JOURNALS OF SALOON AND BEAUTY INDUSTRY

VOL.1-NO.1-2026

P ISSN: xxxx-xxx

E ISSN: xxxx-xxx

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON SALON AND BEAUTY CONSUMER PREFERENCES

Kinza Ishaq

BS, Department of CS Computer Science, The Cosmic Degree College (For Women) ,University of Okara

ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of social media has significantly transformed the salon and beauty industry by changing the ways consumers discover beauty services, evaluate cosmetic products, develop brand preferences, and make purchasing decisions. Social media influencers have emerged as important sources of beauty-related information because they share product reviews, makeup tutorials, skincare routines, hairstyling techniques, salon transformations, and personal experiences across digital platforms. Their content can influence consumers' perceptions of beauty brands, expectations regarding salon services, and willingness to purchase recommended products or visit particular salons. This article examines the impact of social media influencers on salon and beauty consumer preferences, with particular attention to influencer credibility, trustworthiness, attractiveness, content quality, perceived authenticity, and relationships between influencers and their followers. The study adopts a qualitative, literature-based research approach and draws upon recent scholarly research concerning influencer marketing, beauty vloggers, cosmetic purchasing behaviour, and consumer purchase intentions. Previous studies indicate that consumers' responses to influencer recommendations are shaped not only by the popularity of the influencer but also by the perceived reliability of their information, the relevance of their content, and the consistency between their recommendations and followers' needs. The article also considers the potential influence of sponsored promotions, unrealistic beauty expectations, and differences between advertised results and actual consumer experiences. The literature suggests that influencer marketing can provide valuable opportunities for salons, beauty professionals, and cosmetic brands to increase awareness, strengthen consumer engagement, and develop customer loyalty. However, its effectiveness depends on transparent communication, credible recommendations, realistic representations of beauty services, and a clear understanding of consumer preferences. The article contributes to understanding how influencer-related factors may shape consumer attitudes and purchasing intentions in the contemporary salon and beauty market.

KEYWORDS: *Social media influencers, salon marketing, beauty industry, consumer preferences, influencer credibility, purchase intention, beauty services.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of social media has transformed contemporary marketing practices and created new opportunities for businesses to communicate with consumers. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook allow beauty brands, salon owners, hairstylists, makeup artists, skincare professionals, and individual content creators to share information with large audiences. Unlike traditional advertising, which primarily communicates promotional messages directly from businesses to consumers, influencer marketing frequently presents products and services through demonstrations, personal experiences, tutorials, reviews, and recommendations. This

approach allows consumers to observe how beauty products are applied, how hairstyles are created, how makeup techniques are performed, and how salon treatments are presented online. Consequently, social media has become an important environment in which beauty-related information is discovered, evaluated, and incorporated into consumer decision-making. Recent research on influencer marketing identifies purchase intention as an important outcome of consumers' interactions with influencers, while studies specifically examining beauty vloggers highlight the importance of credibility and trust in shaping consumer responses (Garg & Bakshi, 2024; Sardar & Vijay, 2025).

Social media influencers are individuals who develop an audience through regular online content and may affect their followers' opinions, preferences, and purchasing intentions. In the salon and beauty industry, influencers include professional makeup artists, skincare educators, hairstylists, beauty bloggers, lifestyle creators, and individuals who regularly review cosmetic products or document salon experiences. Their influence may develop through perceived expertise, physical attractiveness, communication style, consistency, authenticity, and the degree to which followers identify with their lifestyles and recommendations. Consumers may consider an influencer's advice useful when selecting a facial treatment, choosing a hairstyle, purchasing skincare products, comparing makeup brands, or deciding whether to visit a particular salon. However, the influence of an online recommendation depends on more than the number of followers an individual possesses. Research by Garg and Bakshi (2024) demonstrates the relevance of beauty vloggers' credibility, parasocial interaction, and trust to purchase intention, suggesting that the relationship between the influencer and the audience is an important consideration in beauty-related marketing.

The salon and beauty industry is particularly suitable for influencer marketing because many of its products and services can be demonstrated visually. Consumers can watch before-and-after transformations, observe makeup application, compare hairstyles, view skincare routines, and learn about salon treatments before deciding whether to purchase a product or book a service. Visual content can help potential customers understand the appearance of a service and develop expectations about its possible results. For example, a hairstylist who shares a transformation video may attract consumers interested in similar hair treatments, while a makeup artist who demonstrates a particular cosmetic product may encourage viewers to explore that product. Likewise, a beauty influencer who explains a salon experience may introduce a business to consumers who were previously unfamiliar with it. These promotional activities may influence awareness, perceived quality, brand attitudes, and purchasing intentions. Research into beauty-product marketing has similarly identified influencer credibility as an important factor associated with consumer purchasing behaviour (An et al., 2024).

Consumer preferences in the beauty market are influenced by a combination of personal needs, financial considerations, cultural expectations, product performance, service quality, convenience, and social influences. Social media influencers may contribute to this process by presenting particular beauty products, salon services, fashion trends, and personal-care routines as attractive or desirable. Consumers may develop preferences after repeatedly viewing demonstrations or recommendations from influencers they trust. They may also use influencer content to compare prices, identify new brands, discover suitable beauty professionals, and assess whether a particular service matches their personal style. Nevertheless, consumers do not necessarily accept every recommendation they encounter online. They may question promotional claims, compare alternative products, examine comments from other customers, or seek recommendations from friends and family. Therefore, influencer marketing should be understood as one factor within a broader consumer decision-making process rather than as the only explanation for purchasing behaviour. The relationship between influencer credibility and consumer purchase intention has been examined in recent research on TikTok and other social media platforms (Sitorus et al., 2024; Sardar & Vijay, 2025).

Influencer credibility is especially important because beauty consumers may rely on online recommendations when evaluating products or services whose quality is difficult to determine before use. Trustworthiness concerns whether consumers believe that an influencer communicates honestly, while expertise relates to the influencer's perceived knowledge and practical ability. Attractiveness may increase attention and make content visually appealing, but it does not automatically establish that a recommendation is reliable. For example, a consumer may appreciate a makeup tutorial because of its visual quality while still questioning whether the recommended cosmetic product is suitable for their skin type or budget. Similarly, a salon transformation may attract attention, but consumers may require information about the treatment, its price, possible risks, and the qualifications of the professional providing it. Garg and Bakshi (2024) examined credibility-related attributes alongside trust and parasocial interaction, while Sitorus et al. (2024) investigated trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise in the context of cosmetic purchase intention. These studies support examining different influencer characteristics separately rather than treating all forms of popularity as equally persuasive.

The relationship between influencers and their followers also deserves attention. Regular exposure to an influencer's content may create a feeling of familiarity, emotional connection, or personal closeness, even when the relationship is not reciprocal. Such connections may encourage followers to pay attention to recommendations and perceive the influencer as a relatable source of information. In beauty marketing, this relationship may be strengthened when creators respond to questions, explain product application, share experiences, and demonstrate how particular products or services fit into everyday routines. However, consumers may respond

differently when content appears excessively commercial or when promotional claims conflict with their personal experiences. Gopakumar and Dananjayan (2024) examined parasocial interactions, influencer credibility, product–influencer congruence, and online purchase intention in the context of Instagram beauty influencers. Their work provides a relevant basis for understanding why the relationship between an influencer, the promoted product, and the audience may matter for consumer preferences.

Despite the potential advantages of influencer marketing, the salon and beauty industry also faces challenges associated with unrealistic beauty standards, exaggerated product claims, undisclosed sponsorships, and digitally altered images. Consumers may develop unrealistic expectations when promotional content does not accurately represent typical results or fails to explain the limitations of a treatment. A salon service may produce different results depending on hair condition, skin type, individual needs, professional skill, and aftercare. Similarly, a cosmetic product may work differently for different consumers. When influencer content overlooks these differences, consumers may make decisions based on incomplete information. Businesses therefore need to consider the ethical implications of influencer partnerships and ensure that promotional communication remains transparent and realistic. Recent research on influencer marketing emphasizes the importance of credibility, consumer trust, and the broader factors associated with purchase intention (Garg & Bakshi, 2024; An et al., 2024).Although existing studies have examined influencer credibility, cosmetic purchasing behaviour, trust, and purchase intention, further attention is needed to understand how these factors relate specifically to consumer preferences for salon services and beauty experiences. Purchasing a cosmetic product is not identical to selecting a salon, because salon decisions may involve professional competence, personal interaction, service hygiene, appointment availability, location, treatment cost, and the perceived safety of a procedure. Consumers may therefore respond differently to influencers who promote products than to those who recommend a salon or demonstrate a professional beauty treatment. A broader examination of these relationships can help clarify how influencer content may contribute to consumer awareness, preference formation, service selection, and customer loyalty. The present article addresses this issue through a literature-based examination of the impact of social media influencers on salon and beauty consumer preferences, drawing upon recent research on influencer marketing and beauty-related purchasing decisions (Gopakumar & Dananjayan, 2024; Sardar & Vijay, 2025).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the influence of social media influencers on consumers' preferences for salon services, beauty products, and cosmetic brands.

2. To analyse the role of influencer credibility, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and content quality in shaping consumer attitudes and purchasing intentions.
3. To explore how influencer marketing may contribute to salon selection, brand awareness, customer engagement, and consumer loyalty in the beauty industry.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do social media influencers influence consumers' preferences for salon services, beauty products, and cosmetic brands?
2. How do influencer credibility, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and content quality affect consumer attitudes and purchasing intentions?
3. How does influencer marketing contribute to salon selection, brand awareness, customer engagement, and consumer loyalty in the beauty industry?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media influencer marketing has become an important area of contemporary consumer research because digital creators can communicate product information, demonstrate product use, and develop relationships with audiences through regular online interaction. Influencers differ from conventional advertising representatives because their promotional activities are frequently integrated into personal content, lifestyle presentations, tutorials, and accounts of everyday experiences. This communication style may make recommendations more accessible and relatable to consumers, particularly when the promoted product or service is relevant to their interests. Sardar and Vijay (2025), in their review of research on social media influencers and purchase intention, examined the broader academic literature and identified influencer marketing as a developing field that requires an integrated understanding of the factors associated with consumer purchasing intentions. Their review provides a foundation for examining how credibility, consumer attitudes, trust, and other influencer-related factors may interact. In the salon and beauty sector, these relationships are particularly relevant because consumers frequently encounter recommendations through visual content before making decisions about cosmetic purchases, personal-care routines, or professional beauty services. Nevertheless, the effects of influencer marketing should not be assumed to be identical across every product category, audience, or platform.

Influencer credibility is one of the most frequently examined concepts in research on digital marketing and consumer purchasing behaviour. Credibility generally involves consumers' perceptions of an influencer's trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness, although the importance of each characteristic may differ according to the situation. Trustworthiness concerns whether the influencer appears honest and dependable, while expertise relates to perceived

knowledge and competence in the relevant subject. Attractiveness can include physical appearance, presentation, communication style, and the overall appeal of the content. In beauty marketing, these characteristics may affect whether consumers pay attention to a recommendation and consider it worthy of further evaluation. Garg and Bakshi (2024) investigated beauty vloggers' credible attributes, parasocial interaction, trust, and consumer purchase intention. Their research is relevant because it connects influencer characteristics with the development of trust and subsequent consumer responses. For salon owners and beauty brands, the implication is that selecting influencers solely on the basis of follower numbers may overlook the qualities that help audiences evaluate and accept promotional messages. Influencers who provide relevant explanations, communicate consistently, and demonstrate an appropriate understanding of beauty products or services may offer a more credible form of promotion.

Research on cosmetic purchasing behaviour also highlights the importance of influencer credibility in shaping consumers' evaluations of beauty-related products. An et al. (2024) investigated the influence of social media influencer credibility on beauty-product purchase behaviour in Vietnam. Their study addresses how influencers' personal branding, perceived reliability, and communication with followers relate to consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions. This line of research is important because beauty products frequently involve personal preferences and individual differences, meaning that consumers may seek guidance before selecting a product. A skincare recommendation, for example, may be evaluated in relation to the consumer's skin type, product ingredients, price, and expected benefits. Similarly, consumers considering makeup products may compare coverage, durability, colour suitability, and ease of application. Influencer content can introduce consumers to these characteristics, but its value depends partly on whether the information is perceived as credible and relevant. In the salon context, the same general principle may apply when consumers evaluate recommendations for hair treatments, facial services, makeup applications, or other beauty experiences. However, product-related evidence should be applied cautiously to salon services because service quality also depends on the professional delivering the treatment and the consumer's individual circumstances.

The relationship between influencer trustworthiness and consumer purchasing intentions has received particular attention in studies examining TikTok and other short-form video platforms. Sitorus et al. (2024) examined the credibility of TikTok influencers and their relationship with consumers' intentions to purchase local cosmetics. Their research considered trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise as distinct dimensions of influencer credibility. The reported findings indicated positive effects for trustworthiness and attractiveness, whereas expertise did not have a statistically significant effect in their particular study. This distinction is important because it suggests that the influence of individual characteristics should be assessed empirically

rather than assumed in advance. It also indicates that the importance of an influencer attribute may depend on the audience, product category, and context of the research. For salon businesses, a visually appealing influencer may attract attention to a new hairstyle or treatment, but consumers may still need reliable information about service costs, suitability, expected results, and the experience of the professional. Therefore, visual attractiveness may contribute to initial interest without necessarily being sufficient to establish long-term confidence or satisfaction.

Parasocial interaction provides another perspective for understanding the relationship between influencer content and consumer preferences. This concept describes a perceived sense of personal connection that audiences may develop with media personalities, even when direct interpersonal relationships are limited. Social media can strengthen this perception through repeated exposure, informal communication, personal storytelling, audience responses, and discussions of everyday experiences. In the beauty sector, influencers may share personal routines, explain their product choices, discuss beauty-related challenges, and respond to followers' questions. These activities may help audiences feel familiar with the influencer and make recommendations appear more personally relevant. Gopakumar and Dananjayan (2024) examined parasocial interactions, influencer credibility, product–influencer congruence, attitudes, and online purchase intention among female Instagram users who followed beauty influencers. Their study is particularly relevant to understanding how an influencer's relationship with followers may interact with the suitability of the promoted product. For example, an audience may be more receptive to a recommendation when the influencer's usual content, demonstrated experience, and personal presentation are consistent with the product being promoted. However, perceived familiarity should not automatically be interpreted as evidence that a product is suitable or that a salon service will deliver the advertised result.

Content quality is another important consideration in influencer marketing because consumers require information that helps them assess products and services. Beauty-related content may include tutorials, product comparisons, demonstrations, treatment explanations, salon reviews, customer experiences, and before-and-after presentations. Such content can help consumers understand how a product is used, what a service involves, and which characteristics deserve attention before purchasing. Detailed explanations may be more useful than promotional messages that focus exclusively on appearance or popularity. In addition, clear communication about price, product limitations, treatment requirements, and expected outcomes may help consumers develop more realistic expectations. The broader review by Sardar and Vijay (2025) provides a basis for considering influencer marketing through multiple factors rather than treating exposure to promotional content as a sufficient explanation for purchase intention. In the salon industry, content quality may be particularly relevant because consumers cannot always evaluate service quality fully before booking an appointment. Demonstrations and reviews can

provide preliminary information, although they cannot replace professional consultation or guarantee that an individual customer will experience identical results.

The match between an influencer and a promoted product or service is also relevant to the effectiveness of beauty marketing. Consumers may evaluate a recommendation differently depending on whether the influencer appears knowledgeable about the subject and whether the promotion is consistent with their established content. An influencer who regularly demonstrates professional makeup techniques may be perceived as a relevant source for makeup products, while a hairstylist who explains hair-care routines may be a more appropriate partner for a salon promoting hair treatments. Conversely, a recommendation may appear less convincing when the promoted service seems unrelated to the influencer's usual activities or when the content appears motivated primarily by commercial interests. Gopakumar and Dananjayan (2024) examined product–influencer congruence alongside credibility and parasocial interaction, providing a relevant framework for understanding these relationships. For salon businesses, an appropriate partnership should therefore consider the influencer's audience, content specialisation, communication style, and relevance to the service being promoted. This approach may help businesses reach consumers whose interests are more closely aligned with the services offered.

A further consideration is the distinction between consumer awareness, purchase intention, actual purchasing behaviour, and customer loyalty. Influencer content may introduce a salon or beauty product to an audience without necessarily producing a booking or sale. A consumer may like a promotional video, save a tutorial, or follow a beauty creator but ultimately choose a different brand because of price, availability, personal preferences, or previous experience. Similarly, an individual may book a salon appointment after watching an influencer's review but may not return if the actual service fails to meet expectations. Sardar and Vijay (2025) reviewed research focused on purchase intention, while broader work on influencer credibility and consumer responses examines how digital recommendations relate to attitudes, trust, and purchasing outcomes. These distinctions are important for the salon industry because the commercial value of influencer marketing cannot be assessed solely through views, likes, or follower counts. Businesses should also consider enquiries, bookings, conversions, customer satisfaction, repeat visits, and feedback where reliable information is available.

The expansion of influencer marketing also creates concerns about authenticity, sponsorship transparency, and consumer expectations. Paid collaborations and gifted products may influence the way promotional content is produced, making it important for consumers to understand when an influencer has a commercial relationship with a brand. Consumers may also encounter edited images, carefully selected results, or demonstrations that do not fully represent ordinary outcomes. In the beauty industry, these practices can affect expectations about skin appearance,

hair quality, makeup performance, and the results of professional treatments. An et al. (2024) and Garg and Bakshi (2024) provide relevant research perspectives on credibility and trust in beauty-related influencer marketing. From a consumer perspective, reliable recommendations should distinguish personal opinions from substantiated product information and should not imply that every treatment will produce the same result. From a business perspective, transparent communication may support more informed decisions and help maintain a consistent relationship between promotional claims and actual service experiences.

Recent literature consequently provides a useful foundation for understanding influencer marketing in the beauty sector, but the transfer of findings from cosmetics to salon services requires careful consideration. Cosmetic purchases often involve choosing a physical product, whereas salon services include a professional interaction, an appointment, and a treatment whose outcome may depend on individual circumstances. Consumers may consider professional skill, cleanliness, convenience, price, location, communication, and previous customer experiences when choosing a salon. Influencer recommendations may help consumers discover a salon and form an initial impression, but these recommendations represent only part of the decision-making process. The studies reviewed by Sardar and Vijay (2025), together with research on beauty vloggers and cosmetic purchase intention by Garg and Bakshi (2024) and Sitorus et al. (2024), establish the relevance of credibility and consumer trust. Further investigation of salon-specific decisions can extend this understanding by distinguishing product preferences from service preferences and examining how influencer exposure relates to actual salon selection and repeat patronage.

Overall, the literature suggests that the relationship between social media influencers and beauty consumer preferences involves several connected factors, including credibility, trust, perceived expertise, content quality, audience relationships, and the relevance of recommendations. These factors may influence the way consumers discover beauty options, evaluate promotional information, form attitudes, and consider purchasing products or booking services. At the same time, their relative importance may vary across audiences, platforms, brands, and types of beauty services. The literature therefore supports a balanced examination of influencer marketing that recognises its promotional opportunities while acknowledging the importance of service quality, realistic expectations, transparency, and independent consumer judgement. The present article uses these insights to examine the potential impact of social media influencers on salon and beauty consumer preferences and to identify considerations that may be relevant to salon owners, beauty professionals, and marketers.

METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a qualitative, literature-based research methodology to examine the impact of social media influencers on salon and beauty consumer preferences. Rather than collecting new questionnaire responses or conducting interviews with salon customers, the study draws upon existing scholarly publications concerning influencer marketing, beauty vloggers, cosmetic purchasing behaviour, influencer credibility, parasocial interaction, and purchase intention. The literature provides the conceptual basis for examining how social media content may influence consumer awareness, preferences, attitudes, and purchasing decisions. The review focuses on the relationship between influencer characteristics and consumer responses, with particular attention to trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, perceived authenticity, content relevance, and the connection between influencers and their audiences. Relevant studies published between 2023 and 2025 were prioritised where their subject matter directly related to the research topic. The literature was selected for its relevance to social media marketing and beauty-related consumer behaviour, and the resulting discussion was organised around recurring concepts and relationships. Because the study is literature-based, its conclusions represent a synthesis of previously published research rather than the results of a new empirical investigation. The approach is intended to establish a structured understanding of the topic and identify areas in which additional salon-specific research may be valuable.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research uses a qualitative descriptive and thematic review design to organise and interpret existing academic literature related to social media influencers and consumer preferences in the salon and beauty industry. The descriptive component outlines the principal influencer characteristics and consumer responses discussed in previous studies, while the thematic component groups the literature into related areas, including influencer credibility, trust, visual attractiveness, content quality, parasocial interaction, product–influencer congruence, purchase intention, and customer loyalty. The design enables findings from studies of beauty products and cosmetics to be considered alongside their potential relevance to salon services, while recognising that the two contexts are not identical. The research does not employ an experimental design, manipulate influencer exposure, or measure causal relationships through original participant data. Instead, it examines how existing studies conceptualise and report associations between influencer marketing and consumer behaviour. The design is suitable for developing an organised overview of the subject, comparing common themes across publications, and identifying limitations in the existing evidence. Particular attention is given to the distinction between consumers' initial interest in promotional content and their subsequent decisions to purchase products, book salon appointments, or continue using a service. This distinction helps maintain an appropriate relationship between the available literature and the conclusions drawn in the article.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis is based on a qualitative thematic interpretation of the selected scholarly literature. The publications were examined to identify recurring concepts, reported relationships, and differences in how influencer marketing is associated with consumer behaviour in the beauty sector. The analysis focuses on five interconnected themes: influencer credibility, consumer trust, content quality, audience relationships, and purchasing behaviour. These themes provide a structured basis for interpreting how consumers may respond to influencer recommendations and how those responses may relate to preferences for salon services, beauty products, and cosmetic brands. Research by Garg and Bakshi (2024), Sitorus et al. (2024), and Gopakumar and Dananjayan (2024) provides relevant evidence concerning credibility, trust, parasocial interaction, and purchase intention. The analysis considers these findings in relation to the central research questions while distinguishing established findings from potential applications to salon businesses. Since the article does not involve the collection of original consumer data, no statistical tests, numerical comparisons, or new estimates of consumer behaviour are reported.

The first analytical theme concerns the relationship between influencer credibility and consumer preferences. The reviewed literature indicates that trustworthiness, perceived expertise, and attractiveness are relevant dimensions for understanding consumers' responses to influencer recommendations. These characteristics may affect whether audiences regard promotional information as useful, credible, and worthy of further consideration. However, their importance is not necessarily identical in every situation. Sitorus et al. (2024), for example, reported different results for individual credibility dimensions in their study of TikTok influencers and local cosmetic purchase intention. This suggests that influencer characteristics should be considered separately rather than treated as interchangeable indicators of effectiveness. In the salon industry, credibility may be particularly relevant when consumers are deciding whether to trust a professional's demonstration, accept a product recommendation, or consider booking a treatment. Nevertheless, the literature-based analysis cannot establish that credibility alone determines salon selection, because consumers may also consider affordability, location, availability, previous experiences, and service quality.

The second analytical theme concerns trust, parasocial interaction, and the relationship between influencers and their followers. Regular exposure to personal content may help audiences develop familiarity with influencers and perceive their recommendations as relevant to their own interests. Beauty-related content can strengthen this connection by demonstrating product use, explaining personal routines, responding to audience questions, and discussing experiences with different treatments. Garg and Bakshi (2024) examined the relationship between beauty vloggers' credible attributes, parasocial interaction, trust, and purchase intention, while

Gopakumar and Dananjayan (2024) investigated parasocial interaction and related factors in the context of Instagram beauty influencers. These studies provide a basis for interpreting the role of perceived connection and credibility in consumer decision-making. For salon businesses, such relationships may help attract initial attention and encourage consumers to explore services. However, a perceived personal connection should not be confused with verified professional competence or guaranteed treatment results.

The third analytical theme concerns content quality and the presentation of beauty products and services. Social media content may influence consumer preferences by providing demonstrations, comparisons, reviews, tutorials, and visual examples of possible outcomes. Content that explains the characteristics, costs, suitability, and limitations of a product or service may help consumers make more informed comparisons. In contrast, promotional content that emphasises appearance without providing relevant information may attract attention without necessarily supporting a well-informed purchasing decision. An et al. (2024) examined influencer credibility in relation to beauty-product purchasing behaviour, providing relevant context for understanding how influencer communication may relate to consumer evaluations. The analysis suggests that salon businesses may benefit from content that presents services clearly and realistically, including information about treatment procedures and individual differences in results. Nevertheless, the usefulness of such content must be evaluated in relation to consumers' actual responses rather than assumed from visual engagement alone.

The fourth analytical theme concerns the relationship between influencer recommendations and purchasing outcomes. The literature distinguishes between exposure to promotional messages, favourable attitudes, purchase intention, actual purchases, and continuing customer relationships. These outcomes represent different stages of consumer behaviour and should not be treated as equivalent. A consumer may watch a beauty tutorial without purchasing the recommended product, or may book a salon appointment after viewing a promotional video without becoming a repeat customer. Sardar and Vijay (2025) reviewed research on influencer marketing and purchase intention, providing a broader framework for considering the factors associated with consumers' intentions to purchase. Applied to the salon sector, this distinction suggests that businesses should assess influencer partnerships in relation to meaningful outcomes, such as enquiries, confirmed bookings, customer feedback, repeat appointments, and satisfaction. The present analysis does not measure these outcomes directly but identifies them as relevant considerations for interpreting the commercial effectiveness of influencer marketing.

The final analytical theme concerns authenticity, transparency, and the limitations of influencer-based promotion. Consumers may evaluate recommendations differently when they recognise a commercial relationship, question the accuracy of promotional claims, or encounter differences

between advertised and actual results. These considerations are important in beauty marketing because individual outcomes may depend on skin type, hair condition, personal preferences, professional skill, and the specific treatment selected. The reviewed literature supports examining credibility, trust, and the suitability of influencer recommendations as interconnected aspects of consumer decision-making (Garg & Bakshi, 2024; Gopakumar & Dananjayan, 2024). From this perspective, transparent sponsorship disclosures, realistic demonstrations, and accurate explanations may contribute to more responsible promotional practices. The analysis also identifies a need for further research specifically examining salon customers, because evidence concerning cosmetic purchases does not necessarily establish how consumers select professional beauty services or develop long-term relationships with salons.

FINDINGS

The literature-based analysis indicates that social media influencers may play an important role in shaping consumer awareness, attitudes, and preferences within the salon and beauty industry. Influencers provide opportunities for consumers to discover unfamiliar products, compare beauty options, observe professional techniques, and learn about salon services through digital content. Their recommendations may contribute to initial interest in a product or business, particularly when the content is visually engaging and relevant to the audience. However, the reviewed studies suggest that influencer marketing should not be understood simply as a consequence of popularity or repeated exposure. Credibility, trustworthiness, perceived expertise, and the relevance of the recommendation are important considerations when interpreting consumers' responses. Research by Garg and Bakshi (2024), An et al. (2024), and Sitorus et al. (2024) provides relevant evidence concerning influencer credibility and beauty-related purchasing behaviour. These findings support the conclusion that influencer marketing is a multidimensional process in which consumers evaluate both the source of a recommendation and the information being communicated.

A second finding is that trust and perceived relationships between influencers and their audiences may contribute to the acceptance of beauty-related recommendations. Consumers who regard an influencer as reliable or relatable may be more willing to consider the products and services discussed in their content. Regular demonstrations, personal explanations, and relevant interactions may help make recommendations understandable and personally meaningful. The studies by Garg and Bakshi (2024) and Gopakumar and Dananjayan (2024) provide a basis for recognising the importance of credibility and parasocial interaction in influencer marketing. Nevertheless, trust should not be interpreted as unconditional acceptance of every recommendation. Consumers may still compare alternatives, examine product information, consider their budgets, and evaluate whether a salon service is appropriate for their needs.

Therefore, the influence of social media creators may operate alongside other personal, economic, and practical considerations rather than replacing them.

A third finding concerns the importance of content relevance and the relationship between an influencer and the promoted product or service. Beauty-related demonstrations and reviews may help consumers understand product application, treatment procedures, styling options, and possible service outcomes. The literature suggests that credibility and the suitability of promotional recommendations deserve attention when evaluating influencer marketing effectiveness (An et al., 2024; Gopakumar & Dananjayan, 2024). In practical terms, a salon may find a partnership more relevant when the influencer's audience and content specialisation correspond to the salon's services. For example, an influencer who regularly creates hairstyling tutorials may be relevant to a business promoting hair treatments, while a makeup artist may be suitable for a salon specialising in bridal makeup. These examples illustrate possible applications of the literature rather than measured outcomes of the present study. The actual effectiveness of a partnership would require evidence from customer responses, booking data, and other appropriate performance measures.

The analysis also indicates that purchase intention and actual purchasing behaviour must be distinguished when assessing influencer marketing. A promotional video may attract attention or create interest without leading to a purchase or salon appointment. Likewise, an initial booking does not necessarily result in customer satisfaction, repeat patronage, or loyalty. Sardar and Vijay (2025) provide a broader research framework for understanding influencer marketing and purchase intention, while the beauty-focused studies reviewed in this article illustrate the relevance of credibility and trust. For salon businesses, these findings suggest that the evaluation of influencer campaigns should extend beyond likes, comments, and views to include meaningful consumer outcomes where data are available. Customer enquiries, bookings, service experiences, and repeat visits may offer a more informative understanding of commercial performance. However, the relative contribution of influencer marketing to these outcomes cannot be quantified from the literature reviewed here.

Finally, the analysis identifies transparency, realistic communication, and the need for salon-specific evidence as important considerations. Influencer recommendations may help consumers discover new services, but promotional content cannot guarantee identical outcomes for every individual. Consumers may require information about pricing, suitability, professional qualifications, treatment limitations, and expected results before making decisions. Credible and transparent communication may help align expectations with the services actually provided. The reviewed literature also indicates that research on beauty products and cosmetic purchases should not automatically be generalised to all salon services. Salon selection involves service-related

considerations that may differ from the purchase of a cosmetic product. Consequently, further empirical research involving salon customers could clarify how influencer credibility, content quality, and trust relate to appointment decisions, customer satisfaction, and loyalty in particular markets. These conclusions reflect a synthesis of existing literature and do not represent results obtained from a new survey or experiment.

CONCLUSION

The impact of social media influencers on salon and beauty consumer preferences represents an important area of contemporary marketing research. Social media platforms provide opportunities for beauty professionals, salon owners, cosmetic brands, and content creators to communicate with consumers through demonstrations, reviews, tutorials, and personal experiences. The literature examined in this article suggests that influencer credibility, trustworthiness, perceived expertise, attractiveness, content relevance, and relationships with followers are important considerations for understanding how influencer recommendations may shape consumer awareness and purchasing intentions. Research on beauty vloggers and cosmetic purchasing behaviour provides evidence relevant to these relationships and establishes a foundation for examining influencer marketing within the wider beauty sector (Garg & Bakshi, 2024; An et al., 2024; Sitorus et al., 2024).

The analysis further indicates that influencer marketing should be understood as one element of consumer decision-making rather than an independent guarantee of purchasing behaviour. Consumers may consider recommendations when discovering beauty products or evaluating salon services, but their final decisions can also depend on price, convenience, service quality, personal preferences, and previous experiences. Trust and perceived relationships with influencers may encourage consumers to consider promotional messages, while content quality and the relevance of a recommendation may help them evaluate available options. However, purchase intention does not necessarily translate into an actual transaction, and an initial purchase or appointment does not automatically lead to satisfaction or customer loyalty. Businesses therefore need to assess influencer partnerships in relation to appropriate consumer and commercial outcomes rather than relying exclusively on social media engagement.

The article also highlights the importance of authenticity, transparency, and realistic representations of beauty products and services. Influencers and businesses should communicate promotional relationships clearly and avoid presenting individual treatment outcomes as guaranteed results. For salon owners, selecting relevant influencers and providing accurate service information may help establish more informed relationships with potential customers. At the same time, consumers should be encouraged to evaluate recommendations critically and

consider whether products and treatments suit their individual needs. These practices may help make influencer marketing more responsible and useful within the beauty industry.

In conclusion, the existing literature provides a valuable foundation for understanding the relationship between social media influencers and beauty consumer preferences, but further salon-specific empirical research is needed. Future investigations could examine consumers' actual booking decisions, the relationship between influencer recommendations and service satisfaction, and the factors associated with repeat visits and customer loyalty. Research involving salon customers from different age groups, locations, and consumer segments could also clarify whether influencer characteristics operate differently across audiences and service categories. Since the present article relies on existing literature rather than original participant data, its conclusions should be interpreted as a synthesis of published research rather than as direct measurements of consumer behaviour. Overall, influencer marketing offers potential opportunities for salon and beauty businesses, but its effectiveness depends on credible communication, relevant content, consumer trust, and the quality of the products and services being promoted.

REFERENCES

An, G. K., Ngo, T. T. A., Tran, T. T., & Nguyen, P. T. (2024). Investigating the influence of social media influencer credibility on beauty product purchase behaviors: A case study from Vietnam. Innovative Marketing, 20(3), 261–276.

Garg, M., & Bakshi, A. (2024). Exploring the impact of beauty vloggers' credible attributes, parasocial interaction, and trust on consumer purchase intention in influencer marketing. Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 11, Article 235.

George, A., Shibu, M. S., Joseph, E. T., & Sunny, P. (2025). Impact of social media influencer marketing on customer purchase intention in the fashion industry: A systematic literature review. Frontiers in Communication, 10.

Gopakumar, S., & Dananjayan, M. P. (2024). It must be excellent if an Instagram star endorses it, right? Inquiring about the parasocial interactions and online purchase intention. Business Perspectives and Research.

Nurdianasari, R., Maharani, S., & Damarani, Z. N. (2025). The role of social media influencers in cosmetic marketing: A systematic literature review. Jurnal Ekonomi Kreatif dan Manajemen Bisnis Digital, 4(2).

Sardar, S., & Vijay, T. S. (2025). Social media influencers and purchase intention: A review and research agenda. International Journal of Consumer Studies, 49(3), Article e70046.

Sitorus, B. A., Azwa Ambad, S. N., & Robert Dawayan, C. (2024). TikTok influencers' credibility and its impact on local cosmetic purchase intention. Jurnal Intelek, 19(2), 121–132.