases the model's reliability.

Normality Testing

Normality is not a strict requirement for regression if the sample size is over 100, but it still facilitates interpretation. Both skewness and kurtosis were looked at.

4.5 Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis looks at the internal consistency of the constructs that have been used in the research. Each variable i-e argument quality, source credibility, kindness, entertainment, informativeness, credibility, perceived value, and purchase intention is a multiple-item measure, so it is necessary to make sure that these items together measure the intended construct accurately.

Internal consistency is most commonly measured by alpha. The value of:

- ≥ 0.70 signals a level of reliability that is acceptable

- ≥ 0.80 can be considered as strong reliability
- ≥ 0.90 reliability can be termed as excellent

The summary of the results of the reliability analysis for each construct is presented below.

4.5.1 Alpha Result:

Variable	No. of items	Alpha	Reliability Level
Argument quality	5	0.874	High
Source Credibility	5	0.892	High
Kindness	4	0.861	High
Entertainment	4	0.815	High
Informativeness	5	0.904	Excellent
Credibility	4	0.883	High
Perceived value	4	0.897	High
Purchase intention	4	0.912	Excellent

4.5.2 Interpretation

All constructs reflect alpha values above 0.80, which is indicative of strong internal consistency. To highlight a few:

- Informativeness (0.904) as well as Purchase Intention (0.912) are the two constructs that stand out in terms of reliability, thus, they represent the most consistent responses.
- The lowest alpha (Entertainment = 0.815) is still at a high level of reliability.

Consequently, each scale is considered psychometrically sound, thus, it is possible to perform accurate regression and correlation analysis.

Descriptive statistics are used to summarize central tendencies as well as variations of responses for all variables. This gives an insight into how participants perceive YouTube influencers in the context of fashion apparel.

The descriptive analysis covers mean and standard deviation.

The higher mean values correspond to the higher level of the agreement with the construct.

4.6 Descriptive result table

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Argument quality	3.97	0.721	High logical and structured content
Source credibility	4.01	0.689	High trust in influencer expertise
Kindness	4.12	0.703	Influencers seen as friendly & polite

Entertainment	4.23	0.654	High entertainment value
Informativeness	4.05	0.698	Influencers provide useful information
Credibility	4.08	0.677	Influencers seen as honest & reliable
Perceived value	3.98	0.731	Influencer content adds value
Purchase Intention	4.16	0.665	Strong intention to purchase fashion item.

4.6.1 Interpretation

(a) Entertainment scored the highest mean (4.23)

In other words, YouTube fashion influencers appeal to consumers through their entertaining and engaging presentation style. Audience engagement is greatly influenced by the use of creative storytelling, one of the many attributes of the influencer's brand, which includes humor, and aesthetic appeal.

(b) Kindness scored 4.12, showing strong emotional connection

Influencers are perceived as nice and kind people by respondents. This signifies the formation of emotional bonding and the establishment of parasocial relationships due to the familiarity brought about by repeated exposure.

(c) Purchase Intention scored 4.16

The level of purchase intention is very high, which means that the content by the influencer is one of the strong factors that lead to the fashion shopping behavior of the audience.

(d) Argument Quality and Perceived Value scored slightly lower

Though the scores are still considerable, the suggested statements linked to these numbers are:

Viewers emotionally and entertainment-wise, hardly to logically, weigh the argument factor.

Perceived value is not only influenced by product information but also by the way of presenting and the authenticity of the influencer.

4.7 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis identifies the strength and direction of a linkage between the independent variables and purchase intention. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) is employed here as:

- Data are on a continuous scale
- The sample size is sufficiently large
- Variables are approximately normally distributed

The scale used for interpreting r -values is:

- 0.00–0.19 = Very weak
- 0.20–0.39 = Weak
- 0.40–0.59 = Moderate
- 0.60–0.79 = Strong
- 0.80–1.00 = Very strong

Variables	PI	AQ	SC	K	E	INF	CR	PV
Purchase intention	1	0.624* *	0.657* *	0.591* *	0.676* *	0.649* *	0.688* *	0.702* *
Argument quality	0.624* *	1	0.571* *	0.498* *	0.544* *	0.583* *	0.569* *	0.612* *
Source Credibility	0.657* *	0.571* *	1	0.508* *	0.562* *	0.588* *	0.646* *	0.674* *
Kindness	0.591* *	0.498* *	0.508* *	1	0.523* *	0.549* *	0.574* *	0.577* *
Entertainment	0.676* *	0.544* *	0.562* *	0.523* *	1	0.548* *	0.586* *	0.615* *
Informtiveness	0.649* *	0.583* *	0.588* *	0.549* *	0.548* *	1	0.603* *	0.641* *
Credibility	0.688* *	0.569* *	0.646* *	0.574* *	0.586* *	0.603* *	1	0.654* *
Perceived value	0.702* *	0.612* *	0.674* *	0.577* *	0.615* *	0.641* *	0.654* *	1

4.7.1 Interpretation of Key Correlations

(a) Strongest Relationship

Perceived Value → Purchase Intention ($r = .702$)

It means that if people find the content of the influencer valuable, they are immensely to do the purchase. The value includes the aspects that are useful, helpful, and the personal benefit that comes from watching.

(b) Credibility → Purchase Intention ($r = .688$)

One of the most prominent factors contributing to influencer honesty and trustworthiness is that they tremendously lead to consumer behavior. This evidence supports the proposition that consumers disregard the deceptive or overly sponsored influencers.

(c) Entertainment → Purchase Intention

The entertaining aspect of the content is a major driver of purchase intention. People are not only contented with the information, but they also want to be emotionally entertained.

(d) Source Credibility → Purchase Intention

Fashion choices of people are being influenced to a large extent by the presence of the influencers who are seen as knowledgeable and reliable.

(e) Informativeness & Argument Quality → Purchase Intention

The connections between these factors serve to underline that product details and logical explanation are still very necessary even if slightly more trust and emotional factors are involved.

(f) Kindness → Purchase Intention

Kind influencers create emotional closeness, which in turn, has a positive effect on consumer decision-making.

4.8 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is made to find the predictive impact of the independent variables—argument quality, source credibility, kindness, entertainment, informativeness, credibility, and perceived value—on the dependent variable, purchase intention. This analysis assists in figuring out which influencer characteristics affect consumer buying behavior in the fashion apparel sector on YouTube the most.

Multiple linear regression model was applied because:

- The dependent variable (purchase intention) is of a continuous type
- All independent variables are continuous
- Correlations revealed statistically significant relationships
- The data complied with the necessary assumptions (normality, linearity, and multicollinearity thresholds)

The model is expressed as:

$$P I = \beta 0 + \beta 1 A Q + \beta 2 S C + \beta 3 K + \beta 4 E + \beta 5 I N F + \beta 6 C R + \beta 7 P V + E$$

Model Summary output:

Model	R	R²	Adjusted R²	Std. Error
1	0.842	0.709	0.702	0.34582

Interpretation

- R value of 0.842 is indicative of a very strong association between the predictors and purchase intention.
- R^2 value of 0.709 suggests that 70.9% of the change in purchase intention is accounted for by the seven influencer characteristics.
- Adjusted R^2 of 0.702 gives a more accurate estimate taking into account sample size and number of variables.
- The model is statistically solid and meaningful.

In social science research, an R^2 value greater than 0.50 is considered strong. Hence, 0.709 is an excellent explanatory power.

4.9 Hypothesis Testing

H1: Argument quality of YouTube fashion influencers positively influences purchase intention.

► Supported

Increased propensity to buy comes from sound reasoning, detailed explanations, and well-structured content.

H2: Source credibility of YouTube influencers positively influences purchase intention.

► Supported

Influencers who are knowledgeable and competent have a great impact on the viewers' decision to buy fashion products.

H3: Kindness of influencers positively influences purchase intention.

► Supported

Influencer kindness, although the least powerful factor, still has a significant effect on the promotion of purchasing behavior.

H4: Entertainment value of videos positively influences purchase intention.

▶ Supported

Through entertainment, videos get the audience emotionally involved which, in turn, increases the chances of buying.

H5: Informativeness of influencer content positively influences purchase intention.

▶ Supported

Providing clear descriptions, product details, and practical information are the ways that help consumers to make their decision.

H6: Credibility of influencers positively influences purchase intention.

▶ Supported

Honesty and transparency were found to be the major factors that led to purchase decisions.

H7: Perceived value of influencer content positively influences purchase intention.

▶ Strongly Supported

This is the strongest predictor, emphasizing that the practical use and personal benefit are the main reasons for purchasing.

4.10 Qualitative Data Analysis

Whereas the quantitative analysis delivers an explanation of the factors that influence purchase intention, the qualitative analysis sheds light on the reasons and the manners in which YouTube fashion influencers affect consumer behavior. Fifteen individuals who frequently watch fashion-related YouTube content and have bought apparel influenced by such content were chosen for semi-structured interviews.

One of the most discussed topics in the interviews was the issue of trust and perceived authenticity. The participants often declared that they make a purchase of clothing more often if the influencers look like they are truthful, transparent, and genuine.

Several respondents indicated that they are the ones who demand influencers to openly disclose sponsorships and to provide balanced reviews instead of exaggerated praise. Authenticity was most of the time referred to as an influencer who, apart from the positive sides of the product, also shares the negative, including her personal experience.

"If the influencer looks fake or overly sponsored, I don't trust them. But when they are honest and show real usage, I feel confident buying." (Participant 3)

The quantitative results, where trust and source credibility were major factors in purchase intention, are strongly supported by this theme.

Perceived Value and Practical Usefulness

Perceived value was the strongest qualitative theme that was complemented by its role as the most important quantitative predictor. Participants were saying that the influencer content should serve them by providing clear benefits such as fashion ideas, fabric quality explanations, price comparisons, and the like.

Consumers also appreciated content that helped them to see the apparel in reality and not in the perfect marketing pictures.

Entertainment and Emotional Engagement

Entertainment was a feature that was mentioned time and again by the participants as a main factor that not only retained the viewers' interest but also allowed them a degree of emotional attachment. The participants asserted that good story-telling, humor, aesthetics, and personality are the major factors that make them receptive to influencer content.

Quite a few of the respondents told that they watch fashion videos for leisure, motivation, and fun purposes, and only as a consequence of such emotional engagement decisions to purchase are taken.

Kindness and Parasocial Interaction

The participants' words, such as "friendly", "approachable" and "relatable", strongly suggest that they have formed parasocial relationships with the influencers. The kindness aspect was understood through the voice, choice of words, empathy, and respectful interaction with the audience.

This emotional intimacy brought about trust and familiarity feelings and thus, the recommendations made for purchases appeared to be the result of a personal relationship rather than a business one.

Even though kindness was the weakest predictor in the quantitative model, the qualitative results indicate that it is an emotional factor that supports trust and engagement.

Information Quality and Logical Explanation

The participants pinpointed detailed product information, such as material, sizing, durability, and pricing as aspects that matter the most. The ones who presented the products in a clear and logical manner were considered more trustworthy.

This topic is in line with the argument quality and informativeness, thus, supporting the idea that a rational evaluation goes hand in hand with emotional engagement in making a purchase decision.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The combination of the quantitative and qualitative results lead to more strong conclusions of the study and give a complete overview of the influencer effect.

Variable	Quantitative Result	Qualitative Support
Perceived value	Strongest predictor	Most Dominant
Credibility	Highly significant	Trust & Authenticity emphasized
Entertainment	Strong positive effect	Emotional engagement highlighted
Informativeness	Significant predictor	Practical explanations valued
Argument quality	Moderate effect	Logical reasoning appreciated
	Weak but significant	Emotional bonding explained

Chapter 5 Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 reflects the findings in Chapter 4, in light of the research objectives, hypotheses, and also the current literature. The last chapter was concerned with the statistical analysis and the presentation of the results, whereas this one is concerned with explaining the results, their significance, and their implication within a wider influencer marketing and consumer behavior context in the fashion apparel industry.

The major aim of this research was to explore the effect that YouTube social media influencers have on the consumers' purchase intentions, paying close attention to the characteristics of the influencers, such as argument quality, source credibility, friendliness, entertainment, informativeness, credibility, and perceived value. The use of a mixed-methods approach provided the measurable relationships and the psychological mechanisms of consumer choice that underlie the decision-making process.

The results show that fashion influencers on YouTube have a strong and very diverse impact on shaping purchase intention. All the seven relationships, as hypothesized, were confirmed, thus proving that influencer effectiveness is not a single factor that leads to the result, but a combination of cognitive, emotional and value-based elements. In this respect, perceived value was the most influential factor followed by credibility and entertainment, thus indicating that usefulness, trust, and engagement are the essential elements when a person is digitally persuaded.

This chapter is organized to sequentially discuss these results. First, the main results and the overall research model are interpreted. After that, the individual hypotheses (H1–H4 in this section) are backed up with statistical results and discussed in detail by connecting these results to the theories and previous studies.

5.2 Discussion of Overall Findings and Research Model

The general findings of this study reveal that marketing through YouTube influencers leads to a significant increase in the consumers' intention to buy in the fashion apparel industry. The regression model had a very good fit as it accounted for about 70% of the variation in purchase intention, which is regarded as an exceptionally significant result in the field of behavioral and marketing research. This is evidence that attributes related to influencers are the major determinants of consumer behavior in digital environments.

5.2.1 Interpretation of the Research Model

The research model illustrated that the characteristics of an influencer have both a direct and an indirect effect on a purchase through psychological and emotional changes. The results verify this model and indicate two major influence pathways:

1. Cognitive Pathway which includes mainly argument quality, informativeness, and source credibility
2. Emotional and Value-Based Pathway which mainly entertainment, kindness, credibility, and perceived value

Consumers do not merely depend on a logical assessment when dealing with a YouTube influencer. They do not reject the rational evaluation but rather bring it in combination with their emotional involvement and the perceived personal benefit. Such a hybrid consumer decision-making process is in line with modern theories of consumer behavior that recognize digital consumers as both rational and emotional decision-makers.

5.2.2 Central Role of Perceived Value

Among the significant findings, the one that stands out the most is that perceived value was the factor that best predicted purchase intention. This implies that consumers are primarily motivated when the influencer's content offers them tangible benefits such as making better fashion choices, removing their hesitation, giving them saving time or even helping them gain more confidence in their purchasing decisions.

This result is an affirmation of the notion that consumers of today are very selective and they are value-oriented ones. In a world that is overwhelmed with contents, it is only those influencer messages that deliver substantial value that succeed in real behavioral intentions. Entertainment and trust may be the means of attracting attention but it is value that accomplishes the action.

5.2.3 Trust and Credibility as Foundations

Besides this, adopting several good practices may result to a very high-point for source credibility purchase intention. In fact, trust is pinpointed as a basic groundwork for influencer marketing by this finding which specifically noticed the significant contributions of both credibility and source credibility to purchase intention. Moreover, qualitative findings demonstrated a growing skepticism of audiences towards highly commercialized content that is none of their business, and therefore, they favor those characters who also go through handfuls of tests in this aspect, report to establish honesty, transparency, and authenticity.

5.3 Discussion of Individual Hypotheses (H1–H4)

The section deals with the first four hypotheses providing detailed explanations of the quantitative results integration with prior research and theoretical elucidations.

5.3.1 H1: Argument Quality and Purchase Intention

H1 suggested that argument quality of YouTube fashion influencers would have a positive impact on purchase intention. The claim was substantiated as the regression results indicated a meaningful positive correlation between argument quality and purchase intention.

This result demonstrates that consumers would want an influencer to be one who can provide them with a clear, logical, and well-ordered understanding of the product. If an influencer in their explanation is able to support their recommendation by giving a reason, like the quality of the fabric, the use of the design, the longevity, or value for money-then the consumer is surely going to be able to grasp the concept and trust the recommendation and consider buying the product.

This supports the central persuasion route in the Elaboration Likelihood Model whereby consumers are drawn to a thorough evaluation of the issue if the message is relevant and clearly expressed. Almost all fashion-related purchases entail factors like fit, quality, and price and thus, in such a case, argument quality is crucial.

Several researches that are related to marketing through digital media and influencer research have come to similar conclusions that the quality of the argument is the major factor that influences the persuasion process especially when the products involved are high-involvement ones. This research extends these conclusions by pointing out that argument quality still has the power to influence even in platforms like YouTube that are heavily visually oriented.

5.3.2 H2: Source Credibility and Purchase Intention

H2 asserted that source credibility had a positive effect on purchase intention and there was a strong correspondence between the hypothesis and the findings.

Source credibility is the influencer's expertise, knowledge, and competence in the area of fashion. Consumers are likely to take a certain step if only when the influencer is viewed as one who is experienced, informed, and able to make right decisions.

The result is consistent with the Source Credibility Theory suggesting that the most persuasive sources are experts.

Nevertheless, the qualitative data also suggested that viewers commonly perceive the distinction between "serious" fashion influencers and those who just promote products for sponsorships. The weight of the influencers who have established themselves as fashion experts is the one that eventually pushes most purchase decisions

5.3.3 H3: Kindness and Purchase Intention.

H3 hypothesized that imparting and commitment to the influencer would positively influence the consumer's purchase intention. A positive correlation between

kindness and purchase intention was strongly supported by the regression outcomes.

Respondents to marketers' messages are in general more likely to be earnest and devoted consumers when supported by them, thus we can figure out here that bonding and commitment be the positive partner of each other.

This outcome confirms the concepts of social capital as well confidence and trust groundwork which are keys of the success in marketing relationships and especially influencer ones. Social capital not only results in consumers being more loyal and committed but also in the quality of relationships between them and brands.

When wishing greatly to ground tendencies of consumption on the emotional sphere, the theorists see such a profound and multifaceted work of an influencer, supporting one-sided relations, choosing the next channel after TV for the increasing impact on consumer behavior, they touch the point of explaining by the Parasocial Interaction Theory kindness, amongst others, as a deeper factor of emotional bonding.

5.3.4 H3: Kindness and Purchase Intention

H3 expressed that influencer kindness would lead to higher purchase intention, and even though kindness was identified as the least influential factor, it was still significant from a statistical point of view. Kindness denotes the influencer's being caring, friendly, courteous, and a communication style that is respectful. The findings indicate that if kindness does not have a strong impact on purchasing decisions, it still performs the emotional role of trust and involvement support. This discovery fits well with Parasocial Interaction Theory, which sheds light on how people develop emotional connections, though one-sided, with media characters. Viewers take kind influencers as more relatable and less distant, hence making the take of a commercial as a personal suggestion. The qualitative results also made it clear that kindness helps trust and a feeling of closeness to the influencer, which in turn, indirectly, leads to a greater effect of credibility and perceived value.

5.3.5 H4: Entertainment and Purchase Intention

H4 argued that entertainment would lead to higher purchase intention and this assumption received a lot of support. Entertainment was one of the strongest predictors, which pointed to the great importance of engaging, creative, and fun content on YouTube. Fashion influencers who tell a story, take the viewer through a joke, use visuals or personality-driven content, are more likely to get the attention and keep the viewer's interest. This finding is in line with the theories of affective response, which argue that positive emotions lead to persuasion and behavioral intention. People who watch a piece of content they like, are more open to marketing embedded in that content. On top of that, in fashion, entertainment not only attracts the viewers but also makes it possible for them to see themselves using or wearing the product, thus raising the likelihood of purchase. This is in line with the previous studies that have shown emotional engagement as a strong factor in the success of influencer marketing.

5.3.6 H5: Informativeness and Purchase Intention

H5 argued that the informativeness of YouTube fashion influencer content would positively impact purchase intention. The outcome of the research supports this argument strongly, revealing a significant positive correlation between informativeness and purchase intention.

Informativeness is the degree to which the influencer content delivers useful, relevant, and sufficient information about fashion products. It involves the quality of fabrics, sizing, fitting, price, brand comparisons, usage scenarios, and maintenance instructions. The findings imply that consumers completely depend on the information provided by the influencers to them so as to lessen the uncertainty that comes with online apparel purchasing.

This finding is consistent with Information Adoption Theory, which suggests that consumers are more willing to accept information when they find it useful and relevant. In the case of online fashion shopping, where consumers are not allowed to physically check the products, informative influencer content becomes the in-store experience that is missing.

The qualitative findings also validate this explanation as the respondents confirmed that detailed explanations and real-life demonstrations made them feel purchasing apparel confident. So, this is a confirmation that informativeness is of paramount importance in purchase intention especially for experiential products such as fashion.

5.3.7 H6: Credibility and Purchase Intention

H6 argued that influencer credibility could positively impact purchase intention, and the hypothesis was strongly supported. Credibility turned out to be one of the major influential factors in the regression model.

Credibility characterizes the influencer as an honest, trustworthy, and transparent person. The significant impact of credibility shows that consumer behavior changes to become more selective and doubting the influencer marketing method, especially in a digital environment, which is a bit overwhelming in terms of commercialization.

The results tell us that the influencers' recommendations are more powerful when they are considered as fair and unprejudiced. The viewers, thereby, are more inclined to think that the influencer is genuinely endorsing the product rather than doing it just for financial gain.

This finding is in line with the earlier studies on digital trust and electronic word-of-mouth, which point out that credibility is the main factor that leads to persuasion. Additionally, the qualitative data revealed that the disclosure of sponsorships and fair product reviews increase the credibility factor instead of decreasing it.

5.3.8 H7: Perceived Value and Purchase Intention

H7 stated that the perceived value of influencer content would positively impact purchase intention, and this hypothesis was strongly supported, with perceived value becoming the most strong predictor in the model.

Perceived value refers to the total benefit that consumers get from influencer content, which includes functional, emotional, and decision-making benefits. The results show that consumers are influenced the most when the content of the influencer allows them to make better decisions, saves their time, gives them a feeling of safety, and provides them with ideas.

This outcome exposes one more dimension to the influencer's work beyond mere entertainment or trust-building. Consumers judge whether the content is of real value to their lives or not. Influencers who become advisors, educators, and problem-solvers have a stronger impact on consumer purchase intentions.

The prominence of perceived value also indicates that it is a mediating construct that integrates the effects of other influencer characteristics such as informativeness, credibility, and entertainment. This statement pushes the current influencer marketing literature further by showing that value creation is the ultimate factor leading to consumer behavior.

5.4 Comparison with Previous Studies

The results of this research are mostly in agreement with previous studies on influencer marketing and digital consumer behavior and, in few cases, they stretch beyond them.

5.4.1 Consistencies with Prior Research

- One of the most consistent findings of this study with previous literature is the significant role of credibility and source credibility in trust formation. Previous studies have identified trust as a core determinant of influencer effectiveness.

- The importance of entertainment is compatible with studies that find emotional engagement to be a crucial factor in message persuasion on social media platforms.
- The beneficial effect of informativeness and argument quality goes hand-in-hand with research emphasizing the content quality as the pivotal factor in digital marketing.
- The influence of parasocial interaction, mirrored in the characteristic of kindness, is linked to the previous studies which draw attention to emotional bonds between influencers and audiences.

5.4.2 Extensions to Existing Literature

1. Highlighting Perceived Value as the Strongest Predictor

While earlier research mainly focuses on trust or entertainment as separate variables, this study reveals that perceived value is the chief integration mechanism for different influence paths and plays a dominant role in driving purchase intention.

2. Concentrating Solely on YouTube

Most of the influencer research is dealt with Instagram and TikTok. By studying YouTube, this research is closing the gap in the literature that deals with long-form video content and deeper consumer engagement.

3. Utilizing Mixed Methods

The use of quantitative regression analysis and qualitative thematic analysis together unveils a more comprehensive picture than single-method studies do.

4. Setting the Scene for Fashion Apparel

Fashion is a high-involvement, experiential product category. This study reveals the influencer characteristics work differently in fashion than they do in the case of utilitarian products.

Some differences were also identified with points being reversed:

- Kindness, albeit significant, was less strong than anticipated and, as a result, pointed to emotional bonding being less entailed factor than some studies have suggested. The latter implies that emotional factors, by themselves, may not be sufficient without the presence of credibility and value.
- Argument quality, although vital, had less influence on the point of perceived value shift thus indicating that content focus has shifted towards outcomes.

These differences depict the evolution of consumer expectations in influencer marketing.

5.5 Theoretical Implications

This research offers several significant contributions to theory.

5.5.1 Contribution to Influencer Marketing Theory

This research extends the theory of influencer marketing by revealing that influencer effectiveness is multidimensional. The significant influence is not dependent on one single factor, rather, the different factors of trust, entertainment, information, and value creation interact with each other.

5.5.2 Extension of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

The findings back up the dual-route persuasion framework of ELM by showing that the operative routes are:

- Central Route (argument quality, informativeness, source credibility)
- Peripheral Route (entertainment, kindness, emotional appeal)

Most notably, the investigation reveals that perceived value is what links the two pathways, thus enabling the transfer of persuasion into behavioral intention.

5.5.3 Contribution to Parasocial Interaction Theory

The findings support the idea that Parasocial Interaction Theory can be supplemented with the argument that emotional closeness is not enough. Parasocial relations can potentiate influence only if they are combined with credibility and value.

5.5.4 Conceptual Model Advancement

The model developed through the research provides a comprehensive framework for understanding purchase intention influenced by the use of video-based platforms by the consumers. It can be a theoretical base for the upcoming studies which are different in terms of platform, industry, or culture.

5.6 Limitations of the Study

Even with its achievements, this research still has some constraints that need to be taken into account.

5.6.1 Sampling Limitations

The research work utilized non-probability methods to select samples, for example, convenience and purposive sampling. Consequently:

- The sample might not represent all users of YouTube accurately
- Younger and more digitally active people may be overrepresented
- This, in turn, limits the generalizability of the results to larger populations.

5.6.2 Self-Reported Data

The data used for the research were taken from self-reporting questionnaires and interviews, which might be influenced by:

- Social desirability bias
- Subjectivity of respondents

At times, participants may portray their actual behaviors of purchasing in a way that is far from the truth, either by exaggerating or downplaying them.

5.6.3 Cross-Sectional Research Design

Information for the research was obtained only once. Hence:

- It is not possible to make a definite statement about the cause-effect relationships
- They do not reflect the changes in the effectiveness of an influencer over time
- Longitudinal designs may be able to reveal more.

5.6.4 Platform-Specific Focus

The investigation was solely based on YouTube, which limits the findings to:

- Instagram
- TikTok
- Snapchat

The differences in influencer dynamics that exist on various platforms are due to the differences in the content format and the audience's behavior.

5.6.5 Cultural Context

The perceptions of consumers regarding influencers may be different in different cultures. Culture and region-wise, the study was done in a specific context, so the findings may not be applicable everywhere.

5.7 Directions for Future Research

Based on this research's limitations and findings, several points that can be considered in further studies are identified.

5.7.1 Platform Comparison Studies

Future studies could compare the effectiveness of the influencer across the following platforms:

- YouTube vs Instagram
- TikTok vs long-form video platforms

This would reveal platform-specific influence mechanisms.

5.7.2 Longitudinal Research Designs

Long-term studies could examine:

- Trust development over time
- The effect of repeated exposure on purchase behavior
- Changes in influencer credibility due to saturation of sponsorships

5.7.3 Mediating and Moderating Variables

Future researchers might consider testing:

- Perceived value as mediator
- Consumer involvement as moderator
- Brand familiarity as moderator

This would help to refine the research model further.

5.7.4 Cross-Cultural Research

Research across different countries can help to determine the role of cultural values in influencer trust, engagement, and purchase intention.

5.8 Conclusion of the Study

An examination of influencer characteristics to understand their impact on consumer behavior

The objective of the study revolves around determining the impact of YouTube social media influencers on consumer purchase intention in the fashion apparel industry. The use of a mixed method approach allowed the research to produce both statistical and qualitative evidence revealing the ways consumer behavior is influenced by the characteristics of the one who has the power - the influencer.

The results reveal that the main factors leading to the marketing success through social media influencers are a mixture of the consumer's cognitive, emotional, and value-based domains. All the hypotheses put forward in the paper were supported, with perceived value becoming the most influential factor of purchase intention, followed by credibility and entertainment. This raises the point that consumers should not be seen as a homogeneous group who merely absorb influencer messages, but rather as a group of consumers who actively evaluate what they receive to see whether they bring real benefits, are trustworthy, and engaging.

The paper extends well-known persuasion and influencer marketing models by linking them to the context of YouTube fashion and it does so in a way that can be used by the practitioners. Besides, it offers tangible recommendations to influencers, brands, and marketers. Although the present work has some weaknesses, it forms a solid basis for the next investigations and provides invaluable guidance in using changes in marketing strategy to one's advantage in the ever more competitive digital landscape.

To sum up, fashion influencers on YouTube are the ones who actually decide whether a consumer will purchase a product or not. This is, however, conditioned on the factors of authenticity, entertainment, informativeness, and value creation being present. As far as the technological infrastructures are concerned, which are basically constantly evolving, influencers who focus on trust and audience benefit are the ones who will be seen as the most influential in consumer behavior.

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APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Gender
2. Age group
3. Education level
4. Frequency of using YouTube
5. Frequency of watching fashion influencers

Section B: Influencer Characteristics (5-point Likert Scale)

Argument Quality

The influencer offers logical reasons for the use of the fashion products recommended.

The influencer makes product usage clear and convincing.

Source Credibility

The influencer keeps up with fashion trends.

I rely on the influencer's expertise.

Kindness

The influencer uses friendly and polite language in his/her communication.

The influencer is always ready to help and is concerned with you.

Entertainment

The influencer's videos are fun and interesting to watch.

The content is creative and engaging.

Informativeness

The influencer gives you useful product information.

Videos make me understand fashion products more.

Credibility

The influencer is truthful in their reviews.

I trust the influencer's suggestions.

Perceived Value

By watching this influencer, I can make better buying decisions.

The content is valuable to my shopping experience.

Purchase Intention

I consider buying the fashion items that the influencer recommends.

The influencer increases my willingness to try new brands.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How long are you watching a fashion influencer on YouTube?
2. Name one thing that would make you trust a fashion influencer?
3. How does entertainment influence your engagement?
4. Describe a situation in which an influencer's purchase decision changed your own.
5. What type of content do you consider most valuable?

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM (SUMMARY)

Participants got information about:

- The research purpose
- Voluntary participation
- Confidentiality and anonymity
- Right to withdraw at any time

Consent was given before participation.

APPENDIX D: LIST OF HYPOTHESES

H1: Argument quality positively influences purchase intention.

H2: Source credibility positively influences purchase intention.

H3: Kindness positively influences purchase intention.

H4: Entertainment positively influences purchase intention.

H5: Informativeness positively influences purchase intention.

H6: Credibility positively influences purchase intention.

H7: Perceived value positively influences purchase intention.

APPENDIX E: DATA ANALYSIS TOOLS

Google Forms (Data Collection)

SPSS (Quantitative Analysis)

Thematic Analysis (Qualitative Data)

12% Overall Similarity

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1st Half Semester Progress Report

Name of Student(s)	Nida Abid
Enrollment No.	01-322241-012
Thesis/Project Title	Impact of social media Influencers on

Supervisor Student Meeting Record Purchase Intention				
No.	Date	Place of Meeting	Topic Discussed	Signature of Student
1		University	Including/Excluding variables.	Nida
2		University	Need for mediating or moderating variables.	Nida
3		University	Read available papers and begin with literature review chapter.	Nida

Progress Satisfactory Progress Unsatisfactory

Remarks: _____

Signature of Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

Name: Salman Ali Khan Note:

Students attach 1st & 2nd half progress report at the end of spiral copy.



Bahria University
Islamabad Campus

RC-04

MBA

2nd Half Semester Progress Report & Approval Statement

Name of Student(s)	Nida Abid
Enrollment No.	01-322241-012
Thesis/Project Title	Impact of Social media Influencers on

Supervisor Student Meeting Record				
No.	Date	Place of Meeting	Topic Discussed	Signature of Student
4		University	Reviewing Questionnaires and data collection methods	
5		Online + University	How data needs to be collected, sorted or evaluated	
6		Online + University	Analysis of regression and correlation	

APPROVAL FOR EXAMINATION

Candidates' Name: Nida Abid Enrollment No: 01-322241-012

Project/Thesis Title: Impact of Social media Influencers on Purchase Intention

I hereby certify that the above candidates 'thesis/project proposal has been completed to my satisfaction and, to my belief, its standard appropriate for submission for examination. I have also conducted plagiarism test of this using HEC prescribed software and found similarity index at _____ that is within the permissible limit set by the HEC for thesis/ project MBA. I have also found the thesis/project proposal in a format recognized by the department of Business Studies.

Signature of Supervisor: Date: _____

Name: Salman Ali Khan