

**INFLUENCE OF BEAUTY VLOGGERS ON THE CONSUMER PURCHASE  
INTENTION FOR COSMETIC BRANDS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY**

**A Thesis**

**Submitted In Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Submitted by:**

**Mukta Garg**

**(Registration number: 902010019)**

**Under the guidance of**

**Dr. Apurva Bakshi**

Associate Professor

School of Humanities & Social Sciences

Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology



**SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (SHSS)  
THAPAR INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY  
(Deemed to be University)  
PATIALA, PUNJAB, INDIA**

**2024**

## Declaration

I, **Mukta Garg** hereby declare that the thesis entitled, “**Influence of Beauty Vloggers on the Consumer Purchase Intention for Cosmetic Brands: An Empirical Study**” submitted to Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology (Deemed to be University), Patiala, in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY** in **MARKETING**, is a record of the original research work carried out by me under the guidance and supervision of **Dr. Apurva Bakshi**, Associate Professor, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology. The matter embodied in this thesis has not been submitted in part or full to any other institute for the award of any degree.



**Mukta Garg**

(Registration number: 902010019)

## Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, **“Influence of Beauty Vloggers on the Consumer Purchase Intention for Cosmetic Brands: An Empirical Study”** which is being submitted by Ms. Mukta Garg, in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in MARKETING**, is a record of the candidate's original research work carried out under my supervision and guidance. The matter embodied in this thesis has not been submitted in part or full to any other institute for the award of any degree.

*Apurva Bakshi*  
*1/10/2024*

**Dr. Apurva Bakshi**

Associate Professor

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology

Date: *1<sup>st</sup> October, 2024*

Place: Patiala, Punjab, India

## **Dedication**

*This thesis is dedicated to the loving memory of my father, **Mr. Satish Kumar Garg**, whose guidance and wisdom continue to inspire me every day. Although he is no longer with us, his values and teachings have been a driving force in my life and academic pursuits.*

**Mukta Garg**

## Acknowledgement

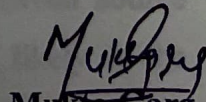
I extend my deepest gratitude to the Almighty for granting me the strength and perseverance to complete my Ph.D. thesis. This research represents the culmination of extensive cooperation and support from numerous individuals. I am profoundly thankful to all who have contributed to the successful completion of this thesis.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, **Dr. Apurva Bakshi** (Associate Professor, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology), for his support throughout this journey. His insightful comments and suggestions have contributed immensely to the research. It would not have been possible to sail through this journey without his guidance and assistance at every stage of the research. I would like to thank him for motivating me and answering all my questions. I have benefitted greatly from his experience and knowledge. The stimulating discussions have contributed greatly to the research.

I would like to thank my institute, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology (TIET), Patiala, for providing the resources to complete this thesis. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to **Dr. Padmakumar Nair** (Director and Professor, TIET), **Dr. N Tejo Prakash** (Dean of Research & Sponsored Projects, TIET), **Dr. Kaustav Roy** (Professor and Head of Department, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, TIET), **Dr. Ravi Kiran** (Professor, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, TIET), and **Dr. Gurvinder Kaur** (Associate Professor, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, TIET) for their guidance. Their kind and encouraging words have helped me keep my morale high. I am thankful to the members of the Doctoral Committee, **Dr. Subhash Chandra Bose** (Assistant Professor, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, TIET), **Dr. Anupam Sharma** (Assistant Professor, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, TIET) and **Dr. Sonia Garg** (Associate Professor, LM Thapar School of Management, TIET), for their thoughtful and detailed feedback. I wish to thank the faculty members of the School of Humanities and Social sciences, for their encouragement and assistance. In particular, I would like to thank **Dr. Rajesh Kumar** (Associate Professor, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, TIET) and **Dr. Ash Narayan Sah** (Associate Professor, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, TIET) for polishing my research methodology skills. I would like to thank **Dr. Atul Shiva** (Assistant Professor, Jaipuria Institute of Management, Noida) for sharing his knowledge regarding software's used in the study.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my mother, **Mrs. Nisha Garg**, for her unwavering love, support, and sacrifices. Her strength, guidance, and constant encouragement have been the foundation of my success. Without her care and belief in me, this journey would not have been possible. I am deeply thankful to my brother, **Mr. Devansh Garg**, for his constant support, encouragement, and positivity. His belief in me and his thoughtful advice have been a source of strength throughout this journey. I truly appreciate his presence and all the ways he has helped me succeed. I would like to thank my paternal and maternal uncles and aunts for their support throughout my journey. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to my fiancé, **Mr. Anubhav Agarwal**, for his unwavering support, patience, and encouragement throughout this journey. His belief in me has been a constant source of strength and motivation. His love and understanding have made this endeavor possible and I am endlessly grateful for his presence in my life. I am also thankful to his family, their love and support have been invaluable, and I am truly blessed to have them in my life.

I am also grateful to all my colleagues for their moral support. I would like to thank my friends, **Ridhima, Avisha, Priyanka, Yakshi, Ridhya, Monika, Harshaurya, Anju, Aastha, Devshree, Levia, Meghana, Riya, Amit Pandey, Sahil, and Bikrambir**, for making these years memorable. I will cherish the time spent together. The light-hearted conversations made this journey less stressful. Lastly, I would like to thank all the respondents for their time and cooperation in completing the survey. Without their participation, the research could not have been carried out. Sometimes words are not enough to express deep and hearty regards for an inspirational experience of life. Finalizing this work of research is one of those beautiful moments of life which is beyond any words.

  
**Mukta Garg**

## **Abstract**

The rapid proliferation of social media has fundamentally transformed marketing strategies, giving rise to influencer marketing as a potent tool for brands to engage consumers. Among influencers, beauty vloggers have emerged as significant opinion leaders, particularly within the cosmetics industry. This study investigates the efficacy of beauty vlogger marketing in shaping consumer behavior, with a specific focus on the burgeoning market of India. The research aims to bridge the existing gap in the literature regarding vlogger-led marketing effectiveness in Asian emerging markets by examining how beauty vloggers impact consumer responses, attitudes, and purchase intentions.

The theoretical framework of the study is grounded in source credibility theory, self-congruency theory, parasocial interaction theory, meaning transfer theory, and social exchange theory. These theories provide a comprehensive lens to analyze the complex interplay between beauty vloggers and their followers. Purchase intention, a predictor of consumer behavior, was used as the key dependent variable to evaluate beauty vlogger marketing effectiveness. The study attempted to fill a research gap by treating source characteristics, audience characteristics, and interactional elements as distinct execution factors and by examining their effects. The study also investigated the previously unexplored mediating role of trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence on consumer purchase intention. Since, there is a dearth of research on beauty vlogger marketing in the context of Asian emerging markets, the present study was conducted in North India in the states of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, and Delhi (NCR). 461 participants were asked to fill the structured questionnaire. The research employs a quantitative approach, specifically structural equation modeling (SEM), to assess the relationships between the variables and to test the proposed hypotheses.

The findings reveal that source characteristics of beauty vloggers play a crucial role in building consumer trust. The study highlights that trust mediates the relationship between source characteristics and purchase intention, indicating that consumers are more likely to be influenced by beauty vloggers they perceive as credible, trustworthy, expertise, and attractive. Regarding audience characteristics, the study finds that both self-concept and user-influencer personality congruence contribute to forming a favorable attitude towards beauty vloggers. The young consumers view influencers as role models, incorporating their values into their own identity formation. The congruence between the personality of the vlogger and that of the

audience strengthens this bond, facilitating a favorable consumer attitude and subsequently influencing purchase intentions. The analysis of interactional elements underscores the importance of parasocial interactions, emotional attachment, meaning transfer, and informational value in enhancing the perceived influence of beauty vloggers. These elements collectively enhance the perceived influence of beauty vloggers, driving consumer behavior and purchase decisions.

The study's implications are manifold. For marketers and brand managers, the findings provide actionable insights to develop targeted marketing strategies that resonate with Indian consumers. By leveraging the trust and influence of beauty vloggers, brands can foster stronger consumer-brand relationships and enhance brand engagement. For policymakers, the study underscores the necessity of establishing regulatory frameworks to ensure ethical practices and transparency in influencer marketing, protecting consumers from deceptive advertising. Content creators, particularly beauty vloggers, can optimize their content strategies by incorporating effective engagement techniques and persuasive strategies identified in the study. This can enhance audience engagement, build stronger connections with followers, and increase their influence within the beauty community. Aspiring content creators can also benefit from these insights, laying a solid foundation for their vlogging careers by understanding the nuances of influencer marketing and audience engagement.

This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on influencer marketing by providing a nuanced understanding of how beauty vloggers impact consumer behavior in an emerging market.

## Contents

|                                                     |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <i>Declaration</i> .....                            | <i>i</i>    |
| <i>Certificate</i> .....                            | <i>ii</i>   |
| <i>Dedication</i> .....                             | <i>iii</i>  |
| <i>Acknowledgement</i> .....                        | <i>iv</i>   |
| <i>Abstract</i> .....                               | <i>vi</i>   |
| <i>Content</i> .....                                | <i>viii</i> |
| <i>List of tables</i> .....                         | <i>xii</i>  |
| <i>List of figures</i> .....                        | <i>xiii</i> |
| <i>Abbreviations</i> .....                          | <i>xiv</i>  |
| <br>                                                |             |
| <b>Chapter 1. Introduction</b> .....                | <b>1</b>    |
| 1.1 Background.....                                 | 1           |
| 1.2 Social media and influencer marketing.....      | 3           |
| 1.3 Beauty vloggers.....                            | 6           |
| 1.4 Statement of the problem.....                   | 11          |
| 1.5 Research questions.....                         | 12          |
| 1.6 Objectives of the study.....                    | 13          |
| 1.7 Significance and contribution of the study..... | 13          |
| 1.8 organization of the thesis.....                 | 15          |
| 1.9 Summary of the chapter.....                     | 16          |

|                                                                                                        |               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Chapter 2. Literature review and hypothesis development.....</b>                                    | <b>17</b>     |
| 2.1 Theoretical underpinning.....                                                                      | 18            |
| 2.1.1 Source credibility theory.....                                                                   | 18            |
| 2.1.2 Self-congruency theory.....                                                                      | 19            |
| 2.1.3 Parasocial interaction theory.....                                                               | 20            |
| 2.1.4 Meaning transfer theory.....                                                                     | 21            |
| 2.1.5 Social exchange theory.....                                                                      | 22            |
| 2.2 Effect of source characteristics on trust towards beauty vlogger.....                              | 25            |
| 2.3 Effect of audience characteristics on consumer attitude towards beauty<br>vlogger.....             | 30            |
| 2.4 Effect of interactional elements on perceived influence of beauty vloggers                         | 35            |
| 2.5 Impact of trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence on consumer<br>purchase intention..... | 41            |
| 2.6 Mediating role of trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence.....                           | 45            |
| 2.7 Research gaps.....                                                                                 | 50            |
| 2.8 Conceptual framework.....                                                                          | 52            |
| 2.9 Summary of the chapter.....                                                                        | 54            |
| <br><b>Chapter 3. Research Methodology.....</b>                                                        | <br><b>56</b> |
| 3.1 Research design.....                                                                               | 56            |
| 3.2 Stimuli.....                                                                                       | 58            |
| 3.3 Pretest.....                                                                                       | 59            |
| 3.4 Participants.....                                                                                  | 59            |
| 3.5 Procedure.....                                                                                     | 62            |

|                                                                                      |                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 3.6 Research instrument.....                                                         | 63             |
| 3.7 Measurement scale.....                                                           | 64             |
| 3.8 Tools and techniques.....                                                        | 68             |
| 3.8.1 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).....                                        | 69             |
| 3.9 Summary of the chapter.....                                                      | 71             |
| <br><b>Chapter 4. Results and Discussion.....</b>                                    | <br><b>72</b>  |
| 4.1 Descriptive statistics.....                                                      | 72             |
| 4.2 Common method bias.....                                                          | 77             |
| 4.3 Data diagnosis.....                                                              | 78             |
| 4.4 Measurement model assessment for lower-order construct.....                      | 80             |
| 4.5 Measurement model assessment for higher-order construct.....                     | 89             |
| 4.6 Hypothesis testing.....                                                          | 96             |
| 4.7 PLS predict.....                                                                 | 101            |
| 4.8 Discussion.....                                                                  | 103            |
| 4.9 Summary of the chapter.....                                                      | 109            |
| <br><b>Chapter 5. Implications, limitations, and future research directions.....</b> | <br><b>111</b> |
| 5.1 Theoretical implications.....                                                    | 112            |
| 5.2 Practical implications.....                                                      | 115            |
| 5.3 Limitations.....                                                                 | 118            |
| 5.4 Future research directions.....                                                  | 118            |
| 5.5 Summary of the chapter.....                                                      | 121            |
| References.....                                                                      | 122            |

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Appendix.....             | 148 |
| Publications table.....   | 157 |
| Conferences attended..... | 158 |
| Publications.....         | 159 |

## List of Tables

|                                                                    |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 3.1 Demographic details of respondents.....                        | 61  |
| 3.2 Measurement scale of all the constructs used in the study..... | 65  |
| 4.1 Descriptive analysis.....                                      | 73  |
| 4.2 Harman's one factor test.....                                  | 77  |
| 4.3 Variance inflation factor (VIF) (Outer and inner model).....   | 78  |
| 4.4 Measurement model for lower-order constructs.....              | 82  |
| 4.5 Factor loading for lower-order constructs.....                 | 83  |
| 4.6 Fornell and Larcker for lower-order constructs.....            | 87  |
| 4.7 HTMT ratio for lower-order constructs.....                     | 88  |
| 4.8 Measurement model analysis for higher-order constructs.....    | 90  |
| 4.9 Fornell and Larcker for higher-order constructs.....           | 92  |
| 4.10 HTMT ratios for higher-order constructs.....                  | 93  |
| 4.11 Cross loadings.....                                           | 94  |
| 4.12 Result of hypothesis 1.....                                   | 97  |
| 4.13 Result of hypothesis 2.....                                   | 97  |
| 4.14 Result of hypothesis 3.....                                   | 98  |
| 4.15 Result pf hypothesis 4.....                                   | 98  |
| 4.16 Result of hypothesis 5.....                                   | 100 |
| 4.17 PLS predict analysis.....                                     | 102 |
| 4.18 Hypothesis status.....                                        | 109 |

## **List of Figures**

|                                                                                                                |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1.1 Types of influencers based on number of followers.....                                                     | 4   |
| 1.2 Different types of vlogs.....                                                                              | 6   |
| 1.3 Different types of videos made by beauty vloggers.....                                                     | 8   |
| 1.4 Segments of the cosmetic industry.....                                                                     | 10  |
| 2.1 Conceptual framework for understanding the mechanism of beauty<br>vlogger marketing.....                   | 53  |
| 2.2 The detailed conceptual framework showing the dimension of<br>independent variables used in the study..... | 54  |
| 3.1 Outline of the research design of the study.....                                                           | 58  |
| 4.1 Conceptual model analysis using SmartPLS.....                                                              | 90  |
| 4.2 Structural model analysis and statistical relation between variables.....                                  | 101 |

### List of Abbreviations

| Abbreviation | Full Form                                          |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| AVE          | Average Variance Extracted                         |
| CB SEM       | Covariance Based Structural Equation Modeling      |
| CFA          | Confirmatory Factor Analysis                       |
| CMB          | Common Method Bias                                 |
| CR           | Composite Reliability                              |
| eWOM         | Electronic word of mouth                           |
| FDA          | Food and Drug Administration                       |
| FGD          | Focus Group Discussions                            |
| GRWM         | Get Ready with Me                                  |
| HTMT         | Heterotrait-Monotrait                              |
| LM           | Linear Model                                       |
| MAE          | Mean Absolute Error                                |
| NCR          | National Capital Region                            |
| PLS SEM      | Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling |
| PSI          | Parasocial interactions                            |
| PT           | Projective Techniques                              |
| RMSE         | Root Mean Square Error                             |
| SPSS         | Statistical Package for the social sciences        |
| SRMR         | Standardised Root Mean Square Residual             |
| VIF          | Variance Inflation Factor                          |

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 Background**

The evolution of marketing strategies has been shaped by the ever-changing landscape of consumer behaviour and technological advancements (Manchanda et al., 2022). Initially, marketing professionals mainly depended on traditional marketing techniques to connect and interact with their intended customers. Before the rise of digital media, marketing tactics were based on approaches derived from mass communication and persuasive concepts. Marketing practitioners mostly used mass media advertising as one of their primary advertising tactics, which included outlets such as television, radio, newspapers, and magazines (Haenlein et al., 2020). Television advertising became a powerful tool for reaching large audiences as businesses allocated substantial money to produce visually captivating advertisements that would grab viewers' attention during popular time periods (Joo et al., 2014). Radio advertising was crucial in reaching large and diverse audiences, particularly during busy commute times when listeners were tuned in to their preferred stations (Riebe & Dawes, 2006). Radio advertisements use captivating melodies, compelling dialogues, and unforgettable audio effects to make a lasting impact on listeners and motivate them to act, such as buying a product or visiting a business (Weinberger & Campbell, 1991). Print advertising, such as newspaper and magazine advertisements, gives marketers a medium to convey focused messages to specific demographic groups. Newspaper advertisements often use attention-grabbing headlines, visually appealing graphics, and time-limited promotions to capture readers' attention among a large amount of journalistic material (Sridhar & Sriram, 2015; Lin et al., 2021). Magazine advertising, however, provides firms the chance to display their items in a visually attractive and editorially integrated way, frequently including high-quality images and detailed product descriptions (Frith et al., 2005; Belch & Belch, 2013). In addition to conventional mass media channels, marketing professionals also use out-of-home advertising methods to engage with customers in their daily surroundings. Billboards, posters, and signs strategically positioned in busy locations like highways, bus stops, and shopping malls function as visual cues for companies and goods, strengthening brand recognition and encouraging people to contemplate buying (Roux & Waldt, 2014).

Marketers use direct marketing strategies with mass media and out-of-home advertising to establish a more intimate connection with customers. Brands are able to establish direct communication with individual customers via direct mail campaigns, telemarketing, and door-to-door sales operations (Yi & Amenuvor, 2022). This enables them to customize their messaging and offers according to demographic data and previous purchase history. Subsequently, marketing practitioners began linking prominent public figures with their companies in order to appeal to a more extensive customer base. This phenomenon is referred to as celebrity endorsement (Kumar & Gupta, 2016). A celebrity endorser is a person who is well recognized by the public and leverages their popularity to promote consumer goods by appearing in advertisements. The celebrity endorser is well recognized by the general population. He or she can be an actor, athlete, politician, business typhoon, or a member of the military services (Mccracken, 1989; Schimmelpfennig, 2018). Many firms have opted for celebrity endorsement as the most efficient marketing method to build a company's unique identity, foster a favourable attitude towards their product, and create brand image and equity (Kumar & Gupta, 2016). These conventional advertising techniques were distinguished by their unidirectional communication strategy, where businesses would transmit information to passive audiences in order to generate awareness, contemplation, and eventually, the intention to buy.

As technology continues to advance, traditional marketing strategies have experienced a decline in effectiveness. The advent of new technology can fundamentally alter the nature of work, necessitating the adoption of novel behaviours and expectations from users (Suri & Sharma, 2012). The widespread adoption of the internet has reached unprecedented levels, with active internet users numbering 5.35 billion, representing 66.2 percent of the global population (Petrosyan, 2024). In India, a developing country, internet usage has surged dramatically. In 2010, there were 93.05 million internet users, but with the introduction of free internet services by Reliance Jio, this number skyrocketed to 305.29 million in 2015. Furthermore, the outbreak of COVID-19 led to another surge in internet usage as people were confined to their homes due to the lockdown situation (Kim & Kim, 2021; Pandey, 2021). The number of internet users in India increased from 644.51 million in 2019 to 757.96 million in 2020. By 2023, there were 1240.69 million active internet users in India, and it is projected to grow to 1412.89 million by the end of 2024. Moreover, India became the second-largest online market worldwide in 2022, following China (Basuroy, 2023).

With the escalating use of the internet, people are spending less time on traditional platforms and are gravitating toward newer platforms, notably social media platforms. Platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram provide users with the freedom to express themselves without constraints (Filieri et al., 2023). This shift in consumer behaviour has significant implications for preferences and purchasing patterns, with social media platforms serving as powerful channels similar to word of mouth. In essence, social media can be likened to electronic word of mouth (EWOM), giving rise to the phenomenon of social media marketing (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Donthu et al., 2021).

## **1.2 Social media and influencer marketing**

Social media encompasses a variety of internet-based applications that facilitate the creation and exchange of user-generated content, rooted in the principles and technology of Web 2.0 (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). This broad category includes platforms such as social networking, microblogging, video blogging, podcasts, social blogs, weblogs, image sharing, social bookmarking, and rating systems. The increasing proliferation of technology and internet usage has led to a widespread adoption of social media (Ladhari et al., 2020). Originally developed for entertainment and leisure, social media has evolved into a crucial marketing tool, enabling consumer engagement and gradually replacing traditional advertising channels like television, newspapers, magazines, and radio (Haenlein et al., 2020). Today, people utilize various social media platforms for entertainment, information gathering, and virtual social interactions. Social media platforms have emerged as vital marketing tools for fostering connections with potential consumers and facilitating lasting relationships. Many users actively generate online content by sharing product reviews, personal experiences, opinions, and ideas, thereby assuming the role of opinion leaders for their followers (Lee & Watkins, 2016). These opinion leaders can significantly influence their followers' perceptions of brands and products through their posts (Lee & Lee, 2022), earning them the designation of "influencers" or "social media influencers." A social media influencer can be defined as an independent third-party endorser who has cultivated a substantial social network by publicly sharing details about their personal lives, experiences, and opinions through various mediums such as texts, images, videos, hashtags, and location check-ins (Freberg et al., 2011; Ki & Kim, 2019). The surge in popularity of social media influencers has led to the emergence of a novel marketing approach known as "influencer marketing" (Feng et al., 2020). In this innovative strategy, brands form partnerships with influencers to endorse and showcase their products to a wider audience (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

The global influencer marketing industry has experienced exponential growth since 2019, with its size estimated to reach \$24 billion USD by the end of 2024 (Dencheva, 2024). Unlike traditional celebrities, whose fame stems from their roles in traditional media, social media influencers are everyday individuals who have risen to prominence as "digital celebrities" or "micro-celebrities" by creating and sharing self-generated content on social media platforms (Hassan et al., 2021). By revealing personal aspects of their lives on their social media profiles, these micro-celebrities are perceived by consumers as more relatable, accessible, and authentic compared to traditional celebrities (Tafheem et al., 2022). While these influencers are commonly referred to as "micro-celebrities," the influencer marketing industry categorizes them into four primary categories based on their follower count. These categories include nano-influencers, micro-influencers, macro-influencers, and mega-influencers (Haenlein et al., 2020; Ren et al., 2023; Venciute et al., 2023), as illustrated in Figure 1.1.

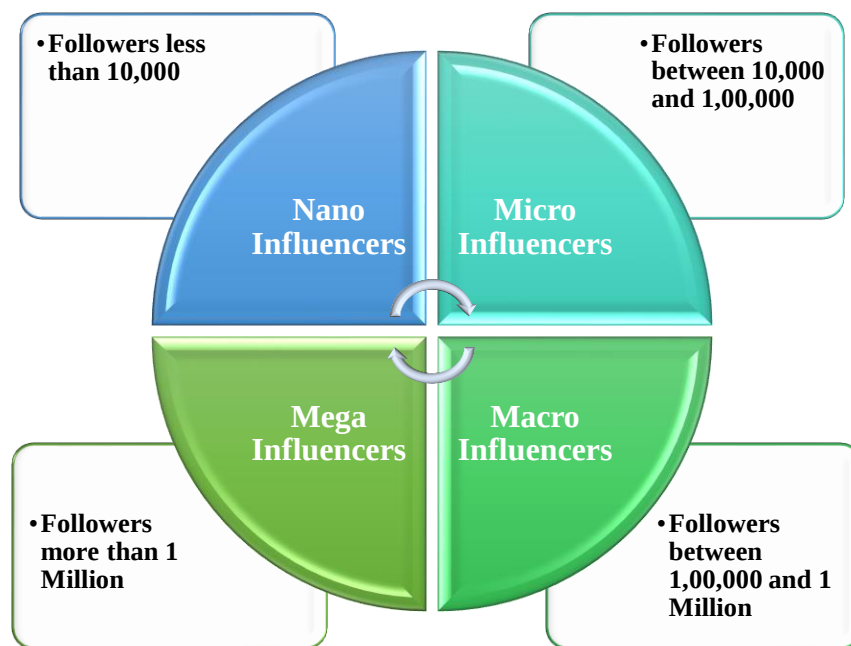


Figure 1.1 Types of influencers based on number of followers

Nano influencers are those who are in the early stages of their influencer journey and typically have fewer than 10,000 followers. Micro influencers, on the other hand, have follower counts ranging from 10,000 to 1,00,000. Moving up the scale, macro influencers are individuals with follower counts exceeding 1,00,000 but less than 1 million. Finally, mega influencers are those with over 1 million followers. Mega influencers are often regarded with the same level of recognition as traditional celebrities due to their extensive reach and

influence within their respective niches (Filieri et al., 2023). Indeed, the rising popularity and sizable followings of influencers on social media platforms have positioned them as valuable assets for marketers seeking to promote their products (Ren et al., 2023). Marketers perceive influencers as a prime opportunity to capitalize on the strong connections forged between influencers and their audiences (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Consumers increasingly identify with influencers, viewing them as self-made artists who offer genuine and trustworthy information. This perception leads to higher engagement rates, as consumers are more inclined to interact with content originating from relatable individuals rather than traditional advertising channels (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Influencer marketing has thus emerged as a novel and effective method of advertising, leveraging the authentic appeal and relatability of influencers to establish meaningful connections with consumers.

In influencer marketing, there is a lot of content available online on different social media platforms, but the most prominent among them is the video content generally known as vlogs. The ones who create such content are known as vloggers (Manchanda et al., 2022). Vlogs encompass a broad spectrum of themes, intentions, and styles, all unified by the common thread of direct address. In these videos, individuals speak directly to the camera, sharing their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. From its inception, vlogging has served as a platform for personal expression and communication, drawing creators and audiences with the promise of authenticity, intimacy, and a glimpse into the "real" lives of everyday individuals (Berryman & Kavka, 2017). Whether discussing daily routines, sharing personal anecdotes, or delving into niche interests, vlogs offer a window into the lives of their creators, fostering a sense of connection and relatability among viewers (Berryman, 2020). There exist numerous niches within the realm of vlogging, catering to diverse interests and preferences. Figure 1.2 outlines some of these niches.

Food and cooking vloggers specialize in creating content focused on cooking recipes, food reviews, restaurant visits, culinary explorations, and dietary guidance. They venture to various locations to sample local cuisines and recommend standout dishes from different cities and states. Tourism vloggers travel to different destinations and share insights with their audience regarding expenses, accommodations, and notable attractions. They offer recommendations for places to visit and provide information about lodging facilities. Technology and gaming vloggers are grouped together due to their common interest in gadgets. They often produce unboxing videos for newly launched products, highlighting their features and comparing them with existing offerings in the market. Gaming vloggers delve

into the gaming world, sharing gameplay footage, reviews, walkthroughs, and strategies for various video games across different platforms. They also create content about cheat codes and strategies to overcome challenging levels.

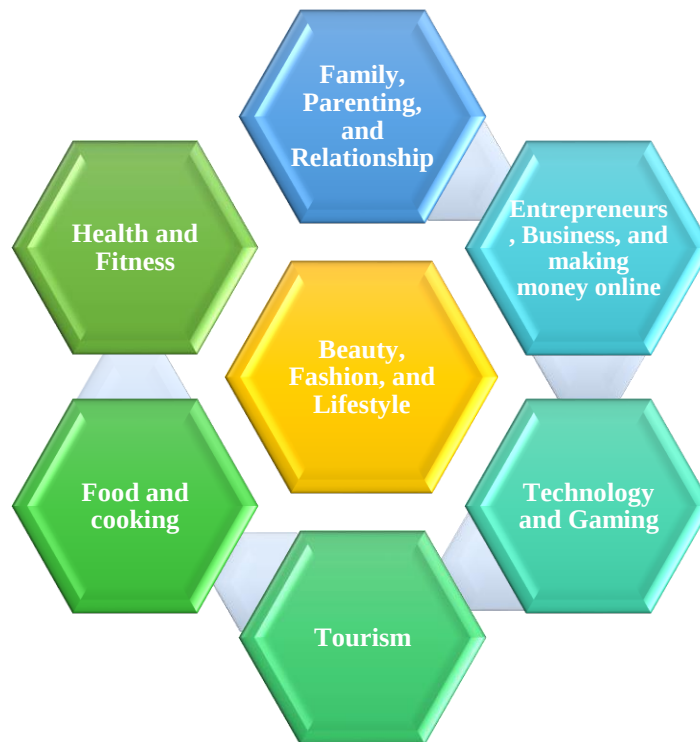


Figure 1.2 Different types of vlogs

Entrepreneurs, business, and online money-making vloggers cover topics related to earning money, business growth strategies, and essential skills for starting and running a business. Family, parenting, and relationship vloggers share personal experiences online, providing advice and guidance to their viewers on family matters, parenting techniques, and relationship dynamics. Health and fitness vloggers offer content aimed at improving viewers' eating habits and fitness routines. They share diet plans, workout routines, and motivational tips to help viewers achieve their health goals. Beauty, fashion, and lifestyle vloggers produce content related to self-grooming, makeup tutorials, fashion tips, and lifestyle advice to enhance their viewers' personal style and well-being.

### 1.3 Beauty Vloggers

Among the various niches of vlogs available online, beauty and fashion vlogs stand out as one of the most viewed and influential categories (Manchanda et al., 2022). The beauty

community has far more reach on online platforms than any other (Gupta et al., 2017). While existing literature lacks a precise definition of beauty vloggers, the present attempts to briefly define them as social media influencers who possess the knowledge, expertise, and resources to make beauty-related content and update themselves to the latest makeup trends them online on their channels (Tafheem et al., 2022). They are also commonly referred to as “beauty influencers” and “beauty gurus” (Ladhari et al., 2020; Manchanda et al., 2022). Their video content generally includes detailed step-by-step application of makeup products, which they generally referred as tutorials, haul videos, get ready with me (GRWM) videos, question and answer videos, favourite videos, outfit of the day, and review videos (Handriana et al., 2019; Delbaere et al., 2021; Filieri et al., 2023) as illustrated in figure 1.3. Since these beauty vloggers provide step-by-step product tutorials, their followers/viewers can vicariously experience cosmetic products by watching their videos and learn makeup. Due to the burgeoning popularity of influencer marketing, many beauty vloggers have transitioned their passion into a full-time profession, dedicating their time and effort to creating and sharing content online. As a result, they are now able to monetize their platforms and generate income through various means, such as sponsored content, brand partnerships, affiliate marketing, and advertising revenue (Chen & Dermawan, 2020). This evolution has transformed beauty vlogging into a lucrative career path for many individuals within the beauty community (Berryman & Kavka, 2017).

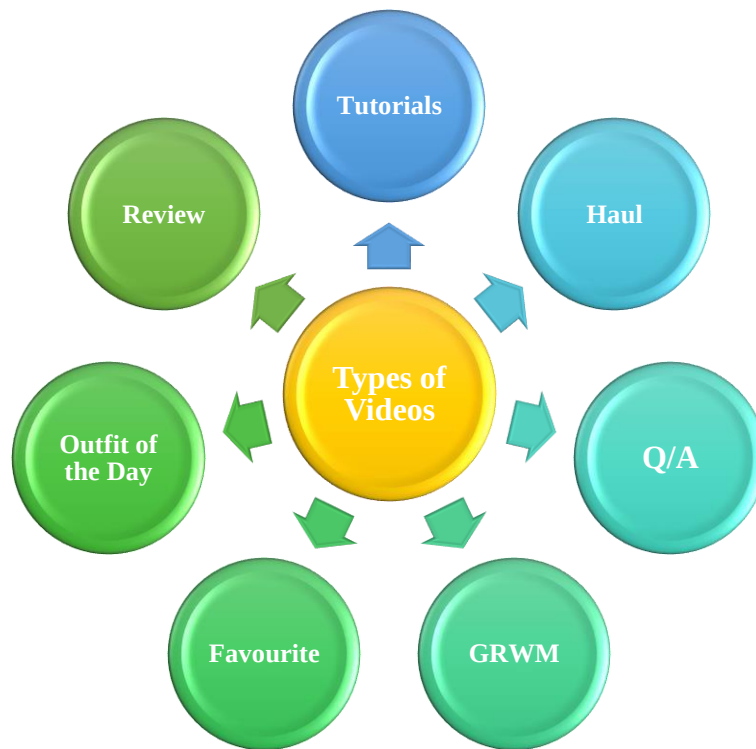


Figure 1.3 Different types of videos made by beauty vloggers

Over the years, cosmetic companies have witnessed a significant surge in the usage of their products, driven by evolving societal standards of beauty and increasing consumer awareness regarding skincare and personal grooming in various sectors beyond entertainment (Lee, 2019). Initially confined to the realm of film, television, and stage productions, cosmetic products are now ubiquitous, with individuals from all walks of life utilizing them to enhance their appearance and boost their confidence. This widespread adoption of cosmetic products, fuelled by the desire for a more presentable appearance, has contributed significantly to the growth of the cosmetic industry. Moreover, the demographic of cosmetic product users has expanded to include men, marking a significant shift in societal attitudes towards grooming and self-care (Sanny et al., 2020). As a result, the cosmetic industry has diversified to cater to a broader audience, encompassing four major segments: skincare, haircare, decorative (makeup), and perfumes (Nosita & Lestari, 2019) as shown in Figure 1.4. Within each segment, cosmetic companies strive to innovate and offer products tailored to meet the diverse needs and preferences of consumers. Historically, these companies heavily relied on traditional marketing techniques, such as television commercials, magazine advertisements, and billboards, to promote their products and influence consumer behaviour (Hassan et al.,

2021). These methods, while effective to some extent, often lacked the personalized touch and direct interaction with consumers that are increasingly valued in today's digital age (Kim & Kim, 2021). In a bid to capture consumer attention and establish brand credibility, many cosmetic companies turned to celebrity endorsements, employing renowned figures from the entertainment industry as brand ambassadors. These celebrities were chosen based on their popularity, influence, and perceived alignment with the brand's image and values (Choi & Rifon, 2012). However, while celebrity endorsements provided visibility and prestige to cosmetic brands, they also came with significant costs. Securing the endorsement of a high-profile celebrity often involved substantial financial investments, making it a luxury that only larger cosmetic companies could afford.

Against this backdrop, the emergence of beauty vloggers as influential voices in the realm of cosmetics has revolutionized the marketing landscape, offering cosmetic companies a cost-effective alternative to traditional celebrity endorsements (Schouten et al., 2020). Unlike conventional celebrities whose endorsements often come with hefty price tags, beauty vloggers present a more accessible and relatable option for companies seeking to engage with their target audience (García-Rapp, 2017). Beauty vloggers, often individuals who gained popularity through their makeup tutorials, product reviews, and skincare routines shared on platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook, have amassed loyal followings comprised of beauty enthusiasts and consumers seeking authentic and informative content (Lee & Lee, 2022). Notably, instances where beauty vloggers mentioned Loreal and Estee Lauder products in their videos have led to significant spikes in sales for these brands, highlighting the impact of influencer marketing on consumer purchasing behaviour (Lee & Watkins, 2016; Lee, 2019; Delbaere et al., 2021). Moreover, the Korean skincare and makeup industry considers content produced by beauty vloggers as a major contributor to the increase in their sales, demonstrating the global reach and influence of digital content creators in the cosmetics market (Lee, 2019).

While cosmetic companies also produce content for their official channels, consumers tend to feel more connected with the content produced by beauty vloggers compared to firm-centred content. This is because firm-centred content is often perceived as promotional and does not resonate as strongly with consumers (Lee, 2019). Moreover, the interactive nature of social media platforms allows firms to collaborate with beauty vloggers, tapping into their creativity and expertise to co-create content that resonates with audiences, all while reducing communication costs compared to traditional marketing channels (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

This shift towards consumer-driven marketing underscores the transformative power of digital influencers and the importance of authentic engagement in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase intentions (Hassan et al., 2021). As consumers increasingly turn to beauty vloggers for advice, recommendations, and product reviews, cosmetic companies must adapt their strategies to harness the power of influencer marketing and remain competitive in an ever-evolving landscape (Lee & Lee, 2022). Consumers often imitate their favourite beauty vloggers, leading to a notable increase in product sales for items featured in the vloggers' videos (Hassan et al., 2021). For instance, Becca Cosmetics partnered with a renowned beauty vlogger, resulting in the sale of 25,000 units within just 20 minutes at Sephora (Delbaere et al., 2021), demonstrating the tangible impact of influencer collaborations on driving sales and brand visibility in the cosmetics industry. This paradigm shift underscores the growing recognition of the influential role played by digital content creators, commonly called beauty vloggers, in shaping consumer preferences and purchase intentions within the cosmetics industry, signalling a departure from traditional advertising models towards more personalized and interactive forms of brand promotion.

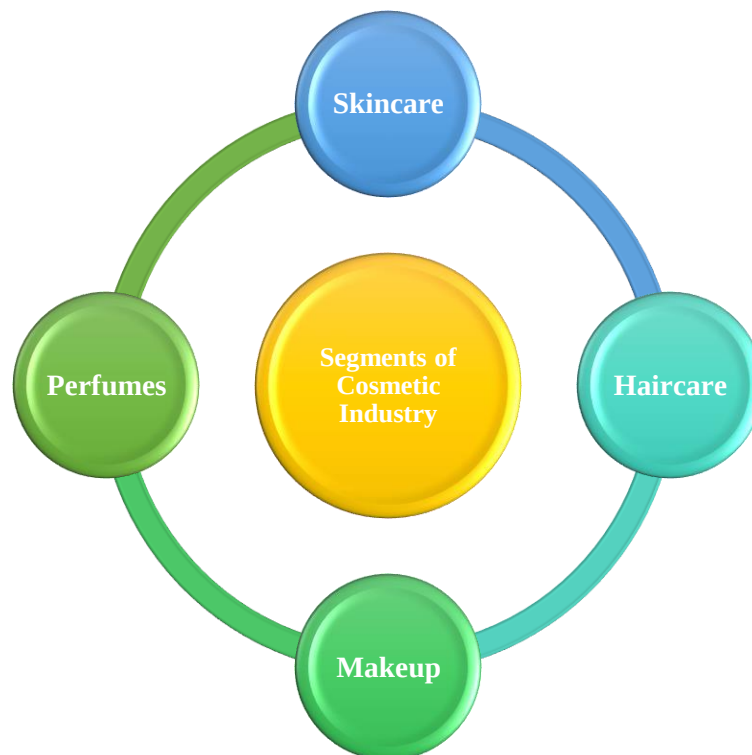


Figure 1.4 Segments of the Cosmetic Industry

## **1.4 Statement of the Problem**

Due to the increasing competition in the marketplace, a critical challenge faced by cosmetic companies is the effective allocation of resources towards influencer marketing initiatives, particularly in the selection of suitable beauty vloggers for promoting their products. Previous literature has highlighted the industry's shift towards influencer marketing and the substantial investments made by cosmetic companies in leveraging the influence of beauty vloggers (Ki & Kim, 2019; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Filieri et al., 2023). However, amidst the abundance of available beauty vloggers, companies encounter difficulty in identifying the most suitable influencers to collaborate with. The lack of clear guidelines or criteria for selecting beauty vloggers poses a significant problem, as companies may not yield the desired results. They cannot effectively allocate resources to this advertising strategy without understanding the factors affecting consumers' buying decisions. For instance, a US based pharmaceutical company once partnered with a prominent beauty and fashion influencer, Kim Kardashian, to endorse their pregnancy sickness medication. However, despite the collaboration, the promotional post shared by Mrs. Kardashian failed to yield the expected increase in sales. Notably, the post omitted crucial information regarding the drug's potential side effects. Consequently, the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) intervened, mandating the removal of the post due to its non-compliance with regulatory guidelines (Haenlein, et al., 2020). In another instance, a well-known beauty vlogger, Shannon Harris, collaborated with the renowned brand Clinique, endorsing their newly launched product to her vast audience (Delbaere et al., 2021). However, despite her endorsement, the anticipated surge in sales did not materialize. During the promotional video, Harris explicitly disclosed that she was using the product solely for the purpose of the video, emphasizing its sponsorship status, which therefore did not generate the anticipated boost in product sales (Delbaere et al., 2021).

Furthermore, previous literature on advertising strategies predominantly emphasized the congruency between the personalities of the product and the endorser, or between the product and the consumer (Mishra et al., 2015; Xu & Pratt, 2018; Belanche et al., 2021b; Tafheem et al., 2022). However, there has been relatively limited emphasis on aligning the congruence between the personalities of the consumer and the endorser, particularly within the realm of influencer marketing (Choi & Rifon, 2012). This oversight is significant as it plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behaviour towards purchasing products endorsed or used by beauty vloggers. Recognizing and leveraging the synergy between consumer and endorser personalities can potentially lead to a more impactful and effective influencer marketing

strategy, thereby influencing consumer purchasing decisions to a greater extent. Moreover, while existing literature acknowledges the impact of beauty vloggers on consumer purchase intention, there remains a gap in understanding the specific interactional elements utilized by beauty vloggers to connect with their audience and exert influential power (Lee & Watkins, 2016; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Haenlein, et al., 2020; Hassan et al., 2021; Lee & Lee, 2022). Despite recognizing the influence wielded by beauty vloggers, studies have yet to delve into the nuanced strategies employed by these influencers to effectively engage and persuade their followers. Thus, understanding the intricacies of how beauty vloggers interact with their audience and the specific techniques they employ to foster engagement and influence consumer behaviour is crucial for cosmetic companies seeking to optimize their influencer marketing strategies. Moreover, it's worth noting that the majority of studies pertaining to influencer marketing have been conducted within Western markets (Schouten et al., 2020; Wiedmann & Mettenheim, 2020; Sánchez-Fernández & Jiménez-Castillo, 2021; Castillo-Abdul et al., 2021). This has resulted in a notable gap in research regarding the role of beauty vloggers in highly populous and emerging countries such as India. Despite India being the second-largest user of the internet globally, there remains a scarcity of scholarly investigation into this subject within the Indian context.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The current study attempts to address the following question:

RQ1: How do consumers perceive source characteristics of beauty vloggers in building trust towards them?

RQ2: How do audience characteristics impact consumer attitude towards beauty vloggers when they endorse the product?

RQ3: How do interactional elements used by beauty vloggers impact the perceived influence of consumers towards the product promoted by them?

RQ4: How do trust, consumer attitude towards beauty vloggers, and perceived influence affect the purchase intention of consumers for cosmetic products endorsed by beauty vloggers?

RQ5: How do trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence play a mediating role in affecting the relation among source characteristics, audience characteristics, and perceived influence towards consumer's buying intentions?

## **1.6 Objectives of the study**

The study seeks to expand our understanding of consumer responses to advertising messages, particularly in the realm of beauty vlogger marketing, which is increasingly prevalent. The primary focus is on discerning how influencer marketing impacts Indian consumers' attitudes and behaviours towards cosmetics endorsed or utilized by beauty vloggers. Additionally, the research aims to explore the effectiveness of beauty vlogger marketing by examining its influence on Indian consumers' intentions to purchase cosmetic products.

Here are the five objectives of the present study:

O1: To examine the impact of source characteristics on trust towards beauty vloggers.

O2: To examine the effect of audience characteristics on consumer attitude in relation to marketing by beauty vloggers.

O3: To examine the influence of interactional elements on beauty vloggers' perceived influence on customers.

O4: To investigate the influence of trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence on purchase intention.

O5: To design a model for understanding the impact of source characteristics, audience characteristics, and interactional elements on purchase intention, incorporating the interventional role of trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence.

## **1.7 Significance and Contribution of the study**

Progress and well-being of humanity is largely driven by the capacity to create and innovate (Pandey & Dharni, 2014). In modern society, an emerging and populous country like India has become the centre of attraction for various brands. Indian markets provide great opportunities for established as well as new brands to sustain and earn higher profits, thereby increasing competition. To survive this competition, brands are actively participating in forming advertising strategies (Kansal, 2014). Despite the substantial and continuous alterations in advertising methods, there is less knowledge on how consumers perceive and analyse modern advertising forms. With the advancement in the technology and increasing usage of social media platforms in our day-to-day lives, more and more brands attempt to leverage influencer marketing in their advertising strategies. The rigorous investigation of factors influencing consumer behaviour and their intention to purchase is becoming critical.

As research on this topic is very limited and scant, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of Indian consumers' behaviour towards beauty vlogger marketing for cosmetic products and the factors affecting their purchase intention.

The present study contributes to the existing literature by examining beauty vlogger marketing effectiveness in the Indian context. The findings of this research hold greater significance for future research scholars, marketing practitioners, content creators, and policymakers. The empirical findings can create exciting research and theory development opportunities for academicians. The research can also stimulate further interest in this area. The current study might be valuable for marketers who are already using or are interested in using beauty vloggers to communicate effectively with customers. Marketers must comprehend the efficacy of vlogger marketing before spending money on this advertising technique. By understanding the intricate dynamics at play in consumer-brand relationships within the context of beauty vlogger marketing, marketing practitioners can devise more targeted and effective strategies to engage with their target audience and drive purchase behaviour. Moreover, the contextualization of these findings within the Indian market provides valuable guidance for marketers seeking to navigate the unique cultural and social landscape of this diverse and rapidly evolving market. In addition, insights from this study can help in guiding updates for advertising regulations, adapting to evolving digital practices. The study is helpful for content creators as well. It allows content creators to optimize their content strategy by incorporating effective engagement techniques and persuasive strategies. By leveraging these insights, vloggers can enhance audience engagement, build stronger connections with their followers, and ultimately increase their influence and impact within the beauty community. Moreover, the study extends its utility to aspiring content creators who are at the nascent stages of their vlogging journey and aspire to pursue vlogging as a full-time career. By leveraging the findings of this research, novice vloggers can gain a deeper understanding of the nuances of influencer marketing and audience engagement, thus laying a solid foundation for their future endeavours. Policymakers must address influencer marketing challenges, like blurred lines between editorial content and paid promotions, with adapted or new regulations. By understanding the factors that influence purchase intention in influencer marketing, policymakers can craft regulations that promote fair competition, protect consumers' rights, and maintain the integrity of the advertising ecosystem. In addition, insights from studies on beauty vlogger marketing can also inform the development or revision of advertising regulations to keep pace with evolving digital marketing practices.

Policymakers may need to adapt existing regulations or create new ones to address the unique challenges posed by influencer marketing, such as the blurring of lines between editorial content and paid promotions.

## **1.8 Organization of the thesis**

The thesis is structured into five chapters.

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The first chapter presents a comprehensive examination of the advertising methods used by marketing professionals and their gradual evolution throughout time. The chapter highlights the research problem that the present study intends to cater. The chapter discusses the research questions and enumerates the five main objectives of the current study. Furthermore, the chapter underscores the significance of the study's findings for various stakeholders, including academicians, policymakers, marketing practitioners, and content creators.

### **Chapter 2: Literature Review and Hypothesis Development**

The second chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the theories that are pertinent to the present investigation. This chapter examines the existing body of research and analyses the results of empirical investigations conducted in the advertising area, with a particular focus on influencer marketing. The chapter includes existing studies focusing on the impact of source characteristics on building trust towards beauty vloggers; the impact of audience characteristics on consumer attitude towards beauty vloggers; the impact of interactional elements used by beauty vloggers to increase perceived influence; the impact of trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence on purchase intentions; design and evaluate a model for understanding the combined impact of source characteristics, audience characteristics, and interactional elements on purchase intention of consumer, incorporating the mediating role of trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence. The chapter further introduces the study's hypotheses derived from the current body of literature. The chapter emphasizes the research gaps that have been highlighted in the existing understanding of beauty vlogger marketing. Finally, the chapter introduces the conceptual framework.

### **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

The third chapter provides comprehensive details of the methodology used to conduct the present study. This chapter highlights the main reasons for choosing the North Indian States

for this study. The chapter provides a clear explanation of the methods used to gather and analyse the data. The chapter specifically presents information about the participants, procedure used, measurement scales, and data analysis tools.

#### Chapter 4. Results and Discussion

The fourth chapter provides a comprehensive overview of descriptive statistics, common method bias (CMB), and data diagnostics. The chapter focuses on the examination of the research hypothesis. The results are organized based on the objectives and hypotheses of the study. The research results are compared to the results of previous investigations in the same field. The chapter discusses the status of each hypothesis based on the outcomes of the current study.

#### Chapter 5. Implications, Limitations, and Future Research Directions

This chapter synthesizes the theoretical and practical implications of the study findings, delineating implications for stakeholders across diverse domains like academicians, policymakers, marketing practitioners, and content creators. The study also highlights the methodological limitations while delineating avenues for future research. Future researchers can address the shortcomings of this study, expanding the scholarly discourse in this domain.

### **1.9 Summary of the Chapter**

The chapter highlights an overview of advertising strategies embraced by marketers. The chapter mainly focuses on novel advertising strategies adopted by marketers spurred by the growing prevalence of internet and social media platforms. The chapter delves into the research problem that the present study aims to address. Additionally, the chapter mentions the research question and set of objectives that the present study aimed to accomplish. Furthermore, the chapter elaborates on the significance and contribution of the study to various stakeholders. At the end, the chapter shows a detailed overview of the organization of the thesis.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review and Hypothesis Development**

The literature review is a crucial component of any research project, as it involves a critical analysis and synthesis of published information related to the research topic. Its primary objective is to summarize and categorize existing knowledge, providing a comprehensive understanding of the topic and the contributions made by various researchers over time. By reviewing previous findings, researchers can identify gaps in the literature and opportunities for further investigation, laying a solid foundation for their own study and facilitating the development of theories. In the context of this research project, the literature review focuses on examining existing literature related to social media influence, specifically within the realm of beauty vlogging. This review encompasses a comprehensive analysis of studies, articles, and other scholarly sources that explore the phenomenon of beauty vloggers' influence on social media platforms. By synthesizing and critically evaluating this body of literature, the chapter aims to inform the development of research hypotheses and the research model for the present study.

Eight sections make up the structure of the chapter. Section 2.1 focuses on theories relevant to the study, providing a theoretical framework to deepen understanding and guide the research framework's development. Following this, subsequent sections review existing studies and formulate research hypotheses. Section 2.2 reviews studies exploring the impact of source characteristics (credibility, trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness) on trust towards beauty vloggers. Section 2.3 review prior research that examines the impact of audience characteristics (self-concept and user-influencer personality congruence) on consumer attitudes towards beauty vloggers. Section 2.4 delves into existing studies investigating the impact of interactional elements (such as parasocial interactions, emotional attachment, informational value, and meaning transfer) on increasing the perceived influence of beauty vloggers. Section 2.5 reviews previous research examining the impact of trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence on purchase intentions. Section 2.6 reviews the literature investigating the mediating role of trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence. Section 2.7 identifies research gaps in the existing literature, while subsection 2.8 presents the conceptual framework for the present study, synthesizing the reviewed literature and providing a foundation for the research hypotheses.

## **2.1 Theoretical Underpinning**

The study incorporates several existing theories and frameworks to elucidate consumers' perceptions and responses to advertising messages. These theories collectively contribute to the research framework and hypothesis development, offering a multifaceted understanding of influencer marketing dynamics. The Source Credibility Theory is employed to comprehend how the perceived credibility of an endorser influences behavioural intentions towards the endorsed product or brand. This theory underscores the importance of the endorser's credibility in shaping consumer perceptions and subsequent behaviours. Secondly, the Self-Congruence Theory is utilized to explore how individuals' perceptions of themselves influence their receptivity to advertising messages and subsequent behavioural changes. Understanding self-congruency helps to decipher the alignment between consumer self-perception and brand image, which has an impact on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. Thirdly, the Parasocial Interaction Theory sheds light on the intricate relationship between influencers and their audience, elucidating how parasocial interactions foster a sense of closeness and connection between influencers and followers, ultimately shaping consumer behaviour and brand preferences. Furthermore, the Meaning Transfer Theory clarifies the process of transferring meaning and beliefs from an endorser to the endorsed product, which in turn shapes consumer attitudes and preferences. This theory provides insights into how consumers attribute significance and value to a product based on its association with a credible endorser. Lastly, the Social Exchange Theory offers insights into the reciprocal relationship between influencers and their followers, elucidating the exchange of resources and benefits within this paradigm. Understanding the dynamics of social exchange helps to decipher how influencers wield influence and persuasive power over their audience, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies. By integrating these theories and frameworks, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of consumers' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours in the context of influencer marketing, contributing to the advancement of knowledge in this field.

### **2.1.1 Source Credibility Theory**

Source credibility, a multifaceted concept that evaluates the reliability and influence of provided information, holds significant sway (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Kanwar & Huang, 2022). A listener's favourable disposition towards the source and subsequent openness to the message can be easily swayed by source credibility (Kim & Kim, 2021; Cheng et al., 2023). Many

marketing experts emphasize the pivotal role of endorser attributes in ensuring message effectiveness, underscoring the importance for marketers to select suitable spokespersons for brand endorsement, which can in turn increase purchase intentions (Koay et al., 2022; Ashraf et al., 2023; Foroughi, et al., 2023). Numerous empirical studies have investigated the impact of endorser credibility on consumer purchasing behaviour (Choi & Lee, 2019; Manchanda et al., 2022; Filieri et al., 2023). This notion is exemplified in Ohanian's (1991) source credibility model, where "source credibility" denotes the favourable attributes of a communicator influencing message acceptance. In essence, source credibility refers to the extent to which an audience perceives a source as possessing the requisite experience and knowledge to enhance their understanding of a particular product or service (Ohanian, 1991; AlFarraj et al., 2021; Sesar et al., 2022; Venciute et al., 2023). Initially, Hovland and Weiss (1951) identified trustworthiness and expertise as key dimensions of the source credibility model. However, McGuire (1985) introduced another crucial dimension, attractiveness, to the model due to the increasing use of celebrities for product endorsements. In the cosmetic industry, the physical appeal of an endorser significantly shapes consumers' perceptions of a product (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Torres et al., 2019). Source attractiveness encompasses both physical and non-physical attributes, as noted by Ohanian (1991) and McGuire (1985). Additionally, Lee and Watkins (2016) explored the impact of physical and social attractiveness on consumers' purchase intentions for luxury cosmetic products, finding that attractive and familiar endorsers enhance purchase intentions, making attractiveness an important dimension. Thus, this study incorporates all three primary dimensions outlined by Ohanian (1991); trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness; to evaluate the source characteristics of endorsers, specifically beauty vloggers.

### **2.1.2 Self-Congruence Theory**

Self-congruency theory, which has its roots in consumer psychology, posits that individuals possess an innate inclination to maintain coherence between their self-concept, delineating how they perceive themselves, and their consumption preferences (Plewa & Palmer, 2014). Sirgy's seminal contributions in 1982 and 1985 introduced a multi-dimensional approach to self-concept, comprising four primary dimensions: actual self-image, ideal self-image, social self-image, and ideal social self-image (Sirgy, 1982; 1985). Actual self-image encapsulates an individual's self-perception, while ideal self-image represents the aspirational identity one aims to embody (Sirgy, 1985; Ekinci & Riley, 2003). Social self-image reflects how consumers believe they are perceived by significant others, whereas ideal social self-image

denotes the desired impression one seeks to convey to others (Sirgy, 1985). Aligned with this multi-dimensional framework, Sirgy (1982; 1985) elucidated self-congruence as the correspondence between consumers' self-image and the image associated with a brand, product, or celebrity (Sirgy, 1982; 1985). Here it signifies, “Actual self-congruence as the congruence between the actual self-image and the celebrity/brand image, ideal self-congruence as the congruence between the ideal self-image and the celebrity/brand image (Zogaj et al., 2021a), social self-congruence as the congruence between the social self-image and the celebrity/brand image and ideal social self-congruence as the congruence between the ideal social self-image and the celebrity/brand image” (Sirgy, 1985; 1985). In this regard, the theory posits that consumers exhibit a preference for products, brands, or celebrities that mirror their self-concept, viewing these choices as expressive of their identity (Graeff, 1996; Sirgy, 1985). Consequently, consumers may reject offerings that diverge from their self-image while gravitating towards those that resonate with their identity (Beerli et al., 2007; Sirgy, 1985). Extant literature underscores the impact of brand self-congruence on consumers' affective and behavioural responses, encompassing attitudes and purchase intentions (Sirgy, 2018; Zhu et al., 2019; Sop, 2020). Widely employed in advertising contexts, self-congruency theory posits that consumers' emotional and behavioural reactions hinge upon the alignment between the brand or celebrity's image and consumers' self-perception (Sirgy, 1982). In the context of influencer marketing, self-congruency theory suggests that consumers are more likely to be attracted to influencers whose image, values, and lifestyle align with their own self-concept (Xu & Pratt, 2018). This alignment fosters a sense of identification and connection between the consumer and the influencer, leading to increased trust, admiration, and persuasion towards the endorsed/used brands, thereby elevating purchase intentions.

### **2.1.3 Parasocial Interaction Theory**

Horton & Wohl (1956) introduced the term ‘parasocial interactions’ to describe the close connection that exists between an actor and their audience. Parasocial interaction (PSI) is characterized as an illusory experience in which consumers engage with famous personalities (actors, singers, and athletes) as if they are actively present and involved in a mutually beneficial relationship. People perceived these interactions as an innovative communication strategy that aims to substitute traditional face-to-face relationships. Parasocial interactions foster the perception among individuals that they are participating in a reciprocal exchange with public figures (Labrecque, 2014). The virtual communication between viewers and celebrities creates an illusory feeling of friendship in their minds (Lee

and Watkins, 2016). Previously, PSI was employed within the domain of media outlets such as television and radio, as well as media consumers (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Handriana et al., 2019). During that period, it became increasingly popular to engage with consumers by regularly interacting with their audience as a means of capturing their attention. Consumers have begun to perceive that they coexist with a prominent personality and have a special bond between them (Kim et al., 2020; Manchanda et al., 2022). However, with the expanding technological landscape and increased use of social media, the scope of PSI has broadened beyond traditional media figures in the domains of television and radio. Now, celebrities are using social media platforms to interact with their audiences (Labrecque, 2014). Initially, parasocial interactions were identified as a unidirectional communication approach by previous researchers when they were confined only to television and radio channels (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Rubin et al., 1985). But social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube provide an opportunity for viewers to comment and express their feelings by using emoticons, hence making these parasocial interactions a two-way source of communication (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Lee & Lee, 2022). Given the significant impact that these interactions have on the daily lives of social media users, it is imperative that we incorporate them into our research in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of influencer marketing.

#### **2.1.4 Meaning Transfer Theory**

The meaning transfer model given by McCracken, (1989) was an extension of the cultural consumption model. McCracken (1986) showcased a model that demonstrated the transfer of cultural meaning to products using advertisements and the fashion system, then to ultimate consumers by possession ritual, divestment ritual, grooming ritual, and exchange ritual. Later in 1989, McCracken, (1989) proposed a similar meaning transfer model using celebrity endorsers. He posited that celebrities embody a set of integrated meanings derived from their portrayed roles, personal achievements, and past campaigns. Over time, these meanings become deeply embedded in the celebrity's persona, thereby shaping their public image. Celebrities draw upon these meanings in their endorsements, imbuing products with symbolic significance. As a result, the researcher referred to celebrity endorsements as a ubiquitous feature of modern marketing. McCracken (1989) illustrated that meaning transfer occurs in three stages. In stage 1, meaning is inculcated in celebrities from the past roles they have played. Celebrities possess the ability to evoke meaning within their persona with heightened clarity and vividness, delivering it with greater potency. They inherently "own" the meaning

attributed to them, cultivated over an extended period of time through repeated exposure on the public stage. They “own” their meaning, which they created over a long period of time by working on the public stage repeatedly. Celebrities drew their meaning from the roles, and each role brings him/her into contact with a range of personas, objects, and contexts, out of which meaning resides in the celebrity, which gets transferred (Rosara & Luthfia, 2020). The multitude of cultural meanings inherent in celebrity personas is extensive, encompassing distinctions of social status, gender, age, personality traits, and lifestyle preferences (Schimmelpfennig, 2018). In stage 2, advertising and marketing firms first determine the symbolic meaning associated with the product, then find a celebrity whose meaning matches the meaning of the product. Finally, the advertisement should convey the inherent similarity between the celebrity and the product, enabling consumers to complete the final stage of the meaning transfer process (Filieri et al., 2023). At this stage, the meaning associated with the celebrity gets transferred to the product that he or she will be endorsing. The final stage, stage 3, is when the consumers finally receive the meaning. Consumers must consume, exchange, care for, and claim the product to understand the appropriateness of the meaning instilled in it. Thoughtfully crafted advertisements facilitate this fundamentally symbolic transference. The most effective endorsements derive their power from a successful transfer of meaning. This paradigm of meaning transfer can also be observed in influencer marketing, as influencers create content in their specific niches and leverage their personal identities to create meaning to endorse the product (Hmoud et al., 2022). The cultural meaning of influencers is inherent in their social presence and embedded in all the posts they share on different social media platforms. These posts consist of their personal information related to their travel, lifestyle, preferences, and public appearances (Jin et al., 2019). Hence, this theory provides a strong theoretical background for the current study.

#### **2.1.5 Social Exchange Theory**

Researchers have employed social exchange theory to evaluate the dynamics of "exchange of activities," initially focused on employment connections (Homans, 1958). Over time, this theory has expanded its scope to encompass sociology, anthropology, and psychology (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Coco & Eckert, 2020). Given the broadening ambit of social exchange theory, its applicability extends to elucidating the dynamics inherent in the influencer-follower paradigm, along with the persuasive strategies employed by influencers to shape the behaviour of their followers (Holiday et al., 2021). Effectively navigating resource exchange between stakeholders, namely influencers and followers in our study,

engenders the cultivation of psychological bonds and incentivizes the perpetuation of their relationship (Ahmad et al., 2023). Both parties' benefit from investing resources. Therefore, social exchange theory provides an appropriate theoretical foundation for beauty vlogging or influencer marketing. Cropanzano & Mitchell (2005) suggested that the exchange of resources encompasses both tangible and symbolic aspects, including elements like status, affection, services, information, monetary assets, and tangible goods within its purview. This approach utilizes cost and reward to foster long-term partnerships (Taillon et al., 2020; Kim & Kim, 2021).

Social exchange theory also emphasizes status and power. Blau (1964) advanced this notion by introducing the theoretical framework of "exchange and power," which pertains to the capacity of one party to exert influence over another party, compelling the latter to undertake specific actions. Individuals take voluntary actions that are motivated by the returns that are expected for successful exchange behaviour. If the influential party provides informational content, the other party will become dependent on it (Emerson, 1976; Cook & Emerson, 1978). Beauty vloggers and their audiences rely on each other for social interaction (Cook & Yamagishi, 1992). Interdependence between influencers and followers has a societal effect. Vloggers build viewer dependency and social influence by delivering helpful information and aesthetic content (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019).

Reciprocity, a social exchange theory principle, posits that social exchange benefits should be equal (Chia et al., 2021). In other words, trading parties should get equal incentives from each other (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Molm et al., 2007). The parties that are engaged in reciprocal-relationships typically exhibit high engagement levels and behavioural commitment (Ren et al., 2023). On the vlogger part, content is uploaded regularly that is liked by their audiences. In return, their followers like and comment on their content, which gives monetary benefits to vloggers. The engagement rate depends on the quality of the influencer's content (Wong & Wei, 2023). This principle affects the stability of the relationship between the two parties (in our study, beauty vloggers and their followers), making it a continuous process. This can also be applied to explain the phenomenon of interpersonal communication and demonstrate how two parties communicate based on cost and benefits (Kim & Kim, 2021). Hence, this theory provides a strong theoretical underpinning.

The theoretical framework of this study bridges several complementary theories—Source Credibility Theory, Self-Congruency Theory, Parasocial Interaction Theory, Meaning Transfer Theory, and Social Exchange Theory—to create a cohesive model that explains how beauty vloggers influence consumer purchase intention. The Source Credibility Theory underlies the connection between source characteristics and trust, establishing how credible, trustworthy, expert, and attractive sources inspire consumer trust, which mediates the relationship between source characteristics and purchase intention. By focusing on the credibility and trustworthiness of influencers, this theory informs how beauty vloggers are perceived as reliable authorities, facilitating consumer decision-making. The integration of Self-Congruency Theory further enriches this framework by illustrating how congruence between audience self-concept and the influencer’s personality leads to a positive consumer attitude. The alignment of values and self-perception between the influencer and the follower creates a psychological connection that enhances purchase intentions, reinforcing the emotional and cognitive dimensions of consumer behaviour.

Building on these foundations, Parasocial Interaction Theory and Meaning Transfer Theory expand the understanding of influencer-follower dynamics by highlighting the role of interactional elements in shaping perceived influence. Parasocial interactions enable influencers to form strong, illusionary relationships with followers, while meaning transfer emphasizes how influencers convey personal values and attributes onto the products they endorse. Together, these theories explain how influencers’ ongoing interactional elements, such as parasocial relationships and emotional attachment, translate into increased influence over their audience. Lastly, Social Exchange Theory ties these interactions together, emphasizing the reciprocal nature of the influencer-consumer relationship, where consumers derive value—emotional, informational, or social—from the interaction, and in return, reciprocate by adopting product recommendations. These dynamics underscore the broader social and psychological mechanisms at play in influencer marketing, where trust, attitude, and perceived influence operate interdependently to shape consumer behaviour.

By integrating these theories into a unified framework, this study addresses the gap in existing research, which often treats these concepts in isolation. Instead of viewing them separately, this research demonstrates how source characteristics, audience characteristics, and interactional elements converge to create a robust model of influencer marketing effectiveness. This theoretical integration provides a more comprehensive understanding of

how beauty vloggers drive purchase intentions, advancing the existing literature by offering a holistic explanation of consumer decision-making in the digital age.

## **2.2 Effect of source characteristics on trust towards beauty vloggers**

Source characteristics are inherent attributes possessed by an endorser that enable them to influence their audience's attitude toward a specific product or brand. The current study elucidates and explores several source characteristics of beauty vloggers to evaluate their influence on their respective audiences (Hudders et al., 2021). These characteristics include factors such as credibility, trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness, which are instrumental in shaping consumers' perceptions and attitudes toward beauty vloggers and the products they endorse.

In the realm of beauty vlogging, the evaluation of source credibility is paramount to understanding consumer behaviours and responses to influencer marketing strategies. Credibility, rooted in Aristotle's ethos, has long been pivotal in persuasion. Aristotle's conceptualization of credibility as multidimensional, encompassing intelligence, character, and goodwill, laid the groundwork for subsequent research in the field (Salsabila et al., 2013). However, advancements in communication theory led to a refinement of the dimensions used to measure credibility. Hovland et al. (1953) proposed expertise and trustworthiness as primary dimensions, highlighting their significant impact on perceived credibility. Building on this framework, Berlo et al., (1969) introduced safety, qualification, and dynamism as additional factors influencing credibility perception. Further developments in the field saw researchers like Ohanian (1990) emphasizing the importance of attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness in shaping credibility judgments. Hu, (2015) extended this perspective by introducing competence, trustworthiness, and attractiveness as key dimensions of credibility. Moreover, recent studies by Munnukka et al., (2016), Lou & Kim, (2019), Yuan & Lou, (2020), and Martínez-López et al., (2020) identified trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, and similarity as principal factors influencing credibility perceptions in modern communication contexts. Sokolova & Kefi, (2020) measured credibility through physical attractiveness and attitude homophily. Additionally, Wijerathna & Wijesundara, (2020) highlighted the interchangeability of terms like authenticity and credibility in academic discourse, underscoring the evolving nature of credibility research. While the traditional source credibility model encompasses dimensions such as trustworthiness, expertise, similarity, authenticity, competence, and attractiveness, recent research within the beauty

industry has introduced a more nuanced approach. Specifically, the delineation of credibility as a separate dimension, distinct from the dimensions of the source credibility model, has emerged as a novel framework for examining the multifaceted nature of influencer marketing. Consider the scenario of a popular beauty vlogger partnering with a skincare brand to endorse a new line of products. Through the lens of the traditional source credibility model, consumers may initially evaluate the vlogger's expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness based on his or her industry knowledge and track record of providing reliable recommendations. However, the present research highlights the nuanced nature of credibility, emphasizing additional factors such as accuracy, authenticity, and impartiality that influence consumer perceptions which helps in boosting trust towards the beauty vloggers. For instance, consumers may prioritize the vlogger's ability to deliver accurate and unbiased assessments of skincare products, valuing his/her commitment to providing transparent and honest reviews. This authenticity resonates with viewers, fostering a sense of trust and reliability in the vlogger's recommendations. Moreover, the vlogger's impartiality in evaluating different brands and products further solidifies her credibility, demonstrating their commitment to providing objective and insightful content. While expertise focuses primarily on the perceived knowledge and competence of the source, credibility encompasses a broader range of factors that contribute to the perceived reliability and authenticity of the information provided. Similarly, trustworthiness as a distinct dimension that encompasses consumers' perceptions of the vlogger's dependability, integrity, and sincerity in content creation. Beyond trustworthiness, expertise is exemplified by the vlogger's consistent delivery of high-quality content, genuine interactions with followers, and ethical conduct in sponsored collaborations. These qualities inculcate confidence in viewers, strengthening their bond with the vlogger and enhancing her influence within the beauty community. For example, a beauty vlogger who consistently engages with her audience, addresses their concerns, and remains transparent in her partnerships cultivates a loyal following built on mutual trust and respect. Their unwavering commitment to authenticity and integrity resonates with viewers, establishing her as a trusted authority and influencer in the industry. Furthermore, unlike attractiveness, which focuses on subjective perceptions of attractiveness or similarity, credibility emphasizes objective factors such as accuracy, authenticity, and impartiality. While attractiveness may influence initial perceptions of the source, credibility is more concerned with the substantive qualities of the information provided. By delineating credibility as a separate dimension, the research provides a nuanced framework for understanding the complexities of influencer marketing in the beauty industry. This

comprehensive approach enables a deeper analysis of the factors driving consumer perceptions and behaviours, empowering content creators and brands to forge stronger connections with their audience and drive meaningful engagement and loyalty.

Credibility, as a fundamental dimension of source characteristics, is intricately linked to consumer trust in beauty vloggers. It can be defined as the assessment made by a perceiver regarding the trustworthiness and believability of a communicator. It is essentially the quality of being trusted or having the capability to be believed. Credibility is often associated with the reliability of an information source, with authenticity and transparency being key factors that contribute to positive outcomes in social media marketing contexts (Mabkhot et al., 2022). Research suggests that influencers possess higher levels of credibility and are more influential compared to traditional media sources (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). According to Nosita & Lestari (2019), credibility is perceived by the audience as the quality of the influencer, indicating that the information provided by the influencer is credible and capable of guiding decision-making processes. Similarly, Ramadanty et al. (2020) emphasized credibility as the influencer's ability to provide accurate information. Mabkhot et al., (2022) examined credibility as a separate dimension and revealed that it significantly contributes to effectiveness in influencing. Their results demonstrated that credibility is a crucial characteristic that influences the recipient's understanding of information. Similarly, Belanche et al., (2021a) depicted perceived credibility as an antecedent to followers' behavioral intentions to act upon the information shared by endorsers. Their findings suggest that followers tend to imitate endorsers whom they perceive as credible. Gerlich (2023) discovered that messages delivered by credible individuals leave a positive impression on followers who trust their words. Meanwhile, Saima and Khan (2020) explored the mediating role of credibility in influencer marketing. Their findings revealed that credibility acts as a partial mediator in the relationship between trustworthiness and purchase intention. Additionally, credibility fully mediates the impact of information quality and entertainment value on purchase intention. However, it does not serve as a mediator in the relationship between expertise, likability, and purchase intention.

The concept of "trustworthiness" pertains to the degree of acceptance and assurance the audience has in the message the speaker conveys. An endorser with high trustworthiness and a strong opinion is more effective in influencing consumer attitudes than an untrustworthy endorser (Giffin, 1967; Ohanian, 1991). Trustworthiness is measured by the honesty, dependability, and reliability of the source in transmitting information that can influence

behavioural change (Jin et al., 2019; Manchanda et al., 2022). In the realm of celebrity endorsement, studies such as Djafarova & Rushworth (2017) have shown that celebrities elicit greater trust and confidence among consumers. However, as technology progresses, the content produced by influencers is perceived as more trustworthy than that of celebrities (Martínez-López et al., 2020; Venciute et al., 2023). Research by Bickart & Schindler (2001) and Kim et al. (2021) has indicated that consumers place more trust in content produced by influencers compared to other forms of marketing communications. Balabanis & Chatzopoulou (2019) argued that the more followers perceive a vlogger as a trustworthy source of information, the more persuasive the vlogger becomes. Koay et al., (2022) highlighted the significance of trustworthiness in establishing a strong bond and believability between influencers and their audience. Their findings suggest that if consumers perceive the endorser as providing informative content, it may influence their purchasing behaviour. Foroughi et al., (2023) demonstrated that when followers associate themselves with a trustworthy influencer, they believe that the product or brand endorsed by the influencer aligns with their personalities, fostering a strong bond and resulting in higher engagement rates for that product or brand. Similarly, Choi & Lee (2019) emphasized the importance of the source's trustworthiness in shaping consumer perceptions in the online market structure, as acceptance of oral information from a trustworthy source influences consumer perception.

Hovland et al., (1953), describe expertise as the degree to which the endorser is perceived as a credible source of information, and consumers may rely on the information presented by them to make their purchasing decisions. Lou and Yuan, (2019) illustrated that when customers use or intend to purchase products that are associated with a beauty vlogger's area of expertise, they are more inclined to accept or believe the vlogger's opinions. Ki & Kim (2019) found that the knowledge and experience possessed by beauty vloggers establish them as opinion leaders. Consumers rely on their advice and opinions about products before making purchasing decisions. Similarly, Venciute et al., (2023) demonstrated that influencers are highly experienced in their niche areas, making them reliable sources of information trusted by consumers when making purchase decisions. In the beauty community, followers trust the expert and professional knowledge of beauty vloggers. Kim & Kim (2021) investigated the impact of influencers' expertise on product endorsements. Their results showed that influencers' expertise significantly influences trust in them, leading to increased loyalty toward the influencer and, ultimately, increased purchase intentions for the endorsed product. However, Ladhari et al., (2020) found no significant impact of vloggers' expertise on

increasing the popularity of vloggers, which subsequently affects changes in purchasing behaviour.

The term "attractiveness" pertains to the observable physical and social characteristics of the individual endorsing a product or service. Physical and social attractiveness are the two constituents through which source attractiveness may be examined. Here, social attractiveness refers to the familiarity, likeability, and similarity between beauty vloggers and their respective audiences, while physical attractiveness primarily relates to the physical structure, facial characteristics, and overall personality of the beauty vlogger (Kim & Kim, 2021). McGuire, (1985) revealed that an endorser who is perceived as attractive tends to be more well-liked and has a positive influence on the products they endorse. In the beauty industry, the perceived attractiveness of an endorser is a significant factor in influencing attitudinal shifts. It has been observed that a visually appealing stimulus tends to garner greater attention, particularly in the cosmetic industry domain, resulting in an increased inclination to purchase (De Veirman et al., 2017). Ki & Kim (2019) provided empirical evidence that the aesthetic and visually appealing posts of influencers establish them as taste leaders, prompting consumers to mimic their style and resulting in increased purchase intentions for products used by beauty vloggers. Another study conducted by Widyanto & Agusti (2020) found that young female adults, particularly from Generation Z in Indonesia, seek inspirational role models to emulate their style, which in turn leads them to follow attractive beauty vloggers and trust the products they endorse. Torres et al., (2019) investigated the significance of source attractiveness in forming a positive attitude toward endorsements, consequently fostering a positive brand attitude and higher purchase intentions for the endorsed brand. Additionally, Lee & Watkins (2016) demonstrated the effectiveness of both the social and physical attractiveness of beauty vloggers. They found that attractive vloggers have a positive impact on luxury brands if they are chosen as brand ambassadors. However, Koay et al., (2022) showed contrasting results. Their findings revealed no significant direct relationship between source attractiveness and purchase intentions, suggesting an indirect impact instead. Similarly, Wong & Wei (2023) examined the impact of social and physical attractiveness as important peripheral cues influencing the effectiveness of influencers in shaping consumer purchasing behaviour. Their results indicated an indirect impact of the social and physical attractiveness of influencers on purchase intentions.

Previous researchers have utilized these attributes in relation to celebrity endorsers (Roy et al., 2013; Bhatt et al., 2013; Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018). However, with the advancement of

technology, these attributes can be applicable to user-generated content, specifically in the context of beauty vloggers (Shan et al., 2019). Trust plays a pivotal role in establishing a strong connection between source characteristics—such as credibility, trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness—and consumers' attitudes toward beauty vloggers. While previous research has predominantly focused on the direct link between these source characteristics and purchase intention (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017), the present study highlights the importance and relevancy of trust. Trust towards beauty vloggers is essential because it enhances the effectiveness of these source characteristics, transforming them from mere qualities into powerful drivers of consumer behaviour. Specifically, credibility and expertise foster trust by providing consumers with reliable and accurate information, whereas trustworthiness creates a sense of authenticity and sincerity, making consumers feel more confident in the vlogger's recommendations. Attractiveness, though often perceived as a more superficial trait, can also influence trust when combined with the other attributes, as it fosters a sense of relatability and personal connection with the audience (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). This study emphasizes that consumers are more likely to be influenced by beauty vloggers they perceive as trustworthy. Trust deepens the relationship between the influencer and the audience, solidifying the source characteristics into factors that guide consumer decision-making. Without trust, even highly credible or attractive influencers may struggle to drive purchase intentions effectively. The relationship between source characteristics and trust toward beauty vloggers is critical, as trust serves as the foundation for consumers' acceptance of influencer recommendations, thereby enhancing their willingness to act on these endorsements. Therefore, all four attributes used in the study are clubbed under the head source characteristics, and they play an important role in forming trust towards beauty vloggers. Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H1: Source characteristics has a positive impact on trust towards beauty vloggers.*

### **2.3 Effect of audience characteristics on consumer attitude towards beauty vloggers**

In consumer behaviour research, audience characteristics also denote the diverse attributes, beliefs, and traits possessed by individuals within a target audience segment. These characteristics encompass various dimensions such as demographics, psychographics, and behavioural tendencies, all of which contribute to shaping consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchasing decisions. In the context of influencer marketing, audience characteristics play a pivotal role in influencing consumer behaviour and brand preferences. As consumers

increasingly turn to social media platforms for product recommendations and lifestyle inspiration, understanding the unique characteristics of the audience following beauty vloggers becomes imperative for brands and marketers seeking to effectively engage with their target demographics. Audience characteristics serve as key determinants in forming favourable consumer attitudes towards the beauty vloggers they follow, thereby fostering a sense of connection. Moreover, these positive attitudes towards influencers translate into heightened purchase intentions for the products endorsed or featured in their content. By aligning their marketing strategies with the specific audience characteristics of their target demographic, brands can leverage the influential power of beauty vloggers to enhance brand awareness, drive consumer engagement, and ultimately, stimulate purchase behaviour. These characteristics encompass elements like self-concept and user-influencer personality congruence, pivotal in moulding consumer attitudes towards beauty vloggers and the products they endorse.

The concept of self-concept encompasses the entirety of an individual's thoughts and feelings about themselves in relation to others. This notion can be bifurcated into two distinct forms: the "actual self" and the "ideal self." The actual self refers to an individual's perception of themselves as they currently are ("me as I am"), while the ideal self represents the image of how they aspire to be perceived ("the perfect me") (Zhu et al., 2019). Self-concept is a multifaceted construct that encompasses dimensions such as self-esteem, self-image, and self-identity. It serves as an intrinsic motivating factor, playing a crucial role in forming favourable attitudes and influencing marketing outcomes, particularly purchase intention. Additionally, self-concept helps shape attitudes toward influencers by facilitating identification with them (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Zogaj et al., 2021a). For example, an individual with a strong self-identity as an environmentalist is more likely to follow and support influencers who promote sustainability and eco-friendly behaviours. Moreover, self-concept influences the perception of relatability and authenticity in beauty vloggers, leading consumers to purchase the same products as the influencers, thereby reinforcing a satisfying self-concept. For example, beauty vloggers like Michelle Phan, who emphasize creativity and self-expression, may appeal to consumers who value individuality and artistic endeavours. Similarly, vloggers like Huda Kattan, known for her entrepreneurial spirit and luxurious lifestyle, attract followers who aspire to these traits. Furthermore, the core premise of self-congruency theory posits that consumers are inclined to choose products, brands, or people that align with their self-concepts. Through their brand purchases, consumption behaviours

and interacting behaviour, individuals actively shape and reinforce their self-image. As a result, self-concept effectively describes audience characteristics and influences their consumption choices. Initially, researchers explored the impact of self-concept in the context of celebrity endorsements (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Mishra et al., 2015). These studies found that celebrities who embody qualities or traits congruent with consumers' self-concepts are more effective in influencing consumer attitudes and behaviours. Choi & Rifon (2012) revealed that consumers purchase products endorsed by celebrities because they help activate their ideal selves, thereby contributing to the construction of a satisfying self-concept. However, the advancement of technology and the rise of social media have led to a similar phenomenon in influencer marketing (Shan et al., 2019). Influencers, particularly beauty vloggers, have become prominent figures whose perceived authenticity and relatability resonate deeply with consumers. Their content often mirrors the viewers' ideals, aspirations, and values, which in turn influence purchase intentions and brand loyalty. The alignment of a beauty vlogger's persona with a consumer's self-concept can lead to stronger identification and emotional connection. For instance, a beauty vlogger who promotes body positivity and inclusivity can attract a following of individuals who see these values as integral to their self-concept. Moreover, the positive impact of self-concept on intention change has been substantiated in various fields, particularly in tourism. Xu & Pratt (2018) demonstrated that young consumers, in particular, often view the celebrities they admire as role models and incorporate these celebrities' values into their own identity formation. Consequently, purchasing products endorsed by these celebrities or visiting celebrity-endorsed destinations enables consumers to adopt these values, thereby aiding in the construction of a more satisfying self-concept. Similarly, Pradhan et al., (2023) illustrated that the alignment between the self-concepts of the celebrity and the tourist's personality is likely to engender a sense of familiarity and closeness. This perceived similarity helps tourists acquire the meanings embodied by the celebrity, thereby developing and reinforcing their self-image. This indicates that when tourists perceive the image of a celebrity endorser to be congruent with their own self-concept, they are more likely to conform to the attitudes and behaviours promoted by the endorser. To thoroughly investigate the robustness of vlogger-led marketing, in the beauty domain, it is crucial to consider self-concept as a key variable. This entails examining how beauty vloggers' portrayals of themselves align with the self-concepts of their audience and how this alignment influences consumer attitudes and purchase intentions.

User-influencer personality congruence is the other critical sub-construct of audience characteristics. Initially, the personality congruence concept originated in the era of celebrity endorsement, where the researchers matched the personality traits of consumers, products, and celebrities for effective celebrity endorsement. Among these congruences, the least explored congruence is the celebrity-consumer personality congruence. It refers to the alignment or similarity between the personality traits of a celebrity and those of their audience or fans (Wong & Wei, 2023). This congruence is an essential factor in the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements and the overall impact celebrities have on their followers' attitudes and behaviours. When there is a high degree of personality congruence, fans are more likely to feel a connection with the celebrity, trust their endorsements, and be influenced by their opinions and actions (Mettenheim & Wiedmann, 2021). Similarly, in the context of influencer marketing, the same phenomenon can be observed as user-influencer personality congruence. User-influencer personality congruence, also known as personality alignment, refers to the extent to which the personality traits of social media influencers (SMIs) match or resonate with the personality traits of their followers or audience. This congruence plays a crucial role in forming and strengthening the connection between influencers and their audience, which in turn can significantly affect consumer attitudes and behaviours. While the existing literature has extensively examined the congruence between brand personality and endorser personality and its impact on purchase intention (Mishra et al., 2015; Malodia et al., 2017; Tafheem et al., 2022), the investigation into the congruence between endorser and consumer personality remains a promising area for further research. Choi and Rifon (2012) highlighted the importance of such congruency, demonstrating its potential to drive behavioural changes. Consumers tend to evaluate advertising more favourably and show increased purchase intentions when there is alignment between their personalities and those of the celebrities they admire. Building on these insights, Balabanis and Chatzopoulou (2019) provided further evidence within the blogging sphere, showing that a higher degree of influence is achieved when the personality of a blogger resonates with that of an information seeker. Recent studies in the tourism domain have also indicated that visitors are more likely to adopt the attitudes and behaviours endorsed by a celebrity when they perceive congruence between the endorser's personality and their own (Pradhan et al., 2023). Similarly, in the context of social media, congruence between user and influencer personalities has been shown to lead to positive shifts in consumer attitudes toward influencers, thereby influencing behavioural outcomes such as purchase intention. This phenomenon is particularly significant in influencer marketing, where influencers are often

seen as relatable individuals, similar to "people like you and me" (Mettenheim & Wiedmann, 2021). Users perceive influencers as inspirational figures and aspire to emulate their lifestyles, thereby enhancing the impact of personality congruence on consumer behaviour (Ki & Kim, 2019). For instance, consider the case of Zoella (Zoe Sugg), a well-known beauty and lifestyle influencer. Zoella's brand is built around her relatable, down-to-earth personality, which includes aspects of her everyday life, personal struggles, and joys. Her audience, primarily young women, often sees reflections of their own lives in her content. This personality congruence fosters a strong connection and trust between Zoella and her followers. When Zoella endorses a product, her followers are more likely to respond positively because they perceive her recommendations as coming from someone who shares their values and experiences. In the realm of fashion, consider Chiara Ferragni, an influencer whose chic and cosmopolitan style resonates with fashion-forward individuals globally. Her audience admires her sense of style and often seeks to emulate it. The congruence between her sophisticated yet accessible persona and her followers' fashion aspirations makes her endorsements particularly persuasive. These examples illustrate that the alignment of personalities between influencers and their followers plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behaviour. Influencers who project a persona that resonates with their audience's personality can create a sense of familiarity and trust, making their recommendations more impactful. This alignment not only enhances the effectiveness of influencer marketing but also underscores the importance of authenticity and relatability in digital marketing strategies.

In conclusion, including both self-concept and user-influencer personality congruence in our study under the umbrella of audience characteristics is crucial for understanding their impact on consumer attitudes towards beauty vloggers. This comprehensive approach will illuminate how these psychological and relational factors shape consumer behaviour, thereby enhancing the efficacy of influencer marketing strategies. By examining these audience characteristics, we can better understand the dynamics between vloggers and their audiences, leading to more targeted and effective marketing approaches. By addressing these aspects, our study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the vlogger-led marketing phenomenon and its implications for purchase intentions. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

*H2: Audience characteristics has a positive impact on consumer attitude towards beauty vloggers.*

## **2.4 Effect of Interactional elements on perceived influence of beauty vloggers**

Interactional elements encompass various strategies and techniques employed by beauty vloggers to enhance their perceived influence over consumers. These elements serve as crucial tools for engaging and connecting with their audience on a deeper level, thereby fostering loyalty and trust. Interactional elements play a pivotal role in shaping the dynamics of influencer-consumer relationships in the realm of beauty vlogging. These elements serve as vehicles for communication and connection, enabling vloggers to establish a sense of rapport and authenticity with their audience. In our study, we focus on four key interactional elements: parasocial interactions, meaning transfer, informational value, and emotional attachment. Through adept utilization of these interactional elements, beauty vloggers can effectively engage and persuade their audience, ultimately increasing their perceived influence and impact on consumer behaviour. Hence, understanding and leveraging these interactional elements are essential for vloggers seeking to enhance their influence and impact within the beauty industry.

Horton and Wohl (1956) pioneered the concept of parasocial interactions (PSI), which describes the phenomenon where individuals develop a sense of mutual connection with public figures, such as celebrities, sportsperson, singers, etc. despite being one-sided. Initially, PSI was limited to television and radio to create a sense of belonging between celebrities and their audiences. However, with the expanding technological landscape and increased use of social media, the scope of PSI has broadened beyond traditional media figures. Now, celebrities are using social media platforms to interact with their audiences. The same phenomenon can be observed from beauty vloggers' viewpoints, as vloggers also create an illusory friendship with their followers, which is influential in nature (Kim et al., 2020). The stability of this illusory or pseudo friendship is based on contact frequency (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Manchanda et al., 2022). In order to establish a closer connection with their audience, beauty vloggers frequently upload regular content that relates to their daily lives (Lee & Watkins, 2016; Kim et al., 2020; Choi & Lee, 2019). Additionally, they conduct question-answer sessions to address queries from their audience pertaining to their personal lives. Various social media platforms, such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook, provide a means for individuals to engage in dialogue with beauty vloggers by means of commenting on the videos they upload (Sokolova & Kefi, 2019; Shan et al., 2019). The interactions between beauty vloggers and their audiences foster the development of long-lasting relationships, which influence their behaviour. Moreover, parasocial interactions have

evolved into a form of interactive communication that involves reciprocal engagement (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Now, beauty vloggers provide both entertaining and informative content, and their audiences express their appreciation through engagement metrics such as video likes, subscriptions, and comments (Choi & Lee, 2019). Correspondingly, audiences tend to develop a sense of familiarity with beauty vloggers and place trust in the recommendations they provide. Consumers frequently rely on advice from sources (beauty vloggers) they trust, similar to how one might seek guidance from a close acquaintance, when making purchasing decisions (Labrecque, 2014). This increases the perceived influence of influencers over their respective audiences. From a marketing standpoint, this presents a significant opportunity for cosmetic companies to promote their products through the use of beauty vloggers. Prior to finalizing a purchase, consumers tend to seek guidance from beauty bloggers. Marketers leverage the illusionary friendship between beauty vloggers and their viewers through repeated interactions to promote their products (Hu et al., 2020; Manchanda et al., 2022).

Labrecque, (2014) conducted a study investigating the effects of PSI in the online paradigm. The researcher explored various outcomes of parasocial interactions done by celebrities using online platforms. The research demonstrated that PSI helps in building trust and loyalty towards celebrities by building interpersonal relationships. Moreover, the study underscored the importance of two-way communication in facilitating openness, which is vital for establishing strong relationships. Manchanda et al., (2022) showcased the importance of PSI by exploring the impact of PSI on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) intentions as well as the mediating role of PSI between credibility and eWOM intentions. Similarly, Lee & Watkins (2016) and Handriana et al., (2019) examined the mediating impact of beauty vloggers' attributes (such as social and physical attractiveness, attitude homophily, and expertise) on willingness to share information and brand user imagery fit. Djafarova & Rushworth, (2017) and Sokolova & Kefi, (2020) emphasized that young females exhibit greater engagement with online celebrities due to their PSI activities. Delbaere et al., (2021) revealed the impact of illusionary friendship fostered by vloggers using PSI activities, which contributes to increasing their influence over luxury products and fostering greater brand engagement. Prior studies have consistently demonstrated the importance of PSI in enhancing the influential power of influencers (Shan et al., 2019; Lee & Lee, 2022; Ashraf et al., 2023; Bailey et al., 2023; Cheng et al., 2023; Koay et al., 2023), thus justifying its inclusion in the current study.

McCracken (1989), revealed the three stages of meaning transfer. In the first stage, a symbolic meaning is created in an individual based on the role assigned or done by him or her in the past. The same meaning is then transferred to the product he/she endorses. In the last stage, the same meaning is consumed by the customers when they make a purchase decision for the same product. Miller & Allen, (2012) used the meaning transfer model to explore the process of meaning transfer with celebrities and mature brands. The researchers have applied the macro-level to the individual level by focusing on the second stage of the meaning transfer process using evaluative conditioning. The results reveal that using evaluative conditioning in the endorsement model, supports the transfer of meaning on an individual level. Torres et al., (2019) used the meaning transfer model to show the congruency between the personality of the influencer and the personality of the brand. They illustrated that in the transfer process, symbolic meanings that the consumer associates with the digital influencer get transferred to the product and then to the consumer. This approach helps in selecting the right influencer to convey the right message, which increases the perceived influence of influencers. A similar proposition was made by Hmoud et al., (2022) that depicted that companies choose celebrities whose personalities have a strong and clear meaning. Schimmelpfennig, (2018) demonstrated that viewers of an endorsement advertisement do not pay attention only to the attractiveness of the endorser; rather, they identify the specific set of cultural values that they have accumulated over time by playing different roles. They argue that celebrities are persuasive communicators as they represent meanings that consumers find captivating. Jain & Roy, (2016) conducted a qualitative investigation based on Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Projective Techniques (PT) to explore the dimensions and antecedents of meaning generation in celebrity and transfer to the product via endorsement. However, in 2017, Roy & Jain, (2017) validated the model given in 2016 using empirical data. The findings reveal the significant impact of dimensions on celebrity meaning, the transfer of celebrity meaning to a brand, and finally to consumers. Knoll et al., (2016) referred to the process of meaning transfer as associative learning. They illustrated that meaning transfer occurs when consumers perceive a brand to possess a specific attribute by associating it with a celebrity renowned for embodying that attribute. Consumers often draw from past experiences where individuals commonly align themselves with objects that reflect similarities to their own characteristics. This pattern of association between events in the past influences consumers to form assumptions about similar occurrences in the present. Consequently, consumers may infer that a brand possesses a particular attribute when they observe it being associated with a celebrity recognized for

embodying that attribute. Jin et al., (2019) revealed that celebrities who exhibit positive and culturally desirable traits play a significant role in bolstering brand associations through endorsements. Expanding the scope of meaning transfer, Chia et al., (2021) demonstrated the impact of the meaning transfer model on social media influencers. The study showcased that consumers tend to consume products that are endorsed by their idols. By disclosing their personal experiences with a product, social media influencers can influence the perceptions of other community members regarding that specific product. Therefore, it is crucial to include meaning transfer as an interactional element in the present study.

The notion of emotional attachment pertains to forming a relationship that is distinct to a specific individual and is established via the connection of emotions between individuals. It facilitates the sustenance of a durable connection between the involved parties, which may then be used to influence behaviour and foster a feeling of psychological proximity and accessibility (Thomson, 2006). Emotional attachment signifies a deeply felt, target-specific bond between an individual and another individual or object (Ladhari et al., 2020). Such attachments are often marked by heightened emotions, including affection, love, connection, and passion, with stronger attachments correlating with more intense feelings (Thomson, 2006). Initially examined within the context of parent-child relationships, emotional attachment has garnered attention across various domains, including consumer behaviour. Consumer studies have illuminated the phenomenon of emotional attachment extending beyond interpersonal relationships to encompass connections with places, celebrities, brands, and possessions, underscoring its broad and multifaceted nature (Ladhari et al., 2020). Online environments provide fertile ground for the cultivation of emotional bonds between influencers and their followers (Sánchez-Fernández & Jiménez-Castillo, 2021). As noted by Wang et al., (2015), influencers have the ability to evoke positive emotional responses from their audience, fulfilling various psychological needs such as fantasy, identification, status, affiliation, and attachment. Thomson (2006) introduced the concept of the human brand, which encompasses any prominent individual who is the focus of marketing communication efforts. This category includes actors, musicians, politicians, and media personalities, as well as renowned vloggers and bloggers such as Michelle Phan, Huda Kattan, and Zoe Sugg. When a human brand successfully satisfies consumers' autonomy or relatedness needs, it increases the likelihood of fostering strong emotional attachments among consumers. García-Rapp (2017) conducted a case study focusing on a prominent beauty influencer known as "Bubzbeauty." The study unveiled that "Bubzbeauty" strategically creates videos on

emotional topics to enhance familiarity and likability among her audience. By producing emotional vlogs, the vlogger aims to establish a closer connection with her viewers, encouraging them to engage more deeply. Consequently, viewers reciprocate by sharing their own stories, further augmenting the influencer's impact and influence within the community. Similarly, Britt et al. (2020) found that micro-influencers tend to create more emotionally resonant content compared to mega influencers, aiming to establish deeper connections with their followers. Choi & Lee (2019) also emphasized the significance of the emotional bond forged between beauty vloggers and their audience in enhancing viewers' intention to share content, consequently leading to increased purchase intent for the products endorsed by the vloggers. Bhatia (2020) advocated that the proliferation of social media platforms has contributed to an enhancement in the emotional attachment between content creators (vloggers) and their followers. Additionally, Zhang & Choi, (2022) investigated the role of emotional attachment in the relationship between followers and influencers. Their findings indicated that emotional attachment significantly influences followers' intentions to continue following the vlogger and to recommend the vlogger to others. Therefore, it is imperative to incorporate the concept of emotional attachment into the present study.

Sánchez-Fernández and Jiménez-Castillo (2021) define informational value as a critical cue for influencing behaviour. When viewers perceive the information provided by vloggers as accurate, valuable, and conducive to enhancing their knowledge, it elevates the quality of communication between the audience and vloggers. In digital environments, the concept of information value is grounded in the original notion of 'perceived value', which has become pivotal in understanding consumer behaviour (Gallarza et al., 2011). Perceived value encompasses various dimensions or sources of value, including utilitarian and hedonic aspects, that individuals perceive in a consumption experience. Lee et al. (2014) elaborate on this by identifying information value as a component within the utilitarian and functional value dimensions. Prior research conducted in virtual environments, various terms have been employed to describe users' perceptions of acquiring knowledge, experience, and service from others on online platforms. These terms include 'purposive value' (Dholakia et al., 2004), 'information satisfaction' (Hsu et al., 2014), 'informational value' (Lou & Yuan, 2019), and 'information value' (Lahuerta-Otero & Cordero-Gutiérrez, 2016; Phua et al., 2020; Wan et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2015). Collectively, these studies underscore the utilitarian nature of the concept of information value. Social media influencers are often regarded as authentic and/or experts due to the perceived value of their opinions and recommendations (Uzunoğlu

& Kip, 2014). Their capacity to furnish current and sophisticated information to others is notable (Hsu & Tsou, 2011), providing followers with utility that can enhance their knowledge, provide innovative insights, and deliver intriguing news (Lee et al., 2014). In this study, information value is construed as a functional value representing the utility derived from performance expectations. Specifically, it pertains to users' anticipation of acquiring knowledge, information, or resources disseminated by beauty vloggers. This utility enables users to gain insights, innovative information, and engaging news (Sánchez-Fernández and Jiménez-Castillo, 2021). Furthermore, such informational values have the potential to contribute to the creation of competitive advantages. Foroughi et al., (2023) further contend that influencer posts offer valuable information about brands and products, thereby influencing followers' reactions and decisions regarding the products. Pop et al. (2021) also uncovered that consumers frequently seek informative content from travel vloggers' posts before planning their trips. These posts often provide crucial information that influences consumers' purchase decisions. Schouten et al., (2020) compared the impact of celebrity and influencer endorsement effectiveness. The results revealed that consumers perceive more authentic information from influencers as compared to celebrities. Similarly, Ashraf et al., (2023) showcased the importance of information in maintaining a strong and long-lasting relationship between influencers and their viewers. Furthermore, Ki & Kim (2019) contended that consumers designate influencers as their opinion leaders when they perceive influencers to offer high-quality, accurate information and provide detailed product reviews, thereby influencing consumer attitudes. Lee & Lee, (2022) also emphasized that young women watch beauty vloggers' videos to get product information and acquire makeup skills. Hence, it is important to include informational value as one of the sub-constructs under interactional elements.

Currently, there is a paucity of research investigating the combined impact of all interactive elements on purchase intention. While previous scholars have examined individual interactional components, such as meaning transfer (McCracken, 1989; Miller & Allen, 2012; Knoll et al., 2016) and parasocial interactions (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Rubin et al., 1985), primarily within the context of celebrity endorsement, the rapid evolution of technology has led individuals to allocate a substantial portion of their time to social media platforms. These platforms primarily facilitate user engagement with vloggers for entertainment and information acquisition purposes. Therefore, we propose the following two hypotheses:

*H3: Interactional elements used by beauty vloggers has a positive impact on perceived influence on beauty vloggers.*

## **2.5 Impact of trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence on consumer purchase intention**

Trust can be defined as the degree of confidence vested by a recipient in the communicator or speaker. Trust is significant in communication, as it contributes to the credibility and trustworthiness of an individual's words and actions within a context characterized by uncertainty or potential harm (Giffin, 1967). Morgan and Hunt (1994) illustrated that, trust exists when the viewer seeks integrity and reliability in the information provided by the spokesperson. Contrary to common belief, the ability to supervise or control the actions of the other party is not a prerequisite for trust. Instead, trust is characterized by the willingness of one party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party with the expectation that the latter will perform a particular task that is important to the former (Mayer et al., 1995). Trust is commonly perceived as a trait that is nurtured over time through frequent interactions within relationships. The establishment of trust is a fundamental aspect in the cultivation of interpersonal connections, as it enhances efficacy, fosters adaptability, and contributes to the sustainability of the relationship between the involved parties (Tran & Nguyena, 2020; Atiq et al., 2022). Drawing from their relationships with communicators, people may estimate and evaluate the worth of future trades (Kim & Kim, 2021). In influencer marketing, beauty vloggers cultivate trust with their viewers through repeated engagements via live video sessions, reviewing audience feedback, and responding to their inquiries pertaining to products. Consumers typically seek guidance from beauty vloggers when they perceive similarities and familiarity between the vloggers' lifestyles and their own, prior to making any purchase decisions. The building of trust between an influencer and their audience is a fundamental factor that contributes to creating an atmosphere that is favourable to increasing purchase intention. The credibility, trustworthiness, expertness, and attractiveness of a beauty vlogger play a crucial role in shaping the audience's acceptance of the goods or services being marketed, since influencers serve as mediators between businesses and customers (Ki et al., 2023). Consequently, they establish a relationship that positively affects their purchase intentions for the products they use/endorse (Firman et al., 2021).

Research on trust spans several fields, including philosophy, sociology, economics, marketing, and organizational studies (Putnam, 1995; Koehn, 1996; Doney & Cannon, 1997;

Mayer et al., 1995). As seen from a marketing standpoint, trust is considered a crucial element in establishing and sustaining successful relationships that last (Pennanen et al., 2007). According to Deborah et al., (2019), influencers are seen as socially engaged and empowered individuals on social media platforms who are perceived as credible information sources by other users. Numerous studies have been undertaken to explore trust as a multidimensional construct with respect to social media influencers operating in the tourism domain (Artigas et al., 2017; Mircică, 2020; Cohen et al., 2014; Seçilmiş et al., 2022). Consequently, it is imperative to analyse the significance of trust within the cosmetics sector as well. In order to enhance the efficacy of beauty vlogger marketing, it is advisable for practitioners to prioritize the optimization of consumers' trust in beauty vloggers (Ki et al., 2023). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H4a: Trust on beauty vlogger has a positive impact on purchase intention towards the products used/endorsed by beauty vloggers.*

Attitude, a foundational construct in consumer psychology, embodies the intricate interplay of cognitive and affective evaluations concerning external stimuli (Chetoui et al., 2020; Taillon et al., 2020). This cognitive schema plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals' perceptions and behavioural predispositions within their environmental context, thus exerting a profound influence on their inclination towards specific objects or brands and consequent purchase intentions (Chanana, 2015). Extensive empirical inquiry has underscored the formidable sway wielded by celebrities in capturing consumer attention and engendering favourable attitudes towards endorsed products, thereby fostering heightened purchase intentions among consumers (Zhu et al., 2019). But in today's digital world, where social media and influencer culture are big, people are more likely to follow influencers who have similar personality traits, lifestyles, or tastes, which is different from the way endorsement s have traditionally been done with celebrities (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). This paradigmatic shift, rooted in the perceived alignment between influencers and prospective consumers, cultivates favourable attitudes towards influencers and amplifies purchase intentions (Zhu et al., 2019). Previous literature has extensively focused on consumer attitudes towards the products and brands endorsed by celebrities or influencers, providing valuable insights into how endorsements can enhance brand image and influence purchase intentions. However, with the burgeoning use of influencers for endorsing products, this gap is significant as the nature of interaction between beauty vloggers and their audience is fundamentally different from traditional celebrity endorsements. Beauty vloggers engage

with their audience on a personal and interactive level, fostering a unique type of relationship that directly impacts consumer behaviour. The significance of studying consumer attitudes towards beauty vloggers lies in the depth and quality of the engagement between the vlogger and the audience. Unlike traditional celebrities, beauty vloggers build their followings through consistent, authentic content that often includes detailed product reviews, tutorials, and personal stories. This form of content creation enables beauty vloggers to establish a sense of familiarity with their audience that matches the audience's self, which in turn shapes consumer attitudes and influences purchase decisions. For instance, research has shown that when consumers perceive influencers' personalities as similar and relatable, they are more likely to form positive attitudes towards them, which enhances the effectiveness of their product endorsements (Schouten et al., 2020). A real-life example that illustrates the profound impact of consumer attitudes towards beauty vloggers on purchase intentions is James Charles, a prominent beauty vlogger and makeup artist. James Charles has gained a massive following through his engaging makeup tutorials, creative looks, and interactive content. His authentic personality has earned him a dedicated fan base that trusts his recommendations and values his opinions. When James endorses a product, his followers are more likely to purchase it because they have a favourable attitude towards him as a trusted beauty expert (Taillon et al., 2020). This phenomenon is supported by empirical studies indicating that when consumers identify with an influencer's personality and values, they are more likely to develop a favourable attitude towards them, which positively impacts their purchasing behaviour (Ki & Kim, 2019). Similarly, Taillon et al., (2020) also showcased the importance of attitude toward influencers. Thus, the incorporation of consumer attitudes assumes paramount significance within the ambit of the present study, given its substantive implications for unravelling consumer behaviour within the burgeoning sphere of influencer marketing, particularly in the realm of beauty vlogging. The unique and personal relationship that beauty vloggers cultivate with their audience distinguishes them from traditional celebrities and makes their influence more profound. By focusing on attitudes towards beauty vloggers, researchers and marketers can better understand the factors that drive purchase intentions, ultimately leading to more effective marketing strategies. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H4b: Consumer attitude on beauty vlogger has a positive impact on purchase intention towards the products used/endorsed by beauty vloggers.*

In the contemporary landscape of consumer behaviour, the dynamics of influence are intricate and multifaceted. Perceived influence, as elucidated by Wang & Lin (2011), encapsulates the subjective belief held by the audience regarding an endorser's ability to sway opinions, behaviours, or purchasing decisions. In consumer behaviour, the perception that a message originates from an opinion leader or a renowned personality, such as a prominent beauty vlogger, can significantly alter the listener's perception of a specific product or brand (Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). Furthermore, the process of meaning transfer holds promise for heightening perceived influence by aligning the influencer's personal brand with the values and aspirations of their audience. When individuals perceive the influencer as embodying their desired lifestyle, aesthetic preferences, or ethical beliefs, they are more inclined to trust and resonate with the content and recommendations provided by the influencer (Holiday et al., 2021). This alignment facilitates a deeper level of connection and engagement between the influencer and their audience, fostering a sense of trust, authenticity, and relatability, resulting in increasing the influence of the influencer over their audience.

The concept of parasocial interaction, as proposed by Horton & Wohl (1956), plays a pivotal role in amplifying perceived influence within the realm of influencer marketing. Parasocial interaction refers to the one-sided relationship individuals develop with media personalities, wherein they perceive a sense of closeness, intimacy, and familiarity with the influencer despite the absence of real-life interaction. This parasocial bond cultivates a sense of kinship and rapport between the influencer and their audience, enhancing perceived influence. Beauty vloggers leverage parasocial interaction by fostering an illusion of intimacy and connection through their content, encouraging viewers to perceive them as trusted confidants and advisors (Sánchez-Fernández & Jiménez-Castillo, 2021). As a result, viewers are more receptive to the influencer's recommendations and more likely to align their attitudes and behaviours with the influencer's persona and preferences. Additionally, beauty vloggers, in particular, play a significant role in driving meaning transfer within their respective communities. By curating content that is informative, entertaining, and relatable, they establish themselves as trusted authorities in the realm of beauty and cosmetics. Their audiences, comprised of individuals seeking guidance, inspiration, and validation, often turn to them for product recommendations, makeup tutorials, and skincare advice (Sánchez-Fernández & Jiménez-Castillo, 2021). In this digital age where online information reigns supreme, consumers place immense value on the insights and expertise shared by influencers,

viewing them as credible sources of information and inspiration (Lee & Lee, 2022; Manchanda et al., 2022). Moreover, the emotional connections forged between influencers and their followers play a pivotal role in enhancing perceived influence. As noted by Foroughi et al. (2023), influencers have the ability to evoke strong emotional responses from their audience, eliciting feelings of admiration, aspiration, and identification. These emotional connections deepen the bond between the influencer and their audience, fostering a sense of loyalty, engagement, and receptivity to their recommendations. Additionally, influencers who leverage their personal experiences, struggles, and triumphs in their content resonate more deeply with their audience, creating a sense of empathy and understanding that further amplifies their perceived influence (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). In sum, perceived influence in the context of influencer marketing is a multifaceted phenomenon shaped by factors such as parasocial interaction, informational value, emotional attachment, and meaning transfer. As influencers adeptly navigate these dynamics and cultivate authentic connections with their audience, their perceived influence becomes a potent force driving consumer attitudes, behaviours, and purchasing decisions. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H4c: Perceived influence on beauty vloggers has a positive impact on purchase intention towards the products used/endorsed by beauty vloggers.*

## **2.6 Mediating role of trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence**

The establishment of trust between beauty vloggers and consumers is a crucial factor in the decision-making process when it comes to purchasing beauty products. When consumers perceive that vloggers and influencers provide trustworthy, authentic, and reliable information about products, they tend to develop a sense of loyalty towards them. Consumers tend to consistently rely on a particular vlogger for their product reviews (Kim & Kim, 2021). According to Konstantopoulou et al. (2019), customers are more likely to adopt advice that could potentially alter their purchase decisions if it comes from a trusted influencer. In the conventional marketing paradigm, consumers rely on their past experiences to bolster the efficacy of salespersons and establish trust in them (Crosby et al., 1990). However, in the realm of influencer marketing, consumers rely on the credibility, trustworthiness, expertness, and attractiveness of the beauty vloggers they follow to make informed purchasing decisions, drawing from their previous interactions with said vloggers. Therefore, the effectiveness of an influencer's message is enhanced when their followers have trust in them, leading to a perception of the relationship as being rewarding (Kim & Kim, 2021). Additionally,

Dekavalla (2019) investigated the importance of trust in influencing consumer behaviour. The researcher revealed that authenticity, transparency, expertise, and reliability play a major role in building trust in online content creators. In the context of the online paradigm, consumers exhibit scepticism toward the authenticity of the material disseminated on social media platforms. Nevertheless, when individuals see beauty vloggers as reliable purveyors of knowledge, they are inclined to place their confidence in them, exerting an impact on customers' choices about purchases (Singh, 2021). Hence, trust is considered a crucial element in establishing and sustaining prosperous, enduring relationships from a marketing standpoint. In addition to trust, the attribute of trustworthiness holds significant importance in the realm of marketing strategy. Trustworthiness and trust are distinct concepts, with the former referring to the accumulation of antecedent perceptual experiences that give rise to trust (Pop et al., 2022). The level of confidence placed in an influencer is a significant characteristic that may be used to evaluate the truthfulness of their posts. This conduct, in turn, has an impact on an individual's interest and inclination to actively seek out further information offered by the influencer (Martínez-López et al., 2020). Moreover, Lou & Yuan (2019) also revealed the mediating role of trust in influencers' posts between influencers' physical attractiveness and purchase intention. Additionally, another study conducted by Wijerathna and Wijesundara (2022) investigated the mediating effect of trust in the relationship between perceived authenticity of micro-influencers and purchase intention within the fitness sector. Consequently, this study aims to investigate the mediating role of trust in the relationship between the source characteristics of beauty vloggers and the purchase intention of consumers. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H5a: Trust mediates the relation between source characteristics and purchase intention.*

The characteristics of an audience play a pivotal role in shaping a positive attitude towards beauty vloggers, which in turn enhances purchase intention. Vloggers often engage in various activities to resonate more closely with their audience, allowing consumers to identify with their personalities. When consumers perceive a match between their self-image and that of the vlogger, they tend to develop a favourable attitude towards the vlogger (Zhu et al., 2019). This alignment of personalities fosters a positive attitude towards the vlogger, which significantly influences purchase intention (Taillon et al., 2020). Research has long highlighted the significance of audience characteristics in influencing consumer attitudes towards brands and products endorsed by celebrities or influencers. However, it is equally important to explore how consumer attitudes towards the influencers themselves impact

purchase intentions. Additionally, the concepts of self-concept and user-influencer personality congruence play a crucial role in this dynamic. When consumers perceive a strong alignment between their own personality traits and those of the beauty vlogger, their attitude towards the vlogger becomes more favourable. This alignment, or congruence, leads to stronger, more sensitive connections and greater influence over consumer behaviour. For example, a study by Choi and Rifon (2012) found that personality congruence between consumers and endorsers significantly enhances advertising effectiveness and purchase intentions. The mediating role of consumer attitudes towards beauty vloggers is crucial in understanding the effectiveness of influencer marketing. When influencers engage their audiences through relatable and authentic content, they are not just promoting products but also building personal connections. These connections are reinforced when the audience sees their own self-concept reflected in the influencers. For instance, Nikkie de Jager, known as NikkieTutorials, often shares personal stories and struggles alongside her beauty tutorials. This transparency allows her audience to relate to her on a deeper level, fostering a positive attitude that influences their purchasing decisions. Moreover, the concept of user-influencer personality congruence is supported by empirical evidence. Studies have demonstrated that consumers are more likely to evaluate advertising favourably and express heightened purchase intentions when there is alignment between their personalities and those of the celebrities or influencers they admire (Choi & Rifon, 2012). This finding can be extended to beauty vloggers, where a positive match between the personalities of the vlogger and the audience enhances the audience's attitude towards the vlogger. This, in turn, mediates the relationship between audience characteristics and purchase intentions. The importance of studying consumer attitudes towards beauty vloggers, rather than just the products they endorse, cannot be overstated. In the digital age, where influencers play a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour, understanding the dynamics of this relationship is essential. Beauty vloggers like Jackie Aina, who advocates for diversity and inclusivity in the beauty industry, attract followers who resonate with these values. This alignment creates a favourable attitude towards Aina, which positively impacts her audience's purchasing decisions. Therefore, consumer attitude towards beauty vloggers serves as a crucial mediating variable between audience characteristics and purchase intentions. By examining this mediation, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms driving influencer marketing. It highlights the importance of considering both self-concept and user-influencer personality congruence in the study of audience characteristics. These variables not only help in forming a positive attitude towards beauty vloggers but also play a significant role in

shaping consumer behaviour and purchase intentions. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H5b: Consumer attitude mediated the relation between audience characteristics and purchase intention.*

Vloggers are adept at employing a diverse array of interactional strategies aimed at fostering familiarity and relatability with their audience (Lee & Watkins, 2016; Lou & Kim, 2019). These strategies encompass a spectrum of engagement tactics, including sharing personal anecdotes, offering behind-the-scenes glimpses into their lives, and actively engaging with their audience through comments and direct messages. By showcasing their authentic selves and creating an atmosphere of transparency and openness, vloggers establish a genuine emotional bond with their viewers (Ladhari et al., 2020; Lee & Lee, 2022). This emotional connection transcends the digital realm, resonating deeply with viewers and cultivating a sense of trust and camaraderie. Therefore, perceived influence plays a critical role in the relationship between interactional elements and purchase intention, serving as a key mediator that explains how engagement with influencers translates into consumer action. The interactional elements—such as parasocial interactions, emotional attachment, meaning transfer, and informational value—establish the foundation of the influencer-audience relationship, but without perceived influence, these factors may not fully translate into increased purchase intentions.

Moreover, influencers occupy a unique position as opinion leaders within their respective niches, wielding considerable sway over their followers' perceptions and behaviours (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Through their content, influencers disseminate valuable information and insights about products and brands, positioning themselves as trusted authorities in their field (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Followers, in turn, place a high degree of trust in the recommendations and endorsements provided by influencers they admire, viewing them as credible sources of information (Sánchez-Fernández & Jiménez-Castillo, 2021). For example, research by Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández (2019) emphasized that perceived influence significantly boosts consumer engagement and purchase intentions when consumers feel that influencers authentically represent products and values aligned with their own. In this context, the interactional elements create an environment where consumers feel connected and emotionally attached to the influencer, but it is the perceived influence that transforms this relationship into a driver of purchasing behaviour. This trust is instrumental in

shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions, as followers are more likely to heed the advice and recommendations put forth by influencers they trust. Furthermore, the alignment between the influencer's values and the preferences of their audience plays a pivotal role in influencing consumer behaviour (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). When followers perceive a resonance between their own beliefs and the values espoused by the influencer, they are more inclined to emulate the influencer's consumer choices. This alignment fosters a sense of identification and belonging among followers, strengthening their affinity for the influencer and their endorsements. Thus, by examining the intricate interplay between interactional strategies, perceived influence, and purchase intention, we gain valuable insights into the mechanisms underlying consumer behaviour in the realm of influencer marketing. Moreover, findings by Sánchez-Fernández and Jiménez-Castillo (2021) further illustrate that the informational value provided by influencers strengthens perceived influence, as consumers rely on influencers they perceive as knowledgeable and credible. In this way, perceived influence acts as a crucial mediator, enhancing the relationship between the knowledge an influencer provides and the consumer's decision to purchase. Without this perceived influence, the informational value alone may not be compelling enough to drive purchasing behaviour. As vloggers leverage interactional elements to cultivate emotional connections and trust with their audience, their perceived influence increases, subsequently driving higher intentions to purchase the products or brands they endorse. This holistic understanding underscores the pivotal role of influencers in shaping consumer decision-making processes and highlights the importance of perceived influence in fostering authentic connections and meaningful engagement with audiences in influencer marketing campaigns to achieve desired outcomes, making perceived influence a suitable mediator between interactional elements and purchase intention.

In conclusion, perceived influence mediates the relationship between interactional elements and purchase intention by enabling the emotional and informational connections established between influencers and their followers to directly impact purchasing behaviour. Prior research consistently emphasizes that the interactional elements (such as parasocial interactions and emotional attachment) alone do not suffice to drive consumer decisions unless they are filtered through the audience's perception of the influencer's authority and persuasive power. Therefore, the role of perceived influence as a mediator is fundamental to fully understanding how influencer marketing effectively leads to consumer purchases.

Without it, the persuasive effect of interactional elements on purchase intention would remain significantly diminished. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H5c: Perceived influence mediates the relation between interactional elements and purchase intention.*

## **2.7 Research Gaps**

Identifying gaps in the current body of knowledge about a research topic is a crucial step for researchers. These gaps can be of various types, including methodological, empirical, and theoretical gaps. Recognizing these gaps is essential for shaping a coherent research agenda. By identifying research gaps, researchers can translate these deficiencies into specific research objectives, ultimately guiding the design of studies aimed at addressing these gaps. Based on an extensive review of the literature, the following research gaps have been identified.

Previous studies on influencer marketing have predominantly focused on developed countries (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Kim & Kim, 2021; Lee & Lee, 2022). However, there is a notable scarcity of research examining this phenomenon in emerging economies. Understanding how consumers in emerging markets react to beauty vlogger marketing is crucial, especially given the rising usage of social media in these regions. The socio-cultural and economic contexts of these countries can significantly influence consumer behaviour, thus warranting dedicated research.

Existing research has often explored the dimensions of source characteristics, audience characteristics, and interactional elements in isolation. Prior investigations on the influence of social media influencers on purchase intention, such as Lee & Watkins (2016), Torres et al. (2019), and Wong & Wei, (2023), had employed the source attractiveness model only. Sokolova & Kefi (2019) measured credibility using source attractiveness, in an empirical study on bloggers. Ladhari et al. (2020) and Wiedmann & Mettenheim (2020) exclusively considered expertise. Nosita & Lestari (2019), Ramadanty et al. (2020), Schouten et al. (2020), and Mabkhot et al., (2022) concentrated on expertise and trustworthiness. Additionally, Choi & Riffon, (2012) and Zogaj et al., (2021)a have illustrated the impact of self-identity. Furthermore, Mishra et al., (2015), Malodia et al., (2017), and Tafheem et al., (2022) have demonstrated the importance of congruency between personalities. Similarly, Sokolova & Kefi, (2020) and Manchanda et al., (2022) studied the impact of parasocial interactions, Torres et al., (2019), Hmoud et al., (2022), and Schimmelpfennig, (2018)

examined the impact of meaning transfer, Ladhari et al., (2020), Wang et al., (2015), and Sánchez-Fernández & Jiménez-Castillo, (2021) have studied the impact of emotional attachment and informational value. However, to fully comprehend the vlogger-led marketing mechanism, it is essential to integrate these variables into a holistic model. This approach will provide a more nuanced understanding of how these elements interact and influence consumer behaviour in the context of influencer marketing.

Most studies have focused on the traditional dimensions of the source credibility model: trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise (Munnukka et al., 2016; Lou & Kim, 2019; Yuan & Lou, 2020; Martínez-López et al., 2020). However, these dimensions do not fully capture the essence of credibility. Therefore, the delineation of credibility as a separate dimension, distinct from the dimensions of the source credibility model, is yet to be explored. There is a lack of studies that have studied credibility as a separate dimension and examined its impact on the purchasing behaviour of consumers.

The subconstructs of interactional elements, specifically parasocial interactions and meaning transfer, have been extensively studied in the context of celebrity endorsements (Miller & Allen, 2012; Knoll et al., 2016; Horton & Wohl, 1956; Rubin et al., 1985). However, their application in influencer marketing remains underexplored. Additionally, other interactional elements like emotional attachment and informational value have rarely been investigated (Sánchez-Fernández & Jiménez-Castillo, 2021; Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). Understanding how these elements contribute to the formation of relationships between consumers and social media influencers and how they subsequently influence purchasing behaviour, is a significant research gap that needs to be addressed.

Furthermore, previous literature has highlighted the importance of alignment between the personalities of celebrity endorsers and the products they promote (Mishra et al., 2015; Xu & Pratt, 2018; Belanche et al., 2021b). However, the impact of congruence between the personality of the consumer and the celebrity on consumer behaviour has been largely overlooked. This gap extends to influencer marketing as well. Investigating the congruence between consumer and influencer personalities can provide valuable insights into the determinants of purchasing behaviour and help in developing more effective advertising strategies.

Additionally, previous empirical studies have predominantly focused on female respondents to measure the impact of influencer marketing on their purchasing behaviour (Lee & Watkins,

2016; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Ladhari et al., 2020). However, with the increasing use of cosmetic products by males, driven by changing social norms and the growing acceptance of self-care and grooming among men. This shift is particularly evident in the entertainment sector, where male celebrities and influencers are setting trends and normalizing the use of beauty products (Sanny et al., 2020). Thus, there is a significant gap in the literature. Including male respondents in research is crucial to comprehensively understanding the influence of beauty vloggers across different demographics. This inclusion will provide a more complete picture of consumer behaviour and ensure that marketing strategies are effectively tailored to a broader audience.

## **2.8 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework presents a summary of the variables chosen for the study and outlines the relationships to be explored. Drawing from the literature review and the study's hypotheses, Figure 2.1 illustrates the proposed relationships between various variables. The study aims to offer insights into the effectiveness of beauty vlogger marketing by examining source characteristics that may influence consumers' trust in beauty vloggers. Audience characteristics affecting consumer attitudes towards beauty vloggers are also considered. Additionally, the framework encompasses interactional elements utilized by beauty vloggers to enhance their perceived influence. It further illustrates the impact of trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence on consumers' purchase intentions for cosmetic brands endorsed or used by beauty vloggers. Importantly, the framework highlights the mediating role of variables such as trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence. This holistic approach aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics involved in consumer behaviour within the context of beauty vlogger marketing.

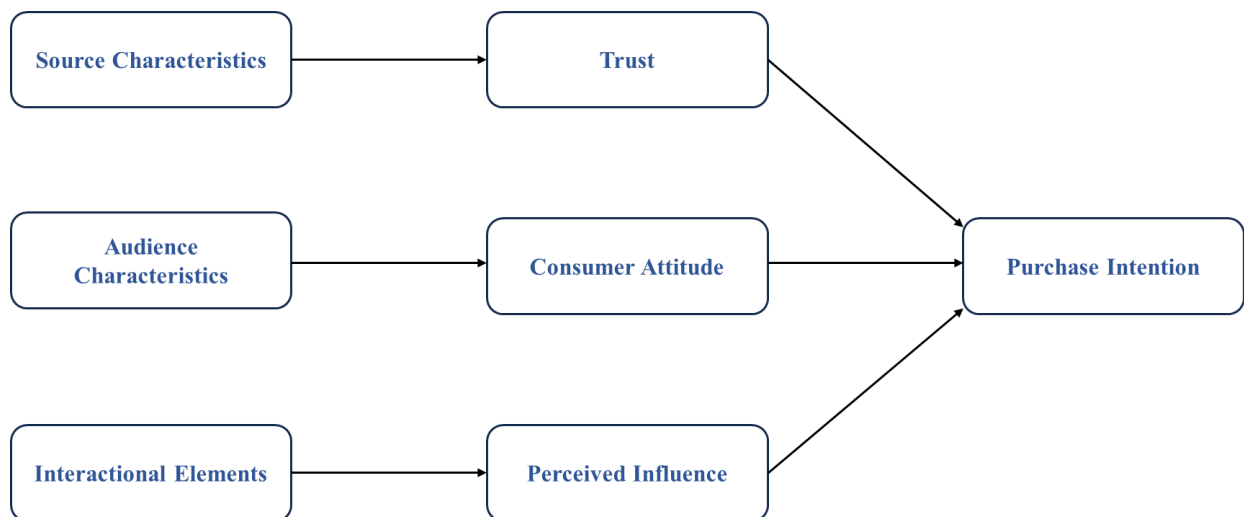


Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework for understanding the mechanism of beauty vlogger marketing

Additionally, Figure 2.2 presents a detailed conceptual model encompassing all dimensions of the independent variables used in the current study. Source characteristics are represented by credibility, trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness. Audience characteristics include self-concept and user-influencer personality congruence. Parasocial interactions, emotional attachment, informational value, and meaning transfer are the dimensions of interactional elements. Additionally, the model illustrates the relationships between independent variables, mediating variables, and dependent variables. This comprehensive model aims to provide a detailed understanding of the various factors in beauty vlogger marketing that help in influencing consumer behaviour.

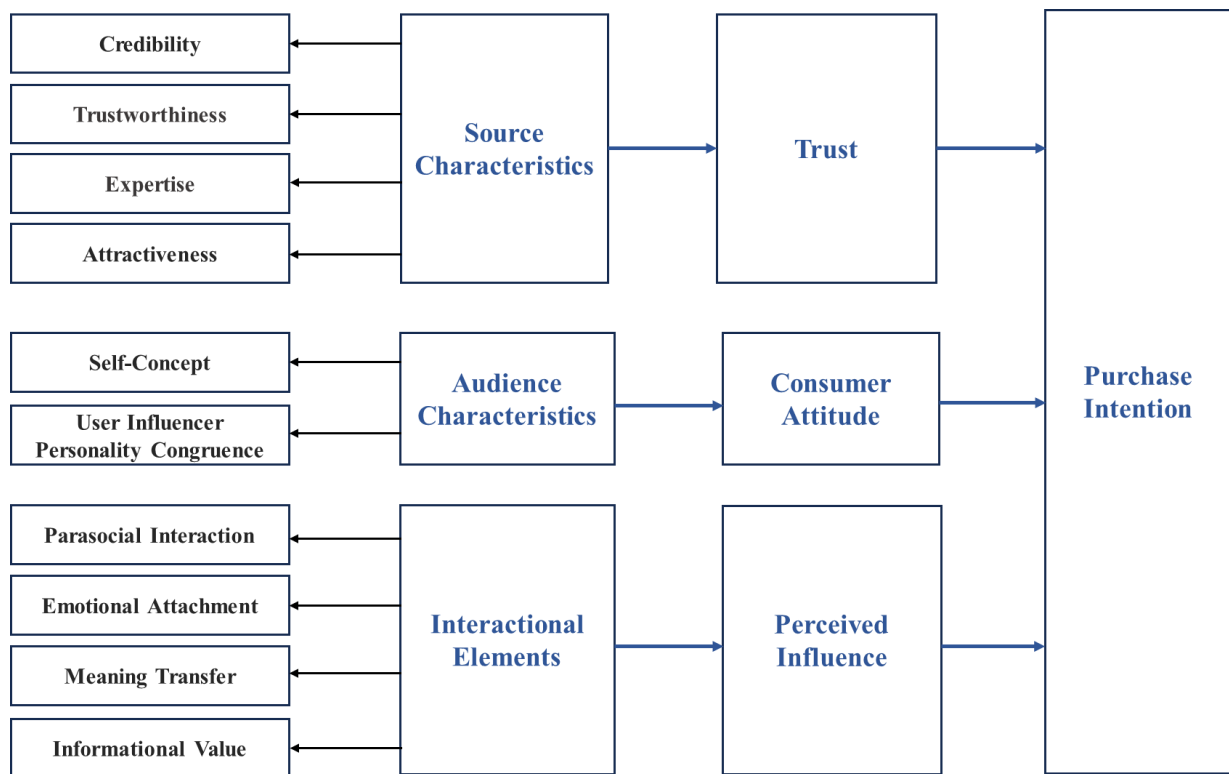


Figure 2.2 The detailed conceptual framework showing the dimension of independent variables used in the study.

## 2.9 Summary of the chapter

Chapter two provides a comprehensive overview of theoretical frameworks relevant to the current study, encompassing source credibility theory, self-congruency theory, parasocial interaction theory, meaning transfer theory, and social exchange theory. These theories serve as foundational pillars for understanding the hypothesized relationships between variables. Through an extensive review of existing literature, this chapter synthesizes empirical findings from prior studies conducted within the realm of influencer marketing, with a specific focus on beauty vloggers. The emphasis is placed on elucidating the impact of source characteristics on trust towards beauty vloggers, the influence of audience characteristics on consumer attitudes, the role of interactional elements in shaping the perceived influence of beauty vloggers, and the interplay of trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence and their effect on consumers' purchase intention. Drawing upon insights gleaned from existing theories and empirical investigations, this chapter formulates several research hypotheses and identifies gaps in the current body of knowledge surrounding influencer marketing leveraging

beauty vloggers. Lastly, the chapter culminates in the presentation of a conceptual framework that serves as a theoretical roadmap for the subsequent empirical analysis.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Methodology**

Research entails systematic exploration aimed at acquiring knowledge, understanding, and insights into various phenomena. It's a scientific and rigorous way of asking questions that includes looking for new information, checking facts, looking into cause and effect, giving fair judgement, and keep careful records of controlled observations. Through this process, researchers endeavour to develop generalizations, principles, or concepts that can be validated and lead to predictions and potential solutions to existing problems or challenges. Research methodology constitutes the organized structure and instruments essential for conducting thorough and reliable investigations, serving as the foundational framework for all research activities. Researchers employ a variety of methods, procedures, and theoretical frameworks to collect and evaluate data, address open research questions, and test hypotheses. The validity of a study and its ability to draw meaningful and accurate conclusions hinge on a meticulously designed research methodology. Depending on the arena and the specific objectives of the study, methodologies can take various forms, including empirical or observational designs, surveys, interviews, content analysis, and both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The choice of methodology is influenced by the nature of the research problem, the type of data required, and the resources available. A robust research methodology systematically addresses potential biases and limitations, delineates the scope of the study, and details the procedures for data collection and analysis. This comprehensive approach ensures that the research process enhances the reliability and validity of the findings, making them both credible and precise. Ultimately, research methodology is the bedrock of scientific inquiry, providing the essential framework that enables researchers to systematically explore, understand, and contribute to the expanding body of knowledge within their specialized fields. When executed meticulously, a well-crafted research methodology not only bolsters the dependability of the research outcomes but also ensures that the conclusions drawn are both significant and actionable, thereby advancing the discipline and informing practice and policy.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

It is the structured plan that directs the organization and execution of a research study. It serves as the foundational framework outlining the overall approach and strategy for

investigating a research problem or question. This design delineates the procedures for data collection, evaluation, and interpretation, ensuring a methodical and focused inquiry. Key components of a research design include the type of study (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods), specific techniques for data gathering and analysis, the process for selecting subjects or participants, and the overarching plan for conducting the study. The choice of research design is influenced by the nature of the research question, accessible resources, and the desired results. A robust research design is crucial as it guides researchers in gathering relevant and meaningful data. It plays a vital role in ensuring the validity and reliability of the study's outcomes by controlling for potential biases, confounding variables, and inaccuracies. Additionally, the research design affects the generalizability of findings to broader populations or contexts. Thus, a well-conceived research design is indispensable for achieving the study's objectives, producing insightful results, and making a significant contribution to the field of study.

This study employs a quantitative research approach, which is essential for investigating the relationships between multiple constructs through statistical analysis. The quantitative method allows for the collection of numerical data, which can be subjected to rigorous statistical tests to validate hypotheses and provide generalizable results. This approach is particularly suited for this research as it aims to quantify the influence of beauty vloggers on consumers' purchase intentions. Additionally, a summary of the sample and the observations are provided by descriptive statistics by computing the mean and standard deviation of all the constructs used in the study. Therefore, the present study is both descriptive and empirical in nature. A cross-sectional survey design is utilized in this study. This method involves collecting data at a single point in time from a large sample, providing a snapshot of current attitudes and behaviours. The cross-sectional survey is advantageous for its efficiency and ability to capture a wide range of data from diverse respondents, making it possible to generalize the findings to a broader population. The survey method also facilitates the collection of data on multiple constructs simultaneously, allowing for comprehensive analysis and robust conclusions. The present research is conducted in various stages. Figure 3.1 showcases the overall outline of the research design, containing all the stages for the current study.

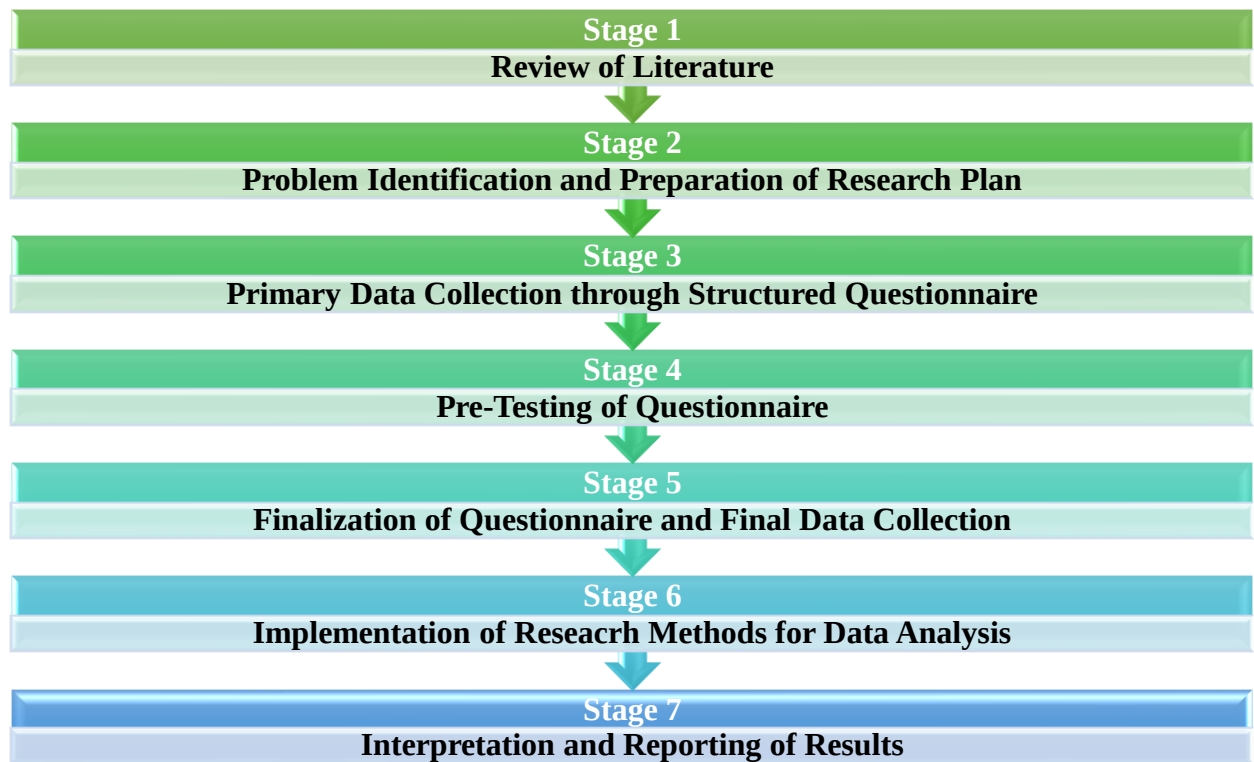


Figure 3.1 Outline of the research design of the study

### 3.2 Stimuli

In this particular investigation, the term "stimuli" refers to a certain group of content providers who are often referred to as beauty gurus, beauty influencers, or beauty vloggers. These content producers are individuals who typically generate material related to beauty items, makeup tutorials, or product reviews, and they are well-known within the community of people who are interested in beauty and cosmetics. Rather than taking into account the amount of involvement or popularity of the beauty vloggers, the selection of these individuals as stimuli for the research was based on their significance within the beauty business. The purpose of this endeavour was to collect a sample that was typical of beauty vloggers, who are well-known individuals in the community of online beauty enthusiasts. Only those content providers who were identified by the respondents as beauty vloggers were included in the stimuli. This was done to guarantee that the stimuli maintained their relevance and appropriateness. The stimuli that were offered to the respondents were simply in the form of textual descriptions. These descriptions prompted the participants to think back on and reflect on the videos that they had previously seen from the beauty vloggers that they follow. This

strategy guaranteed that participants were able to submit replies based on their familiarity with the content and style of the beauty vloggers that they had selected.

### **3.3 Pretest**

A pretest is conducted to ensure the reliability and validity of the research instrument before administering it to the full sample. The pretest involves a small sample of 40 respondents who are representative of the target population. The primary objective of the pretest is to identify any issues related to the wording, clarity, and comprehensibility of the questionnaire items and to ensure that the stimuli effectively capture the constructs being measured.

The pretest participants are selected using the same stratified sampling technique as the main study, ensuring diversity in terms of age, gender, and social media usage. Respondents are asked to complete the questionnaire and provide feedback on any items they find confusing or difficult to understand. Their responses are also analysed to assess the reliability of the scales using Cronbach's alpha.

The feedback of the respondents was positive and did not need any improvement in rephrasing the items or adding or removing any questions from the final questionnaire. All the items were clear and easily understandable. The pretest results provide confidence that the final instrument is robust and capable of accurately measuring the constructs of the study.

### **3.4 Participants**

The target group of individuals under investigation in a research study is referred to as the population. Given the impracticality of collecting responses from the entire population, a smaller subset, known as a sample, is chosen to facilitate the research. This process, known as sampling, aims to accurately reflect the characteristics of the broader population through this representative subset. To ensure the validity of the research findings, it is crucial that the sample accurately represents the population from which it is drawn. Sampling techniques are broadly classified into two categories: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. In probability sampling, every member of the population has an equal opportunity of being selected, thereby minimizing selection bias and enhancing the generalizability of the results. Conversely, non-probability sampling does not afford each population member an equal chance of selection, which can introduce biases and limit the extent to which the findings can be generalized. The choice of sampling method significantly impacts the study's outcomes, as probability sampling methods strive to produce more scientifically robust and reliable results

by leveraging statistical principles to ensure representativeness. However, non-probability sampling methods may result in collecting samples that are not fully representative of the population, thus necessitating careful consideration of potential biases and limitations in the interpretation of the findings. Consequently, selecting an appropriate sampling technique is critical for the integrity and applicability of research conclusions.

The population of the present study comprises consumers who follow beauty vloggers, aged between 18 to 45 years. This research was conducted in contiguous North Indian states, namely, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, and Delhi NCR. Consumers in these regions highly value reputable brands, perceiving them as symbols of status and wealth. Given their affluent lifestyles and substantial purchasing power, there are vast opportunities for brands to capitalize on these markets. A stratified random sampling technique, a type of probability sampling, was adopted to select the participants for the current study. After selecting the sampling technique, it is important to select an adequate sample size for the study. Challenges emerge when the sample size is insufficient. The precision of the findings may be compromised if the sample size is too small. In hypothesis testing, two types of errors can occur: Type I error and Type II error. Therefore, an appropriate sample size is essential for hypothesis testing. An adequate sample size diminishes the likelihood of committing Type I and Type II errors, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the study's conclusions. When the population is large or unknown, the sample size can be calculated using the Cochran formula.

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

According to the formula (e), this is the desired level of precision.

(p) is the estimated (proportion) of the population that has the attribute in question.

(q) is 1-p.

(Z) is constant.

Using this formula, the sample size comes out to be 385, so we had to round off and take 400 as the appropriate sample size for the current study. The strata were made based on the regions. Initially, the questionnaire was distributed to 600 respondents residing in Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, and Delhi (NCR). Out of these, 139 respondents did not follow any

beauty vloggers. After eliminating the responses of these participants, the final dataset comprises 461 respondents who use social media on a daily basis and follow beauty vloggers. Table 3.1 contains demographic details of all the respondents used in the study.

| <b>Table 3.1 Demographic details of respondents (N=461)</b> |                  |                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Participants</b>                                         | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
| <b><i>Gender</i></b>                                        |                  |                   |
| Male                                                        | 229              | 49.67             |
| Female                                                      | 232              | 50.32             |
| <b><i>Educational Qualification</i></b>                     |                  |                   |
| Senior Secondary                                            | 58               | 12.58             |
| Graduation                                                  | 230              | 49.89             |
| Post-graduation and above                                   | 173              | 37.52             |
| <b><i>Region</i></b>                                        |                  |                   |
| Punjab                                                      | 108              | 23.42             |
| Haryana                                                     | 117              | 25.37             |
| Chandigarh                                                  | 107              | 23.21             |
| Delhi (NCR)                                                 | 129              | 27.98             |
| <b><i>Age</i></b>                                           |                  |                   |
| Below 18                                                    | 11               | 2.38              |
| Above 18 – 30                                               | 447              | 96.96             |
| 31 – 45 and above                                           | 3                | 0.65              |
| <b><i>Occupation</i></b>                                    |                  |                   |
| Student                                                     | 417              | 90.45             |
| Salaried                                                    | 41               | 8.89              |
| Self-employed                                               | 2                | 0.43              |
| Homemaker                                                   | 1                | 0.21              |
| <b><i>Annual Income of the Household</i></b>                |                  |                   |
| Less than 2 lakhs                                           | 50               | 10.84             |
| 2 lakhs – 5 lakhs                                           | 72               | 15.61             |
| 5 lakhs – 10 lakhs                                          | 144              | 31.23             |
| Above 10 lakhs                                              | 195              | 42.29             |

| <b><i>Social media platform used</i></b>       |     |       |
|------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| YouTube                                        | 430 | 93.47 |
| Instagram                                      | 436 | 94.57 |
| Facebook                                       | 184 | 39.91 |
| Snapchat                                       | 294 | 63.77 |
| Twitter                                        | 150 | 32.53 |
| <b><i>Time Spent on social media</i></b>       |     |       |
| Less than an hour                              | 43  | 9.32  |
| 1 hour – 3 hours                               | 230 | 49.89 |
| 3 hours – 5 hours                              | 132 | 28.63 |
| 5 hours and above                              | 56  | 12.14 |
| <b><i>Source: Self-compiled by author.</i></b> |     |       |

### **3.5 Procedure**

The data collection procedure involves multiple steps to ensure the systematic and efficient gathering of responses. Initially, the structured questionnaire is developed and pre-tested to confirm its reliability and validity. Following the pretest, the finalized questionnaire is prepared using Google Forms and distributed through both online and offline channels. Those participants who follow beauty vloggers on different social media platforms were targeted for the current study. The participants were given a brief overview of the study to get a better understanding of the topic. However, the objectives of the study were not disclosed, as it would have influenced their viewing behaviour and consequently tampered with the findings. After giving a brief overview of the study, participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire. To avoid the problem of missing data, all questions were mandatory. The participants received no monetary incentives for filling out the questionnaire. They were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality. After the completion of the experiment, they were thanked for their time. They were also informed about the objective of the study and the reason for not informing them about it beforehand.

The data was collected for a span of ten months, from June 2022 to March 2023, to ensure a sufficient number of responses. Ethical clearance for data collection was secured from the institution's ethical committee, accompanied by an authority letter. The survey was disseminated electronically to individuals. The online Google Forms platform automatically

records and stores the data, which is then downloaded and prepared for analysis. The responses collected offline were also incorporated into the main dataset for final analysis.

### **3.6 Research Instrument**

A structured questionnaire was meticulously designed to test the proposed relationships within the study. Developed in English, the questionnaire leveraged the widespread use of the language in India's educational institutions and its status as the national foreign language, making it highly appropriate for the research context (Muralidharan et al., 2016; Muralidharan et al., 2017). The research incorporated existing scales and some self-constructed scales, drawing on established literature to measure the constructs accurately. Statements from previous literature were slightly modified to align with the specific context of the present research, ensuring relevance and clarity. All questions were closed-ended to facilitate consistent responses. Five-point Likert scales were employed across all constructs, aiding in the uniform interpretation of study findings (Wong & Merrilees, 2007). This scale choice is substantiated by its ability to enhance response rates and reduce respondent frustration levels (Leong et al., 2020). While three-point scales might suppress respondents' opinions and seven-point scales could introduce confusion (Pai & Huang, 2011), the five-point Likert scale strikes an optimal balance, providing sufficient granularity without overwhelming the participants. This methodological decision underscores the study's commitment to obtaining precise, reliable data, thereby contributing to the validity and reliability of the research outcomes. The careful construction and thoughtful adaptation of the questionnaire were integral in capturing nuanced responses, essential for testing the complex relationships between constructs, thus advancing the understanding of consumer behaviour in the context of beauty vloggers and influencer marketing.

To help ensure clarity regarding the research topic, brief definitions of all the constructs used in the study were mentioned before the items of each construct. Broadly, the questionnaire was divided into two main parts. Section 1 gathers all the demographic details about the respondents. This section also comprised items measuring the extent of social media exposure by asking questions such as the social media platforms used by respondents and the number of hours spent on social media platforms on a daily basis. Along with this, there was one scrutinizing question, i.e., “Do you follow any beauty vloggers on any social media platform?”. The respondents who said “Yes” to this question were permitted to proceed to Section 2 of the questionnaire. Section 2 of the questionnaire gathers information related to

the constructs used. This section was divided into seven parts. Section A contains items to measure the impact of the source characteristics of beauty vloggers on consumers. Section B consists of items measuring the impact of audience characteristics in the realm of beauty vlogger influencing. Section C encompasses items to measure the effect of interactional elements used by beauty vloggers to enhance their influential power over their respective audiences. Section D contains items to measure trust towards beauty vloggers. Section E measures consumer attitudes towards beauty vloggers. Section F inquiries about the perceived influence of beauty vloggers. And at last, Section G measures the purchase intention of consumers towards the products used or endorsed by beauty vloggers.

Before the survey was administration, the questionnaire underwent a thorough review by several subject-matter experts proficient in English. These experts assessed the relevance and representativeness of the items in relation to the study constructs. They provided valuable feedback on various aspects, including the language, clarity, and comprehensibility of the questionnaire items. Based on their responses, minor adjustments were made to refine the questionnaire, enhancing its precision and readability. This rigorous review process ensured both the content and face validity of the questionnaire (Jain, 2020; S. Kumar et al., 2021; Lim et al., 2021). By incorporating expert feedback, the questionnaire was meticulously tailored to accurately capture the constructs under investigation, thereby fortifying the robustness of the research instrument. This iterative process of expert review and refinement underscores the importance of expert validation in developing a reliable and valid measurement tool. The final version of the questionnaire, reflecting these refinements, is presented in the Appendix, providing a comprehensive and precise instrument for the data collection of the current study.

### **3.7 Measurement Scale**

Table 3.2 provides all the details of the measurement scale used in the present study. Demographic details like age, gender, occupation, region, and annual income of the respondents were gathered. Apart from this, social media exposure was measured by asking the respondents which social media platforms they prefer or use on a daily basis, how much time they spend on social media daily, and whether they follow any beauty vloggers or not. Credibility was measured using a six-item scale adapted from two studies: Mabkhot et al., (2022) and Appelman & Sunder, (2016). Trustworthiness was measured using a six-item scale adapted from Ohanian's (1991) and Teng et al. (2020). The instruments for measuring expertise and attractiveness consist of eight and nine items, respectively, and were adapted

from three separate studies (Ohanian, 1991; Ki & Kim, 2019; Teng et al., 2020). Self-concept was measured on a six-item scale, self-constructed, and modified for our research using existing literature (Malhotra, 1981; Goñi et al., 2011). User-influencer personality congruence was assessed using a five-item scale, originated from three different studies (Ki & Kim, 2019; Casaló et al., 2020; Belanche et al., 2021b). Parasocial interaction was measured using a twelve-item scale, adapted from two different studies: Lou & Kim (2019) and Lee & Watkins (2016). Emotional attachment was assessed using a nine-item scale, adapted from two studies (Choi & Lee, 2019; Ladhari et al., 2020). Informational value was measured using a ten-item scale, adapted from three distinct research studies (Ki & Kim, 2019; Lou & Kim, 2019; Lee et al., 2014). Meaning transfer was measured on an eight-item scale, self-constructed using the previous two literatures (Roy & Jain, 2017; Jain & Roy, 2016). Trust was measured using a five-item scale adapted from the study conducted by Meng & Wei (2020). Similarly, consumer attitude was measured on a six-item scale adapted from a study conducted by Chanana, (2015). Perceived influence, which acts as a mediating variable between interactional elements and purchase intention, was measured on a three-item scale, adapted from the study conducted by Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández, (2019). Finally, the dependent variable, purchase intention, was measured on a six-item scale adapted from three distinct studies (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019; Lou & Kim, 2019; Meng & Wei, 2020).

| <b>Table 3.2 Measurement scale of all the constructs used in the study</b> |                                                                                                                   |                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Construct</b>                                                           | <b>Description of the Scale</b>                                                                                   | <b>Source</b>                                                     |
| <b><i>Source Characteristics (Independent Variable)</i></b>                |                                                                                                                   |                                                                   |
| <b>Credibility</b>                                                         | Statements were assessed on a five-point scale where 1 denoted “strongly disagree” and 5 denoted “strongly agree” | Adapted from Mabkhot et al., (2022) and Appelman & Sunder, (2016) |
| <b>Trustworthiness</b>                                                     | Items were assessed on a five-point scale where 1 denoted “strongly disagree” and 5 denoted “strongly agree”      | Adapted from Ohanian, (1991) and Teng et al., (2020)              |

|                                                               |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Expertise</b>                                              | Items were rated on a five-point scale where 1 denoted “strongly disagree” and 5 denoted “strongly agree”         | Adapted from Ohanian, (1991), Ki & Kim, (2019), and Teng et al., (2020)                                                       |
| <b>Attractiveness</b>                                         | Statements were rated on a five-point scale where 1 denoted “strongly disagree” and 5 denoted “strongly agree”    | Adapted from Ohanian, (1991), Ki & Kim, (2019), and Teng et al., (2020)                                                       |
| <b><i>Audience Characteristics (Independent Variable)</i></b> |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Self-Concept</b>                                           | Items were measured on a five-point scale where 1 denoted “strongly disagree” and 5 denoted “strongly agree”      | Self-constructed using studies conducted by Malhotra, (1981) and Goñi et al., (2011)                                          |
| <b>User-Influencer Personality Congruence</b>                 | Items were measured on a five-point scale where 1 denoted “strongly disagree” and 5 denoted “strongly agree”      | Self-constructed using studies conducted by Ki & Kim, (2019), Casaló et al., (2020), and Belanche et al., (2021) <sup>b</sup> |
| <b><i>Interactional Elements (Independent Variable)</i></b>   |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Parasocial Interactions</b>                                | Statements were assessed on a five-point scale where 1 denoted “strongly disagree” and 5 denoted “strongly agree” | Adapted from Lou & Kim, (2019) and Lee & Watkins, (2016)                                                                      |
| <b>Emotional Attachment</b>                                   | Items were assessed on a five-point scale where 1 denoted “strongly disagree” and 5 denoted “strongly agree”      | Adapted from Choi & Lee, (2019) and Ladhari et al., (2020)                                                                    |
| <b>Meaning Transfer</b>                                       | Items were rated on a five-point scale where 1 denoted                                                            | Self-constructed using studies conducted by Roy &                                                                             |

|                                        |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                        | “strongly disagree” and 5 denoted “strongly agree”                                                                | Jain, (2017) and Jain & Roy, (2016)                                                                        |
| <b>Informational Value</b>             | Statements were rated on a five-point scale where 1 denoted “strongly disagree” and 5 denoted “strongly agree”    | Adapted from Ki & Kim, (2019), Lou & Kim, (2019), and Lee et al., (2014)                                   |
| <b><i>Mediating variables</i></b>      |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                            |
| <b>Trust</b>                           | Statements were assessed on a five-point scale where 1 denoted “strongly disagree” and 5 denoted “strongly agree” | Adapted from Meng & Wei (2020).                                                                            |
| <b>Consumer Attitude</b>               | Items were assessed on a five-point scale where 1 denoted “strongly disagree” and 5 denoted “strongly agree”      | Adapted from a study conducted by Chanana, (2015)                                                          |
| <b>Perceived Influence</b>             | Items were rated on a five-point scale where 1 denoted “strongly disagree” and 5 denoted “strongly agree”         | Adapted from a study conducted by Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández, (2019)                           |
| <b><i>Dependent Variable</i></b>       |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                            |
| <b>Purchase Intention</b>              | Items were measured on a five-point scale where 1 denoted “strongly disagree” and 5 denoted “strongly agree”      | Adapted from Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández, (2019), Meng and Wei, (2020), and Lou and Kim, (2019) |
| <b><i>Source: Self-Constructed</i></b> |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                            |

### **3.8 Tools and Techniques**

Research methodologies can be broadly classified into two major approaches: qualitative and quantitative research. These approaches differ significantly in their data collection and analysis methods, each with distinct merits and demerits. Researchers choose an approach based on the study's objectives and the nature of the research question. Qualitative research is an approach that produces results that are not derived from statistical techniques. It encompasses a wide variety of methods for data collection, including participant observation, case studies, focus groups, and in-depth interviews. This approach facilitates a comprehensive understanding of different perspectives and contexts, providing rich, detailed insights into the subject matter. However, analysing qualitative data can be time-consuming and labour-intensive. One significant drawback of qualitative research is its susceptibility to researcher biases, which can affect the validity and reliability of the findings. On the other hand, quantitative research involves the collection and analysis of quantifiable data using statistical techniques. Data for quantitative research are typically collected through structured methods such as polls and surveys, which use closed-ended questions to simplify data analysis. The results of quantitative research are generally unbiased and can be generalized to larger populations, making this approach highly valuable for studies aiming for broader applicability.

In this study, a quantitative research method was employed to achieve the research objectives. The cross-sectional data were analysed using two different software packages: the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 developed by IBM, and SmartPLS version 4.1 developed by SmartPLS GmbH. The SPSS software was utilized for conducting the descriptive analysis, providing a detailed summary of the demographic characteristics and social media usage patterns of the respondents. This initial analysis was essential for understanding the basic features of the data and ensuring its suitability for further statistical testing. Subsequently, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed to test the proposed hypotheses.

Before commencing the analysis process, the data were scrutinized for common method bias (CMB), multicollinearity, and normality. CMB can occur when participants respond to questions related to both independent and dependent variables, potentially skewing the research findings. To mitigate this, Harman's single-factor test was conducted to check for CMB. Multicollinearity, which refers to the presence of intercorrelations among two or more

independent variables, was assessed using variance inflation factor (VIF) values. This is crucial because multicollinearity can distort the results of regression analyses, making it difficult to determine the individual impact of each independent variable. Furthermore, the normality of the data was evaluated based on skewness and kurtosis values. A dataset is considered to be normally distributed if the values are symmetrically distributed about the mean. Ensuring normality is essential because many statistical tests assume a normal distribution of the data. By assessing skewness and kurtosis, the study confirmed whether the data met this assumption, thereby validating the appropriateness of subsequent statistical analyses.

### **3.8.1 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)**

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) has become one of the preferred data analysis techniques among researchers due to its robustness in testing complex models. This technique is particularly advantageous when dealing with multiple independent (exogenous) and dependent (endogenous) constructs, allowing for the simultaneous examination of numerous relationships within a single analysis. SEM consists of several linear equations that collectively determine the relationships among various constructs. While SEM serves purposes similar to multiple regression, there are notable differences between the two. Unlike multiple regression, SEM can simultaneously test multiple relationships, including scenarios where an endogenous construct becomes an exogenous construct in subsequent relationships within the same analysis. Additionally, SEM can simultaneously account for multiple endogenous variables, offering a comprehensive view of the interrelationships among constructs. A major advantage of SEM is its ability to account for measurement errors, which enhances the accuracy of the analysis (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 2000).

There are two primary approaches for assessing the structural model quality: Partial Least Squares SEM (PLS-SEM) and Covariance-Based SEM (CB-SEM). Researchers can choose between these methods based on the specific requirements of their study (Henseler, 2017). PLS-SEM, which is utilized in this study, is chosen for its minimal assumptions and strong statistical capabilities, making it particularly suitable for handling complex interactions (Hair et al., 2017; Sarstedt, et al., 2022). PLS-SEM focuses on maximizing the explained variance in the endogenous constructs, whereas CB-SEM emphasizes accurately approximating the observed covariance matrix (Hair et al., 2019). This variance-based approach of PLS-SEM is

beneficial for exploring predictive relationships and managing complex models with numerous constructs and indicators.

SmartPLS software was used in this study to develop and analyse the research model, linking strategic decision-making and leadership philosophies to business performance. SmartPLS has been recommended for managing complex relationships and higher-order constructs, offering greater flexibility in modeling intricate relationships. The choice of PLS-SEM in this study is further justified by its ability to handle models with higher-order constructs, making it more adaptable for complex research frameworks. In the current study, source characteristics, audience characteristics, and interactional elements are the higher-order constructs, hence making PLS SEM suitable for analysis.

First, the measurement model is assessed to check the reliability and validity of the constructs. When using PLS-SEM, this step involves confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Manley et al., 2020). The primary objective of CFA in PLS-SEM is to confirm the measurement model (Hair et al., 2020). CFA necessitates that construct and their associated items or indicators be specified prior to data analysis. This specification allows for an investigation into how well the items or indicators capture the underlying construct. Items or indicators with low outer loading values, indicating weak correlations with the construct, are typically dropped to improve the model's accuracy. Following the refinement of the measurement model by dropping poorly performing items, the reliability and validity of the constructs are rigorously examined. Reliability is typically assessed using metrics such as composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha, while validity is evaluated through convergent validity (average variance extracted) and discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT ratio).

Second, the structural model is assessed to determine the influence of one construct on another. This step involves path analysis, a crucial component of SEM that allows researchers to test the hypothesized relationships among constructs. Path analysis examines the direct and indirect effects between constructs, providing insights into the strength and direction of these relationships. The sign (positive or negative) and magnitude of the path coefficients indicate the nature and strength of the relationships between constructs. The statistical significance of the path coefficients is determined through bootstrapping techniques, which generate standard errors and confidence intervals for hypothesis testing. The structural model also

involves assessing the explained variance ( $R^2$  values) in the endogenous constructs, which indicates the model's predictive power.

### **3.9 Summary of the Chapter**

The third chapter provides an in-depth examination of the methodology employed in this research. This chapter meticulously outlines the research design, emphasizing the structured approach taken to investigate the research questions. It describes the stimuli used, particularly focusing on beauty vloggers as a key element for measuring consumer attitudes and behaviours. The importance of pretests is highlighted, ensuring that the selected stimuli do not introduce biases that could distort the research findings. Detailed accounts of the data collection and analysis processes are provided, ensuring transparency and replicability of the study. Additionally, the chapter explains the tools and techniques utilized for data analysis, particularly the application of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) for hypothesis testing. The use of SPSS for descriptive analysis and SmartPLS for advanced statistical modeling is justified, underscoring the methodological rigor of the research. Overall, this chapter lays a comprehensive foundation for understanding the methodological choices made, their rationale, and their implementation in the study. By meticulously outlining the methodology, this chapter lays a solid foundation for understanding the subsequent analysis and findings, ensuring that the research objectives are systematically and rigorously addressed.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results and Discussion**

The previous chapter delved into the detailed process of response collection. This chapter focuses on the analysis of those responses and the interpretation of the resulting data. The analytical approach encompasses both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, which utilize numerical and graphical representations, are employed to characterize the responses (Sondhi & Sandhu, 2020). They provide essential insights into the sample's attributes and serve as the foundation for subsequent analyses. Inferential statistics are then used to evaluate the statistical significance of observed differences or relationships between variables (Mishra et al., 2019). For instance, a p-value less than 0.05 indicates that a difference or relationship is statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level. These inferential techniques are crucial for hypothesis testing, enabling researchers to draw valid conclusions about the population based on sample data. The decision to accept or reject hypotheses is grounded in these inferential findings, thus facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the population from which the sample is drawn.

Furthermore, this chapter presents the results of the PLS-SEM analysis, adhering to the established methodologies within the field. The process begins with an assessment of the measurement model to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data, along with the validity of the structural model. The evaluation of the measurement model includes an examination of the convergent, discriminant, and internal consistency validity of reflective constructs. To address potential common method bias, Harman's single factor test was performed. Following this, the significance of the structural model was assessed, along with evaluations of the model's explanatory and predictive power. The chapter concludes with a detailed presentation of the analytical results and the findings related to the study's hypotheses.

#### **4.1 Descriptive Statistics**

The descriptive statistics for the variables under study are detailed in Table 4.1, encompassing key metrics such as mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis, which collectively provide a comprehensive overview of the data's distribution characteristics. The mean, serving as a measure of central tendency, represents the average value calculated by summing all individual data points and dividing by the total number of observations. This metric offers

insight into the typical value within the dataset. The standard deviation is a critical measure of dispersion, indicating the extent to which individual data points deviate from the mean. A higher standard deviation signifies greater variability within the data, while a lower standard deviation indicates that the data points are closely clustered around the mean. Skewness quantifies the asymmetry of the data distribution. A skewness coefficient can be either negative or positive, reflecting whether the distribution skews to the left or the right, respectively. A negatively skewed distribution has a longer left tail, while a positively skewed distribution has a longer right tail. This measure is essential for understanding the directional bias of the data. Kurtosis, on the other hand, provides insight into the shape and heaviness of the distribution tails. High kurtosis values indicate distributions with heavy tails, suggesting the presence of outliers, which are data points that deviate significantly from the majority of the dataset. Conversely, low kurtosis values imply lighter tails and fewer outliers. The coefficient of kurtosis is particularly useful for identifying the extent to which outliers are influencing the dataset. Outliers, identified by their significant deviation from other data points, are critical in statistical analysis as they can disproportionately affect the results and interpretations. Long tails in the distribution, indicated by high kurtosis, suggest the presence of numerous outliers, whereas short tails indicate a paucity of such extreme values. The combined analysis of mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis provides a robust descriptive statistical framework. This framework not only captures central tendency and variability but also offers a nuanced understanding of the data's asymmetry and tail behaviour, which are crucial for accurate data interpretation and subsequent analyses.

**Table 4.1 Descriptive Analysis (N = 461)**

|                    | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Standard<br/>Deviation</b> | <b>Skewness</b> | <b>Kurtosis</b> |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Credibility</b> |             |                               |                 |                 |
| CRED_1             | 3.73        | 0.855                         | - 0.856         | 1.000           |
| CRED_2             | 3.74        | 0.828                         | -0.771          | 0.826           |
| CRED_3             | 3.93        | 0.900                         | - 1.076         | 1.433           |
| CRED_4             | 3.73        | 0.942                         | -0.699          | 0.201           |
| CRED_5             | 3.32        | 1.293                         | -0.230          | -1.184          |
| CRED_6             | 3.73        | 1.154                         | -0.742          | -0.418          |

| Trustworthiness |      |       |        |        |
|-----------------|------|-------|--------|--------|
| TW_1            | 3.80 | 0.921 | -0.813 | 0.708  |
| TW_2            | 3.87 | 0.970 | -0.981 | 0.805  |
| TW_3            | 3.80 | 0.461 | -0.717 | 0.607  |
| TW_4            | 4.05 | 0.841 | -1.071 | 1.729  |
| TW_5            | 4.02 | 0.866 | -1.058 | 1.461  |
| TW_6            | 3.98 | 0.848 | -0.900 | 1.249  |
| Expertise       |      |       |        |        |
| EXP_1           | 3.87 | 1.000 | -0.954 | 0.601  |
| EXP_2           | 4.05 | 0.882 | -1.138 | 1.691  |
| EXP_3           | 3.91 | 0.965 | -0.977 | 0.749  |
| EXP_4           | 3.69 | 1.051 | -0.791 | 0.170  |
| EXP_5           | 4.00 | 0.865 | -1.053 | 1.454  |
| EXP_6           | 4.12 | 0.867 | -1.286 | 2.335  |
| EXP_7           | 4.13 | 0.854 | -1.153 | 1.694  |
| EXP_8           | 4.26 | 0.771 | -1.391 | 2.899  |
| Attractiveness  |      |       |        |        |
| ATT_1           | 4.30 | 0.783 | -1.253 | 2.213  |
| ATT_2           | 4.21 | 0.781 | -1.184 | 2.373  |
| ATT_3           | 4.19 | 0.855 | -1.291 | 2.351  |
| ATT_4           | 4.20 | 0.793 | -1.130 | 1.924  |
| ATT_5           | 4.08 | 0.971 | -1.158 | 1.248  |
| ATT_6           | 4.10 | 0.820 | -1.075 | 1.718  |
| ATT_7           | 4.17 | 0.892 | -1.349 | 2.231  |
| ATT_8           | 4.31 | 0.765 | -1.420 | 3.321  |
| ATT_9           | 4.30 | 0.779 | -1.414 | 3.192  |
| Self-Concept    |      |       |        |        |
| SEL_1           | 2.63 | 1.337 | 0.289  | -1.221 |
| SEL_2           | 4.04 | 0.935 | -0.883 | 0.499  |
| SEL_3           | 4.06 | 0.981 | -0.983 | 0.547  |
| SEL_4           | 4.04 | 0.996 | -1.064 | 0.697  |
| SEL_5           | 4.13 | 0.891 | -1.078 | 1.233  |

|                                               |      |       |        |        |
|-----------------------------------------------|------|-------|--------|--------|
| SEL_6                                         | 4.32 | 0.903 | -1.484 | 2.160  |
| <b>User-Influencer Personality Congruence</b> |      |       |        |        |
| UIPC_1                                        | 3.52 | 1.112 | -0.518 | -0.621 |
| UIPC_2                                        | 3.77 | 0.929 | -0.761 | 0.618  |
| UIPC_3                                        | 4.00 | 0.842 | -1.046 | 1.756  |
| UIPC_4                                        | 3.77 | 0.992 | -0.751 | 0.229  |
| UIPC_5                                        | 3.89 | 1.011 | -0.774 | -0.037 |
| <b>Parasocial Interactions</b>                |      |       |        |        |
| PARA INT_1                                    | 3.72 | 1.043 | -0.834 | 0.264  |
| PARA INT_2                                    | 3.92 | 0.949 | -0.997 | 0.846  |
| PARA INT_3                                    | 3.86 | 0.947 | -0.774 | 0.384  |
| PARA INT_4                                    | 3.96 | 0.985 | -0.858 | 0.245  |
| PARA INT_5                                    | 3.95 | 0.880 | -1.039 | 1.526  |
| PARA INT_6                                    | 3.93 | 0.900 | -0.836 | 0.605  |
| PARA INT_7                                    | 4.13 | 0.963 | -1.132 | 0.845  |
| PARA INT_8                                    | 3.63 | 1.091 | -0.621 | -0.303 |
| PARA INT_9                                    | 3.76 | 1.024 | -0.876 | 0.344  |
| PARA INT_10                                   | 3.90 | 1.045 | -0.802 | -0.115 |
| PARA INT_11                                   | 3.89 | 1.067 | -0.844 | 0.048  |
| PARA INT_12                                   | 4.13 | 0.941 | -1.166 | 1.151  |
| <b>Informational Value</b>                    |      |       |        |        |
| IV_1                                          | 3.99 | 0.881 | -0.899 | 0.874  |
| IV_2                                          | 4.00 | 0.799 | -0.949 | 1.477  |
| IV_3                                          | 3.96 | 0.845 | -1.081 | 1.779  |
| IV_4                                          | 4.10 | 0.785 | -1.098 | 2.180  |
| IV_5                                          | 4.10 | 0.812 | -1.148 | 2.144  |
| IV_6                                          | 3.99 | 0.863 | -0.936 | 1.001  |
| IV_7                                          | 4.08 | 0.846 | -1.209 | 2.161  |
| IV_8                                          | 4.09 | 0.854 | -1.055 | 1.448  |
| IV_9                                          | 3.94 | 0.944 | -1.046 | 1.144  |
| IV_10                                         | 4.10 | 0.824 | -0.955 | 1.095  |
| <b>Meaning Transfer</b>                       |      |       |        |        |

|                             |      |       |        |        |
|-----------------------------|------|-------|--------|--------|
| MT_1                        | 4.01 | 0.824 | -0.861 | 0.924  |
| MT_2                        | 4.00 | 0.858 | -0.990 | 1.167  |
| MT_3                        | 3.92 | 0.862 | -0.846 | 0.614  |
| MT_4                        | 3.95 | 0.866 | -0.848 | 0.791  |
| MT_5                        | 3.98 | 0.886 | -0.961 | 1.062  |
| MT_6                        | 4.05 | 0.875 | -1.017 | 1.098  |
| MT_7                        | 3.98 | 0.901 | -1.013 | 1.048  |
| MT_8                        | 4.22 | 0.790 | -1.154 | 1.995  |
| <b>Emotional Attachment</b> |      |       |        |        |
| EA_1                        | 3.63 | 1.146 | -0.680 | -0.341 |
| EA_2                        | 3.90 | 0.938 | -0.980 | 0.879  |
| EA_3                        | 3.59 | 1.136 | -0.593 | -0.451 |
| EA_4                        | 3.65 | 1.121 | -0.762 | -0.154 |
| EA_5                        | 3.87 | 0.965 | -0.933 | 0.703  |
| EA_6                        | 3.82 | 1.048 | -0.820 | 0.073  |
| EA_7                        | 3.92 | 0.988 | -1.133 | 1.256  |
| EA_8                        | 4.07 | 0.944 | -1.261 | 1.596  |
| EA_9                        | 3.79 | 1.130 | -0.865 | 0.011  |
| <b>Trust</b>                |      |       |        |        |
| TRUST_1                     | 3.93 | 0.863 | -1.166 | 2.110  |
| TRUST_2                     | 3.95 | 0.863 | -0.938 | 0.998  |
| TRUST_3                     | 3.65 | 1.016 | -0.639 | -0.050 |
| TRUST_4                     | 3.60 | 1.055 | -0.646 | -0.178 |
| TRUST_5                     | 3.97 | 0.869 | -1.058 | 1.592  |
| <b>Consumer Attitude</b>    |      |       |        |        |
| CA_1                        | 3.81 | 0.981 | -0.919 | 0.673  |
| CA_2                        | 4.02 | 0.887 | -1.179 | 1.819  |
| CA_3                        | 4.12 | 0.856 | -1.258 | 2.185  |
| CA_4                        | 4.22 | 0.781 | -1.033 | 1.519  |
| CA_5                        | 3.75 | 1.040 | -0.806 | 0.212  |
| CA_6                        | 4.12 | 0.891 | -1.333 | 2.297  |
| <b>Perceived Influence</b>  |      |       |        |        |

|                                                    |      |       |        |       |
|----------------------------------------------------|------|-------|--------|-------|
| PER IN_1                                           | 3.98 | 0.884 | -1.018 | 1.196 |
| PER IN_2                                           | 3.89 | 0.946 | -1.008 | 0.923 |
| PER IN_3                                           | 4.04 | 0.869 | -1.023 | 1.348 |
| <b>Purchase Intention</b>                          |      |       |        |       |
| PUR INT_1                                          | 3.86 | 0.965 | -1.007 | 0.979 |
| PUR INT_2                                          | 3.90 | 0.957 | -1.024 | 1.002 |
| PUR INT_3                                          | 3.87 | 0.925 | -0.952 | 1.116 |
| PUR INT_4                                          | 3.92 | 0.904 | -0.993 | 1.188 |
| PUR INT_5                                          | 4.04 | 0.865 | -1.042 | 1.522 |
| PUR INT_6                                          | 4.10 | 0.884 | -1.210 | 1.771 |
| <b>Source: Self-compiled by authors using SPSS</b> |      |       |        |       |

## 4.2 Common Method Bias

Research can be compromised by common method bias (CMB) when participants respond to questions concerning both independent and dependent variables. This bias can significantly distort research findings. To mitigate the potential for CMB, participants were encouraged to answer all questions as truthfully as possible and were assured of their anonymity (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Ayalew & Walia, 2024). The necessity of checking for CMB arose from the use of a self-report instrument for data collection. Harman's single-factor test was conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0, developed by IBM, to detect the presence of CMB. In this test, all questionnaire items were loaded onto a single factor. The analysis revealed that this single factor accounted for 35.263 percent of the total variance (shown in Table 4.2). Given that this percentage is below the recommended threshold of 50 percent, the results suggest that CMB was not a significant issue in this study (Chinchanachokchai & Gregorio, 2020; S. Kumar et al., 2021).

| <b>Table 4.2 Harman's one-factor test</b> |              |                      |                              |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Component</b>                          | <b>Total</b> | <b>% of Variance</b> | <b>Cumulative Variance %</b> |
| 1.00                                      | 34.911       | 35.263               | 35.263                       |
| <b>Source: Self-compiled using SPSS</b>   |              |                      |                              |

### 4.3 Data Diagnosis

Before initiating the analysis process, the data were rigorously examined for multicollinearity and normality. The presence of multicollinearity can significantly distort the study findings by causing independent variables to exert undue influence on each other, thereby complicating the assessment of their individual relationships with the dependent variable. To detect multicollinearity, variance inflation factor (VIF) values were calculated. VIF values are instrumental in gauging the severity of multicollinearity; a VIF value exceeding 10 indicates a substantial multicollinearity problem (Mwema & Crewett, 2019; O'Brien, 2007). In such cases, variables with VIF values greater than 10 should be removed from the model, followed by a re-evaluation of VIF values. In this study, all constructs exhibited VIF values less than 3.33 (Diamantopoulos, 2008; Shiva et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2019), as displayed in Table 4.3, indicating an absence of multicollinearity.

Assessing the normality of the dataset is essential for conducting valid statistical analyses, as many parametric tests assume normally distributed data. The normality of the data was evaluated through skewness and kurtosis values, which are presented in Table 4.1. Skewness measures the asymmetry of the data distribution, with a negative skewness indicating a longer tail on the left side and a positive skewness indicating a longer tail on the right side. Ideally, skewness values should lie between -1 and +1. In this study, the data exhibited negative skewness, suggesting a longer left tail, and hence, the data were not normally distributed. Similarly, kurtosis assesses the peakness of the distribution. A positive kurtosis value suggests a distribution that is more peaked than normal, while a negative value indicates a flatter than normal distribution. The acceptable range for kurtosis values is between -2 and +2 (Joshi & Garg, 2020). Values outside this range suggest the distribution is either too peaked or too flat. In this study, the skewness and kurtosis values did not fall within the desired limits, indicating a non-normal distribution of the data. Given this deviation from normality, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed for data analysis, as it does not necessitate the assumption of multivariate normality (Hair et al., 2022). This methodological choice ensures the robustness and reliability of the analytical results, accommodating the non-normality inherent in the dataset.

| Table 4.3 Variance Inflation factor (VIF) (Outer and Inner Model) |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Construct                                                         | VIF |
| <i>Outer Model</i>                                                |     |

|                                              |       |
|----------------------------------------------|-------|
| Credibility                                  | 2.515 |
| Trustworthiness                              | 3.302 |
| Expertise                                    | 2.600 |
| Attractiveness                               | 1.694 |
| Self-Concept                                 | 1.349 |
| User-Influencer Personality Congruence       | 1.349 |
| Parasocial Interactions                      | 2.869 |
| Informational Value                          | 3.110 |
| Meaning Transfer                             | 2.646 |
| Emotional Attachment                         | 3.247 |
| TRUST_1                                      | 1.608 |
| TRUST_2                                      | 1.640 |
| TRUST_3                                      | 1.812 |
| TRUST_4                                      | 1.742 |
| TRUST_5                                      | 1.746 |
| CA_1                                         | 1.722 |
| CA_2                                         | 1.920 |
| CA_3                                         | 1.553 |
| CA_4                                         | 1.617 |
| CA_6                                         | 1.696 |
| PER IN_1                                     | 1.804 |
| PER IN_2                                     | 1.688 |
| PER IN_3                                     | 1.836 |
| PUR INT_1                                    | 2.575 |
| PUR INT_2                                    | 2.394 |
| PUR INT_3                                    | 2.063 |
| PUR INT_4                                    | 1.872 |
| PUR INT_5                                    | 2.045 |
| PUR INT_6                                    | 1.643 |
| <b><i>Inner Model</i></b>                    |       |
| Source Characteristics > Trust               | 1.000 |
| Audience Characteristics > Consumer Attitude | 1.000 |

|                                                    |       |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Interactional Elements > Perceived influence       | 1.000 |
| Trust > Purchase Intention                         | 2.181 |
| Consumer Attitude > Purchase Intention             | 2.146 |
| Perceived Influence > Purchase Intention           | 2.433 |
| <b><i>Source: Self-compiled using SmartPLS</i></b> |       |

#### **4.4 Measurement Model Assessment for Lower-Order Constructs**

It is essential to ensure the reliability and validity of the research instrument, particularly in questionnaire-based studies. Reliability refers to the degree to which a measurement scale consistently produces stable results over time (Hammersley, 1987; Heale & Twycross, 2015). To evaluate the reliability of the measurement scales in this study, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) values were calculated for each construct. Both Cronbach's alpha and CR are indicators of internal consistency (Hair et al., 2020; Niclasen et al., 2013). The measurement scales demonstrated satisfactory reliability, as evidenced by Cronbach's alpha and CR values exceeding the threshold of 0.7 (Aggarwal & Rahul, 2018; Hair et al., 2020; Nunnally, 1978; Lučić, 2020). Validity, on the other hand, pertains to the accuracy with which a measurement scale captures the intended construct (Hammersley, 1987; Heale & Twycross, 2015). Researchers are concerned with different types of validity, which can be categorized into face, content, and construct validity. As outlined in Chapter 3, both content and face validity were thoroughly assessed. Face validity involves determining whether the research instrument appears to measure the intended construct, relying on subjective judgment (Heale & Twycross, 2015). Content validity, however, ensures that the measurement scale comprehensively reflects the scope and content of the construct (Heale & Twycross, 2015; Johnston et al., 2014). To establish content and face validity, the questionnaire underwent a rigorous review process. Initially, it was evaluated by various subject-matter experts with proficiency in English, who assessed the relevance and representativeness of the items relative to the study constructs. Based on their feedback, the various modifications were made to enhance the precision of the instrument. Subsequently, the refined questionnaire was pilot tested with forty respondents from the target population. These participants were asked to complete the questionnaire and provide feedback on the language, clarity, and comprehensibility of the items. The responses were positive and did not need any improvement in rephrasing the items or adding or removing any questions from the final questionnaire. All the items were clear and easily understandable. This meticulous process of

expert review and pilot testing was instrumental in establishing both content and face validity for the questionnaire, ensuring that it effectively captured the constructs of interest and was easily understood by the target audience. Additionally, construct validity determines whether the measurement scale functions in alignment with theoretical expectations (Johnston et al., 2014). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is a widely utilized statistical technique for assessing construct validity (DiStefano & Hess, 2005; Hair et al., 2020).

In the present study, there are various independent variables along with their sub-constructs; it becomes difficult to measure the impact of each sub-construct on the dependent variable. So, it is important to use lower and higher-order constructs. Instead of delineating relationships between multiple independent and dependent constructs within a path model, researchers can consolidate the independent constructs into a higher-order construct. This approach renders the relationships from the (now) lower-order components to the dependent constructs in the model unnecessary. In the proposed model, the three independent variables (source characteristics, audience characteristics, and interactional elements) are higher-order constructs, whereas their sub-constructs are lower-constructs. The primary task is to evaluate the measurement model for lower-order construct. The initial assessment of the reliability and validity of the lower-order constructs was conducted following the guidelines outlined in the PLS-SEM manuals (Hair et al., 2017, 2019; Sarstedt et al., 2019). To determine the reliability of these constructs, we evaluated whether the factor loadings of all reflective constructs met the threshold of 0.708 (Hair et al., 2017, 2020). As indicated in Table 4.5, nearly all values exceeded the permissible limits. However, certain items—two from credibility (CRED2,3), one from self-concept (SEL1), four from parasocial interactions (PARA INT3,6,8,9), and one from consumer attitude (CA5)—were excluded to enhance the measurement model. Cronbach's alpha values were also within the acceptable range of 0.70 to 0.95.

For internal consistency reliability, composite reliability and Henseler's rho-A were employed, with both metrics requiring values greater than 0.70. The values, as displayed in Table 4.4, confirmed that internal consistency was achieved (Hair et al., 2017, 2020). Convergent validity was assessed using the average variance extracted (AVE), which measures the variation in endogenous variables explained by exogenous variables (Ayalew & Walia, 2024). The threshold for AVE is 0.50 (Cohen, 1988; Hair et al., 2017; Sarstedt et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2019). The AVE values of the constructs, as shown in Table 4.4, fell within the acceptable range, thereby establishing the full evaluation of the measurement model for

the conceptual framework. Figure 4.1 shows the results of lower order constructs of the proposed framework using SmartPLS software 4.1 version.

**Table 4.4 Measurement model for lower-order constructs**

| <b>Constructs</b>                                     | <b>Cronbach <math>\alpha</math></b> | <b>rho-a</b> | <b>rho-c</b> | <b>AVE</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| <b>Credibility</b>                                    | 0.820                               | 0.825        | 0.874        | 0.581      |
| <b>Trustworthiness</b>                                | 0.831                               | 0.834        | 0.877        | 0.545      |
| <b>Expertise</b>                                      | 0.874                               | 0.874        | 0.901        | 0.531      |
| <b>Attractiveness</b>                                 | 0.903                               | 0.905        | 0.922        | 0.568      |
| <b>Self-Concept</b>                                   | 0.840                               | 0.843        | 0.887        | 0.611      |
| <b>User-Influencer<br/>Personality<br/>Congruence</b> | 0.850                               | 0.852        | 0.893        | 0.626      |
| <b>Parasocial<br/>Interactions</b>                    | 0.888                               | 0.889        | 0.911        | 0.561      |
| <b>Informational<br/>Value</b>                        | 0.909                               | 0.910        | 0.925        | 0.551      |
| <b>Meaning<br/>Transfer</b>                           | 0.878                               | 0.879        | 0.904        | 0.541      |
| <b>Emotional<br/>Attachment</b>                       | 0.910                               | 0.912        | 0.926        | 0.582      |

|                                            |       |       |       |       |
|--------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Trust</b>                               | 0.825 | 0.827 | 0.877 | 0.589 |
| <b>Consumer Attitude</b>                   | 0.824 | 0.829 | 0.876 | 0.586 |
| <b>Perceived Influence</b>                 | 0.810 | 0.810 | 0.888 | 0.725 |
| <b>Purchase Intention</b>                  | 0.883 | 0.885 | 0.911 | 0.632 |
| <i>Source: Self-compiled using PLS SEM</i> |       |       |       |       |

| <b>Table 4.5 Factor loading for lower-order constructs</b> |              |                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Construct</b>                                           | <b>Items</b> | <b>Outer Loadings</b> |
| <b>Credibility</b>                                         | CRED_1       | 0.783                 |
|                                                            | CRED_4       | 0.733                 |
|                                                            | CRED_5       | 0.758                 |
|                                                            | CRED_6       | 0.716                 |
| <b>Trustworthiness</b>                                     | TW_1         | 0.685                 |
|                                                            | TW_2         | 0.789                 |
|                                                            | TW_3         | 0.735                 |
|                                                            | TW_4         | 0.678                 |
|                                                            | TW_5         | 0.803                 |
|                                                            | TW_6         | 0.729                 |
| <b>Expertise</b>                                           | EXP_1        | 0.730                 |
|                                                            | EXP_2        | 0.748                 |
|                                                            | EXP_3        | 0.707                 |
|                                                            | EXP_4        | 0.716                 |
|                                                            | EXP_5        | 0.760                 |
|                                                            | EXP_6        | 0.749                 |
|                                                            | EXP_7        | 0.740                 |

|                                                   |         |       |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------|-------|
|                                                   | EXP_8   | 0.678 |
| <b>Attractiveness</b>                             | ATT_1   | 0.809 |
|                                                   | ATT_2   | 0.780 |
|                                                   | ATT_3   | 0.765 |
|                                                   | ATT_4   | 0.764 |
|                                                   | ATT_5   | 0.729 |
|                                                   | ATT_6   | 0.735 |
|                                                   | ATT_7   | 0.585 |
|                                                   | ATT_8   | 0.793 |
|                                                   | ATT_9   | 0.800 |
| <b>Self-Concept</b>                               | SEL_2   | 0.790 |
|                                                   | SEL_3   | 0.721 |
|                                                   | SEL_4   | 0.812 |
|                                                   | SEL_5   | 0.833 |
|                                                   | SEL_6   | 0.747 |
| <b>User-Influencer Personality<br/>Congruence</b> | UIPC_1  | 0.773 |
|                                                   | UIPC_2  | 0.848 |
|                                                   | UIPC_3  | 0.781 |
|                                                   | UIPC_4  | 0.814 |
|                                                   | UIPC_5  | 0.736 |
| <b>Parasocial Interactions</b>                    | PARA_1  | 0.727 |
|                                                   | PARA_2  | 0.754 |
|                                                   | PARA_4  | 0.791 |
|                                                   | PARA_5  | 0.707 |
|                                                   | PARA_7  | 0.746 |
|                                                   | PARA_10 | 0.738 |
|                                                   | PARA_11 | 0.748 |
|                                                   | PARA_12 | 0.776 |
| <b>Informational Value</b>                        | IV_1    | 0.703 |
|                                                   | IV_2    | 0.713 |
|                                                   | IV_3    | 0.737 |
|                                                   | IV_4    | 0.784 |

|                             |         |       |
|-----------------------------|---------|-------|
|                             | IV_5    | 0.716 |
|                             | IV_6    | 0.717 |
|                             | IV_7    | 0.786 |
|                             | IV_8    | 0.789 |
|                             | IV_9    | 0.713 |
|                             | IV_10   | 0.761 |
| <b>Meaning Transfer</b>     | MT_1    | 0.734 |
|                             | MT_2    | 0.738 |
|                             | MT_3    | 0.735 |
|                             | MT_4    | 0.727 |
|                             | MT_5    | 0.677 |
|                             | MT_6    | 0.788 |
|                             | MT_7    | 0.760 |
|                             | MT_8    | 0.719 |
| <b>Emotional Attachment</b> | EA_1    | 0.799 |
|                             | EA_2    | 0.795 |
|                             | EA_3    | 0.799 |
|                             | EA_4    | 0.800 |
|                             | EA_5    | 0.794 |
|                             | EA_6    | 0.764 |
|                             | EA_7    | 0.709 |
|                             | EA_8    | 0.690 |
|                             | EA_9    | 0.674 |
| <b>Trust</b>                | TRUST_1 | 0.756 |
|                             | TRUST_2 | 0.750 |
|                             | TRUST_3 | 0.774 |
|                             | TRUST_4 | 0.759 |
|                             | TRUST_5 | 0.796 |
| <b>Consumer Attitude</b>    | CA_1    | 0.778 |
|                             | CA_2    | 0.809 |
|                             | CA_3    | 0.729 |
|                             | CA_4    | 0.730 |

|                                                   |           |       |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
|                                                   | CA_6      | 0.779 |
| <b>Perceived Influence</b>                        | PER INF_1 | 0.852 |
|                                                   | PER INF_2 | 0.845 |
|                                                   | PER INF_3 | 0.856 |
| <b>Purchase Intention</b>                         | PUR INT_1 | 0.838 |
|                                                   | PUR INT_2 | 0.813 |
|                                                   | PUR INT_3 | 0.800 |
|                                                   | PUR INT_4 | 0.781 |
|                                                   | PUR INT_5 | 0.799 |
|                                                   | PUR INT_6 | 0.734 |
| <i><b>Source: Self-compiled using PLS SEM</b></i> |           |       |

Furthermore, discriminant validity was evaluated using both the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) criterion and the Fornell-Larcker criterion. According to the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion, the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct, positioned on the diagonal, should be greater than the inter-construct correlation values (Lučić, 2020). Table 4.6 illustrates that each construct demonstrated a clear distinction from the others, confirming that the measurement model meets the necessary criteria for discriminant validity. Consequently, the study is deemed suitable for final analysis.

Subsequently, we examined discriminant validity using the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio. The application of the HTMT criterion for assessing discriminant validity is increasingly prevalent in marketing research, especially in studies employing the PLS-SEM technique. The HTMT criterion relies on the correlation between constructs. Typically, most HTMT ratios fall between 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015) and 0.90 (Gold et al., 2001); however, the ratio between trustworthiness and credibility exceeds 0.90. In such cases, a more liberal approach is applied. Confidence intervals for HTMT inferences were obtained using bootstrapping (Shiva et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2022). The HTMT value of 0.925 falls within the confidence intervals (0.877 and 0.970), thereby confirming the distinctiveness between the constructs. The results of the HTMT ratios are presented in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.6 Fornell and Larcker for lower-order constructs**

|            | 1.           | 2.           | 3.           | 4.           | 5.           | 6.           | 7.           | 8.           | 9.           | 10.          | 11.          | 12.          | 13.          | 14.          |
|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>1.</b>  | <b>0.763</b> |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>2.</b>  | 0.746        | <b>0.738</b> |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>3.</b>  | 0.643        | 0.701        | <b>0.729</b> |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>4.</b>  | 0.445        | 0.560        | 0.620        | <b>0.754</b> |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>5.</b>  | 0.506        | 0.498        | 0.510        | 0.548        | <b>0.782</b> |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>6.</b>  | 0.618        | 0.624        | 0.577        | 0.519        | 0.509        | <b>0.791</b> |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>7.</b>  | 0.530        | 0.604        | 0.609        | 0.631        | 0.486        | 0.643        | <b>0.749</b> |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>8.</b>  | 0.608        | 0.668        | 0.693        | 0.630        | 0.527        | 0.665        | 0.712        | <b>0.742</b> |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>9.</b>  | 0.538        | 0.563        | 0.637        | 0.648        | 0.512        | 0.626        | 0.643        | 0.738        | <b>0.735</b> |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>10.</b> | 0.531        | 0.594        | 0.629        | 0.599        | 0.501        | 0.674        | 0.729        | 0.732        | 0.701        | <b>0.763</b> |              |              |              |              |
| <b>11.</b> | 0.653        | 0.650        | 0.627        | 0.465        | 0.468        | 0.592        | 0.574        | 0.708        | 0.664        | 0.673        | <b>0.767</b> |              |              |              |
| <b>12.</b> | 0.569        | 0.584        | 0.643        | 0.627        | 0.485        | 0.596        | 0.663        | 0.736        | 0.729        | 0.684        | 0.650        | <b>0.765</b> |              |              |
| <b>13.</b> | 0.539        | 0.569        | 0.582        | 0.550        | 0.442        | 0.571        | 0.578        | 0.693        | 0.713        | 0.647        | 0.700        | 0.694        | <b>0.851</b> |              |
| <b>14.</b> | 0.549        | 0.591        | 0.562        | 0.520        | 0.458        | 0.575        | 0.596        | 0.685        | 0.677        | 0.633        | 0.657        | 0.663        | 0.701        | <b>0.795</b> |

*Note: 1-credibility, 2-trustworthiness, 3-expertise, 4-attractiveness, 5-self-concept, 6-user influencer personality congruence, 7-parasocial interactions 8-informational value, 9-meaning transfer, 10-emotional attachment, 11-trust, 12-consumer attitude, 13-perceived influence, 14-purchase intention.*

*Source: Self-compiled using PLS SEM*

**Table 4.7 HTMT ratio for lower-order constructs**

|     | 1.    | 2.    | 3.    | 4.    | 5.    | 6.    | 7.    | 8.    | 9.    | 10.   | 11.   | 12.   | 13.   | 14. |
|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| 1.  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |     |
| 2.  | 0.925 |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |     |
| 3.  | 0.757 | 0.860 |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |     |
| 4.  | 0.512 | 0.647 | 0.696 |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |     |
| 5.  | 0.610 | 0.598 | 0.596 | 0.630 |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |     |
| 6.  | 0.738 | 0.743 | 0.670 | 0.594 | 0.602 |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |     |
| 7.  | 0.619 | 0.700 | 0.686 | 0.702 | 0.563 | 0.740 |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |     |
| 8.  | 0.702 | 0.770 | 0.777 | 0.696 | 0.601 | 0.755 | 0.790 |       |       |       |       |       |       |     |
| 9.  | 0.627 | 0.658 | 0.725 | 0.726 | 0.605 | 0.724 | 0.724 | 0.846 |       |       |       |       |       |     |
| 10. | 0.619 | 0.684 | 0.703 | 0.659 | 0.574 | 0.764 | 0.862 | 0.804 | 0.783 |       |       |       |       |     |
| 11. | 0.794 | 0.779 | 0.737 | 0.533 | 0.557 | 0.703 | 0.664 | 0.811 | 0.771 | 0.776 |       |       |       |     |
| 12. | 0.686 | 0.702 | 0.751 | 0.725 | 0.575 | 0.703 | 0.764 | 0.847 | 0.888 | 0.781 | 0.775 |       |       |     |
| 13. | 0.660 | 0.693 | 0.691 | 0.642 | 0.536 | 0.688 | 0.677 | 0.807 | 0.845 | 0.753 | 0.851 | 0.847 |       |     |
| 14. | 0.643 | 0.691 | 0.638 | 0.582 | 0.530 | 0.661 | 0.669 | 0.763 | 0.768 | 0.705 | 0.766 | 0.774 | 0.827 |     |

**Note:** 1-credibility, 2-trustworthiness, 3-expertise, 4-attractiveness, 5-self-concept, 6-user influencer personality congruence, 7-parasocial interactions 8-informational value, 9-meaning transfer, 10-emotional attachment, 11-trust, 12-consumer attitude, 13-perceived influence, 14-purchase intention.

**Source:** Self-compiled using PLS SEM

#### **4.5 Measurement Model Assessment for Higher-Order Constructs**

After evaluating the measurement model of the lower-order constructs, the latent variable scores obtained from the PLS algorithm for all the sub-constructs (i.e., lower-order constructs) of independent variables were incorporated into the main dataset. This was done to examine the higher-order construct within the proposed model using the repeated indicator approach. Given that the proposed model, illustrated in Figure 4.1, is a Type 1 higher-order model (reflective-reflective), the repeated indicator method is deemed more suitable for measurement (Becker et al., 2012; Perez-Vega et al., 2018; Agyapong, 2021).

The higher-order constructs were then analysed for reliability and validity using the same criteria applied to the lower-order constructs. The Cronbach's alpha values for nearly all variables exceeded the threshold value. Similarly, composite reliability and Henseler's  $\rho_A$  were generally within acceptable limits. In the context of higher-order constructs, the path coefficients of lower-order constructs serve as indicators, and thus, these values are regarded as outer loadings for the higher-order constructs (Agyapong, 2021). In the proposed model, the outer loadings for all sub-constructs exceeded the permissible limit of 0.708 (Hair et al., 2017; 2019; 2020). Additionally, the AVE values for the higher-order constructs were above the threshold value of 0.5, indicating that the reliability and validity of the higher-order constructs were established. All values for factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and AVE are detailed in Table 4.8.

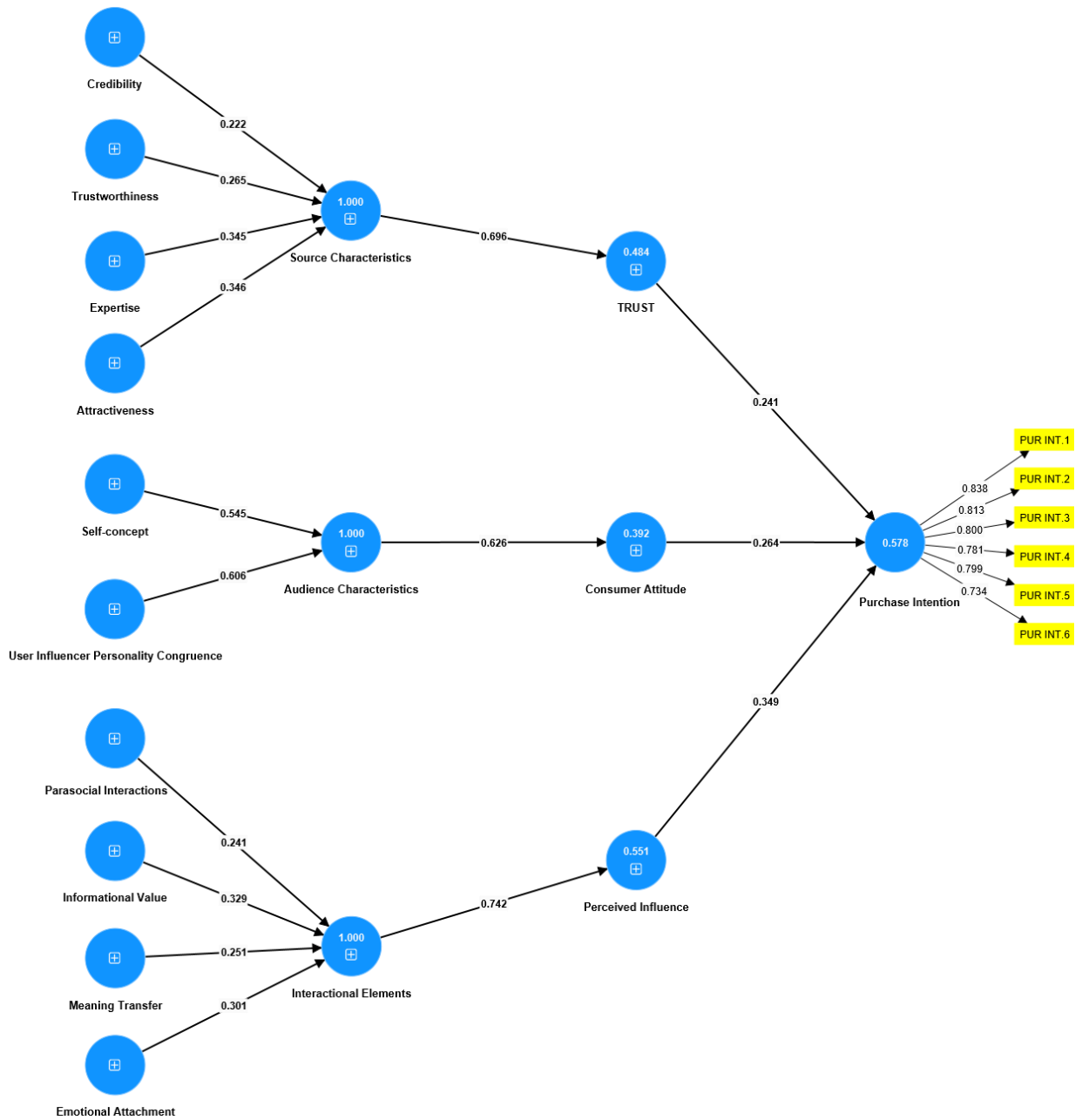


Figure 4.1 Conceptual model analysis using SmartPLS.

**Table 4.8 Measurement model Analysis for higher-order constructs**

| Constructs                    | Indicators      | Outer Loadings | Cronbach $\alpha$ | rho-a | rho-c | AVE   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Source Characteristics</b> | Credibility     | 0.859          | 0.871             | 0.887 | 0.912 | 0.723 |
|                               | Trustworthiness | 0.912          |                   |       |       |       |
|                               | Expertise       | 0.884          |                   |       |       |       |
|                               | Attractiveness  | 0.736          |                   |       |       |       |

|                                    |                                              |       |       |       |       |       |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Audience<br/>Characteristic</b> | Self-Concept                                 | 0.838 | 0.674 | 0.694 | 0.859 | 0.753 |
|                                    | User-Influencer<br>Personality<br>Congruence | 0.896 |       |       |       |       |
|                                    |                                              |       |       |       |       |       |
| <b>Interactional<br/>Elements</b>  | Parasocial<br>Interactions                   | 0.869 | 0.912 | 0.917 | 0.938 | 0.790 |
|                                    | Informational<br>Value                       | 0.906 |       |       |       |       |
|                                    | Meaning<br>Transfer                          | 0.882 |       |       |       |       |
|                                    | Emotional<br>Attachment                      | 0.899 |       |       |       |       |

**Source: Self-compiled using SmartPLS**

Following the reporting of internal reliability and convergent validity for higher-order constructs, we proceeded to examine discriminant validity using the same criteria applied to the lower-order constructs, i.e., the Fornell and Larcker criterion and heterotrait and montrait ratios. The values for the Fornell and Larcker criterion are detailed in Table 4.9. Subsequently, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios are reported in Table 4.10. While most HTMT values fall within the acceptable range of 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015) and 0.90 (Gold et al., 2001), a few values exceed 0.90. In such instances, a liberal approach was adopted. To address this, bootstrapping was performed on 10,000 subsamples using the complete slower procedure, and confidence intervals were derived using Bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrapping. Discriminant validity is achieved if the HTMT ratio falls within the lower and upper bounds of the confidence intervals. For instance, the HTMT value between audience characteristics and source characteristics is 0.973, which lies within the confidence interval bounds of 0.916 and 1.034. Similarly, the HTMT value between interactional elements and source characteristics is 0.902, falling between 0.856 and 0.945. The HTMT value between interactional elements and audience characteristics is 0.958, which is within the range of 0.894 and 1.024. The HTMT value between consumer attitude and interactional elements is 0.915, which lies between 0.875 and 0.953. These results illustrate the uniqueness of the constructs, thereby establishing discriminant validity among them. All HTMT ratio values are presented in Table 4.10.

**Table 4.9 Fornell and Larcker for higher-order constructs**

|                                             | <b>1.</b>    | <b>2.</b>    | <b>3.</b>    | <b>4.</b>    | <b>5.</b>    | <b>6.</b>    | <b>7.</b>    |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>1. Source characteristics</b>            | <b>0.850</b> |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>2. Audience Characteristics</b>          | 0.746        | <b>0.867</b> |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>3. Interactional elements</b>            | 0.796        | 0.760        | <b>0.889</b> |              |              |              |              |
| <b>4. Trust</b>                             | 0.711        | 0.616        | 0.739        | <b>0.767</b> |              |              |              |
| <b>5. Consumer attitude</b>                 | 0.705        | 0.628        | 0.702        | 0.649        | <b>0.765</b> |              |              |
| <b>6. Perceived Influence</b>               | 0.654        | 0.590        | 0.744        | 0.700        | 0.694        | <b>0.851</b> |              |
| <b>7. Purchase Intention</b>                | 0.652        | 0.601        | 0.731        | 0.657        | 0.663        | 0.701        | <b>0.795</b> |
| <i>Source: Self-compiled using SmartPLS</i> |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |

**Table 4.10 HTMT ratios for higher-order constructs**

|                                             | 1.    | 2.    | 3.    | 4.    | 5.    | 6.    | 7. |
|---------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----|
| <b>1. Source characteristics</b>            |       |       |       |       |       |       |    |
| <b>2. Audience Characteristics</b>          | 0.973 |       |       |       |       |       |    |
| <b>3. Interactional Elements</b>            | 0.902 | 0.958 |       |       |       |       |    |
| <b>4. Trust</b>                             | 0.827 | 0.814 | 0.844 |       |       |       |    |
| <b>5. Consumer attitude</b>                 | 0.838 | 0.824 | 0.915 | 0.775 |       |       |    |
| <b>6. Perceived Influence</b>               | 0.784 | 0.789 | 0.860 | 0.851 | 0.847 |       |    |
| <b>7. Purchase Intention</b>                | 0.745 | 0.769 | 0.811 | 0.766 | 0.774 | 0.827 |    |
| <b>Source: Self-compiled using SmartPLS</b> |       |       |       |       |       |       |    |

In comparison to the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, a relatively less rigorous method for assessing discriminant validity among constructs is the examination of cross-loadings. According to the recommended guidelines, an indicator variable should exhibit a loading of at least 0.70 on its corresponding construct and should not display significant cross-loading on any other construct within the measurement model (Hair et al., 2019). Table 4.11 illustrates that the loadings for all constructs exceed the

threshold of 0.70 on their associated constructs, thereby confirming the discriminant validity of the constructs within the measurement model.

**Table 4.11 Cross Loadings**

|                                                       | Source<br>Characteristics | Audience<br>Characteristics | Interactional<br>Elements | Trust        | Consumer<br>Attitude | Perceived<br>Influence | Purchase<br>Intention |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Credibility</b>                                    | <b>0.859</b>              | 0.653                       | 0.622                     | 0.653        | 0.596                | 0.539                  | 0.549                 |
| <b>Trustworthiness</b>                                | <b>0.912</b>              | 0.653                       | 0.682                     | 0.649        | 0.584                | 0.569                  | 0.591                 |
| <b>Expertise</b>                                      | <b>0.884</b>              | 0.629                       | 0.724                     | 0.627        | 0.643                | 0.582                  | 0.562                 |
| <b>Attractiveness</b>                                 | <b>0.736</b>              | 0.611                       | 0.706                     | 0.465        | 0.627                | 0.550                  | 0.520                 |
| <b>Self-Concept</b>                                   | 0.599                     | <b>0.838</b>                | 0.573                     | 0.467        | 0.485                | 0.443                  | 0.458                 |
| <b>User-Influencer<br/>Personality<br/>Congruence</b> | 0.689                     | <b>0.896</b>                | 0.733                     | 0.592        | 0.596                | 0.571                  | 0.575                 |
| <b>Parasocial<br/>Interactions</b>                    | 0.690                     | 0.658                       | <b>0.869</b>              | 0.574        | 0.663                | 0.578                  | 0.596                 |
| <b>Informational<br/>Value</b>                        | 0.660                     | 0.693                       | <b>0.906</b>              | 0.707        | 0.716                | 0.693                  | 0.685                 |
| <b>Meaning<br/>Transfer</b>                           | 0.692                     | 0.664                       | <b>0.882</b>              | 0.664        | 0.659                | 0.713                  | 0.677                 |
| <b>Emotional<br/>Attachment</b>                       | 0.686                     | 0.685                       | <b>0.899</b>              | 0.672        | 0.684                | 0.647                  | 0.633                 |
| <b>TRUST_1</b>                                        | 0.600                     | 0.503                       | 0.641                     | <b>0.754</b> | 0.634                | 0.578                  | 0.536                 |

|                  |       |       |       |              |              |              |              |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>TRUST_2</b>   | 0.522 | 0.398 | 0.518 | <b>0.750</b> | 0.574        | 0.486        | 0.458        |
| <b>TRUST_3</b>   | 0.524 | 0.468 | 0.533 | <b>0.775</b> | 0.421        | 0.480        | 0.467        |
| <b>TRUST_4</b>   | 0.495 | 0.456 | 0.513 | <b>0.760</b> | 0.401        | 0.526        | 0.510        |
| <b>TRUST_5</b>   | 0.576 | 0.528 | 0.615 | <b>0.796</b> | 0.536        | 0.602        | 0.539        |
| <b>CA_1</b>      | 0.582 | 0.570 | 0.694 | 0.552        | <b>0.778</b> | 0.550        | 0.543        |
| <b>CA_2</b>      | 0.577 | 0.509 | 0.643 | 0.498        | <b>0.809</b> | 0.534        | 0.524        |
| <b>CA_3</b>      | 0.493 | 0.438 | 0.553 | 0.443        | <b>0.729</b> | 0.482        | 0.452        |
| <b>CA_4</b>      | 0.476 | 0.360 | 0.540 | 0.442        | <b>0.730</b> | 0.507        | 0.476        |
| <b>CA_6</b>      | 0.557 | 0.496 | 0.619 | 0.535        | <b>0.778</b> | 0.576        | 0.532        |
| <b>PER INF_1</b> | 0.536 | 0.501 | 0.632 | 0.566        | 0.612        | <b>0.852</b> | 0.581        |
| <b>PER INF_2</b> | 0.571 | 0.511 | 0.645 | 0.625        | 0.587        | <b>0.845</b> | 0.616        |
| <b>PER INF_3</b> | 0.564 | 0.495 | 0.621 | 0.596        | 0.573        | <b>0.856</b> | 0.592        |
| <b>PUR INT_1</b> | 0.572 | 0.553 | 0.646 | 0.561        | 0.572        | 0.621        | <b>0.838</b> |
| <b>PUR INT_2</b> | 0.520 | 0.469 | 0.577 | 0.504        | 0.512        | 0.560        | <b>0.813</b> |

|                                                    |       |       |       |       |       |       |              |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| <b>PUR INT_3</b>                                   | 0.495 | 0.487 | 0.580 | 0.525 | 0.523 | 0.538 | <b>0.800</b> |
| <b>PUR INT_4</b>                                   | 0.481 | 0.420 | 0.558 | 0.497 | 0.513 | 0.520 | <b>0.781</b> |
| <b>PUR INT_5</b>                                   | 0.535 | 0.463 | 0.582 | 0.547 | 0.543 | 0.564 | <b>0.799</b> |
| <b>PUR INT_6</b>                                   | 0.501 | 0.465 | 0.537 | 0.496 | 0.494 | 0.533 | <b>0.734</b> |
| <i><b>Source: Self-compiled using SmartPLS</b></i> |       |       |       |       |       |       |              |

#### 4.6 Hypothesis Testing

The first objective was to analyse the impact of source characteristics on trust towards beauty vloggers. Hypothesis H1 was related to the first objective. The second objective examines the effect of audience characteristics on consumer attitudes in relation to marketing by beauty vloggers. Hypothesis H2 was related to the second objective. The third objective investigates the impact of interactional elements used by beauty vloggers towards perceived influence on consumer. Hypothesis H3 is related to the third objective. The fourth objective is to analyse the influence of trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence on consumers' purchase intentions. Hypotheses H4a, H4b, and H4c were related to the fourth objective. The fifth and last objective of the study was to design a model for understanding the impact of source characteristics, audience characteristics, and interactional elements on purchase intention, incorporating the intervening roles of trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence. Hypotheses H5a, H5b, and H5c were related to the fifth objective. All the hypotheses were investigated using PLS SEM, under which structural model assessment was done for evaluating the hypotheses.

The first hypothesis concerns the impact of source characteristics on trust towards beauty vloggers. Source characteristics is the first higher-order constructed, it is measured using four lower-order constructs, namely, credibility, trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness. The factor loading for credibility, trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness is above 0.709, and it is. A path coefficient value of at least 0.1 is necessary to include a particular effect within the model. The path coefficient value between source characteristics and trust is 0.711,

and the value of t statistics is above 1.96 (t stats = 25.045), indicating a significant impact. The results show that there is a significant impact of source characteristics on trust ( $p < 0.05$ ) (see table 4.12). Hence, H1 is accepted.

| <b>Table 4.12 Result of Hypothesis 1</b>    |                |                    |                           |                     |                |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
|                                             | <b>B-Value</b> | <b>Sample Mean</b> | <b>Standard deviation</b> | <b>t-statistics</b> | <b>p-value</b> |
| Source Characteristics > Trust              | 0.711          | 0.712              | 0.028                     | 25.045              | 0.000          |
| <b>Source: Self-compiled using SmartPLS</b> |                |                    |                           |                     |                |

The second hypothesis deals with the effect of audience characteristics on consumer attitudes towards beauty vloggers. In the proposed model, audience characteristics is second higher-order construct. It is measured using two sub-constructs, namely, self-concept and user-influencer personality congruence. The factor loading for self-concept and user-influencer personality congruence is 0.838 and 0.896, respectively, and the value of t statistics for audience characteristics is above 1.96 (t stats = 18.305), indicating a significant positive relationship between the two variables. The path coefficient results show that there is a significant impact of audience characteristics on consumer attitude ( $p < 0.05$ ) (see table 4.13). Hence, H2 is accepted.

| <b>Table 4.13 Result of Hypothesis 2</b>     |                |                    |                           |                     |                |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
|                                              | <b>B-Value</b> | <b>Sample Mean</b> | <b>Standard deviation</b> | <b>t-statistics</b> | <b>p-value</b> |
| Audience Characteristics > Consumer attitude | 0.628          | 0.629              | 0.034                     | 18.305              | 0.000          |
| <b>Source: Self-compiled using SmartPLS</b>  |                |                    |                           |                     |                |

The third hypothesis examines the influence of interactional elements used by beauty vloggers to increase their perceived influence over consumers. Just like the other two independent variables, interactional element is also a higher-order construct. It is measured through four lower-order constructs, namely, parasocial interactions, informational value, meaning transfer, and emotional attachment. The factor loading of all the sub-constructs used to measure interactional elements is above 0.709. The t statistics value of the interactional element is above 1.96 (t stats = 30.047), and the path coefficient value is also significant at

the 5% interval level, showing a significant impact of interactional elements on perceived influence (see table 4.14). Therefore, H3 is accepted.

**Table 4.14 Result of Hypothesis 3**

|                                              | <b>B-Value</b> | <b>Sample Mean</b> | <b>Standard deviation</b> | <b>t-statistics</b> | <b>p-value</b> |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Interactional Elements > Perceived Influence | 0.744          | 0.745              | 0.025                     | 30.047              | 0.000          |
| <b>Source: Self-compiled using SmartPLS</b>  |                |                    |                           |                     |                |

The fourth hypothesis concerns the impact of trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence on consumers' purchase intentions. The factor loading of all the items of trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence are above the threshold value of 0.709. The t-statistics value for trust is 4.490, for consumer attitude it is 4.509, and for perceived influence it is 5.475 (see table 4.15). The path coefficient value of trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence is also significant at the 5% level, showing a significant effect on purchase intention. Therefore, H4a, H4b, and H4c are accepted.

**Table 4.15 Result of Hypothesis 4**

|                                             | <b>B-Value</b> | <b>Sample Mean</b> | <b>Standard deviation</b> | <b>t-statistics</b> | <b>p-value</b> |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Trust > Purchase Intention                  | 0.242          | 0.243              | 0.054                     | 4.490               | 0.000          |
| Consumer Attitude > Purchase Intention      | 0.265          | 0.267              | 0.059                     | 4.509               | 0.000          |
| Perceived Influence > Purchase Intention    | 0.348          | 0.346              | 0.064                     | 5.475               | 0.000          |
| <b>Source: Self-compiled using SmartPLS</b> |                |                    |                           |                     |                |

The fifth and last hypothesis concerns designing a model that incorporates all the independent variables (source characteristics, audience characteristics, and interactional elements) along with their sub-constructs and mediating variables (trust, consumer attitude, and perceived influence) and their combined impact on purchase intention. The model is designed and evaluated in PLS SEM using the software SmartPLS 4.1 version. Bootstrapping on 10,000 sub-samples was done to evaluate the model. All the path coefficient values are shown in Table 4.16 and Figure 4.2. The t-statistics values of all the variables are above 1.96,

indicating the significance of the model. The p value of all the variables is less than 0.05, showing a significant impact on the dependent variable (purchase intention). Since both the direct and indirect effects are significant at the 5% level, this is the case of complementary partial mediation (Zhao et al., 2010; 2014), indicating that there is complementary partial mediation of trust between source characteristics and purchase intention, complementary partial mediation of consumer attitude between audience characteristics and purchase intention, and at last complementary partial mediation of perceived influence between interactional elements and purchase intention. Hence, supporting the hypotheses H5a, H5b, and H5c. Additionally, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) for each endogenous latent variable was investigated. The  $R^2$  value explains the variance in the endogenous variables caused by the exogenous variable. The  $R^2$  of all endogenous constructs, trust (0.505), consumer attitude (0.394), perceived influence (0.553), and purchase intention (0.578), were moderately significant, as visible in Table 4.16 and Figure 4.2. Any value of  $R^2$  0.20 or above is viewed as significant in the behavioural sciences, as in the social sciences we are measuring someone's behaviour (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2017; Barbić et al., 2018; Shiva et al., 2020). Furthermore, in the latest marketing research using PLS-SEM models, the goodness of fit of the model is assessed by examining the Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) (Hair et al., 2020), and the value should be less than 0.08. The value of SRMR in the present model is 0.069, which is below the threshold value of 0.08 is reported in Table 4.16. The satisfying critical SRMR value shows that the model under study has sufficient explanatory power (Henseler et al., 2016).

Additionally, to further evaluate the robustness of the model, the impact of gender was examined as a control variable on the dependent variable. This step was crucial to determining whether gender differences could influence the overall findings of the study. The analysis revealed that gender does not have a statistically significant effect on the direct relationship between the variables ( $\beta = -0.044$ ,  $p = 0.466$ ), indicating that the influence of gender is negligible (Collier, 2020). By including gender as a control variable, the study ensures that the observed relationships are not confounded by gender differences, thus enhancing the validity of the results. The lack of significant gender influence suggests that the proposed model and its relationships are consistent across different gender groups, reinforcing the generalizability of the results.

**Table 4.16 Result of Hypothesis 5**

|                                                                   | B-Value  | Sample Mean | Standard deviation | t-statistics | p-value |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------|--------------------|--------------|---------|
| Direct Effects                                                    |          |             |                    |              |         |
| Source Characteristics > Trust                                    | 0.711    | 0.712       | 0.028              | 25.045       | 0.000   |
| Audience Characteristics > Consumer attitude                      | 0.628    | 0.629       | 0.034              | 18.305       | 0.000   |
| Interactional Elements > Perceived Influence                      | 0.744    | 0.745       | 0.025              | 30.047       | 0.000   |
| Trust > Purchase Intention                                        | 0.242    | 0.243       | 0.054              | 4.490        | 0.000   |
| Consumer Attitude > Purchase Intention                            | 0.265    | 0.267       | 0.059              | 4.509        | 0.000   |
| Perceived Influence > Purchase Intention                          | 0.348    | 0.346       | 0.064              | 5.475        | 0.000   |
| Indirect Effects                                                  |          |             |                    |              |         |
| Source Characteristics > Trust > Purchase Intention               | 0.172    | 0.173       | 0.039              | 4.377        | 0.000   |
| Audience Characteristics > Consumer Attitude > Purchase Intention | 0.166    | 0.168       | 0.040              | 4.187        | 0.000   |
| Interactional Elements > Perceived Influence> Purchase Intention  | 0.259    | 0.258       | 0.050              | 5.209        | 0.000   |
|                                                                   | R Square |             | Adjusted R square  |              | SRMR    |
| Trust                                                             | 0.505    |             | 0.504              |              | 0.058   |
| Consumer Attitude                                                 | 0.394    |             | 0.393              |              |         |
| Perceived Influence                                               | 0.553    |             | 0.552              |              |         |
| Purchase Intention                                                | 0.578    |             | 0.576              |              |         |
| Source: Author’s calculation using SmartPLS                       |          |             |                    |              |         |

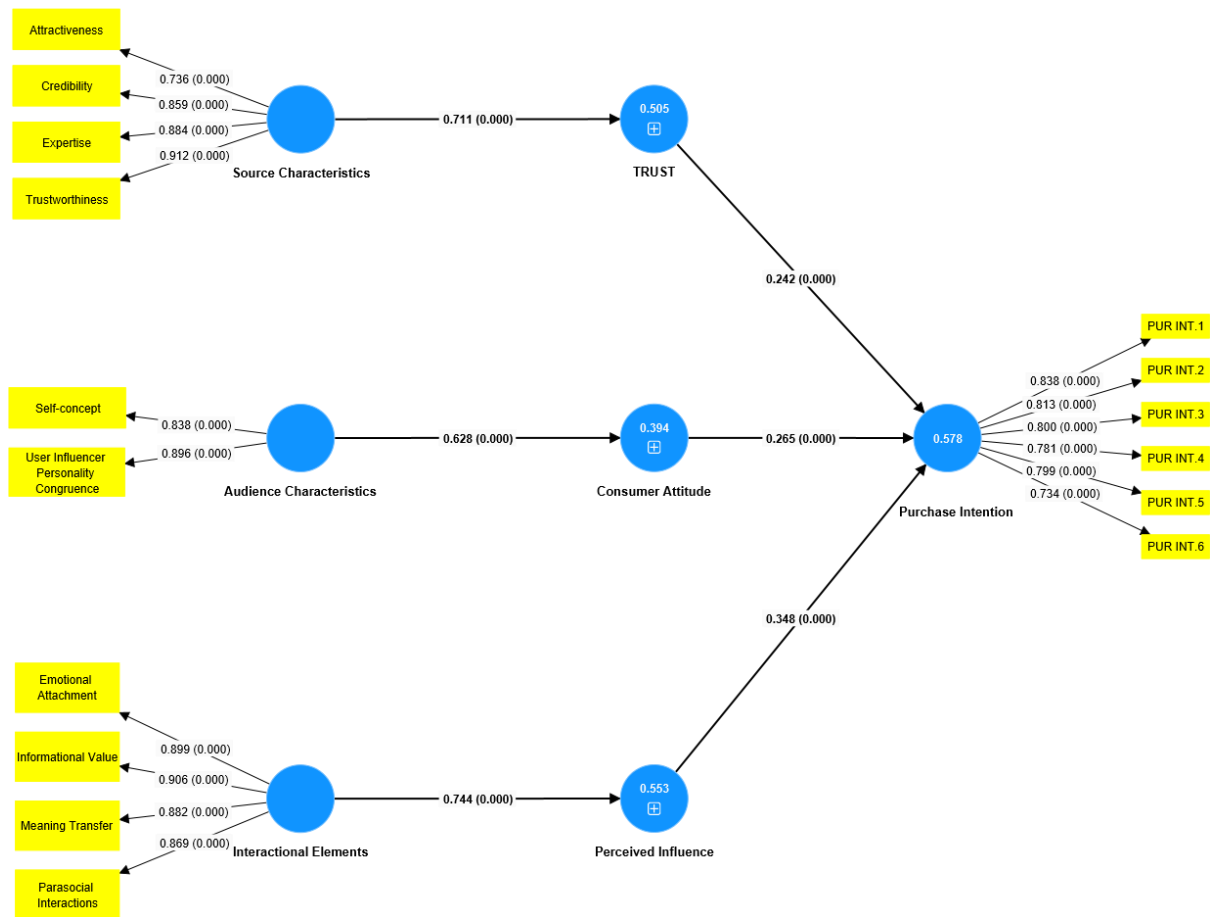


Figure 4.2 Structural model analysis and statistical relation between variables

#### 4.7 PLS Predict

Effect size ( $f^2$ ) quantifies the impact of exogenous variables on the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) of endogenous variables, providing insight into the relative importance of predictor variables within the model. According to Cohen (1988),  $f^2$  values should exceed 0.02 to be considered meaningful. Specifically, an  $f^2$  range of 0.02 to 0.15 indicates a weak effect, 0.15 to 0.35 signifies a moderate effect, and values above 0.35 denote a strong effect. In the present study, the analysis reveals that source characteristics exert a strong effect on trust ( $f^2 = 1.021$ ), audience characteristics have a substantial impact on consumer attitude ( $f^2 = 0.650$ ), and interactional elements significantly influence perceived influence ( $f^2 = 1.238$ ). Conversely, trust ( $f^2 = 0.063$ ), consumer attitude ( $f^2 = 0.077$ ), and perceived influence ( $f^2 = 0.118$ ) demonstrate only weak effects on purchase intention. To evaluate the predictive relevance of the model, the  $Q^2$  predict values are calculated. The  $Q^2$  predict values for the endogenous variables—trust ( $Q^2 = 0.501$ ), consumer attitude ( $Q^2 = 0.388$ ), perceived

influence ( $Q^2 = 0.549$ ), and purchase intention ( $Q^2 = 0.495$ )—are all greater than zero, indicating the model's predictive validity. The PLSpredict procedure, which employs a ten-fold cross-validation method, is used to estimate predictive error metrics for the indicators of endogenous variables (Shmueli et al., 2016). The  $Q^2$  predict values for each indicator of the endogenous variables are reported in Table 4.17, all exceeding zero, further supporting the model's predictive relevance.

Given that the predictive errors are not symmetrically distributed, mean absolute error (MAE) values are examined to establish the predictive accuracy of the proposed model. However, root mean square error (RMSE) values are also presented in the table for comprehensive evaluation. In both MAE and RMSE terms, the indicators demonstrate lower prediction errors compared to a linear regression model, indicating a higher predictive power of the PLS-SEM model (Shmueli et al., 2019; Singh & Bala, 2020). The detailed values of PLS-SEM\_RMSE, PLS-SEM\_MAE, LM\_RMSE, and LM\_MAE for each indicator of the endogenous variable (purchase intention) are provided in Table 4.17, underscoring the superior predictive performance of the proposed model. This rigorous assessment highlights the robustness and reliability of the PLS-SEM approach in handling complex relationships and predicting outcomes effectively.

**Table 4.17 PLS Predict Analysis**

|                                             | <b>Q2 Predict</b> | <b>PLS<br/>SEM_RMSE</b> | <b>LM_RMSE</b> | <b>PLS<br/>SEM_MAE</b> | <b>LM_MAE</b> |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------|------------------------|---------------|
| <b>PUR INT_1</b>                            | 0.381             | 0.762                   | 0.817          | 0.571                  | 0.606         |
| <b>PUR INT_2</b>                            | 0.306             | 0.794                   | 0.865          | 0.587                  | 0.641         |
| <b>PUR INT_3</b>                            | 0.305             | 0.770                   | 0.840          | 0.575                  | 0.634         |
| <b>PUR INT_4</b>                            | 0.273             | 0.769                   | 0.864          | 0.580                  | 0.646         |
| <b>PUR INT_5</b>                            | 0.311             | 0.710                   | 0.760          | 0.543                  | 0.573         |
| <b>PUR INT_6</b>                            | 0.276             | 0.758                   | 0.813          | 0.566                  | 0.603         |
| <b>Source: Self-Compiled by the authors</b> |                   |                         |                |                        |               |

## 4.8 Discussion

Beauty vloggers significantly impact consumers' purchase decisions, often steering them towards well-known and prestigious brands. These brands, when endorsed by prominent beauty vloggers, become status symbols, particularly among youth. This trend is driven by factors such as rising disposable incomes, the growth of the upper middle class, steady economic progress, and favourable demographics, making India an increasingly attractive market for brands. Indian consumers are also showing a willingness to experiment with various brands, prompting many companies to adopt influencer marketing strategies to target this demographic. The study, conducted in North India, aimed to provide in-depth insights into the effectiveness of influencer marketing by examining the factors shaping consumers' perceptions and responses. It focused on the contiguous states of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, and Delhi (NCR). A total of 461 young adults participated in this research. Participants were given a brief overview of the study and subsequently asked to complete a structured questionnaire. This approach provided valuable data on how beauty vlogger endorsements influence consumer behaviour in the Indian market. Table 4.18 displays the results of the hypotheses in the present study.

The study aimed to assess the impact of source characteristics on trust towards beauty vloggers. The findings of the present study reveal that source characteristics, such as credibility, trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness, significantly influence trust in beauty vloggers. The results indicate that consumers place their trust in the beauty vloggers they follow, provided they perceive these vloggers as authentic sources of information and have confidence in their opinions. These findings align with previous studies (Kim & Kim, 2021; Lee & Watkins, 2016; Lee & Lee, 2022; Sokolova & Kefi, 2019; Manchanda et al., 2022; Lou & Yuan, 2019). The research indicates that the credibility, trustworthiness, and expertise of beauty vloggers are more influential than attractiveness. Trustworthiness is particularly vital in influencer marketing, significantly affecting followers' decision-making and brand evaluations (Fowler & Thomas, 2023). Influencers with expertise provide valuable insights, instilling confidence in followers to choose endorsed brands and products (Alboqami, 2023). Consumers also feel more connected with influencers perceived as unbiased and authentic information providers. These results are consistent with Nosita and Lestari (2019) and Ramadanty et al. (2020). Balabanis and Chatzopoulou (2019) found that trustworthiness and expertise significantly affect purchase intention, while attractiveness does not. However, Lou and Yuan (2018) conducted a comprehensive analysis of trustworthiness,

expertise, and attractiveness, revealing that purchase intention is primarily influenced by trustworthiness, while expertise and attractiveness have negligible impact. Nonetheless, the importance of attractiveness in endorsing cosmetic products cannot be ignored, as attractive sources are more likely to persuade people to purchase these products (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Kim & Kim, 2021). Credibility is also associated with the reliability of an information source, with authenticity and transparency being key factors contributing to positive outcomes in social media marketing (Mabkhot et al., 2022). Findings by Torres et al. (2019) also demonstrated a positive impact of source attractiveness on purchase intention when endorsed by influencers, and Ladhari et al. (2020) highlighted the significant impact of source expertise on purchase intention. Despite the significance of source characteristics in influencing consumer behavior, previous studies yield ambiguous results regarding the efficacy of the credibility model (Lee & Watkins, 2016; Torres et al., 2019; AlFarraj et al., 2021). This ambiguity suggests the existence of an alternative mediating factor that transmits the effect of beauty vloggers' attributes on consumer behaviour (Hayes, 2017). Hence, the current study examines the mediating role of trust. The results reveal that if consumers perceive beauty vloggers as credible, trustworthy, expert, and attractive, they are likely to develop trust in them and subsequently exhibit loyalty. Consumers frequently visit the profiles of their preferred beauty vloggers for product recommendations, fostering long-term partnerships that marketers can leverage for product promotion. The findings also illustrate that there is partial complementary mediation between source characteristics and purchase intention, demonstrating that consumers are more likely to be influenced by beauty vloggers when they have higher trust in them. Thus, trust plays a mediating role in the mechanism of deploying beauty vlogger resources to influence consumer behaviour. These results are consistent with studies that show the mediating effect of trust in different domains, including influencer marketing in the US (Kim & Kim, 2021) and the tourism sector (Pop et al., 2022; Seçilmiş et al., 2022). The findings underscore the pivotal role of trust as a mediating factor in the relationship between source characteristics and consumer purchase intention, highlighting its importance in the effectiveness of beauty vlogger marketing strategies. These findings also concern about hypothesis H5a and the first part of research question 5 (RQ5).

The present study aimed to measure the impact of audience characteristics on forming a favourable consumer attitude towards beauty vloggers. This study utilized self-congruency theory as a foundational framework to gain an in-depth understanding of the concept. The findings indicate that both dimensions of audience characteristics, namely self-concept and

user-influencer personality congruence, significantly contribute to forming favourable attitudes towards beauty vloggers. The results of the present study contradict previous findings, which suggested no direct impact of self-concept and user-influencer personality congruence on consumer behaviour (Zogaj et al., 2021b; Pradhan et al., 2016; Choi & Rifon, 2012). However, Xu and Pratt (2018) demonstrated that young consumers often view the celebrities they admire as role models, incorporating these celebrities' values into their own identity formation. Consequently, purchasing products endorsed by these celebrities or visiting celebrity-endorsed destinations enables consumers to adopt these values, thereby aiding in the construction of a more satisfying self-concept. Similarly, Mettenheim and Wiedmann (2021) showed that a high degree of personality congruence leads fans to feel a stronger connection with the celebrity, trust their endorsements, and be influenced by their opinions and actions. These findings support the results of the present study. Moreover, much of the existing literature has emphasized the congruence between the personalities of the celebrity/influencer and the brand. However, it is equally important to study the impact of congruence between the personalities of influencers and their respective followers. This perspective shifts the focus to the interpersonal dynamics between influencers and their audience, offering a more nuanced understanding of influencer marketing.

The present research addresses the mediation of consumer attitude between audience characteristics and purchase intention. The results reveal significant complementary partial mediation of consumer attitude between audience characteristics and purchase intention. This suggests that when customers develop a favourable perception of influencers, communication barriers are reduced, leading to an increased intention to make purchases. Consumers tend to emulate the actions of their role models, with whom they perceive a sense of likeness (Mettenheim & Wiedmann, 2021), bridging the gap between audience characteristics and purchase intention. Additionally, if consumers have a favourable attitude towards beauty vloggers, the impact of self-concept and personality congruence on consumer behaviour is enhanced, demonstrating the effective mediating role of consumer attitude. These findings align with the study by Pradhan et al. (2023). Overall, the audience's self-concept and the congruence between the vlogger's personality and that of the audience indirectly influence purchasing decisions. By identifying with the vlogger's personality and finding alignment with their self-concept, consumers are more likely to form a favourable attitude towards the vlogger, believe in their recommendations, and be influenced to purchase endorsed products. Thus, understanding the interplay between self-concept and personality congruence is

essential for comprehending the dynamics of vlogger-led marketing. Moreover, the present study highlights the importance of the influencer-audience relationship, emphasizing that congruence in personality traits fosters a sense of connection and trust. This connection is pivotal for the effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies. When consumers perceive influencers as reflections of their own identities, they are more likely to engage with their content and act upon their recommendations. This insight underscores the necessity for marketers to carefully select influencers whose personalities resonate with their target audiences, thereby maximizing the impact of their marketing campaigns. The findings provide a nuanced understanding of how self-congruency theory applies in the context of influencer marketing, offering a robust framework for future research in this domain.

The present study aimed to measure the impact of interactional elements utilized by beauty vloggers in enhancing their perceived influence over their followers. The present study employed three theoretical frameworks to gain a comprehensive understanding: parasocial interaction theory, meaning transfer theory, and social exchange theory. Parasocial interaction theory and meaning transfer theory were used to identify two sub-constructs under interactional elements, while social exchange theory elucidated the dynamics of these elements in influencer marketing. This theoretical framework helps to comprehend how parties interact by exchanging perceived costs and benefits (Kim & Kim, 2021). In influencer marketing, this framework posits that consumers engage with influencers expecting to derive value, particularly in entertainment and knowledge. The nature of the influencer-follower relationship is shaped by continuous exchanges and mutually obtained benefits. When exchanges are recurrent, identifying the specific interaction that solidifies a strong relationship becomes challenging. The present study examined four sub-constructs of interactional elements: parasocial interactions, emotional attachment, meaning transfer, and informational value. The findings reveal that all four sub-constructs exhibit nearly identical empirical impacts. Parasocial interaction (PSI) was originally used by traditional media such as TV and radio (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Similarly, meaning transfer was initially studied within the context of celebrity endorsements. However, with the advent of social media and technological advancements, influencers have become a new reference group with whom consumers can more easily identify compared to traditional celebrities. Consequently, PSI and meaning transfer have expanded beyond conventional media, as beauty vloggers cultivate influential, illusionary relationships with their audiences. The analysis underscores the importance of parasocial interactions in influencer-audience dynamics, promoting reciprocity.

Social exchange theory suggests that followers reciprocate the attention and engagement provided by influencers by valuing and adopting their recommendations, thereby amplifying the influencer's perceived authority towards the brands they endorse. Meaning transfer also emerges as a crucial mechanism through which influencers enhance their perceived influence by associating products or brands with positive attributes or values. Influencers possess unique identities and personal brands shaped by their beliefs, lifestyles, and areas of expertise (Holiday et al., 2021). When brands partner with influencers, they aim to capitalize on the favourable meanings linked to the influencer's persona and transfer these meanings to their products. Social exchange theory posits that individuals are motivated to maintain relationships that enhance their self-image or social status. When followers perceive that using a product endorsed by their favourite beauty vlogger aligns with their desired identity or values, they are more likely to adopt the product, thereby reinforcing the influencer's authority and influence. This phenomenon highlights the power of influencers to shape consumer preferences and influence broader cultural narratives and norms through the products and brands they endorse. The results revealed that, emotional attachment and informational value also play vital roles in enhancing the influence of beauty vloggers. Sánchez-Fernández and Jiménez-Castillo (2021) demonstrated the significant impact of informational value and emotional attachment on creating perceived influence on consumers' buying intentions, underscoring the role of perceived influence as a mediator. They also highlighted the interdependence between influencers and their followers, examining it through the lens of social exchange theory. They found that followers reciprocate favourable thoughts, emotions, and actions towards the brands/products suggested by influencers when they perceive a benefit from their connection with the influencer. Thus, social exchange theory asserts the importance of informational value in fostering trust and emotional attachment within online communities. These connections are established and nurtured through continuous interactions revolving around meaningful shared values (Holiday et al., 2021). Overall, the insights gleaned from this study highlight the multifaceted nature of perceived influence in influencer marketing, with parasocial interactions, emotional attachment, meaning transfer, and informational value each playing distinct yet interconnected roles in shaping followers' perceptions of influencers' authority and influence. By elucidating these mechanisms through the theoretical framework of social exchange theory, this study provides valuable insights for marketers seeking to leverage influencer relationships to drive consumer behaviour and brand engagement in an increasingly

competitive digital landscape. This comprehensive understanding is crucial for developing more effective influencer marketing strategies.

The present research also highlights the mediation effect of perceived influence. The results demonstrated that there is a significant positive complementary partial mediation of perceived influence between interactional elements and purchase intention. Perceived influence, as elucidated by Wang and Lin (2011), encapsulates the subjective belief held by the audience regarding an endorser's ability to sway opinions, behaviours, or purchasing decisions. In the realm of consumer behaviour, the perception that a message originates from an opinion leader or a renowned personality, such as a prominent beauty vlogger, can significantly alter the listener's perception of a specific product or brand (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). The findings align with the study conducted by Holiday et al. (2021), who revealed that when individuals perceive the influencer as embodying their desired lifestyle, aesthetic preferences, or ethical beliefs, they are more inclined to trust and resonate with the content and recommendations provided by the influencer. Additionally, Sánchez-Fernández and Jiménez-Castillo (2021) demonstrated that by curating content that is informative, entertaining, and relatable, influencers establish themselves as trusted authorities in the beauty and cosmetics realm. Their audiences, comprising individuals seeking guidance, inspiration, and validation, frequently turn to them for product recommendations, makeup tutorials, and skincare advice, thereby increasing the purchase intention for the endorsed products. Moreover, as noted by Foroughi et al. (2023), influencers have the ability to evoke strong emotional responses from their audience, eliciting feelings of admiration, aspiration, and identification. These emotional connections deepen the bond between the influencer and their audience, fostering a sense of loyalty, engagement, and receptivity to their recommendations. Influencers who leverage their personal experiences, struggles, and triumphs in their content resonate more deeply with their audience, creating a sense of empathy and understanding that further amplifies their perceived influence (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). In sum, perceived influence in the context of influencer marketing is a multifaceted phenomenon shaped by factors such as parasocial interaction, informational value, emotional attachment, and meaning transfer. As influencers adeptly navigate these dynamics and cultivate authentic connections with their audience, their perceived influence becomes a potent force driving consumer attitudes, behaviours, and purchasing decisions, highlighting the mediation effect of perceived influence. The comprehensive insights provided by this study underscore the critical role of perceived influence in shaping consumer behaviour,

offering valuable guidance for marketers aiming to leverage influencer relationships effectively in the ever-evolving digital landscape.

**Table 4.18 Hypothesis status**

| <b>Hypothesis</b>                                                                                                                                     | <b>Status</b>                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>H1: Source characteristics has a positive impact on trust towards beauty vloggers.</i>                                                             | <i>Empirically Supported</i> |
| <i>H2: Audience characteristics has a positive impact on consumer attitude towards beauty vloggers.</i>                                               | <i>Empirically Supported</i> |
| <i>H3: Interactional elements used by beauty vloggers has a positive impact on perceived influence on beauty vloggers.</i>                            | <i>Empirically Supported</i> |
| <i>H4a: Trust on beauty vlogger has a positive impact on purchase intention towards the products used/endorsed by beauty vloggers.</i>                | <i>Empirically Supported</i> |
| <i>H4b: Consumer attitude on beauty vlogger has a positive impact on purchase intention towards the products used/endorsed by beauty vloggers.</i>    | <i>Empirically Supported</i> |
| <i>H4c: Perceived influence on beauty vloggers has a positive impact on purchase intention towards the products used/endorsed by beauty vloggers.</i> | <i>Empirically Supported</i> |
| <i>H5a: Trust mediates the relation between source characteristics and purchase intention.</i>                                                        | <i>Empirically Supported</i> |
| <i>H5b: Consumer attitude mediated the relation between audience characteristics and purchase intention.</i>                                          | <i>Empirically Supported</i> |
| <i>H5c: Perceived influence mediates the relation between interactional elements and purchase intention.</i>                                          | <i>Empirically Supported</i> |
| <b>Source: Self-compilation</b>                                                                                                                       |                              |

#### **4.9 Summary of the Chapter**

The fourth chapter is dedicated to testing the research hypotheses. Prior to initiating the analysis process, it is essential to check for common method bias (CMB), multicollinearity, and normal distribution of the data. This chapter provides a comprehensive account of descriptive statistics, CMB assessment, data diagnostics, and the evaluation of reliability and validity. It subsequently details the assessment of the measurement model and the structural

model. It also shows the predictive relevance of the proposed model. The findings are systematically presented in alignment with the research objectives and hypotheses. Each hypothesis's status is determined based on the study's results. Additionally, these findings are juxtaposed with those from existing studies to draw comparisons and highlight any consistencies or discrepancies. By integrating these comparisons, the chapter not only contextualizes the results within the broader field of study but also underscores the unique contributions and implications of the current research.

## Chapter 5

### Implications, Limitations, and Future Research Directions

Social media encompasses a diverse array of internet-based platforms designed to facilitate the creation and exchange of user-generated content, rooted in the principles and technology of Web 2.0 (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). This expansive category includes platforms such as social networking, microblogging, video blogging, podcasts, social blogs, weblogs, image sharing, social bookmarking, and rating systems. The increasing ubiquity of technology and internet usage has resulted in the widespread adoption of social media. Initially developed for leisure and entertainment purposes, social media has evolved into a pivotal marketing tool, gradually supplanting traditional advertising channels such as television, newspapers, magazines, and radio (Haenlein et al., 2020). Social media platforms have emerged as indispensable marketing tools for establishing connections with potential consumers and nurturing enduring relationships (Ladhari et al., 2020). Numerous users actively contribute to online content creation by sharing product reviews, personal experiences, opinions, and ideas, effectively assuming the role of opinion leaders for their followers. The rise in prominence of social media influencers has given rise to a novel marketing strategy known as "influencer marketing," wherein brands collaborate with influencers to endorse and showcase their products to a broader audience (Feng et al., 2020). This innovative approach has gained traction in recent years, yet research in this domain remains relatively scarce. Given the substantial financial investments made by brands in advertising, comprehending the effectiveness of influencer marketing is paramount.

To ascertain the efficacy of influencer marketing, particularly within the domain of beauty vlogging, this research examines the impact of beauty vloggers' content on consumer responses, focusing on both affective and behavioural dimensions. Given the scarcity of studies addressing the effectiveness of vlogger-led marketing in emerging Asian markets, particularly in India, where social media consumption is burgeoning and the cosmetics industry is experiencing rapid growth, this study seeks to shed light on Indian consumers' attitudes and behaviours toward beauty vlogger marketing. Drawing upon existing literature, the research posits hypotheses concerning the relationships between various variables, with purchase intention serving as the principal dependent variable to gauge the effectiveness of beauty vlogger marketing. By treating source characteristics, audience characteristics, and

interactional elements as distinct drivers of execution, the study aims to bridge existing research gaps. Theoretical frameworks are employed to elucidate consumers' responses to brand endorsements by beauty vloggers. The ensuing chapter delineates the implications of the study findings and delineates avenues for future research.

### **5.1 Theoretical Implications**

Given the prevalence of content consumption on social media platforms, particularly within the entertainment sector, this research is both timely and crucial. This study proposes and empirically tests a model to elucidate the factors influencing consumer perceptions and responses toward beauty vlogger marketing, grounded in established theoretical frameworks. The present study has incorporated five existing theories: source credibility theory, self-congruency theory, parasocial interaction theory, meaning transfer theory, and social exchange theory. The source credibility theory underscores the importance of the trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness of beauty vloggers in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviours. Self-congruency theory highlights the alignment between consumers' self-concept and the vlogger's image, influencing their identification and engagement. Parasocial interaction theory provides insights into the one-sided, yet impactful, relationships consumers form with beauty vloggers, enhancing emotional attachment and loyalty. Meaning transfer theory explains how vloggers can imbue products with symbolic meanings that resonate with consumers, thereby affecting their purchasing decisions. Lastly, social exchange theory offers a lens to understand the reciprocal nature of interactions between beauty vloggers and their audiences, where perceived value and benefits drive consumer responses. By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the research offers a comprehensive understanding of how beauty vlogger marketing influences consumer behaviour, providing valuable insights for both academic inquiry and practical marketing strategies.

Previous scholars have employed various theoretical models to elucidate the impact of influencer mechanisms on consumer behaviour, such as the credibility model (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017), source attractiveness model (Kim & Kim, 2021), parasocial interaction theory (Lee & Lee, 2022), elaboration likelihood model of persuasion (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020), self-congruency theory (Xu & Pratt, 2018), persuasion knowledge (Myers et al., 2024), and uses and gratification theory (Dolan et al., 2016), among others. Notably, this study is pioneering in its application of social exchange theory within the context of

interactional elements employed by beauty vloggers. The burgeoning domain of beauty vlogger marketing in digital spaces underscores the need to extend social exchange theory to encompass the intricacies of online interactions. Traditional applications of social exchange theory have predominantly centred on face-to-face exchanges. However, the ubiquity of influencer-follower interactions mediated through digital platforms necessitates a refined understanding of how digital interactions influence reciprocity and perceived influence (Ahmad et al., 2023). Therefore, this study significantly contributes to the extant literature on the evolving phenomenon of influencer marketing by integrating social exchange theory with the digital landscape, offering new insights into the mechanisms of influencer marketing and its impact on consumer behaviour.

Prior scholarly research has predominantly focused on identifying the credible characteristics exhibited by social media influencers, typically studying three dimensions of credibility: trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness (Ohanian, 1990; Munnukka et al., 2016; Lou & Kim, 2019; Yuan & Lou, 2020). However, limiting the measure of credibility to these dimensions fails to capture its full essence. Thus, it is imperative to consider credibility as a distinct dimension and a critical attribute of source characteristics for the effective communication of messages. Furthermore, previous studies have not extended their investigation to explore the potential use of vloggers' characteristics to enhance the efficacy of influencer marketing. This empirical research fills this gap by employing trust as a mediator, providing empirical evidence that supports the amplified impact of the source characteristics of beauty vloggers on consumers' purchase intentions. This comprehensive approach underscores the vital role of source characteristics in the influencer marketing paradigm, thereby advancing the understanding of its mechanisms and effects.

Previous literature has predominantly focused on the effectiveness of attractiveness in influencer marketing, particularly for cosmetic products, examining its direct and indirect effects on consumer behaviour (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). However, the present study shifts the emphasis to audience characteristics, specifically self-concept and user-influencer personality congruence, in shaping customer attitudes that lead to purchase intentions. This approach offers a more intricate theoretical framework regarding the impact of the congruence between an individual's self-identity and an influencer's image on consumer decision-making processes. A significant theoretical contribution of this study is the proposition to incorporate mediating variables, particularly consumer attitudes, within the framework of self-congruency theory. Traditional self-congruency theory emphasizes the

direct linkage between audience characteristics and buying intentions. However, our findings reveal a substantial indirect pathway mediated by consumer attitudes towards beauty vloggers. This suggests that the effect of audience characteristics on buying intentions is not solely driven by direct alignment with influencer personality traits but is also significantly mediated by consumers' perceptions and attitudes towards the influencers. This nuanced understanding underscores the complex interplay between audience characteristics and influencer attributes, highlighting the importance of mediated pathways in shaping consumer behaviour. By elucidating these indirect mechanisms, this study enhances the theoretical depth of self-congruency theory and provides valuable insights into the dynamics of influencer marketing, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of how audience characteristics influence consumer decision-making through mediated effects.

Previous scholars have individually explored elements such as emotional attachment (Ladhari et al., 2020), informational value (Sánchez-Fernández & Jiménez-Castillo, 2021), parasocial interaction theory (Labrecque, 2014), and meaning transfer theory (Miller & Allen, 2012), primarily within the context of celebrity endorsements. Notably, parasocial interaction and meaning transfer have been extensively examined in relation to celebrities (McCracken, 1989; Miller & Allen, 2012; Knoll et al., 2016; Horton & Wohl, 1956; Rubin et al., 1985). However, the current study distinguishes itself by integrating all these interactional elements—parasocial interaction, informational value, meaning transfer, and emotional attachment—under a unified framework to provide a more comprehensive understanding of vlogger-led marketing. This holistic approach represents a pioneering effort in the field, as it is the first study to amalgamate these critical elements to assess their combined impact on the perceived influence of beauty vloggers. By doing so, the study offers a nuanced contribution to the existing body of literature, revealing the intricate ways in which these interactional elements collectively enhance the effectiveness of influencer marketing. This integrated perspective allows for a deeper insight into how beauty vloggers engage with their audience and build connections and influence through a multifaceted approach. The findings underscore the significance of considering multiple dimensions of interaction when evaluating the effectiveness of vlogger-led marketing strategies, thereby enriching the theoretical and practical understanding of influencer marketing dynamics.

The present study included both male and female respondents to empirically examine the impact of influencer marketing on consumer behaviour. This inclusion is particularly relevant given the increasing use of cosmetic products among male consumers (Sanny et al., 2020).

The findings revealed that influencer marketing operates as a gender-neutral phenomenon, affecting both male and female consumers similarly. This insight enhances the generalizability of the study, as it demonstrates that the influence of beauty vloggers extends across gender lines. The increasing use of cosmetics among male respondents underscores the importance of including them in studies related to beauty and influencer marketing. The results suggest that the strategies employed by beauty vloggers are effective in engaging a broad audience, irrespective of gender. This broad applicability underscores the versatility and robustness of influencer marketing tactics in the beauty industry, highlighting their potential to reach and resonate with a wide demographic. By incorporating a diverse sample, the study contributes significantly to the existing literature, which often lacks comprehensive gender representation.

## **5.2 Practical Implications**

This research yields several significant practical implications for policymakers, marketing professionals, and content producers. The insights gleaned from this study are particularly pertinent to marketers, who invest heavily in advertising strategies involving beauty vloggers on various social media platforms. Understanding consumers' attitudes and behaviours toward beauty vloggers is crucial, as it enables marketers to comprehend the underlying reasons for the success or failure of such marketing initiatives.

This study offers actionable insights for marketers and brand managers aiming to leverage beauty vlogger endorsements in India. Owing to the increasing use of social media platforms by consumers, marketers should make good use of this opportunity to advertise their products to a large audience. By comprehending the influence of source characteristics, audience characteristics, and interactional elements on consumer responses, marketers can craft more informed and targeted strategies. These strategies can be designed to align with the preferences and values of Indian consumers, thereby enhancing brand engagement and cultivating stronger consumer-brand relationships. Source characteristics, such as the credibility, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise of beauty vloggers, play a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and attitudes. Marketers can utilize these insights to select influencers who possess the attributes that resonate most with their target audience, thereby maximizing the impact of their endorsements. Audience characteristics, including self-concept and personality congruence with the influencer, also significantly affect consumer behaviour. By identifying and understanding these traits, marketers can tailor their

campaigns to better match the psychological profiles of their audience, leading to more effective communication and increased consumer loyalty. Interactional elements, such as emotional attachment, parasocial interactions, informational value, and meaning transfer, further enhance the efficacy of vlogger endorsements. Marketers can integrate these elements into their content strategies to create more engaging and persuasive marketing messages. For instance, by fostering a sense of emotional connection between the vlogger and the audience, brands can enhance the perceived authenticity and reliability of their endorsements. Marketing professionals can utilize the study's insights to refine their strategies, making them more aligned with consumer preferences and behaviours. By identifying key factors that drive consumer engagement and purchase intentions, marketers can develop more targeted and impactful campaigns. This approach not only enhances the effectiveness of marketing efforts but also maximizes return on investment by ensuring that resources are allocated to strategies that resonate most with the target audience. Moreover, the findings of this research offer significant implications for emerging cosmetic companies operating with constrained marketing budgets. Collaborating with beauty vloggers who resonate with the interests and preferences of their target audience presents a promising avenue for these companies to effectively reach and engage consumers through informative online content. By leveraging such collaborations, companies can mitigate the adverse effects of consumer distrust, as evidenced by prior research (Ki et al., 2023). Moreover, the current study underscores the influential role of beauty vloggers in shaping consumers' purchase intentions for recommended products. Given that consumers exhibit stronger connections with beauty vloggers compared to traditional celebrity endorsers, marketers cannot afford to overlook the potential of this innovative marketing approach (Nosita & Lestari, 2019; Schouten et al., 2020). Additionally, the impact of closeness between beauty vloggers and their audiences can be used by companies with a global outlook. They can collaborate with multiple beauty vloggers across various regions, while also considering the cultural uniqueness of each region. For instance, various cosmetic brands like Estée Lauder, Clinique, Becca Cosmetics, L'Oréal, Mac, NYX, Glossier, Kylie Cosmetics, Lush, and Milk Makeup use several beauty vloggers for different regions to endorse their products worldwide (Ladhari et al., 2020; Delbaere et al., 2021; Hassan et al., 2021). This may benefit cosmetic businesses in the long term.

While the subject of beauty vlogger marketing may not have direct implications for traditional policymaking processes, it offers valuable insights that policymakers can consider.

The study findings emphasize the importance of instituting regulatory frameworks to uphold ethical standards and transparency within influencer marketing practices. This is essential for preserving consumer trust and safeguarding vulnerable demographics from potential exploitation. A nuanced understanding of how beauty vloggers influence consumer behaviour can inform the development of policies aimed at protecting consumers from deceptive or misleading advertising strategies. Policymakers can utilize insights derived from research on source characteristics, audience characteristics, and interactional elements to formulate guidelines or regulations that promote transparency and integrity in influencer marketing campaigns. For instance, regulatory measures may necessitate clear disclosures of sponsored content and endorsements to ensure that consumers are not misled by covert advertising tactics, thereby fostering a more equitable marketplace for consumers and brands alike. Additionally, given that vlogger-led marketing is a relatively new phenomenon without existing regulatory policies, policymakers can draw upon the insights of the present study to frame regulatory policies specifically tailored to address the unique challenges and dynamics of this emerging marketing strategy.

This study offers valuable insights for content creators, providing them with the means to optimize their content strategies through the integration of effective engagement techniques and persuasive strategies. By harnessing these insights, vloggers can enhance audience engagement, foster stronger connections with their followers, and ultimately augment their influence and impact within the beauty community. Furthermore, this research extends its utility to aspiring content creators who are embarking on their vlogging journey and aspire to establish vlogging as a sustainable career path. Through the application of the findings from this study, novice vloggers can acquire a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies of influencer marketing and audience engagement, thereby laying a robust groundwork for their future pursuits in the realm of content creation.

Prior research predominantly focused on female participants to explore the impact of influencer marketing, particularly within the realm of beauty products (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Choi & Lee, 2019; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Lee & Lee, 2022). However, the present study extends this investigation by including male respondents, thereby broadening the understanding of influencer marketing's effects across gender demographics. The findings reveal that male participants also exhibit susceptibility to the influence of this innovative marketing strategy. Consequently, companies specializing in cosmetic products targeted at males can consider leveraging influencer marketing strategies through beauty

vloggers to effectively reach and engage their target audience. This highlights the importance of adopting inclusive marketing approaches that cater to diverse consumer segments, irrespective of gender.

### **5.3 Limitations**

Like any empirical study, the present investigation exhibits certain limitations related to the surveyed sample. The authors endeavoured to collect data from individuals aged 18 to 45 to gain a comprehensive understanding of beauty vlogger marketing across different age groups. However, the majority of the data was sourced from individuals aged 18 to 30, as those aged 31 to 45 and above demonstrate infrequent engagement with beauty vloggers. This age-related limitation may skew the findings, predominantly reflecting the preferences and behaviours of younger consumers. Second, the scope of the study was geographically confined to the northern states of India, specifically Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, and Delhi (NCR). This geographical restriction potentially limits the generalizability of the research outcomes, as cultural, economic, and social factors in other regions may influence consumer behaviour differently. Third, the investigation exclusively focused on beauty vloggers and their impact on consumers' purchasing intentions. This narrow focus limits the scope of the study, as numerous other domains exist within the realm of online content creation, each potentially exerting unique influences on consumer behaviour. Fourth, the study relied solely on quantitative research methods for data collection, hypothesis testing, and addressing the research questions. This methodological limitation may restrict the depth of understanding regarding the practice of beauty vlogger marketing, as qualitative insights could provide richer, more nuanced perspectives on consumer attitudes and behaviours. Fifth, the study concentrated on the perceptions of young consumers regarding beauty vlogger marketing and the influence of beauty vloggers on their purchasing decisions. This focus restricts the generalizability of the findings to a broader demographic, particularly the mature and adult generations. Consequently, the insights derived from this study may not accurately reflect the behaviours and preferences of older consumers, thus limiting the overall applicability of the results to the wider consumer market.

### **5.4 Future Research Directions**

The limitations identified in this study offer several avenues for future research. Future scholars can address these limitations by collecting data from a broader range of age groups and conducting comparative analyses to understand the impact of beauty vlogger marketing

across different demographics. By including a more diverse age spectrum, researchers can gain insights into how beauty vlogger marketing affects various age groups differently, potentially uncovering nuanced consumer behaviours and preferences. Comparative studies can reveal whether the influence of beauty vloggers varies significantly across age brackets, providing a more detailed understanding of the target audience for beauty vlogger marketing strategies. Apart from this, replicating this study in diverse geographical regions such as the eastern, western, and southern parts of India would help test the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, comparative studies analysing consumer responses across different countries could provide valuable insights into the influence of social and cultural factors on consumer behaviour. Such cross-cultural analyses could illuminate how regional differences shape consumer engagement with beauty vloggers, offering a richer understanding of the global applicability of the findings. Moreover, future research could explore the impact of various demographic characteristics, such as age, educational qualifications, and family income, on consumer responses to beauty vlogger marketing. By examining these demographic variables, researchers can identify specific segments of the population that are more or less influenced by beauty vlogger marketing, thereby aiding marketers in tailoring their strategies more effectively.

While the sample size in this study is noteworthy, it may not comprehensively represent all demographic groups across India or other emerging markets in Asia, owing to potential biases inherent in self-reported data. Future research would benefit from incorporating a more diverse sample that includes participants from varied socio-economic backgrounds to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study's reliance on structured questionnaires could introduce bias, given the tendencies of participants to respond in a socially desirable manner. To mitigate this, future studies could adopt a triangulation approach, utilizing multiple data sources to further validate and strengthen the findings. Considering that this study was conducted in India, it primarily focused on social media platforms popular within the country. The results revealed that 94.57 % of the respondents use Instagram, followed by YouTube (93.47%) and Snapchat (63.77%). Future research could investigate the impact of platforms banned in India, such as TikTok, or those less frequently used by the Indian population, like high usage of social media platform, WeChat and Sina Weibo in China, VKontakte and Odnoklassniki in Russia. This would provide a broader perspective on the effectiveness of beauty vlogger marketing across different social media environments. Comparative analyses based on different social media platforms, such as

YouTube versus Instagram or Instagram versus Facebook, could offer nuanced insights into the algorithms and monetization policies of these platforms. Such studies could reveal which platforms are more effective for beauty vlogger marketing and why, enabling a deeper understanding of platform-specific consumer behaviours and preferences.

Expanding the scope of the conceptual model used in this study to include different domains of content creation, such as food, travel, gaming, and healthy lifestyle vlogging, is another promising research direction for scholars. Given the surge in the number of content creators across various domains, it is imperative to include these areas in future studies. Investigating the impact of vlogger marketing across these diverse content types could provide a comprehensive understanding of how different forms of content influence consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions. Additionally, while this study employed quantitative methods, future researchers could adopt qualitative methodologies such as in-depth interviews and content analysis with consumers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. Qualitative approaches can provide rich, detailed insights into consumers' attitudes, perceptions, and motivations regarding beauty vlogger marketing that are often not captured through quantitative methods alone. By exploring personal narratives and experiences, researchers can uncover nuanced aspects of consumer behaviour and the intricate dynamics between beauty vloggers and their audiences. This mixed-methods approach would offer a more holistic perspective, combining the statistical rigor of quantitative data with the depth and context provided by qualitative research. Case studies focusing on particular brands that rely exclusively on vlogger marketing for advertising could also provide valuable insights, significantly increasing the practical application of vlogger-led marketing. These case studies can offer detailed accounts of how brands effectively harness the power of beauty vloggers to engage consumers, thereby providing a richer understanding of successful strategies and tactics. By examining real-world examples, researchers can identify best practices and potential pitfalls, offering practical guidance for brands looking to leverage vlogger marketing. Furthermore, such case studies can shed light on the long-term effects and return on investment of vlogger marketing campaigns, making the findings highly relevant for marketing practitioners and strategists. Furthermore, future studies could explore the perspectives of beauty vloggers, addressing the challenges they face in content creation and brand collaborations. It is important to consider the beauty vlogger's viewpoint to gain a better understanding. By examining these various aspects, future research can provide a more

holistic understanding of beauty vlogger marketing and its impact on consumer behaviour, contributing to a more comprehensive body of knowledge in this field.

## **5.5 Summary of the Chapter**

The fifth chapter elucidates the theoretical and practical implications derived from the study's findings. These implications extend to various stakeholders, including policymakers, academics, marketing professionals, and content producers. For policymakers, the insights garnered from this research underscore the importance of regulating influencer marketing practices to ensure ethical standards and consumer protection. Academicians can benefit from the study's findings by integrating them into existing theoretical frameworks and expanding upon them in future research endeavours. Marketing professionals stand to gain valuable insights into consumer behaviour and effective marketing strategies, which can inform the development of more impactful marketing campaigns. Similarly, content producers can leverage the findings to enhance their content creation strategies and improve audience engagement. Despite its contributions, the study acknowledges its limitations, which provide avenues for future research to address. By addressing these limitations, future research can further advance our understanding of influencer marketing dynamics and their impact on consumer behaviour.

## References

- Aggarwal, A., & Rahul, M. (2018). The effect of perceived security on consumer purchase intentions in electronic commerce. *International Journal of Public Sector Performance Management*, 4(1), 1-20. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1504/IJPSPM.2018.088691>
- Agyapong, D. (2021). Analyzing financial risks in small and medium enterprises: evidence from the food processing firms in selected cities in Ghana. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 27(1), 45-77. doi:10.1108/IJEBr-05-2020-0269
- Ahmad, R., Nawaz, M. R., Ishaq, M. I., Khan, M. M., & Ashraf, H. A. (2023). Social exchange theory: Systematic review and future directions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 1015921. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1015921>
- Alboqami, H. (2023). Trust me, I'm an influencer!-causal recipes for customer trust in artificial intelligence influencers in the retail industry. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 72, 103242. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2022.103242>
- AlFarraj, O., Alalwan, A. A., Obeidat, Z. M., Baabdullah, A., Aldmour, R., & Al-Haddad, S. (2021). Examining the impact of influencers' credibility: Attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise on the purchase intention in the aesthetic dermatology industry. *Review of International Business and Strategy*, 31(3), 355-374. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/RIBS-07-2020-0089>
- Appelman, A., & Sunder, S. S. (2016). Measuring Message Credibility: Construction and Validation of an Exclusive Scale. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 93(1), 59-79. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699015606057>
- Artigas, E. M., Yrigoyen, C. C., Moraga, E. T., & Villalón, C. B. (2017). Determinants of trust towards tourist destinations. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 6(4), 327-334. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2017.03.003>
- Ashraf, A., Hameed, I., & Saeed, S. A. (2023). How do social media influencers inspire consumers' purchase decisions? The mediating role of parasocial relationships.

- International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 47(4), 1416-1433. doi:  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12917>
- Atiq, M., Abid, G., Anwar, A., & Ijaz, M. F. (2022). Influencer Marketing on Instagram: A Sequential Mediation Model of Storytelling Content and Audience Engagement via Relatability and Trust. *Information*, 13(7), 345.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.3390/info13070345>
- Ayalew, B. M., & Walia, N. (2024). Does job satisfaction mediate the nexus between perceived organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior? Empirical evidence from Ethiopian Public Higher Education Institutions. *Cogent Business & Management*, 11(1), 2297801. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2023.2297801>
- Bailey, A. A., Mishra, A. S., & Vaishnav, K. (2023). Response to social media influencers: Consumer dispositions as drivers. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 47(5), 1979-1998. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12976>
- Balabanis, G., & Chatzopoulou, E. (2019). Under the influence of a blogger: The role of information-seeking goals and issue involvement. *Psychology & Marketing*, 36(4), 342-353. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21182>
- Barbić, D., Lučić, A., & Chen, J. M. (2018). Measuring responsible financial consumption behaviour. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 43(1), 102-112.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12489>
- Basuroy, T. (2023, July 18). *Number of Internet users in India*. Retrieved March 21, 2024, from statista.com: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/255146/number-of-internet-users-in-india/>
- Becker, J.-M., Klein, K., & Wetzels, M. (2012). Hierarchical Latent Variable Models in PLS-SEM: Guidelines for Using Reflective-Formative Type Models. *Long Range Planning*, 45(5-6), 359-394. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2012.10.001>
- Beerli, A., Meneses, G. D., & Gil, S. M. (2007). Self-congruity and destination choice. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34(3), 571-587.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2007.01.005>
- Belanche, D., Casaló, L. V., Flavián, M., & Ibáñez-Sánchez, S. (2021). Building influencers' credibility on Instagram: Effects on followers' attitudes and behavioral responses

- toward the influencer. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 61, 102585.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102585>
- Belanche, D., Casaló, L. V., Flavián, M., & Ibáñez-Sánchez, S. (2021). Understanding influencer marketing: The role of congruence between influencers, products and consumers. *Journal of Business Research*, 132, 186-195.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.03.067>
- Belch, G. E., & Belch, M. A. (2013). A content analysis study of the use of celebrity endorsers in magazine advertising. *International Journal of Advertising: The Review of Marketing Communications*, 32(3), 369-389. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.2501/IJA-32-3-369-389>
- Berlo, D. K., Lemert, J. B., & Mertz, R. J. (1969). Dimensions for Evaluating the Acceptability of Message Sources. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 33(4), 563-576.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1086/267745>
- Berryman, R. (2020). Vloggers. *The International Encyclopedia of Gender, Media, and Communication*, 1-5. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119429128.iegmc044>
- Berryman, R., & Kavka, M. (2017). ‘I Guess A Lot of People See Me as a Big Sister or a Friend’: the role of intimacy in the celebrification of beauty vloggers. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 26(3), 307-320. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2017.1288611>
- Bhatia, A. (2020). Vlogging and the discursive co-construction of ethnicity and beauty. *World Englishes*, 39(1), 7-21. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12442>
- Bhatt, N., Jayswal, R. M., & Patel, J. D. (2013). Impact of Celebrity Endorser’s Source Credibility on Attitude Towards Advertisements and Brands. *South Asian Journal of Management*, 20(4), 74.
- Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. New York: Wiley.
- Britt, R. K., Hayes, J. L., Britt, B. C., & Park, H. (2020). Too Big to Sell? A computational analysis of network and content characteristics among mega and micro beauty and fashion social media influencers. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 20(2), 111-118.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2020.1763873>
- Casaló, L. V., Flavián, C., & Sánchez, S. I. (2020). Influencers on Instagram: Antecedents and consequences of opinion. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 510-519.

- Castillo-Abdul, B., Romero-Rodríguez, L. M., & Balseca, J. (2021). Hola Followers! Content Analysis of YouTube Channels of Female Fashion Influencers in Spain and Ecuador. *Sage open*, 11(4). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211056609>
- Chanana, N. (2015). Consumer attitude toward celebrity endorsement. *Innovative Marketing Strategied for Sustainable Growth*.
- Chen, J.-L., & Dermawan, A. (2020, April). The Influence of YouTube Beauty Vloggers on Indonesian Consumers' Purchase Intention of Local Cosmetic Products. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 15(5), 100-116.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v15n5p100>
- Cheng, Z., Chen, J., Peng, R. X., & Shoenberger, H. (2023). Social media influencers talk about politics: Investigating the role of source factors and PSR in Gen-Z followers' perceived information quality, receptivity and sharing intention. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 1-15.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2023.2173700>
- Chetioui, Y., Benlafqih, H., & Lebdaoui, H. (2020). How fashion influencers contribute to consumers' purchase intention. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 24(3), 361-380. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/JFMM-08-2019-0157>
- Chia, K.-C., Hsu, C.-C., Lin, L.-T., & Tseng, H. H. (2021). The identification of ideal social media influencers: Integrating the social capital, social exchange, and social learning theories. *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, 22(1), 4-21.
- Chinchanachokchai, S., & Gregorio, F. d. (2020). A consumer socialization approach to understanding advertising avoidance on social media. *Journal of Business Research*, 110, 474-483. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.01.06>
- Choi, S. M., & Rifon, N. J. (2012). It Is a Match: The Impact of Congruence between Celebrity Image and Consumer Ideal Self on Endorsement Effectiveness. *Psychology & Marketing*, 29(9), 639-650. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20550>
- Choi, W., & Lee, Y. (2019). Effects of fashion vlogger attributes on product attitude and content sharing. *Fashion and Textiles*, 6(6), 1-18. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40691-018-0161-1>

- Coco, S. L., & Eckert, S. (2020). #sponsored: Consumer insights on social media influencer marketing. *Public Relations Inquiry*, 9(2), 177-194.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/2046147X20920816>
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, New Jersey, New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203771587>
- Cohen, S. A., Prayag, G., & Moital, M. (2014). Consumer behaviour in tourism: Concepts, influences, and opportunities. *Current Issues In Tourism*, 17(10), 872-909.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2013.850064>
- Collier, J. (2020). *Applied Structural Equation Modeling using AMOS. Basic to Advanced Techniques* (1 ed.). New York: Routledge. doi:<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003018414>
- Cook, K. S., & Emerson, R. M. (1978). Power, equity and commitment in exchange networks. *American Sociological Review*, 43(5), 721-739.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.2307/2094546>
- Cook, K. S., & Yamagishi, T. (1992). Power in exchange networks: a power-dependence formulation. *Social Networks*, 14(3-4), 245-265. doi:[https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-8733\(92\)90004-Q](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-8733(92)90004-Q)
- Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social Exchange Theory: An Interdisciplinary Review. *Journal of Management*, 31(6), 874-900. doi:10.1177/0149206305279602
- Crosby, L. A., Evans, K. R., & Cowles, D. (1990). Relationship Quality in Services Selling: An Interpersonal Influence Perspective. *Journal of Marketing*, 54(3), 68-81.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299005400306>
- De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L. (2017). Marketing through Instagram influencers: the impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude. *International Journal of Advertising*, 36(5), 798-828.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2017.1348035>
- Deborah, A., Michela, A., & Anna, C. (2019). How to quantify social media influencers: An empirical application at the Teatro alla Scala. *Heliyon*, 5(5), e01677.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2019.e01677>

- Dekavalla, M. (2019). Gaining trust: the articulation of transparency by You Tube fashion and beauty content creators. *Media, Culture & Society*, 42(1), 75-92.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443719846613>
- Delbaere, M., Michael, B., & Phillips, B. J. (2021). Social media influencers: A route to brand engagement for their followers. *Psychology & Marketing*, 38(1), 101-112.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21419>
- Dencheva, V. (2024, February 06). *Global influencer market size*. Retrieved March 21, 2024, from Statista.com: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1092819/global-influencer-market-size/>
- Dholakia, U. M., Bagozzi, R. P., & Pearo, L. K. (2004). A social influence model of consumer participation in network-and small-group-based virtual communities. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 21(3), 241-263.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2003.12.004>
- Diamantopoulos, A. (2008). Formative indicators: Introduction to the special issue [Editorial]. *Journal of Business Research*, 61(12), 1201-1202.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2008.01.008>
- DiStefano, C., & Hess, B. (2005). Using confirmatory factor analysis for construct validation: An empirical review. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, 23(3), 225-241.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/073428290502300303>
- Djafarova, E., & Rushworth, C. (2017). Exploring the credibility of online celebrities' Instagram profiles in influencing the purchase decisions of young female users. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 68, 1-7. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.11.009>
- Dolan, R., Conduit, J., Fahy, J., & Goodman, S. (2016). Social media engagement behaviour: a uses and gratifications perspective. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 24(3-4), 261-277. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254X.2015.1095222>
- Doney, P. M., & Cannon, J. P. (1997). An examination of the nature of trust in buyer-seller relationships. *Journal of Marketing*, 61(2), 35-51.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.2307/1251829>
- Donthu, N., Kumar, S., Pandey, N., Pandey, N., & Mishra, A. (2021). Mapping the electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) research: A systematic review and bibliometric analysis.

*Journal of Business Research*, 135, 758-773.

doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.07.015>

- Ekinci, Y., & Riley, M. (2003). An investigation of self-concept: actual and ideal self-congruence compared in the context of service evaluation. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 10(4), 201-214. doi:[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0969-6989\(02\)00008-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0969-6989(02)00008-5)
- Feng, Y., Chen, H., & King, Q. (2020). An expert with whom i can identify: the role of narratives in influencer marketing. *International Journal of Advertising*, 40(7), 972-993. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2020.1824751>
- Filieri, R., Acikgoz, F., Li, C., & Alguezaui, S. (2023). Influencers' "organic" persuasion through electronic word of mouth: A case of sincerity over brains and beauty. *Psychology & Marketing*, 40(2), 347-364. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21760>
- Firman, A., Ilyas, G. B., Reza, H. K., Lestari, S. D., & Putra, A. H. (2021). The mediating role of customer trust on the relationships of celebrity endorsement and e-WOM to Instagram Purchase intention. *Jurnal Minds: Manajemen Ide dan Inspirasi*, 8(1), 107-126.
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39-50. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378101800104>
- Foroughi, B., Iranmanesh, M., Nilashi, M., Ghobakhloo, M., Asadi, S., & Khoshkam, M. (2023). Determinants of followers' purchase intentions toward brands endorsed by social media influencers: Findings from PLS and fsQCA. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 23(2), 888-914. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.2252>
- Fowler, K., & Thomas, V. L. (2023). Influencer marketing: A scoping review and a look ahead. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 39(11-12), 933-964. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2022.2157038>
- Freberg, K., Graham, K., McGaughey, K., & Freberg, L. A. (2011). Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality. *Public Relations Review*, 37(1), 90-92. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2010.11.001>

- Frith, K., Shaw, P., & Cheng, H. (2005). The Construction of Beauty: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Women's Magazine Advertising. *Journal of Communication*, 55(1), 56-70. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2005.tb02658.x>
- Gallarza, M. G., Gil-Saura, I., & Holbrook, M. B. (2011). The value of value: Further excursions on the meaning and role of customer value. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 10(4), 179-191. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.328>
- García-Rapp, F. (2017). Popularity markers on YouTube's attention economy: the case of Bubzbeauty. *Celebrity studies*, 8(2), 228-245. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/19392397.2016.1242430>
- Gerlich, M. (2023). The Power of Personal Connections in Micro-Influencer Marketing: A Study on Consumer Behaviour and the Impact of Micro-Influencers. *Transnational Marketing Journal*, 11(1), 131-152. doi:<https://doi.org/10.58262/tmj.v11i1.1010>
- Giffin, K. (1967). The Contribution of Studies of Source Credibility to a Theory of Interpersonal Trust in the Communication Process. *Psychological Bulletin*, 68(2), 104-120. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1037/h0024833>
- Gold, A. H., Malhotra, A., & Segars, A. H. (2001). Knowledge Management: An Organizational Capabilities Perspective. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 18(1), 185-214. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/07421222.2001.11045669>
- Goñi, E., Madariaga, J. M., Axpe, I., & Goñi, A. (2011). Structure of the Personal Self-Concept (PSC) Questionnaire1. *International Journal of Psychology and Psychological Therapy*, 11(3), 509-522.
- Graeff, T. R. (1996). Using promotional messages to manage the effects of brand and self-image on brand evaluations. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 13(3), 4-18. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/07363769610118921>
- Gupta, H., Singh, S., & Sinha, P. (2017). Multimedia tool as a predictor for social media advertising-a YouTube way. *Multimedia Tools and Applications*, 76(18), 18557-18568. doi:10.1007/s11042-016-4249-6
- Haenlein, M., Anadol, E., Farnsworth, T., Hugo, H., Hunichen, J., & Welte, D. (2020). Navigating the New Era of Influencer Marketing: How to be Successful on Instagram,

- TikTok, & Co. *California Management Review*, 63(1), 5-25.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/0008125620958166>
- Hair, J. F., Howard, M. C., & Christian, N. (2020). Assessing measurement model quality in PLS-SEM using confirmatory composite analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, 109, 101-110. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.11.069>
- Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2017). *A Primer on Partial Least Squares structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California, United States: SAGE Publications.
- Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2022). *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publication.
- Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review*, 31(1), 2-24.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-11-2018-0203>
- Hammersley, M. (1987). Some notes on the terms ‘validity’ and ‘reliability’. *British Educational Research Journal*, 13(1), 73-82.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/0141192870130107>
- Handriana, T., Dananjaya, D. I., Lestari, Y. D., & Aisyah, R. A. (2019). Parasocial Interaction between YouTube Beauty Vlogger and Millennial Consumers in Indonesia. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 9(8), 181-196.
- Hassan, S. H., Teo, S. Z., Ramaya, T., & Al-Kumaim, N. H. (2021). The credibility of social media beauty gurus in young millennials’ cosmetic product choice. *Plos One*, 16(3), e0249286. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0249286>
- Hayes, A. F. (2017). *Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis: A regression-based approach*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Heale, R., & Twycross, A. (2015). Validity and reliability in quantitative studies.x. *Evidence-Based Nursing*, 18(3), 66-67. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1136/eb-2015-102129>
- Henseler, J. (2017). Bridging design and behavioral research with variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of Advertising*, 46(1), 178-192.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2017.1281780>

- Henseler, J., Hubona, G., & Ray, P. A. (2016). Using PLS Path Modeling in New Technology Research: Updated Guidelines. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 116(1), 2-20. doi:10.1108/IMDS-09-2015-0382
- Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* volume, 43(1), 115-135. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8
- Hmoud, H., Nofal, M., Yaseen, H., Al-Masaeed, S., & AlFawwaz, B. M. (2022). The effects of social media attributes on customer purchase intention: The mediation role of brand attitude. *International Journal of Data and Network Science*, 6(4), 1543-1556. doi:10.5267/j.ijdns.2022.4.022
- Holiday, S., Densley, R. L., & Norman, M. S. (2021). Influencer Marketing Between Mothers: The Impact of Disclosure and Visual Brand Promotion. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*, 42(3), 236-257. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/10641734.2020.1782790
- Homans, :. G. (1958). Social Behavior as Exchange. *American Journal of Sociology*, 63(6), 597-606. doi:https://doi.org/10.1086/222355
- Horton, D., & Wohl, R. R. (1956). Mass Communication and Para-Social Interaction. *Psychiatry*, 19(3), 215-229. doi:10.1080/00332747.1956.11023049
- Hovland, C. I., & Weiss, W. (1951). The Influence of Source Credibility on Communication Effectiveness. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 15(4), 635-650. doi:https://doi.org/10.1086/266350
- Hovland, C. I., Janis, I. L., & Kelley, H. H. (1953). *Communication and Persuasion*. New Haven, Connecticut, U.S.: Yale University Press. doi:https://doi.org/10.2307/2087772
- Hsu, C.-P., Huang, H.-C., Ko, C.-H., & Wang, S.-J. (2014). Basing bloggers' power on readers' satisfaction and loyalty. *Online Information Review*, 38(1), 78-94. doi:https://doi.org/10.1108/OIR-10-2012-0184
- Hsu, H. Y., & Tsou, H.-T. (2011). Understanding customer experiences in online blog environments. *International Journal of Information Management*, 31(6), 510-523. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2011.05.003

- Hu, L., Min, Q., Han, S., & Liu, Z. (2020). Understanding followers' stickiness to digital influencers: The effect of psychological responses. *International Journal of Information Management*, 54, 102169.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102169>
- Hu, X. (2015). *Assessing source credibility on social media—An electronic word-of-mouth communication perspective* (4th ed.). New York, London: Doctoral dissertation, Bowling Green State University.
- Hudders, L., Jans, S. D., & Veirman, M. D. (2021). The commercialization of social media stars: a literature review and conceptual framework on the strategic use of social media influencers. *International Journal of Advertising*, 40(3), 327-375.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2020.1836925>
- Jain, S. (2020). Assessing the moderating effect of subjective norm on luxury purchase intention: a study of Gen Y consumers in India. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 48(5), 517-536. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJRDM-02-2019-0042>
- Jain, V., & Roy, S. (2016). Understanding meaning transfer in celebrity endorsements: a qualitative exploration. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 19(3), 266-286. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/QMR-03-2015-0020>
- Jiménez-Castillo, D., & Sánchez-Fernández, R. (2019). The role of digital influencers in brand recommendation: Examining their impact on engagement, expected value and purchase intention. *International Journal of Information Management*, 49, 366-376.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2019.07.009>
- Jin, S. V., Muqaddam, A., & Ryu, E. (2019). Instafamous and social media influencer marketing. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 37(5), 567-579.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-09-2018-0375>
- Johnston, M., Dixon, D., Hart, J., Glidewell, L., Schröder, C., & Pollard, B. (2014). Discriminant content validity: A quantitative methodology for assessing content of theory-based measures, with illustrative applications. *British Journal of Health Psychology*, 19(2), 240-257. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/bjhp.12095>

- Joo, M., Wilbur, K. C., Cowgill, B., & Zhu, Y. (2014). Television Advertising and Online Search. *Management Science*, 60(1), 56-73.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2013.1741>
- Joshi, R., & Garg, P. (2020). Role of brand experience in shaping brand love. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 45(2), 259-272. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12618>
- Kansal, P. (2014). Online privacy concerns and consumer reactions: insights for future strategies. *Journal of Indian Business Research*, 6(3), 190-212.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/JIBR-06-2012-0046>
- Kanwar, A., & Huang, Y.-C. (2022). Exploring the impact of social media influencers on customers' purchase intention: A sequential mediation model in Taiwan context. *Entrepreneurial Business and Economics Review*, 10(3), 123-141.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.15678/EBER.2022.100308>
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons*, 53, 59-68.  
doi:[10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003)
- Ki, C.-W. C., & Kim, Y. K. (2019). The mechanism by which social media influencers persuade consumers: The role of consumers' desire to mimic. *Psychology & Marketing*, 36(10), 905-922. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21244>
- Ki, C.-W. C., Chow, T. C., & Li, C. (2023). Bridging the Trust Gap in Influencer Marketing: Ways to Sustain Consumers' Trust and Assuage Their Distrust in the Social Media Influencer Landscape. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, 39(17), 3445-3460. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2022.2097785>
- Kim, D. Y., & Kim, H.-Y. (2021). Trust me, trust me not: A nuanced view of influencer marketing on social media. *Journal of Business Research*, 134, 223-232.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.05.024>
- Kim, J., Kang, S., & Lee, K. H. (2020). How social capital impacts the purchase intention of sustainable fashion products. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 596-603.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.10.010>
- Knoll, J., Matthes, J., Münch, A., & Ostermann, M. (2016). How long does celebrity meaning transfer last? Delayed effects and the moderating roles of brand experience, celebrity

- liking, and age. *International Journal of Advertising*, 36(4), 588-612.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2016.1213062>
- Koay, K. Y., Cheung, M. L., Soh, P. C.-H., & Teoh, C. W. (2022). Social media influencer marketing: the moderating role of materialism. *European Business Research*, 34(2), 224-243. doi:[10.1108/EBR-02-2021-0032](https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-02-2021-0032)
- Koay, K. Y., Lim, W. M., Kaur, S., Soh, K., & Poon, W. C. (2023). How and when social media influencers' intimate self-disclosure fosters purchase intentions: the roles of congruency and parasocial relationships. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 41(6), 790-809. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-06-2023-0246>
- Koehn, D. (1996). Should we trust in trust? *American Business Law Journal*, 34(2), 183-204. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-1714.1996.tb00695.x>
- Konstantopoulou, A., Rizomyliotis, I., Konstantoulaki, K., & Badahdah, R. (2019). Improving SMEs competitiveness with the use of Instagram influencer advertising and eWOM. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 27(2), 308-321. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOA-04-2018-1406>
- Kumar, S., Talwar, S., Murphy, M., Kaur, P., & Dhir, A. (2021). A behavioural reasoning perspective on the consumption of local food. A study on REKO, a social media-based local food distribution system. *Food Quality and Preference*, 93, 104264. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2021.104264>
- Kumar, S., Talwar, S., Murphy, M., Kaur, P., & Dhir, A. (2021). A behavioural reasoning perspective on the consumption of local food. A study on REKO, a social media-based local food distribution system. *Food Quality and Preference*, 93, 104264. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2021.104264>
- Kumar, V., & Gupta, S. (2016). Conceptualizing the Evolution and Future of Advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, 45(3), 302-317. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2016.1199335>
- Labrecque, L. I. (2014). Fostering Consumer–Brand Relationships in Social Media Environments: The Role of Parasocial Interaction. *Journal of interactive marketing*, 38(2), 134-148. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2013.12.003>

- Ladhari, R., Massa, E., & Skandrani, H. (2020). YouTube vloggers' popularity and influence: The roles of homophily, emotional attachment, and expertise. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 54, 102027. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.102027>
- Lahuerta-Otero, E., & Cordero-Gutiérrez, R. (2016). Looking for the perfect tweet. The use of data mining techniques to find influencers on twitter. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 64, 575-583. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.07.035>
- Lee, J. E., & Watkins, B. (2016). YouTube vloggers' influence on consumer luxury brand perceptions and intentions. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(12), 5753-5760. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.04.171>
- Lee, M. R., Yen, D. C., & Hsiao, C. Y. (2014). Understanding the perceived community value of Facebook users. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 35, 350-358.
- Lee, M., & Lee, H.-H. (2022). Do parasocial interactions and vicarious experiences in the beauty YouTube channels promote consumer purchase intention? *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 46(1), 235-248. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12667>
- Lee, Y. W. (2019). Synergistics Co-operations in the Cosmetic Industry: Learning and Convergence between firms and social media. *Kritika Kultura*, 32, 237-259.
- Leong, L.-Y., Hew, T.-S., Ooi, K.-B., & (Jun), J. W. (2020). Predicting mobile wallet resistance: A two-staged structural equation modeling-artificial neural network approach. *International Journal of Information Management*, 51, 102047. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2019.102047>
- Lim, W. M., Gupta, S., Aggarwal, A., Paul, J., & Sadhna, P. (2021). How do digital natives perceive and react toward online advertising? Implications for SMEs. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 1-35. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254X.2021.1941204>
- Lin, Y., Ahmad, Z., Shafik, W., Khosa, S. K., Almaspoor, Z., Alsuhabi, H., & Abbas, F. (2021). Impact of Facebook and Newspaper Advertising on Sales: A Comparative Study of Online and Print Media. *Computational Intelligence and Neuroscience*, 1-13. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1155/2021/5995008>
- Lou, C., & Kim, H. K. (2019). Fancying the New Rich and Famous? Explicating the Roles of Influencer Content, Credibility, and Parental Mediation in Adolescents' Parasocial

- Relationship, Materialism, and Purchase Intentions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 2567. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02567>
- Lou, C., & Yuan, S. (2019). Influencer Marketing: How Message Value and Credibility Affect Consumer Trust of Branded Content on Social Media. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 19(1), 58-73. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2018.1533501>
- Lučić, A. (2020). Measuring Sustainable Marketing Orientation—Scale Development Process. *Sustainability*, 12(5), 1734. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3390/su12051734>
- Mabkhot, H., Isa, N. M., & Mabkhot, A. (2022). The Influence of the Credibility of Social Media Influencers SMIs on the Consumers' Purchase Intentions: Evidence from Saudi Arabia. *Sustainability*, 14(19), 12323. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3390/su141912323>
- Malhotra, N. K. (1981). A Scale to Measure Self-Concepts, Person Concepts, and Product Concepts. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(4), 456-464. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378101800407>
- Malodia, S., Singh, P., Goyal, V., & Sengupta, A. (2017). Measuring the impact of brand-celebrity personality congruence on purchase intention. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 23(5), 493-512. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2017.1322125>
- Manchanda, P., Arora, N., & Sethi, V. (2022). Impact of Beauty Vlogger's Credibility and Popularity on eWOM Sharing Intention: The Mediating Role of Parasocial Interaction. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 28(3), 379-412. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2021.1989542>
- Manley, S. C., Hair Jr, J. F., Williams Jr, R. I., & McDowell, W. C. (2020). Essential new PLS-SEM analysis methods for your entrepreneurship analytical toolbox. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 17, 1805-1825. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11365-020-00687-6>
- Martínez-López, F. J., Anaya-Sánchez, R., Esteban-Millat, I., Torrez-Meruvia, H., D'Alessandro, S., & Miles, M. (2020). Influencer marketing: brand control, commercial orientation and post credibility. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 36(17-18), 1805-1831. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2020.1806906>

- Mayer, R. C., Davis, J. H., & Schoorman, F. D. (1995). An integrative model of organizational trust. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(3), 709-734. doi:<https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1995.9508080335>
- McCracken, G. (1986). Culture and Consumption: A Theoretical Account of the Structure and Movement of the Cultural Meaning of Consumer Goods. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13(1), 71-84. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1086/209048>
- Mccracken, G. (1989). Who Is the Celebrity Endorser? Cultural Foundations of the Endorsement Process. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16(3), 310-321. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1086/209217>
- McGuire, W. J. (1985). Attitudes and attitude change. In L. Gardner, & E. Aronson (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 233-346). Erlbaum, Hillsdale, New Jersey, U.S.
- Meng, F., & Wei, J. (2020). Scale design of opinion leaders' impact on online consumers' purchasing intention. *Journal of Intelligent & Fuzzy Systems*, 39(2), 1937-1949. doi:10.3233/JIFS-179964
- Mettenheim, W. v., & Wiedmann, K.-P. (2021). The complex triad of congruence issues in influencer marketing. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 20(5), 1277-1296. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.1935>
- Miller, F. M., & Allen, C. T. (2012). How does celebrity meaning transfer? Investigating the process of meaning transfer with celebrity affiliates and mature brands. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 22(3), 443-452. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2011.11.001>
- Mircică, N. (2020). Restoring public trust in digital platform operations: Machine learning algorithmic structuring of social media content. *Review of Contemporary Philosophy*, (19), 85-91. doi:<https://doi.org/10.22381/RCP1920209>
- Mishra, A. S., Roy, S., & Bailey, A. A. (2015). Exploring Brand Personality–Celebrity Endorser Personality Congruence in Celebrity Endorsements in the Indian Context. *Psychology & Marketing*, 32(12), 1158-1174. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20846>
- Mishra, P., Singh, U., Pandey, C. M., Mishra, P., & Pandey, G. (2019). Application of student's t-test, analysis of variance, and covariance. *Annals of Cardiac Anaesthesia*, 22(4), 407-411. doi:10.4103/aca.ACA\_94\_19

- Molm, L. D., Collett, J. L., & Schaefer, D. R. (2007). Building Solidarity through Generalized Exchange: A Theory of Reciprocity. *American Journal of Sociology*, 113(1), 205-242. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1086/517900>
- Morgan, R. M., & Hunt, S. D. (1994). The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 58(3), 20-38. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299405800302>
- Munnukka, J., Uusitalo, O., & Toivonen, H. (2016). Credibility of a peer endorser and advertising effectiveness. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 33(3), 182-192. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/JCM-11-2014-1221>
- Muralidharan, S., Ferle, C. L., & Sung, Y. (2017). Are we a product of our environment? Assessing culturally congruent green advertising appeals, novelty, and environmental concern in India and the U.S.A. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 27(4), 396-414. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/01292986.2017.1280063>
- Muralidharan, S., Rejón-Guardia, F., & Xue, F. (2016). Understanding the green buying behavior of younger Millennials from India and the United States: A structural equation modeling approach. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 28(1), 54-72. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/08961530.2015.1056328>
- Mwema, C., & Crewett, W. (2019). Social networks and commercialisation of African indigenous vegetables in Kenya: A Cragg's double hurdle approach. *Cogent Economics & Finance*, 7(1), 1642173. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/23322039.2019.1642173>
- Myers, S., Sen, S., Syrdal, H., & Woodroof, P. (2024). The impact of Persuasion knowledge cues on social media engagement: a look at pet influencer marketing. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 32(1), 43-60. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/10696679.2022.2093224>
- Niclasen, J., Skovgaard, A. M., Andersen, A.-M. N., Sømhovd, M. J., & Obel, C. (2013). A confirmatory approach to examining the factor structure of the strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ): A large scale cohort study. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 41, 355-365. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-012-9683-y>

- Nosita, F., & Lestari, T. (2019). The Influence of User Generated Content and Purchase Intention on Beauty Products. *Journal of Management and Marketing Review*, 4(3), 171-183.
- Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric Theory* (3rd ed.). (McGraw-Hill, Ed.) New York.
- O'brien, R. M. (2017). A caution regarding rules of thumb for variance inflation factors. *Quality & Quantity*, 41(5), 673-690. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-006-9018-6>
- Ohanian, R. (1991). Construction and Validation of a Scale to Measure Celebrity Endorsers' Perceived Expertise, Trustworthiness, and Attractiveness. *Journal of Advertising*, 19(3), 39-52. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.1990.10673191>
- Pai, F.-Y., & Huang , K.-I. (2011). Applying the technology acceptance model to the introduction of healthcare information systems. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 78(4), 650-660. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2010.11.007>
- Pandey, N. (2021). Digital marketing strategies for firms in post covid-19 era: insights and future directions. In H. Chaturvedi, & A. K. Dey, *The new normal challenges of managerial business, social and ecological systems in the post covid-19 era* (pp. 107-124). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Pandey, N., & Dharni, K. (2014). *Intellectual Property Rights*. Delhi: PHI Learning Private Limited.
- Pennanen, K., Tiainen, T., & Luomala , H. T. (2007). A qualitative exploration of a consumer's value-based e-trust building process: A framework development. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 10(1), 28-47. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/13522750710720387>
- Perez-Vega, R., Taherib, B., Farrington, T., & O'Gorman, K. (2018). On being attractive, social and visually appealing in social media: The effects of anthropomorphic tourism brands on Facebook fan pages. *Tourism Management*, 66, 339-347. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.11.013>
- Petrosyan, A. (2024, March 20). *Number of internet users worldwide*. Retrieved March 20, 2024, from Statista.com: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/617136/digital-population-worldwide/>

- Phua, J., Jin, S. V., & Kim, J. (. (2020). Pro-veganism on Instagram: Effects of user-generated content (UGC) types and content generator types in Instagram-based health marketing communication about veganism. *Online Information Review*, 44(3), 685-704.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/OIR-06-2019-0213>
- Plewa, C., & Palmer , K. (2014). Self-congruence theory: towards a greater understanding of the global and malleable selves in a sports specific consumption context. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 15(4), 26-39.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-15-04-2014-B004>
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J.-Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(5), 879-903.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879>
- Pop, R.-A., Săplăcan, Z., Dabija, D.-C., & Alt, M.-A. (2022). The impact of social media influencers on travel decisions: the role of trust in consumer decision journey. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 25(5), 823-843.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2021.1895729>
- Pradhan, D., Duraipandian, I., & Sethi, D. (2016). Celebrity endorsement: How celebrity – brand –user personality congruence affects brand attitude and purchase intention. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 22(5), 456-473.
- Pradhan, D., Moharana, T. R., & Malik, G. (2023). Influence of celebrity, destination and tourist personality on destination attachment and revisit intention: Moderating roles of endorsement embeddedness, destination crowding and gender. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 27, 100754.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2022.100754>
- Putnam, R. D. (2015). Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy*, 6(1), 65-78. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1995.0002>
- Ramadanty, S., Muqarrabin, A. M., Nita, W. A., & Syafganti, I. (2020). Examining the Effect of Persuasive Message of Beauty Vloggers on Information Acceptance of eWOM and Purchase Intention: The Study of Consumers of Beauty Products in Jabodetabek, Indonesia. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 28(2), 763-775.

- Rasoolimanesh, S. M., Jaafar, M., Kock, N., & Ahmad, A. G. (2017). The effects of community factors on residents' perceptions toward World Heritage Site inscription and sustainable tourism development. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 25(2), 198-216. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2016.1195836>
- Ren, S., Karimi, S., Velázquez, A. B., & Cai, J. (2023). Endorsement effectiveness of different social media influencers: The moderating effect of brand competence and warmth. *Journal of Business Research*, 156, 113476. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.113476>
- Riebe, E., & Dawes, J. (2006). Recall of radio advertising in low and high advertising clutter formats. *International Journal of Advertising*, 25(1), 71-86. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2006.11072952>
- Rosara, N. A., & Luthfia, A. (2020). Factors Influencing Consumer's Purchase Intention on Beauty Products in YouTube. *Journal of Distribution Science*, 18(6), 37-46. doi:<https://doi.org/10.15722/jds.18.6.202006.37>
- Roux, A. T., & Waladt, D. V. (2014). Out-of-home advertising media: theoretical and industry perspectives. *Communitas*, 19, 95-115. doi:<https://doi.org/10.38140/com.v19i0.1007>
- Roy, S., & Jain, V. (2017). Exploring meaning transfer in celebrity endorsement: Measurement and Validation. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Business Administration*, 9(2), 87-104. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/APJBA-06-2016-0058>
- Roy, S., Jain, V., & Rana, P. (2013). The moderating role of consumer personality and source credibility in celebrity endorsements. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Business Administration*, 5(1), 72-88. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/17574321311304549>
- Rubin, A. M., Perse, E. M., & Powell, R. A. (1985). Loneliness, parasocial interaction, and local television news viewing. *Human Communication Research*, 12(2), 155-180. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1985.tb00071.x>
- Saima, & Khan, M. A. (2020). Effect of Social Media Influencer Marketing on Consumers' Purchase Intention and the Mediating Role of Credibility. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 27(4), 503-523. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2020.1851847>

- Salsabila, R. R., Iskandar, B. P., & Nasution, R. A. (2013). Evaluating the content marketing strategy of 3 successful beauty vloggers. *International Research Conference on Management and Business*.
- Sánchez-Fernández, R., & Jiménez-Castillo, D. (2021, January). How social media influencers affect behavioural intentions towards recommended brands: the role of emotional attachment and information value. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 37(11-12), 1-25. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2020.1866648>
- Sanny, L., Arina, A. N., Maulidya, R. T., & Pertiwi, R. P. (2020). Purchase intention on Indonesia male's skin care by social media marketing effect towards brand image and brand trust. *Management Science Letters*, 10(10), 2139-2146. doi:10.5267/j.msl.2020.3.023
- Sarstedt, M., Hair, J. F., Cheah, J.-H., & Becker, J.-M. (2019). How to specify, estimate, and validate higher-order constructs in PLS-SEM. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 27(3), 197-211. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2019.05.003>
- Sarstedt, M., Hair, J. F., Pick, M., Liengaard, B. D., Radomir, L., & Ringle, C. M. (2022). Progress in partial least squares structural equation modeling use in marketing research in the last decade. *Psychology & Marketing*, 39(5), 1035-1064. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21640>
- Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C. M., & Hair, J. F. (2017). Partial least squares structural equation modeling. In C. Homburg, M. Klarmann, & A. Vomberg (Eds.), *Handbook of Market Research* (pp. 587-632). Heidelberg, Germany: Springer International Publishing. doi:[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-57413-4\\_15](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-57413-4_15)
- Schimmelpfennig, C. (2018). Who is the Celebrity Endorser? A Content Analysis of Celebrity Endorsements. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 30(4), 220-234. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/08961530.2018.1446679>
- Schouten, A. P., Janssen, L., & Verspaget, M. (2020). Celebrity vs. Influencer endorsements in advertising: the role of identification, credibility, and Product-Endorser fit. *International Journal of Advertising*, 39(2), 258-281. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2019.1634898>

- Seçilmiş, C., Özdemir, C., & Kılıç, İ. (2022). How travel influencers affect visit intention? The roles of cognitive response, trust, COVID-19 fear and confidence in vaccine. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 25(17), 2789-2804. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2021.1994528>
- Sesar, V., Martinčević, I., & Boguszewicz-Kreft, M. (2022). Relationship between Advertising Disclosure, Influencer Credibility and Purchase Intention. *Journal of Risk and Financial Management*, 15(7), 276. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3390/jrfm15070276>
- Shan, Y., Chen, K.-J., & Lin, J.-S. (2019). When social media influencers endorse brands: the effects of self-influencer congruence, parasocial identification, and perceived endorser motive. *International Journal of Advertising*, 39(5), 590-610. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2019.1678322>
- Shiva, A., Narula, S., & Shahi, S. K. (2020). What drives retail investors' investment decisions? Evidence from no mobile phone phobia (Nomophobia) and investor fear of missing out (I-FoMo). *Journal of Content, Community & Communication*, 11(6), 2-20. doi:10.31620/JCCC.06.20/02
- Shmueli, G., Ray, S., Estrada, J. M., & Chatla, S. B. (2016). The elephant in the room: Predictive performance of PLS models. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(10), 4552-4564. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.03.049>
- Shmueli, G., Sarstedt, M., Hair, J. F., Cheah, J.-H., Ting, H., Vaithilingam, S., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). Predictive model assessment in PLS-SEM: guidelines for using PLSpredict. *European Journal of Marketing*, 53(11), 2322-2347. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-02-2019-0189>
- Singh, K. (2021). Influencer Marketing from a Consumer Perspective: How Attitude, Trust, and Word of Mouth Affect Buying Behavior. *European Integration Studies*, 15(1), 231-241. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.5755/j01.eis.1.15.28803>
- Singh, S., & Bala, R. (2020). Mediating role of self-efficacy on the relationship between conscientiousness and procrastination. *International Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion*, 11(1), 41-61. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1504/IJWOE.2020.109422>
- Sirgy, M. J. (1982). Self-Concept in Consumer Behavior: A Critical Review. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9(3), 287-300. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1086/208924>

- Sirgy, M. J. (1985). Using Self-Congruity and Ideal Congruity to Predict Purchase Motivation. *Journal of business Research*, 13(3), 195-206.  
doi:[https://doi.org/10.1016/0148-2963\(85\)90026-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0148-2963(85)90026-8)
- Sirgy, M. J. (2018). Self-congruity theory in consumer behavior: A little history. *Journal of Global Scholars of Marketing Science*, 28(2), 197-207.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/21639159.2018.1436981>
- Sokolova, K., & Kefi, H. (2020). Instagram and YouTube bloggers promote it, why should I buy? How credibility and parasocial interaction influence purchase intentions. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 53, 101742.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.01.011>
- Sondhi, S. P., & Sandhu, V. (2020). Work-life balance of employees in Punjab State Power Corporation Limited: A reliability and descriptive analysis. *Test Engineering and Management*, 82, 7218-7223.
- Sop, S. A. (2020). Self-congruity theory in tourism research: A systematic review and future research directions. *European Journal of Tourism Research*, 26, 2604.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.54055/ejtr.v26i.1935>
- Sridhar, S., & Sriram, S. (2015). Is online newspaper advertising cannibalizing print advertising? *Quantitative Marketing and Economics*, 13, 283-318.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11129-015-9160-3>
- Steenkamp, J.-B. E., & Baumgartner, H. (2000). On the use of structural equation models for marketing modeling. 17(2-3), 195-202. doi:[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-8116\(00\)00016-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-8116(00)00016-1)
- Suri, G., & Sharma, S. (2012). Impact of Internet Access and Usage on Student Activities on Computer-A study on Punjab University, India. *IFRSA Business Review*, 2(4), 395-400.
- Tafheem, N., El-Gohary, H., & Sobh, R. (2022). Social Media User-Influencer Congruity: An Analysis of Social Media Platforms Parasocial Relationships. *International Journal of Customer Relationship Marketing and Management*, 13(1), 1-26.  
doi:10.4018/IJCRMM.289213

- Taillon, B. J., Mueller, S. M., Kowalczyk, C. M., & Jones, D. N. (2020). Understanding the relationships between social media influencers and their followers: the moderating role of closeness. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 29(6), 767-782.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-03-2019-2292>
- Teng, W., Su, Y., Liao, T.-T., & Wei, C.-L. (2020). An exploration of celebrity business ventures and their appeal to fans and non - fans. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 54, 102004. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.102004>
- Thomson, M. (2006). Human brands: Investigating antecedents to consumers' strong attachments to celebrities. *Journal of Marketing*, 70(3), 104-119.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.70.3.104>
- Torres, P., Augusto, M., & Matos, M. (2019). Antecedents and outcomes of digital influencer endorsement: An exploratory study. *Psychology & Marketing*, 36(12), 1267-1276.  
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21274>
- Tran, V. D., & Nguyena, H. A. (2020). Consumer attitudes towards beauty bloggers and paid blog advertisements on purchase intention in Veitnam. *Management Science Letters*, 10(5), 1017-1026. doi:10.5267/j.msl.2019.11.008
- Uzunoglu, E., & Kip, S. M. (2014). Brand communication through digital influencers: Leveraging blogger engagement. *International Journal of Information Management*, 34(5), 592-602. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2014.04.007>
- Venciute, D., Mackeviciene, I., Kuslys, M., & Correia, R. F. (2023). The role of influencer–follower congruence in the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase behaviour. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 75, 103506.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103506>
- Wan, J., Lu, Y., Wang, B., & Zhao, L. (2017). How attachment influences users' willingness to donate to content creators in social media: A socio-technical systems perspective. *Information & Management*, 54(7), 837-850.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2016.12.007>
- Wang, S. W., & Scheinbaum, A. C. (2018). Enhancing Brand Credibility Via Celebrity Endorsement: Trustworthiness Trumps Attractiveness and Expertise. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 58(1), 16-32. doi:10.2501/JAR-2017-042

- Wang, S.-J., Hsu, C.-P., Huang, H.-C., & Chen, C.-L. (2015). How readers' perceived self-congruity and functional congruity affect bloggers' informational influence Perceived interactivity as a moderator. *Online Information Review*, 39(4), 537-555.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/OIR-02-2015-0063>
- Wang, S.-m., & Lin, J. C.-C. (2011). The effect of social influence on bloggers' usage intention. *Online Information Review*, 35(1), 50-65. doi:10.1108/14684521111113588
- Weinberger, M. G., & Campbell, L. (1991). The use and impact of humor in radio advertising. *Journal of advertising research*, 31(1), 644-652.
- Widyanto, H. A., & Agusti, C. R. (2020). Beauty influencer in the digital age: How does it influence purchase intention of generation Z? *Jurnal Manajemen dan Pemasaran Jasa*, 13(1), 1-16.
- Wiedmann, K.-P., & Mettenheim, W. V. (2020). Attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise – social influencers' winning formula? *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 30(5), 707-725. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-06-2019-2442>
- Wijerathna, D., & Wijesundara, T. (2022). Impact of perceived authenticity in micro-influencer marketing on purchasing intention in fitness sector: The mediation role of trust. *Journal of Management Matters*, 9(1), 1-25.  
doi:<http://doi.org/10.4038/jmm.v9i1.30>
- Wong, A., & Wei, J. (2023). Persuasive cues and reciprocal behaviors in influencer-follower relationships: The mediating role of influencer defense. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 75, 103507. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103507>
- Wong, H. Y., & Merrilees, B. (2007). Closing the marketing strategy to performance gap: The role of brand orientation. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 15(5), 387-402.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/09652540701726942>
- Xu, X., & Pratt, S. (2018). Social media influencers as endorsers to promote travel destinations: an application of self-congruence theory to the Chinese Generation Y. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 35(7), 958-972.
- Yi, H.-T., & Amenuvor, F. E. (2022). The Effect of Door-to-Door Salespeople's Individual Sales Capabilities on Selling Behavior and Performance: The Moderating Effect of

- Competitive Intensity. *Sustainability*, 14(6), 3327.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.3390/su14063327>
- Yuan, S., & Lou, C. (2020). How social media influencers foster relationships with followers: The roles of source credibility and fairness in parasocial relationship and product interest. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 20(2), 133-147.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2020.1769514>
- Zhang, X., & Choi, J. (2022). The Importance of Social Influencer-Generated Contents for User Cognition and Emotional Attachment: An Information Relevance Perspective. *Sustainability*, 14(11), 6676. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3390/su14116676>
- Zhao, J., Wang, Y., & Kong, F. (2014). Exploring the Mediation Effect of Social Support and Self-Esteem on the Relationship Between Humor Style and Life Satisfaction in Chinese College Students. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 64, 126-130.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2014.02.026>
- Zhao, X., Lynch Jr, J. G., & Chen , Q. (2010). Reconsidering Baron and Kenny: Myths and Truths about Mediation Analysis. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37(2), 197-206.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1086/651257>
- Zhu, X., Teng, L., Foti, L., & Yuan, Y. (2019). Using self-congruence theory to explain the interaction effects of brand type and celebrity type on consumer attitude formation. *Journal of Business Research*, 103, 301-309.
- Zogaj, A., Tscheulin, D. K., & Olk, S. (2021). Benefits of matching consumers' personality: Creating perceived trustworthiness via actual self-congruence and perceived competence via ideal self-congruence. *Psychology & Marketing*, 38(3), 416-430.  
doi:10.1002/mar.21439
- Zogaj, A., Tscheulin, D. K., Lindenmeier , J., & Olk , S. (2021). Linking actual self-congruence, ideal self-congruence, and functional congruence to donor loyalty: the moderating role of issue involvement. *Journal of Business Economics*, 91, 379-400. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11573-020-01006-9>

## Appendix

### Questionnaire

Dear Respondents,

I am Mukta Garg (Research Scholar) pursuing my Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) from Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala, Punjab, under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Apurva Bakshi. This survey is for my doctoral research on the topic, ***“Influence of Beauty Vloggers on Consumer Purchase Intention for Cosmetic Brands: An Empirical Study”***.

The survey is divided into two sections. The first section includes the personal details of the respondents. The second section comprises of the questions regarding the variables under study. It would take only 15-20 minutes of your time to fill in the questionnaire.

Personal details and responses of the respondents will be kept confidential and the data collected will be used for academic purpose only.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

If you have any query regarding the questionnaire, feel free to contact me at

Email address: [mgarg60\\_phd20@thapar.edu](mailto:mgarg60_phd20@thapar.edu)

Contact no. 7206352247

Mukta Garg

Research Scholar

School of Humanities and Social Sciences,

Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala

(Deemed to be University)

#### SECTION 1 (PERSONAL DETAILS)

|          |       |                 |  |
|----------|-------|-----------------|--|
| 1. Name  |       | 2. Email        |  |
| 3. Age   |       |                 |  |
| Below 18 | 18-30 | 31-45 and above |  |

|                                                                                                 |                   |                    |                |                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| 4. Gender                                                                                       |                   |                    |                |                           |
| Male                                                                                            |                   | Female             |                | Others                    |
| 5. Educational Qualification                                                                    |                   |                    |                |                           |
| Senior Secondary                                                                                |                   | Graduation         |                | Post Graduation and above |
| 6. Region                                                                                       |                   |                    |                |                           |
| Punjab                                                                                          | Haryana           | Chandigarh         | Delhi (NCR)    |                           |
| 7. Occupation                                                                                   |                   |                    |                |                           |
| Student                                                                                         | Salaried          | Self-employed      | Homemaker      |                           |
| 8. Annual income of the household                                                               |                   |                    |                |                           |
| Less than 2 lakhs                                                                               | 2 lakhs – 5 lakhs | 5 lakhs – 10 lakhs | Above 10 lakhs |                           |
| 9. Social media platforms you use                                                               |                   |                    |                |                           |
| YouTube                                                                                         | Facebook          | Instagram          | Snapchat       | Twitter                   |
| 10. How much time do you devote to social media in a day according to your mobile data updates? |                   |                    |                |                           |
| Less than an hour                                                                               | 1 hour – 3 hours  | 3 hours – 5 hours  | Above 5 hours  |                           |
| 11. Do you follow and beauty vlogger on any social media platform?                              |                   |                    |                |                           |
| Yes                                                                                             |                   | No                 |                |                           |

## SECTION 2

### A. Source Characteristics

Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 with regard to the beauty vlogger you follow (or most prominently follow), where 1 represents ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 represents ‘strongly agree’.

| A     | Source Characteristics                                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| A.1   | Credibility                                                           |   |   |   |   |   |
| A.1.1 | The information provided by the beauty vlogger is accurate.           |   |   |   |   |   |
| A.1.2 | The information provided by the beauty vlogger is credible.           |   |   |   |   |   |
| A.1.3 | The information provided by the beauty vlogger is believable.         |   |   |   |   |   |
| A.1.4 | The content provided by the beauty vlogger is authentic.              |   |   |   |   |   |
| A.1.5 | The description provided by the beauty vlogger related to products is |   |   |   |   |   |

|       |                                                                               |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
|       | free from biasness.                                                           |  |  |  |  |  |
| A.1.6 | The beauty vlogger you follow gives a neutral opinion about different brands. |  |  |  |  |  |

**Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 with regard to the beauty vlogger you follow (or most prominently follow), where 1 represents ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 represents ‘strongly agree’.**

| <b>A</b>   | <b>Source Characteristics</b>                                      |          |          |          |          |          |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>A.2</b> | <b>Trustworthiness</b>                                             | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
| A.2.1      | The content provided by the beauty vlogger is dependable.          |          |          |          |          |          |
| A.2.2      | The beauty vlogger you follow is honest in making his/her content. |          |          |          |          |          |
| A.2.3      | The content provided by the beauty vlogger is reliable.            |          |          |          |          |          |
| A.2.4      | My favourite beauty vlogger is sincere in making content.          |          |          |          |          |          |
| A.2.5      | My favourite beauty vlogger is trustworthy.                        |          |          |          |          |          |
| A.2.6      | My favourite beauty vlogger is righteous in nature.                |          |          |          |          |          |

**Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 with regard to the beauty vlogger you follow (or most prominently follow), where 1 represents ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 represents ‘strongly agree’.**

| <b>A</b>   | <b>Source Characteristics</b>                                                                                                                 |          |          |          |          |          |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>A.3</b> | <b>Expertise</b>                                                                                                                              | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
| A.3.1      | When looking at beauty vlogger’s content, I think he/she is an expert.                                                                        |          |          |          |          |          |
| A.3.2      | When looking at beauty vlogger’s Content, I think he/she is experienced in his/her field.                                                     |          |          |          |          |          |
| A.3.3      | The beauty vlogger has enough knowledge about the products/brands that he/she endorses.                                                       |          |          |          |          |          |
| A.3.4      | When looking at beauty vlogger’s content, I think he/she is qualified enough to give professional opinion on the products/brands he/she uses. |          |          |          |          |          |
| A.3.5      | When looking at beauty vlogger’s content, I think he/she has skills regarding the correct usage of products.                                  |          |          |          |          |          |
| A.3.6      | My favourite beauty vlogger is talented.                                                                                                      |          |          |          |          |          |
| A.3.7      | My favourite beauty vlogger’s performance is professional.                                                                                    |          |          |          |          |          |

|       |                                                                                         |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| A.3.8 | My favourite beauty vlogger has earned recognition for his/her outstanding performance. |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|

**Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 with regard to the beauty vlogger you follow (or most prominently follow), where 1 represents ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 represents ‘strongly agree’.**

| <b>A</b>   | <b>Source Characteristics</b>                              |          |          |          |          |          |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>A.4</b> | <b>Attractiveness</b>                                      | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
| A.4.1      | The beauty vlogger I follow has an attractive personality. |          |          |          |          |          |
| A.4.2      | The beauty vlogger that I follow has a classy personality. |          |          |          |          |          |
| A.4.3      | My favourite beauty vlogger is beautiful.                  |          |          |          |          |          |
| A.4.4      | My favourite beauty vlogger is elegant.                    |          |          |          |          |          |
| A.4.5      | The beauty vlogger that I follow is sexy.                  |          |          |          |          |          |
| A.4.6      | The beauty vloggers have unique charisma.                  |          |          |          |          |          |
| A.4.7      | My favourite beauty vlogger is friendly.                   |          |          |          |          |          |
| A.4.8      | My favourite beauty vlogger is good-looking.               |          |          |          |          |          |
| A.4.9      | My favourite beauty vlogger is visually appealing.         |          |          |          |          |          |

## **B. Audience Characteristics**

**Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 with regard to the beauty vlogger you follow (or most prominently follow), where 1 represents ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 represents ‘strongly agree’.**

| <b>B</b>   | <b>Audience Characteristics</b>                  |          |          |          |          |          |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>B.1</b> | <b>Self-Concept</b>                              | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
| B.1.1      | I generally need other people’s approval.        |          |          |          |          |          |
| B.1.2      | I think I have an attractive personality.        |          |          |          |          |          |
| B.1.3      | I enjoy mixing with people.                      |          |          |          |          |          |
| B.1.4      | I feel confident when dealing with other people. |          |          |          |          |          |
| B.1.5      | I look pleasant and presentable to others.       |          |          |          |          |          |
| B.1.6      | I consider myself a very worthy person.          |          |          |          |          |          |

Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 with regard to the beauty vlogger you follow (or most prominently follow), where 1 represents ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 represents ‘strongly agree’.

| <b>B</b>   | <b>Audience Characteristics</b>                                                                      |          |          |          |          |          |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>B.2</b> | <b>User-Influencer Personality</b>                                                                   | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
| B.2.1      | I aspire to the lifestyle of the beauty vlogger I follow.                                            |          |          |          |          |          |
| B.2.2      | The content shared by the beauty vlogger is relevant to my values.                                   |          |          |          |          |          |
| B.2.3      | The content shared by the beauty vlogger matches with my interest.                                   |          |          |          |          |          |
| B.2.4      | The content shared by the beauty vlogger on different social media platforms matches my personality. |          |          |          |          |          |
| B.2.5      | I can identify with the beauty vlogger I follow.                                                     |          |          |          |          |          |

### **C. Interactional Elements**

Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 with regard to the beauty vlogger you follow (or most prominently follow), where 1 represents ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 represents ‘strongly agree’.

| <b>C</b>   | <b>Interactional Elements</b>                                       |          |          |          |          |          |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>C.1</b> | <b>Parasocial Interactions</b>                                      | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
| C.1.1      | Beauty vlogger makes me feel comfortable, as if I am with a friend. |          |          |          |          |          |
| C.1.2      | I always look forward to seeing his/her post.                       |          |          |          |          |          |
| C.1.3      | I see he/she as a natural, down-to-earth person.                    |          |          |          |          |          |
| C.1.4      | If he/she starts another social media channel, I will follow her.   |          |          |          |          |          |
| C.1.5      | He/she seems to understand the kind of things I want to know.       |          |          |          |          |          |
| C.1.6      | If I see a story about, he/she in other places, I would read it.    |          |          |          |          |          |
| C.1.7      | I would love to meet he/she in person.                              |          |          |          |          |          |
| C.1.8      | He/she would fit in well with my group of friends.                  |          |          |          |          |          |
| C.1.9      | If something happens to him/her, I will feel sad.                   |          |          |          |          |          |
| C.1.10     | I would like to invite him/her to my party.                         |          |          |          |          |          |
| C.1.11     | He/she is the kind of person I would like to hang out with.         |          |          |          |          |          |
| C.1.12     | If he/she lived in my neighbourhood, we would be friends.           |          |          |          |          |          |

Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 with regard to the beauty vlogger you follow (or most prominently follow), where 1 represents ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 represents ‘strongly agree’.

| C      | Interactional Elements                                                                                               |   |   |   |   |   |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| C.2    | Informational Value                                                                                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| C.2.1  | I look at my favourite beauty vlogger’s posts and messages because I find them informative.                          |   |   |   |   |   |
| C.2.2  | I find my favourite beauty vlogger’s content on different social media platforms informative.                        |   |   |   |   |   |
| C.2.3  | The information provided by beauty vloggers seems to be effective.                                                   |   |   |   |   |   |
| C.2.4  | The information shared by the beauty vlogger on his/her channel is helpful.                                          |   |   |   |   |   |
| C.2.5  | I feel the content shared by the beauty vlogger is functional as it helps in making buying decision.                 |   |   |   |   |   |
| C.2.6  | I find the necessary information on the beauty vlogger’s channel across different social media platforms.            |   |   |   |   |   |
| C.2.7  | I find that the beauty vlogger shares efficient information that helps me gain more insight regarding product usage. |   |   |   |   |   |
| C.2.8  | I accumulate knowledge through the beauty vlogger’s shared information.                                              |   |   |   |   |   |
| C.2.9  | I acquire novel information via the beauty vlogger’s channel.                                                        |   |   |   |   |   |
| C.2.10 | I get interesting information via the beauty vlogger’s content.                                                      |   |   |   |   |   |

Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 with regard to the beauty vlogger you follow (or most prominently follow), where 1 represents ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 represents ‘strongly agree’.

| C     | Interactional Elements                                                                                                              |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| C.3   | Meaning Transfer                                                                                                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| C.3.1 | I believe that the respectability attached to the beauty vlogger gets transferred to the brands he/she endorses/uses.               |   |   |   |   |   |
| C.3.2 | I believe that the performance standards of the beauty vlogger are also reflected in the performance standards of the brands he/she |   |   |   |   |   |

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
|       | endorses/uses.                                                                                                                                                                    |  |  |  |  |  |
| C.3.3 | I believe that the personality demonstrated by the beauty vlogger is similar to the personality of the brand that he/she endorses/uses.                                           |  |  |  |  |  |
| C.3.4 | I believe that the feelings evoked by the influencer are also the feelings evoked by the brands he/she endorses/uses.                                                             |  |  |  |  |  |
| C.3.5 | Some aspects of the appearance of the influencer (e.g., good looking) seem to be transferred to the products (e.g., packaging/features of the product) that he/she endorses/uses. |  |  |  |  |  |
| C.3.6 | I believe that the values attached to the beauty vloggers get transferred to the brands he/she endorses/uses.                                                                     |  |  |  |  |  |
| C.3.7 | I believe that the ethical aspects identified with the beauty vloggers are transferred as the ethical characteristics of the brands he/she endorses/uses.                         |  |  |  |  |  |
| C.3.8 | The target audience's positive feelings towards a beauty vlogger will transfer to the endorsed brand.                                                                             |  |  |  |  |  |

**Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 with regard to the beauty vlogger you follow (or most prominently follow), where 1 represents 'strongly disagree' and 5 represents 'strongly agree'.**

| <b>C</b>   | <b>Interactional Elements</b>                                                              |          |          |          |          |          |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>C.4</b> | <b>Emotional Attachment</b>                                                                | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
| C.4.1      | I feel a tremendous amount of affection towards the beauty vloggers that I follow.         |          |          |          |          |          |
| C.4.2      | I love watching my favourite beauty vlogger's content on different social media platforms. |          |          |          |          |          |
| C.4.3      | I think there is a connection between the beauty vlogger I like and me.                    |          |          |          |          |          |
| C.4.4      | I feel passionate about my favourite beauty vlogger.                                       |          |          |          |          |          |
| C.4.5      | I feel delightful after watching my favourite beauty vlogger's content.                    |          |          |          |          |          |
| C.4.6      | The vlogger I follow feels like a friend to me.                                            |          |          |          |          |          |
| C.4.7      | Beauty vloggers try to communicate intimately with viewers.                                |          |          |          |          |          |
| C.4.8      | The beauty vlogger I follow seems to be interested in the viewers' opinion.                |          |          |          |          |          |
| C.4.9      | After watching the vlog, I thought I wanted to comment.                                    |          |          |          |          |          |

#### **D. Trust**

**Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 with regard to the beauty vlogger you follow (or most prominently follow), where 1 represents ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 represents ‘strongly agree’.**

| <b>D</b> | <b>Trust</b>                                                                                | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| D.1      | I think that beauty vloggers have the ability to contribute specialized information.        |          |          |          |          |          |
| D.2      | I think that the beauty vloggers grasp the relevant knowledge of the commodities discussed. |          |          |          |          |          |
| D.3      | I think the beauty vloggers are honest in the release of information.                       |          |          |          |          |          |
| D.4      | I think that the information released by the beauty vloggers is without prejudice.          |          |          |          |          |          |
| D.5      | I think that the beauty vloggers will do their best to provide information to help others.  |          |          |          |          |          |

#### **E. Consumer Attitude**

**Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 with regard to the beauty vlogger you follow (or most prominently follow), where 1 represents ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 represents ‘strongly agree’.**

| <b>E</b> | <b>Consumer Attitude</b>                                                                                                  | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| E.1      | Sometimes I take pleasure in thinking about what I saw or heard from the beauty vlogger.                                  |          |          |          |          |          |
| E.2      | People use the products showcased by the beauty vlogger because they are endorsed by them.                                |          |          |          |          |          |
| E.3      | Brands using beauty vloggers for marketing are more effective in delivering the message.                                  |          |          |          |          |          |
| E.4      | Beauty vloggers are influential and audiences believe what they say.                                                      |          |          |          |          |          |
| E.5      | Price comparison and information search becomes less necessary when my preferred beauty vlogger is endorsing the product. |          |          |          |          |          |
| E.6      | Brands being endorsed by the beauty vlogger come to my mind                                                               |          |          |          |          |          |

|  |                                     |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
|  | before other brands while shopping. |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|

## **F. Perceived Influence**

**Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 with regard to the beauty vlogger you follow (or most prominently follow), where 1 represents ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 represents ‘strongly agree’.**

| <b>F</b> | <b>Perceived Influence</b>                                                                                    | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| F.1      | After viewing beauty vlogger’s content, my perception often changes related to the products/brands they show. |          |          |          |          |          |
| F.2      | I value the opinion of beauty vloggers, as if he/she is someone close to whom I can trust.                    |          |          |          |          |          |
| F.3      | I think beauty vloggers suggest helpful products/brands.                                                      |          |          |          |          |          |

## **G. Purchase Intention**

**Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 with regard to the beauty vlogger you follow (or most prominently follow), where 1 represents ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 represents ‘strongly agree’.**

| <b>G</b> | <b>Purchase Intention</b>                                                                           | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| G.1      | I would purchase a brand based on the advice I am given by the influencer that I follow.            |          |          |          |          |          |
| G.2      | I would follow brand recommendations from the influencers that I follow.                            |          |          |          |          |          |
| G.3      | In the future, I will purchase the products of brands recommended by the influencers that I follow. |          |          |          |          |          |
| G.4      | It is possible that I will visit some online stores or actual stores because of his/her posts.      |          |          |          |          |          |
| G.5      | The beauty vlogger provides a great help for my purchase decision.                                  |          |          |          |          |          |
| G.6      | The beauty vlogger changes my views on some products.                                               |          |          |          |          |          |

### Journal Publications

| Sr. No. | Title of the Paper                                                                                                                                     | Journal                                                                         | Year of Publication | Impact Factor |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| 1.      | Exploring the impact of beauty vloggers' credible attributes, parasocial interaction, and trust on consumer purchase intention in influencer marketing | Humanities and Social Sciences Communication<br>(Springer Nature)<br>(Attached) | 2024                | 3.5           |
| 2.      | Exploring the effects of audience and strategies used by beauty vloggers on behavioural intention towards endorsed brands                              | Humanities and Social Sciences Communication<br>(Springer Nature)<br>(Attached) | 2024                | 3.5           |

### Conferences Attended

| Sr. No. | Title of the Paper                                                                                                                                             | Year | Name and Place of Conference                                                                                                         |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.      | Influence of beauty vlogging on Consumer Purchase Intention                                                                                                    | 2022 | 20 <sup>th</sup> AIMS International Conference on Management ( <b>IIM Kozhikode</b> )                                                |
| 2.      | Impact of Beauty vlogger credible attributes on Consumers' purchase intention, incorporating the mediating role of trust: A second order Construct             | 2023 | Conference on Excellence in Research and Education (CERE-2023) ( <b>IIM Indore</b> )                                                 |
| 3.      | Consumer Behaviour in the Age of Influencer Marketing: The Influence of Meaning Transfer, Informational Value, and Emotional Attachment on Purchase Intentions | 2023 | 16th ISDSI-Global Conference 2023 ( <b>IIM Ranchi</b> )                                                                              |
| 4.      | Unveiling the Influence of Beauty Vloggers on Consumers' Purchase Intention: A Second Order Construct Analysis                                                 | 2024 | 9th PAN IIM World Management Conference ( <b>IIM Sambalpur</b> )                                                                     |
| 5.      | The Power of Beauty Vloggers: Exploring Influencer Marketing's Impact on Consumer Behaviour                                                                    | 2024 | 3rd International Marketing Conference (iMarC III) Marketing Transformations: Reimagine, Realign, and Rework ( <b>IIM Shillong</b> ) |



ARTICLE



<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-02760-9>

OPEN

# Exploring the impact of beauty vloggers' credible attributes, parasocial interaction, and trust on consumer purchase intention in influencer marketing

Mukta Garg<sup>1</sup> & Apurva Bakshi<sup>1</sup>

The growing usage of digital platforms has made influencer marketing the most cost-effective marketing tool, especially for products consumed by young digital natives. Among other products, these include fashion and beauty-related items such as cosmetics, whose online marketing has created a particular category of influencers called 'beauty vloggers.' By applying the source credibility model, this study investigates whether beauty vloggers' credible attributes (trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness) help consumers build trust towards them and whether followers' trust leads to desirable marketing outcomes (increased purchase intention). Prior literature used the source credibility model in a fragmented manner. However, this study enhances the holistic framework of social media influencers' impact on purchase intention by investigating all three credible attributes. It specifically addresses the significance of cultivating trust between beauty vloggers and followers, exploring the impact of vloggers' credible attributes on consumer purchase intention. Additionally, beauty vloggers periodically engage in parasocial interactions to increase closeness with their audiences, affecting consumer behaviour. This study addresses the limited research on the consequences of parasocial interactions in an emerging market context, examining the impact of beauty vloggers' repeated interactions on consumer behaviour, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of purchase intention using parasocial interaction as an antecedent. The research was conducted on consumers belonging to the age group of 16–45 who use social media platforms daily. Using structural equation modelling via SmartPLS software, the statistical analysis was done on 357 North Indian respondents. The study explores the influence of beauty vloggers on consumers' purchasing behaviour in the Indian context. The results demonstrate that beauty vloggers' credibility traits help in influencing consumer behaviour. The findings also revealed that trust partially mediates the impact of credible attributes of beauty vloggers and consumers' purchase intention. Additionally, the results show that customers' purchasing decisions might be influenced by repeated parasocial interactions done by beauty vloggers if they perceive them as credible information sources. The findings of the study contribute to help industrial marketers and practitioners of cosmetic companies use influencer marketing strategically in order to increase market sales.

<sup>1</sup>School of Humanities & Social Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala, Punjab, India. email: [mgarg60\\_phd20@thapar.edu](mailto:mgarg60_phd20@thapar.edu); [abakshi@thapar.edu](mailto:abakshi@thapar.edu)

## Introduction

In contemporary times, gigantic expansion in internet and social media usage has been observed during the outbreak of Covid 19 (Kim & Kim, 2021). People use various social media sites for their entertainment and informational purposes, and for having virtual social experiences. Some social media users actively produce online content by sharing their product reviews, personal lives, feelings, opinions, ideas, etc., becoming opinion leaders for their audiences (Lee & Watkins, 2016). Opinion leaders may impact their followers' brand and product perceptions via their postings (Lee & Lee, 2022). Thus, they are called "influencers" or "social media influencers".

A social media influencer is an "autonomous third-party endorser who has amassed substantial social networks by openly disclosing information about their personal experiences, opinions and matters through various mediums such as texts, images, videos, hashtags, and location check-ins" (Freberg et al., 2011; Ki & Kim, 2019). Their success on social media has made them micro-celebrities. There are a lot of social media influencers making content in different sectors like health, food, gaming, travelling, lifestyle, technology etc. However, those influencers who specifically produce beauty-related content, such as review videos featuring cosmetic products, or tutorial videos on how to use a particular product, are generally known as beauty vloggers or beauty influencers. According to a global survey conducted by Marketing (2019), there is a notable disparity in consumer sentiment between photos and video content. This discrepancy has particular significance in the context of cosmetics marketing by beauty influencers, given the visual characteristics of the products and their application (Manchanda et al., 2022). In contrast to other forms of vlog marketing such as entertainment vlogs, health vlogs, food vlogs, and travel vlogs, beauty vlogging offers unique experiences to audiences due to its capacity to develop vicarious experiences for viewers. Young consumers watch makeup tutorials given by beauty vloggers to understand the step-by-step process of product application, making the marketing experience more realistic. Consequently, this practice enhances the authenticity of beauty vlogger marketing (Lee & Lee, 2022).

Prior researchers (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Kim & Kim, 2021; Manchanda et al., 2022) revealed that consumers get authentic and believable information from these beauty vloggers. They feel a sense of similarity and familiarity with these micro-celebrities. Additionally, beauty vloggers make regular interactions with their respective audiences making them more approachable and real than traditional celebrity endorsers (Tafheem et al., 2022). Marketers of cosmetic companies see this as an opportunity to promote their products using these beauty vloggers, giving rise to a new marketing phenomenon called "influencer marketing". Influencer marketing has witnessed significant growth globally as well as in India. According to a recent market analysis, influencer marketing is valued at 12.75 billion rupees in 2022 and it is expected to increase to 28 billion rupees by 2026 (Statista, 2023). Additionally, a survey found that 92% of consumers trust influencers more than traditional marketing tactics (Kim and Kim, 2021). Thus, this new marketing strategy has allowed cosmetic businesses to sell their goods more economically than with celebrity endorsements (Hassan et al., 2021).

It is evident from the literature that cosmetic companies have traditionally used celebrity endorsement to promote their products (Spry et al., 2011; Jin & Phua, 2014). Later on, marketers started shifting towards beauty vlogger marketing owing to the increased usage of social media (Ki & Kim, 2019). Prior literature posits that consumers rely more on social media influencers as compared to traditional celebrities (Manchanda et al., 2022). Still, there is a lack of extensive research on the specific traits of beauty vloggers that

are crucial criteria for their selection in brand collaborations. Additionally, the research on the effect of influencer marketing in an emerging economy like India is still unexplored. Prior investigations on the influence of social media influencers on purchase intention, such as Lee & Watkins (2016), Torres et al. (2019), and Wong & Wei, (2023), had employed the source attractiveness model only. Sokolova & Kefi (2019) measured credibility using source attractiveness, in an empirical study on bloggers. Ladhari et al. (2020) and Wiedmann & Mettenheim (2020) exclusively considered expertise. Nosita & Lestari (2019), Ramadanty et al. (2020), Schouten et al. (2020), and Mabkhot et al., (2022) concentrated on expertise and trustworthiness. However, the aforementioned research used credibility measures in a fragmented manner. The current study aims to comprehensively investigate all dimensions of the credibility model to enhance the robustness of the holistic framework. Additionally, theoretical studies on celebrity endorsement highlight trust as a crucial factor for determining the efficacy of messages being conveyed by celebrities (Jiang et al., 2015), correlating with a positive attitude toward sponsored messages (Wang et al., 2017). Social media has elevated the role of social media influencers (SMIs) to transcend even traditional celebrities. Moreover, prior research has examined the impact of SMIs on tourist purchasing intentions, considering trust (Chatzigeorgiou, 2017; Magno & Cassia, 2018) and attitudes towards advertisements and destinations as significant factors (Xu & Pratt, 2018). Additionally, previous studies lacked emphasis on the significance of cultivating trust between beauty vloggers and their followers. The present study aims to fill this gap by examining the impact of credible attributes of beauty vloggers that serve to create trust in them, which influences consumers' intention to purchase the endorsed product. Apart from credible attributes, parasocial interactions (PSI) are another major antecedent of purchase intention (Choi & Lee, 2019; Lee & Lee, 2022; Manchanda et al., 2022). People often turn to beauty vloggers' videos for advice before making a buying decision. Marketers use the fact that beauty vloggers and their fans connect with each other often to create the impression that they are friends. Moreover, prior literature postulates that regular interactions between beauty vloggers and their viewers can change consumers' attitudes towards a brand/product (Lee & Lee, 2022). It is vital to understand the importance of parasocial interactions for examining purchase intention. However, the investigation of the consequences of PSI in an emerging market context is still limited. Additionally, Lee & Lee, (2022) recommended investigating the impact of parasocial interactions on purchase intention. So, to fill this gap, the current study investigates the effect of repeated interactions (parasocial interactions) done by beauty vloggers on consumer behaviour. Moreover, while several studies have examined the influence of source credibility (Manchanda et al., 2022; Ashraf et al., 2023) and parasocial interactions (Lee & Watkins, 2016; Lee & Lee, 2022) on consumers' purchasing decisions, there remains a scarcity of research investigating the combined effects of these factors. Considering these gaps in the literature, this study attempts to address the following research questions:

RQ1: Do credible attributes of beauty vloggers help in changing the attitude of consumers towards the product they endorse/use?

RQ2: Does trust affect the relationship between source credibility attributes and purchase intention?

RQ3: Do repeated parasocial interactions by beauty vloggers affect the purchase intention of consumers?

The present study uses the holistic source credibility model given by Ohanian, (1991) and parasocial interaction theory given by Horton and Wohl, (1956) to examine how beauty vloggers influence consumers' purchase intention for cosmetic brands. This study shows how credible attributes (trustworthiness,

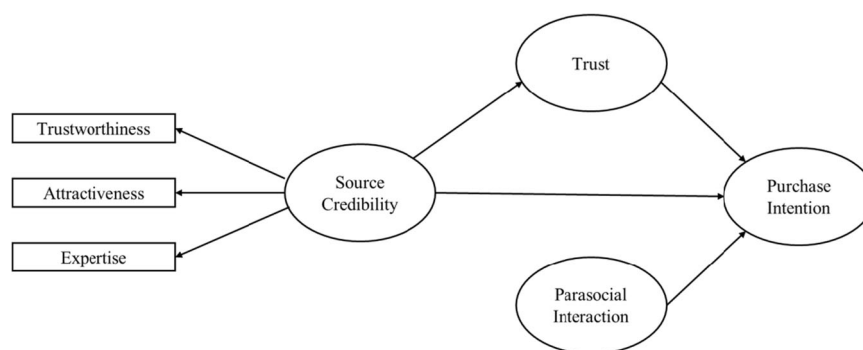


**Fig. 1 Proposed conceptual framework.** A representation of the relationship between all the variables used (source credibility, trust, parasocial interaction, and purchase intention). Here, source credibility is a second-order construct, and trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise are lower-order constructs.

expertise, and attractiveness) of beauty vloggers and parasocial interactions affect purchase intention by taking trust as a mediating variable (as shown in Fig. 1).

**Significance of the study.** The current study delves into contemporary digital marketing, emphasising the escalating influence of influencer marketing, particularly in the beauty industry targeting young digital natives. It reveals key credible attributes of beauty vloggers that affect consumer behaviour, highlighting trust as a pivotal mediator in purchase decisions. Marketers in the competitive beauty landscape can strategically enhance trust by recognising and leveraging these attributes. The study underscores the role of parasocial interactions in fostering connections with influencers, aiding marketers in crafting resonant messages for target demographics. In conclusion, leveraging beauty vloggers' credibility and parasocial interactions offers a potent strategy for marketers to build consumer trust and connect with specific audience segments.

In recent years, influencer marketing, particularly targeting tech-savvy natives, has gained prominence. This study focuses on beauty vloggers within this realm, recognising their unique impact on consumer behaviour, particularly in the cosmetics domain. The investigation stems from the understanding that influencer marketing effectiveness varies based on product type and influencer attributes. In the beauty vlogging niche, where personal credibility is paramount, understanding influence mechanisms is crucial. This choice is justified by the transformative influence of digital platforms on consumer behaviour. Beauty vloggers, shaping cultural and commercial landscapes, impact perceptions and preferences, especially among the younger demographic. The study emphasises that their influence extends beyond product endorsement to include credibility, parasocial interactions, and audience trust. By dissecting beauty vlogger influence within influencer marketing, the study aims to provide nuanced insights for tailored cosmetic marketing strategies.

The next section of the paper discusses the theoretical background and literature review that helps in forming a hypothesis for the current study. Section "Research design and methodology" provides the research framework and methodology. The results and findings of the study are displayed in the section "Results and findings" followed by the discussion portion in the section "Discussion". At last section "Implications, limitations and future research avenues" provides implications and limitations of the current study along with future research avenues.

## Literature review and hypothesis development

This section contains theoretical background to support the proposed model by emphasising on source credibility theory and

parasocial interaction theory. This section also presents the work done by previous researchers on similar variables that help in formulating a hypothesis for the current study.

**Source credibility theory.** Numerous marketing professionals and advertising experts believe that endorsers' attributes play a crucial role in guaranteeing the effectiveness of a message. It is imperative for marketers to carefully choose a suitable spokesperson to endorse their brand, as this can lead to an increase in purchase intention. Many empirical investigations have been conducted to examine the influence of an endorser's credibility on the purchasing behaviour of consumers (Choi & Lee, 2019; Manchanda et al., 2022). The notion in question was demonstrated in the source credibility model proposed by Ohanian (1991). The phrase "source credibility" is often used to denote the favourable attributes of a communicator that influence the recipient's willingness to accept a message. In other words, source credibility refers to the degree to which the intended audience perceives a source as having the necessary experience and knowledge to enhance their comprehension of a specific product or service (Ohanian, 1991). Initially, Hovland & Weiss (1951) illustrated trustworthiness and expertise as the two significant dimensions of the source credibility model. However, McGuire (1985) added another important dimension, namely, attractiveness to the source credibility model owing to the increasing use of celebrities to endorse products. Within the context of the cosmetic sector, the physical appeal of a spokesperson has a considerable influence in moulding customers' favourable perception of a product, thereby establishing it as a crucial factor (Lou & Yuan, 2019). The concept of source attractiveness encompasses both physical attractiveness (Ohanian, 1991) and non-physical attractiveness (McGuire, 1985). Lee and Watkins (2016) also examined the impact of physical and social attractiveness on the consumers' purchase intention for luxury cosmetic products. The results revealed that if a luxury product is reviewed by an attractive and familiar source, it creates more purchase intention. So, the present study involved the identification of all three primary dimensions given by Ohanian (1991), namely trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness, to assess the credibility of the endorser (specifically, a beauty vlogger).

The concept of "trustworthiness" pertains to the degree of acceptance and assurance the audience has in the message the speaker conveys. Moreover, an endorser with high trustworthiness and strong opinion is more effective in influencing consumer attitudes than an untrustworthy endorser (Giffin, 1967; Ohanian, 1991). Hovland et al. (1953), describe expertise as the degree to which the endorser is perceived as a credible source of information, and consumers may rely on the information presented by them to make their purchasing decisions. The term

“attractiveness” pertains to the observable physical and social characteristics of the individual endorsing a product or service. Physical and social attractiveness are the two constituents through which source attractiveness may be examined. Here, social attractiveness refers to the familiarity, likeability, and similarity between beauty vloggers and their respective audiences, whilst physical attractiveness primarily relates to the physical structure, facial characteristics, and overall personality of the beauty vlogger (Kim & Kim, 2021). McGuire (1985) revealed that an endorser who is perceived as attractive tends to be more well-liked and has a positive influence on the products they endorse. In the beauty industry, the perceived attractiveness of an endorser is a significant factor in influencing attitudinal shifts. Previous researchers have utilised the source credibility model in relation to celebrity endorsers (Roy et al., 2013; Bhatt et al., 2013; Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018). In contemporary times, individuals who create content related to beauty on online platforms are regarded as micro-celebrities or self-made artists. As a result, all three aspects of the source credibility model also fit in this context (influencer marketing) (Shan et al., 2019).

The credibility of the source is a multidimensional phenomenon primarily used to rate the information provided, hence possessing influencing powers. A listener’s favourable attitude toward the source and consequent receptivity to the message can easily be influenced by source credibility. Prior studies have demonstrated that individuals are more susceptible to influence from individuals they perceive as trustworthy (Lee & Watkins, 2016; Sokolova & Kefi, 2019; Balabanis & Chatzopoulou, 2019). Also, if the remarks given by the endorser (beauty vlogger) are true, sincere, and concise, the information source is generally regarded as more credible, leading to higher purchase intention (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Giffin, 1967; Ismagilova et al., 2020). Sokolova and Kefi, (2019), examined the importance of credible attributes in shaping the behaviour of consumers towards the product they endorse/use. The results of the study revealed that consumers become more inclined to purchase a product that has been endorsed by an opinionated person. Lou and Yuan, (2019) illustrated that when customers use or intend to purchase products that are associated with beauty vlogger’s area of expertise, they are more inclined to accept or believe beauty vlogger’s opinions. Another study conducted by Cheng et al. (2023) provided evidence indicating that the effectiveness of communication is heavily dependent on the perceived credibility of the influencer. Also, the familiarity, similarity, and acquaintance that consumers experience towards beauty vloggers have been found to influence their intention to purchase positively (Manchanda et al., 2022). Moreover, it has been observed that a visually appealing stimulus tends to garner greater attention, particularly in the cosmetic industry domain, resulting in increased inclination to purchase (De Veirman et al., 2017). The three dimensions of source credibility are instrumental in fostering trust towards beauty vloggers. The followers perceive the association between influencers and themselves as satisfying. Furthermore, the efficacy of the communication is amplified when the audience places confidence in the influencer. Followers anticipate that the influencer’s endorsement will be helpful since they think the influencer’s message will produce favourable results (Kim & Kim, 2021). Therefore, we put forth the subsequent two hypotheses:

*H1: Source credibility of beauty vloggers positively influences trust towards beauty vloggers.*

*H2: Source credibility of beauty vloggers positively influences purchase intention of consumers towards the brands they endorse.*

**Trust.** Trust can be delineated as the degree of confidence vested by a recipient in the communicator or speaker. Trust is significant in communication, as it contributes to the credibility of an

individual’s words and actions within a context characterised by uncertainty or potential harm (Giffin, 1967). Morgan and Hunt (1994) illustrated that trust exists when the viewer seeks integrity and reliability in the information provided by the spokesperson. The ability to supervise or control the actions of the other party is not a necessary condition for trust. Instead, trust is characterised by the willingness of one party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party with the expectation that the latter will perform a particular task that is important to the former (Mayer et al., 1995). Trust is commonly perceived as a characteristic that is cultivated over time through frequent interactions within relationships. The establishment of trust is a fundamental aspect in the cultivation of interpersonal connections, as it enhances efficacy, fosters adaptability, and contributes to the sustainability of the relationship between the involved parties (Atiq et al., 2022). Based on their relationships with their communicator, people may estimate and evaluate the worth of future trades (Kim & Kim, 2021). In influencer marketing, beauty vloggers establish credibility with their viewers through repeated engagements via live video sessions, reviewing audience feedback, and responding to their inquiries pertaining to products. Consumers tend to seek advice from beauty vloggers when they perceive similarities and familiarity between the vloggers’ lifestyles and their own, prior to making any purchase decisions. The building of trust between an influencer and their audience is a fundamental factor that contributes to creating an atmosphere that is favourable to increasing purchase intention. The credibility of influencers plays a crucial role in shaping the audience’s acceptance of the goods or services being marketed since influencers serve as mediators between businesses and customers (Ki et al., 2023). Thus, they establish a relationship that positively affects their purchase intentions for the products they use/endorse (Firman et al., 2021).

Research on trust spans several fields, including philosophy, sociology, economics, marketing, and organisational studies (Putnam, 2015; Koehn, 1996; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Mayer et al., 1995). As seen from a marketing standpoint, trust is considered a crucial element in establishing and sustaining successful relationships that last (Pennanen et al., 2007). According to Deborah et al., (2019), influencers are seen as socially engaged and empowered individuals on social media platforms who are perceived as credible information sources by other users. Numerous studies have been undertaken to explore trust as a multidimensional construct with respect to social media influencers operating in the tourism domain (Artigas et al., 2017; Mircică, 2020; Cohen et al., 2014; Seçilmiş et al., 2022). Consequently, it is crucial to analyse the significance of trust inside the cosmetics sector as well. In order to enhance the efficacy of influencer marketing, it is advisable for practitioners to prioritise the optimisation of consumers’ trust in beauty vloggers (Ki et al., 2023). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H3: Trust on beauty vloggers positively influences the purchase intention of consumers towards the brands they endorse.*

**Mediating role of trust.** The establishment of trust between beauty vloggers and consumers is a crucial factor in the decision-making process when it comes to purchasing beauty products. When consumers perceive that vloggers and influencers provide trustworthy information about products, they tend to develop a sense of loyalty towards them. Consumers tend to consistently rely on a particular vlogger for their product reviews (Kim & Kim, 2021). According to Konstantopoulou et al. (2019), customers are more likely to adopt advice that could potentially alter their purchase decisions if it comes from a trusted influencer. In the conventional marketing paradigm, consumers rely on their past experiences to bolster the efficacy of salespersons and establish

trust in them (Crosby et al., 1990). However, in the realm of influencer marketing, consumers rely on the credibility of beauty vloggers they follow to make informed purchasing decisions, drawing from their previous interactions with said vloggers. Therefore, the effectiveness of an influencer's message is enhanced when their followers have trust in them, leading to a perception of the relationship as being rewarding (Kim & Kim, 2021). Additionally, Dekavalla (2019) investigated the importance of trust in influencing consumer behaviour. The researcher revealed that authenticity, transparency, expertise, and reliability play a major role in building trust in online content creators. In the context of the online paradigm, consumers exhibit scepticism toward the authenticity of the material disseminated on social media platforms. Nevertheless, when individuals see beauty vloggers as reliable purveyors of knowledge, they are inclined to place their confidence in them, exerting an impact on customers' choices about purchases (Singh, 2021). Hence, trust is considered a crucial element in establishing and sustaining prosperous, enduring relationships from a marketing standpoint. In addition to trust, the attribute of trustworthiness holds significant importance in the realm of marketing strategy. Trustworthiness and trust are distinct concepts, with the former referring to the accumulation of antecedent perceptual experiences that give rise to trust (Pop et al., 2022). The level of confidence placed in an influencer is a significant characteristic that may be used to evaluate the truthfulness of their posts. This conduct, in turn, has an impact on an individual's interest and inclination to actively seek out further information offered by the influencer (Martínez-López et al., 2020). Additionally, in their recent study, Wijerathna and Wijesundara (2022) investigated the mediating effect of trust in the relationship between the perceived authenticity of micro-influencers and purchase intention within the fitness sector. Consequently, this study aims to investigate the mediating role of trust in the relationship between the credibility of beauty vloggers and the purchase intention of consumers. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H4: Trust mediates the relationship between the source credibility of beauty vloggers towards customers' purchase intention.*

**Parasocial interaction theory.** The concept of parasocial interaction is not novel. Parasocial interactions were frequently used in communication even before the advent of the internet and hence the concept is very common among media researchers. Horton and Wohl (1956) introduced the term 'parasocial interactions' to describe the close connection that exists between an actor and their audience. Parasocial interaction (PSI) is characterized as an illusionary experience in which consumers engage with famous personalities (actors, singers, athletes) as if they are actively present and involved in a mutually beneficial relationship. These interactions were perceived as an innovative communication strategy that aimed to substitute traditional face-to-face relationships. Parasocial interactions foster the perception among individuals that they are participating in a reciprocal exchange with public figures (Labrecque, 2014). The virtual communication between viewers and celebrities creates an illusionary experience of friendship in the minds of viewers (Lee and Watkins, 2016).

Previously, PSI was employed within the domain of media outlets such as television and radio, as well as media consumers (Horton & Wohl, 1956). During that period, it became increasingly popular to engage with consumers by regularly interacting with their audience, as a means of capturing their attention. Consumers have begun to perceive that they coexist with a prominent personality. However, with the expanding

technological landscape and increased use of social media, the scope of PSI has broadened beyond traditional media figures in the domains of television and radio. Now, celebrities are using social media platforms to interact with their audiences. The same phenomenon can be observed from beauty vloggers' viewpoint, as vloggers also create an illusionary friendship with their followers which is influential in nature (Kim et al., 2020). The stability of this illusionary or pseudo-friendship is based on contact frequency (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). In order to establish a closer connection with their audience, beauty vloggers frequently upload regular content that relates to their daily lives (Lee & Watkins, 2016; Kim et al., 2020; Choi & Lee, 2019). Additionally, they conduct question-and-answer sessions to address queries from their audience pertaining to their personal life. Various social media platforms, such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook, provide a means for individuals to engage in dialogue with beauty vloggers by means of commenting on the videos they upload (Sokolova & Kefi, 2019; Shan et al., 2019). The interactions between beauty vloggers and their audiences foster the development of long-lasting relationships resulting in influencing their behaviour. Moreover, parasocial interactions have evolved into a form of interactive communication that involves reciprocal engagement (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Now, beauty vloggers provide both entertaining and informative content, and their audiences express their appreciation through engagement metrics such as video likes, subscriptions, and comments (Choi & Lee, 2019). Correspondingly, audiences tend to develop a sense of familiarity with beauty vloggers and place trust in the recommendations they provide. Consumers frequently rely on advice from sources (beauty vloggers) they trust, similar to how one might seek guidance from a close acquaintance when making purchasing decisions (Labrecque, 2014).

From a marketing standpoint, this presents a significant opportunity for cosmetic companies to promote their products through the use of beauty vloggers. Prior to finalising a purchase, consumers tend to seek guidance from beauty bloggers. This illusionary friendship between beauty vloggers and their viewers through repeated interactions is leveraged by marketers to promote their products (Hu et al., 2020; Manchanda et al., 2022).

Initially, parasocial interactions were identified as a unidirectional communication approach by previous researchers when they were confined only to television and radio channels (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Rubin et al., 1985). However, social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube provide an opportunity for viewers to comment and express their feelings by using emoticons and hence making these parasocial interactions a two-way source of communication (Lee & Lee, 2022). Given the significant impact that these interactions have on the daily lives of social media users, it is imperative that we incorporate them into our research in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the concept of influencer marketing. Prior studies have also validated that parasocial interaction (PSI) serves as an antecedent to purchase intention (Lee & Watkins, 2016; Lee & Lee, 2022). Consequently, an increase in parasocial interactions results in a corresponding increase in purchase intention. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis.

*H5: Parasocial interaction by beauty vloggers creates a positive influence on consumer purchase intention for the brands they endorse.*

## Research design and methodology

**Measurement and scale.** The questionnaire was adapted from various scholarly works found in the extant literature. The trustworthiness items were adapted from Ohanian's (1991) and Teng et al. (2020). The instruments for measuring expertise and

attractiveness consist of eight and nine items, respectively, and were adapted from three separate studies (Ohanian, 1991; Ki & Kim, 2019; Teng et al., 2020). The items for the mediating variable, trust, were adapted from the scale explored by Meng & Wei (2020). The items for parasocial interactions were adapted from Lee and Watkins (2016) and Lou and Kim (2019). The items for the endogenous variable, purchase intention, were adapted from different studies (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019; Lou & Kim, 2019; Meng & Wei, 2020). The items were assessed using a 5-point Likert Scale with values ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 represents strongly disagree and 5 represents strongly agree. All the items are mentioned in Appendix 1 (see supplementary information).

**Sample.** The current investigation was carried out on consumers who view beauty vloggers’ videos on social media platforms on a regular basis, to ascertain their inclination to purchase cosmetic products that are promoted by said beauty vloggers. The period designated for data collection spanned from June 2022 to March 2023. Ethical clearance for data collection was secured from the institution’s ethical committee, accompanied by an authority letter. The survey was disseminated electronically to individuals within the age range of 16 to 45 who consume beauty vloggers’ content for 1–3 h daily. The present study tried to incorporate diverse age groups to broaden its scope and assess the model’s robustness across varying age demographics. The social media user population is vast and unknown, making the application of probability sampling impractical. Therefore, the data was collected using a non-probability convenience sampling method (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Lee & Lee, 2022). At the outset, a total of 500 questionnaires were disseminated to customers residing in the northern states of India, namely Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, and Delhi NCR. However, the final dataset comprises respondents who were subjected to detailed scrutiny, specifically those who follow beauty vloggers daily and engage with their content for 1–3 h per day. Therefore, the final analysis was based on only 357 responses, which represents a response rate of 71.4%. Table 1 presents a comprehensive summary of the descriptive analysis conducted in the study. The final data consists of a few minor respondents (11), an informed consent from their guardians was obtained by enlightening them about their contribution to the study’s relevance.

**Methods.** The final data was analysed by partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS software 4.0 version. This method is preferred as it works best with complex path models and latent variables (Agyapong, 2021). PLS-SEM incorporates elements of both factor analysis and regression, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding of the connection between endogenous and exogenous variables (Hair et al., 2017; 2019; 2020; Sarstedt et al., 2017). Furthermore, it is noteworthy that PLS-SEM exhibits optimal performance when dealing with non-parametric data and does not necessitate multivariate normality of data to yield dependable results. Also, source credibility is a second-order construct, and PLS-SEM provides higher flexibility in such complex models (Hair et al., 2019; 2020).

Results and findings

This section of the paper contains the main results and findings of the study. Confirmatory factor analysis, convergent validity, and discriminant validity for both lower-order construct and higher-order construct were measured, followed by structural equation modelling and bootstrapping, respectively, for testing the hypothesis. PLS predict was also examined to check the predictive power of the proposed model.

| Table 1 Descriptive analysis. |           |            |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Participants                  | Frequency | Percentage |
| Gender                        |           |            |
| Male                          | 201       | 56.30      |
| Female                        | 156       | 43.69      |
| Region                        |           |            |
| Punjab                        | 102       | 28.57      |
| Haryana                       | 78        | 21.84      |
| Chandigarh                    | 69        | 19.32      |
| Delhi NCR                     | 108       | 30.25      |
| Age                           |           |            |
| Below 18                      | 11        | 3.08       |
| 18–30                         | 343       | 96.07      |
| 31–45 and above               | 3         | 0.84       |
| Social media platforms used   |           |            |
| YouTube                       | 330       | 92.43      |
| Instagram                     | 337       | 94.39      |
| Facebook                      | 130       | 36.41      |
| Snapchat                      | 227       | 63.58      |
| Twitter                       | 123       | 34.45      |
| Time spent on social media    |           |            |
| Less than an hour             | 41        | 11.48      |
| 1 h–3 h                       | 196       | 54.90      |
| 3 h–5 h                       | 86        | 24.08      |
| 5 h and above                 | 34        | 9.52       |

Source: Self-compiled by the author.

**Measurement model for lower-order construct.** The primary task in evaluating the measurement model is to examine the model’s reliability and validity. By using the repeated indicator approach, the lower-order construct and higher-order construct comprise the conceptual model’s two divisions (Sarstedt et al., 2019). First investigation of the reliability and validity of the lower-order construct is done. The results are reported according to the guidelines given in the manual of PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2017; 2019; Sarstedt et al., 2019). For the purpose of determining the construct’s reliability, we examined if the factor loadings of all reflective constructs fall under the threshold of 0.708 (Hair et al., 2017; 2020). As shown in Fig. 2 and Table 2, almost all the values are above the permissible limits. However, one item from trustworthiness (TW1), one item from attractiveness (ATT7), and four items from parasocial interactions (PARA INT3,6,8,9) were deleted to improve the measurement model. Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  was likewise within the permissible range of 0.70 to 0.95. For evaluating the construct reliability for internal consistency, composite reliability, and Henseler’s rho-A were employed and their values should be more than 0.70. The values are displayed in Table 2, indicating that internal consistency was established (Hair et al., 2017; 2020). The average variance extracted (AVE), which represents the variation in endogenous variables caused by exogenous variables, is evaluated for convergent validity. The threshold level for AVE is 0.50 (Cohen, 1988; Hair et al., 2017; Sarstedt et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2019). The AVE values of the constructs were within the acceptable range (as shown in Table 2), establishing the complete measurement model evaluation of the conceptual model.

Next, the study examines the discriminant validity as it assures the uniqueness of the constructs used in the PLS model (Sarstedt, et al., 2022). The discriminant validity for each construct is established using a new criterion, the ratio of correlations between heterotraits and monotraits (HTMT). According to the most recent criteria, all HTMT values must be less than 1, as recommended by the HTMT inference approach which is considered a liberal approach. However, to be more stringent, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations must not exceed 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015). In the current study, all the values are below the permissible limit of 0.85. All the values of HTMT inference are explained in Table 3.

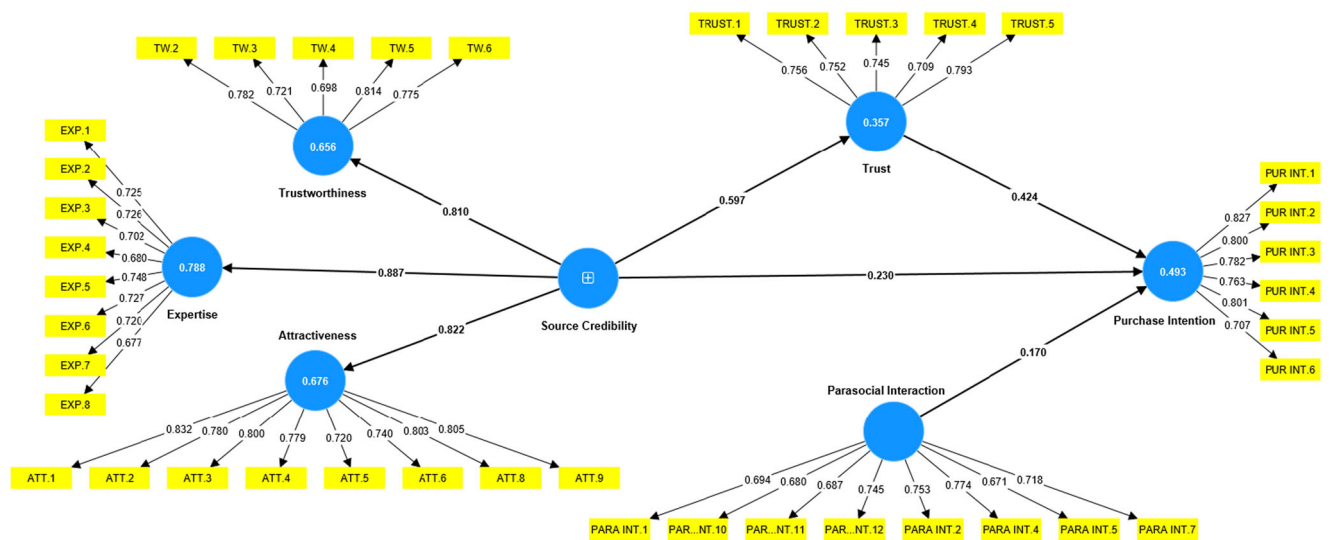


**Fig. 2 Conceptual model analysis using SmartPLS.** The figure contains the results for the measurement model. Source: self-structured through SmartPLS software.

| Table 2 Lower-order measurement model assessment. |             |                |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Constructs                                        | Indicators  | Outer loadings | Cronbach's alpha | Composite reliability (rho_a) | Composite reliability (rho_c) | Average variance extracted (AVE) |
| Trustworthiness                                   | TW2         | 0.782          | 0.815            | 0.817                         | 0.871                         | 0.576                            |
|                                                   | TW3         | 0.721          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | TW4         | 0.698          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | TW5         | 0.814          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | TW6         | 0.775          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
| Expertise                                         | EXP1        | 0.725          | 0.862            | 0.863                         | 0.892                         | 0.509                            |
|                                                   | EXP2        | 0.726          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | EXP3        | 0.702          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | EXP4        | 0.680          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | EXP5        | 0.748          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | EXP6        | 0.727          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | EXP7        | 0.720          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | EXP8        | 0.677          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
| Attractiveness                                    | ATT1        | 0.832          | 0.909            | 0.911                         | 0.927                         | 0.613                            |
|                                                   | ATT2        | 0.780          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | ATT3        | 0.800          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | ATT4        | 0.779          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | ATT5        | 0.720          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | ATT6        | 0.740          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | ATT8        | 0.803          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | ATT9        | 0.805          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
| Parasocial interactions                           | PARA INT.1  | 0.694          | 0.865            | 0.869                         | 0.894                         | 0.513                            |
|                                                   | PARA INT.2  | 0.753          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | PARA INT.4  | 0.774          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | PARA INT.5  | 0.671          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | PARA INT.7  | 0.718          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | PARA INT.10 | 0.680          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | PARA INT.11 | 0.687          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | PARA INT.12 | 0.745          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
| Trust                                             | TRUST1      | 0.756          | 0.808            | 0.814                         | 0.866                         | 0.565                            |
|                                                   | TRUST2      | 0.752          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | TRUST3      | 0.745          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | TRUST4      | 0.709          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | TRUST5      | 0.793          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
| Purchase intention                                | PUR INT1    | 0.827          | 0.871            | 0.874                         | 0.903                         | 0.610                            |
|                                                   | PUR INT2    | 0.800          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | PUR INT3    | 0.782          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | PUR INT4    | 0.763          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | PUR INT5    | 0.801          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                                                   | PUR INT6    | 0.707          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |

Source: Self-compiled by the author.

**Measurement model for higher-order construct.** After testing the measurement model of the lower-order construct, the latent variable scores obtained from the PLS algorithm for all three dimensions of source credibility are transferred to the main dataset in order to investigate the higher-order construct in the proposed model using the repeated indicator approach. As the proposed model (shown in Fig. 2) is a Type 1 higher-order model, i.e., reflective-reflective, the repeated indicator method would be more appropriate for measuring (Becker et al., 2012; Perez-Vega et al., 2018; Agyapong, 2021) and the results of higher-order

construct were reported in Table 4. The source credibility of beauty vloggers was modelled to reflect three main attributes in the context of this study, namely trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness. The Cronbach  $\alpha$  was above the threshold value (0.795). The composite reliability and Henseler's rho-a were 0.827 and 0.879, respectively, and hence above the permissible limits. The path coefficient of lower-order construct becomes the indicator of higher-order constructs and hence the values are considered as outer loadings for the higher-order construct (Agyapong, 2021). In the proposed model, outer loadings for three dimensions were above the permissible limit of 0.708 (Hair et al., 2017; 2019; 2020).

After reporting the results of internal reliability and convergent validity of the higher-order construct, next we examined the discriminant validity using the same criterion used in the lower-order construct. All the values of HTMT are within the threshold limit and hence did not exceed 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015). The results of HTMT for higher-order construct is reported in Table 5.

**Structural model assessment.** After the measurement model was assessed successfully, the next step is validation of the structural model and hypothesis testing to understand the relationship between the constructs and their predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2017). The first step is to check the multicollinearity issue between the constructs. For doing so, each construct is assessed separately by considering them as formative construct and the tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) values are checked for the inner model. All the values in the inner model are below 3 and hence assuring no multicollinearity between the constructs (Diamantopoulos, 2008; Shiva et al., 2020). Next, we investigate

the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) for each endogenous latent variable in the path model. The  $R^2$  value explains the variance in the endogenous variables caused by the exogenous variable. The  $R^2$  of both endogenous constructs, Trust (0.394) and Purchase Intention (0.490) were moderately significant as visible in Table 6 and Fig. 3. Any value of  $R^2$  0.20 or above is viewed as significant in the behavioural sciences as in social sciences we are measuring someone's behaviour (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2017; Shiva et al., 2020). For hypothesis testing, it is necessary to check the significance and relevance of path coefficients using bootstrapping at 10000 subsamples in SmartPLS. The source credibility is a second-order construct and the path coefficient values of its three dimensions becomes the outer loadings which is significant at 5 percent as shown in Fig. 3 (Hair et al., 2017; Henseler, 2017; Agyapong, 2021; Shiva et al., 2020). The values of direct effect are reported in Table 6. All the values are significant at 5 percent and hence supporting hypothesis H1, H2, H3, H5. There is a positive significant relationship between source credibility and trust towards beauty vloggers ( $\beta = 0.628$ ,  $t = 16.268$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ), trust towards beauty vlogger and purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.416$ ,  $t = 7.352$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ), source credibility and purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.226$ ,  $t = 3.280$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and parasocial interaction and purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.179$ ,  $t = 3.326$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

In the latest marketing research using PLS-SEM Models, the goodness of fit of the model is assessed by examining Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) (Hair et al., 2020) and the value should be less than 0.08. The value of SRMR of the present model is 0.069, which is below the threshold value of 0.08 is reported in Table 6. The satisfying critical SRMR value shows that the model under the research has sufficient explanatory power (Henseler et al., 2016). Additionally, in order

**Table 3 Discriminant validity (lower-order construct).**

|                        | Trustworthiness | Expertise | Attractiveness | Parasocial interactions | Trust | Purchase intention |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|-------------------------|-------|--------------------|
| Trustworthiness        |                 |           |                |                         |       |                    |
| Expertise              | 0.816           |           |                |                         |       |                    |
| Attractiveness         | 0.537           | 0.569     |                |                         |       |                    |
| Parasocial Interaction | 0.570           | 0.573     | 0.570          |                         |       |                    |
| Trust                  | 0.751           | 0.693     | 0.395          | 0.533                   |       |                    |
| Purchase Intention     | 0.628           | 0.605     | 0.489          | 0.569                   | 0.755 |                    |

Source: Self-compiled by the author.

**Table 4 Higher-order measurement model assessment.**

| Constructs         | Indicators      | Outer loadings | Cronbach's alpha | Composite reliability (rho_a) | Composite reliability (rho_c) | Average variance extracted (AVE) |
|--------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Source credibility | Trustworthiness | 0.879          | 0.795            | 0.827                         | 0.879                         | 0.710                            |
|                    | Expertise       | 0.898          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |
|                    | Attractiveness  | 0.742          |                  |                               |                               |                                  |

Source: Self-compiled by the author.

**Table 5 Discriminant validity assessment for higher-order construct.**

|                        | Source credibility | Parasocial interaction | Trust | Purchase intention |
|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-------|--------------------|
| Source credibility     |                    |                        |       |                    |
| Parasocial interaction | 0.707              |                        |       |                    |
| Trust                  | 0.752              | 0.533                  |       |                    |
| Purchase intention     | 0.708              | 0.569                  | 0.755 |                    |

Source: Self-compiled by the author.

| Table 6 Structural model assessment.                    |                        |             |                    |              |         |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------|---------|
|                                                         | Original sample<br>(β) | Mean sample | Standard deviation | t-statistics | p-value |
| Direct effects                                          |                        |             |                    |              |         |
| H1: Source credibility > Trust                          | 0.628                  | 0.629       | 0.039              | 16.268       | 0.000   |
| H2: Source credibility > Purchase Intention             | 0.226                  | 0.224       | 0.069              | 3.280        | 0.001   |
| H3: Trust > Purchase Intention                          | 0.416                  | 0.418       | 0.057              | 7.352        | 0.000   |
| H5: Parasocial interaction > Purchase intention         | 0.179                  | 0.183       | 0.054              | 3.326        | 0.001   |
| Indirect effect                                         |                        |             |                    |              |         |
| H4: Source characteristics > Trust > Purchase intention | 0.261                  | 0.263       | 0.040              | 6.580        | 0.000   |
| Trust                                                   | R-square               |             | Adjusted R-square  |              | SRMR    |
| Trust                                                   | 0.394                  |             | 0.392              |              | 0.069   |
| Purchase intention                                      | 0.490                  |             | 0.486              |              |         |

Source: Self-compiled by the author.

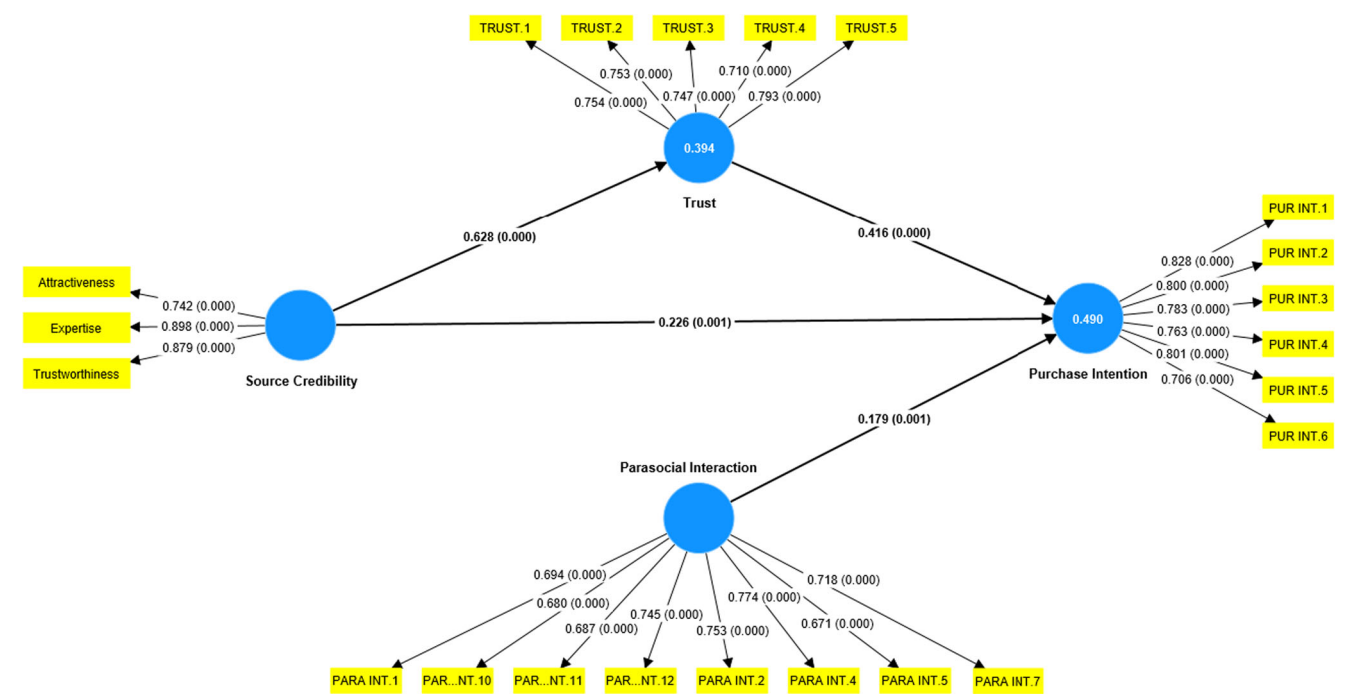


**Fig. 3 Structural model analysis.** The figure shows the statistical relationship between variables. It contains the results for the structural model. Source: self-constructed through SmartPLS software.

to assess the robustness of the model, the influence of gender was investigated as a control variable in both the direct and indirect relationships. The findings indicate that there is no statistically significant effect of gender on both the direct relationship ( $\beta = -0.068$ ,  $p = 0.392$ ) and the mediated relationship ( $\beta = -0.095$ ,  $p = 0.253$ ) (Collier, 2020).

**Mediation analysis.** The findings indicate that the acceptance of H1 and H3 provides evidence for the mediating role of trust in the relationship between source credibility and purchase intention. Given the empirical support for H2, it is imperative to conduct a comparative analysis of the direct and indirect impact of source credibility on purchase intention. The results indicate that the  $\beta$ -value for the direct impact of source credibility on purchase intention is 0.226. However, when trust mediation is applied, the  $\beta$ -value increases to 0.261(H1\*H3: 0.628\*0.416). The findings indicate that source credibility has a noteworthy and direct impact on purchase intention. However, this association is strengthened when trust serves as a mediator, indicating a

complementary partial mediation effect of trust on both source credibility and purchase intention (Zhao et al., 2014).

**PLS predict.** Effect size ( $f^2$ ) tells the importance of exogenous variables on the coefficient of determination of endogenous variables. According to Cohen (1988), the value of effect size ( $f^2$ ) should lie between 0.02 to 1. A value range of 0.02–0.15 represents a weak effect, 0.15–0.35 represents a moderate effect, and values above 0.35 represent a strong effect. In the current study, source credibility ( $f^2 = 0.049$ ) has a weak effect size on purchase intention. However, source credibility ( $f^2 = 0.650$ ) has a strong effect size on trust. Moreover, there is a high effect size of trust ( $f^2 = 0.202$ ) on purchase intention. Additionally, parasocial interaction ( $f^2 = 0.040$ ) has a weak effect size on purchase intention. For checking the predictive relevance of the model,  $Q^2$  predict values are estimated. The  $Q^2$  predict the value of endogenous variables trust ( $Q^2$  predict = 0.385) and purchase intention ( $Q^2$  predict = 0.372) is greater than 0. Moreover, the PLS predict procedure creates a tenfold sample-based prediction for estimating predictive error metrics for the indicators of

| Table 7 PLS predict. |                  |              |         |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------|---------|
|                      | Q square predict | PLS SEM_RMSE | LM_RMSE |
| PUR INT.1            | 0.283            | 0.838        | 0.860   |
| PUR INT.2            | 0.200            | 0.877        | 0.909   |
| PUR INT.3            | 0.197            | 0.853        | 0.878   |
| PUR INT.4            | 0.209            | 0.827        | 0.854   |
| PUR INT.5            | 0.262            | 0.761        | 0.784   |
| PUR INT.6            | 0.199            | 0.821        | 0.835   |

Source: Self-compiled by the author.

endogenous variables (Shmueli et al., 2016). The values of  $Q^2$  predict for each indicator of endogenous variable are also greater than 0 and they are reported in Table 7. Since the errors are symmetrically distributed so, root mean square error values are examined to establish the predictive relevance of the proposed model. In terms of root mean square error (RMSE), all indicators yield lower prediction errors than the linear regression model resulting in higher predictive power of the model (Shmueli et al., 2019; Singh & Bala, 2020). All the values of PLS SEM\_RMSE, LM-RMSE, or each indicator of endogenous variable (Purchase Intention) are reported in Table 7.

Discussion

This study aimed to examine the impact of source credibility and parasocial interactions done by beauty vloggers on consumers' purchase intention using a trust-based model. The findings obtained from the application of Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) provide support for all the hypotheses (H1–H5). The research outcomes indicate that the buying behaviour of consumers is impacted by beauty vloggers, provided that the consumers perceive these vloggers as credible sources of information and have faith in their opinions. The findings of the study are in line with the previous studies (Kim & Kim, 2021; Lee & Watkins, 2016; Lee & Lee, 2022; Sokolova & Kefi, 2019; Manchanda et al., 2022; Lou & Yuan, 2019). The results of the study reveal that both credible attributes and parasocial interactions impact purchase intention. However, a closer examination demonstrated that the impact of credibility is slightly more than that of parasocial interaction. This finding contradicts the outcomes of Sokolova and Kefi (2019) for the younger generation belonging to the 16–18 age group, who depicted that parasocial interaction has more impact than credibility. For younger generations, visiting daily vlogs of their favourite beauty vlogger becomes mere addiction rather than a friendship. However, the role of credibility predominates the role of parasocial interactions among older generations belonging to the age group of 25 and above and the results are in line with the study conducted by Sokolova and Kefi, (2019) for older generations. These findings can be explained by a study conducted by Bailey et al., (2023) who used Indian respondents to examine the effect of consumer scepticism. The findings indicate that consumer scepticism towards information sources, notably social media influencers, possesses the capability to impact consumers' parasocial relationships with beauty influencers. This, in turn, exerts an influence on consumers' responses to these sources, revealing the heightened scepticism among Indian consumers towards internet reviews. However, to establish trust in a beauty vlogger, consumers exhibit a proclivity to consistently engage with and follow their content. Consumers will only form an illusionary friendship with a beauty vlogger after establishing credibility and familiarity. In developed countries with more advanced digital infrastructure, individuals might have different patterns of engagement with media personalities. Prior

researchers used parasocial interaction as a mediating variable within diverse developed economies has yielded different outcomes (Shan et al., 2019; Ashraf et al., 2023). The cultural norms and sensitivities in India could shape how individuals respond to certain media content, impacting the strength of parasocial interactions. Developed countries may have different cultural sensitivities, and the types of content that foster credibility or parasocial connections could differ. Indian consumers first establish trust in a specific vlogger by evaluating attributes such as expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Only upon the establishment of trust in these dimensions, do they proceed to cultivate an enduring virtual companionship with the aforementioned vlogger. Additionally, the weak effect size of parasocial interaction in the Indian context can be attributed to other cultural factors as well, such as the country's collectivist culture, where individuals prioritise real-life relationships within their immediate social circles over connections with influencers. Moreover, the high-context communication style in India, relying on contextual cues and shared experiences, may diminish the resonance of social media interactions, contributing to the observed weaker impact. Furthermore, the cultural emphasis on respect for authority and elders poses a challenge for influencers, often perceived as younger individuals, as they may struggle to automatically garner trust and authority, thereby resulting in a weakened influence.

This research used Ohanian's (1991) source credibility theory to examine how credibility affects purchasing intention. The source credibility model initially included trustworthiness and expertise. During that time, the model was designed for celebrity endorsement. However, attractiveness is a crucial dimension in influencer marketing. Therefore, this study applies source credibility as a second-order concept using all three dimensions. The findings indicate that the trustworthiness and expertise of beauty vloggers are more significant in contrast to attractiveness. This is because, in influencer marketing, trustworthiness is vital, significantly influencing follower decision-making and brand evaluations (Fowler & Thomas, 2023). Additionally, influencers, possessing expertise, offer valuable insights, instilling confidence in followers to choose endorsed brands and products (Alboqami, 2023). The results are in line with Nosita and Lestari (2019) and Ramadanty et al., (2020). Balabanis & Chatzopoulou, (2019) revealed that trustworthiness and expertise have a significant effect on purchase intention. However, the attractiveness of the source does not impact purchase intention. In contrast, Lou and Yuan (2018) conducted a comprehensive analysis of all three dimensions of credibility. However, the results reveal that purchase intention for the products endorsed by beauty vloggers is only influenced by trustworthiness. The effects of expertise and attractiveness had negligible impact. Nonetheless, the significance of the attractiveness characteristic of beauty vloggers in endorsing a cosmetic brand or product cannot be ignored. When an appealing source reviews a cosmetic product, people are more likely to buy it (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Kim & Kim, 2021). The findings of Torres, et al., (2019) also exhibited positive impact of source attractiveness on purchase intention when endorsed by influencers. Additionally, Ladhari et al., (2020) illustrated the significant impact of source expertise on purchase intention. Thus, all three components of the source credibility model are equally important in understanding influencer marketing. The results of the present study are in line with the original theory Ohanian (1991) and previous literature (Choi & Lee, 2019; Manchanda et al., 2022).

Prior scholarly work yields ambiguous results regarding the efficacy of the credibility model (Lee & Watkins, 2016; Torres et al., 2019; AlFarraj, et al., 2021). This has given rise to the coexistence of an alternative mediating factor that transmits the

effect of credible attributes of beauty vloggers on consumer behaviour (Hayes, 2017). Hence, the current study examined the mediating role of trust. The results reveal that if consumers perceive beauty vloggers as credible sources of information, consumers will be likely to develop trust in them and subsequently exhibit loyalty towards them. They repeatedly visit the profile of their preferred beauty vlogger for advice on product recommendations. This builds long-term partnerships between beauty vloggers and their viewers which can be leveraged by marketers for promoting their products. The findings also illustrate that there is partial complementary mediation between source credibility and purchase intention. This demonstrates that consumers are more likely to be influenced by beauty vloggers when they have a higher level of trust in them. Hence, trust plays a mediating role in the mechanism of deploying beauty vlogger resources aimed at influencing consumer behaviour. Similar results were illustrated by Kim and Kim (2021) who have examined the impact of influencer marketing on US participants taking trust as a mediator. The results are in line with the studies showing the mediating effect of trust conducted in the tourism domain (Pop et al., 2022; Seçilmiş et al., 2022).

Another main finding of the current study indicates parasocial interaction as an antecedent to purchasing intention. The study used the parasocial interaction theory given by Horton and Wohl (1956) and found that parasocial interactions between beauty vloggers and their viewers impact purchase intention. Beauty vloggers try to establish a friendly camaraderie with their viewers by periodically engaging in parasocial interactions. The findings indicate that while the credible attributes of vloggers have a greater influence than parasocial interaction, the significance of the latter cannot be ignored (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). This is because parasocial interactions play a crucial role in fostering enduring connections between beauty vloggers and their respective viewers. It helps in building an effective relationship between beauty vloggers and their audiences. With recurring interactions, consumers start seeing the beauty vlogger as their “surrogate friend” and seek their advice before buying like a close friend (Handriana et al., 2019). The repeated interactions with these micro-celebrities lead to heightened feelings of intimacy and likeness, resulting in the development of a “ritualistic viewing” behaviour towards their favourite beauty vloggers’ content that can be used by marketers (Lou & Kim, 2019). The results of the current study are in line with the previous literature (Labrecque, 2014; Hwang & Zhang, 2018; Lee & Lee, 2022). Also, cosmetic products are experiential in nature, since beauty vloggers often demonstrate makeup application steps and provide personal recommendations based on their expertise in their videos during interactive sessions. Therefore, viewers may virtually experience cosmetic items via beauty vloggers’ videos unlike celebrities (Lee & Lee, 2022).

### Implications, limitations, and future research avenues

**Theoretical implications.** The present study provided significant theoretical contributions. First, this empirical research used two theories, namely source credibility theory and parasocial interaction theory, illustrating the combined effect of both the theories on purchase intention of consumers. Therefore, this study contributes to the extant literature on the emerging phenomenon of influencer marketing. Second, prior scholarly research has been limited to the identification of the credible characteristics shown by social media influencers. The researchers did not extend their investigation to explore the potential use of vloggers’ credibility qualities for boosting the efficiency of influencer marketing. This empirical research used trust as a mediator to provide empirical evidence supporting the heightened impact of source credibility attributes on purchase intention. Third, research on parasocial interaction in the field of influencer marketing is still a growing area of study. Previous

scholars have examined the indirect effect of parasocial interaction on consumer behaviour (Lee & Watkins, 2016; Handriana et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2020; Lee & Lee, 2022). However, the present study explored its direct impact on purchase intention and the results reveal that parasocial interactions help in changing behavioural outcomes of social media users. Fourth, the present study used male as well as female respondents to empirically test the impact of influencer marketing on consumer behaviour. The findings of the study demonstrated that influencer marketing is a gender-neutral phenomenon. This increases the generalisability of the present study and hence contributes to the existing literature.

**Practical implications.** Apart from theoretical implications, there are a few managerial implications as well. First, increasing usage of the internet and social media has boosted the number of content creators in different domains. However, marketers face a challenging task in selecting the appropriate beauty vloggers to invest in while allocating their advertising budget. The current investigation discussed the three primary dimensions of source credibility. Marketers may consider these influencer traits before investing. Second, the study indicated that beauty vloggers’ credibility influences consumer behaviour. Brands try to choose trusted influencers to enhance the credibility of the message sent through them (Martínez-López et al., 2020). Marketers and practitioners know that reliable sources boost purchase intent (Hovland et al., 1953; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Lee & Lee, 2022). The current research will help emerging cosmetic companies with limited marketing budgets. This can be achieved by engaging in collaborations with beauty vloggers who share similar interests with the target consumers and possess expertise in providing informative online content. By doing so, the negative repercussions stemming from consumers’ lack of trust can be mitigated (Ki et al., 2023). The present study illustrated that beauty vloggers affect consumers’ purchase intention for recommended products. Since consumers connect more to beauty vloggers than celebrity endorsers, marketers cannot ignore this novel marketing approach (Nosita & Lestari, 2019; Schouten et al., 2020). Third, the findings of the study demonstrated that parasocial interactions help in the formation of illusory friendships with their followers. Understanding the dynamics of beauty vlogger influence goes beyond the conventional examination of marketing strategies. It delves into the realms of consumer psychology, social interactions, and trust-building in the digital age. Beauty vloggers share their personal lives on these social media platforms resulting in increased connectedness between the two. Beauty vloggers usually make content that is familiar to their regional audience. With repeated interactions, consumers feel that they share similar cultural beliefs and mindsets as that of beauty vloggers. The impact of closeness between beauty vloggers and their audiences can be used by companies with a global outlook. They can collaborate with multiple beauty vloggers across various regions, while also considering the cultural uniqueness of each region. For instance, various cosmetic brands like Estée Lauder, Clinique, Becca Cosmetics, L’Oréal, Mac, NYX, Glossier, Kylie Cosmetics, Lush, and Milk Makeup use several beauty vloggers for different regions for endorsing their products worldwide (Ladhari et al., 2020; Delbaere et al., 2021; Hassan et al., 2021). This may benefit cosmetic businesses in the long-term. Fourth, previous research only used female participants (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Choi & Lee, 2019; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Lee & Lee, 2022) and showed how influencer marketing affects women. The present study includes male respondents to broaden the influencer marketing approach. The findings indicate that male participants are also susceptible to the impact of this innovative marketing strategy. Therefore, companies that exclusively offer cosmetic products for males can also consider utilising influencer marketing through beauty vloggers.

**Limitations and future research avenues.** Despite our best efforts, we were unable to completely eliminate the drawbacks of the research. Like any other empirical study, the present investigation exhibits certain limitations contingent upon the surveyed sample. The majority of the data was collected from individuals between the ages of 18 and 30, as those aged 31 to 45 and above exhibit infrequent engagement with beauty vloggers. A potential avenue for future research involves conducting a comparative analysis of the impact of influencer marketing on various age groups. Second, the data was collected from the northern states of India. However, the outcome can be different across India's Southern, Eastern, and Western states, where attitudes towards beauty products, brands, and influencers may vary, which presents opportunities for further research. Third, the present investigation has solely considered two facets of beauty vlogging, namely source credibility and parasocial interactions, and their impact on the intention to purchase. Nonetheless, future scholars may also consider audience characteristics such as self-concept (Choi & Rifon, 2012) and congruence with the influencer (Belanche et al., 2021), as these factors help in developing consumer attitudes towards a brand or product that beauty vloggers endorse. Fourth, the current investigation has exclusively focused on beauty vloggers and their impact on the purchasing intentions of consumers. The proposed framework of beauty vlogger marketing can also be replicated in food, travel, gaming, and health vlogging as well by future researchers in the field. They can conduct comparative investigations for different vlogging segments. Among the three credible attributes, source attractiveness has been least explored by previous researchers. Future researchers can study this specific characteristic for a more profound understanding. Moreover, forthcoming researchers may consider incorporating moderating factors such as relationship strength to enhance the comprehensiveness of influencer marketing. Given the growing integration of AI tools in marketing, upcoming researchers can apply the suggested credible model to virtual influencers. This allows for a comparative analysis between beauty vloggers and virtual influencers.

## Data availability

The datasets generated and/or analysed during the current study are not publicly available due to confidentiality agreement with participants but are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Received: 17 July 2023; Accepted: 26 January 2024;

Published online: 08 February 2024

## References

- Agyapong D (2021) Analyzing financial risks in small and medium enterprises: evidence from the food processing firms in selected cities in Ghana. *Int J Entrepreneurial Behav Res* 27(1):45–77. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEBR-05-2020-0269>
- Alboqami H (2023) Trust me, I'm an influencer!-causal recipes for customer trust in artificial intelligence influencers in the retail industry. *J Retail Consum Serv* 72:103242. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2022.103242>
- AlFarraj O, Alalwan AA, Obeidat ZM, Baabdullah A, Aldmour R, Al-Haddad S (2021) Examining the impact of influencers' credibility: attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise on the purchase intention in the aesthetic dermatology industry. *Rev Int Bus Strategy* 31(3):355–374. <https://doi.org/10.1108/RIBS-07-2020-0089>
- Artigas EM, Yrigoyen CC, Moraga ET, Villalón CB (2017) Determinants of trust towards tourist destinations. *J Dest Mark Manag* 6(4):327–334. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2017.03.003>
- Ashraf A, Hameed I, Saeed SA (2023) How do social media influencers inspire consumers' purchase decisions? The mediating role of parasocial relationships. *Int J Consum Stud* 47(4):1416–1433. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12917>
- Atiq M, Abid G, Anwar A, Ijaz MF (2022) Influencer marketing on Instagram: a sequential mediation model of storytelling content and audience engagement via relatability and trust. *Information* 13(7):345. <https://doi.org/10.3390/info13070345>
- Bailey AA, Mishra AS, Vaishnav K (2023) Response to social media influencers: Consumer dispositions as drivers. *Int J Consum Stud* 47(5):1979–1998. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12976>
- Balabanis G, Chatzopoulou E (2019) Undertheinfluence of a blogger: the role of information-seeking goals and issue involvement. *Psychol Mark* 36(4):1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21182>
- Becker J-M, Klein K, Wetzels M (2012) Hierarchical latent variable models in PLS-SEM: guidelines for using reflective-formative type models. *Long Range Plan* 45(5–6):359–394. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2012.10.001>
- Belanche D, Casalo LV, Flavian M, Sanchez SI (2021) Understanding influencer marketing: The role of congruence between influencers, products and consumers. *J Bus Res* 132:186–195
- Bhatt N, Jayswal RM, Patel JD (2013) Impact of celebrity endorser's source credibility on attitude towards advertisements and brands. *South Asian J Manag* 20(4):74
- Chatzigeorgiou C (2017) Modelling the impact of social media influencers on the behavioural intentions of millennials: the case of tourism in rural areas in Greece. *J Tour, Herit Serv Mark* 3(2):25–29. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1209125>
- Cheng Z, Chen J, Peng RX, Shoenberger H (2023) Social media influencers talk about politics: Investigating the role of source factors and PSR in Gen-Z followers' perceived information quality, receptivity and sharing intention. *J Inf Technol Polit*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2023.2173700>
- Choi SM, Rifon NJ (2012) It is a match: the impact of congruence between celebrity image and consumer ideal self on endorsement effectiveness. *Psychol Mark* 29(9):639–650. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20550>
- Choi W, Lee Y (2019) Effects of fashion vlogger attributes on product attitude and content sharing. *Fash Text* 6(6):1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40691-018-0161-1>
- Cohen J (1988) Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences (2nd edn.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, New Jersey, New York
- Cohen SA, Prayag G, Moital M (2014) Consumer behaviour in tourism: concepts, influences, and opportunities. *Curr Issues Tour* 17(10):872–909. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2013.850064>
- Collier J (2020) Applied structural equation modeling using AMOS. Basic to advanced techniques (1 edn.). Routledge, New York
- Crosby LA, Evans KR, Cowles D (1990) Relationship quality in services selling: an interpersonal influence perspective. *J Mark* 54(3):68–81. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299005400306>
- De Veirman M, Cauberghe V, Hudders L (2017) Marketing through Instagram influencers: the impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude. *Int J Adver* 36(5):798–828. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2017.1348035>
- Deborah A, Michela A, Anna C (2019) How to quantify social media influencers: An empirical application at the Teatro alla Scala. *Heliyon* 5(5):e01677. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2019.e01677>
- Dekavalla M (2019) Gaining trust: the articulation of transparency by You Tube fashion and beauty content creators. *Media Cult Soc* 42(1):75–92. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443719846613>
- Delbaere M, Michael B, Phillips BJ (2021) Social media influencers: a route to brand engagement for their followers. *Psychol Mark* 38(1):101–112. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21419>
- Diamantopoulos A (2008) Formative indicators: Introduction to the special issue [Editorial]. *J Bus Res* 61(12):1201–1202. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2008.01.008>
- Djafarova E, Rushworth C (2017) Exploring the credibility of online celebrities' Instagram profiles in influencing the purchase decisions of young female users. *Comput Hum Behav* 68:1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.11.009>
- Doney PM, Cannon JP (1997) An examination of the nature of trust in buyer-seller relationships. *J Mark* 61(2):35–51. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1251829>
- Firman A, Ilyas GB, Reza HK, Lestari SD, Putra AH (2021) The mediating role of customer trust on the relationships of celebrity endorsement and e-WOM to Instagram Purchase intention. *J Minds: Manaj Ide dan Inspirasi* 8(1):107–126
- Fowler K, Thomas VL (2023) Influencer marketing: a scoping review and a look ahead. *J Mark Manag* 39(11–12):933–964. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2022.2157038>
- Freberg K, Graham K, McGaughey K, Freberg LA (2011) Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality. *Public Relat Rev* 37(1):90–92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2010.11.001>
- Giffin K (1967) The contribution of studies of source credibility to a theory of interpersonal trust in the communication process. *Psychol Bull* 68(2):104–120. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0024833>
- Hair JF, Howard MC, Christian N (2020) Assessing measurement model quality in PLS-SEM using confirmatory composite analysis. *J Bus Res* 109:101–110. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.11.069>
- Hair JF, Hult GT, Ringle CM, Sarstedt M (2017) A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) (2nd edn.). SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, California, United States
- Hair JF, Risher JJ, Sarstedt M, Ringle CM (2019) When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *Eur Bus Rev* 31(1):2–24. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-11-2018-0203>

- Handriana T, Dananjaya DI, Lestari YD, Aisyah RA (2019) Parasocial interaction between youtube beauty vlogger and millennial consumers in Indonesia. *Int J Innov Creativ Change* 9(8):181–196
- Hassan SH, Teo SZ, Ramaya T, Al-Kumaim NH (2021) The credibility of social media beauty gurus in young millennials' cosmetic product choice. *PLoS ONE* 16(3):e0249286. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0249286>
- Hayes AF (2017) Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: a regression-based approach. Guilford Press, New York
- Henseler J (2017) Bridging design and behavioral research with variance-based structural equation modeling. *J Advert* 46(1):178–192. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2017.1281780>
- Henseler J, Hubona G, Ray PA (2016) Using PLS Path Modeling in New Technology Research: Updated Guidelines. *Ind Manag Data Syst* 116(1):2–20. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IMDS-09-2015-0382>
- Henseler J, Ringle CM, Sarstedt M (2015) A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *J Acad Mark Sci* Vol 43(1):115–135. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8>
- Horton D, Wohl RR (1956) Mass communication and para-social interaction. *Psychiatry* 19(3):215–229. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00332747.1956.11023049>
- Hovland CI, Weiss W (1951) The influence of source credibility on communication effectiveness. *Public Opin Q* 15(4):635–650. <https://doi.org/10.1086/266350>
- Hovland CI, Janis IL, Kelley HH (1953) Communication and persuasion. Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, U.S
- Hu L, Min Q, Han S, Liu Z (2020) Understanding followers' stickiness to digital influencers: The effect of psychological responses. *Int J Inf Manag* 54:102169. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jinfomgt.2020.102169>
- Hwang K, Zhang Q (2018) Influence of parasocial relationship between digital celebrities and their followers on followers' purchase and electronic word-of-mouth intentions, and persuasion knowledge. *Comput Hum Behav* 87:155–173. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.05.029>
- Ismagilova E, Slade E, Rana NP, Dwivedi YK (2020) The effect of characteristics of source credibility on consumer behaviour: a meta-analysis. *J Retail Consum Serv* 53:101736. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.01.005>
- Jiang J, Huang Y-H, Wu F, Choy H-Y, Lin D (2015) At the crossroads of inclusion and distance: organizational crisis communication during celebrity-endorsement crises in China. *Public Relat Rev* 41(1):50–63. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.11.003>
- Jiménez-Castillo D, Sánchez-Fernández R (2019) The role of digital influencers in brand recommendation: examining their impact on engagement, expected value and purchase intention. *Int J Inf Manag* 49:366–376. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jinfomgt.2019.07.009>
- Jin S-AA, Phua J (2014) Following celebrities' tweets about brands: the impact of Twitter-based electronic word-of-mouth on consumers' source credibility perception, buying intention, and social identification with celebrities. *J Advert* 43(2):181–195. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2013.827606>
- Ki C-W, Chow TC, Li C (2023) Bridging the trust gap in influencer marketing: ways to sustain consumers' trust and assuage their distrust in the social media influencer landscape. *Int J Hum-Comput Interact* 39(17):3445–3460. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2022.2097785>
- Ki C-W, Kim YK (2019) The mechanism by which social media influencers persuade consumers: The role of consumers' desire to mimic. *Psychol Mark* 36(10):905–922. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21244>
- Kim DY, Kim H-Y (2021) Trust me, trust me not: a nuanced view of influencer marketing on social media. *J Bus Res* 134:223–232. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.05.024>
- Kim J, Kang S, Lee KH (2020) How social capital impacts the purchase intention of sustainable fashion products. *J Bus Res* 117:596–603. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.10.010>
- Koehn D (1996) Should we trust in trust? *Am Bus Law J* 34(2):183–204. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-1714.1996.tb00695.x>
- Konstantopoulou A, Rizomyliotis I, Konstantoulaki K, Badahdah R (2019) Improving SMEs competitiveness with the use of Instagram influencer advertising and eWOM. *Int J Organ Anal* 27(2):308–321. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOA-04-2018-1406>
- Labrecque LI (2014) Fostering consumer-brand relationships in social media environments: the role of parasocial interaction. *J Interact Mark* 38(2):134–148. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2013.12.003>
- Ladhari R, Massa E, Skandrani H (2020) YouTube vloggers' popularity and influence: The roles of homophily, emotional attachment, and expertise. *J Retail Consum Serv* 54:102027. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.102027>
- Lee JE, Watkins B (2016) YouTube vloggers' influence on consumer luxury brand perceptions and intentions. *J Bus Res* 69(12):5753–5760. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.04.171>
- Lee M, Lee H-H (2022) Do parasocial interactions and vicarious experiences in the beauty YouTube channels promote consumer purchase intention? *Int J Consum Stud* 46(1):235–248. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12667>
- Lou C, Kim HK (2019) Fancying the new rich and famous? Explicating the roles of influencer content, credibility, and parental mediation in adolescents' parasocial relationship, materialism, and purchase intentions. *Front Psychol* 10:2567. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02567>
- Lou C, Yuan S (2019) Influencer marketing: how message value and credibility affect consumer trust of branded content on social media. *J Interact Advert* 19(1):58–73
- Mabkhot H, Isa NM, Mabkhot A (2022) The influence of the credibility of social media influencers SMIs on the consumers' purchase intentions: evidence from Saudi Arabia. *Sustainability* 14(19):12323. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su141912323>
- Magno F, Cassia F (2018) The impact of social media influencers in tourism. *Anatolia* 29(2):288–290. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2018.1476981>
- Manchanda P, Arora N, Sethi V (2022) Impact of beauty vlogger's credibility and popularity on eWOM sharing intention: the mediating role of parasocial interaction. *J Promot Manag* 28(3):379–412. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2021.1989542>
- Marketing R (2019) Influencer marketing consumer survey. Retrieved from <https://www.iab.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Rakuten-2019-Influencer-Marketing-Report-Rakuten-Marketing.pdf>
- Martínez-López FJ, Anaya-Sánchez R, Esteban-Millat I, Torrez-Meruvia H, D'Alessandro S, Miles M (2020) Influencer marketing: brand control, commercial orientation and post credibility. *J Mark Manag* 36(17-18):1805–1831. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2020.1806906>
- Mayer RC, Davis JH, Schoorman FD (1995) An integrative model of organizational trust. *Acad Manag Rev* 20(3):709–734. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1995.9508080335>
- McGuire WJ (1985) Attitudes and attitude change. In: Gardner L, Aronson E (eds.), The handbook of social psychology (vol. 2). Erlbaum, Hillsdale, New Jersey, U.S. pp. 233–346
- Meng F, Wei J (2020) Scale design of opinion leaders' impact on online consumers' purchasing intention. *J Intell Fuzzy Syst* 39(2):1937–1949. <https://doi.org/10.3233/JIFS-179964>
- Mircică N (2020) Restoring public trust in digital platform operations: machine learning algorithmic structuring of social media content. *Rev Contemp Philos* 19:85–91. <https://doi.org/10.22381/RCP1920209>
- Morgan RM, Hunt SD (1994) The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing. *J Mark* 58(3):20–38. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299405800302>
- Nosita F, Lestari T (2019) The influence of user generated content and purchase intention on beauty products. *J Manag Mark Rev* 4(3):171–183
- Ohanian R (1991) Construction and validation of a scale to measure celebrity endorsers' perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. *J Advert* 19(3):39–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.1990.10673191>
- Pennanen K, Tiainen T, Luomala HT (2007) A qualitative exploration of a consumer's value-based e-trust building process: a framework development. *Qual Mark Res: Int J* 10(1):28–47. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13522750710720387>
- Perez-Vega R, Taherib B, Farrington T, O'Gorman K (2018) On being attractive, social and visually appealing in social media: the effects of anthropomorphic tourism brands on Facebook fan pages. *Tour Manag* 66:339–347. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.11.013>
- Pop R-A, Săplăcan Z, Dabija D-C, Alt M-A (2022) The impact of social media influencers on travel decisions: the role of trust in consumer decision journey. *Curr Issues Tour* 25(5):823–843. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2021.1895729>
- Putnam RD (2015) Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. *J Democr* 6(1):65–78. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1995.0002>
- Ramadanty S, Muqarrabin AM, Nita WA, Syafganti I (2020) Examining the effect of persuasive message of beauty vloggers on information acceptance of eWOM and purchase intention: the study of consumers of beauty products in Jabodetabek, Indonesia. *J Soc Sci Humanit* 28(2):763–775
- Rasoolimanesh SM, Jaafar M, Kock N, Ahmad AG (2017) The effects of community factors on residents' perceptions toward World Heritage Site inscription and sustainable tourism development. *J Sustain Tour* 25(2):198–216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2016.1195836>
- Roy S, Jain V, Rana P (2013) The moderating role of consumer personality and source credibility in celebrity endorsements. *Asia-Pac J Bus Adm* 5(1):72–88. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17574321311304549>
- Rubin AM, Perse EM, Powell RA (1985) Loneliness, parasocial interaction, and local television news viewing. *Hum Commun Res* 12(2):155–180. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1985.tb00071.x>
- Sarstedt M, Hair JF, Cheah J-H, Becker J-M (2019) How to specify, estimate, and validate higher-order constructs in PLS-SEM. *Australas Mark J* 27(3):197–211. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2019.05.003>
- Sarstedt M, Hair JF, Pick M, Liengaard BD, Radomir L, Ringle CM (2022) Progress in partial least squares structural equation modeling use in marketing research in the last decade. *Psychol Mark* 39(5):1035–1064. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21640>
- Sarstedt M, Ringle CM, Hair JF (2017) Partial least squares structural equation modeling. In: Homburg C, Klarmann M, A. Vomberg A (eds.). Handbook of market research. Springer International Publishing, Heidelberg, Germany. pp. 587–632

- Schouten AP, Janssen L, Verspaget M (2020) Celebrity vs. influencer endorsements in advertising: the role of identification, credibility, and product-endorser fit. *Int J Advert* 39(2):258–281. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2019.1634898>
- Seçilmiş C, Özdemir C, Kılıç İ (2022) How travel influencers affect visit intention? The roles of cognitive response, trust, COVID-19 fear and confidence in vaccine. *Curr Issues Tour* 25(17):2789–2804. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2021.1994528>
- Shan Y, Chen K-J, Lin J-S (2019) When social media influencers endorse brands: the effects of self-influencer congruence, parasocial identification, and perceived endorser motive. *Int J Advert* 39(5):590–610. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2019.1678322>
- Shiva A, Narula S, Shahi SK (2020) What drives retail investors' investment decisions? Evidence from no mobile phone phobia (Nomophobia) and investor fear of missing out (I-FoMo). *J Content, Community Commun* 11(6):2–20. <https://doi.org/10.31620/JCCC.06.20/02>
- Shmueli G, Ray S, Estrada JM, Chatla SB (2016) The elephant in the room: predictive performance of PLS models. *J Bus Res* 69(10):4552–4564. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.03.049>
- Shmueli G, Sarstedt M, Hair JF, Cheah J-H, Ting H, Vaithilingam S, Ringle CM (2019) Predictive model assessment in PLS-SEM: guidelines for using PLSpredict. *Eur J Mark* 53(11):2322–2347. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-02-2019-0189>
- Singh K (2021) Influencer marketing from a consumer perspective: how attitude, trust, and word of mouth affect buying behavior. *Eur Integr Stud* 15(1):231–241. <https://doi.org/10.5755/j01.eis.1.15.28803>
- Singh S, Bala R (2020) Mediating role of self-efficacy on the relationship between conscientiousness and procrastination. *Int J Work Organ Emot* 11(1):41–61. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJWOE.2020.109422>
- Sokolova K, Kefi H (2020) Instagram and YouTube bloggers promote it, why should I buy? How credibility and parasocial interaction influence purchase intentions. *J Retail Consum Serv* 53:101742. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.01.011>
- Spry A, Pappu R, Cornwell TB (2011) Celebrity endorsement, brand credibility and brand equity. *Eur J Mark* 45(6):882–909. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090561111119958>
- Statista (2023, March 20) Value of influencer marketing industry in India 2021–2026. Retrieved from statista.com: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1294803/india-influencer-marketing-industry-value/>
- Tafheem N, El-Gohary H, Sobh R (2022) Social media user-influencer congruity: an analysis of social media platforms parasocial relationships. *Int J Cust Relatsh Mark Manag* 13(1):1–26. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJCRMM.289213>
- Teng W, Su Y, Liao T-T, Wei C-L (2020) An exploration of celebrity business ventures and their appeal to fans and non-fans. *J Retail Consum Serv* 54:102004. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.102004>
- Wang SW, Scheinbaum AC (2018) Enhancing brand credibility via celebrity endorsement: trustworthiness trumps attractiveness and expertise. *J Advert Res* 58(1):16–32. <https://doi.org/10.2501/JAR-2017-042>
- Wang SW, Kao GH-Y, Ngamsiriudom W (2017) Consumers' attitude of endorser credibility, brand and intention with respect to celebrity endorsement of the airline sector. *J Air Transp Manag* 60:10–17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2016.12.007>
- Wiedmann K-P, Mettenheim WV (2020) Attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise—social influencers' winning formula? *J Prod Brand Manag* 30(5):707–725. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBMM-06-2019-2442>
- Wijerathna D, Wijesundara T (2022) Impact of perceived authenticity in micro-influencer marketing on purchasing intention in fitness sector: the mediation role of trust. *J Manag Matters* 9(1):1–25. <https://doi.org/10.4038/jmm.v9i1.30>
- Wong A, Wei J (2023) Persuasive cues and reciprocal behaviors in influencer-follower relationships: The mediating role of influencer defense. *J Retail Consum Serv* 75:103507. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103507>
- Xu X, Pratt S (2018) Social media influencers as endorsers to promote travel destinations: an application of self-congruence theory to the Chinese Generation Y. *J Travel Tour Mark* 35(7):958–972
- Zhao J, Wang Y, Kong F (2014) Exploring the mediation effect of social support and self-esteem on the relationship between humor style and life satisfaction

in Chinese college students. *Personal Individ Differ* 64:126–130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2014.02.026>

## Author contributions

The first author conceived and designed the research, conducted data collection and analysis, drafted the manuscript, and participated in critical revisions. The second author significantly contributed to the research design, conducted literature reviews, provided crucial intellectual input, assisted in data interpretation and statistical analysis, participated in manuscript writing, and played a key role in revisions. Both authors approved the final version of the manuscript for submission.

## Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests. All authors have approved the paper and agree with its submission.

## Ethical approval

The procedures used in this study adhere to the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. The corresponding author obtained permission to conduct the study. The research was carried out in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration guidelines and has been reviewed by the Ethical Committee of Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology (TIEC/EC/2022-16). Informed consents were obtained from participants prior to the survey to ensure respondents had a good understanding of the study objectives. Additionally, the authors have obtained verbal informed consent from the guardians of the minor respondents to safeguard their rights and ensure their appropriate and responsible contribution to the study.

## Informed consent

The survey was conducted upon informed consent previously gained from participants, who agreed to provide data for data analysis for this study. We informed each respondent of their rights and to safeguard their personal information. Similar information regarding keeping respondents' identities anonymous and confidential was provided to the guardians of the minor respondents.

## Additional information

**Supplementary information** The online version contains supplementary material available at <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-02760-9>.

**Correspondence** and requests for materials should be addressed to Mukta Garg or Apurva Bakshi.

**Reprints and permission information** is available at <http://www.nature.com/reprints>

**Publisher's note** Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



**Open Access** This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

© The Author(s) 2024



ARTICLE



<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03133-y>

OPEN

# Exploring the effects of audience and strategies used by beauty vloggers on behavioural intention towards endorsed brands

Mukta Garg<sup>1</sup>  & Apurva Bakshi<sup>1</sup>

Influencer marketing has become a potent and dynamic force in the digital age, changing the face of marketing in a variety of sectors. Even though social media influencers are still important in corporate communication strategies, there are still unresolved issues concerning what exactly makes an influencer powerful and how that influence impacts the behaviour of their followers. This research investigates the role of interactional elements used by beauty vloggers on the purchase intentions of consumers. In addition to the influence of beauty vloggers, there are inherent aspects that impact consumer purchasing behaviour. The present study also examines the impact of audience characteristics in forming consumer attitudes towards beauty vloggers that result in shaping favourable consumer behaviour. The study was carried out on individuals aged 16 to 45 years, who use social platforms regularly. Data obtained from 367 respondents from North India was analysed using structural equation modelling with the SmartPLS software. The outcome of the study demonstrates that interactional elements used by beauty vloggers impact the behaviour of consumers. The results also showed that perceived influence serves as a partial mediator in the relationship between interactional elements and consumers' purchase intention. Moreover, findings indicate that when consumers hold favourable attitudes towards beauty vloggers, the impact of self-concept and personality congruence enhancement on consumer behaviour is amplified, showcasing the mediating role of consumer attitude. The study's findings offer insights that can assist industrial marketers and cosmetic company practitioners in strategically selecting influencers to boost sales.

<sup>1</sup>School of Humanities & Social Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala, Punjab, India. ✉email: [mgarg60\\_phd20@thapar.edu](mailto:mgarg60_phd20@thapar.edu)

## Introduction

In an era marked by the pervasive influence of digital technologies, social media platforms have risen as influential tools shaping both consumer attitudes and marketing strategies (Lee and Watkins, 2016; Kim and Kim, 2021; Lee and Lee, 2022). The proliferation of social media users has revolutionised the way individuals engage with each other (Manchanda et al., 2022). Not only is there a notable surge in social media users, but there is also a significant growth in the number of content creators as well on different social media platforms (Ladhari et al., 2020). Once content creators amass a significant following, they are referred to as opinion leaders (Ki and Kim, 2019) or in general “influencers” or “social media influencers” (Lou and Yuan, 2019). Here, the term social media influencer (SMI) refers to an individual who serves as an independent representative having garnered significant virtual presence by sharing factual, cognitive, emotional, and often personalised insights using hashtags, texts, videos, etc (Garg and Bakshi, 2024; Freberg et al., 2011). Many SMIs create content in numerous categories, including lifestyle, gaming, food, travel, food, and technology (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). However, those who precisely provide beauty content like cosmetic product reviews or product instructions are commonly identified as “beauty vloggers” or “beauty influencers” (Manchanda et al., 2022) or “beauty gurus” (Ladhari et al., 2020).

Consumers are currently consuming a greater volume of information from social media platforms compared to traditional media sources (Lee and Watkins, 2016). This seismic shift in media consumption and communication has created a dynamic landscape that calls for a deeper understanding of the relationships between influencers, their audiences, and consumer decision-making processes. Previous studies (Manchanda et al., 2022; Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017; Kim and Kim, 2021; Sokolova and Kefi, 2020) have shown the use of social media influencers as a promotional tactic to affect customer behaviour. Nevertheless, there have been concerns about the efficacy of vlogger-driven marketing (Sánchez-Fernández and Jiménez-Castillo, 2021; Hughes et al., 2019), prompting a necessity to improve understanding of the factors that contribute to its success.

A burgeoning body of literature has explored the impact of social media influencers' credibility (Garg and Bakshi, 2024; Kim and Kim, 2021; Sokolova and Kefi, 2020), attractiveness (Ki and Kim, 2019; Torres et al., 2019; McGuire, 1985; Lee and Watkins, 2016; Ki and Kim, 2019) and importance of vlogger popularity (Manchanda et al., 2022; Ladhari et al., 2020). Yet, in this realm, a notable gap persists in our understanding, particularly concerning the establishment of relationships between consumers and social media influencers, and how this dynamic influences consumer purchasing behaviour. There is a scarcity of research emphasising the elements that facilitate beauty vloggers in fostering robust connections with their audiences, insights that marketers could leverage to promote their brands. Furthermore, past literature has shown the significance of alignment in personality between celebrity endorsers and products (Mishra et al., 2015; Xu and Pratt, 2018; Belanche et al., 2021). However, the importance of self-concept and congruence between the personality of the consumer and celebrity in shaping consumer behaviour has been overlooked. In this research, we aim to provide a comprehensive and timely exploration of the subject, shedding light on its relevance in the contemporary digital marketing landscape.

This study provides a comprehensive examination of the intricate mechanisms through which beauty vloggers exert influence over consumers by using four interactional elements (parasocial interactions, emotional attachment, meaning transfer, and informational value). These elements are used by beauty vloggers to increase their influential power over consumers

contributing to shaping consumers' ultimate purchase intentions towards the brands endorsed by them. Subsequently, this research examines the theoretical aspects of consumers' perception of beauty vloggers, specifically in regard to their self-concept and the impact of consumer-influencer personality congruence in forming a favourable consumer attitude towards beauty vloggers that leads to increased purchase intention.

This study is motivated by the recognition that despite the widespread use of influencer marketing in marketing campaigns (Lee and Watkins, 2016; Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017; Lou and Kim, 2019), there remains a considerable amount of knowledge still to be uncovered and comprehended about the fundamental processes that propel consumer behaviours within this domain. This study aims to analyse the relationships between interactional elements and audience characteristics, as well as the mediating variables, viz. perceived influence and consumer attitude, so as to understand the effect of vlogger marketing upon purchase intention. Influencer marketing is a multifaceted phenomenon that involves numerous factors, and this research seeks to shed light on a crucial aspect of it. Therefore, the main objectives of the present study are listed below:

O1: To investigate how interactional elements that beauty vloggers employ affect buyers' inclination to make purchases.

O2: To investigate the effect of perceived influence in enhancing the relationship between interactional elements and the purchase intention of consumers towards the products/brands they endorse.

O3: To examine the effect of audience characteristics on the purchase intention of consumers.

O4: To investigate how consumer attitude influences the association between audience characteristics and buying intention.

This research uses social exchange theory (Homans, 1958) and self-congruence theory (Sirgy, 1985) to examine the influence of beauty vloggers on consumers' inclination to purchase cosmetic products. This study demonstrates how interactional elements (parasocial interactions, emotional attachment, meaning transfer, and informational value) used by beauty vloggers, along with audience characteristics (self-concept and user-influencer personality congruence), affect the purchase intention by taking perceived influence and consumer attitude, respectively, as mediating variables. The conceptual model, illustrated in Fig. 1., delineates the intricate relationships within this framework and forms the basis for our analysis.

## Theoretical background and hypothesis development

**Interactional elements.** Interactional elements refer to the many strategies that beauty vloggers use to enhance audience engagement and increase their following on social media platforms. The current research integrates parasocial interactions, emotional attachment, meaning transfer, and informational value as constituents of interactional elements to examine their influence on consumers' purchase intention. The present research sought a more comprehensive understanding of consumer-influencer relationships by linking these interactional elements with social exchange theory to gain a deeper understanding of the persuasive mechanisms behind influencer marketing.

**Social exchange theory.** Several studies have used social exchange theory to evaluate the “exchange of activities” (Homans, 1958). Initially, social exchange theory focused on employment connections. This theory now applies to sociology, anthropology, and psychology (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Coco and Eckert, 2020). Given the broadening ambit of social exchange theory, its

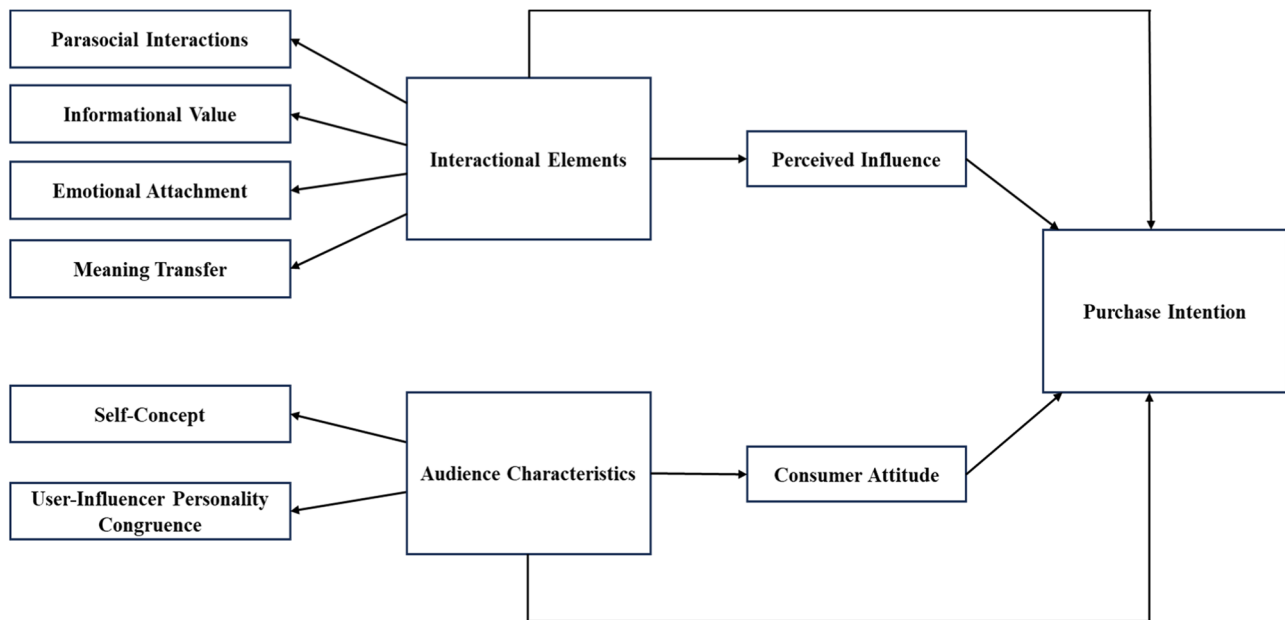


**Fig. 1** Proposed conceptual framework using the interplay of various variables.

applicability extends to elucidating the dynamics inherent in the influencer-follower paradigm, along with the persuasive strategies employed by influencers to shape the behaviour of their followers. Effectively navigating resource exchange between stakeholders, namely influencers and followers in our investigation, engenders the cultivation of psychological bonds and incentivizes the perpetuation of their relationship (Ahmad et al., 2023). Both parties' profit from investing resources. Therefore, social exchange theory provides an appropriate theoretical foundation for beauty vlogging or influencer marketing. Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) suggested that the exchange of resources encompasses both tangible and symbolic aspects, including elements like status, affection, services, information, monetary assets, and tangible goods within its purview. This philosophy uses cost and reward to build long-term partnerships (Kim and Kim, 2021). Beauty vloggers interact with their audiences on a daily basis. These interactions are usually one-sided in which vloggers talk about their personal lives, hence known as parasocial interactions (Horton and Wohl, 1956). Parasocial interactions have given beauty vloggers social influence as viewers rely on them for product suggestions and other useful information (Kim et al., 2020). In exchange their fans subscribe, like, share, and comment to show their love for their favourite beauty vlogger. With respect to social exchange theory, these are perceived as rewards for vloggers (Kim and Kim, 2021). From an economic standpoint, having more followers and views translates into financial benefits for the vlogger.

Status and power are also stressed in social exchange theory. Blau (1964) advanced this notion by introducing the theoretical framework of "exchange and power," which pertains to the capacity of one party to exert influence over another party, compelling the latter to undertake specific actions. Individuals take voluntary actions that are motivated by the returns which are expected for successful exchange behaviour. If the influential party provides informational content, the other party will become dependent on it (Emerson, 1976; Cook and Emerson, 1978). Beauty vloggers and their audience rely on each other for social interaction (Cook and Yamagishi, 1992). Interdependence between influencers and followers has a societal effect. Vloggers build viewer dependency and social influence by delivering helpful information and aesthetic content (Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández, 2019).

The principle of reciprocity can also find application within social exchange theory, which posits that social exchange benefits ought to be equitable (Chia et al., 2021). In other words, trading parties should get equal incentives (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Influencers update viewers on their lives, joyful and sad times, and new purchases to enhance participation that is adored by their audience and gets views on their profiles, demonstrating the reward's worth by developing an emotional attachment (Coco and Eckert, 2020). If the influencer posts stuff their audience likes, the engagement rate will rise until both sides reach a balance (Molm et al., 2007). Psychologically, reciprocity motivates parties to continue connections, building trust and changing behavioural attitudes (Kim and Kim, 2021). The process of exchange unfolds as a perpetual cycle wherein one party initiates an action, prompting reciprocal responses from the other party, thus initiating a fresh iteration of the exchange cycle (Ahmad et al., 2023). Additionally, the meaning transfer occurs when people embrace vloggers' attitudes and views via constant participation. Moreover, audiences relate some symbolic meanings like values and beliefs associated with vloggers (Holiday et al., 2021) with the products/brands that vloggers endorse (Torres et al., 2019). This helps viewers to perceive similar attributes in the brands/products hence resulting in increased purchasing intentions. Moreover, connections that are established based on the acknowledgement and mutual exchange of shared interests serve as fundamental components of communities (Holiday et al., 2021). Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) also revealed that the reciprocity principle requires similar cultural expectations for successful social exchange between consumers and influencers. Taking into account these variables, this study seeks to investigate whether the distinctive elements employed by beauty vloggers can serve as mechanisms of social exchange, fostering long-lasting relationships that precipitate shifts in consumer attitudes toward the products endorsed by influencers. Drawing upon theoretical frameworks, particularly social exchange theory, this research posits that perceived influence and purchase intention represent efficacious outcomes resulting from the exchange of various activities (such as parasocial interactions, emotional attachment, meaning transfer, and informational value) between consumers and influencers.

Parasocial interaction (PSI) characterises the bond between celebrities and their audience (Horton and Wohl, 1956). In PSI, individuals engage with well-known figures such as actors, singers, and athletes, perceiving a sense of lively presence and a mutually beneficial relationship (Garg and Bakshi, 2024). The notion of emotional attachment pertains to forming a relationship that is distinct to a specific individual, which is established via the connection of emotions between individuals. It facilitates the sustenance of a durable connection between the involved parties, which may then be used to influence behaviour and foster a feeling of psychological proximity and accessibility (Thomson, 2006). Sánchez-Fernández and Jiménez-Castillo (2021) describe informational value as an important cue for influencing the behaviour. If viewers perceive that the information provided is accurate and true, and the information is enhancing their knowledge, it will improve the quality of communication resulting in higher perceived influence between the audience and vloggers. McCracken (1989), revealed the three stages of meaning transfer. In the first stage, a symbolic meaning is created in an individual based on the role assigned/done by the individual in the past. The same meaning is then transferred to the product he/she endorses. In the last stage, the same meaning is consumed by the customers when they make the purchase decision for the product. In relation to beauty vlogger endorsements, these four interactional elements (parasocial interactions, emotional attachment, informational value, and meaning transfer) are exchanged by vloggers for enhanced perceived influence and purchase intention for the brands/products they endorse.

There is currently a scarcity of research examining the collective influence of all interactional elements on purchase intention. Moreover, previous scholars have examined interactional components, especially meaning transfer (McCracken, 1989; Miller and Allen, 2012; Knoll et al., 2016) and parasocial interactions (Horton and Wohl, 1956; Rubin et al., 1985), within the realm of celebrity endorsement. However, with the advancement in technology, individuals are increasingly allocating a significant amount of their time to social media platforms. This is primarily attributed to these platforms to facilitate user engagement with vloggers for entertainment and information acquisition purposes. Therefore, we propose the following two hypotheses:

*H1: Interactional elements used by beauty vloggers have a positive impact on followers' perceived influence.*

*H2: Interactional elements used by beauty vloggers have a positive impact on purchase intention.*

**Perceived influence and its mediating role.** Social exchange theory posits the notion of exchange of activities which leads to behavioural change. In the effective communication process, it is important to establish connectedness between the two parties. Perceived influence refers to the subjective view held by the audience of an endorser, whereby they believe that the endorser has the ability to affect opinions, behaviours, or buying choices (Wang and Lin, 2011). In the field of consumer behaviour, if the listener feels that a message is delivered by an opinion leader or a renowned personality (famous beauty vlogger), it might change the perception of the listener about a particular product/brand (Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). Moreover, the process of meaning transfer has the potential to increase the perceived level of influence, since it involves aligning the personal brand of the influencer with the values and goals of their audience. When individuals see the influencer as embodying their desired values or beliefs, they tend to be swayed by their suggestions (Holiday et al., 2021). This can also lead to increased purchase intention towards that particular product. By providing

valuable and useful information in an amusing and pleasing manner, beauty vloggers wield influential power over their audiences. Their audiences seek their advice before making a purchase decision (Sánchez-Fernández and Jiménez-Castillo, 2021). Moreover, in this technology-driven environment, consumers consider online information as more reliable than other sources (Lee and Lee, 2022; Manchanda et al., 2022). Also, previous literature witnesses the effectiveness of using influencer marketing for positive outcomes (purchase intention) (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017; Sokolova and Kefi, 2020; Lou and Yuan, 2019). Hence, perceived influence is regarded as the outcome of many factors, including parasocial interactions, informational value, emotional connection, and meaning transfer. When influencers successfully develop these relationships, their perceived influence within their followers inherently grows.

Additionally, vloggers perform numerous interactional activities to increase familiarity and similarity with their audience which can result in establishing a long-term relationship between the two (Lee and Watkins, 2016; Lou and Kim, 2019). Vloggers share their personal lives on their social media handles to create an emotional bond which can be used to influence audiences' behaviour towards purchasing the recommended products/brands (Ladhari et al., 2020; Lee and Lee, 2022). Influencers are often seen as those who have significant influence and are considered opinion leaders within their respective domains. They play a crucial role in spreading genuine and trustworthy information about various products (Manchanda et al., 2022). When followers get knowledge about the advantages and characteristics of a certain product or service from an influencer, they have faith in, they become more educated and perhaps more inclined to make well-informed purchasing choices (Lou and Yuan, 2019; Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). Moreover, if followers see a congruence between the influencer's viewpoints and choices and their own beliefs and preferences, they may be inclined to adopt similar consumer behaviours (Choi and Rifon, 2012; Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). Consequently, higher perceived influence can lead to higher intention to purchase the endorsed products/brands by the followers (Sánchez-Fernández and Jiménez-Castillo, 2021). By examining how interactional elements affect perceived influence and subsequently influence purchase intention, we can infer that perceived influence acts as a mediator between preceding factors and individual actions. Therefore, the researchers put forward the following two hypotheses:

*H3: Perceived influence has a significant impact on buying intention.*

*H4: Perceived influence acts as a mediator in the association between interactional elements and buying intention.*

**Audience characteristics.** The interactional elements employed by beauty vloggers determine consumers' behavioural outcomes. Additionally, an individual's notions of himself also frame their attitude towards a particular product/brand. This concept is explained by self-congruity theory, which is rooted in the theoretical framework of the self-concept (Plewa and Palmer, 2014). Sirgy (1982) has given two main dimensions of self-concept: actual self-concept and ideal self-concept. Actual self-concept is the perception that one holds about himself whereas ideal self-concept describes the aspirational image that one wants to embody. When the actual self-concept matches with the ideal self-concept, self-congruity is achieved (Sirgy, 1985). Self-concept is an intrinsic motivating factor that plays a vital role in framing a favourable attitude and marketing outcome (purchase intention). Also, self-concept helps in shaping the attitude towards influencers as it helps in identifying with influencers

(Choi and Rifon, 2012; Zogaj et al., 2021). For example, an individual who has a robust sense of self-identity as an environmentalist may have a greater propensity to adhere to and support influencers who advocate for sustainability and the adoption of eco-friendly behaviours. Hence buying the same things as influencers helps build a satisfying self-concept (Xu and Pratt, 2018). Moreover, the main proposition of self-congruency theory demonstrates that customers choose items or brands that align with their self-concepts. Consumers shape their self-image via brand purchases and consumption. Hence, we can say that self-concept describes audience characteristics. Initially, researchers have revealed the impact of self-concept with respect to celebrity endorsement (Choi and Rifon, 2012; Mishra et al., 2015). However, with the advancement in technology, a similar phenomenon can be observed in influencer marketing (Shan et al., 2019). Additionally, previous literature also supports the positive impact of self-concept towards the intention change especially in the field of tourism (Pradhan et al., 2023; Xu and Pratt, 2018). For checking the robustness of vlogger-led marketing, it is important that we should consider self-concept as one of the variables in this investigation.

Another sub-construct of audience characteristics is the user-influencer personality congruence. It is the congruency between the personality of consumers with that of the influencer (Belanche et al., 2021). Within the parameters of consumer behaviour, various studies have been conducted showing the congruence between brand personality and endorser personality and its effect on purchase intention (Mishra et al., 2015; Malodia et al., 2017; Tafheem et al., 2022). However, congruence between endorser and consumer personality is yet to be explored. Choi and Rifon (2012) reveal that if the congruency between the personalities of consumers and celebrities matches, it helps in framing behavioural changes as the customer is expected to evaluate the advertising more positively and express stronger intentions to make a purchase. Balabanis and Chatzopoulou (2019) also discovered similar findings, demonstrating that a higher degree of influencing power may be achieved when the personality of a blogger aligns with that of an information seeker. Moreover, a recent study undertaken within the domain of tourism literature reveals that visitors are inclined to adopt the attitudes and behaviours advocated by a celebrity endorser when they see a congruence between the endorser's personality and their own personality (Pradhan et al., 2023). Similarly, in the social media context, if there is congruency between the personalities of users and influencers, it can help in changing the consumer attitude towards influencers that further leads to changes in the behavioural outcome of the consumers (purchase intention). Additionally, this phenomenon is more effective in influencer marketing than celebrity endorsement as consumers perceive influencers as people "like you and me" (Mettenheim and Wiedmann, 2021). This is because, users see influencers as inspirational figures and aspire their lifestyle to be like them (Ki and Kim, 2019). Taking both self-concept and user-influencer personality congruence under the bracket of audience characteristics we propose the following two hypotheses:

*H5: Audience characteristics have a positive impact in framing consumer attitudes towards beauty vloggers.*

*H6: Audience characteristics have a positive impact on purchase intention.*

**Consumer attitude and its mediating role.** Attitude is the perception that one makes for others (Chetioui et al., 2020). If an individual creates an attitude towards a particular product/brand or even a person, it will last for a long time (Taillon et al., 2020). One's attitude has a significant role in determining their level of

attraction toward a specific object, thereby impacting their intent to acquire that product (Chanana, 2015). Prior research has demonstrated that celebrities possess a notable ability to attract the attention of consumers. Consequently, if consumers hold a favourable attitude towards these celebrities, it is likely to enhance their intention to purchase products endorsed by them (Zhu et al., 2019). This is due to the celebrities' role in heightening awareness about the endorsed products (Chanana, 2015). However, in this technologically advanced era, consumers have a tendency to align themselves more with influencers that possess common personality qualities, a lifestyle that aligns with their own, or similar tastes as compared to traditional celebrities (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017). A greater level of congruence between influencers and prospective consumers indicates favourable attitudes towards influencers, leading to heightened intentions to make purchases (Zhu et al., 2019). Therefore, it is imperative to integrate consumer attitudes within the scope of the present study.

Additionally, the audience characteristics of consumers help in forming positive attitudes towards the vloggers resulting in increased purchase intention. Vloggers do various interactional activities to engage more with their audiences so that consumers can match their personalities with them. If the audience's self-image matches with the vlogger's self-image, consumers will form a favourable attitude towards vloggers (Zhu et al., 2019). Consequently, a positive match between their personalities creates an attitude towards a vlogger that further helps in increasing purchase intention (Taillon et al., 2020). Therefore, consumer attitude towards beauty vloggers acts as a mediating variable between audience characteristics and purchase intentions. Hence, we put forward the following two hypotheses:

*H7: Consumer attitude has a positive impact on buying intention.*

*H8: Consumer acts as a mediator in the association between audience characteristics and purchasing intention.*

## Research methodology

**Measurement Scale.** The questionnaire was derived from multiple academic sources found in existing literature. The items for parasocial interactions are taken from the scale used by Lou and Kim (2019) and Lee and Watkins (2016). The items for emotional attachment are adapted from two studies (Choi and Lee, 2019; Ladhari et al., 2020). The items for informational value were drawn and adapted from three distinct research (Ki and Kim, 2019; Lou and Kim, 2019; Lee et al., 2014). The items for meaning transfer are self-constructed using the previous literature (Roy and Jain, 2017; Jain and Roy, 2016). Self-concept items are self-constructed and modified for our research using existing literature (Malhotra, 1981; Goñi et al., 2011). The items for user-influencer personality congruence originated from three different studies (Ki and Kim, 2019; Casalo et al., 2020; Belanche et al., 2021). The items pertaining to mediating variables, perceived influence and consumer attitude were taken and modified from two distinct researches (Chanana, 2015; Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández, 2019) respectively. Purchase intention is the endogenous variable and its items were generated using several researches (Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández, 2019; Meng and Wei, 2020; Lou and Kim, 2019). The indicators have been evaluated by employing a 5-point Likert Scale, where 1 indicates strongly disagree and 5 indicates strongly agree. Detailed information on all the indicators can be found in Appendix 1 (refer to additional information given in supplementary materials).

**Sample of the study.** This study focused on individuals who regularly watch videos created by beauty influencers on YouTube

or similar websites, to determine their likelihood of purchasing cosmetic products endorsed by these vloggers. Data collection for the investigation of the current study spanned between June 2022 and March 2023. The questionnaire was circulated electronically to individuals aged 16 to 45 who identify as consumers. Since the characterisation of such virtual consumers and determination of the exact user population is tough, convenience sampling was employed (Lee and Lee, 2022; Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017). Initially, 500 respondents from northern India were administered the survey. Subsequently, refined data came from individuals who underwent thorough examination, satisfying the criteria of

regularly following beauty influencers and actively consuming material from those influencers between 1 to 3 h every day. Ultimately, we obtained 367 responses, resulting in a participation rate of 73.4%. In Table 1 we provide an overview detailing the demographic details of the respondents.

**Methods.** SmartPLS 4.0 was used to analyse the final data using partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). This strategy is excellent for complicated latent variables (Agyapong, 2021). The relationship between endogenous and exogenous variables is better understood by PLS-SEM, which combines factor analysis and regression (Sarstedt et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2020; 2019; 2017). Additionally, PLS-SEM is more effective when applied to distribution-free data and obviates the requirement for strict adherence to assumptions of multivariate normality. Interactional elements and audience characteristics are higher-order constructs (HOC), and PLS-SEM is more flexible in complicated models (Hair et al., 2020; 2019).

**Statistical analysis**

**Assessment of lower order construct's (LOC's) measurement model.** Reliability and validity are the main evaluation criteria for the measurement model. In relation to the repeated indicator approach that was applied, LOC and HOC represent the two divisions of the conceptual framework (Sarstedt et al., 2019). The validity and reliability pertaining to LOC has been examined first. All findings are presented in accordance with the stipulated protocols outlined in the PLS-SEM manual (Sarstedt et al., 2019; Hair et al., 2019; 2017). To ensure the reliability of a construct, it is recommended that the outer loadings of the prevailing reflective variables surpass the minimum value of 0.708 (Hair et al., 2020; 2017). Table 2 and Fig. 2 depict that most values exceed threshold values. We removed 1 indicator from self-concept (SC1), 1 indicator from consumer attitude (CA5), as well as 4 indicators from PSI (PARA INT.3,6,8,9) to improve the assessment framework. Similarly, Cronbach's alpha remained within acceptable limits, i.e., 0.70–0.95. The values of composite reliability and

| Table 1 Demographic details of respondents. |           |       |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Respondents                                 | Frequency | %age  |
| Gender                                      |           |       |
| Female                                      | 166       | 45.23 |
| Male                                        | 201       | 54.76 |
| Region                                      |           |       |
| Delhi NCR                                   | 109       | 29.70 |
| Haryana                                     | 83        | 22.61 |
| Punjab                                      | 102       | 27.79 |
| Chandigarh                                  | 73        | 19.89 |
| Age of respondents                          |           |       |
| Below 18                                    | 11        | 2.99  |
| 18 - 30                                     | 353       | 96.18 |
| 31-45                                       | 3         | 0.81  |
| Social media platforms used by respondents  |           |       |
| Facebook                                    | 136       | 37.05 |
| YouTube                                     | 340       | 92.64 |
| Instagram                                   | 347       | 94.55 |
| Snapchat                                    | 232       | 63.21 |
| Twitter                                     | 124       | 33.78 |
| Number of hours spent on social media       |           |       |
| Less than an hour                           | 41        | 11.17 |
| 1-3 h                                       | 197       | 53.67 |
| 3-5 h                                       | 94        | 25.61 |
| 5 h and above                               | 35        | 9.53  |

Source: Developed by authors.

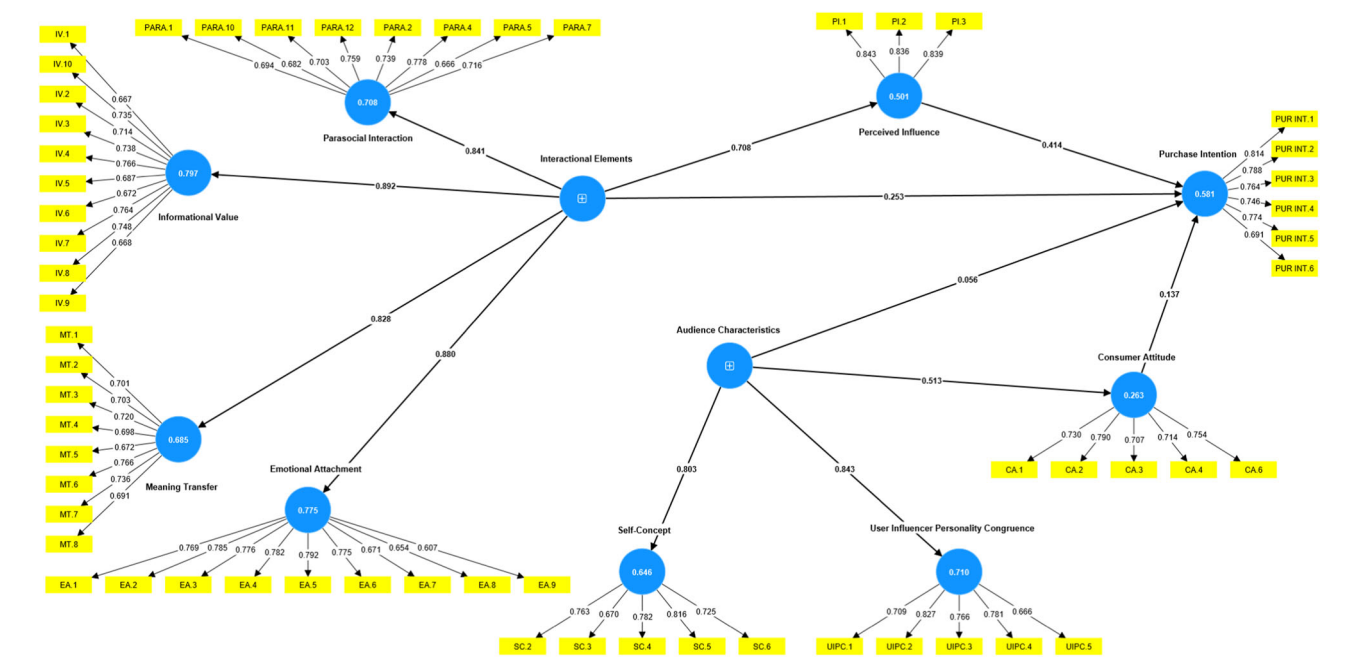


**Fig. 2** Analysis of the conceptual model utilising SmartPLS. Source: Self-constructed using SmartPLS 4.0 version.

**Table 2** Loc's assessment framework.

| Variables                              | Indicators | Factor loadings | Alpha values | rho_a | rho_c | AVE   |
|----------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|--------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Parasocial interaction                 | PARA.1     | 0.694           | 0.866        | 0.869 | 0.895 | 0.516 |
|                                        | PARA.2     | 0.739           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | PARA.4     | 0.778           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | PARA.5     | 0.666           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | PARA.7     | 0.716           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | PARA.10    | 0.682           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | PARA.11    | 0.703           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | PARA.12    | 0.759           |              |       |       |       |
| Informational value                    | IV.1       | 0.667           | 0.894        | 0.896 | 0.913 | 0.514 |
|                                        | IV.2       | 0.714           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | IV.3       | 0.738           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | IV.4       | 0.766           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | IV.5       | 0.687           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | IV.6       | 0.672           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | IV.7       | 0.764           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | IV.8       | 0.748           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | IV.9       | 0.668           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | IV.10      | 0.735           |              |       |       |       |
| Meaning transfer                       | MT.1       | 0.701           | 0.860        | 0.861 | 0.891 | 0.506 |
|                                        | MT.2       | 0.703           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | MT.3       | 0.720           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | MT.4       | 0.698           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | MT.5       | 0.672           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | MT.6       | 0.766           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | MT.7       | 0.736           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | MT.8       | 0.691           |              |       |       |       |
| Emotional attachment                   | EA.1       | 0.769           | 0.894        | 0.899 | 0.914 | 0.544 |
|                                        | EA.2       | 0.785           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | EA.3       | 0.776           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | EA.4       | 0.782           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | EA.5       | 0.792           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | EA.6       | 0.775           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | EA.7       | 0.671           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | EA.8       | 0.654           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | EA.9       | 0.607           |              |       |       |       |
| Self-concept                           | SC.2       | 0.763           | 0.807        | 0.812 | 0.867 | 0.567 |
|                                        | SC.3       | 0.670           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | SC.4       | 0.782           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | SC.5       | 0.816           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | SC.6       | 0.725           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | SC.7       | 0.763           |              |       |       |       |
| User-influencer personality congruence | UIPC.1     | 0.709           | 0.806        | 0.812 | 0.866 | 0.565 |
|                                        | UIPC.2     | 0.827           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | UIPC.3     | 0.766           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | UIPC.4     | 0.781           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | UIPC.5     | 0.666           |              |       |       |       |
| Perceived influence                    | PI.1       | 0.843           | 0.790        | 0.791 | 0.877 | 0.704 |
|                                        | PI.2       | 0.836           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | PI.3       | 0.839           |              |       |       |       |
| Consumer attitude                      | CA.1       | 0.730           | 0.793        | 0.797 | 0.858 | 0.547 |
|                                        | CA.2       | 0.790           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | CA.3       | 0.707           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | CA.4       | 0.714           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | CA.6       | 0.754           |              |       |       |       |
| Purchase intention                     | PUR INT.1  | 0.814           | 0.857        | 0.860 | 0.893 | 0.584 |
|                                        | PUR INT.2  | 0.788           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | PUR INT.3  | 0.764           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | PUR INT.4  | 0.746           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | PUR INT.5  | 0.774           |              |       |       |       |
|                                        | PUR INT.6  | 0.691           |              |       |       |       |

Source: Self-constructed by the author.

Henseler's rho-A are above 0.70 indicating internal consistency in the proposed model (Hair et al., 2020; 2017). The (AVE) average variance extracted, which indicates the amount of variance in dependent constructs explained by independent

constructs, is assessed to determine convergent validity. The AVE values of all the constructs were above 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019; 2017; Sarstedt et al., 2017; Cohen, 1988), establishing the whole measurement model valuation.

The research next investigates discriminant validity to ensure the uniqueness of the constructs (Sarstedt et al., 2022). The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlation criteria is used to demonstrate discriminant validity for each component. According to the latest criteria, the liberal HTMT inference approach suggests that all HTMT ratio values should be below 1 (Garg and Bakshi, 2024). However, for more stringent criteria, the HTMT ratio should ideally fall between 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015) and 0.90 (Gold et al., 2001). In our research, most measurements fall below acceptable standards, as demonstrated in Table 3.

**Assessment of HOC’s measurement model.** After investigating the assessment framework of LOC, the latent variable scores derived for the four sub-constructs relating to interactional elements and two sub-constructs of audience characteristics are integrated into the main dataset to examine the HOCs in the anticipated framework utilising the repeated indicator technique. Since the prospective framework model (as shown in Fig. 2) represents a Type 1 higher-order model, the repeated indicator technique is deemed suitable for measurement (Garg and Bakshi, 2024; Agyapong, 2021; Perez-Vega et al., 2018; Becker et al., 2012). The outcomes of the higher-order constructs are documented in Table 4. In the present study, there are two HOCs namely, interactional elements and audience characteristics. The Cronbach  $\alpha$  for interactional elements is 0.884. The composite reliability (rho-c) and Henseler’s rho-a are 0.920 & 0.890 respectively. Audience characteristics have only two items, hence the Cronbach  $\alpha$  value of 0.526 is justified (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). However, the value of composite reliability is 0.805 which establishes the internal consistency of the construct. The AVE value for both the higher-order constructs is above the threshold value of 0.5. In the proposed model, the path coefficients of LOCs serve as indicators for HOCs, serving as outer loadings for the HOC. In this model, outer loadings related to all sub-constructs exceed the acceptable threshold of 0.708 (Hair et al., 2020).

Next, we investigate the discriminant validity using the similar approach used in LOCs. Although most HTMT ratios are between 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015) and 0.90 (Gold et al., 2001), the ratio between interactional elements and audience characteristics is over 0.90, hence a liberal approach is utilised. For doing so, confidence intervals for HTMT inferences are obtained using bootstrapping (Shiva et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2022). The HTMT value is 0.968, which is within the confidence intervals hence establishing uniqueness between the constructs. The results of HTMT ratios along with confidence intervals are displayed in Table 5.

**Structural model assessment.** Once the measurement model has been validated, the structural framework is assessed to ascertain the relationships between variables and to evaluate their predictive ability (Hair et al., 2017). Multicollinearity between constructs must be checked first. We evaluate each construct as a formative factor and examine the tolerance and VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) of the inner model and these measurements are found to be below 3, ensuring no construct multicollinearity issue (Shiva et al., 2020; Diamantopoulos, 2008). Subsequently, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was examined for every predicted latent variable. The  $R^2$  value elucidates the inherent variance relating to predicted variables attributed to antecedent factors. Notably, the  $R^2$  values for the dependent constructs, Consumer Attitude (0.266), Perceived Influence (0.507), and Purchase Intention (0.581), were found to exhibit moderate significance depicted by Fig. 2. and Table 6. In social sciences,  $R^2$  0.20 or more is considered significant since we measure behaviour (Hair et al., 2017; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). Bootstrapping at 10,000 SmartPLS subsamples is done to assess path coefficient significance and relevance for hypothesis testing. The interactional elements and audience characteristics are HOCs, while the path coefficient of their sub-constructs serves as factor loadings as displayed in Fig. 3 (Shiva et al., 2020). Table 6 indicates that the majority of the values are statistically significant at the 5% level, thereby supporting hypotheses H1–H5 and H7. However, no

| Table 3 Discriminant validity (LOC).       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |    |
|--------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----|
|                                            | i     | ii    | iii   | iv    | v     | vi    | vii   | viii  | ix |
| i. Parasocial interaction                  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |    |
| ii. Informational value                    | 0.732 |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |    |
| iii. Meaning transfer                      | 0.632 | 0.805 |       |       |       |       |       |       |    |
| iv. Emotional attachment                   | 0.824 | 0.742 | 0.700 |       |       |       |       |       |    |
| v. Self-concept                            | 0.419 | 0.474 | 0.483 | 0.443 |       |       |       |       |    |
| vi. User-influencer personality congruence | 0.650 | 0.665 | 0.616 | 0.678 | 0.442 |       |       |       |    |
| vii. Perceived influence                   | 0.617 | 0.776 | 0.813 | 0.702 | 0.427 | 0.617 |       |       |    |
| viii. Consumer attitude                    | 0.701 | 0.799 | 0.851 | 0.708 | 0.441 | 0.585 | 0.826 |       |    |
| ix. Purchase intention                     | 0.583 | 0.735 | 0.734 | 0.641 | 0.408 | 0.575 | 0.861 | 0.755 |    |
| Source: Calculated by authors.             |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |    |

| Table 4 Assessment of HOC's measurement model. |                                        |                 |                |       |       |       |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Constructs                                     | Items                                  | Factor loadings | $\alpha$ value | rho_a | rho_c | AVE   |
| Interactional elements                         | Parasocial interaction                 | 0.835           | 0.884          | 0.890 | 0.920 | 0.741 |
|                                                | Informational value                    | 0.888           |                |       |       |       |
|                                                | Meaning transfer                       | 0.850           |                |       |       |       |
|                                                | Emotional attachment                   | 0.869           |                |       |       |       |
| Audience characteristics                       | Self-concept                           | 0.757           | 0.526          | 0.560 | 0.805 | 0.674 |
|                                                | User-influencer personality congruence | 0.880           |                |       |       |       |
| Source: Self-constructed by authors.           |                                        |                 |                |       |       |       |

**Table 5 Evaluation of discriminant validity for HOC.**

|                              | i.                   | ii.                  | iii.                 | iv.                  | v. |
|------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----|
| i. Interactional elements    |                      |                      |                      |                      |    |
| ii. Audience characteristics | 0.968 (0.861; 1.101) |                      |                      |                      |    |
| iii. Perceived influence     | 0.844 (0.775; 0.906) | 0.786 (0.652; 0.924) |                      |                      |    |
| iv. Consumer attitude        | 0.888 (0.829; 0.942) | 0.775 (0.632; 0.919) | 0.826 (0.720; 0.918) |                      |    |
| v. Purchase intention        | 0.783 (0.714; 0.846) | 0.743 (0.611; 0.886) | 0.861 (0.782; 0.935) | 0.755 (0.660; 0.836) |    |

Source: Calculated by authors.

**Table 6 Assessment of Structural model and hypothesis testing.**

|                                                                   | $\beta$ -value | Sample mean | Standard deviation | t-statistics | p-value |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------|---------|
| Direct effect                                                     |                |             |                    |              |         |
| Interactional elements > Perceived influence                      | 0.712          | 0.713       | 0.030              | 23.507       | 0.000*  |
| Perceived influence > Purchase intention                          | 0.411          | 0.413       | 0.070              | 5.893        | 0.000*  |
| Interactional elements > Purchase intention                       | 0.257          | 0.255       | 0.080              | 3.209        | 0.001*  |
| Audience characteristics > Consumer attitude                      | 0.516          | 0.518       | 0.049              | 10.496       | 0.000*  |
| Consumer attitude > Purchase intention                            | 0.134          | 0.136       | 0.067              | 1.988        | 0.047*  |
| Audience characteristics > Purchase intention                     | 0.055          | 0.055       | 0.057              | 0.972        | 0.331*  |
| Indirect effect                                                   |                |             |                    |              |         |
| Interactional elements > Perceived influence > Purchase intention | 0.293          | 0.294       | 0.052              | 5.624        | 0.000*  |
| Audience characteristics > Consumer attitude > Purchase intention | 0.069          | 0.071       | 0.036              | 1.904        | 0.057** |

|                     | $R^2$ | Adjusted $R^2$ | SRMR  |
|---------------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| Perceived influence | 0.507 | 0.506          | 0.063 |
| Consumer attitude   | 0.266 | 0.264          |       |
| Purchase intention  | 0.581 | 0.576          |       |

Source: Self-calculated by authors.  
 $p \leq 0.05^*$ ;  $p \leq 0.10^{**}$ .

significant explicit relationship was found between audience characteristics and purchase intention, hence rejecting H6 ( $\beta = 0.055$ ,  $t = 0.972$ ,  $p = 0.331$ ). The present study employs Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) for evaluating the fitness of the model, which cannot exceed 0.08. The SRMR measurement for the current study is 0.063, hence indicating sufficient explanatory power of the model (Henseler et al., 2016). Table 6. lists all  $p$ -values, path coefficient values,  $t$ -statistic values, and SRMR values.

To test model predictive relevance,  $Q^2$  predict values are computed. The  $Q^2$  predict values of endogenous variables consumer attitude (0.259), perceived influence (0.503), and purchase intention (0.465) are larger than 0, establishing predictive relevance. Moreover, for estimating predictive error metrics for endogenous variables' indicators, PLSpredict uses tenfold sample-based predictions (Shmueli et al., 2016). Table 7 shows that  $Q^2$  predicted values for each indicator are less than 0. RMSE (Root mean square error) measurements are assessed to determine the model's predictive relevance as errors are symmetrically distributed. Most of the items yield fewer prediction errors in the PLS model than in the linear model, resulting in moderate predictive relevance of the model (Singh and Bala, 2020; Shmueli et al., 2019).

**Analysis of mediating variables.** The results suggest that confirming Hypotheses 1 and 3 substantiates the function of perceived influence as a mediator in linking offers interactional elements to buying intention. In the light of empirical evidence supporting Hypothesis 2, a comparative investigation of interactional elements' direct and indirect effects on purchase intention is necessary. The study found a  $\beta$ -value of 0.257, establishing a

direct linkage between interactional elements and consumer purchasing intention. Moreover, perceived influence mediation increases  $\beta$  to 0.292 (Hypothesis 1 \* Hypothesis 3:  $0.712 * 0.411$ ). These results reveal interactional elements directly affecting buying intention. However, this impact is increased when perceived influence mediates, showing a complementary partial mediation effect (Zhao et al., 2014; Garg and Bakshi, 2024). In the case of audience characteristics, acceptance of H5 and H7 indicated a mediation effect. However, rejection of H6 revealed no explicit relation between audience characteristics and consumer purchasing intention ( $p = 0.331$ ), indicating the case of full mediation (Zhao et al., 2014).

## Discussion

The present study aims to examine the combined impact of interactional elements used by beauty vloggers and audience characteristics on purchase intention using two mediating variables. The findings obtained from the application of PLS-SEM support almost all the hypotheses (H1–H5, H7, H8) except one (H6). The outcomes of the study indicate that interactional elements used by beauty vloggers help in creating buying intention for the merchandise used/promoted by beauty influencers. Additionally, empirical evidence does not suggest a strong linkage between audience characteristics and purchase intention. The extensive literature suggests that consumers with a strong self-concept or high degree of congruence with an influencer's personality have a higher chance of purchasing merchandise endorsed by the said influencer (Zogaj et al., 2021; Mishra et al., 2015; Choi and Rifon, 2012), this finding may seem counter-intuitive. This shows the complexity of consumer buying behaviours.

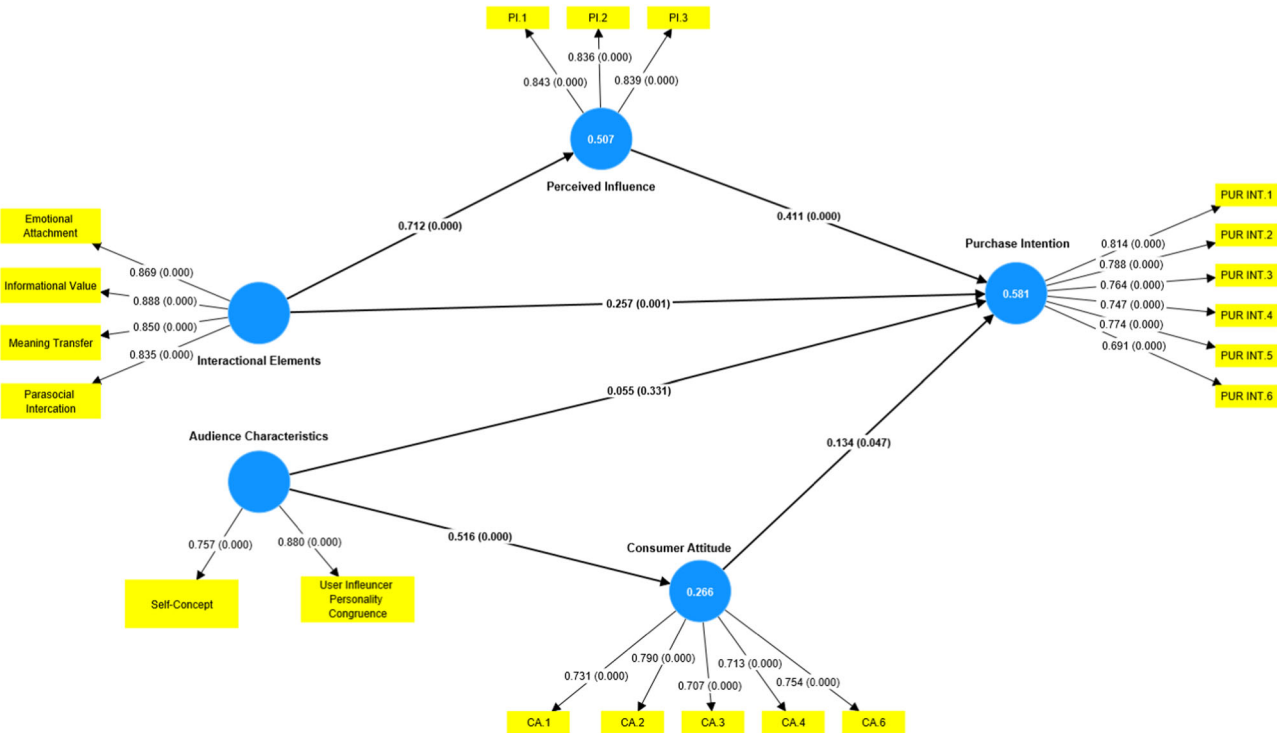


Fig. 3 Analysis of structural model and statistical relationships between variables. Source: Self-constructed using SmartPLS 4.0 version.

| Table 7 PLSPredict. |                        |            |          |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------|----------|
|                     | Q <sup>2</sup> Predict | RMSE (PLS) | RMSE(LM) |
| PUR. INT.1          | 0.335                  | 0.792      | 0.799    |
| PUR. INT.2          | 0.251                  | 0.830      | 0.843    |
| PUR. INT.3          | 0.268                  | 0.793      | 0.796    |
| PUR. INT.4          | 0.243                  | 0.798      | 0.801    |
| PUR. INT.5          | 0.302                  | 0.729      | 0.723    |
| PUR. INT.6          | 0.219                  | 0.794      | 0.792    |

Source: Self-calculated by authors.

The present research used social exchange theory to explain influencer marketing dynamics. The application of this theory helps us understand how two parties interact with each other by exchanging perceived costs and benefits (Kim and Kim, 2021). According to social exchange theory, people associate and interact with the anticipation of getting reciprocal advantages in exchange for their own efforts. In relation to influencer marketing, the aforementioned theoretical framework postulates that customers actively interact with influencers with the expectation of deriving value or advantages, especially in the form of entertainment and knowledge. The nature of the relationship established between influencers and their followers is shaped by the ongoing process of exchange and the mutually obtained benefits. In instances where a sequence of exchanges occurs, discerning the specific exchange that precipitated the formulation of a robust relationship becomes notably challenging. The present study used four sub-constructs of interactional elements namely, parasocial interactions, emotional attachment, meaning transfer, and informational value. The results reveal that all four sub-constructs have almost similar empirical impacts. PSI was formerly used by media outlets including TV and radio and media consumers (Horton and Wohl, 1956). Similarly, meaning transfer was initially studied from a celebrity endorsement’s perspective. However, with the rise of social media and technology, influencers have

become the new reference group for consumers with whom they can identify themselves more easily as compared to traditional celebrities. Hence, PSI and meaning transfer have expanded beyond conventional media as beauty vloggers build an influential, illusionary relationship with their audience. Moreover, the analysis underscores the significance of parasocial interactions in influencer-audience dynamics, fostering reciprocity. Social exchange theory suggests that followers may reciprocate the attention and engagement offered by influencers by valuing and adopting their recommendations, thereby amplifying the perceived influence of the influencer towards the brands endorsed by them. Furthermore, meaning transfer emerges as a salient mechanism through which influencers enhance their perceived influence by associating products or brands with positive attributes or values. Influencers have unique identities and personal brands that are constructed based on their beliefs, lifestyles, and areas of expertise (Holiday et al., 2021). When a brand partners with an influencer, its objective is to capitalise on the favourable meanings linked to the influencer’s character and then convey those meanings to the products. Social exchange theory posits that individuals are motivated to maintain relationships that enhance their self-image or social status. When followers perceive that using a product endorsed by their favourite beauty vlogger aligns with their desired identity or values, they are more likely to adopt the product, thereby reinforcing the influencer’s authority and influence. This phenomenon underscores the power of influencers not only to shape consumer preferences but also to influence broader cultural narratives and norms through the products and brands they endorse. Emotional attachment and informational value also play a vital role in creating influential roles for beauty vloggers. Sánchez-Fernández and Jiménez-Castillo (2021) revealed the significant impact of informational value and emotional attachment in creating a perceived influence on consumer’s buying intention, hence signifying the role of perceived influence as a mediator. Additionally, they also showcased the interdependence between influencers and their followers, examining it through the lens of social exchange theory. They

found that followers are likely to reciprocate favourable thoughts, emotions, and actions towards the brands/products suggested by influencers when they perceive a benefit from their connection with the influencer. Hence, social exchange theory asserts that consumers need to acknowledge the importance of informational value for creating trust and emotional attachment in online communities. These connections are established and nurtured by continuous, interactions that revolve around meaningful shared values (Holiday et al., 2021). Overall, the insights gleaned from this study highlight the multifaceted nature of perceived influence in influencer marketing, with parasocial interactions, emotional attachment, meaning transfer, and informational value each playing distinct yet interconnected roles in shaping followers' perceptions of influencers' authority and influence. By elucidating these mechanisms through the theoretical framework of social exchange theory, this study offers valuable insights for marketers seeking to leverage influencer relationships to drive consumer behaviour and brand engagement in an increasingly competitive digital landscape.

Another antecedent proposed in the current study is audience characteristics, consisting of two sub-constructs namely, self-concept and user-influencer personality congruence. The study examined the impact of audience characteristics on purchase intentions using self-congruency theory. The results demonstrate that there is no significant direct relationship between audience characteristics and purchase intention. Previous literature also supports the connotation that there is no direct impact of self-concept and user-influencer personality congruence on consumer behaviour (Zogaj et al., 2021; Pradhan et al., 2016; Choi and Rifon, 2012). However, the findings reveal that there is a significant indirect relationship between audience characteristics and purchasing intention using consumer attitude. When customers develop a favourable perception of influencers, it reduces communication barriers between the two parties. This phenomenon leads to an increased intention to make purchases, as consumers tend to emulate the actions of their role models with whom they see a sense of likeness (Mettenheim and Wiedmann, 2021). Thus, it bridges the gap between audience characteristics and purchase intention. Additionally, if consumers have favourable attitudes towards beauty vloggers, the impact of self-concept and personality congruence affects consumer behaviour, hence showing the satisfying mediating role of consumer attitude. The results of the present study are in line with the study conducted by Pradhan et al. (2023). Overall, the audience's self-concept and the congruence between the personality of the vlogger and that of the audience indirectly influence their purchasing decisions. By identifying with the vlogger's personality and finding alignment with their own self-concept, consumers are more likely to form a favourable attitude towards them such that they trust the vlogger's recommendations and get influenced to purchase the endorsed products.

### Implications, limitations, and future research directions

**Theoretical contribution.** This investigation has produced noteworthy intellectual insights. Using 2 independent theoretical frameworks, i.e., social exchange and self-congruence, to demonstrate the reciprocal influence of the two frameworks on customers' buying intention. Previous academicians have used the credibility model (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017), the source attractiveness model (Kim and Kim, 2021), the elaboration likelihood model of persuasion (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020), persuasion knowledge (Myers et al., 2024), uses and gratification theory (Dolan et al., 2016), and many others to show the effect of influencer mechanism on consumer behaviour. However, the current study is the first that has used social exchange theory in

the context of interactional elements used by beauty vloggers. The rise of beauty vlogger marketing in digital spaces necessitates an extension of social exchange theory to incorporate the dynamics of online interactions. While traditional applications of social exchange theory focus on face-to-face exchanges, the prevalence of influencer-follower interactions mediated through digital platforms calls for a nuanced understanding of how digital interactions influence reciprocity and perceived influence (Ahmad et al., 2023). Consequently, this study makes a valuable contribution to the existing literature on the emerging phenomenon of influencer marketing. Secondly, the application of social exchange theory to influencer marketing could benefit from a deeper examination of the evolving power dynamics between influencers and followers. Influencers often wield significant power over their audiences due to their persuasive abilities and large followings. Understanding how these power dynamics fluctuate over time and in response to factors such as content authenticity, engagement strategies, and brand partnerships could enrich social exchange theory's explanatory power in the context of influencer marketing. Third, the cultural and contextual factors shaping influencer marketing relationships present opportunities for extending social exchange theory. While the theory primarily emphasises individual-level exchanges within dyadic relationships, influencer marketing operates within broader cultural and contextual contexts that influence interactions and perceptions. Modifications to social exchange theory could involve integrating cultural norms, societal values, and platform-specific dynamics to better understand the complexities of reciprocity and perceived influence in influencer marketing relationships across diverse cultural and contextual settings. Fourth, the study highlights the need to examine long-term relationship dynamics in influencer marketing. While social exchange theory focuses on short-term exchanges and transactions, influencer marketing campaigns often aim to cultivate long-term relationships between influencers and followers. Future research could explore how social exchange processes unfold over time within these sustained relationships, including factors such as loyalty, commitment, and relationship maintenance strategies employed by influencers and brands. Fifth, the previous literature has only shown the effectiveness of credibility and its direct and indirect effect on consumer behaviour, however, the present study emphasizes the role of audience characteristics, particularly self-concept and user-influencer personality congruence, in influencing customer attitudes that lead to purchase intention. This approach offers a more intricate theoretical framework for the impact of the congruence between an individual's self-identity and an influencer's image on consumer decision-making. Another notable theoretical contribution is the proposition for the incorporation of mediating variables, specifically consumer attitudes, into the framework of self-congruency theory. While traditional self-congruency theory emphasizes the explicit linkage between audience characteristics and buying intention, our findings reveal a significant indirect pathway mediated by consumer attitudes towards beauty vloggers. This suggests that the effect of audience characteristics on buying intention is not solely driven by direct alignment with influencer personality traits but is also mediated by consumers' perceptions and attitudes towards the influencers. Therefore, future researchers should explore the importance of consumer attitudes more extensively within the framework of self-congruency theory to gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms driving consumer behaviour in influencer marketing contexts.

**Practical implications.** In addition to theoretical implications, this study also holds practical significance. First, owing to the increasing usage of social media and absorbing more online

content, the study provides an alternative to traditional celebrity endorsers. Beauty vloggers are regarded as opinion leaders and consumers relate more with them as compared to traditional celebrities. Second, the results of this research provide a valuable understanding of the process of influencer selection in practical contexts. Marketers can identify influencers whose self-concept and personality qualities coincide with their intended target audience, hence augmenting the authenticity and efficacy of influencer marketing efforts. Third, the results reveal the importance of meaning transfer. This study can assist marketers in making informed decisions regarding investment in beauty vloggers whose values and beliefs align with their products, thereby enhancing customer consumption. Fourth, the current study underscored the significance of emotional attachment. Consequently, marketers should refrain from solely relying on metrics such as follower count, likes, and comments to gauge the popularity of influencers. Instead, they should prioritise investing in influencers who possess the ability to forge emotional connections with their audience, thereby enhancing the persuasive effectiveness of their followers. Fifth, the primary objective of influencer marketing is to generate revenue via increased sales. The purchasing intent of customers may be favourably influenced when they possess a favourable attitude towards an influencer and the products/brands they advocate. Consumers may have a greater propensity to experiment with or buy products that are promoted by influencers whom they admire. This enhances the usage of influencer marketing. In addition to marketers, this research incorporates interactional elements that promote the establishment of likeness and familiarity with their target audiences. Consequently, the current study has potential value for emerging influencers seeking to enhance their engagement rates across various social media platforms.

**Limitations and future research directions.** Despite our diligent endeavour, the researchers were incapable of eradicating all research flaws. This research is subject to sample-based limitations, as is common in empirical studies. Due to the demographic patterns of beauty vlogger viewership, with relatively few viewers over the age of 45, the majority of data was gathered from individuals aged 18 to 30 years old. Future studies might compare influencer marketing's effects on different age groups. Second, the data used in this research originated from a developing nation like India. However, it's important to note that findings may differ across diverse countries due to cultural variations, which could impact the characteristics of the target audience. Third, this study only examined beauty vloggers' interactional aspects to persuade customers, as well as audience factors influencing consumer attitudes about vloggers and their impact on purchase intention. However, future researchers may examine how sponsored marketing and the disclosure hashtag affect customer perception. This study was limited to the product categories pertinent to beauty vloggers only, primarily cosmetics. Future researchers may apply the vlogger marketing approach to health, gaming, food, and travel vlogging.

### Data availability

The dataset collected and/or analysed during the present study is not publicly accessible due to confidentiality agreements with participants. The participants had furnished personal data and agreed to answer probing questions in the questionnaire upon the precondition that none of their data would be shared subsequently, except in case of extremely reasonable requirements. Hence, the dataset can be obtained from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Received: 9 December 2023; Accepted: 29 April 2024;

Published online: 13 May 2024

### References

- Agyapong D (2021) Analyzing financial risks in small and medium enterprises: evidence from the food processing firms in selected cities in Ghana. *Int J Entrep Behav Res* 27(1):45–77. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEBR-05-2020-0269>
- Ahmad R, Nawaz MR, Ishaq MI, Khan MM, Ashraf HA (2023) Social exchange theory: Systematic review and future directions. *Front Psychol* 13:1015921. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1015921>
- Balabanis G, Chatzopoulou E (2019) Under the influence of a blogger: The role of information-seeking goals and issue involvement. *Psychol Mark* 36(4):342–353. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21182>
- Becker J-M, Klein K, Wetzels M (2012) Hierarchical latent variable models in PLS-SEM: guidelines for using reflective-formative type models. *Long Range Plan* 45(5-6):359–394. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2012.10.001>
- Belanche D, Casaló LV, Flavián M, Ibáñez-Sánchez S (2021) Understanding influencer marketing: the role of congruence between influencers, products and consumers. *J Bus Res* 132:186–195. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.03.067>
- Blau PM (1964) *Exchange and power in social life*. Wiley, New York
- Casaló LV, Flavián C, Sánchez SI (2020) Influencers on Instagram: antecedents and consequences of opinion. *J Bus Res* 117:510–519
- Chanana N (2015) Consumer attitude toward celebrity endorsement. *Innov Market Strateg Sustain Growth*
- Chetioui Y, Benlafqih H, Lebdaoui H (2020) How fashion influencers contribute to consumers' purchase intention. *J Fash Mark Manag Int J* 24(3):361–380. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFMM-08-2019-0157>
- Chia K-C, Hsu C-C, Lin L-T, Tseng HH (2021) The identification of ideal social media influencers: Integrating the social capital, social exchange, and social learning theories. *J Electron Commer Res* 22(1):4–21
- Choi SM, Rifon NJ (2012) It is a match: the impact of congruence between celebrity image and consumer ideal self on endorsement effectiveness. *Psychol Mark* 29(9):639–650. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20550>
- Choi W, Lee Y (2019) Effects of fashion vlogger attributes on product attitude and content sharing. *Fash Text* 6(6):1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40691-018-0161-1>
- Coco SL, Eckert S (2020) #sponsored: consumer insights on social media influencer marketing. *Public Relat Inq* 9(2):177–194. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2046147X20920816>
- Cohen J (1988) *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences*, 2nd edn. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, New Jersey, New York, 10.4324/9780203771587
- Cook KS, Emerson RM (1978) Power, equity and commitment in exchange networks. *Am Sociol Rev* 43(5):721–739. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2094546>
- Cook KS, Yamagishi T (1992) Power in exchange networks: a power-dependence formulation. *Soc Netw* 14(3-4):245–265. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-8733\(92\)90004-Q](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-8733(92)90004-Q)
- Cropanzano R, Mitchell MS (2005) Social exchange theory: an interdisciplinary review. *J Manag* 31(6):874–900. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206305279602>
- Diamantopoulos A (2008) Formative indicators: introduction to the special issue. *J Bus Res* 61(12):1201–1202. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2008.01.008>
- Djafarova E, Rushworth C (2017) Exploring the credibility of online celebrities' Instagram profiles in influencing the purchase decisions of young female users. *Comput Hum Behav* 68:1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.11.009>
- Dolan R, Conduit J, Fahy J, Goodman S (2016) Social media engagement behaviour: a uses and gratifications perspective. *J Strateg Mark* 24(3-4):261–277. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254X.2015.1095222>
- Emerson RM (1976) Social exchange theory. *Annu Rev Sociol* 2(1):335–362
- Freberg K, Graham K, McGaughey K, Freberg LA (2011) Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality. *Public Relat Rev* 37(1):90–92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2010.11.001>
- Garg M, Bakshi A (2024) Exploring the impact of beauty vloggers' credible attributes, parasocial interaction, and trust on consumer purchase intention in influencer marketing. *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 11(235):1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-02760-9>
- Gold AH, Malhotra A, Segars AH (2001) Knowledge management: an organizational capabilities perspective. *J Manag Inf Syst* 18(1):185–214. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07421222.2001.11045669>
- Goñi E, Madariaga JM, Axpe I, Goñi A (2011) Structure of the Personal Self-Concept (PSC) Questionnaire. *Int J Psychol Psychol Ther* 11(3):509–522
- Hair JF, Howard MC, Christian N (2020) Assessing measurement model quality in PLS-SEM using confirmatory composite analysis. *J Bus Res* 109:101–110. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.11.069>

- Hair JF, Hult GT, Ringle CM, Sarstedt M (2017) A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), 2nd edn. SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, California, United States
- Hair JF, Hult GT, Ringle CM, Sarstedt M (2022) A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), 3rd edn. Sage Publication, Thousand Oaks, California
- Hair JF, Risher JJ, Sarstedt M, Ringle CM (2019) When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *Eur Bus Rev* 31(1):2–24. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-11-2018-0203>
- Henseler J, Hubona G, Ray PA (2016) Using PLS path modeling in new technology research: updated guidelines. *Ind Manag Data Syst* 116(1):2–20. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IMDS-09-2015-0382>
- Henseler J, Ringle CM, Sarstedt M (2015) A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *J Acad Mark Sci Vol* 43(1):115–135. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8>
- Holiday S, Densley RL, Norman MS (2021) Influencer marketing between mothers: the impact of disclosure and visual brand promotion. *J Curr Issues Res Advert* 42(3):236–257. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10641734.2020.1782790>
- Homans G (1958) Social behavior as exchange. *Am J Sociol* 63(6):597–606. <https://doi.org/10.1086/222355>
- Horton D, Wohl RR (1956) Mass communication and para-social interaction. *Psychiatry* 19(3):215–229. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00332747.1956.11023049>
- Hughes C, Swaminathan V, Brooks G (2019) Driving brand engagement through online social influencers: an empirical investigation of sponsored blogging campaigns. *J Mark* 83(5):78–96. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242919854374>
- Jain V, Roy S (2016) Understanding meaning transfer in celebrity endorsements: a qualitative exploration. *Qual Mark Res Int J* 19(3):266–286. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QMR-03-2015-0020>
- Jiménez-Castillo D, Sánchez-Fernández R (2019) The role of digital influencers in brand recommendation: examining their impact on engagement, expected value and purchase intention. *Int J Inf Manag* 49:366–376. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2019.07.009>
- Ki C-W, Kim YK (2019) The mechanism by which social media influencers persuade consumers: The role of consumers' desire to mimic. *Psychol Mark* 36(10):905–922. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21244>
- Kim DY, Kim H-Y (2021) Trust me, trust me not: a nuanced view of influencer marketing on social media. *J Bus Res* 134:223–232. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.05.024>
- Kim J, Kang S, Lee KH (2020) How social capital impacts the purchase intention of sustainable fashion products. *J Bus Res* 117:596–603. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.10.010>
- Knoll J, Matthes J, Münch A, Ostermann M (2016) How long does celebrity meaning transfer last? Delayed effects and the moderating roles of brand experience, celebrity liking, and age. *Int J Advert* 36(4):588–612. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2016.1213062>
- Ladhari R, Massa E, Skandrani H (2020) YouTube vloggers' popularity and influence: the roles of homophily, emotional attachment, and expertise. *J Retail Consum Serv* 54:102027. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.102027>
- Lee JE, Watkins B (2016) YouTube vloggers' influence on consumer luxury brand perceptions and intentions. *J Bus Res* 69(12):5753–5760. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.04.171>
- Lee MR, Yen DC, Hsiao CY (2014) Understanding the perceived community value of Facebook users. *Comput Hum Behav* 35:350–358
- Lee M, Lee H-H (2022) Do parasocial interactions and vicarious experiences in the beauty YouTube channels promote consumer purchase intention. *Int J Consum Stud* 46(1):235–248. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12667>
- Lou C, Kim HK (2019) Fancying the new rich and famous? Explicating the roles of influencer content, credibility, and parental mediation in adolescents' parasocial relationship, materialism, and purchase intentions. *Front Psychol* 10:2567. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02567>
- Lou C, Yuan S (2019) Influencer marketing: how message value and credibility affect consumer trust of branded content on social media. *J Interact Advert* 19(1):58–73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2018.1533501>
- Malhotra NK (1981) A scale to measure self-concepts, person concepts, and product concepts. *J Mark Res* 18(4):456–464. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378101800407>
- Malodia S, Singh P, Goyal V, Sengupta A (2017) Measuring the impact of brand-celebrity personality congruence on purchase intention. *J Mark Commun* 23(5):493–512. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2017.1322125>
- Manchanda P, Arora N, Sethi V (2022) Impact of beauty vlogger's credibility and popularity on eWOM sharing intention: the mediating role of parasocial interaction. *J Promot Manag* 28(3):379–412. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2021.1989542>
- Mccracken G (1989) Who is the celebrity endorser? Cultural foundations of the endorsement process. *J Consum Res* 16(3):310–321. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209217>
- McGuire WJ (1985) Attitudes and attitude change. In: Gardner L, Aronson E (eds.), *The handbook of social psychology*. vol. 2. Erlbaum, Hillsdale, New Jersey, USA. pp. 233–346
- Meng F, Wei J (2020) Scale design of opinion leaders' impact on online consumers' purchasing intention. *J Intell Fuzzy Syst* 39(2):1937–1949. <https://doi.org/10.3233/JIFS-179964>
- Mettenheim WV, Wiedmann K-P (2021) The complex triad of congruence issues in influencer marketing. *J Consum Behav* 20(5):1277–1296. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.1935>
- Miller FM, Allen CT (2012) How does celebrity meaning transfer? Investigating the process of meaning transfer with celebrity affiliates and mature brands. *J Consum Psychol* 22(3):443–452. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2011.11.001>
- Mishra AS, Roy S, Bailey AA (2015) Exploring brand personality-celebrity endorser personality congruence in celebrity endorsements in the Indian context. *Psychol Mark* 32(12):1158–1174. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20846>
- Molm LD, Collett JL, Schaefer DR (2007) Building solidarity through generalized exchange: a theory of reciprocity. *Am J Sociol* 113(1):205–242. <https://doi.org/10.1086/517900>
- Myers S, Sen S, Syrdal H, Woodroof P (2024) The impact of Persuasion knowledge cues on social media engagement: a look at pet influencer marketing. *J Mark Theory Pract* 32(1):43–60. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10696679.2022.2093224>
- Nunnally JC, Bernstein IH (1994) *Psychometric theory*. 3rd edn. McGraw-Hill, Ed. New York
- Perez-Vega R, Taherib B, Farrington T, O'Gorman K (2018) On being attractive, social and visually appealing in social media: the effects of anthropomorphic tourism brands on Facebook fan pages. *Tour Manag* 66:339–347. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.11.013>
- Plewa C, Palmer K (2014) Self-congruence theory: towards a greater understanding of the global and malleable selves in a sports specific consumption context. *Int J Sports Mark Spons* 15(4):26–39. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSSMS-15-04-2014-B004>
- Pradhan D, Moharana TR, Malik G (2023) Influence of celebrity, destination and tourist personality on destination attachment and revisit intention: moderating roles of endorsement embeddedness, destination crowding and gender. *J Destination Mark Manag* 27:100754. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2022.100754>
- Pradhan D, Duraipandian I, Sethi D (2016) Celebrity endorsement: How celebrity—brand—user personality congruence affects brand attitude and purchase intention. *J Mark Commun* 22(5):456–473
- Rasoolimanesh SM, Jaafar M, Kock N, Ahmad AG (2017) The effects of community factors on residents' perceptions toward World Heritage Site inscription and sustainable tourism development. *J Sustain Tour* 25(2):198–216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2016.1195836>
- Roy S, Jain V (2017) Exploring meaning transfer in celebrity endorsement: measurement and validation. *Asia-Pac J Bus Adm* 9(2):87–104. <https://doi.org/10.1108/APJBA-06-2016-0058>
- Rubin AM, Perse EM, Powell RA (1985) Loneliness, parasocial interaction, and local television news viewing. *Hum Commun Res* 12(2):155–180. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1985.tb00071.x>
- Sánchez-Fernández R, Jiménez-Castillo D (2021) How social media influencers affect behavioural intentions towards recommended brands: the role of emotional attachment and information value. *J Mark Manag* 37(11-12):1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2020.1866648>
- Sarstedt M, Hair JF, Cheah J-H, Becker J-M (2019) How to specify, estimate, and validate higher-order constructs in PLS-SEM. *Australas Mark J* 27(3):197–211. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2019.05.003>
- Sarstedt M, Hair JF, Pick M, Liengaard BD, Radomir L, Ringle CM (2022) Progress in partial least squares structural equation modeling use in marketing research in the last decade. *Psychol Mark* 39(5):1035–1064. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21640>
- Sarstedt M, Ringle CM, Hair JF (2017) Partial least squares structural equation modeling. In: Homburg C, Klarmann M, Vomberg A (eds.) *Handbook of market research*. Springer International Publishing, Heidelberg, Germany, pp. 587–632. 10.1007/978-3-319-57413-4\_15
- Shan Y, Chen K-J, Lin J-S (2019) When social media influencers endorse brands: the effects of self-influencer congruence, parasocial identification, and perceived endorser motive. *Int J Advert* 39(5):590–610. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2019.1678322>
- Shiva A, Narula S, Shahi SK (2020) What drives retail investors' investment decisions? Evidence from no mobile phone phobia (Nomophobia) and investor fear of missing out (I-FoMo). *J Content Community Commun* 11(6):2–20. <https://doi.org/10.31620/JCCC.06.20.02>
- Shmueli G, Ray S, Estrada JM, Chatla SB (2016) The elephant in the room: Predictive performance of PLS models. *J Bus Res* 69(10):4552–4564. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.03.049>
- Shmueli G, Sarstedt M, Hair JF, Cheah J-H, Ting H, Vaithilingam S, Ringle CM (2019) Predictive model assessment in PLS-SEM: guidelines for using

- PLSpredict. *Eur J Mark* 53(11):2322–2347. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-02-2019-0189>
- Singh S, Bala R (2020) Mediating role of self-efficacy on the relationship between conscientiousness and procrastination. *Int J Work Organ Emot* 11(1):41–61. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJWOE.2020.109422>
- Sirgy MJ (1982) Self-concept in consumer behavior: a critical review. *J Consum Res* 9(3):287–300. <https://doi.org/10.1086/208924>
- Sirgy MJ (1985) Using self-congruity and ideal congruity to predict purchase motivation. *J Bus Res* 13(3):195–206. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0148-2963\(85\)90026-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0148-2963(85)90026-8)
- Sokolova K, Kefi H (2020) Instagram and YouTube bloggers promote it, why should I buy? How credibility and parasocial interaction influence purchase intentions. *J Retail Consum Serv* 53:101742. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.01.011>
- Tafheem N, El-Gohary H, Sobh R (2022) Social media user-influencer congruity: an analysis of social media platforms parasocial relationships. *Int J Customer Relatsh Mark Manag* 13(1):1–26. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJCRMM.289213>
- Taillon BJ, Mueller SM, Kowalczyk CM, Jones DN (2020) Understanding the relationships between social media influencers and their followers: the moderating role of closeness. *J Prod Brand Manag* 29(6):767–782. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-03-2019-2292>
- Thomson M (2006) Human brands: Investigating antecedents to consumers' strong attachments to celebrities. *J Mark* 70(3):104–119. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.70.3.104>
- Torres P, Augusto M, Matos M (2019) Antecedents and outcomes of digital influencer endorsement: an exploratory study. *Psychol Mark* 36(12):1267–1276. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21274>
- Wang S-m, Lin JC-C (2011) The effect of social influence on bloggers' usage intention. *Online Inf Rev* 35(1):50–65. <https://doi.org/10.1108/1468452111113588>
- Xu X, Pratt S (2018) Social media influencers as endorsers to promote travel destinations: an application of self-congruence theory to the Chinese Generation Y. *J Travel Tour Mark* 35(7):958–972
- Zhao J, Wang Y, Kong F (2014) Exploring the Mediation Effect of Social Support and Self-Esteem on the Relationship Between Humor Style and Life Satisfaction in Chinese College Students. *Pers Individ Differ* 64:126–130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2014.02.026>
- Zhu X, Teng L, Foti L, Yuan Y (2019) Using self-congruence theory to explain the interaction effects of brand type and celebrity type on consumer attitude formation. *J Bus Res* 103:301–309
- Zogaj A, Tschudin DK, Olk S (2021) Benefits of matching consumers' personality: Creating perceived trustworthiness via actual self-congruence and perceived competence via ideal self-congruence. *Psychol Mark* 38(3):416–430. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21439>

## Author contributions

MG conceived and designed the research, conducted data collection and analysis, drafted the manuscript, analysed and interpreted the data, and participated in critical revisions.

AB significantly contributed to the research design, provided crucial intellectual input, participated in manuscript writing, and played a key role in revisions. Both authors approved the final version of the manuscript for submission.

## Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

## Ethical approval

The procedures used in this study adhere to the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. The corresponding author obtained permission to conduct the study. The research was carried out in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration guidelines and has been reviewed by the Ethical Committee of Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology (TIEC/EC/2022-16). Informed consents were obtained from participants prior to the survey to ensure respondents had a good understanding of the study objectives.

## Informed consent

The survey was conducted upon informed consent previously gained from participants, who agreed to provide data for data analysis for this study. We informed each respondent of their rights and to safeguard their personal information.

## Additional information

**Supplementary information** The online version contains supplementary material available at <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03133-y>.

**Correspondence** and requests for materials should be addressed to Mukta Garg.

**Reprints and permission information** is available at <http://www.nature.com/reprints>

**Publisher's note** Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



**Open Access** This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

© The Author(s) 2024