



Bloggers Authenticity and Product Reviews: A Study of Consumer Perceptions and Purchase Intention

Erham Ahmad

Lecturer, Department of Media and Communication Studies, National University of Modern Languages (NUML) Rawalpindi Campus

Email: erham.ahmed@numl.edu.pk

Abstract: The rapid growth in internet usage and various social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, twitter etc. is gaining much popularity among people due to its easy use and user-friendly features. These social networking sites gave birth to the new phenomenon that is gaining public attention is of blogging and bloggers. To present ideas and one's self in a unique, organized and attractive way is blogging and the persons who create blogs are bloggers (Skrba, 2020). Fashion bloggers on Instagram are popular among users due to their product reviews on various products. Their followers and viewers trust these reviews and influenced by the consumer behavior. The study was quantitative in nature and data was collected from 230 Instagram users through survey. This study seeks to explore whether product reviews of fashion bloggers effect the consumer behavior. The research study also aimed to see whether trust on bloggers and their popularity was an influential factor towards the consumer behavior. It was revealed that majority of the respondents claimed that they buy fashion products because of product reviews by the fashion bloggers. It was also found that the bloggers' popularity and trust on the bloggers are also an important factor contributing in buying fashion products.

Key words: Fashion bloggers, Product reviews, Consumer behavior, Trust, Blogger authenticity

1. Introduction

Social media have now become the integral part of daily life. It leads to change the personal and professional behaviors as well. With the wide spread of internet and social media applications like Facebook, Instagram, twitter are gaining popularity among youth. Instagram was first presented as a smartphone picture sharing app, much like other social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and others, with the intention of taking and sharing photos (Benjamin, 2012). Instagram became a platform for a person to create an ideal image of him or herself (Sunstrum, 2014). Social media users spend plenty of time on creation of their online self-image (Solomon, 2010). This relates with one's motives to realize his or her full potential and abilities. According to a research, bloggers having 1 million above followers usually post on average 8.58 posts each day and variety of sellers and product marketers approach them to use them on Instagram as a marketing tool (Mediakix., 2019).

With the expansion of social media sites another phenomenon appeared that is known as online blogging and bloggers. Blogging is seen as a social domain where a large number of individuals compete for the symbolic control of space (blog, 2014). Blogging is a way for people to portray themselves as public personalities and a way to become well-known to a certain audience, form affecting ties with viewers and consider their followers as fans. The notable trend of collaborating with bloggers to promote products through various ways of product placements in videos or pictures, discount code offers and giving advices, recommendations (Chishma, 2016).

Even though blogs are effective in many ways and bloggers also hold a notable influence in the marketing area and it occurs due to the fast growth in the usage of Instagram application. Instagram is one of the most preferred and used applications among fashion bloggers in view of its ease and speed to share multiple styles and varieties. As a general task, blogging provides room for wide variety of expressions within a simple and constrained format (Sim, 2019). Bussey (2013) composited another adapted technique that is referred to as social media influencers or bloggers. The social media bloggers do efforts to get a kind of celebrity status by maintaining the most devotion as possible and creating a reliable personal brand i.e. their name and fame via social networks, which may later be used by the brands and product advertisers to access customers. The social media bloggers are made by themselves and identified by a variety of social media networks.

In past few years, social media blogging had been a new trend and gradually gaining popularity with passage of time. The bloggers using various practices to create a consistent public image that reveals their values and overall reputation to get place among their followers (Fita, 2018). It is the continuous process of evolving and sustaining image and status as an individual or a group (Henderson, 2019). The credibility of a blogger is a significant aspect in inspiring audience's behaviors. The brands and advertisers know that these high trustworthy and reliable sources can increase the persuasiveness of the message (Harshman, 1985). The source trustworthiness basically specifies helpful behaviors of a blogger that has an impact on the audience's ability to accept a message efficiently (Ohanian, 1990).

1.2. Rationale

The basic aim of present research was to study the effects of product reviews by Instagram fashion bloggers on consumer behavior. The research also intended to find out whether having trust on product reviews of fashion bloggers and the popularity of a fashion blogger have any effect on consumer behavior of people. People like fashion bloggers and view their blogs and reviews on various brands and products. The research also explored people's views on trustworthiness of fashion bloggers on Instagram.

1.3. Research Questions

- a) Is there any influence of product reviews on consumer behavior?
- b) Do people buy the fashion products because of their trust on the bloggers?
- c) Does the blogger's popularity influence consumer behavior? Whether the fashion bloggers are influencing their followers' purchase behavior by their product reviews?

1.4. Significance of the Study

Blogging and bloggers is a new phenomenon among the people and with the mushrooming of social media sites, the bloggers through their blogs are now shaping and influencing their followers' views and opinions. Fashion bloggers with higher followership, by reviewing the fashion styles and products through their blogs are changing people views about latest trends, styles etc. Consumer behavior is also one of the perspectives that has been changing due to these product reviews. As many people are considering them as credible and trustworthy source to get information about latest products and hence make buying decisions according to it. Reason that the phenomenon of blogging and bloggers is growing rapidly, is due to the increase in use of Instagram as the most used social networking site with more than 1 billion users around the world. The fashion bloggers on Instagram are creating a great awareness and knowledge among the people due their unique styles of blogging and reviewing. People seeks product knowledge through reviews and fashion bloggers helps consumers to complete their research while making purchase decisions of different fashion items, be it clothing, styling, makeup and beauty tips.

2. Literature Review

Using known figures as representatives is commonly used advertising strategy because of their massive influence (Schlecht, 2003). Public known personalities have the capability to produce and sustain attention because of their fame but to attain high appreciation for the communicated information from the advertising perception as well (Erdogan, 2008). Bloggers are the ones using social media as a tool for generating viewers and also referred as small celebrities on social media sites as they also have niche followers (Clarewells, 2014). Blogging is about being well known to a niche, group of people where people present themselves as public personas, form affective ties with audience. The notable trend of collaborating with bloggers to promote products through various ways of product placements in videos or pictures, discount code offers and giving advices, recommendations (Khamis, Lawrence, & Raymond, 2017).

People are now actively and passively in both ways shown advertising through multiple ways and they might feel that advertising as forced upon them, might bored them. Nowadays, people shift towards social media like blogging, to gather information and getting advice online, before making their buying decisions (Hennig, 2010). Social media users as consumers are using blogs as a source of information to form their buying decisions. Blogging has become a crucial part of a consumer's decision-making process (Chishma, 2016). Virtual groups intensely increase consumer access to uncommercial customized information (Jepsen, 2006). Social media bloggers usually provide unique information with the ability to form the behavior and attitudes of their followers through blogs and posts (Freberg, 2011). Their reviews on social media are able to persuade their followers to have the similar products, therefore influencing purchase intentions of consumers (Hwang, 2018). Those who view bloggers as opinion leaders can easily be influenced as when consumers trust bloggers, they accept the reviews as well as recommendations that can reshape the purchasing choices (Konstantopoulou, 2019).

Abidin (2015) implies that blogger are usually famous to a niche group of people. Social networking sites opened a space of numerous possibilities for anyone to show their talent, skill, knowledge they want to communicate with others. The promoting personal image is a method that includes finding the unique ideas, creating a reputé on things you want to be known for and let yourself be known for them. The potential large audience of bloggers on social media has attracted businesses to engage in paid collaboration with them for advertising purposes (Michael, 2019). Bloggers defined a new style of digital presentation where people engage in video, audio, blogs and SNS to gain popularity among social media users and the term blogging refers to the dissolution of private in public and exists in these states of being famous and wish to be famous (Senft, 2013). According to research (2016), Bloggers are the ones who have much fame through using social media, create viewership as well as followership by having followers out of their friends and peer groups. There is a consistent bond between audience as fans or followers and the bloggers in process, as there is a lively value to the self-presentation of the blogger and the viewers create meanings and find significance through their connections with the bloggers and the blogger's online blogs. The present activities of getting fame and status are now renovating into social media actions. The popularity attained due to social media sites is classified by uploading one's daily routines and activities regularly (Jerslev, 2016).

2.1 Social media, Instagram and Fashion Bloggers

Celebrities and bloggers both use social media to create persistent flow of content, competing for getting more followers. These practices are the constituent elements of maintaining online presence in which blog's views represent success (Marwick, 2015). Various social networking sites give diverse opportunities to brands, companies to maintain ties with their customers (Hopkins, 2013). When consumers search information, they trust visual and spoken information by a person i.e. a blogger more than information given on product. It happens because blogger's verbally provided information is considered reliable and trustworthy and is based on another person's experience (Herr, 1991). Blogs have an exciting power within the advertising area, one can only accept the fast growth within the usage of Instagram. Instagram is one of the preferred applications among fashion bloggers given its ease and swiftness to share styles and combinations of clothing (Sudha M., 2017).

Blogs serve as a platform where identity is formed, basically blogs appear as an impulsive medium (Zareie, 2013), providing extreme interactivity for fame and spotlight, blogging can give person a vision to speak his or her favorite social identity to the vast audience and quickly become a star, appeared as micro celebrities commonly known as bloggers (Marwick, 2013). In this new media atmosphere, fashion shows, brand campaigns and fashion editorials, are giving a boost to another phase of blogging which is fashion blogging. Fashion blogs usually emerge as a guiding tool and a brand knowledge and information platform (Findlay, 2019). Fashion blogs are relatively unique advertising and promotional tool that allows fashion brands and their customers to interact in a collaborative environment (Hilde, 2013). Bloggers with a big social media following who use their profiles to be artistic and showcase their fashion in various ways, through posting sponsored content, advertisements, reviews and interesting in brand partnerships, also promoting awareness and consumption of joined brands to their followers (Findlay, 2019). With the emergence of latest media, many companies attempt to assimilate blog into their marketing strategies and utilize blogs so as to succeed in the consumers (Hilde, 2013).

2.2 Fashion Bloggers and Product Reviews

In the modern advertising and promotions phenomenon, a brand implies a convinced quality or idea that go together with product that simplifies the decision-making of consumers. Basically, a brand or person is supposed to possess solid, unique and relevant intellectual relations (Keller, 2009), which helps distinguish the brand within the market.

Promoting and creating one's image over social media revolve around devotion, significantly encompasses the potential for getting famous, maintaining reputation and personality. Captivating stories can attract audiences for various motives (Khamis, Lawrence, & Raymond, 2017). Pooley (2010) explains a perception of intended authenticity, which is evident in presentation and a deliberate presentation of their self as a brand.

2.3 Fashion Bloggers, Authenticity and Trustworthiness

Establishing credibility and sincerity are trademarks of self-presentation and self-branding based on the supported the mediated social connection that is likely to arise between the blogger and followers. Blogger extends this to social networking sites of actual interaction, like giving instant replies, comments and virtually or inter personal meetings. This communication is a key to take care of the blogger's popularity and becomes a part of their personal brand. There is an excessive level of responsibility for bloggers than other celebrities. The bloggers need to be very careful while reviewing or promoting a product or service (Marwick, 2015). Bloggers have really important effect on buying decisions as they are considered more authentic and reliable. Constant with the thought of being trustworthy and sincere, the blogger may have more reliability and thus have more influence than other sorts of social influences (Alperstein, 2018). Bloggers have a really significant impact on purchase decisions, reasoning as they are more credible and believable.

Credibility is all about the likelihood to believe or trust someone with no doubt of being manipulated. Faith, trust, love and objectivity are all summed up in one word, credibility. One more factor that positively or negatively in either way affects source credibility in relation to advertising and celebrity endorsements is the similarity between the spokesperson and the product. Trustworthiness refers to the honesty and believability of a source. A blogger's trustworthiness depends primarily on the audience's perception of his or her endorsement motivations (Marwick, 2011). Bloggers comprises a sense of self-rule. Because of the widespread notion of social media platforms, it is believed that young bloggers are not enlisted into the powerful and commercialized system sustaining celebrity culture (Marwick, 2013). This idea of individuality, therefore, strengthens their trustworthiness and authenticity.

To attain authenticity, a person must possess trustworthiness, capability and goodwill. These three perceptions can be created, achieved and refined. This requires a synchronized approach to message design, delivery and most vital, variation to the given audience and existing media situation (Ohanian, 1991). Bloggers need to be able to their existence on social media with minimal assistance, which can subject them to uncertain of their audiences. Among one of the ways during which audiences exhibit this sense making process is through their responses to bloggers that separate some social expectancy, like bloggers that sell-out to marketable interests. There is an assumption that bloggers will present themselves in an authentic and sincere manner that raises the mark for them and potentially makes them more careful towards their reviews (Khamis, Lawrence, & Raymond, 2017).

Today these bloggers are also enabled by the growth of social media and authorized by ordinary people that successfully manage to present themselves as a vision and are rewarded instantly for their invitations to bridge by mechanism of subscribers and followers (Hearn, 2008). Identity expression is inclined by perception of audience. Posting to a section of close friends is different from the broad spectrum of masses on social media sites like on Facebook and can affect how people present themselves. The term online identity states that there is a difference between how people exhibit themselves online and the way they are doing offline. Identity on social networking sites is usually stated through personalization. People producing blogs and online figures can use a variety of digital items such as pictures, looks, styles, images, fonts, music and video to represent themselves. These digital products become representative labels of their private character (Marwick, 2013).

Having the capacity to represent themselves in any way they wanted, bloggers defined themselves through a process of mediation with others, establishing interpretive setting for their online selves by linking to the homepages of friends and educational institutions. These personal homepages were gradually comprised by blogs and social network site profiles that allowed an excellent deal of customization and personal expression through designs (Wynn, 1997). Bloggers manage to present themselves as brand and commodity. These online processes of having fame in present-day combine the commodification and branding smoothly with originality. Bloggers as well as vloggers exhibit this sense of originality in them through their on-camera presentation, making vlogging the accomplishing results of their individual creative efforts. Therefore, despite successful vloggers' continuous claim to the standard, they're also exceptionally successful in their commercial actions (Jerslev, 2016). Being a state of having fame, brings the thought of being a model to be followed and this fame and a spotlight must be reproduced, while the image must be proved and desired. Roland Barthes points out that an image is formed to ask the observation of the individual. It is interdiscursive and relies on the spectator to become fully realized (Fuery, 2003).

2.4 Consumer Behavior

When a blogger; micro-celebrity, commonly known as blogger, promotes a product and gives reviews people pay more attention to the product and its features, whereas in the celebrity placement, their most focus is on the celebrity not on product (Erdogan, 2008). Today's generation customers have a habit to make purchasing decisions that are frequently based on the effect and opinions of others (Colucci, 2014). The comments on blogs posted online play a large role in a consumer's decision-making process. Consumers have now started using blogs for information purposes on products and services for the reason that as consumers they are annoyed by the commonly used mass media practices and old methods are taken as less trustworthy (Dennis, 2009). A study highlighted the new and unique marketing concept of research shopping, this concept is all about assembling information from one source such as online sources, blogs and product reviews and purchasing in another. Consumers research high involvement purchases before buying a product. Thus, bloggers provide assistance to consumers in their hunt for the perfect brand or product that meet their requirements (Hsu, 2013).

2.5 Theoretical Framework

2.5.1 Theory of Reasoned Action

This theory is supportive in defining consumer attitudes towards bloggers and products promoted by them. The aim of theory of reasoned actions helps to explain volitional, choice behaviors. The theory is mostly used to explain consumer's purchase behavior. Considering bloggers reviews as credible, fair and believable to follow them, is a balanced, systematic and thoughtful behavior rather than largely controlled by unconscious motives. Theory of reasoned action (Ajzen, 2005) suggests a suitable framework for theorizing that kind of behavior. Theory emphasizes on the effects of relative factors on the intention of a consumer to behave a certain way towards utilization and also tries to explain human behavior. Consistent to this view, consumers intentions to follow bloggers as a source to get information, are determined by their attitudes and perceptions. This theory states that the consumer behavior can be determined by the intention to buy a product, that comes through the positive and negative reviews of products. Now a days bloggers are doing their best at giving the product reviews for their viewers and followers to create brand awareness and knowledge. These product reviews by social media fashion bloggers effects the consumer behavior of people to assess their product choices. The relative factors to affect the consumer behavior can be the factors of being credible, having trust on them and the blogger's popularity can also be an influencing factor as well. Theory of reasoned actions signifies that now people follow the bloggers as they attribute them as trustworthy enough to believe what they are saying or reviewing. This implies that the consumer behavior related to various products is basically the reaction of these product reviews given by fashion bloggers through their Instagram handles. People usually finds the product review as helpful in making their buying decisions

2.5.2 Source Credibility Theory

The source credibility theory (Hovland J. I., 1953) defines that people are more likely to be persuaded when the source presents itself as credible. McCroskey referred that communicators with high credibility tend to have respect in front of receivers as their views are acknowledged more easily. The followers associate the source credibility to the blogger's promising appeal that produces knowledge, ethical values and friendliness towards their followers or viewers (McCroskey, 1958). Source credibility in publicity and endorsing is additionally influenced by source attractiveness that is referred as popularity. The more popular a blogger is, the more likely followers as consumers shop for whatever they are telling, reviewing or recommending (Shimp, 1984). Source credibility theory also incorporates certain aspects like trust, likeliness, knowledge, popularity as main extents of a source being credible. When a blogger is considered credible enough among people and have better amount of trust on their reviews, they can more likely be able to effect the consumer behavior of products reviewed by the fashion bloggers. The credibility is crucial element to convince and persuade the audience towards some actions i.e. purchasing a product. The popular and trusted bloggers have more repute among followers and hence also effects their consumer choices.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study was quantitative in nature and survey method was adopted to collect the data. For this research study female university students of age 18-26 were selected for present research. The present study follows descriptive quantitative method, in which the subjects are measured once and the only intention of research is to find out the

effect of bloggers' product reviews on consumer behavior. Probability purposive sampling used to collect data through survey method. The results were then calculated by using SPSS to analyze the responses of research survey.

3.2 Population

Population of research was mainly the active users of Instagram. The population for this research were the female students of International Islamic University Islamabad and Bahria University Islamabad. The purpose of selecting these universities is because of the convenience of the researcher. The population for the current research consists of Instagram users and follow at least one fashion blogger on Instagram.

3.3 Sample

Purposive sampling method was adopted for the study. The female students taken as sample were from two different universities of Islamabad. 300 survey questionnaires were distributed among female university students in Islamabad from International Islamic University Islamabad and Bahria university Islamabad. 234 responses were received through survey. 4 responses were neglected and were not entered in SPSS because they are not Instagram users, so 230 responses were used in data analysis. The research survey was conducted through use of google forms in which respondents were asked to answer the questions related to the influence of fashion bloggers and their product reviews on people and also its effect on their consumer behavior.

3.4 Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of 26 items including closed-ended questions. The first 2 questions used as screening questions to make sure that only Instagram users who followed at least one fashion blogger on Instagram could take part in the survey. To pretest the questionnaire, pilot testing is done on 40 participants to test the reliability of the questionnaire before conducting actual research survey that included mainly the researcher's friends and fellows who were active users of Instagram. Minor changes in wording of statements were done to the questionnaire and pretest data was not used in the final analyses. Questionnaire constructed was of 26 items in which two were used as screening questions to ensure the use of Instagram by the respondents. The remaining are the statements of negative and positive statements. Questionnaire was divided into two parts. In first part, the information on demographics and general questions about the usage of Instagram and familiarity with fashion bloggers was asked to the respondents. Second part of the questionnaire comprised of statements which were required to answer according five-point Likert scale.

3.5 Variables

3.5.1 Conceptual Definitions

3.5.1.1 Instagram Usage

Instagram allows the users to create their identities among others and provide a sights into their lives that fit these personae. The practices used by Instagram bloggers are important element of an online attention economy in which page views are the same with success and attainment of online status (Marwick, 2015).

3.5.1.2 Consumer Behavior

Consumer buying decision is a process that comprises need recognition, information search, evaluating substitutes, selection and behavior after product purchase. Product reviews by bloggers basically leads to rise in emotions, thus influences the behavior of consumers and in response they behave according to various scopes of consumer behavior (Tahseen, 2016). One aspect of consumer behavior is the influence of reference groups like bloggers, peer group on consumer behavior and it basically effects their behavior and attitude towards brands and also the selection of brands (Goldsmith, 1996).

3.5.1.3 Trust

Trustworthiness is defined as the confidence a consumer have on the source of information in an impartial and honest approach (Ohanian, 1991).

The likeness of bloggers and viewers or followers matters a lot to increase their trustworthiness, as people generally trust individuals who are alike them (Erdogan, 2008). Moreover, constant experience could also construct the similar feelings of bond enhancement, hence it makes social media bloggers a trustworthy source of information (Hwang, 2018).

3.5.1.4 Popularity

Individual users from consumer brands borrow the methods and view point to do their online activity i.e. blogging in

order to increase their popularity (Marwick, 2015). It is evident that once a blogger attains firm popularity among followership, their followers visit the blog and the social networking sites blogs have huge followership and variety of users (Pedroni M. M., 2016, 2018).

3.5.2 Operational Definitions

3.5.2.1 Instagram Usage

Instagram is a social media interaction tool designed for sharing, exploring by tapping the user’s finger on the screen of their smartphone. As consumers are exposed to variety of ideas through Instagram, thus the choices and standard of their attention changes.

3.5.2.2 Consumer behavior

Consumer behavior is termed as the method that is generally involved when individuals or groups choose, buy, use or dispose the products, services, ideas or experiences to gratify needs and wants.

3.5.2.3 Trust

Bloggers maintain strong relations with their audience that is often regarded as having a level of trust on the blogger’s opinions. The blog reader’s trust in the blogger is significant to the perceived utility of the blogger’s product reviews towards purchasing based on the consumer’s perspective.

3.5.2.4 Popularity

Social interactions can imply the popularity of bloggers and blogs. Popularity refers to the ability to interact with and known among the blog followers and readers, which reflects the perceived expertise of bloggers.

4. Results and Analysis

For present research a total of 300 questionnaires were distributed among the female university students of International Islamic University Islamabad and Bahria University Islamabad. 234 responses of research survey were received. The response rate was 78 percent of research survey.

The demographic characteristics of the respondents is given in table 4.1.

Table 1: Demographics characteristics of the respondents

Total number of respondents	Age	Education	Employment status
230	18-20	61.3%	Under graduate
	21-23	32.6%	Graduate
	24-26	6.1%	Unemployed

As per the usage of Instagram is concerned, 98.3 percent of the respondents claimed to be Instagram users while only 1.7 percent were not using Instagram and these non-Instagram users are not made a part of research analysis.

The respondents were asked whether they follow any fashion blogger on Instagram. 36 respondents claimed that they always follow a fashion blogger, 119 respondents sometimes follow a fashion blogger, 71 respondents rarely follow a fashion blogger and only 4 respondents never follow any fashion blogger on Instagram. The data revealed that 29.6% respondents were using Instagram since 1 year, 16.5% respondents were using Instagram since 2 years, 17.5% respondents were using Instagram since 3 years and 36.5% respondents were using Instagram for more than 3 years.

Table 2: From how many years the respondents are using Instagram

Years	No. of respondents	Percentage
1 year	68	29.6%
2 years	38	16.5%
3 years	40	17.4%
More than 3 years	84	36.5%

Table 4.3 shows that how much time respondents spent on Instagram in a day. The Instagram usage per day is divided into 4 categories. Out of 230 respondents, 66 respondents use Instagram for less than an hour per day, 82 respondents use Instagram for 1-2 hours per day, 56 use Instagram for 3-4 hours per day while 26 respondents use Instagram for more than 4 hours in a day.

Table 3: Usage of Instagram per day

Instagram usage	No. of respondents	Percentage
Less than an hour	66	28.7%
1-2 hours	82	35.7%
3-4 hours	56	24.3%
More than 4 hours	26	11.3%

Respondents who follow makeup blogs of fashion bloggers were 56 respondents, 69 respondents follow clothing blogs whereas 71 respondents follow styling blogs and 34 respondents follow for beauty blogs of fashion bloggers. In response to another question to check the probability of buying behavior of respondents related to the reviewed and suggested products by fashion bloggers. Out of 230 respondents, 56.9 percent were less likely to buy the suggested or reviewed product, 30.4 percent were indecisive while only 12.7 percent were more likely to buy any reviewed or suggested product by a fashion blogger.

Table 4.4 shows that 82 respondents felt that product reviews by fashion bloggers were informative, 31 respondents felt that product reviews by fashion bloggers were engaging, 82 respondents felt that product reviews by fashion bloggers were satisfying and 35 respondents felt that product reviews by fashion bloggers were not interesting.

Table 4: Respondents' views about product reviews by fashion bloggers

Views about product reviews by fashion bloggers	No. of respondents	Percentage
Informative	82	35.7%
Engaging	31	13.5%
Satisfied	82	35.7%
Not interesting	35	15.2%

When respondents were asked about how they feel about the promoted content by fashion bloggers, for 70 respondents promoted content is informative, for 45 respondents it is engaging whereas 72 respondents were satisfied by the promoted content by fashion bloggers and for 43 respondents promoted content is not interesting.

The respondents were asked about the relationship between consumer behavior and exposure to the product reviews. 17 strongly agreed on buying a product that is reviewed by the known famous fashion bloggers. 93 agreed, 66 held a neutral opinion, 44 disagreed and 10 strongly disagreed. A mix collection of opinion was noticed when asked whether fashion blogs make it easier to make purchase decisions about new products. 31 strongly agreed, 124 agreed, 51 remained neutral, 18 disagree, whereas only 6 strongly disagreed. When asked about their consumer behavior about the products that were trusted by fashion bloggers, 22 responded as strongly agreed, 96 agreed, 70 had a neutral opinion, 32 disagreed and 10 strongly disagreed.

The research also investigated the influence of fashion bloggers' popularity on consumer behavior. It was about the trust on product reviews of respondent's favorite fashion bloggers while purchasing products. 21 strongly agreed, 102 agreed, 65 remained neutral, 33 disagreed and 9 strongly disagreed.

4.1 Research questions

RQ1: Is there any influence of product reviews on consumer behavior?

The female university students were taken as a sample for this study comprised of 98.3% of them being Instagram users with 15.7% of them always while 51.7% of them sometimes following a fashion blogger on Instagram as well. When looking at the respondents age, with the highest percentage 61.3% was being from the age group of 18-20 years, 32.6% comprised of age group of 21-23 and 6.1% were between age group of 24-26. While the 89.6% of respondents were under graduate and only 6.1% of respondents were graduate. Having an influence of fashion blogs due to the fashion bloggers through Instagram, 58% agreed that they make product's purchase decisions on the basis of reviews of fashion bloggers while 20% were indecisive and 22% respondents did not purchase any reviewed product.

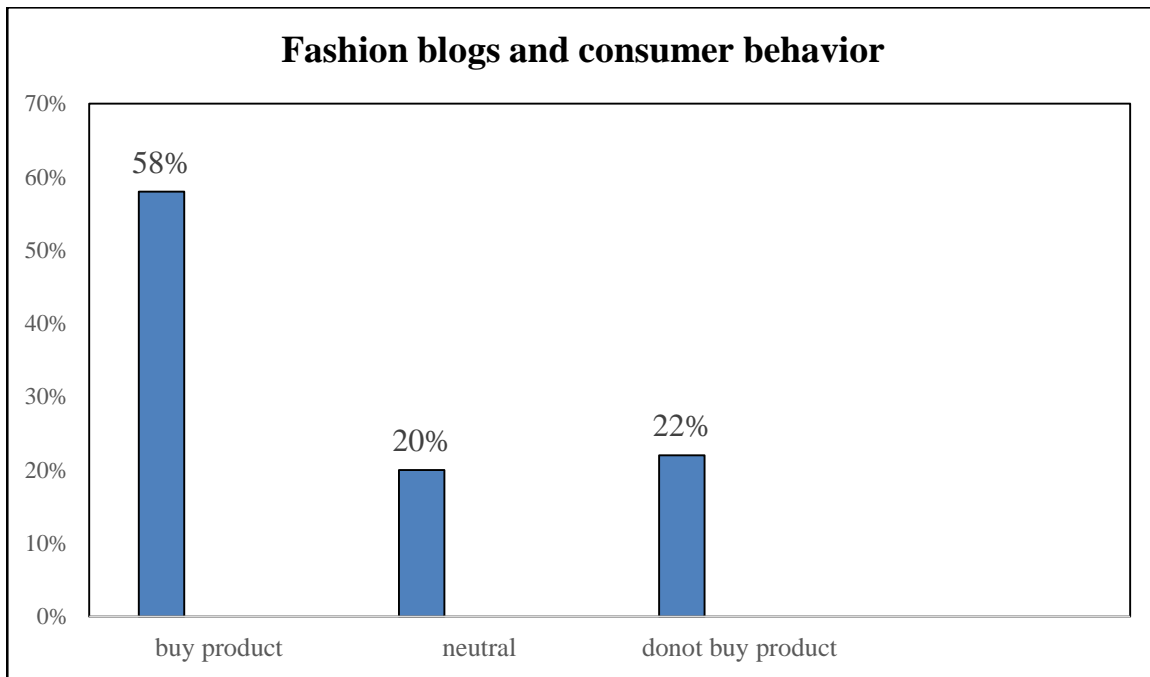


Figure 1: Influence of fashion blogs on consumer behavior

People are easily influenced by the experiences and others' opinions like the product reviews and recommendations by social media bloggers. Social media users and product consumers are heavily influenced by the experiences and opinions of others while making online purchase decisions (Mishra & Ashfaq, 2023). The product reviews of the fashion bloggers being expose to the Instagram users created a mix response, 58.2% leaned towards buying a positively reviewed product, 27.8% had no opinion while 14% of them being disagreed. When asked if the fashion bloggers and their blogs on Instagram made purchasing the new products easier, 67.4% was seen agreeing, 22.2% neutral and 10.4% disagreeing.

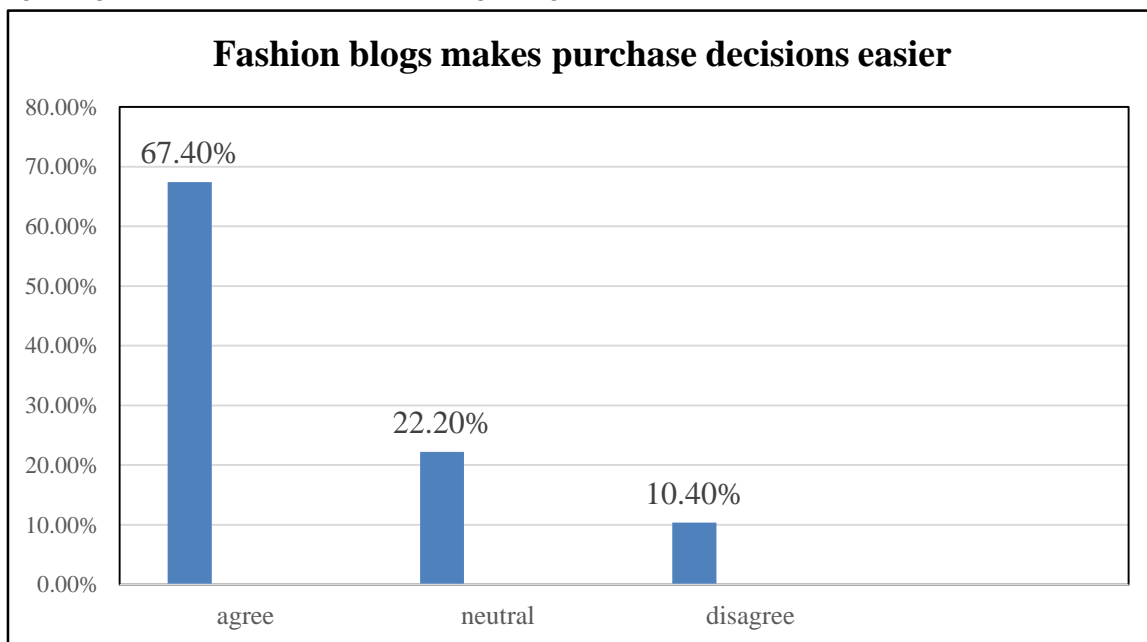


Figure 2: Fashion blogs makes product purchase decisions easier

RQ2: Do people buy the fashion products because of their trust on the bloggers?

Having trust on fashion blogger's reviews and blogs leads to a change in consumer behavior, the respondents gave a mixed responses when 41.7% showed their trust on bloggers and believe that the reviewed product by a fashion

blogger is worth buying, 37% remained neutral whereas 21.3% responded as disagreed. As far as the consumer behavior of those fashion products which are trusted by fashion bloggers is concerned, 51.3% preferred buying the products that are trusted by the bloggers, 30.4% responded being neutral while 18.3% disagreed to buy those products.



Figure 3: Consumer behavior and trust on fashion blogger's product reviews

RQ3: Does the blogger’s popularity influence consumer behavior?

The received data shows that fashion blogger’s popularity on Instagram users also have an influence on their consumer behavior as 53.5% respondents agreed on following and being influenced by the product reviews of their favorite bloggers while purchasing while 28.3% held a neutral opinion and 18.2% of them disagreed. According to past research, 51.7% people usually use Instagram as a platform to access influencers. Popularity of Instagram and influencers among users is due to its aesthetics, visually attractive, pleasing and appealing (Mishra & Ashfaq, 2023).

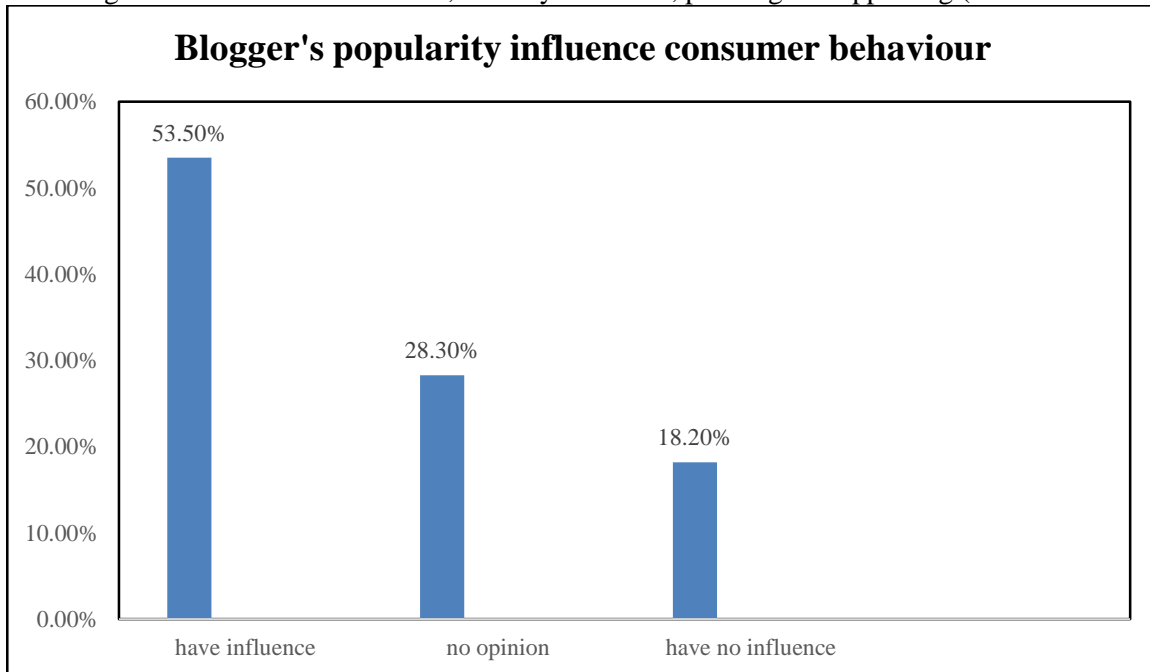


Figure 4: Blogger's popularity influence consumer behavior

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Blogging is the new field gaining much attention on the mainstream social networking sites like Instagram. A variety of bloggers present their ideas and views related to fitness, fashion, food, motivational stories etc. Accessing bloggers for making buying decisions is greatly increasing as large number of people follow the product reviews of fashion

bloggers. The product reviews form their opinions related to such products. The consumer behavior is seen immensely influenced by the product reviews of fashion blogger due to their popularity and having a figure of trustworthiness among their followers. The research aimed to analyze the effects of product reviews on consumer behavior. The fashion bloggers are the most followed bloggers among the Instagram users as people seek them for tips, styling, beauty advices, their followers also consider them as trustworthy to believe their reviews on various products through their fashion blogs. However, the results of the research showed that product reviews greatly effecting the consumer choices and thus changing their consumer behavior as well.

As per the analysis, majority with 98.3% are Instagram users are female students of Islamabad universities between the age of 18 and 26 who were also following the fashion bloggers on Instagram. Table 4.10 shows that large number of respondents are seen being influenced by the product reviews of fashion bloggers. This research also attempted to evaluate people's trust on product reviews of fashion bloggers. The previous research argued that word of mouth is the basis in product purchasing decisions, as it builds the trust among consumers (Hopkins, 2013). Research has found that consumer have strong trust relation on the words of fashion bloggers, which make their purchase decisions easier. Marwick suggest that trustworthiness depend on the public reaction to the endorsements of products. The source credibility theory also states the same. Source credibility theory also combines certain aspects like trust, likeliness, knowledge, popularity as main extents of a source being credible. The credibility is the key to persuade the audience towards buying decisions of products. The popular and trusted bloggers have more reputé among followers and hence also effects their consumer choices. 53% of the user have shown a complete trust on the endorsements of fashion bloggers. This suggests that people have start developing strong trust relation on social media celebs. As data shows that people have begun using Instagram sine last one year, that despite is not a big span to build trust relation, but still half of the users have shown their trust in blogger credibility.

As per the analysis, it can be argued that the fashion blogger by giving product reviews on their blogs changing people's opinions and product purchasing choices. The theory of reasoned actions helps to explain people's choice behaviors. The theory is mostly used to explain consumer's purchasing behavior. Followers of these bloggers usually considers their product reviews as credible and convincing to follow them, people act in accordance to their reviews and make their consumer decisions. In table 4.10, it is clearly shown that large number of respondents have trust on product reviews and they actually pursue these reviews while making buying decisions of certain products. Previous researches have argued that public finds the old traditional sources of advertisements as less credible and boring (Dennis, 2009). They are more motivated to buy the products endorsed through social media platforms, also believing on someone else's experiences represented through blogs influence consumers to believe in the credibility of celeb and reliability of product and hence make their purchase decisions easier. 66% users have agreed to have ease in making purchase decisions by following reviews and blogs of Instagram fashion bloggers. While 43% feel provoked to make purchase decisions following a review or blog.

Self-branding strengthens the trust relations between brand and its audience and bloggers are serving to it. People trusts the product reviews by the bloggers and hence in turn also move towards creating brand loyalty as they have a proper source of reasoning and credibility to associate with the product brand (Marwick, 2011). A number of respondents find products reviews and engaging and informative, successful in targeting their interest. Fascinating blogs attract followers and effect their purchasing decisions. As the results showed that 52% users are leaned to purchase products influenced by the blogging reviews. Today the bloggers have become opinion makers among public and social media is the leading platform to effect user behavior (Huang, 2018). Public idealize their fashion statements and try to adopt the same. The more a person is popular on social media, the more influential he or she is, as the research showed that 53% people agreed to getting influenced by the popularity of blogger. They consider the product review more credible and product to be more reliable. It is shown in previous research studies of Kaplan (2010) showed that the access to information become easier for everyone due to user friendly internet sites, many seems agree that information about any product prior purchasing makes it easier to buy or pass on the product.

5.1 Conclusion

The new generation is using social media and following bloggers purposefully to form their decisions of product buying. The popularity of fashion bloggers among Instagram users and having a level of trust on their product reviews, also taking part in effecting consumer behavior of people. The findings of research study are evident that product reviews by fashion bloggers have a significant effect on product's buying behavior. It can be concluded that social media has become the opinion shaping platform for public. Fashion bloggers have an imminent presentation on social media application like Instagram and through this they are strongly influencing the user behavior on

purchasing and consumption decisions. Public though have recently started taking a visible interest in social media platforms as the survey data showed but still, they have a strong belief and dependence on bloggers use and review of fashion products. People are attracted and more inclined to purchase items that are reviewed or blogged by their favorite influencer. They trust the bloggers and this makes it easier for them to trust on brand and product as well. People are confident in reviews given by bloggers and feel prompted to buy the items. These social media bloggers have become a part of every household now a days, shaping consumer behavior, in turn increasing their important role in consumer's lives.

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