

Perceived Usefulness And Ease Of Use Of Influencer Content: A Technology Acceptance Perspective On Skincare Purchase Behaviour

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Abstract

Purpose: In today's digital ecosystem, social media influencers (SMIs) have emerged as trusted intermediaries who shape consumers' purchase decisions through product-based information, reviews, and recommendations. This study investigates how perceived usefulness and ease of use of influencer-provided content affect consumer purchase intentions in the skincare sector.

Theoretical Framework: Grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Davis (1989), the study applies the core constructs of Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) to explain behavioural intention in influencer-driven marketing contexts. The TAM framework suggests that consumer adoption of online content depends on its practical value and cognitive simplicity.

Methodology: A quantitative, descriptive research design was adopted, collecting responses from 419 valid participants in Haryana, India. The respondents were active social media users and skincare consumers. Standardized Likert-scale instruments measured PU, PEOU, and purchase intention. Data reliability was confirmed through Cronbach's Alpha (> 0.70), and Simple Linear Regression Analysis was applied to test hypotheses using SPSS.

Findings: Results demonstrate that perceived usefulness significantly influences purchase intention ($\beta = 0.445$, $R^2 = 0.218$, $p < 0.001$), while ease of use also has a significant, though slightly weaker, effect ($\beta = 0.380$, $R^2 = 0.120$, $p < 0.001$). These findings confirm that consumers are more inclined to act upon influencer recommendations when the content is both informative and easily accessible.

Implications: The study highlights the growing role of influencers as digital information facilitators. Brands should focus on enhancing the utility and clarity of influencer content to drive higher engagement and purchase conversion.

Keywords: Perceived usefulness, ease of use, influencer content, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), skincare purchase behaviour, digital marketing

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I. Introduction

Background of the Study- Social-media has transformed consumer decision-making by creating an interactive environment where digital influencers act as *trusted opinion leaders*. Particularly in the skincare industry, where consumers face information overload, influencers simplify complex product information through relatable and visual communication. Their ability to translate technical product details into understandable guidance significantly influences consumer choices.

Rationale- Consumers increasingly perceive influencers not merely as brand endorsers but as information providers whose guidance helps them evaluate product suitability, ingredients, and effectiveness. This shift aligns with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989), which emphasizes that perceived usefulness and ease of use are critical determinants of behavioural intention. In the influencer context, these constructs correspond to how effectively and effortlessly consumers can understand and apply influencer-provided information.

Theoretical Foundation

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) postulates that behavioural intention is driven by two cognitive beliefs:

1. **Perceived Usefulness (PU):** The extent to which individuals believe that engaging with influencer content enhances their ability to make informed purchase decisions.
2. **Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU):** The degree to which consumers find influencer content simple, clear, and effortless to engage with.
3. By extending TAM into influencer marketing, this study conceptualizes how these digital interactions lead to purchase intention, a core indicator of consumer adoption.

Research Gap and Objective- While influencer marketing literature has examined factors such as credibility and attractiveness, limited empirical research has integrated TAM constructs into this domain. This study bridges that gap by focusing on cognitive acceptance of influencer content.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To examine the effect of perceived usefulness of influencer-provided skincare information on consumer purchase intention.
2. To analyze the impact of perceived ease of use of influencer content on purchase intention.
3. To determine which construct—usefulness or ease of use—serves as a stronger predictor of purchase intention.

II. Review Of Literature

Author(s)	Focus	Findings
Davis (1989)	Proposed Technology Acceptance Model	Perceived usefulness and ease of use determine behavioural intention.
Venkatesh & Davis (2000)	Extended TAM (TAM2)	Social influence and perceived usefulness directly affect behavioural adoption.
Lou & Yuan (2019)	Influencer credibility and message value	Influencer trust increases message adoption when content is perceived as informative.
Sokolova & Kefi (2020)	Instagram and YouTube influencers	Credibility and content quality enhance trust and purchase intention.
Lim et al. (2017)	Social media influencer impact	Customer attitude mediates the relationship between influencer credibility and purchase intention.

The literature collectively supports that **useful and user-friendly content** fosters acceptance, trust, and purchase behaviour, reinforcing the theoretical application of TAM to influencer marketing.

Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the theoretical framework and prior studies, the following hypotheses were developed:

H1: Perceived usefulness of influencer-provided content has a positive and significant influence on consumer purchase intention.

H2: Perceived ease of use of influencer-provided content has a positive and significant influence on consumer purchase intention.

III. Methodology

Research Design and Sampling- The study adopted a quantitative survey-based approach. Data were collected from 419 valid respondents (after screening out incomplete responses) through purposive sampling. The participants were social media users aged between 20–50 years who actively followed skincare influencers.

Measurement Scales

All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaire included:

1. **Perceived Usefulness (PU):** 4 items adapted from Davis (1989)
2. **Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU):** 4 items adapted from Venkatesh & Davis (2000)
3. **Purchase Intention:** 3 items adapted from Lou & Yuan (2019)

Data Analysis Tools

Descriptive statistics and reliability testing (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.70) confirmed internal consistency. Simple Linear Regression Analysis was used to test both hypotheses independently.

IV. Results

Table 1: Regression Analysis for Perceived Usefulness (PU)

Predictor Variable	β	R ²	t-value	p-value	Decision
Perceived Usefulness	0.445	0.218	7.115	< 0.001	H1 Accepted

Table 2: Regression Analysis for Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)

Predictor Variable	β	R ²	t-value	p-value	Decision
Perceived Ease of Use	0.380	0.120	6.412	< 0.001	H2 Accepted

Interpretation

Both hypotheses (H1 and H2) were accepted, confirming that usefulness and ease of use significantly predict purchase intention. However, the β values and R² indicate that perceived usefulness is a stronger predictor. Consumers tend to rely on influencers who provide valuable, problem-solving, and informative content, whereas ease of content consumption enhances engagement but to a lesser degree.

The findings corroborate the Technology Acceptance Model, demonstrating that consumers adopt influencer recommendations in the same way they adopt new technologies—when content is both useful and user-friendly.

Perceived Usefulness: Consumers perceive greater purchase value when influencer content provides meaningful insights into skincare benefits, product suitability, and application techniques.

Perceived Ease of Use: Simplified communication—such as short videos, step-by-step visuals, and easy language—reduces cognitive effort and enhances comprehension.

These results echo prior studies (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020), emphasizing that informative and clear influencer communication is a critical antecedent of trust and behavioural intention.

V. Implications

Managerial Implications

1. **For Brands:** Collaborate with influencers capable of producing **educational and diagnostic content** that simplifies product understanding.
2. **For Influencers:** Develop content that combines **usefulness (information)** with **clarity (ease of use)** to sustain long-term audience trust.
3. **For Marketing Strategists:** Integrate TAM-based metrics when evaluating influencer effectiveness in campaign analytics.

Theoretical Implications- The study extends TAM to the domain of influencer marketing, validating that the constructs of perceived usefulness and ease of use are not limited to technological adoption but also explain digital content acceptance behaviour. This study concludes that both perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of influencer content significantly impact consumer purchase intentions in the skincare industry. However, usefulness plays a more dominant role, underscoring the value of substantive, credible, and educational influencer content.

As social media ecosystems evolve, consumers increasingly evaluate influencers as knowledge intermediaries rather than promotional agents. The findings therefore advocate for content-driven influencer strategies that prioritize clarity, accuracy, and practical relevance.

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