Impact of Influencers in Consumer Decision Process: the Fashion Industry

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Abstract

Tremendous changes are happening in the world of clothing retail. Internet and social media play vital role in helping consumers find the items they are looking for. Obviously companies will keenly try to retain a strong presence in the social media platforms; otherwise the target audience can easily change suppliers. The present study is intended to explore the influencer marketing techniques used by fashion industries and also the impact of influencers on the consumers buying decision process in fashion industry.

Key words : *Social media, Fashion industry, Influencer marketing, consumer buying decision*

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During the last five years, the spread of social media has further changed buying and selling techniques. With platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, consumers are able to comment on their experiences with products and companies and to share them with their friends. This has led to the growing need for companies to generate positive customer experiences in order to minimize negative word-of-mouth messages, which would easily be spread within the social media platforms to other, potential customers.

Another form of social media that is very popular with fashion conscious women is blogging. Fashion blogs have grown to be one of the most effective ways of sharing experiences and recommendations over the internet and they are an effective way of marketing products straight to the target customer with low cost. It is not only a place where women go to find specific products to buy, but also a place to roam around and accidentally find something desirable. It can increase the amount of internet store buying, since it can link the user directly to the place of purchase.

The existence of social media and the changes in options has also had a dramatic effect on the buying behavior model that describes the traditional way of purchasing products. Because of social media, they are able to conduct even deeper analysis of companies and to portray their own experiences and opinions to other users, creating a certain type of viral marketing-effect where the message can be spread to thousands of user with a few clicks of the mouse.

Digital marketing

It is an umbrella term for the marketing of products or services using digital technologies, mainly on the Internet, including mobile phones, display advertising, other digital media. The way in which digital marketing and has developed since 1990s and 2000s has changed the way brands and businesses utilize technology and digital marketing for their marketing. Digital marketing campaigns are becoming more prevalent, as digital platforms are increasingly incorporated into marketing plans, and as people use digital devices instead of going to physical shops. As digital marketing is dependent on technology which is ever-evolving and fast-changing, the same features should be expected from digital marketing developments and strategies. This portion is an attempt to qualify or segregate the notable highlights existing and being used as of press time.

Online marketing channels

Digital marketing is facilitated by multiple channels, as an advertiser one's core objective is to find channels which result in maximum two-way communication and a better overall ROI for the brand. There are multiple online marketing channels available and they are: I). Affiliate marketing is a type of performance-based marketing in which a business rewards one or more affiliates for each visitor or customer brought by the affiliate's own marketing efforts. The industry has four core players: the network, the publisher, and the customer. The market has grown in complexity, resulting in the emergence of a secondary tier of players, including affiliate management agencies, super-affiliates and specialized third party vendors. ii)Display advertising: it is advertising on websites which includes many different formats and contains items such as text, images, flash, video, and audio. Its main purpose is to deliver general advertisements and brand messages to site visitors. iii) Email marketing: is considered cheap when compared to other means of marketing and it is also a way to rapidly communicate a message such as their value proposition to existing or potential customers iv)Search engine marketing (SEM) is a form of Internet marketing that involves the promotion of websites by increasing their visibility in search engine results pages (SERPs) primarily through paid advertising. SEM may incorporate search engine optimization (SEO), which adjusts or rewrites website content and site architecture to achieve a higher ranking in search engine results pages to enhance pay per click (PPC) listings. v) Social media marketing: when we use social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, Google+, etc.) to market a product or service, the strategy is called Social media marketing. It is a procedure wherein strategies are made and executed to draw in traffic for a website or to gain attention of buyers over the web using different social media platforms. vi) Video advertising: it is a type of advertisements that play on online videos e.g. YouTube videos. It has gained an increase in popularity over time. vii) Mobile marketing: it is marketing on or with a mobile device, such as a smart phone. It can provide customers with time and location sensitive, personalized information that promotes goods, services and ideas. viii) Content marketing can be briefly described as "delivering the content that your audience is seeking in the places that they are searching for it." It is highly present in digital marketing and becomes highly successful when content marketing is involved. ix) Influencer marketing: Important nodes are identified within related communities, known as influencers. This is becoming an important concept in digital targeting. It is possible to reach influencers via paid advertising, such as Facebook Advertising or Google AdWords campaigns, or through sophisticated SCRM (social customer relationship management) software, such as SAP C4C, Microsoft Dynamics, Sage CRM and Salesforce CRM. Many universities now focus, at Masters Level, on engagement strategies for influencers

Social media, in terms of fashion, turns out to be so powerful that it facilitates many people to take an interest in a number of fashion events. A digital world keeps you aware of what is popular and what is being more appreciated in the fashion industry. The availability of different fashion trends in the digital world allows people to take an interest in the buying process, and many of the people get influenced by a wide range of domestic and international fashion brands. The fashion industry is, thus, putting its focus on the digital platform, which involves the innovative uses of technology along with the most recent fashion trends.

Influencer marketing

Influencer marketing can be defined as a process of identifying and activating individuals who have an influence over a specific target audience or medium, in order to be part of a brand's campaign towards increased reach, sales, or engagement. Influencer marketing is an extension to the original concept of word-of-mouth marketing, focusing on a social context and performed in a more professional way. It is a form of relationship building which may be very helpful for brands that seek to expand their audience and turn them into loyal customers through trust and authenticity.

Influencer marketing tends to be broken into two sub-practices: The first one is earned influencer marketing. It stems from unpaid or pre-existing relationships with influencers or third party content that is promoted by the influencer to further their own personal social growth. And the second one is paid influencer marketing: the Paid influencer marketing campaigns can take the form of sponsorship, pre-roll advertising or testimonial messaging and can appear at any point in the content. Budgets vary widely and are usually based on audience reach. Influence can come from a wide range of places. Any person, group, brand, or place could potentially be an influencer. Influencer marketing has many applications. Some marketers use influencer marketing to establish credibility in the market, others to create social conversations around their brand, others yet to drive online or in-store sales of their products. Therefore, the value that influencer marketing creates can be measured in multiple ways.

Fig-1 Brand post opinion

Source : www.clickz.com/wp-content/influence-posting

Influencer marketing derives its value from 3 sources namely reach, relevance and resonance.

Reach is a measure of audience size. Aside from possessing qualities that have the power to drive action, an influencer has an above-average number of followers in a specific niche or market. Influencers are able to reach millions of consumers through their social channels and blogs, Where as relevance measures the degree of relevance to the reader. Influencers need not promote the products and services of a brand that isn't relevant to them. Influencers produce original, and oftentimes effective, marketing content for the brand. Resonance counts the number of activity an influencer generates by publishing content. Someone who creates content people crave for and love to engage with will make a major wave with a blog post and gain a lot of traction

with a single tweet, because the content resonates with fans and followers. Influencers maintain strong relationships with their audience, who has a certain level of trust in the influencer's opinions.

In order to understand the role of influencers in fashion industry it is imperative to understand different types of influencer. They are i) Traditional influencers – These are the individuals that conventional PR agencies and celebrity figures in a specific area of subject expertise. ii) Emerging (digital) influencers – These poster-tech bloggers and emerging digital influencers have recognized a large audience following and drive thought leadership in a specific space. Emerging digital influencers could also be blogs. iii) Influencers by connection – People who have hundreds of Facebook friends and Twitter followers. If you represent a

brand, you want to court these people to produce brand action. iv)Influencers by topic – People who are opinion leaders for the certain topics, like if you represent a brand, you want opinion leaders talking about your products or services.

The rise of influencer marketing has helped brands understand that there needs a shift of focus. As people trust influencers more than any brand for the promotion of a product, direct marketing is not as effective anymore as it was in the past, which creates the need for the assessment of a branded content strategy. And it gets even more challenging when trying to target the younger generation, as millennials are more demanding for the advertised content they get exposed to. In fact, they don't even get convinced from the traditionally popular celebrities, as 70% of them prefer non-celebrity influencers for product endorsements. This means that a brand starting with influencer marketing needs to understand its audience, in order to enjoy the benefits of an effective campaign with an influencer.

Fashion industry is entirely driven by influencer marketing than any other industry. Nowadays, the fashion industry is, even more, prone to using influencers, but it is more democratic. Fashion being one of the industries more comfortable with influencer marketing also offers many ways of collaboration between bloggers and brands. This is not limited to just blog and social media posts, but it can include, Instagram takeovers, event hosting, modeling or even product design. Involving bloggers early in the creative process can pay off, as they know their audience and offer ideas and strategies that are effective for their audience.

Platform for influencers:

The most pertinent platform for influencers marketing are: i) Fashion Blogs are usually maintained by an individual or business with regular entries of commentary, description of events, or other material such as graphics or video. 'Blog' can also be used as a verb, meaning to *maintain or add content to a blog"* (Bodnar, K. 2011). Fashion blogging has become popular since 2011, blogs often cover the industry as a whole, personal style, reviews of clothing items and collections. Fashion bloggers have a very high status of legitimacy and those with large followings have power in the fashion world. ii) Video: YouTube can upload numerous videos about fashion, hair and beauty tips to share with people all over the world. These viewers inspired from these videos because they can simultaneously watch and do their make up. iii)Instagram, Pintrest, Tumblr and many other apps are highly used today to sway how one understands and captures fashion. The photo apps are geared toward the younger generation. The reason for their success relies on their ease and their instantaneous qualities. For a generation that lives in a fast paced world, convenience and quickness is the key to success.

The fashion bloggers can more or less directly or indirectly influence the fashion industry. A blog is a form of social media and a communication channel where messages travel globally across (fig. 2). Bloggers may use this channel to advertise their likes and dislikes and influence the way in which certain brands or products are presented and experienced. In addition, blogs may begin new trends to an industry or discuss matters which companies may not want to be publicly discussed such as ethics or environmental factors.
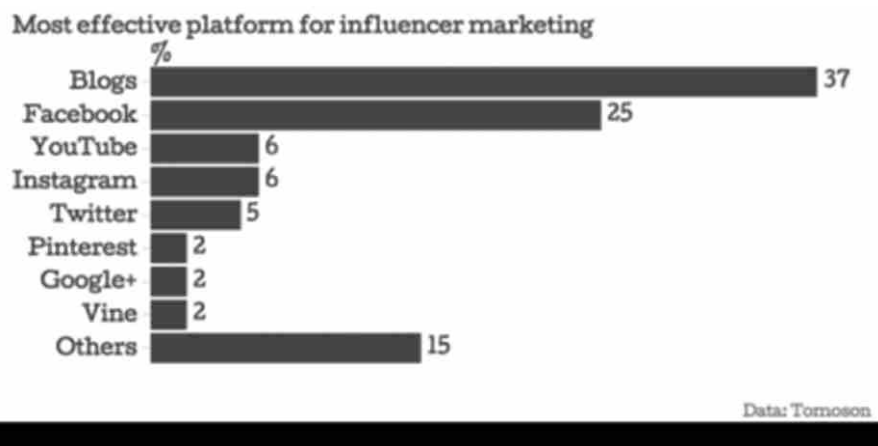

Fig-2 Effective platform for influence marketing

Source : Data - Tomoson

The Consumers and Decision making in fashion

Consumers are actors on the market place stage. Consumers, in general, can be referred as individuals who purchase or consume products and services; however, in terms of buyer and consumer, there is a slight difference. Buyers are the people who are acting either as ultimate, industrial, or institutional purchasers. Consumer exhibits various behavior patterns during purchase process and disposing of goods, services, ideas or experiences. They are eagerly observing the cues of the fashion industries with which they can set perceptions for fulfilling their needs. Inevitably, businesses encounter bottlenecks where the message is not reaching their consumers and prospects, with the fact that, at times, consumers and prospects are facing significant blocks in their decision process. If not, each of them should be fully committed, loyal, enthusiastic, repeated consumers; however, this is not the case. Today the accessibility and transparency of information has profoundly influenced the decision making process; therefore, it is important to examine what are the hurdles and fiction points that hold prospects becoming consumers, or keeps consumers hesitating from repurchasing.

Fashion is of great importance to many consumers, it is defined as "the process of social diffusion by which a new style is adopted by some group of consumers." Fashion influences many aspects of our lives, it has both economic and social value and provides individuals with a tool to express themselves and create an identity. It is therefore important to understand the process of decision making within the fashion industry.

Influencers on Decision Making

Consumer's decision making within fashion is influenced by the information available in the society from many different sources like advertising, magazines, celebrities, online, friends, family and bloggers. Further, a fashion purchase is a devoted task that requires more detailed involvement from consumers. In today's society social influencers, like journalists, celebrities, bloggers, magazines and brand advocates, are regarded as "the most powerful force in the fashion marketplace." They impact customers purchasing decisions based on their personal opinion, ability and position and are often considered experts in their field by consumers. Social influencers therefore have a great deal of influence on consumers purchasing decisions and can influence what becomes a trend and a "must have" fashion as consumers tend to copy their style and believe that they are the experts within the product category. Consumers in today's society are therefore influenced by social influencers to a greater extent than before.
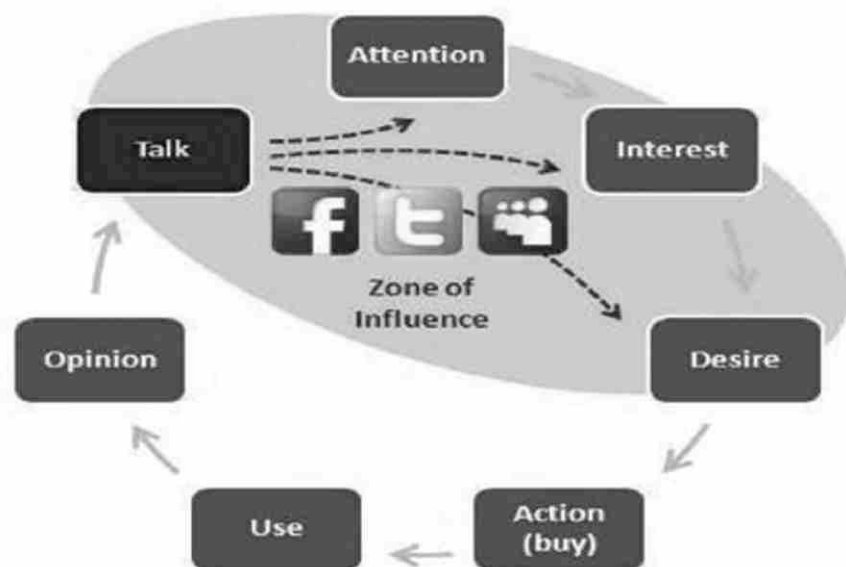
Source - created by author

Fig (3) : Influence of social influences in fashion market

Weidman et al (2012) identifies 3 types of social influencers in fashion

• The fashion super spreaders

• The narrative fashion experts and

• The helpful friends.

Fashion super spreaders have the lowest fashion involvement of the three, the narrative fashion experts are excited about fashion and enjoy shopping and the helpful friends are most concerned with the risk involved in the fashion purchase and therefore them all influence consumers in a different way. Consumers do not associate fashion purchases to be of high risk and therefore don't necessarily have or expect strong ties with the social influencers.

Effect of blogs on women's buying behavior

Buying behavior that occurs in blogs can differ significantly from the buying behavior that occurs in other forms of social media. As stated before, blogs can portray several different forms of marketing that appeal to the consumers. Written from an unbiased point of view, consumers tend to put more weight into the opinion of other consumers than they would in other forms of advertisement such as banner advertisement or PR statements. The marketing efforts that can be found in blogs can have a huge impact on a consumer and therefore on the buying process in itself.

In order to find out what types of factors in blogs affect the behavior of women in buying situations, it is important to consider both internal influencers and external influencers.
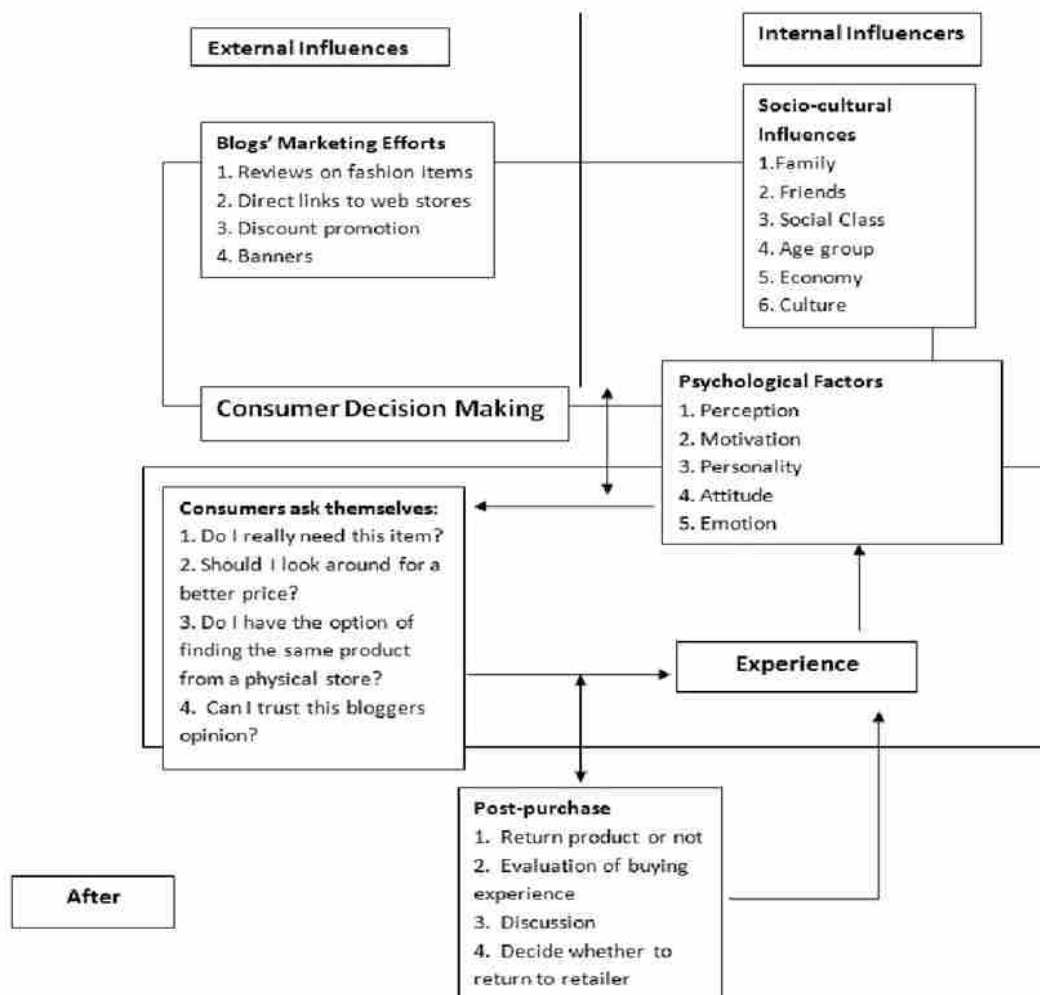

Fig. 4 : Impact of external influencers like Blogs and other internal influencers in the consumer decision making process.

Consumers are unconsciously affected by both every time they make buying decisions, and it is therefore vital that both are considered when studying the topic. The consumer buying process is influenced by several different factors. Since these blogs are essentially formed to act as a tool for the blogger to be able to post reviews and recommendations for their followers and online consumers, it also acts as a form of marketing that can encourage the consumer to try out products they have never used before. Another advantage the blogs have in terms of being a marketing tool is that they can express the bloggers opinions, promote discounts and give readers direct links to the internet store and still maintain a neutral point of view. As an aggressive marketing method don't react negatively to what is promoted. If a company were to promote its product as bluntly, consumer might ignore the message altogether as is typical in today's world of internet advertising. Therefore fashion blog are a huge advantage to online retail stores in terms of providing inexpensive, attractive marketing for the consumers.

The diagram also mentions factors such as socio-cultural and psychological influences that affect consumers buying decision. In terms of the socio-cultural factors, things like friend's opinions, the economic situation and the age group of the consumer can have a huge impact on whether the consumer decides to trust the blogger's recommendation and buy the product (Fig 4).

Scope of the study

Philip Kotler's consumer decision making process is taken as a model. By collecting data from consumers' point of view, fresh insights can be gathered. The research also aims to serve as an indicator to potential readers of how they can tap into the decision making process influencers. Since it studies mainly the effect that blogs have on buying behavior, which something all retailers should be aware of in order to be able to understand how behavior patterns of modern buyers can be affected by other people's opinions.

Review of Literature

Digital marketing campaigns are becoming more prevalent, as digital platforms are increasingly incorporated into marketing plans, and as people use digital devices instead of going to physical shops. As digital marketing is dependent on technology which is ever-evolving and fast-changing, the same features should be expected from digital marketing developments and strategies.

Digital marketing is an umbrella term for all online marketing efforts. Businesses leverage digital channels such as Google search, social media, email, and their websites to connect with their current and prospective customers. Digital marketing can work for any business in any industry. Regardless of the company sells, digital marketing still involves building out buyer personas to identify your audience's needs, and creating valuable online content. Today, monotonous advertising and marketing techniques have given way to digital Marketing (Munshi (2012). In addition, it is so powerful that it can help revive the economy and can create tremendous opportunities for governments to function in a more efficient manner. Chaffey, 2013. Digital marketing is the use of technologies to help marketing activities in order to improve lustomer knowledge by matching their needs.

Consumer Behavior is defined as the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desire.

A person who has indicated his/ her willingness to obtain goods or services from a supplier with the intention of paying for them is called a Consumer (Solomon M. et al (2006). Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) mentioned that the consumer made the purchase decision is influenced by several measurements, namely (1) the measurement of culture, which has the most influence and the most extensive in the behavior of consumers so that marketers need to understand the influence of culture, sub-culture, and social class of consumers; (2) social measurement, which need to be considered when designing a marketing strategy because these factors can affect consumer responses; (3) personal measurements, which consist of the age and stage of life cycle, occupation, economic situation, lifestyle, personality, and self-concept affects the consumer on what is purchased; and (4) psychological measurement, include motivation, perception, learning and beliefs and attitudes also influence the selection of consumer purchases.

Mir and Zaheer(2012)explained through the " Social Impact Theory" that, marketers now must understand how to "position themselves to benefit from fundamental changes that are occurring in the ways people decide on which

products and services to consume, and how they actually consume them." Sedeke(2013) stated that Fashion blogs dominate this communication in the fashion industry, enjoying the attention of users due to the platform's personal and interactive approach versus the standardized treatment through mainstream media.

Conner and Armitage (1998) observed that when a person decides his/her future purchase with the help of his/her past experiences of purchases, one can predict the intention of that person in the future too. D'Souza et al. (2006) postulated that if a person get benefit from his/her previous purchase, s/he will tell about that experience to others and also purchase that product or services again and again. Muhammad Irfan Tariq et al. (2013) elucidated purchase intention concerning four behaviors of consumers comprising the absolute plant purchase the brand, thinking clearly to buy the brand, when someone considers to purchase the brand in the future, and to purchase the particular product absolutely.

McCracken's (1989), through his study observed that a celebrity endorser is an individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement. Celebrity endorsement influences the feelings of the consumers and can also influence the attitude consumers have towards the advertisement and attitude towards the brands, which can increase the purchase intentions and, consequently, increase sales. Tripp C Jensen T.D. and Carlson L. (1994) found that how much consumers trust the celebrity endorser to be credible, when a celebrity endorses one or two products it is significantly more trustworthy than a celebrity who endorses even more products. Hence he states that there is always the possibility of negative effect due to multiple endorsement programs by a single celebrity. McCracken (1998) proposes that superstar is considered like memorial, entertainer or representative of the business organization. Investigation has established that spokesperson endorsement influence consumers' mind-set in common and it may change the feelings of customers towards the commercial and products as well. This may perhaps effect in improvement of acquisition plan and as an outcome in increase of trade.

The trends in fashion change very often. Digital media, nowadays, is given such an importance that it redefines the fashion industry tremendously. A fashion world makes use of social media in a way that it invites bloggers to several fashion shows. Moreover, models contribute in generating a social media following, and the designers, on the other hand, make use of Instagram to inspire the people who look forward to a fashion in trend. Furthermore, the increasing numbers of influencers are being followed by a number of like-minded followers who tend to follow the fashion in a number of ways.

According to Sedeke, (2013) Fashion is a consistently changing industry with new products and trends being created and new designers itching to be publicized around the world at any given moment, making identification with loyal consumers and their preferences vital to any amount of success. As a low-cost form of distributing online media, specifically important to new designers whose budgets remain at lower capabilities, bloggers spend their time searching for high-quality information, including products and trends, to supplement a blog post to attract the largest audience possible.

Objectives of the study

A comprehensive review of most pertinent past research papers about fashion industry and influencers on consumer behavior has been carried out and researchers understand that there are not many researches were conducted on the impact of influencers in fashion industry. Thus keeping in view the gap identified through review we set the following objectives:

I) To identify how the fashion industry is currently using influencer marketing,

ii) To study the impact of influencers on the consumers buying decision process in fashion industry, and

iii) To find out the influencer marketing techniques used by fashion industries.

Research Hypotheses

The following Research Hypotheses are formulated to test the objectives:

H1: There is a significant difference between the levels of influence made by brands, bloggers, and celebrities in each level of decision making process.

H2: There is significant difference in the influencers, viz., brand, celebrity, and bloggers across "age."

H3: There is significant relationship between age and what attracts them i.e. pictures, videos, textual contents.

Research Methodology

The research was conducted on exploratory mode as there is no pre-defined problem but can provide significant insight into a given situation. A structured questionnaire is given to 200 women across all demographic areas based on judgmental and snow bowling technique. The research is not intended to provide conclusive evidence, but helps researchers to have a better understanding of the problem. The focus is on gaining insights and familiarity for later investigation.

Data collection techniques

Data collection is done using both Primary data and Secondary Data. Primary data is collected by means of questionnaire (online and offline). Secondary data for the study were collected from websites and other previous studies. The study was pilot tested with 20 respondents. The pilot study was initially undertaken to ascertain the reliability of the questionnaire. After the pilot study, changes were made to the questionnaire in order to prepare the main survey instrument.

Tools of Analysis

Simple statistical tools such as chi square test, cross tabs, one way Anova analysis are done. These were done using software such as SPSS and MS Excel.

Data Analysis and major findings

Customer Profile

Of the respondents, 30.5%respondents belong to 20-25 age categories and 55% are single. Among the respondents 48% of them are students and 40% of the respondents purchase 1-5 times a month and 57.5% of them spend Rs 1000-5000 at a time. 58% of the consumers sometimes purchase when on sale and 77% of them follow current fashion trends.

Influencer Marketing

In today's society even the apparel customers like fashion trend seekers are influenced by journalists, celebrities, bloggers, magazines and brand advocates and they are regarded as "the most powerful force in the fashion marketplace." They impact customers purchasing decisions based on their personal opinion, ability and position and are often considered experts in their field by consumers.
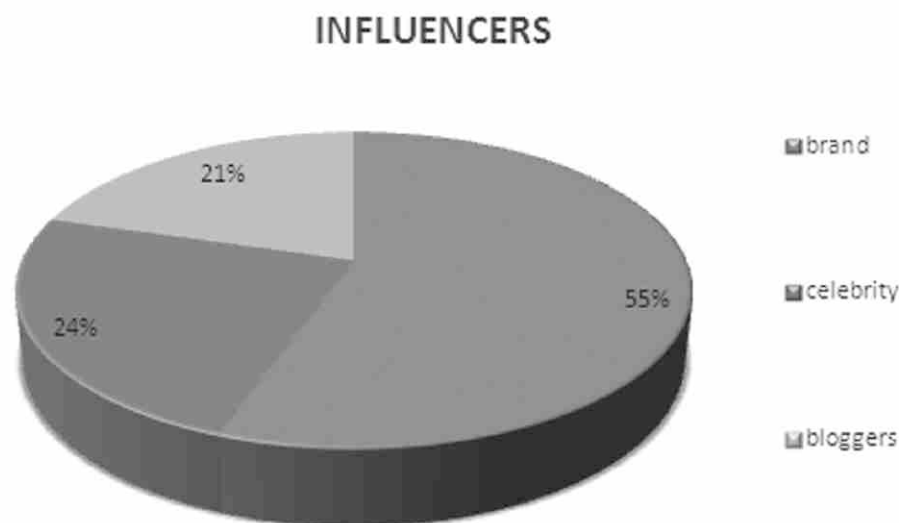

Fig 5: Influencers among the respondents

Brands have maximum influence among the consumers than the celebrities and the bloggers. It is understood from the Fig:5 that, out of the total respondents, 55% (111)follow brands, 24% (48)follow celebrities, 21%(41) follow bloggers. Brands use Facebook as a platform to influence the consumers. Fig:6 states that 25% of the respondents follow brands in Facebook, 24.5% in apps. It is evident from the Fig:7 that, Bloggers use blogs as a platform to influence the consumers.
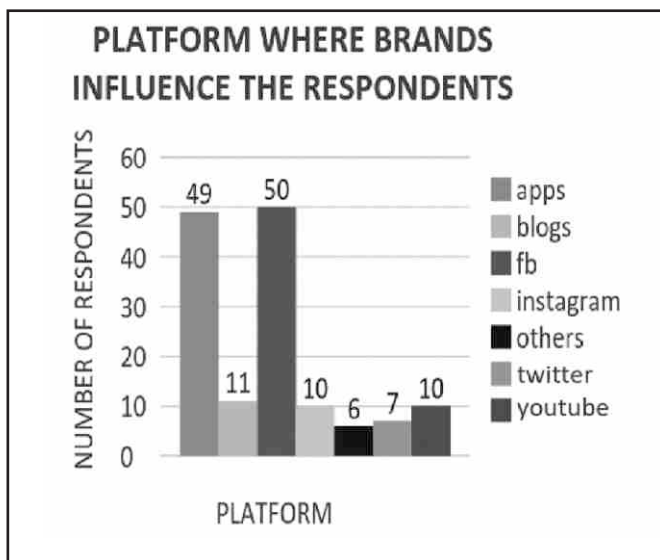
Fig 6: Platforms where the brands influence the respondent

Fig 7: Platforms where bloggers influence respondent

Celebrities use Facebook as a platform to influence the consumers. Fig 8 shows that 22 respondents follow celebrities in Facebook. While analyzing various sources of attraction for respondents, it is clear from the fig 9 that, pictures play a major role in influencing the consumers to
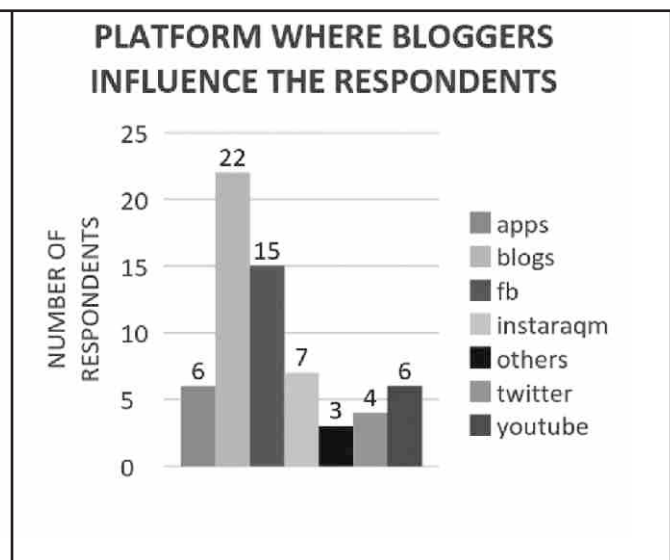
buy clothing. Out of the total respondents, 63.5% of the respondents get attracted towards the pictures, 23.5% towards the textual content, 13% get attracted to videos to buy their fashion clothing.
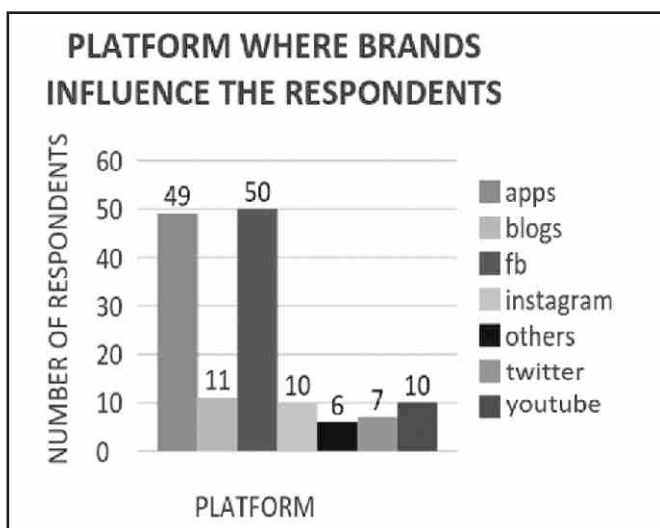
Fig 8: Platforms where celebrity influence the respondents

Fig 9: Source of attraction for the respondents

When we observe the impact made by the influencer in every stage of decision making process, celebrities plays a major role in influencing the consumers followed by brand and the bloggers. But in the information search stage, the bloggers have more impact followed by brands and the celebrities. At the stage of choosing alternatives, brands have more impact than celebrities and

bloggers. As the customer moves on to the stage of purchase decision, bloggers have huge impact than celebrities and brands. Finally in the post purchase behavior, bloggers have huge impact in changing the attitude of the consumers than brand and celebrities. The results are depicted in tables 1 and graph 1.

Table1: Impact made by the influencers in every stage of decision making process

	BRANDS	BLOGGERS	CELEBRITIES
Need recognition	8.30	8.24	8.33
Info search	8.57	8.82	8.21
Choosing alternatives	8.79	7.65	8.21
Purchase decision	7.36	8.24	7.95
Post purchase behavior	7.25	7.94	6.92

Source : primary Data
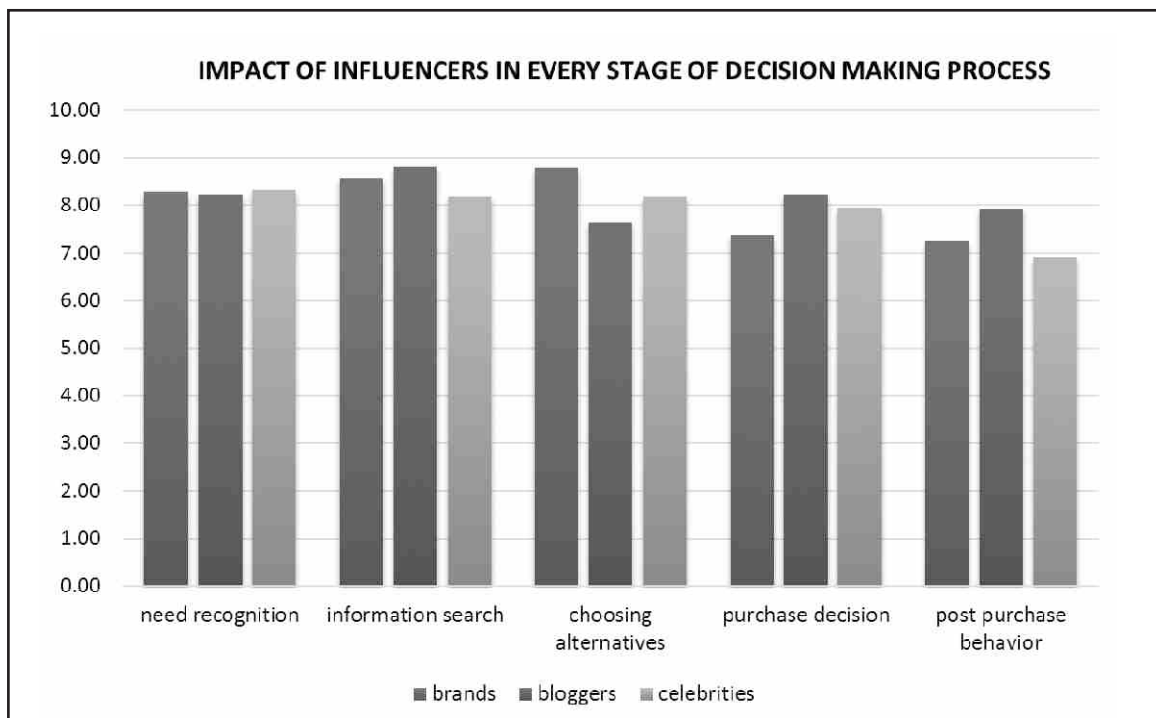
Graph 1: Impact made by the influencers in every stage of decision making process

Source : Primary Data

The present study aims to serve as an indicator to potential readers of how they can tap into the decision making process via the influencers and it also tries to understand how behavior patterns of modern buyers can be affected by other people's opinions. Since the major objectives of the studies are focused on influencer's impact on fashion seekers decision making process, we formulated the following hypothesis for this purpose.

Results of the statistical tests

Hypothesis Testing

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) has been carried out to examine whether there is any significant difference in level of influence exists across the various categories influencers like brands, bloggers and celebrities. We have formulated the following hypothesis for this purpose.

H1: There is a significant difference between the levels of influence made by brands, bloggers, and celebrities in each level of decision making process.

The ANOVA output is presented in Table 2

Table : 2 Result of ANOVA Test

DEPENDANT VARIABLES			Sig.
NEED RECOGNITION	brand	celebrity	.779
		bloggers	.567
	celebrity	brand	.779
		bloggers	.470
	bloggers	brand	.567
		celebrity	.470
INFORMATION SEARCH	brand	celebrity	.740
		bloggers	.825
	celebrity	brand	.740
		bloggers	.644
	bloggers	brand	.825
		celebrity	.644
CHOOSING OF ALTERNATIVES	brand	celebrity	.513
		bloggers	.879
	celebrity	brand	.513
		bloggers	.505
	bloggers	brand	.879
		celebrity	.505
PURCHASE DECISION	brand	celebrity	.219
		bloggers	.661
	celebrity	brand	.219
		bloggers	.528
	bloggers	brand	.661
		celebrity	.528
POST PURCHASE BEHAVIOR	brand	celebrity	.344
		bloggers	.518
	celebrity	brand	.344
		bloggers	.185
	bloggers	brand	.518
		celebrity	.185

ANOVA is used in the analysis of comparative experiments, those in which only the difference in outcomes is of interest. Let the value of P be 0.05. The significance level in every stage of the decision making process is above 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. We infer that, there lies a significant difference between the levels of influence made by the influencers in each level of decision making process.

Social media are now an integral part of many consumers' everyday lives. Majority of the consumer choices are made on the basis of social media information. Previous studies have also investigated the relationship between the fashion consciousness of mature consumers and the fashion information social sources used by members of that market segment. Customer age also plays a distinct role in apparel decision making process. In order to analyze the age wise preference among respondents a second hypothesis has been formulated as follows:

H2: There is significant difference in the influencers, viz., brand, celebrity, and bloggers across "age".

The CROSS TAB: 1 shows the distribution of the age of the respondents and whom they follow. It explains that, in the age group 15-30, brands are followed in a larger aspect as compared to bloggers and celebrities. But in the age group 30-35, it is the bloggers and from 35 and above it is the brand that is followed by the consumers.

Cross Tab 1 : Distribution of Age Responents

			influencers			
			brand	celebrity	bloggers	Total
age	15-20	Count	27	9	1	37
		% within age	73.0%	24.3%	2.7%	100.0%
		% within influencers	30.3%	23.1%	2.9%	22.8%
		% of Total	16.7%	5.6%	.6%	22.8%
	20-25	Count	36	11	6	53
		% within age	67.9%	20.8%	11.3%	100.0%
		% within influencers	40.4%	28.2%	17.6%	32.7%
		% of Total	22.2%	6.8%	3.7%	32.7%
	25-30	Count	11	9	5	25
		% within age	44.0%	36.0%	20.0%	100.0%
		% within influencers	12.4%	23.1%	14.7%	15.4%
		% of Total	6.8%	5.6%	3.1%	15.4%
	30-35	Count	5	5	14	24
		% within age	20.8%	20.8%	58.3%	100.0%
		% within influencers	5.6%	12.8%	41.2%	14.8%
		% of Total	3.1%	3.1%	8.6%	14.8%
	35 and above	Count	10	5	8	23
		% within age	43.5%	21.7%	34.8%	100.0%
		% within influencers	11.2%	12.8%	23.5%	14.2%
		% of Total	6.2%	3.1%	4.9%	14.2%
Total		Count	89	39	34	162
		% within age	54.9%	24.1%	21.0%	100.0%
		% within influencers	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	54.9%	24.1%	21.0%	100.0%

Source : Primary Data

Table 3 : Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	38.170[a]	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	37.763	8	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	23.783	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	162		

a. 1 cells (6.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.83.

chi -square a statistical method assessing the goodness of fit between a set of observed values and those expected theoretically. A significance level is of 0.05 is assumed. It is clear from the table 3 that the Pearson chi-square significance value shows significance value less than 0.05. Since P value <= 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it states that there is a significant difference in the perception of influencers across "age" group.

The above hypothesis proves the existence of the relationship between age of the customer and the perception of influencers, viz., brand, celebrity, and bloggers. This result drives another stage of analysis to investigate the major factors which lead to attract the customers towards the influencers. These factors may also influence the customers in their purchasing decision. So the following hypothesis is formulated to identify the impact of influencing context in this regard.

H3: There is significant relationship between age and what attracts them i.e. pictures, videos, textual contents.

The **CROSS TAB: 2** shows the distribution of age of the respondent and what attracts them i.e. pictures, videos, and textual contents.

Cross Tab 2 : Relationship between Age and Source of attraction

			attracts most			
			Pictures	Videos	Textual content	Total
age	15-20	Count	24	7	6	37
		% within age	64.9%	18.9%	16.2%	100.0%
		% within attracts most	23.3%	28.0%	18.2%	23.0%
		% of Total	14.9%	4.3%	3.7%	23.0%
	20-25	Count	42	8	2	52
		% within age	80.8%	15.4%	3.8%	100.0%
		% within attracts most	40.8%	32.0%	6.1%	32.3%
		% of Total	26.1%	5.0%	1.2%	32.3%
	25-30	Count	16	4	5	25
		% within age	64.0%	16.0%	20.0%	100.0%
		% within attracts most	15.5%	16.0%	15.2%	15.5%
		% of Total	9.9%	2.5%	3.1%	15.5%

		7	3	14	24
30-35	Count	7	3	14	24
	% within age	29.2%	12.5%	58.3%	100.0%
	% within attracts most	6.8%	12.0%	42.4%	14.9%
	% of Total	4.3%	1.9%	8.7%	14.9%
35 and above	Count	14	3	6	23
	% within age	60.9%	13.0%	26.1%	100.0%
	% within attracts most	13.6%	12.0%	18.2%	14.3%
	% of Total	8.7%	1.9%	3.7%	14.3%
Total	Count	103	25	33	161
	% within age	64.0%	15.5%	20.5%	100.0%
	% within attracts most	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	64.0%	15.5%	20.5%	100.0%

Source : Primary Data

In the age group 15-30, pictures and from 30 and above the textual content made by brand, celebrity, and bloggers attracts them a lot.

Table : 4 Chi-Square Text

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	31.869[a]	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	30.805	8	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.299	1	.002
N of Valid Cases	161		

a. 5 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.57.

The table 4 shows that the value of Chi-Square test is significant at 5% significance level. This states that null hypothesis is rejected and alternative is accepted. Thus the result states that, there exists significant relationship between the age and what attracts them i.e. pictures, videos, textual contents.

Conclusion

Fashion plays an important role on lifestyle and many people spend their money proportion to fashion changes. Today, social media are firmly anchored in consumers changing habits in keeping themselves updated with the latest fashion trends. The present paper analyzes the impact of influencers in various stages of consumer decision process in fashion industry. In the beginning stages of the buying process, consumers tend to realize the need for the product by following celebrities in Facebook, Instagram, twitter etc. The consumers have used blogs as a way to find out information about the product they were considering buying. The blogs also increase the amount of communication consumer's conduct that occurs before the actual purchasing situation. With the use of blogs the phenomena of passing on the message is highlighted in its efficiency. Research responses also suggest that readers use blogs as a way of validating their purchasing decisions. They go online to find reviews posted by bloggers about the product they might be interested in buying and by using the communication tools of the blogs, they ask opinions from the blogger and other readers, hoping to get help to their decision making.

The results of the research indicate that blogs can have a significant impact on how young women behave after

reading a positive comment on a purchase, as they enjoy not only having are liable source telling them their opinions on the products and having a source of information, but also that they enjoy reading texts by someone they relate to. The style of the blogger is what draws the reader to a specific blog, it is the pictures that attract readers coming back and trusting their reviews. Bloggers often provide direct links to the specific items they are talking about and provide the consumers with tips on good and safe places to shop from.

This can be seen both as a negative and a positive shift in terms of the company. If the consumer is satisfied with the product, blogs can be a tool the customer uses to pass on a message about the good experience to unlimited amount people. Without blogs, consumers might talk about the product, but mainly only with their friends, limiting the number of potential customers to a very small number. Therefore by writing about the experiences on blogs, companies can get an idea of what they have done right and what they need to improve on, getting the customer point of view. It is important to note that several companies operating in the fashion industry have come to value and recognize the influence that bloggers can have in terms of reaching their target customers, and have found an efficient way of marketing their products. With these recommendations of investing into relationship building with a blogger and indirectly engaging the company's target customer base, company trust and customer loyalty can be built, resulting in higher sales and profitable long-term customer relationships.

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