



Role of Mediating Factors in Shaping Consumer's Attitude towards YouTube Influencers and its Effect on Buying Behavior

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Abstract

The study aimed to analyze the role of mediating factors (Homophily, Physical Attractiveness, Expertise and Sponsorship Disclosure) in shaping consumer attitude towards YouTube vloggers and the influence of this attitude on their buying behavior. For data collection online questionnaire was developed and administered. A total 252 responses were received from respondents who reported to watch and followed daily Vloggers. A standard multiple regression was conducted to understand the association between the independent and dependent variables. Findings of the study revealed that Homophily and Sponsorship disclosure did not have significant relationship with consumer attitude. On the other hand, Physical attractiveness and Expertise were statistically significant. Furthermore, consumer's attitude towards daily Vloggers was found to have a profound effect on buying behavior. This research is going to be helpful for marketers and brands to better understand social media users as potential consumer and develop marketing strategies accordingly.

Keywords: daily vlogger, influencer marketing, homophily, sponsorship disclosure, buying behavior

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1. INTRODUCTION

Technological advancement has not only facilitated individual's access to the information but also made them aware of the strategies brands utilized and thus make informed decision. Celebrity endorsement has long been an important marketing strategy employed by brands to promote their products and services. Existing studies support the strong connection and relationship between consumer buying behavior and celebrity endorsement (Niloy et al., 2023). In recent years, influencer marketing has emerged as a prominent alternative endorsement strategy, gaining substantial attention and enabling brands to achieve their marketing objectives effectively. Influencers promote and review products through their Vlogs, Blogs, Posts or Stories through certain social media platforms including YouTube, a platform that allow users to share, view and comment videos. From among these, Vlogging is very popular, specifically among youth these days. Daily Vloggers public their personal life and develop a bond with their audience. This bond between vloggers and their audience can influence individual's behaviors and attitudes (Hennayake, 2017) that was previously done through Celebrity Endorsement appeal. These vloggers are today's opinion leaders.

Daily vlogging is one of the most common types of vlogs, where people share their daily activities with audience. Daily vloggers actually share their experiences, challenges, make a Q & A video and in short, share the crux of their life in general just like a life streaming (Choe, 2024). Some of the popular daily vloggers of Pakistan are Maaz Safdar, Ducky Bhai, Iqra Kanwal and Rajab Butt. They have large number of subscribers. Ducky Bhai, for instance has more than 8 million subscribers and Sistrolology has more than 5 million subscribers. The increasing popularity of vloggers has been strategically utilized by advertisers as an effective means of reaching and influencing target audiences and their buying behavior.

Buying behavior refers to the possibility that individual will purchase an item and the number of times he/she will buy this item (Qureshi & Malik, 2016). Consumers' buying behavior and influencer endorsement is correlated (Niloy et al., 2023). Theory of planned behavior also explained this relationship and it will be discussed below (Ajzen, 1991).

YouTube is a channel; companies are using for advertising and promotion. It has great audience with an active users of approximately 2.58 billion (Statista, 2025). Previous research mentioned that Gen Z purchase intention is highly influenced by these new digital platforms (Popa et al., 2023). Further, it has been mentioned in existing literature that word of mouth on such platforms is really effective in convincing people to buy products (An & Ngo, 2025) especially among Generation Z consumers who prioritize sustainability and eco-friendly products. Despite this expansion, the key factors driving purchasing decisions for organic cosmetics have not been adequately researched. This study addresses this gap by examining the influence of Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA). However, the role of mediating factors in this relationship has received relatively limited attention in the scholarly literature. Therefore, this study was conducted to fill this gap. It intended to identify the role of four mediating factors i.e., Homophily, Sponsorship

Disclosure, Expertise and Physical Attractiveness on buying behavior. It was hypothesized that these variables shape consumers' attitude towards daily vloggers which further determine their buying behavior.

1.1 Research Questions

RQ 1: To what extent do Homophily, Sponsorship Disclosure, Physical Attractiveness and Expertise predict consumer's attitude towards YouTube influencers? How much variance in consumer's attitude scores can be explained by scores on these four scales?

RQ 2: To what extent do the consumers' attitude towards YouTube influencers predict their buying behavior?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the digital era, companies and brands use two-way communication strategies in which customers are equally involved. This growing potential of social media platforms as marketing tools has attracted considerable scholarly attention, leading to increased research on the various dimensions of this emerging phenomenon. In particular, marketing strategies employed on these platforms and their effectiveness have become areas of significant academic interest. Studies have found that influencer marketing is now becoming one of the most favorite strategy of the brands because people consider them reliable and trustworthy (Baig & Shahzad, 2022). From among social media platforms, YouTube is the second most used platform after Facebook. One digital creator Mr. Beast on YouTube has around 462 million subscribers (Global Media Insight, 2026). It has seen a 39.7% spike in advertising reach of YouTube within a year i.e., 2024-2025 (Kemp, 2025). For this reason, YouTube is considered as an effective platform for marketing (Rathee et al., 2021). Previous studies have also sought to examine the factors contributing to the popularity of influencer marketing, as well as its advantages over traditional celebrity endorsement technique. One of the identified advantages of Influencer marketing is exploitation of the psychology of a consumer. Influencers use two-way communication and their followers get more involved with them and that is why, its effect is quite different from the effect of a traditional advertisement which used to have a popular celebrity in it (Schouten et al., 2020). Following section comprises of the studies on the relationship of selected four factors (Homophily, Sponsorship disclosure, Physical attractiveness and Expertise) with the attitude and buying behavior of a consumer.

2.1 Homophily

Existing research tell us that shared characteristics such as region, cast, language, financial status etc. make communication effective (Atta, 2020). Sense of association and relatability between influencer and consumer develop positive attitude of consumer towards influencer (Rajput & Gandhi, 2024). It leads to a satisfaction and loyalty of a customer (Abdulaziz et al., 2024). Moreover, similarities between influencer and consumers persuade them to start giving value to what he/she said

(Kilumile & Zuo, 2024). Vlogger's self-disclosure affects advertising effectiveness by reducing relational uncertainty between the digital influencer and the user leading to an increased product interest and purchase intention.(Duan et al 2025). Self-disclosure thus may help to create homophily; a sense of association between the vlogger and the follower. When users find shared characteristics, they relate themselves with vloggers. This sense of similarity or Homophily affects user's attitude towards vloggers. Therefore, present research hypothesizes:

H1: There is a significant relationship between Homophily and consumers' attitude towards vlogger.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Homophily and consumers' attitude towards vlogger.

Sponsorship Disclosure

As discussed above, the simple advertisement is quite different from the two-way communication that influencers mostly practice. It was concluded in the previous studies that if consumer is exposed to paid content and influencer clearly mention it then it is perceived as less convincing for the consumer because it is a clear attempt of persuasion and consumer is most likely to resist it (Beckert, 2024). It leads to the decrease in customer engagement with influencer (Qiang et al., 2020). Moreover, previous literature also document the positive effect of sponsorship disclosure and it may lead to the trust of a consumer (Dercy & Santos, 2024; Leonard, 2022). Therefore, present research hypothesizes:

H2: There is a significant relationship between Sponsorship disclosure and consumers' attitude towards vlogger.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Sponsorship disclosure and consumers' attitude towards vlogger.

2.3 Influencer Expertise

Influencer expertise includes experience, knowledge and skill of an influencer about specific product (Bogoevska-Gavrilova & Ciunova-Shuleska, 2022). Acceptance of a message is higher when consumer believes that influencer is expert in area, he/she is talking about. As a result, influencer expertise persuades consumer (Iqbal et al., 2023). It leads to the development of positive attitude towards influencer (Al Jaed & Badghish, 2021). Just as reported in previous research that people like to try food products recommended by food vloggers if they feel they are experts in their area (Ampornklinkaew, 2025) companies are increasingly collaborating with social media influencers (SMIs). So, experts gain trust of people. Therefore, present study hypothesizes:

H3: There is significant relationship between Vlogger's expertise and consumers' attitude towards vlogger.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Vlogger's expertise and consumers' attitude towards vlogger.

2.4 Physical Attractiveness

The message is perceived as more convincing if it is delivered by a physically attractive influencer. Moreover, existing study suggested that effect of this message is stronger on consumers (Reinhard et al., 2006). Source attractiveness affect influencers' reputation positively (Iqbal et al., 2023). McGuire's source effect model has explained the positive impact of source attractiveness on consumer attitude. Physical attractiveness role is significant in shaping consumer attitude but not for all types of endorsed products (Margom & Amar, 2023). Beauty shapes positive attitude and people show trust towards attractive personalities (Shang & Liu, 2022). Therefore, present study hypothesized:

H4: There is a significant relationship between Physical attractiveness of a Vlogger and Consumers' attitude towards vlogger.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Physical attractiveness of a Vlogger and Consumers' attitude towards vlogger.

2.4 Consumer Attitude and Buying Behavior

The consumer will buy a product when he/she has an intention to buy. This intention is affected by several factors such as consumer attitude as explained in theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Purchase intention is higher when feelings are involved and positive attitude results in favorable purchase intention (Le et al., 2021). If consumer finds influencer credible, he/she will prefer to buy a product recommended by such influencer (Chen et al., 2024). Furthermore it was concluded in the research that influencer marketing does not affect purchase intention directly but attitude affect behavior or intention which in turn predicts the actual action (Johansen & Guldvik, 2017). Therefore, present study hypothesized:

H5: Consumer's attitude towards vlogger positively influence buying behavior.

Ho: Consumer's attitude towards vlogger do not positively influence buying behavior.

A systematic review of the literature on digital marketing indicated that the terms digital marketing, influencer marketing, and social media marketing are often used interchangeably. While some studies have examined social media as a broad advertising platform, others have focused on more specific domains such as travel Vlogging (RMS Yaqub et al, 2022) , beauty products (AF Anandna et al 2016, JL Cohen et al 2020) and smart technology products (Kim &Yoon, 20024) . Relatively few studies have directly investigated influencers and their attributes as a central focus within the context of digital marketing, thereby indicating a clear research gap in the existing literature. This study intended to fill this gap by focusing factors related to Influencer marketing.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical foundations of the study are based on Theory of Planned Behavior. Proposed by Icek Ajzen, this theory posits that human behavior can be predicted on the bases of four factors that are intention, attitude, norms and perceived control. These factors collectively influence a person's intention and intention can predict actual behavior (Long et al., 2024). An individual develops a positive or negative attitude on the basis of the belief that performing the behavior will provide a certain outcome (Subramanian, 2016). Moreover, the social influence people experience can predict the intention of a person (Shah & Asghar, 2023). But the sense of control over the behavior can tell whether an individual will actually perform the behavior or not. This theory is really helpful in explaining consumer behavior (Rozenkowska, 2023). TPB has extensively been used in the field of health communication with a specific focus on health education campaigns. The emphasized significance of attitude in shaping behaviors not only justifies the appropriateness of this theoretical base for the present study which aims to examine the relationship between attitude and buying intention of consumer but also underscores the novelty of the study. In the context of marketing, the existing study supported the argument that consumer's attitude plays mediating effect between influencers attributes and purchase intention (Zhao et al., 2024) the authors aim to investigate the impacts of influencers' attributes (professionalism, credibility, interactivity and attractiveness. Theory of planned behavior validated that consumers' attitude towards YouTube influencers specifically daily vloggers influence their buying behavior as described in literature (Lim et al., 2017; Niloy et al., 2023).

4. METHODOLOGY

To answer research questions and test hypothesis, quantitative research design was used. First variables Homophily, Sponsorship Disclosure, Expertise and Physical Attractiveness were considered as independent variables and Consumer Attitude was considered as dependent variable. Later, Consumer Attitude was considered as independent variable and Buying Behavior was considered as dependent variable.

To collect data survey questionnaire based on 5-point Likert Scale was used. Questionnaire was divided into two parts, where the first part was related to demographic information and the second part contained questions regarding Homophily, Physical Attractiveness, Sponsorship Disclosure, Expertise, Consumer Attitude and Buying behavior. The scale was anchored on "5-Strongly Agree" to "1-Strongly Disagree". Age and gender were main demographic determinants. Respondents who answered "yes" to the screening question—whether they regularly watch daily vlogs or follow daily vloggers' content—were eligible to complete the remainder of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was comprised of 21 items.

Sampling

The total population of this study was regular viewers of daily vlogs on you tube. Data was collected from a sample of 252 young age respondents who were randomly accessed online and data was collected through Google Forms.

Data Analysis

A standard multiple regression was conducted to understand the association between mediating factors (Homophily, Physical Attractiveness, Sponsorship Disclosure and Expertise) and consumer attitude and between consumer attitude and buying behavior. Total score of multi-items for each construct was considered for analysis. Firstly, all independent variables were added collectively and then dependent variable attitude was added. After that attitude was added as independent variable and buying behavior was added as dependent.

Scale for measuring research variables that are homophily, sponsorship disclosure, expertise, physical attractiveness and buying behavior is given in Table 1.

Table 1 Research Variables

Variables	No. of items	Relevant Literature
Homophily	4	(McCroskey et al., 1975)
Sponsorship disclosure	2	(Dercy & Santos, 2024)
Physical attractiveness	3	(McCroskey & McCain, 1974)
Influencer expertise	3	(Atta, 2020), (Hartanto et al., 2023)
Attitude towards influencer	3	(Hartanto et al., 2023)
Buying behavior	2	(Dercy & Santos, 2024), (Atta, 2020), (Hartanto et al., 2023)

5.FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

40.9% of the respondents were of age 22-24 years and 70.6% of them were female. 83.7% respondents watched daily vlogs and 76.2% also followed them.

Table 2 Relationship between four factors (Homophily, Expertise, Sponsorship Disclosure and Physical Attractiveness) and Consumer Attitude

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.866 ^a	.751	.747	.51996

Note. R square above 33% has the ability to explain the interrelationships of the constructs.

As model in this study has R square level 75%, it has the ability to explain relationship between all four factors and consumer attitude. So, it indicates that all four factors contribute significantly in shaping consumers' attitude.

Table 3 Table of Significance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	201.071	4	50.268	185.927	.000 ^b
	Residual	66.779	247	.270		
	Total	267.850	251			

Note. $p < 0.05$

It shows that there is a significant relationship between four factors (Homophily, Sponsorship Disclosure, Influencer Expertise and Physical Attractiveness) and Consumers' Attitude towards YouTube influencers.

Table 4 Relationship of Individual Factors with Consumers' Attitude

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	Std. Error	Beta				Lower Bound	Upper Bound

1	(Constant)	.050	.145		.344	.731	-.236	.337
	Homophily	.011	.037	.009	.294	.769	-.062	.084
	Sponsorship_ Disclosure	-.033	.028	-.043	-1.195	.233	-.088	.022
	Physical_At- tractivness	.278	.068	.203	4.122	.000	.145	.411
	Expertise	.736	.048	.718	15.475	.000	.642	.829

Note. Homophily (Beta = .009), Sponsorship Disclosure (Beta = -.043), Physical Attractiveness (Beta = .203) and Expertise (Beta = .718)

It indicates that Homophily and Sponsorship Disclosure have statistically insignificant relationship with Consumers' Attitude. On the other hand, Physical Attractiveness and Expertise have significant relationship with Consumers' Attitude.

Table 5 Impact of Consumer Attitude on Buying Behavior

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.661 ^a	.437	.431	.71700

Note. R square above 33% has the ability to explain the interrelationships of the constructs.

As model in this study has R Square level 43%, it has the ability to explain relationship between Consumer Attitude and Buying Behavior.

Table 6Table of Significance between Consumer Attitude and Buying Behavior

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	98.757	3	32.919	64.033	.000 ^b
	Residual	126.980	247	.514		
	Total	225.737	250			

Note. $p < 0.05$

As shown in Table 6 Sig. value is less than 0.05, it verifies the significant impact of Consumer Attitude towards YouTube influencers on Buying Behavior.

Table 7 Impact of Individual Attitudes (Trust, Reliability and Credibility) on Buying Behavior

Model B		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
1	(Constant)	1.303	.116		11.248	.000	1.075	1.531
	Attitude1	.494	.059	.602	8.418	.000	.378	.609
	Attitude2	-.275	.068	-.335	-4.052	.000	-.409	-.141
	Attitude3	.336	.051	.429	6.580	.000	.235	.437

Note. Attitude 1 (Beta = .602), Attitude 2 (Beta = -.335) and Attitude 3 (Beta = .429)

It shows that Consumer Attitudes discussed in the study i.e. Trust (Attitude 1), Reliability (Attitude 2) and Credibility (Attitude 3) have significant impact on Buying Behavior.

6. DISCUSSION

The study didn't find significant association between homophily and users attitude towards YouTube vloggers. The explanation of this insignificant association is manifold. It is true that many vloggers show real cultural elements such as family interactions, food, festivals, local travel, and social norms, document everyday middle-class urban life, and use local language/s. However a significant portion of vlog content is shaped by platform incentives (views, sponsorships, monetization), which encourages more attractive, entertaining, or aspirational content. Many vloggers present urban, upper-middle-class lifestyles. Furthermore their appearance i.e., fashion, makeup, grooming etc., is often professionally curated, which creates a polished image that differs from everyday reality. This mediated reality or the gap between the life a user experience and observe and a vlogger may cause failure to reduce relational uncertainty, which is a necessary element of homophily.

In relation to the role of influencers' expertise on buying intention, the findings of the study were in accordance with the previous literature. Studies have shown that influencers' expertise have strong association with consumers' attitude (Bogoevska-Gavrilova & Ciunova-Shuleska, 2022) and (Al Jaed & Badghish, 2021). The study revealed the same findings as described in previous literature. So, the results accepted the research hypothesis i.e., Expertise has significant relationship with consumer attitude. However, it should be considered ,while inferring results of present study that the literature showed the significant association between influencer's expertise and a positive response of users towards influencer for micro influencers who had fewer followers and had expertise in a specific field. Mega influencers with an extensive follower base as was the case in present study where influencers included had an extensive followers, this association was not found (Kim & Yoon , 2024). Popular Pakistani YouTube vloggers such as Ducky Bhai and Sistrology have amassed substantial followings despite lacking formal expertise in any specific

professional domain. Their content primarily focuses on family life, daily routines, travel experiences, and personal narratives. Consequently, their influence appears to stem not from subject-matter expertise but from their proficiency in content creation, including storytelling, video production, and audience engagement. Furthermore, the fashion and apparel industry represents one of the most prominent consumer markets in Pakistan, driven by seasonal trends and the country's large population. The promotion of products such as clothing and fashion accessories typically relies less on expert testimonials and more on visual appeal, personal recommendations, and consumer engagement. As a result, influencer marketing these products are not necessarily required to possess specialized qualifications. Instead, their content-creation capabilities and ability to establish authentic connections with audiences are likely perceived as more valuable and persuasive by consumers.

Similarly, existing research revealed that the development of positive attitude towards influencers they watch or follow because they found some similarities and associations between them and influencers (Rajput & Gandhi, 2024). People feel some connection or sense of belonging to influencers who have some kind of similarities with their followers (Liu & Zheng, 2024). But findings of the study reject the alternative hypothesis in favor of null hypothesis i.e., Homophily has significant relationship with consumer attitude. This contrast in findings is possibly due to the awareness among young generation that prefers transparency and quality (Elan, 2021) over relatability. Other studies show that now youth is giving importance to authenticity of the influencers' content that affects their behavior and attitude (Zniva et al., 2023). According to Thanh et al. (2026), young generation pays attention to quality of information such as expertise of influencer, authenticity, trustworthiness etc. before taking any decision. So, one of the reasons behind the findings of the study that homophily does not have the significant relationship with consumer attitude could be the informed generation who is looking for the quality. Furthermore, presentation of an idealized images on social media attract people that is why upward comparison is so common on social media (Nasr et al., 2024). So, people are not only attracted towards influencers who are similar to them but also attracted towards those who they believe superior to them in any aspect. It could be another reason that limit the impact of homophily on consumer attitude.

As far as the association between physical attractiveness of vlogger and positive attitude of user is concerned, the findings were in consistence with existing literature which establish that people develop positive attitude towards physically attractive influencers (Seiler & Kucza, 2017) and (Reinhard et al., 2006). Physical appearance of an influencer affect attitude and behavior of his/her followers as they are more likely to trust attractive personalities and take their recommendations seriously (Wu, 2026) yet less is known about how specific influencer cues are translated into consumer responses through differentiated internal psychological states. Drawing on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R). Also, the target audience of present study was youth which is more vulnerable to be influenced by the physical attractiveness. Previous research suggests that adolescents frequently form parasocial relationships with celebrities/influencers and often place substantial value on their physical attractiveness. As a result, attractive media figures may exert a stronger influence on their attitudes and perceptions (Tracy R Gleason et al. 2017).

Although majority of the studies have shown that exposure to paid content is perceived as less convincing for the consumer and it leads to lack of trust but the positive effect of this exposure is also mentioned in literature (Beckert, 2024) and (Qiang et al., 2020). People are less likely to consider recommendations that are paid as they start doubting its authenticity (Pfeuffer & Huh, 2020). Overall, previous studies suggest the significant relationship between sponsorship disclosure and consumer attitude. Results of the study reject the hypothesis based on literature review. Findings of this study are not in line with literature and it may be due to the knowledge youth have about influencer marketing these days. As previous study mentioned that disclosure is effective for long term engagement as people find it as honest action (Waltenrath, 2024). It shows that people are much informed about this type of marketing and they expect from influencers to do it openly because transparency is something that is important for young generation. It could be the reason of insignificant relationship between sponsorship disclosure and consumer attitude. Theory of planned behavior also support the findings of the study that consumer attitude towards influencers effect the buying behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In this era of influencer marketing, people go and check out the opinions of credible influencers about whom they have positive attitude and then make their decisions to buy products (Shuqair et al., 2016). When people believe that recommendation is authentic, it affects their attitude and consequently purchase intention (Utami & Rahyuda, 2019) views, and reviews (QPVR. So, findings of the study coined with the literature that consumer attitude towards influencers has significant impact on buying behavior.

7. CONCLUSION

Social media has changed the way brands are communicating to their audience. Consumers on the other hand are also aware of marketing strategies .They are now more active and involved in making informed decisions. From among identified factors of traditional advertising strategies like celebrity endorsement, homophily and sponsorship disclosure have not been found significantly associated with user's attitude towards influencers whereas Physical Attractiveness and Expertise have significant relationship with Consumers' Attitude, with expertise as being defined in a different way. The established association between attitude towards celebrity and buying behavior has also applied in influencer marketing. These findings are helpful for marketing managers and decision makers who intend to promote their brands and products through digital influencers.

Limitations

Based on the insights, findings and limitations of this research, several lines of future research can be explored. This study used a small sample which makes it impossible to generalize the conclusions. This research is limited to the responses of the youth living in Urban Lahore. Moreover, lot of factors such as accessibility and affordability of consumer were also not included in this study, thus marginalizing its scope. These factors can affect the actions of a consumer despite of having trust on daily vloggers. A more extensive and in-depth analysis of social media marketing strategies and consumer behavior is recommended.

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