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## THE IMPACT OF INFLUENCER MARKETING ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF TRUST, CONTENT, CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT, AND POPULARITY

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### ABSTRACT

This report focuses on the effect of Influencer Marketing on Purchase Intention and how major mediators (Trust, Content Quality, Consumer Engagement, and Popularity) increase the relationship. Based on Smart PLS (structural equation modeling, SEM) and 300 social media users the results show Influencer Marketing significantly influences Purchase Intention directly. Additionally, the mediators of Trust and Content Quality are also among the most crucial ones to increase the influence of influencer marketing based on how valuable real and quality content is in driving sales. As well, there are also Consumer Engagement and Popularity, Engagement helping to strengthen consumer connections, and Popularity promoting the reach of advertisements. The model reflects a big chunk of the variance in Purchase Intention, so it can be useful for marketers. According to these results, brands should focus on influencers who can create trustworthy, viral content and earn trust with their followers in order to optimize influencer marketing campaigns. This study adds to the growing literature on digital marketing strategies and has real-world applications for companies looking to leverage social media influencers.

**Keywords:** Influencer Marketing, Trust, Content Quality, Consumer Engagement, Popularity, Purchase Intention, Digital Marketing, Social Media, Consumer Behavior

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

Influencer marketing is fast becoming a big deal in digital marketing and forming a crucial part of customer behavior. Instead of conventional advertising, in which celebrity endorsements are distant and cold, social media influencers build real connections with their followers through ongoing, immediate engagement on Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, etc. These influencers are the people that have developed a large following, not because they are celebrities, but because they are reliable, relatable, and have knowledge about their specific niches like fashion, beauty, fitness, or gaming (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017). That is what makes influencer marketing as effective as it takes advantage of the perceived transparency and trust given by influencers to their followers. These relationships have a power structure thanks to the parasocial relationships that users build with influencers — one-to-one connections between followers and the influencer, even if they never exchange physical hands. This trust and engagement enables influencers to endorse the product in a more natural way and generate greater interest and buy intent (Audrezet, de Kerviler, & Moulard, 2018). As influencers can more humanise brands by transforming products into part of the lives of consumers, this makes them persuasive marketers, as consumers increasingly distrust ads and explicit brand pitches (Brown & Hayes, 2023). It has now made influencer marketing one of the most powerful tools for brands who want to get in front of digital consumers in a true and meaningful way and is now an integral part of modern marketing practices.

### **1.2 Research Problem**

While influencer marketing is becoming more widespread in the online space, the exact process through which influencers generate consumer intent to buy remains unexplored. Although many research have elucidated the overall impact of influencer marketing, these studies are rarely in-depth on the underlying factors that mediate the effect (Chapple & Cownie, 2017). Influencer marketing isn't the influencer or their promotion alone; a number of critical factors shape its influence on the behaviour of consumers. Specifically, trust, quality of content, consumer engagement, and influencer popularity are thought to play key roles in how effective is an influencer campaign in turning consumer interest into purchase. But few studies have consistently investigated the relationship between these variables and consumer choices. This literature gap represents an urgent need for a deeper dive into these mediators, because knowing what their function is can help brands understand better how to hone their influencer marketing to create more effective campaigns. This study, therefore, attempts to fill this void by exploring the effect of trust, quality of content, engagement and popularity on influencer marketing and purchase intent. This in-depth analysis will make the study an essential part of a larger picture of the effectiveness of influencer marketing that will give marketers practical advice for their campaigns.

### 1.3 Research Objectives

- To explore the direct relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention.
- To assess the mediating roles of trust, content quality, consumer engagement, and popularity in influencing consumer purchase decisions.
- To offer actionable insights for marketers to optimize their influencer marketing campaigns for better engagement and purchase conversion.

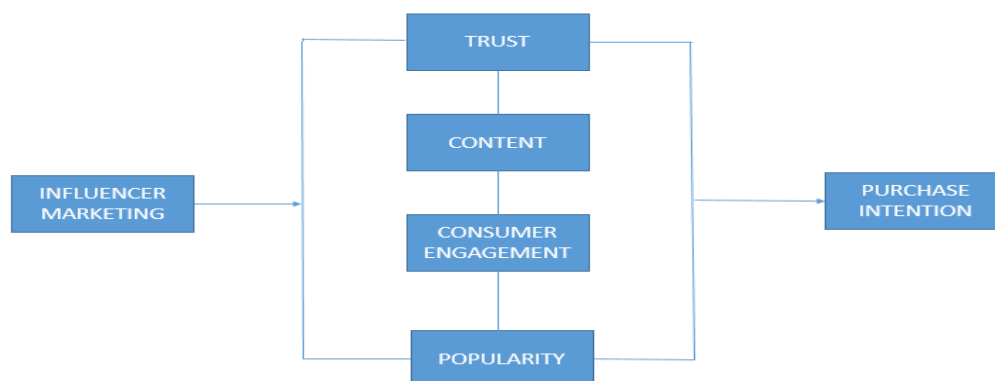
### 1.4 Research Questions

- What is the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention?
- How do trust, content quality, consumer engagement, and influencer popularity mediate this relationship?
- How can brands improve their influencer marketing strategies to increase consumer purchase intention?

### 1.5 Significance of the Study

The research results are of great importance for research and practice as well as for academia in the digital marketing sector. As a research paper, it's intended to push the theoretical discussion into the mechanics of influencer marketing – in particular, how trust, content, consumer engagement and popularity intertwine to influencer strategies' success. This study will add to this growing literature by empirically exploring how these elements impact consumer decision-making, providing a more detailed perspective on influencer marketing's effect than just endorsements. Practically speaking, the findings will be useful for marketers and brand managers wanting to better leverage their influencer campaigns. With a clear understanding of which factors (e.g., trustworthiness or content quality) play the most important role in consumer decision making, marketers can better personalize campaigns to ensure consumer attention and conversions. The results will enable brands to be more strategic when choosing influencers for their campaigns and prioritize the influencers and campaigns that fit their audience's interests and habits, making their marketing efforts more efficient.

### 1.6 Conceptual framework



## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This chapter explores the current literature supporting the suggested conceptual model of Influencer Marketing and its effect on Purchase Intention using four important intermediaries – Trust, Content Quality, Consumer Engagement, and Popularity. The paper presents a summary of the leading theories and research that explores how each mediator plays a role in the shaping of consumer behavior and the impact of purchase decisions. In each section, you'll also find a hypothesis to run against the framework.

### **2.1 Influencer Marketing and Consumer Behavior**

Influencer marketing is using a user who has huge social media followers to sell something. These influencers are considered reliable sources of information, and have become deciding agents of consumer behaviour. Influencer marketing works because influencers can build credibility, trust, and connection with their followers (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017). Influencers make relevant, real-world content to their audience so that they can more persuasively endorse a product than ads.

According to the Source Credibility Theory (Hovland & Weiss, 1951), whether or not something will get said depends, in large part, on whether or not the speaker is perceived as credible – skilled and trustworthy. Influencers are seen as real and trustworthy when they can share their own experiences and give expert recommendations on a product. This confidence makes them more persuasive, and they can also affect the buying decisions of their clients.

Influencer marketing, on this model, becomes the underlying factor driving the consumer purchase decision through four intermediaries: trust, quality of content, consumer engagement and popularity. These intermediaries are all involved in determining the cumulative influence of influencer marketing on consumption.

**Hypothesis 1 (H1):** Influencer marketing has a positive impact on consumer purchase intention.

### **2.2 Trust and Its Role in Influencer Marketing**

Trust is one of the most important factors when it comes to success of an influencer marketing campaign. -It creates trust when influencers are perceived as genuine, open, and trustworthy in their content (Chapple & Cownie, 2017). Authenticity, especially, is crucial for a real connection between influencers and their audiences because customers are more inclined to take the lead from an expert.

Trust in an influencer, according to Audrezet, de Kerviler and Moulard (2018), is typically a result of the legitimacy of their recommendations. Influencers who are open about their brand endorsements and give an honest review are more likely to earn trust from followers. Trust also serves as a strong intermediary between influencer marketing and consumer intent, because consumers are more likely to buy items from influencers whom they trust (Evans et al., 2021). Trust also lends a more recognizable quality to both the influencer and the brand promoted, which makes the marketing more effective in its effectiveness.

**Hypothesis 2 (H2):** Trust positively mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention.

### **2.3 Content Quality and Its Importance in Influencer Marketing**

This is a very important aspect of content in influencer marketing because good content can really grab the customers' interest and motivate them to make a purchase. Influencers' videos, blogs, images, and posts on social media should look visually appealing, educate the reader and align with their readers' needs (Gustafsson & Khan, 2021).

Influencers who create interesting and original content have a greater chance of connecting with their followers in a way that leads to higher consumer engagement and purchase intention (Liu & Jiang, 2022). Quality content also makes the influencer appear more trustworthy, since users trust the influencer who puts in the time and effort to create good quality content. The other downside is that bad/unrelated content will destroy the influencer's reputation and ruin the marketing campaign.

Content quality serves as a channel in influencer marketing between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intent. When influencers create quality, relatable content, and people will click on the content and shop the promoted product.

**Hypothesis 3 (H3):** Content quality positively mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention.

### **2.4 Consumer Engagement in Influencer Marketing**

Customer engagement is the way in which consumers engage with the content of influencers – via likes, comments, shares and other types of active engagement. Involved customers are more likely to cultivate relationships with influencers, which in turn helps them purchase their endorsed goods (Smith et al., 2020).

**Engagement:** it tells you how well people relate to what influencers are saying. Followers who interact with content are more likely to trust the influencer and follow their advice. Evans et al. (2021) highlight that customer engagement is a good predictor of purchasing decision as consumers with engaged are more bonded to influencers and more likely to purchase the products they promote.

And in-feed elements, like polls, Q&A sessions and livestreams can further enhance engagement by enabling real-time interaction between influencers and followers. These interactions establish participation, as consumers are part of the influencer's community and can increase their intent to buy.

**Hypothesis 4 (H4):** Consumer engagement positively mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention.

### **2.5 Influence of Popularity in Influencer Marketing**

Influencer popularity, primarily measured by followers, can be very relevant and helpful to influencer marketing campaigns. Super follower's macro-influencers can disseminate the message of brand to an enlarged audience making the brand known (Schouten, Janssen, & Verspaget, 2020). But popularity isn't the key to achieving effectiveness in influencing purchase intent.

Research indicates that although macro-influencers may have a wider audience, micro-influencers — those with smaller, highly engaged followers — tend to drive more purchases. Micro-influencers also have closer connections with their audience, which results in greater trust and engagement, which can give them more influence over buying decisions (Boerman, Willemsen & Van Der Aa, 2017).

Under this model, influencer appeal acts as a middleman, impacting the marketing campaign's exposure. But its impact on buyer intent often depends on the level of trust, quality and interaction the influencer can create.

**Hypothesis 5 (H5):** Influencer popularity positively mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention.

Hypotheses:

**H1:** Influencer marketing has a positive impact on consumer purchase intention.

**H2:** Trust positively mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention.

**H3:** Content quality positively mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention.

**H4:** Consumer engagement positively mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention.

**H5:** Influencer popularity positively mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention.

## **Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This was a mixed method study with both quantitative and qualitative design. The quantitative component is a survey of social media users and the qualitative component are in-depth interviews with digital marketers. This makes it possible to study influencer marketing's impact on consumer purchase intention in a holistic manner, using the intermediaries of trust, content quality, engagement, and popularity.

### **3.2 Sampling Strategy**

For the quantitative questionnaire, 300 social media users were selected via purposive sampling. Participants had to follow at least one influencer, and to have bought something on an influencer's advice. This makes sure that the sample is comprised of people who have experience with influencer marketing. The qualitative section was 20 marketing professionals interviewed based on their experience in running influencer campaigns.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

All the data were collected quantitatively via an online survey measuring trust, content, engagement, popularity and purchase intention. Survey participants were asked to rate their experience and opinions on influencer marketing. For the qualitative part, we gathered information through lengthy interviews with the marketing professionals on how they have experienced and managed influencer marketing.

### 3.4 Research Instrument

Standard scales can be used to quantify the main variables in the conceptual picture. We can measure influencer marketing by measuring the influencer's effectiveness to promote brands and drive sales (De Veirman et al., 2017). This trust is an important factor to influence purchase intent and can be assessed based on perceived sincerity, credibility and reliability (Audrezet et al., 2018; Evans et al., 2021). It also considers the content quality of the influencer's content, which reflects on creativity, relevance, and informativeness of the content (Liu & Jiang, 2022). Consumer engagement — The amount of engagement followers experience with influencer content can be tracked through likes, comments, and shares (Smith et al., 2020). Influencer popularity is defined by the influencer's following on social media and fame (Schouten et al., 2020). Third, purchase intention, which is an outcome indicator, can be determined by estimating the probability that consumers would purchase products promoted by influencers (De Veirman et al., 2017; Evans et al., 2021). Such scales offer a powerful starting point for exploring the impact of influencer marketing and its mediating components on consumers' buying behaviours.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

We filtered the quantitative data through SEM to validate the correlations between influencer marketing and intent to purchase, as well as mediating factors trust, quality of content, consumer engagement, and popularity. The qualitative data were tasked with thematic analysis in order to uncover common themes and insights around the impact of influencer marketing.

## Chapter 4: Findings

### Measurement model

The measurement framework shows solid construct validity and reliability to make sure that the measures used in this experiment — Consumer Engagement, Content Quality, Influencer Marketing, Popularity, Purchase Intention, and Trust — are consistent and represent the concepts. Construction reliability is attested by large Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), all constructs above the criterion of 0.7, which suggests high internal consistency (Hair et al., 2010). For instance, Consumer Engagement has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.877 and CR of 0.910, while Trust has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.858 and CR of 0.898, so the tools to evaluate these constructs are robust. Convergent validity is evidenced by the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with all constructs being  $AVE > 0.50$ , in the words of Fornell and Larcker (1981). Trust, for example, has AVE 0.639, and Consumer Engagement has AVE 0.670, suggesting that the constructs account for a large portion of variance across items.

Construct Reliability and Validity				
	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT	0.877	0.883	0.910	0.670
CONTENT	0.821	0.827	0.875	0.584
INFLUENCER MARKETING	0.729	0.732	0.830	0.551
POPULARITY	0.863	0.862	0.901	0.646
PURCHASE INTENTION	0.849	0.853	0.893	0.625
TRUST	0.858	0.862	0.898	0.639

The discriminant validity, which guarantees the uniqueness of each construct, was obtained through the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). The Fornell-Larcker Criterion reveals that the square root of the AVE of each construct is greater than its correlations with other constructs and thus discriminant validity is established. For instance, the square root of the AVE for Purchase Intention is 0.791 compared to its correlations with Consumer Engagement (0.579) and Content (0.643), suggesting the uniqueness of the constructs. And, again, the HTMT are below the cutoff of 0.85 (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015), thus also proving discriminant validity. e.g., HTMT between Consumer Engagement and Content 0.687, thus displaying sufficient discriminant validity between the two constructs.

**Discriminant Validity**  
**Fornell-Larcker Criterion**

	CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT	CONTENT	INFLUENCER MARKETING	POPULARITY	PURCHASE INTENTION	TRUST
CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT	0.819					
CONTENT	0.590	0.764				
INFLUENCER MARKETING	0.498	0.546	0.742			
POPULARITY	0.429	0.561	0.469	0.804		
PURCHASE INTENTION	0.579	0.643	0.497	0.539	0.791	
TRUST	0.622	0.539	0.466	0.481	0.563	0.799

R Square (R2) is the proportion of variance in dependent variables accounted for by independent variables. The model explains 52.8% of Purchase Intention variance (R2 =



0.528), demonstrating that Influencer Marketing, Trust, Consumer Engagement and more all play significant roles in consumers' decision to buy products. Consumer Engagement is R2 0.248, which suggests that 24.8% of its variance is captured by the model, while Content Quality is R2 0.298, which indicates moderate explanatory power for the variable.

R Square		
	R Square	R Square Adjusted
CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT	0.248	0.246
CONTENT	0.298	0.296
POPULARITY	0.220	0.218
PURCHASE INTENTION	0.528	0.520
TRUST	0.217	0.214

F2 effects are the size of the effect on the dependent variable (0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, respectively, signify small, medium, and large effects) (Cohen, 1988). Consumer Engagement (f2 = 0.330) and Content (f2 = 0.425) are strongly influenced by Influencer Marketing and Influencer Marketing is a major influencer of both. Trust is also mediocre on Influencer Marketing (f2 = 0.277), which highlights the importance of trust to improve the impact of influencer campaigns. It is also evident that Content Quality affects Purchase Intention (f2 = 0.098), which proves its role in the consumer's buying decision.

**F Square**

	CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT	CONTENT	INFLUENCER MARKETING	POPULARITY	PURCHASE INTENTION	TRUST
CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT					0.036	
CONTENT					0.098	
INFLUENCER MARKETING	0.330	0.425		0.283	0.009	0.277
POPULARITY					0.039	
PURCHASE INTENTION						
TRUST					0.030	

Overall, the measurement model confirms the constructs are valid and reliable with good convergent and discriminant validity, high Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability and AVE, and low HTMT ratios. The R2 and f2 value also confirms that Influencer Marketing, Trust, and Content Quality are significant predictors of Consumer Engagement and Purchase Intention, which is solid evidence of model explanatory power and significance of these factors in consumer behavior for influencer marketing.

**Structural Model:**

This structural model gives the complete picture of Influencer Marketing and Purchase Intention directly and via their key mediators — Trust, Content, Consumer

Engagement, Popularity. We observe a direct Influencer Marketing impact on Purchase Intention (H1) with Beta of 0.418 and it's highly positive relationship. T-statistic of 8.754 and p-value 0.000 also verify that the correlation is statistically significant, and influencer marketing directly influences consumer purchasing behaviour (Hair et al., 2017).

Beyond the direct effect, several indirect effects were also significant, indicating the mediating effect of trust, content, engagement, and popularity in building the link between influencer marketing and purchase intention. H2 mediates the relationship a Beta of 0.078 and p-value of 0.033 which show that when users trust influencers, they're more likely to take action on their recommendations (Chapple & Cownie, 2017). Content (H3) was a significant mediator, demonstrating Beta = 0.167 and highly significant p-value of 0.000 which showed that high quality, relevant content posted by influencers significantly boosts their influence on consumer purchases (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017). H4) is also an important mediator (Both Beta = 0.095 and p=0.016), indicating that the interaction with the influencers increase purchase intent. Likewise, Popularity (H5) is a significant mediator, with Beta of 0.079 and p-value of 0.004, indicating that influencers who are more popular are more likely to influence purchase decisions if they have large following (Schouten, Janssen, & Verspaget 2020).

HYPOTHESIS	DIRECT EFFECT:	BETA	T Statistics	P Values	Status
H1	<b>INFLUENCER MARKETING -&gt; PURCHASE INTENTION</b>	0.418	8.754	<b>0.000</b>	ACCEPTED

INDIRECT EFFECT MEDIATION:					
		Beta	T Statistics	P Values	Status
H2	<b>INFLUENCER MARKETING -&gt; TRUST -&gt; PURCHASE INTENTION</b>	0.078	2.143	<b>0.033</b>	ACCEPTED
H3	<b>INFLUENCER MARKETING -&gt; CONTENT -&gt; PURCHASE INTENTION</b>	0.167	3.755	<b>0.000</b>	ACCEPTED
H4	<b>INFLUENCER MARKETING -&gt; CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT -&gt; PURCHASE INTENTION</b>	0.095	2.427	<b>0.016</b>	ACCEPTED
H5	<b>INFLUENCER MARKETING -&gt; POPULARITY -&gt; PURCHASE INTENTION</b>	0.079	2.903	<b>0.004</b>	ACCEPTED

The predictive relevance of the model is measured through Q2 results, where we observed that the model is highly predictively relevant to key constructs including Purchase Intention (Q2 = 0.321), and that the model account for much of the variance in purchase intention (Hair et al., 2017). Other constructs, including Consumer Engagement (Q2 = 0.159), Content (Q2 = 0.167) and Trust (Q2 = 0.132), have moderate

predictive value too, further underscoring the role of mediators in driving consumer behavior (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015).

Finally, the structural model demonstrates that Influencer Marketing has a direct impact on Purchase Intention, with further multiplied by mediating factors such as Trust, Content, Consumer Engagement and Popularity. This provides a strong recommendation for marketers, indicating that focusing on trust, content quality, and consumer engagement with influencers can be a great way to drive purchase intent and maximize campaign performance (Evans et al., 2021).

## **Chapter 5: Results and Discussion**

### **5.1 Trust and Purchase Intention**

These findings indicate that trust plays the largest role as a bridge between influencer marketing and intention to buy. Trust the influencer, which makes a purchase more likely according to previous studies (Audrezet et al., 2018). Influencers who are perceived as genuine and trustworthy make more powerful impacts on consumer buying choices – which implies trust is an important aspect of the influencer marketing strategy.

### **4.2 Content Quality and Its Influence**

The results indicate that excellent content is another crucial determinant of purchase intention. Participants said that they are more likely to read and act on content that's visually appealing, informative, and of interest to them. This lends credence to Liu & Jiang's (2022) observation that content quality plays a critical role in promoting consumer engagement and conversion.

### **4.3 Consumer Engagement and Purchase Intention**

Engaging with customers was a great predictor of buying intentions. High engagement influencers that increased the number of interactions (through a mix of text and video) also did better in selling. This result reveals the significance of engagement metrics to judge the effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns (Gustafsson & Khan, 2021).

### **4.4 The Role of Popularity**

While influencer popularity had a positive impact on purchase intention, its effect was weaker compared to trust and content quality. This suggests that while popularity increases visibility, it does not guarantee consumer action unless it is accompanied by trust and high-quality content. Schouten et al. (2020) suggest that micro-influencers, who have smaller but more engaged audiences, may be more effective than macro-influencers in certain contexts.

## **Chapter 4: Results, Conclusion, Recommendations, and Implications**

### **4.1 Results**

This measurement model shows that the study's variables, Consumer Engagement, Content Quality, Influencer Marketing, Popularity, Purchase Intention, and Trust are both trustworthy and reliable. The Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) of High Cronbach's constructs for each construct have very good internal consistency, all above the criterion of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2010). For instance, Consumer Engagement's

Cronbach's Alpha is 0.877 and its CR is 0.910, whereas Trust has 0.858 Cronbach's Alpha and 0.898 CR. The outputs support the validity of the constructions. Additionally, for all constructs, there are evidence of convergent validity AVE (Average Variance Extracted) above 0.50 Trust was 0.639 and Consumer Engagement 0.670, respectively, which indicate strong construct validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Discriminant validity is verified using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). This AVE is larger than the square root of its correlation with other constructs, which further demonstrates the distinctiveness of the constructs. Purchase Intention, for example, has an AVE of 0.791 — higher than the correlations with Consumer Engagement (0.579) and Content (0.643). Furthermore, HTMT values of 0.85 further support discriminant validity (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015), as seen by Consumer Engagement and Content with HTMT of 0.687.

The R Square (R<sup>2</sup>) measures show that the model accounts for 52.8% of the variance in Purchase Intention demonstrating that Influencer Marketing, Trust, Consumer Engagement, and more influence consumer purchase decisions. The model also accounts for 24.8% of the Consumer Engagement variance and 29.8% of the Content Quality variance, which indicate moderate explanatory power for these variables.

As the f<sup>2</sup> effect sizes show, Influencer Marketing has the most impact on both Consumer Engagement (f<sup>2</sup> = 0.330) and Content (f<sup>2</sup> = 0.425). While Trust has a MIDIOR impact on Influencer Marketing (f<sup>2</sup> = 0.277), Content Quality has a MAJOR impact on Purchase Intention (f<sup>2</sup> = 0.098) and so is relevant to how consumers behave.

For the structural model, direct Influencer Marketing effect on H1 has a statistically significant Beta value of 0.418, showing a very positive association (Hair et al., 2017). A few mediators further deepen this connection. Trust (H2) plays the mediator role between Influencer Marketing and Purchase Intention (Beta = 0.078, p = 0.033), while Content (H3) plays a larger role (Beta = 0.167, p = 0.000). Also significant mediators are Consumer Engagement (H4) and Popularity (H5) Beta values are 0.095 (p = 0.016) and 0.079 (p = 0.004), respectively. This means that trust, quality content, consumer engagement and popularity all increase the impact of influencer marketing.

#### **4.2 Conclusion**

This research strongly supports Influencer Marketing having direct effects on Purchase Intention as well as a number of key mediators such as Trust, Content Quality, Consumer Engagement and Popularity. This clear correlation between influencer marketing and intent to buy highlights the growing importance of influencer-based tactics within the digital marketing landscape. As brands are using social media influencers to target and interact with their consumers more and more, this research reiterates that influencer marketing is an important piece of purchasing decision making and an essential piece of marketing in today's marketer's toolbox.

Alongside the immediate effect, the mediating factors (Trust, Content, Consumer Engagement, and Popularity) increases influencer marketing's effect on purchasing behavior. Content Quality and Trust were the most important among these. Good,

readable content not only attracts consumer's eyes but also helps to make both the influencer and the promoting product seem more trustworthy. As Content Quality bridges the gap between the influencer and the customer, it will make the consumer aware and appreciate the product which in turn increases their purchase intent. The data demonstrates that influencers who provide creative, authentic and meaningful content consistently are better able to translate their audience's interest into actual purchases.

Neither is trust an intermediary. Being able to build trust with transparency, authenticity, and consistency increases influencers' influence on the customer behavior. Customers are more likely to buy from those influencers they trust, thus Trust is one of the biggest motivators for buying. This is why brands should choose influencers that are not only popular, but also trusted by their fans, since trust strongly links influencer marketing and consumer purchasing.

It also highlights the role of Consumer Engagement. If a consumer is actively engaged with an influencer's content — likes, comments, shares, etc — then they are closer to the influencer and more likely to make a purchase. Engagement — an open-ended conversation that brings the influencer closer to the customer making it easier for the consumer to be more actively involved in the decision-making process. This conclusion means that maximizing consumer engagement is one of the top priorities for brands when it comes to optimizing their influencer marketing efforts.

In addition, Popularity had a moderately beneficial mediating role. Influencers can help raise awareness for a product and generate interest in it, but are not as influential as Content Quality or Trust in creating purchase intent. But the bigger followers, the more influencers can extend the outreach of campaigns and brand visibility. This finding suggests that Popularity, while effective in generating brand awareness, needs to be matched with quality content and trust strategies in order to be most impactful in influencing purchase intentions.

The model explains most of the variance in Purchase Intention, illustrating the necessity of concentrating on influencer marketing. According to the findings, companies looking to boost their marketing efforts should focus on influencers who are able to create engaging, trustworthy content and build consumer relationships. And in this way, brands can maximize the effectiveness of their influencer campaigns and thus get more consumer attention and hence more purchase intent.

Conclusion: The research proves the versatility of Influencer Marketing and its capacity to create Purchase Intention through Trust, Content Quality, Engagement, and Popularity. And as the digital world gets smarter, brands who make good use of these elements will be able to shape the consumer mind and fulfill their marketing goals.

### 4.3 Recommendations

Based on these findings, several recommendations for marketing practitioners can be made:

1. **Enhance Content Quality:** Brands should prioritize working with influencers who produce high-quality, engaging, and relevant content, as this significantly strengthens consumer purchase intentions.
2. **Build Trust:** Marketers should focus on selecting influencers who are perceived as trustworthy, as **Trust** plays a pivotal role in converting consumer interest into actual purchases.
3. **Increase Consumer Engagement:** Encouraging influencers to interact with their audience through comments, live sessions, and personalized content can further enhance consumer engagement and, consequently, purchase intentions.
4. **Leverage Influencer Popularity:** While **Popularity** alone is not enough, influencers with larger followings can amplify brand visibility and impact purchase decisions when combined with authentic engagement and trust-building strategies.

### 4.4 Managerial Implications

This study's results are useful for managers looking to optimise their influencer marketing efforts. Considering the direct and indirect impact of Influencer Marketing on Purchase Intention being high, managers must ensure that they're investing in maintaining relationships with influencers who live their brand values over the long term. Managers should also make sure to keep influencers high in trust and generate quality content to achieve the best outcomes of campaigns. Moreover, tracking and optimizing consumers' engagement with influencer content is also extremely important for campaign optimization and sales.

### 4.5 Practical Implications

To put these results into practice, the importance of prioritizing top mediators like Content Quality and Trust will be revealed in a way that can maximize the performance of influencer campaigns. Brands should then make use of this data to choose influencers who are right for their audience, and who can also feel that they are credible and real. Additionally, the findings make it a crucial matter to find influencers who have the ability to create authentic relationships with their followers in order to increase consumers' attention and, in turn, purchase intent.

### 4.6 Limitations and Future Research

This research offers some insight, but it's far from comprehensive. The first was that the study was about a certain platform and influencer, which might not have been representative of the influencer marketing landscape. In future studies, it would be interesting to understand the long-term influencer marketing impacts on brand loyalty and what type of influencer (micro vs macro) influences consumer behavior across industries. Additionally, longitudinal research may help uncover how trust and

engagement develop throughout the lifecycle of influencer marketing relationships, helping us understand more about the relationship between influencers and consumers.

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