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THE ROLE OF INFLUENCER ATTRIBUTES IN SHAPING PURCHASE PROPENSITY INTENTION BY ANALYZING THE MEDIATING IMPACT OF OPINION LEADERSHIP

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Abstract
This study examines the effect of influencer characteristics—namely information sharing, entertainment, social interaction, and reward—on customers' purchase intention in Pakistan's fashion industry with an emphasis on opinion leadership's mediating function. Social media influencers are powerful agents in marketing communication—who are informed, articulate, and trusted. The paper delves into how social media influencers impact consumer choices by uploading content and shaping the viewers' purchase intentions based on Two Step Flow Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). This study aims to fill a gap by providing insights into how influencers affect their followers' decision-making in a quickly growing market. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey was conducted with [insert number] respondents in [insert location], and data were analyzed using SPSS and Hayes' PROCESS Macro (Model 4. Findings verified opinion leadership plays a significant mediating role in relationships between influencer characteristics and purchase intention, pointing towards its central persuasive role in enhancing consumer responsiveness. Hence, research provided actionable advice for marketers and influencers to maximize content and engagement strategies to increase purchase intentions within culturally unique markets such as Pakistan.
Keywords: Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), Online Purchase Intention, Brand Trust, Digital Marketing, Consumer Behavior

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, the role of influencers on social media platforms is increasingly effective for marketing communication, where influencers—individuals with substantial followings—play a pivotal role in persuading audiences' decisions (Salhab, 2024; Ibrahim & Rasheed, 2024). The attributes of influencers, such as the rewards they offer, the entertainment value they provide, their capacity for social interaction, and effective information sharing, are critical factors that determine their impact in influencing viewer purchase decisions (Belanche et al., 2021). Attributes such as exclusive discounts or giveaways have been shown to increase viewer engagement by offering immediate, tangible benefits (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Abdul, 2023). Similarly, the entertainment value provided by influencers through engaging content can significantly enhance the viewer experience, leading to higher levels of brand recall and purchase intention (Sasmita et al., 2015; Khan, 2018; Nkegbe & Abor, 2023). Social interaction, another key attribute, allows influencers to foster a perception of belonging and community among their followers, which can foster trust and loyalty (Li & Bernoff, 2011; Mirakhor, 2021; Thanh & Sahadewo, 2024). Information sharing further empowers consumers by providing them with valuable product insights and usage knowledge, enabling more informed purchasing decisions (Fakhreddin & Foroudi, 2022; Sujraittanonta, 2021; Oussama & Oluyede, 2022; Zafar et al., 2022; Ngo, 2023).

While these attributes undoubtedly play a role in shaping viewer behavior, their effectiveness is often moderated by the presence of opinion leadership (Ferberg et al., 2011; Asif et al., 2017; Faik, 2023; Samuel, 2023; Feng & Tang, 2024). Opinion leaders are typically more informed, articulate, and trusted individuals within a community, and they have the ability to influence or control the opinions and behaviors of others (Rogers, 2003; Khan & Wali, 2020; Abid et al., 2021; Hun et al., 2024). Hence, an influencer who is considered an opinion leader enhances the persuasive effect of rewards, entertainment,

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social interaction, and information sharing by increasing interest in the message being conveyed (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Rafique et al., 2020; Pacillo, 2022). Opinion leadership also helps create deeper credibility for an influencer's recommendations by acting as a bridge between the influencer's content and the audience's behavior. When influencers are perceived as credible experts, their persuasive power increases significantly—magnifying trust, engagement, and ultimately, purchase intention (Ferberg et al., 2011; Safdar & Malik, 2020; Margolis & Calderon, 2021; Qaiser et al., 2021; Bozic & Bozic, 2025). Thus, opinion leadership plays a crucial mediating role, strengthening the effectiveness of influencer attributes and driving behavioral outcomes.

The focus of this research paper is specifically on the clothing industry. Influencers often create visually appealing content through Instagram reels, YouTube videos, or TikToks and showcase clothing through engaging styling tips, brand collaborations, and fashion hauls. Such content creators are seeing a rise in popularity due to heightened interest in clothing, particularly among younger demographics who seek inspiration and authenticity in fashion choices (Edward, 2022; Yasir et al., 2021; William & Lipman, 2021; Asim et al., 2021; Siddique et al., 2025; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Jin et al., 2019; McQuarrie et al., 2013). This trust stems from the influencer's perceived authenticity and relatability, both of which are linked to their core attributes and their position as opinion leaders.

The research aims to delve into how attributes of influencers—namely, reward, entertainment, social interaction, and information sharing—affect viewer purchase propensity intention (Fakhreddin & Foroudi, 2022; Elahi et al., 2021; Khalid et al., 2025). Moreover, this research aims to provide deeper insights into how influencer attributes impact opinion leadership and, in turn, purchase propensity, particularly within the socio-cultural framework of Pakistan—a setting that remains underexplored in existing literature (Abbas et al., 2021; Ali et al., 2020; Hassan et al., 2016). It is essential to investigate this topic within Pakistan because consumer behavior here is deeply rooted in cultural values, economic constraints, and regional preferences, which may influence how influencer content is perceived. By drawing upon established theories in marketing and consumer behavior, this study ensures the theoretical robustness of its framework and demonstrates its applicability to Pakistan's social media landscape (Bukhari et al., 2025; Asif et al., 2023; Belanche et al., 2021).

Importantly, the research includes opinion leadership as a mediating variable, which provides insights regarding how influencer characteristics are converted into behavioral intentions. Sardar (2024) highlighted an important gap regarding the understanding of the joint role of variables in literature. The aforementioned study explored the influence of individual influencer traits, including source credibility and content features, on consumer engagement and purchase intention. Furthermore, they stressed that the moderating role of product involvement in fashion content is underexplored. This thesis directly addresses that gap by combining several influencer characteristics—namely, informativeness, entertainment, social interaction, and perceived rewards—to test their combined effect on consumer propensity intention.

Focusing on the fashion industry in Pakistan, this study rectifies methodological flaws that occur in isolated variable analysis. Numerous past studies point out the prevalence of misleading content that is false or distorted. Bertaglia (2024) highlighted the important cross-national differences in influencer self-disclosure behaviors. The research stressed that cultural and legal contexts contribute significantly to how trustworthy influencer communication is perceived. Their research calls for country-specific studies, such as this one, which investigates the distinct sociocultural and economic context of Pakistan.

The theoretical analysis utilizes the framework of the Two-Step Flow Theory (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955), which posits that media effects are mediated indirectly through opinion leaders who interpret content and shape their followers' attitudes and choices within their social circles. Additionally, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) is used alongside the Two-Step Flow Theory to describe how consumer acceptance and usage may differ when influencer content is perceived as fun and enjoyable. Through the two theories, this study provides a foundation for understanding how influencer content satisfies consumer motivations, ultimately enhancing opinion leadership and purchase propensity.

The findings of this study will help understand how influencer messages are interpreted locally. Additionally, this paper provides insights into how influencers can optimize their influencer attributes, mediated by opinion leadership, to increase propensity intention among their Pakistani audience, where numerous factors play a role in shaping a viewer's likelihood to buy a product, service, or good.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
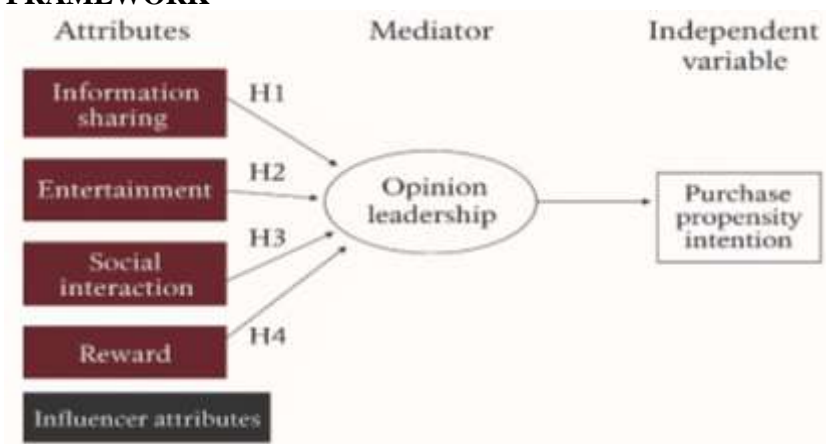
LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

INFORMATION SHARING AND PROPENSITY INTENTION: A PROCESS MEDIATED BY OPINION LEADERSHIP

Information sharing is the act of distributing or exchanging information between individuals, groups, or organizations. Influencers have become pathways allowing viewers to interact with brands (Vale et al., 2018). The number of followers raises an influencer's perceived opinion leadership (De Veirman et al., 2017), hence they act as intermediaries (Kip, 2014). Purchase propensity intention refers to the likelihood of a viewer engaging in a specific buying behavior, based on perceptions through informational influences (Kim et al., 2008), and loyal viewers pass on these leaders' knowledge within their social circles. Influencers play a central role in between brands and consumers by providing information such as product details, reviews, and styling tips (Sudha & Sheena, 2017), brands benefit from the rapid dissemination of opinions leveraging electronic word-of-mouth (Chantamas et al., 2020). Key opinion leaders increase product diffusion by leveraging credibility and knowledge, especially for new products (Chen et al., 2024; De Veirman et al., 2017). They collaborate with brands online, sharing experiences that motivate purchase decisions (Tajvidi et al., 2020). Therefore, opinion leadership is proposed to mediate the relationship between information sharing and purchase propensity intention.

Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Opinion leadership mediates the relationship between information sharing and propensity intention.

ENTERTAINMENT AND PROPENSITY INTENTION: A MEDIATED PROCESS BY OPINION LEADERSHIP

Entertainment delivered by influencers includes engaging visuals, storytelling, humor, or music that captures and retains audience attention (Sreen et al., 2020). Entertaining content increases brand recall and emotional connection, fostering a favorable environment for purchase decisions (Sasmita & Mohd Suki, 2015). Studies confirm that entertainment positively impacts viewers' attitudes toward brands and enhances their intention to purchase (Rodrigues et al., 2022). By blending marketing with enjoyable content, influencers can reduce viewer resistance to advertising and increase message acceptance (Holt et al., 2020). Entertainment content strengthens opinion leadership by making influencers more relatable, trustworthy, and enjoyable to follow (Kaur et al., 2020). Influencers who entertain effectively become opinion leaders whose recommendations carry more weight and result in greater purchase intention among followers (De Veirman et al., 2017). According to Wu (2022), entertaining influencers hold higher credibility and trustworthiness, essential traits of opinion leadership.

Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Opinion leadership mediates the relationship between entertainment and propensity intention.

SOCIAL INTERACTION AND PROPENSITY INTENTION: A MEDIATED PROCESS BY OPINION LEADERSHIP

Information sharing, the act of distributing, disseminating, or exchanging information, knowledge, or data between individuals, groups of people, or organizations. There are current theories of communication focused on opinion leadership. Namely, the two-step flow of communication theory. Opinion leadership in online social networks maintains that opinion leaders might no longer be dependent on information offered by the media if they have access to first-hand information (Brüggemann et al., 2020). Influencers' perceived

popularity (e.g., follower counts) raises their opinion leadership status, making them trusted sources of product information (De Veirman et al., 2017). These micro-celebrities provide reviews, styling tips, and product knowledge that bridge brands and consumers, facilitating information flow and shaping purchase decisions (Sudha & Sheena, 2017). Opinion leaders interpret and amplify media messages, serving as trusted intermediaries whose recommendations strongly affect their followers' attitudes and purchase intentions (Kip, 2014; Hepp, 2019). Limited research exists on how opinion leadership behaviors affect knowledge sharing and purchase behavior (Chen et al., 2024; De Veirman et al., 2017). Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Opinion leadership mediates the relationship between information sharing and propensity intention.

REWARD AND PROPENSITY INTENTION: A MEDIATED PROCESS BY OPINION LEADERSHIP

Karlinda et al. (2023) highlight that rewards not only incentivize viewers but also reinforce the role of opinion leaders, as individuals are more likely to follow and trust influencers who provide tangible benefits. These rewards enhance the credibility of influencers (Lee & Choi, 2010). Opinion leadership plays a crucial mediating role between incentives and consumer behavior outcomes, including propensity intention (Jegham & Bouzaabia, 2022). Opinion leaders who received rewards were more likely to share information and provide entertainment, leading to increased viewer engagement and loyalty (Ardley et al., 2022). Al-Nasser & Mahomed (2020) emphasized that rewards can enhance an individual's credibility, trust, and persuasive power. Consumers are likely to follow Social Media Influencers' (SMIs) purchase recommendations. SMIs act as opinion leaders and can influence their followers' purchasing decisions by sharing their reviews on brands and products and by providing them with some rewards (Nadzri et al., 2024). Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Opinion leadership mediates the relationship between reward and propensity intention.

METHODOLOGY

PROCEDURES AND PARTICIPANTS

Data was collected from a target population consisting of Pakistani females' 16 and above (from Lahore's educational institutions or workplace). They had been actively engaging with influencers through interactions of reward, entertainment, information sharing, and social interaction enhancing the authenticity of the responses collected. Questionnaires were posted online through a link using one of the most recent questionnaire tools, Google Forms. This method guaranteed minimal interference by the researcher. Respondents included online shoppers and social media users. Non-probability selection processes and purposive sampling techniques were used. Non-probability purposive sampling aimed to reach active consumers who were well versed in influencer marketing within the clothing industry. Sample size was selected according to Kline (2015), i.e. the formula of number of items in the questionnaires was multiplied with 10 respondents from the target population i.e. (Total number of items in the questionnaire $\times$ 10 respondents from targeted population). A sample size of 250 participants was adequate to analyze the research model and generalize its findings through consumers with exposure to influencer-driven fashion marketing, particularly those purchasing from mid-range brands.

Unit of analysis refers to the phenomenon that a researcher is studying and collecting data on in a research project. It is the basic entity that is being analyzed. The research focused on individuals. Responses were collected from students, employees or even parents. Young women provide their experiences in a more improved manner and are adaptable towards various variables. Each female viewer has a different choice and intends to purchase different clothing items, which shows that every woman exhibits individuality in belief and preferences. Moreover, this approach achieved genuine findings and results because of responses obtained from diverse groups.

The study employed systematic tools to gather quantifiable data, which was subsequently analyzed through statistical mediation analysis with Hayes' PROCESS Model 4 in SPSS. This model was used due to its ability to examine indirect effects and determine the significance of mediating pathways. The identities of the respondents were not revealed for confidentiality and reducing bias. A significant majority of respondents (61.6%) are within the 18-24 age range, indicating that the sample is largely comprised of younger individuals. This trend implies that the study holds considerable relevance for students or those in the early stages of their careers. The 16-17 age group accounts for (20.8%) of the respondents, representing a significant segment of slightly older individuals who possess greater work experience or higher education. There is a marked decline in representation within the 25-34 age range, which constitutes only 15.2% of the sample, followed by an even lesser percentage in the 35-44 category (1.2%). Finally, the 45-54 age group accounts for (0.4%) and 55-64

age group accounts for (0.8%) of the total respondents, further emphasizing those older individuals are underrepresented in this sample. These findings suggest that the insights derived from the study are primarily applicable to younger populations, with limited involvement from older age groups. Regarding the participants marital status, 10.8% were married, 86.3% were single, 0.4% were divorced, 1.2% were widowed, and 1.2% from others. In terms of participants of active users, 86.4% were active users and 10.8% were not active users.

MEASURES

INFORMATION SHARING

Four measures were taken from Piehler (2019), each measure a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The value 1 will represent 'strongly disagree' ranging all the way up to 5 representing 'strongly agree'. They were used to measure viewers' motivation to engage with SMIs' channels. Motivation to engage with SMI's channels was viewed including information sharing with the item "*The channels of [SMI] help me to learn about useful information*".

ENTERTAINMENT

Taken from Piehler (2019), Entertainment was measured by a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, to measure viewers' motivation to engage with SMIs' channels. The value 1 will represent 'strongly disagree' ranging all the way up to 5 representing 'strongly agree'. The item asks the viewers the extent to which they are effected by influencers' provided entertainment. The item is, *"The channels of [SMI] are fun to watch or read.*

SOCIAL INTERACTION

Four measures including Social Interaction were taken from Piehler (2019), each measure a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The value 1 will represent 'strongly disagree' ranging all the way up to 5 representing 'strongly agree'. Social Interaction measured viewers' motivation to engage with SMIs' channels. The item asks the viewers the extent to which they appreciate social interaction on influencer channels. The item is, "I believe chat among like-minded people on the channels of [SMI] is a nice thing".

REWARD

Reward measure was taken from Piehler (2019). The measure is a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, used to measure viewers' motivation to engage with SMIs' channels. The value 1 will represent 'strongly disagree' ranging all the way up to 5 representing 'strongly agree'. The item asks the viewers the extent to which they get advantages through an influencer which others may not have. The item is, *"The channels of [SMI] offer me advantages that others do not have"*.

PROPENSITY INTENTION

Viewer's propensity intention is measured by 3 items (Liqin Wen et al, 2024) asking viewers the extent to which they find the products and services on an influencer's platform appealing. The item is, *"The items recommended by this live streaming platform are worth buying "*.

OPINION LEADERSHIP

Viewer's opinion leadership measured by 6 items (Casaló.,et al 2020) ask the viewers the extent to which they find the products and services on an influencer's platform appealing. The item is *"Instagram influencers serves as a model for others"*.

RESULTS

DATA ANALYSIS APPROACH

SPSS was used for descriptive statistics, reliability assessment, correlational analysis. The core mediation framework was tested using Hayes' PROCESS Macro (Model 4). The empirical data was statistically analyzed using a two-step procedure. Process macros are the recommended technique to test the indirect and conditional effects.

MEASUREMENT VALIDATION

The reliability of each construct was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with a threshold of 0.70 deemed acceptable (Nunnally, 1978). Values exceeding 0.80 were interpreted as evidence of strong internal consistency. Direct and indirect effects of guerrilla marketing on brand image were evaluated. The bootstrap method (5,000 resamples) was employed to generate bias-corrected confidence intervals (95%) to determine the significance of mediation paths. Mediation was considered present if the confidence interval for the indirect effect did not contain zero. This structured, quantitative approach enabled the researchers to assess both the direct impact of information sharing, entertainment, social interaction and reward and the extent to which opinion leadership explained its influence on propensity intention.

Table 1: Reliability of Scales

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach's α value	Level of Reliability
Information Sharing	4	0.748	Acceptable
Entertainment	4	0.771	Good
Social Interaction	4	0.774	Good
Reward	4	0.776	Good
Opinion Leadership	6	.713	Acceptable
Propensity Intention	3	.854	Very Good

As shown in Table 1, all six constructs in the study—Information Sharing, Entertainment, Social Interaction, Reward, Opinion Leadership, and Propensity Intention—demonstrated acceptable to very good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.713 to 0.854. These results confirm the consistent measurement of each construct and reinforce the reliability of the instruments used.

The findings indicate internal consistency, with Propensity Intention showing the highest reliability ($α = 0.854$). These values validate the measurement quality and affirm that the constructs are suitable for further analysis. The results confirm that the data collected is robust and suitable for drawing meaningful conclusions.

CORRELATION MATRIX

Table 2 presents the correlation matrix of the study variables. , The table shows Pearson correlation coefficients (r) to illustrate the strength and direction of relationships between them based on Pearson correlation coefficients (r), which range from -1 to +1, which is ranging from perfect negative to perfect positive with 0 have no correlation. This preliminary analysis establishes the strength and direction of relationships between constructs and supports subsequent hypothesis testing.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix of Variables

Correlations						
Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1. Information sharing	1					
2. Entertainment	.468**	1				
3. Social Interaction	.489**	.479**	1			
4. Reward	.459**	.388**	.492**	1		
5. Propensity Intention	.422**	.352**	.505**	.562**	1	
6. Opinion Leadership	.501**	.499**	.535**	.518**	.449**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis reveals moderate to strong positive relationships among all variables. Information Sharing is moderately positively correlated with Entertainment ($r = .468, p < .01$), Social Interaction ($r = .489, p < .01$), Reward ($r = .459, p < .01$), and Opinion Leadership ($r = .501, p < .01$). Entertainment also shows significant positive correlations with Social Interaction ($r = .479, p < .01$), Reward ($r = .388, p < .01$), Propensity Intention ($r = .352, p < .01$), and Opinion Leadership ($r = .499, p < .01$). Similarly, Reward exhibits strong positive relationships with Social Interaction ($r = .492, p < .01$), Propensity Intention ($r = .562, p < .01$), and Opinion Leadership ($r = .518, p < .01$). Social Interaction also correlates positively with Propensity Intention ($r = .505, p < .01$) and Opinion Leadership ($r = .535, p < .01$). Lastly, Propensity Intention is positively associated with Opinion Leadership ($r = .449, p < .01$). The strongest correlations observed are between Reward and Propensity Intention ($r = .562$), Social Interaction and Opinion Leadership ($r = .535$), and Social Interaction and Propensity Intention ($r = .505$). All relationships are statistically significant, affirming the interconnectedness of the constructs under study and providing preliminary support for the proposed hypotheses.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING

MEDIATION ANALYSIS RESULTS USING HAYES PROCESS MACRO

Mediation analyses were conducted using Hayes' PROCESS Macro (Model 4), with 1,000 bootstrap samples and 95% confidence intervals to test both direct and indirect effects. In each model, one of the independent variables (Information Sharing, Entertainment, Social Interaction, or Reward) was tested for its influence on Propensity Intention through the mediating role of Opinion Leadership.

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Table 3

Results of Model 4

Y = Propensity Intention
M= Opinion Leadership
X = Information Sharing

Predictor	Outcome= Opinion leadership					
	(coeff)	(SE)	(t)	(p)	(LLCI)	(ULCI)
Constant	0.4807	.6360	11.7623	0.0000	6.2280	8.7333
Information Sharing	.7277	.0798	9.1147	0.0000	.5705	.8850
Predictor	Outcome= Propensity Intention					
	(coeff)	(SE)	(t)	(p)	(LLCI)	(ULCI)
Constant	.3480	.3665	9.1358	0.0000	2.6262	4.0698
Information Sharing	.1764	.0426	4.1422	0.0000	.0925	.2603
Opinion Leadership	.1464	.0293	4.9943	0.0000	.0887	.2042

Total effect model

DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y

Direct effect of X on Y

	Effect	(SE)	(t)	(p)	(LLCI)	(ULCI)
	.1764	.0426	4.1422	0.0000	.0925	.2603

Indirect effect of X on Y

	Effect	(Boot SE)	(Boot LLCI)	(Boot ULCI)
	.1065	.0301	.0521	.1688

Table 4

Results of Model 4
Y = Propensity Intention
M= Opinion Leadership
X = Entertainment

Predictor	Outcome = Opinion leadership					
	(coeff)	(SE)	(t)	(p)	(LLCI)	(ULCI)
Constant	0.5410	.6324	11.9250	0.0000	6.2955	8.7865
Entertainment	.7057	.0778	9.0728	0.0000	.5525	.8589
Predictor	Outcome = Propensity Intention					
	(coeff)	(SE)	(t)	(p)	(LLCI)	(ULCI)
Constant	.5513	.3731	9.5179	0.0000	2.8164	4.2862
Entertainment	.1107	.0422	2.6209	0.0093	.0275	.1973
Opinion Leadership	.1682	.0299	5.6299	0.0000	.1093	.2270

Total effect model

Direct effect of X on Y

	Effect	(SE)	(t)	(p)	(LLCI)	(ULCI)
	.1187	.0422	2.6209	.0093	.0275	.1938

Indirect effect of X on Y

	Effect	(Boot SE)	(Boot LLCI)	(Boot ULCI)
	.1187	.0327	.0607	.1874

The results from Model 4 reveal that Information Sharing has a significant positive effect on Opinion Leadership (β = 0.7277, p < 0.001), indicating that higher levels of Information Sharing foster stronger Opinion Leadership. Opinion Leadership, in turn, significantly predicts Propensity Intention (β = 0.1464, p < 0.001), while Information Sharing also directly influences Propensity Intention (β = 0.1764, p < 0.001). The mediation analysis confirms a significant indirect effect of Information Sharing on Propensity Intention through Opinion Leadership (Effect = 0.1065, Boot SE = 0.0301, Boot LLCI = 0.0521, Boot ULCI = 0.1688). These findings demonstrate that Information Sharing affects Propensity Intention both directly and partially through Opinion Leadership, emphasizing the crucial role of opinion leaders in driving consumer intentions related to influencer marketing.

In the mediation models, Entertainment exhibits a significant positive effect on Opinion Leadership (β = 0.7057, p < 0.001), indicating that greater entertainment enhances opinion leadership. Both Entertainment (β = 0.1107, p < 0.0093) and Opinion Leadership (β = 0.1682, p < 0.001) significantly predict Propensity Intention. The total effect of Entertainment on Propensity Intention remains significant (β = 0.1107, p < 0.001), encompassing direct and indirect pathways. The indirect effect through Opinion Leadership is also significant (Effect = 0.1187, Boot SE = 0.0325, Boot LLCI = 0.0607, Boot ULCI = 0.1874), suggesting partial mediation. These findings demonstrate that entertainment affects Propensity Intention both directly and partially through Opinion Leadership, emphasizing the crucial role of opinion leaders in driving consumer intentions related to influencer marketing.

Table 5

Results of Model 4						
Y = Propensity Intention						
M= Opinion Leadership						
X = Social interaction						
Predictor	Outcome= Opinion Leadership					
	(coeff)	(SE)	(t)	(p)	(LLCI)	(ULCI)
Constant	0.2576	.6064	11.9676	0.0000	6.0632	8.4520
Social interaction	.6773	.0680	9.9597	0.0000	.5433	.8112
Predictor	Outcome= Propensity Intention					
	(coeff)	(SE)	(t)	(p)	(LLCI)	(ULCI)
Constant	.2433	.3488	9.2990	0.0000	2.5564	3.9303
Social interaction	.2166	.0368	5.8797	0.0000	.1441	.2892
Opinion Leadership	.1159	.0291	3.9844	0.0001	.0586	.1731
	Total effect model					
DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y						
Direct effect of X on Y						
	Effect	(SE)	(t)	(p)	(LLCI)	(ULCI)
	.2166	.0368	5.8797	0.0000	.1441	.2892
Indirect effect of X on Y						
	Effect	(Boot SE)	(Boot LLCI)	(Boot ULCI)		
	.0785	.0278	.0283	.1381		

In the mediation models, social interaction exhibits a significant positive effect on Opinion Leadership (β = 0.6773, p < 0.001), indicating that greater social interaction enhances opinion leadership. Both Social interaction (β = 0.2166, p < 0.001) and Opinion Leadership (β = 0.1159, p < 0.001) significantly predict Propensity Intention. The total effect of social interaction on Propensity Intention remains significant (β = 0.2166, p < 0.001), encompassing direct and indirect pathways. The indirect effect through Opinion Leadership is also significant (Effect = 0.0785, Boot SE = 0.0278, Boot LLCI = 0.0283, Boot ULCI = 0.1381), suggesting partial mediation. These findings demonstrate that social interaction affects Propensity Intention both directly and partially through Opinion Leadership, emphasizing the crucial role of opinion leaders in driving consumer intentions related to influencer marketing.

Table 6

Results of Model 4

Y = Propensity Intention
M= Opinion Leadership
X = Reward

Predictor	Outcome= Opinion leadership					
	(coeff)	(SE)	(t)	(p)	(LLCI)	(ULCI)
Constant	0.8788	.6707	10.2556	0.0000	5.5577	8.1998
Reward	.6735	.0707	9.5295	0.0000	.5343	.8127

Predictor	Outcome= Propensity Intention					
	(coeff)	(SE)	(t)	(p)	(LLCI)	(ULCI)
Constant	.8299	.3488	8.1123	0.0000	2.1428	3.5170
Reward	.2702	.0360	7.5055	0.0000	.1993	.3411
Opinion Leadership	.0997	.0277	3.6027	0.0004	.0452	.1542

Total effect model

DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y

Direct effect of X on Y

	Effect	(SE)	(t)	(p)	(LLCI)	(ULCI)
	.2702	.0360	7.5055	0.0000	.1993	.3411

Indirect effect of X on Y

	Effect	(Boot SE)	(Boot LLCI)	(Boot ULCI)
	.0671	.0266	.0170	.1218

In the mediation models, Reward exhibits a significant positive effect on Opinion Leadership (β = 0.6735, p < 0.001), indicating that greater reward enhances opinion leadership. Both reward (β = 0.2702, p < 0.001) and Opinion Leadership (β = 0.0997, p < 0.001) significantly predict Propensity Intention. The total effect of reward on Propensity Intention remains significant (β = 0.2702, p < 0.001), encompassing direct and indirect pathways. The indirect effect through Opinion Leadership is also significant (Effect = 0.0671, Boot SE = 0.0266, Boot LLCI = 0.0170, Boot ULCI = 0.1218), suggesting partial mediation. These findings demonstrate that reward affects Propensity Intention both directly and partially through Opinion Leadership, emphasizing the crucial role of opinion leaders in driving consumer intentions related to influencer marketing.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the mediation model show that information sharing has a positive direct impact on propensity intention (β = 0.1764, t = 4.1422, 95% CI [0.0925, 0.2603], p < 0.001), confirming Hypothesis 1 (H1). The indirect effect of information sharing via opinion leadership was also significant (β = 0.1065, 95% CI [0.0521, 0.1688]), showing partial mediation and verifying the hypothesis. Additionally, entertainment had a direct significant effect on propensity intention (β = 0.1107, t = 2.6209, 95% CI [0.0275, 0.1938], p < 0.01), supporting Hypothesis 2 (H2). The indirect effect via opinion leadership (β = 0.1187, 95% CI [0.0607, 0.1874]) was also positive and significant, indicating partial mediating effect. For social interaction, the effect on propensity intention was direct and significant (β = 0.2166, t = 5.8797, 95% CI [0.1441, 0.2892], p < 0.001), validating Hypothesis 3 (H3). Moreover, the mediation effect through opinion leadership (β = 0.0785, 95% CI [0.0283, 0.1381]) was also statistically significant, validating the mediating role. Moreover, reward showed the greatest direct influence on propensity intention (β = 0.2702, t = 7.5055, 95% CI [0.1993, 0.3411], p < 0.001), thus confirming Hypothesis 4 (H4). Indirect influence via opinion leadership (β = 0.0671, 95% CI [0.0170, 0.1218]) was also significant, confirming partial mediation. Overall, the findings support all the

hypotheses that have been put forward and emphasize the important mediating function of opinion leadership between influencer qualities and intention to buy in the online fashion market of Pakistan.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Focused contextually on Pakistan's cultural and economic the key theoretical contribution of this study is the application of the Two-Step Flow Theory (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955) and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) to influencer marketing. This research extends the models by demonstrating how influencers act as digital opinion leaders, amplifying the effects of influencer attributes, consumers development of behavioural intentions to purchase products based on their engagement with influencers thereby influencing consumer purchase decisions. Aligned with previous research, it reinforces that digital engagement is an essential factor in marketing success. Trust and interaction with digital figures play a pivotal role in consumer decision-making. Comparing digital influencers with traditional marketing agents highlighted the changing nature of consumer interaction, and offered a new interpretation of theories on consumer trust and decision-making. The study explains how the personal bond and perceived credibility of an influencer can increase opinion leadership, and influence consumer intent (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Freberg et al., 2011; Lou, 2019). A critical contribution is the insight into how influencers can enhance their persuasive impact, if perceived as credible. It reinforces the importance of authenticity in influencer-brand collaborations (Freberg et al., 2011; Casaló et al., 2020). Social interaction theory and consumer trust are integrated emphasizing how influencers create a sense of community that fosters brand loyalty (De Veirman et al., 2017; Lou, 2019). A framework for the interplay of influencer attributes, opinion leadership, and purchase intent, analyzing how these factors work together, and laying a foundation for future studies on influencer marketing effectiveness is discussed. Marketers can leverage insights to optimize strategies, increase influencer collaboration visibility and audience engagement (Sasmita & Mohd Suki, 2015).

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Brands can refine digital marketing efforts to increase trust and purchase intention among consumers by engaging with influencers who produce culturally specific content (fashion hauls and styling tutorials) on platforms such as Instagram. Content reflecting local tastes and humour leads to increased intentions to buy. Social interaction's role in influencer marketing creates a community by influencers highly interactive with their followers—via live sessions and direct replies. Companies need to urge influencers to communicate since audience participation enhances brand-consumer relationship. The research also shows the importance of reward-based marketing in economies like Pakistan. Discounts, giveaways, and special promotions by influencers increase audience engagement; brands need to design reward-based campaigns to match consumer expectations. Campaigns are valuable, relevant incentives to the target audience. In addition, brands need to collaborate with knowledgeable who masses consider industry experts. They are great assets for campaigns and the reputation of influencers as 'experts' can be maximized if strategies are localized. In a cultural and economic context, Pakistani consumers are different from western consumers, valuing authenticity and word-of-mouth over mass media. Companies need to arrange influencer campaigns that resonate with economic conditions and audience wishes to achieve greater engagement. Lastly, companies need to monitor performance metrics and readjust strategies to remain competitive and identify influencers who bring maximum ROI. Data-driven insights and AI-based analytics can be used to gauge the efficacy of influencer partnerships.

LIMITATIONS

Although the study offers valuable insights, several limitations should be considered. First, the research focuses exclusively on Pakistani female social media users aged 18–45, particularly in fashion-related influencer marketing. Therefore, findings may not generalize to other demographics, including men or different age groups. Second, the use of a cross-sectional design restricts the ability to establish causal relationships or observe changes in consumer behavior over time. Third, data were collected through self-reported questionnaires, which may be prone to response biases such as social desirability or misinterpretation of questions. desirability or misinterpretation of questions. The study uses purposive sampling which focuses on the demographic of Pakistani women who are active users of social media. Hence the findings cannot be generalized to other demographics not active users of social media.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research may explore ethical concerns in influencer marketing, particularly regarding transparency, paid partnership disclosure, and consumer manipulation. Lack of transparency may significantly affect consumer trust. Additionally, studies can investigate the psychological impact of influencers on young consumers—such as impulse buying, unrealistic beauty standards, and materialism—and how these affect consumer well-being and decisions. Research could also examine how cultural values and norms shape

responses to influencer marketing. In collectivist cultures like Pakistan, opinion leaders may influence purchasing behavior more strongly than in individualistic societies. A longitudinal design may offer deeper insights into how influencer traits shape social media trends and evolving consumer perceptions, which may in turn influence customer loyalty. Lastly, future work can explore cultural views on rewards and incentives in influencer marketing. Some cultures may see giveaways or discounts as trust-building, while others may perceive them as inauthentic.

CONCLUSION

This research explores the relationship between opinion leadership, influencer marketing, and propensity intention in the context of Pakistani female consumers in the fashion industry. Examining the mediating role of opinion leadership between information sharing, entertainment, social interaction, and rewards, this study extends theoretical frameworks and contributes to the literature on social media influence and consumer behaviour. As brands increasingly rely on digital influencers to shape consumer perceptions and drive purchases, the findings offer valuable insights for marketers. Understanding how opinion leaders mediate consumer engagement can help businesses refine influencer marketing strategies to foster trust and encourage purchase intentions. Additionally, the study highlights the need for brands to align influencer marketing with cultural and ethical considerations, especially in markets where consumer trust is crucial. With the rise of social media-driven commerce, businesses must adapt by integrating influencer marketing as a strategic tool for customer engagement. As digital interactions evolve, the role of opinion leaders in shaping preferences and brand loyalty will remain significant. By leveraging authentic, socially connected, and incentive-driven influencer marketing, businesses can build stronger relationships and achieve long-term consumer engagement.

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