



IMPACT OF INFLUENCER MARKETING ON CUSTOMER BUYING JOURNEY: A STUDY ON GLOBAL FASHION BRANDS

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ABSTRACT: *The research aimed at assessing the degree of the impact of influencer marketing on the consumer buying journey from the perspective of the global fashion industry. Four factors are identified by the researcher that are affecting the consumer buying journey in the global fashion industry which are enhancing awareness, generating interest, creating desire, and shaping action. The research has followed the conclusive research design, survey research strategy, quantitative data analysis method, simple random sampling technique, primary information source (100 customers of the global fashion industry), positivist philosophy, and regression analysis technique. It determined that influencers are having a 42.2% impact on the consumer buying journey. In every stage of the customer buying journey, influencers are playing an extremely crucial role. However, some recommendations have been given at the end which include picking the appropriate influencer and not controlling the words of influencers.*

KEYWORDS: Influencer, Influencer Marketing, Brand Awareness, Customer Interest, Purchasing Desire, Buying Action.



INTRODUCTION

Background

The influencer marketing sector has witnessed substantial expansion in recent years, with the market size estimated at 21.1 billion U.S. dollars in 2023, marking a threefold increase since 2019 (Statista, 2023). This surge is accredited to the growing prevalence of social media platforms and the escalating demand for authentic content from influencers recognized as credible authorities in their respective domains. Influencer marketing entails a partnership between brands and influencers, in which influencers endorse products or services to their followers, fostering brand recognition and sales. This approach has gained popularity across businesses of various scales due to its cost-effectiveness and genuine means of reaching target audiences. On average, brands generate \$5.78 for each dollar invested in influencer marketing (Bognar et al., 2019).

The influencer marketing platform market, providing tools and services to facilitate brand-influencer collaborations, attained a valuation of USD 14.27 billion in 2022 and is anticipated to exhibit a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 33.0% from 2023 to 2030 (Statista, 2023). Regarding influencer categories, 39% of brands express a preference for nano-influencers (1K-10K followers) as their primary collaborators, followed by 30% opting for micro-influencers (10K-100K). A smaller proportion of brands directs their focus on larger influencers, with 19% selecting macro-influencers (100K-1M) and 12% for mega/celebrity influencers (Masuda et al., 2022).

Prominent international fashion labels actively participating in influencer marketing encompass Zara, H&M, ASOS, Mango, and Primark. These entities have adeptly employed influencer marketing strategies to connect with and captivate consumers via various social media platforms (Bognar et al., 2019). Furthermore, additional fashion brands, including Amazon, Abercrombie & Fitch, UGG, Urban Outfitters, and Venus Clothing have gained acknowledgment for their proficient execution of influencer marketing initiatives. These brands have harnessed the efficacy of influencer collaborations to endorse their merchandise and foster connections with their intended consumer bases (Nadanyiova et al., 2020).

Zara boasts a specialized team dedicated to managing influencer collaborations, engaging with a global network of 2,500 influencers. The brand's adept utilization of influencer marketing is evidenced by the fact that 20% of its overall media value is derived from these campaigns (Kadekova & Holienčinova, 2018). H&M has strategically aligned itself with influencers on both TikTok and Instagram, producing genuine content that resonates effectively with consumers. The establishment of the brand's own hashtag, #HMLOOKBOOKS, serves to incentivize users to share their H&M acquisitions, affording them an opportunity to feature on the brand's esteemed social media platforms (Taylor, 2020).

ASOS has strategically partnered with influencers, such as Emily Fedner, who shares her favored ASOS fashion discoveries with her followers. The brand's influencer initiatives center on presenting its extensive product range while appealing to a diverse audience. Mango has cultivated partnerships with influencers across Instagram and YouTube, crafting compelling content that spotlights the brand's latest trends and collections (Da Costa, 2019). Primark's collaboration with influencers, including Pernille Teisbaek, is focused on amplifying endorsements for its budget-



friendly yet fashionable clothing options. The brand's influencer strategies are geared towards highlighting its distinctive and reasonably priced offerings (Lee & Kim, 2020).

Amazon has strategically engaged influencers on platforms like Instagram and YouTube, effectively showcasing its extensive array of fashion products to a diverse audience. Abercrombie & Fitch has aligned itself with influencers like TikTok luminary Dixie D'Amelio, leveraging their influence to promote the brand's products to a wider audience. UGG has strategically collaborated with influencers, including Emily Fedner, who shares her preferred UGG fashion selections with her followers (Chopra et al., 2021). The brand's influencer campaigns concentrate on spotlighting its comfortable and stylish footwear. Urban Outfitters has entered into partnerships with influencers like TikTok sensation, Dixie D'Amelio, leveraging their influence to promote the brand's products to their dedicated followers. Venus Clothing's influencer collaborations, featuring figures like Emily Fedner, are geared towards showcasing favored clothing picks and promoting the brand's distinctive and affordable products (Černikovaitė, 2019).

As of August 2023, the Meltwater blog highlights the leading fashion influencers and their substantial followings. Notably, Matilda Djerf commands a substantial audience with 4.3 million followers on Instagram and 1.9 million subscribers on YouTube. Following closely is Lydia Rose, recognized as @fashioninflux, boasting 3.3 million Instagram followers and 654.1K YouTube subscribers. Danielle Bernstein, known as @weworewhat, secures the third position with 2.6 million Instagram followers and 1.2 million YouTube subscribers (Statista, 2023). Aimee Song, identified as @aimeesong, ranks fourth with 5.6 million Instagram followers and 1.7 million YouTube subscribers. Negin Mirsalehi (@negin_mirsalehi) holds the fifth spot, amassing 7.9 million Instagram followers and an impressive 6.5 million YouTube subscribers. The list continues with Chiara Ferragni (@chiaraferragni) boasting 23.5 million Instagram followers and 1.2 million YouTube subscribers, followed by Camila Coelho (@camilacoelho) with 9.5 million Instagram followers and 1.5 million YouTube subscribers. Leonie Hanne (@leoniehanne) is in eighth place, garnering 3.1 million Instagram followers and 1.1 million YouTube subscribers (Statista, 2023). Chriselle Lim (@chrisellelim) secures the ninth position with 1.3 million Instagram followers and 1.1 million YouTube subscribers. Concluding the top ten is Blair Eadie (@blaireadiebee) with 1.5 million Instagram followers and 1.1 million YouTube subscribers (Statista, 2023).



Rationale

In the realm of fashion, influencers play a pivotal role in shaping trends and promoting brands. Leading the pack with an impressive 505,055 mentions from January 2022 to February 2023, Zara continues to dominate the influencer landscape. Renowned for its fashion-forward collections and high-quality products, the Spanish brand remains a top choice for influencers globally, solidifying its leadership position (Statista, 2023).

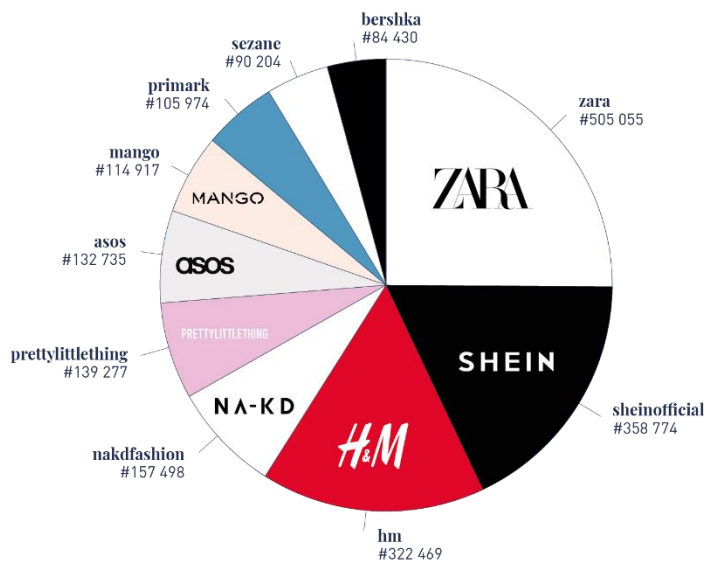


Figure 1: Top ten most mentioned fashion brands by influencers in social media

Source: (Statista, 2023)

Claiming the second spot with 358,774 mentions, the controversial Chinese brand SheIn has strategically employed influencer marketing to achieve meteoric success. Recognized for offering a diverse range of affordable clothing, SheIn has become a benchmark for budget-conscious fashion enthusiasts (Statista, 2023). Meanwhile, H&M secures the third position with 322,469 mentions, leveraging its global presence and commitment to sustainability. Collaborations with influential figures and a diverse clothing offering contribute to H&M's popularity among influencers focused on responsible fashion (Statista, 2023).

Further down the list, NA-KD Fashion emerges as a rising star, amassing 157,498 mentions. This online clothing brand has swiftly gained prominence through collaborations with renowned influencers, expanding its reach and visibility. Pretty Little Thing, ASOS, Mango, Primark, Sézane, and Bershka round out the top 10, each making a distinct mark in the influencer landscape. From trendy and accessible fashion to sustainable and ethical choices, these brands have strategically engaged influencers, solidifying their positions in the dynamic world of fashion. However, three prominent brands that excel in generating significant engagement on Instagram are Louis Vuitton, Zara, and Gucci (Statista, 2023).



In the fashion industry, the ascendancy of influencer marketing stands out as a prevalent and advantageous trend for fashion brands. This strategic approach brings forth a plethora of benefits that contribute to the industry's dynamism and success. One primary advantage lies in the augmentation of brand awareness. The expansive reach of social media platforms, mobilized by influencers, rapidly elevates brand visibility and fosters trust among millions of users. A striking instance of this is exemplified by DKNY's "State of Mind" campaign, where influencers propelled the promotion of limited-edition hoodies, resulting in a notable surge in both brand recognition and sales (Dimitrieska & Efremova, 2021).

Another compelling facet of influencer marketing is the generation of authentic content. Influencers, esteemed as knowledgeable authorities within their niches, wield significant influence, endorsing fashion brands with a stamp of credibility and authenticity. The collaboration between Prada and influencers during Milan Fashion Week epitomizes how this form of marketing cultivates engaging content, creating a buzz around a fashion brand and enhancing its allure (Vrontis et al., 2021). Furthermore, influencer collaborations yield tangible benefits by cultivating increased social media followers and engagement. Urban Outfitters, for instance, strategically partnered with a cadre of enduring influencer collaborators for their 'Fall Including' campaign. This approach effectively showcased their Autumn/Winter collection to a diverse audience, catering to various styles, preferences, and occasions. The upshot was a notable augmentation of the brand's social media following and heightened engagement with their target demographic (Sardar & Dutta, 2020).

An additional boon of influencer marketing is its direct correlation with heightened sales. Statistics reveal that for every dollar invested in influencer marketing, brands can expect an average return of \$5.78, establishing it as a cost-effective avenue for driving sales. UGG's triumph in claiming the fall fashion spotlight in 2022 is a testament to the efficacy of influencer marketing, resulting in a substantial upswing in both sales and brand exposure (Farivar & Wang, 2022). To harness the full potential of influencer marketing, fashion brands should employ diverse tactics, including sponsored content, events, promo codes, and branded hashtags. Prudent selection of influencers is pivotal, demanding meticulous research into factors such as past collaborations, brand consistency, audience demographics, content quality, and follower engagement. By aligning with influencers whose values resonate with the brand, fashion companies can extend their reach, generate leads, and bolster sales, thereby fortifying their market presence and fostering brand loyalty (Thilina, 2021).

In the contemporary marketing landscape, there is a need to closely examine the interplay between influencers and consumer behavior. The study, titled "Impact of Influencer Marketing on Customer Buying Journey: A Study on Global Fashion Brands," seeks to unravel the nuanced influence wielded by influencers in shaping the path to purchase for today's consumers. As influencers continue to play a significant role in the global fashion industry, understanding their impact on the customer buying journey becomes imperative for strategic decision-making (Snyder, 2019). This research delves into the intersection of influencer marketing and the buying process, aiming to elucidate how influencers contribute to various stages – from awareness to consideration and, ultimately, conversion. The study explores the extent to which influencers shape consumer perceptions, drive engagement, and influence purchase decisions (Davidavičienė, 2018).



Furthermore, as global fashion brands navigate the complexities of influencer collaborations, a research inquiry into the effectiveness of such partnerships becomes pivotal. Insights derived from this research endeavor will equip marketers with a profound understanding of the mechanisms through which influencers contribute to brand awareness, credibility, and sales. By shedding light on the dynamic interplay between influencers and the customer buying journey, this research aspires to offer actionable insights for marketers seeking to optimize their influencer marketing strategies in the ever-evolving realm of global fashion (Bognar et al., 2019).

Aims and Objectives

The research aims at investigating the impact of influencer marketing on customer buying journey in the context of global fashion brands.

The objectives of the research are:

- To understand the concept of influencer marketing and its usability in the fashion industry.
- To determine the factors associated with influencer marketing impacting the customer buying journey.
- To assess the degree of impact of influencer marketing on customer buying journey in the context of global fashion brands.
- To recommend strategies to optimize the benefits of influencer marketing on customer buying journey in the context of global fashion brands.

Structure of the Paper

The study will be organized into six sections, each serving a specific purpose. The first section (introduction) lays out the context, reasons, goals, objectives, and research queries. Following this, the literature review section delves into existing publications linked to the subject. The third segment (methodology) outlines the methods and approaches employed in the research process. Subsequently, the analysis and results chapter will describe the findings. Discussion section will showcase and explain the outcomes of the data analysis. Lastly, the conclusions and recommendations section wrap up the main insights and offer ideas for future enhancements.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Influencer Marketing and Its Use in Fashion Industry

Bognar et al. (2019) stated that influencer marketing involves collaborating with influential people on social media to promote a brand's products or services. In fashion, influencer marketing is a strong approach where brands team up with social media personalities who have a big following and influence over their audience. Nadanyiova et al. (2020) opined that this method gained popularity in fashion due to its ability to reach more people, target specific groups, showcase products in an appealing way, use the trust of influencers, keep up with trends and what consumers like, and increase engagement.

Masuda et al. (2022) described that the dynamics of fashion offer a visual allure propelled by ever-evolving trends and distinctive styles. This visual nature of the industry provides influencers with an ideal platform to effectively showcase products, leveraging the power of aesthetics and current fashion preferences. Trust and credibility play pivotal roles in the realm of influencer marketing, with influencers revered as reliable authorities in their respective fields. Their endorsements carry an inherent trustworthiness that surpasses the credibility of traditional advertisements. Kadekova and Holienčinova (2018) shared that the inherent advantage of influencers lies in their expansive social media followings, facilitating a broader reach for fashion brands and fostering increased engagement with their intended audience. Additionally, influencers' innate ability to stay abreast of the latest fashion trends equips brands with the means to remain contemporary and competitive in a swiftly changing industry. Taylor (2020) said that the ripple effects of influencer marketing reverberate through the fashion landscape, generating heightened brand awareness, directing substantial traffic to websites, amplifying brand engagement, and culminating in increased consumer purchases, affirming the multifaceted impact of this strategic approach.

Da Costa (2019) opined that fashion brands can collaborate with different tiers of influencers depending on their goals and budget. Mega-influencers like celebrities have over 1 million followers. Macro-influencers have between 100k-1 million followers and are often seasoned bloggers or Instagram stars. Micro-influencers have less than 100k followers but engagement is often very high with their niche audience. Lee and Kim (2020) described that effective influencer partnerships involve creating compelling and relevant content. For example, brands may send the influencer free products to feature in blog posts, videos or Instagram stories. Giveaways and contests that incentivize user-generated content are also popular. The goal is to inspire content that followers find entertaining or helpful versus overly promotional.



Factors Associated with Influencer Marketing Affecting Customer Buying Journey for Fashion Brands

Enhances Awareness

Chopra et al. (2021) determined that influencer marketing can greatly enhance awareness for fashion brands by allowing them to tap into new demographics and groups that they may not have been able to reach through traditional advertising. For example, partnering with relevant travel bloggers helps fashion brands get in front of travel-loving target consumers. Černiková (2019) described that influencers are also active on multiple social platforms like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and more, which enables fashion brands to expand their presence and reach new audiences where they are spending time. Influencer-created content has the potential to go viral, exponentially growing a brand's visibility through millions of views. Smaller or newer fashion brands can leverage an influencer's credibility to help establish themselves as trendsetting and reputable. Lin et al. (2019) stated that influencers continue to authentically promote brands over time through organic mentions, building sustained awareness beyond any initial sponsored content. Followers also tend to trust influencer recommendations more than promotional ads, lending more consumer trust and credibility when influencers showcase branded products. Tabellion and Esch (2019) found that influencers can spark highly engaging and interactive experiences with followers around fashion brands using giveaways, Q&As, polls and more to heighten awareness.

Generates Interest

Farivar and Wang (2022) demonstrated that influencer marketing can create interest of target audiences for fashion brands before they have even considered making a purchase. When an influencer that a follower admires starts posting attention-grabbing photos and videos wearing or using a brand's items, it immediately sparks interest in learning more. Dimitrieska and Efremova (2021) emphasized that the influencer's unique perspective showcasing products in real-world settings or styled in compelling ways makes audiences take notice where more traditional product catalogs may not. Followers become curious about a brand or product line they may not have known about previously when it is brought onto their radar by an influencer. Vrontis et al. (2021) found that the influencer endorsement adds intrigue, making audiences more receptive to learning about the brand's unique value proposition and point of difference versus competitors. When multiple influencers begin discussing or wearing a new fashion brand, it signals that the brand is growing in popularity and credibility, further fueling interest. Sardar and Dutta (2020) agreed that consumers feel more intrigued to explore brands that resonate with the influencers they trust versus unknown names. Interest reaches greater heights when influencers take audiences behind the scenes of photoshoots, events, or brand headquarters visits through Instagram stories and vlogs. This insider access drives engagement and gives followers a compelling reason to pay attention to the brand.



Creates Desire

Bognar et al. (2019) explained that influencer marketing is an extremely effective tactic for fashion brands to spark desire for their products among target audiences and consumers. Seeing influencers post photos and videos modeling the latest clothing styles, accessories, shoes, and more provides shoppers with style inspiration and visualizes how they could incorporate featured products into their own wardrobes. Nadanyiova et al. (2020) depicted that the artfully arranged product shots and lifestyle imagery influencers make brand items look highly desirable and must-have. When an admired influencer endorses a fashion product as being of exceptional quality or their new favorite item, it imbues the product with more perceived value and prestige in the minds of followers. Followers aspire to emulate the style of influencers they look up to. Masuda et al. (2022) found that if an influencer helps a brand seem aspirational and one-of-a-kind, consumers feel a strong pull towards purchasing from that brand over competitors so they too can achieve the lifestyle and aesthetic portrayed. Kadekova and Holienčinova (2018) stated that beyond aspiration, influencers telling real stories about how a brand's clothing elevates their confidence or receives compliments generates a deep emotional desire among audiences to experience those same benefits. In essence, influencer marketing allows fashion brands to tangibly demonstrate the desire their products can fulfill through vicarious, engaging storytelling. This primes audiences to take action and purchase once their interest is piqued.

Shapes Action

Taylor (2020) stated that influencer marketing plays a crucial role in encouraging customers to engage with brands actively. After sparking initial interest and desire, influencers directly prompt followers to take action, turning inspiration into concrete sales. Da Costa (2019) explained that this unfolds seamlessly through affiliated links, discount codes, and tracked promo codes strategically placed in influencer content, bio links, and stories, creating a straightforward path for immediate purchases. Lee and Kim (2020) highlighted that urgency is heightened when influencers highlight sales, new product releases, or limited-edition items, instilling a sense of scarcity that prompts swift responses. Style influencers leverage shoppable posts and tags on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, allowing customers to effortlessly buy featured items with a simple click or tap. Beyond direct purchases, influencers inspire audiences to join in branded hashtag campaigns, contests, and giveaways, fostering brand interaction and collecting valuable user-generated content. Chopra et al. (2021) added that enlisting followers in email and messaging lists nurtures ongoing communication between brands and potential buyers. Influencers' reviews play a crucial role in reducing barriers to purchase, instilling confidence in aspects such as sizing, quality, and overall satisfaction. The close relationship audiences have with the influencers they follow makes them more open to precise calls-to-action compared to generic advertisements.



Literature Gap

Previous studies by Černikovaitė (2019), Farivar and Wang (2022), and Dimitrieska and Efremova (2021) have suggested that influencer marketing has a significant impact across the entire customer buying journey. These researchers argue that influencers can enhance brand awareness, spark interest in products, generate desire, and drive purchase actions. However, other academics including Vrontis et al. (2021) along with Sardar and Dutta (2020) have critiqued that while influencer marketing is effective for raising awareness and interest, product desire is more dependent on factors like quality and customer service. Furthermore, they state that the final purchase decision relies on customer affordability, attractiveness, and convenience rather than influencers alone. This contrasting perspective reveals a clear research gap in determining the extent of influencer marketing's impact on shaping desire and prompting action. Further research is needed to provide clarity and bridge this gap in understanding. The outcome of this research would help resolve the differing views on how influencer marketing impacts different stages of the customer buying process.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Research design serves as a roadmap for completing a research paper, ensuring activities stay on course. The choice of research design hinges on the research issue, aim, and objectives. Researchers opt for either exploratory or conclusive designs. Exploratory research is chosen when delving into the unknown, forming questions not previously explored (Snyder, 2019). With a small sample size, it sets the groundwork for subsequent descriptive or causal research. Conclusive research, divided into descriptive and causal options, addresses objective topics for decision-making. Descriptive design investigates specific issues, market characteristics, and activities, using surveys or observational methods that aligned with this research and was selected. Causal research determines cause-and-effect relationships but was unsuitable due to multiple variables and a focus on market characteristics (Davidavičienė, 2018).

Research Philosophy

The researcher's motivation shapes the research philosophy, influencing sample size, data interpretation, strategy, and approach. Four commonly employed research philosophies include positivism, pragmatism, realism, and interpretivism. Realism involves an independent application of the researcher's knowledge to avoid bias from external input. Interpretivism aligns with qualitative methods for exploratory research, while pragmatism opts for a mixed approach. In this study, none of these philosophies proved suitable. Positivism was chosen due to its compatibility with a large sample, quantitative methods, and its capacity to yield conclusions for decision-making (Pandey & Pandey, 2021).



Research Approach

The research framework is shaped by the chosen research approach, offering an overview of the structure, data collection, analysis, and research purpose. Two alternatives (inductive and deductive) are available for selection. For conclusive research with a solid theoretical foundation, the deductive approach is preferred as it leads to a conclusive resolution, serving as a decision-making input (Peters, 2010). This research, being conclusive, objective, and well-supported by data and literature, did not aim to introduce new concepts, making the deductive approach the most suitable. The inductive approach, suited for exploratory research aiming to develop new concepts or theories, was not chosen for this research, which was not subjective and had relevant existing works and theories (Snyder, 2019).

Research Strategy

Information gathering methods vary, and seven strategies, including ethnography, archival, and observational, are commonly considered. However, for this research, ethnography and observational methods were deemed unsuitable. Archival aligns with secondary research, but a survey strategy was deemed optimal, enabling effective data collection from a sizable sample (Davidavičienė, 2018).

Research Method

The chosen research method shapes the information nature and explanatory process. Researchers can opt for qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. This study excluded the qualitative method due to its exploratory focus on expert opinions. The mixed method aligns with pragmatism but was disregarded as the research adheres to positivism. Instead, a quantitative approach was adopted, allowing for data collection from a sizable sample, facilitating decision-making through charts, graphs, and tables (Pandey & Pandey, 2021).

Sampling

Sampling, the method for choosing research participants from a larger population, varies in types like simple random, stratified, quota, snowball, cluster, judgmental, and convenience. With constraints on time and budget, the researcher opted for the simplest method. While convenience was a consideration, the potential for selection bias led to the choice of simple random (Peters, 2010). The research has selected 100 customers of the global fashion industry randomly following the method.

Data Collection and Analysis

The study relies on first-hand data gathered from the consumers of global fashion brands, steering clear of secondary sources such as websites, journals, and annual reports. This approach mitigates concerns about currency, dependability, and relevance (Snyder, 2019). Regression analysis is employed to organize and interpret the data coherently with SPSS. The regression model is provided below for reference.



$$ICJ = A + \beta_1 EA + \beta_2 GI + \beta_3 CD + \beta_4 SA$$

Here,

Enhance Awareness = EA

Generates Interest = GI

Creates Desire = CD

Shapes Action = SA

Impact on Consumer Buying Journey = ICJ

A = Constant Value

Ethical Issues

This research adhered to data protection regulations. Participants were informed of the research's purpose and their consent was obtained before survey participation. Participants had the option to decline or skip questions if they felt uneasy.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Demographic Analysis

Gender of Respondents

Table 1: Gender of Participants

Gender	Percentage
Male	55%
Female	45%

Age of Respondents

Table 2: Age of Participants

Age group	Percentage
18-25	50%
26-33	39%
34-42	11%

The research has included respondents from both males and females because it ensured the variety in the responses and included different viewpoints. Based on age, the researcher involved the respondents who belong to Generation Y and Z because they are the core audiences of fashion influencers.



Regression Analysis

Variables Entered

Table 3: Variables Entered

Variables Entered/Removed ^a			
Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	SA, CD, EA, GI ^b	.	Enter
a. Dependent Variable: ICJ			
b. All requested variables entered.			

The research has included four independent variables which are Enhance Awareness (EA), Generates Interest (GI), Creates Desire (CD), and Shapes Action (SA). The only dependent variable of this research was the Impact on Consumer Buying Journey (ICJ).

Model Summary

Table 4: Model Summary

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change
1	.598 ^a	.437	.422	.24193	.437	21.697	4	95	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), SA, CD, EA, GI									

The model summary is showing that the value of R square is 0.437 or 43.7% but after adjusting the errors, the value is 0.422 or 42.2%. It means that influencer marketing with social media influencers impacts 42.2% of the consumer buying journey and the rest is impacted by other factors like product availability, convenience, price, quality, and brand equity.

ANOVA

Table 5: ANOVA Table

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.762	4	2.441	21.697	.000 ^b
	Residual	5.560	95	.059		
	Total	15.322	99			
a. Dependent Variable: ICJ						
b. Predictors: (Constant), SA, CD, EA, GI						



The ANOVA table provides statistical evidence for the validity of the model. A significance value of less than 0.05 indicates a good fitness of the model. Upon examining the significance value section of the ANOVA table, it can be observed that the value of 0.000 indicates a strong statistical fit.

Coefficient

Table 6: Coefficient

Coefficients ^a														
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Partial	Tolerance	VIF	
1	(Constant)	-.074	.566		-.131	.896	-1.197	1.049						
	EA	.645	.072	.634	8.917	.010	.502	.789	.763	.675	.551	.757	1.321	
	GI	.113	.075	.113	1.506	.035	-.036	.263	.485	.153	.093	.673	1.486	
	CD	.110	.073	.097	1.514	.033	-.034	.254	.292	.153	.094	.924	1.082	
	SA	.143	.068	.153	2.109	.038	.008	.277	.458	.211	.130	.724	1.381	

a. Dependent Variable: ICJ

The significance of the independent variables on the dependent variable can be determined by examining the coefficients table. A significance value of less than 0.05 indicates that the independent variable has a significant effect on the dependent variable. In this case, the significance values obtained were 0.010, 0.035, 0.033 and 0.038, all of which are less than the standard value of 0.05. Therefore, all four independent variables have a significant impact on the fashion industry’s consumer buying journey.



DISCUSSION

The research has found that influencers are having a 42.2% impact on the consumer buying journey. In every stage of the customer buying journey, they are playing an extremely crucial role. The research has determined that influencers play a major role in building awareness for fashion brands by introducing their followers to new brands and products through social media posts, stories, haul videos, and more. Their contents provide discovery of brands and items consumers may not have previously known about or had on their radar (Bognar et al., 2019). When an influencer's post goes viral, it can exponentially spread brand awareness far beyond just their own audience. Influencer partnerships also lend credibility and a sense of repute to boutique or up-and-coming fashion brands that consumers may not have heard of before (Nadanyiova et al., 2020).

Influencer marketing sparks interest in fashion brands as followers become curious and want to learn more when influencers discuss or showcase different brands. The influencer's unique perspective makes the products seem more intriguing compared to traditional product catalogs. Providing insider access to photoshoots and brand trips that followers can experience through influencer vlogs and stories further fuels interest in the brand. When multiple influencers start talking about the same new fashion brand, it signals to audiences that the brand is growing in popularity and this grabs their attention (Masuda et al., 2022).

In the desired stage, influencer reviews, testimonials, and recommendations shape positive brand perceptions and address concerns that impact how consumers evaluate a fashion brand. Influencers tackle questions around sizing, quality, value for money, and more that are important evaluation criteria. They also facilitate easier comparison between competitive brand options as influencers often showcase products from multiple brands side-by-side (Kadekova & Holienčinova, 2018).

In the action stage, affiliate links, promo codes, and shoppable posts convert the interest sparked by influencers into action by enabling seamless transactions. Influencers build confidence around product satisfaction, which reduces barriers to purchase (Taylor, 2020). Promoting limited edition releases or sales also drives urgency and incentive for followers to purchase from the fashion brand. In the long-term, influencer partnerships cultivate loyalty by providing sustained exposure over time versus short promotional campaigns. As influencers continue to authentically promote and engage with the fashion brand, it keeps the brand top-of-mind and relevant with target audiences. User-generated content and social engagement driven by influencers also fosters an invested brand community and sense of affiliation between customers (Da Costa, 2019).



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The research aimed at assessing the degree of the impact of influencer marketing on the consumer buying journey from the perspective of the Bangladeshi smartphone market. To meet the research aim, four objectives were prepared by the researcher that were met in 5 chapters of the research paper. The first objective was “to understand the concept of influencer marketing and its use in the fashion industry” which was met in the first and second chapters of the research. The second objective was “to determine the factors associated with influencer marketing that are shaping the customer buying journey” and it was accomplished in the second chapter of the research. These factors are enhancing awareness, generating interest, creating desire, and shaping action. The third objective of the research was “to assess the degree of impact of influencer marketing on customer buying journey in the global fashion brands” which was determined in the fourth chapter of the study. The research has found that influencers are having a 42.2% impact on the consumer buying journey. The last objective was “to recommend some strategies to optimize the benefits of influencer marketing in the global fashion brands” which was obtained in the 5th chapter of the study.

Recommendations

Through the overall discussion, the research has found some areas of improvement that optimize the effectiveness of influencer marketing in the global fashion brands:

- **Avoid forcing the influencers to give exaggerated reviews:** Fashion brands often engage in paid reviews with influencers, resulting in dissatisfied customers and unrealistic expectations. Consequently, many potential customers do not proceed with the adoption process as they perceive the information provided by the influencers to be inaccurate.
- **Picking the appropriate influencer:** Choosing influencers based on the target customer group can lead to more effective results as the target audience tends to have a higher admiration for the selected influencers. Moreover, the influencer should have a good endorsement history and image in social media.



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