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## Influence of Parasocial Relationships Formed Through Influencer Marketing On Brand Loyalty Toward Skincare Products

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### Abstract

In today's time, the Internet has become a necessity among individuals. Most businesses adopt influencer marketing and because of the relationship between influencers and their followers that shows parasocial relationships which means one sided emotional bond formed by the audience with media personalities. Followers generally feel more connected with the influencers and continue watching influencers that play an important role in purchasing behaviour, consumer attitudes towards skincare products. This study addresses the relationship between parasocial relationships and brand loyalty by examining how PSRs influence brand loyalty among customers in the digital Indian context. In the short term, purchase intention influences the influencer traits such as attractiveness, knowledge, authenticity and reliability that attract consumers and followers and it affects their purchasing decision as well. Sometimes, it leads to short term success of the brand.

This study also examines how emotional attachment transforms parasocial relationships (PSR) and affects purchase behaviour and also brand loyalty through psychological factors. This research will be conducted by using the mixed method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques for comprehensive analysis and targeting the population those are social media users and follow the skincare influencers on social media platforms with their account. Data is collected through the online mode. This focuses on the Indian population that are connected with skincare products and influencers. The result shows what factors influence the consumer repeatedly in purchasing decisions in the long term that increase the skincare products brand value and use the various influencer marketing strategies. These findings suggest that consumers always focus on brand quality whenever they purchase from the same brand and follow the beauty of influencers that help to influence more consumers in their daily life with the help of their content.

**Keywords:** Parasocial Relationships (PSR), Influencer Marketing, Skincare, Trust, Brand loyalty, Dermatological recommendation.

### Introduction

In today's fast moving world one thing that is moving very rapidly is the internet. The Internet today has become a necessity for the people, anything you want is just one click away. In this

digital age social media platforms are becoming very important and the rapid growth of social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram and Tiktok etc has totally changed the marketing strategies. The rapid growth of social media platforms has played a pivotal role in the rise of influencer culture. Influencer culture is rapidly growing in India, there are numerous influencers for each section and nowadays brands are relying on influencers for promoting their products and to shape consumer attitudes. This type of marketing is known as influencer marketing. Influencers through consistent content creation and personal engagement with their followers, develop strong connections to go beyond traditional advertisements. These connections which get formed over the time by constantly watching an influencer play a very important role in influencing consumer attitudes and purchasing behaviour towards Skincare Products. One of the key phenomena that explains this relationship between the influencer and their followers is Parasocial Relationships, which refers to one sided emotional bonds formed by the audience with media personalities. In context to influencers, followers generally feel more connected to them. These influencers act as trusted peers rather than distant celebrities, making their endorsements more persuasive and authentic in the eyes of consumers.

Despite the growth of influencer marketing, nowadays influencer marketing has become a dominant promotional activity in the skincare industry, there is no sufficient empirical evidence examining how Parasocial relationships formed through influencer marketing affect brand loyalty toward skincare products. Present studies tend to focus on transactional rather than emotional and relational dimensions of consumer behaviour. There is very limited understanding of how Parasocial relationships formed between influencers and customers affect the brand loyalty in the skincare products. In the previous studies it also remains unclear how trust, emotional attachment, authenticity and emotional satisfaction derived from these relationships affect customer's brand loyalty and long term purchasing behaviour towards Skincare Products.

This study is significant because it will study the role of emotional bonds, trust, emotional attachment, perceived authenticity and influencer traits in sustaining long term customer, brand relationships. Academically this study will help in getting a better understanding of how trust, emotional attachment, perceived authenticity and other psychological factors impact brand loyalty of a product.

#### **Objectives of the study include:**

- To identify how influencer traits like attractiveness, knowledge, authenticity and reliability that attracts consumers/followers.
- To find out how influencer marketing affects or shapes consumer purchasing decisions.
- To know how emotional attachment transforms parasocial relationships and further affects purchasing behaviour.
- To understand the relationship between brand loyalty and psychological factors like trust, emotional attachment and perceived authenticity.

The scope of this study is limited to finding how parasocial relationships formed through influencer marketing affect brand loyalty in skincare products. The scope of this research is limited to understanding key variables like parasocial relationships, brand loyalty and trust/perceived authenticity. Furthermore the scope of this study is limited to respondents within the Indian context, allowing for an analysis of psychological factors like trust, emotional attachment, perceived authenticity and emotional satisfaction on consumer behaviour and market dynamics. This study is going insight into consumer behaviour patterns. In addition to geographical restriction the study is also restricted by sample size and time constraints. Even with these limitations this research aims to offer meaningful insights into how parasocial social relationships formed through influencer marketing affect brand loyalty towards Skincare Products.

#### **Literature of Review**

Nowadays people form their decision by looking at the trends and following different people on

social media, and the key players emerging in the social media age are influencers. In this study we are going to know how research eventually developed over time. What was the trend in the beginning and how it shaped towards influencer marketing eventually. The review includes research that focuses on influencer marketing, brand loyalty, parasocial relationships and consumer attachment. The review consists of the research done in this field. This review also includes both qualitative and quantitative researchers to get a broader picture of how influencers develop an emotional connect that helps them create a parasocial relationship with the consumer that affects brand loyalty.

Recent studies have stated influencer marketing as an important component of modern marketing strategies. Influencers act as both content creators and social figures that affect customer's brand attitude and purchasing intention online. This key phenomenon was first given in 1956 with the research on parasocial interaction (PSI) by Donald Horton and R. Wohl. This theory is known as Parasocial Interaction Theory (Horton & Wohl, 1956) this explains how audiences form emotional bonds, emotional relationships with media personalities even without real life interaction.

### **Parasocial relationships and today's digital age**

Parasocial relationships was first coined by **Horton & Wohl in 1956**, earlier it only used to explain audience connection with media personalities, but in recent times this concept of parasocial relationships has extended to social media influencers. In spite of the fact that these relationships are one sided, followers often perceive influencers as trusted advisors (Emec et al., 2022).

Social media powers parasocial relationships by very regular interactions between the follower and the content creator by everyday content creation, personal storytelling, likes, comments and live interactive sessions (Lestari & Islami et al., 2024). Recent studies show that these emotional attachment, perceived authenticity and trust affect brand awareness and purchasing behaviour (Mulmin et al., 2025). The topic of parasocial relationships has grown intensively but still there is still very little empirical researchers have examined the role of parasocial relationships formed through influencer marketing, particularly in relation to brand related outcomes such as brand loyalty (Breves et al., 2021).

### **Influencer marketing and Parasocial relationships**

As we discussed earlier in skincare context the emotions are involved and it is easier for influencers to form closer Parasocial relationships with their followers (Bismo et al., 2023). Recent empirical researches reveal that content frequency and narrative based self disclosure are the main part of parasocial relationships formulation (Balaban & Szambolics, 2022; Tukachinsky, 2021). Parasocial relationships occur when audiences form emotional bonds and emotional attachment with the influencers without any direct interpersonal interaction (Khairunnisa & As-tuti, 2022). This phenomenon of parasocial relationships has been shown to significantly affect behaviour outcomes and interactions of the consumers. Parasocial relationships mediate the relationship between influencer and followers and they also affect brand loyalty, especially when there are language similarities and strong interaction frequency (Thakur et al. 2025). It focuses on how online feedback influences consumer interest and expectations for various brands, influencer credibility and online customer reviews attract different audiences. Consumers always focus on online customer reviews before purchasing any product. It delivers authentic information to consumers and shapes their purchase intentions and enhances influencers credibility (Angelia Laksana et al., 2025). The followers of Skincare are majorly concerned about ingredients, skin efficiency and effectiveness of products.

### **Significant Influencer traits and market outcomes**

Various studies show that characteristic features of an influencer like authenticity, knowledge, credibility, attractiveness and expertise, significantly impact the strength of parasocial relationships with followers and subsequently impact consumer behaviour (Qi et al., 2024). One of the

studies showed that influencer traits like attractiveness, trust and parasocial interaction can influence consumer's purchase intentions especially for the products that are not necessity (Maryanto et al. 2024).

### **How emotional attachment shape brand loyalty**

In Influence marketing, emotional attachment to the content creator may to the brands promoted by them, strengthening brand loyalty. Although studies are increasing day by day, still many studies examine brand loyalty as an outcome of marketing efforts, they do not consider the role of parasocial relationships.

### **Existing Research Gap in the study**

All the existing literature highlights the impact of influencer marketing on consumer engagement and purchase intention which are the short term outcomes, there is very little empirical research integrating parasocial relationships, psychological factors and influencer traits to explain long term outcomes such as brand loyalty.

Even with India's rapidly growing influencer marketing campaigns and the increasing influence of skincare influencers on consumer decision-making, mostly studies are conducted in a global context, with very little research focusing on the Indian market.

### **Methodology**

Research methodology is a technique where we are using different approaches and procedures like sample collection ,choosing methods for our research and using sources like primary and secondary sources for better understanding.

### **Research design**

Research gives detailed knowledge and idea which we will be conducted in our framework .In our study we use mixed methods quantitative and qualitative both method and we focus on both data in our research paper which help for examine the cross sectional study and show the Parasocial relationship how influence brand loyalty through influencer marketing .it help in understanding of variables which are related to our study .The goal of the research paper is to analyse how consumers are effected by influencers in their preferences .

### **Participants**

Purposive sample of Indian consumers who actively follow skincare influencers on social media and have purchased skincare products recommended by influencers .Participants consisted of individuals (consumers ) and collected from all age group who actively follow influencers on their social media account and changes their preferences according to influencers recommendation.

### **Types and Data collection**

Empirical research, involving the collection and analysis of original data from respondents. Data were collected in-depth and the study uses primary and secondary data in our study . The primary data is collected through directly consumers who follow the influencers in their social media platform and affect their consumer behaviour and secondary data is collected from various sources such as journals , newspapers,magazines ,books etc.

### **Tools and techniques of data analysis**

Structured questionnaires with 5-point Likert scale items measuring parasocial interaction, trust, authenticity, emotional satisfaction, and brand loyalty and Quantitative analysis using descriptive statistics ,comparative analysis were to analyze the data.

### **Results and Discussions**

The analysis indicates that 76.8% of people follow influencers on their social media accounts which affects their choices and 23.2% of people do not follow influencers .consumers mostly follow on Instagram and change their behaviour according to their needs and wants. At the time

of data collection we got a total 142 respondents and there was no missing data. This will help for further analysis. The mean of all variables -Parasocial relationship (3.1573) and influencer credibility (3.2831), emotional attachment is 3.1884, Brand trust (3.2148) and Brand loyalty (3.169) all mean are above 3. That will help to understand the influencers and brand image. Median for all variables is 3. Most of respondents choose neutral options that will indicate the balanced respondents. The standard deviation is value belongs to around 1 which shows that all participants focus on the same range. Skewness value are close to 0 and kurtosis value indicate negative which means the distribution is not suitable and correlations for variable which are 0.001 for two tailed. It is highly positive for these variables -Parasocial relationship and emotional attachment. PSR variables collectively predict 41% of purchase behaviour and both predictors are significant at  $p < 0.001$ .

H1: Strong parasocial relationships with skincare influencers crucially increase brand loyalty.

H2: Parasocial Relationships have a positive relationship with brand trust

H3: Influencer traits like attractiveness, knowledge and expertise enhance emotional attachment in followers.

H4: Higher influencer credibility creates stronger and more lasting brand loyalty than traditional advertising

The study indicates that influencer marketing enhances brand loyalty and improves the production which increases the brand image in the market that will help consumers purchase according to their preferences. It also improves the goodwill for future growth.

### Limitations of the Study

Data is collected through individual responses, which may be subject to respondent bias. The study context is bound to the skincare category. The skincare category includes skin type, person-

| S.No | Social media | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------|--------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1.   | Instagram    | 90        | 63.4%          |
| 2.   | YouTube      | 48        | 33.8%          |
| 3.   | Snapchat     | 1         | 2.1%           |
| 4.   | None         | 1         | 0.7%           |
|      | Total        | 142       | 100.0%         |

al health care that can't be transferable to other categories like fashion, food or electronics and follows a cross-sectional design which limits the ability.

### Conclusion

The already present literature shows the growing significance of influencer marketing and how they help in shaping consumer behaviour and purchase intention and they also talk about consumer behaviour in the digital world. The word parasocial relationships was first given in 1956 by Donald Horton and R. Wohl. As the studies have developed over the time, recent studies show that emotional attachment, perceived authenticity and influencer credibility in shaping consumer behaviour and purchase intention and influencing purchase related outcomes. Moreover, there are also many limitations in the literature, right now most of the existing literature focuses on short term outcomes like purchase intention and brand awareness, there is very low emphasis on long term impact like brand loyalty on the skincare products. In addition, researchers are talking about individual traits such as parasocial relationships, trust, perceived authenticity and influencer traits individually, there is low emphasis on empirical models that collectively analyse their influence. Customer - brand relationships (Lestari & Islami, 2024). This literature gap is particularly noticeable in the skincare industry as for the skincare products consumer decisions are extremely personal and are mostly driven by emotional satisfaction and authenticity. The existing studies are often done on the broader and general product categories, limited to

the sector specific context. However, the skincare market, characterized by repeated usage, emotional satisfaction, and reliance on recommendation, requires deeper analysis on how parasocial relationships formed through influencer marketing affect a brand in the long term (brand loyalty).

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