

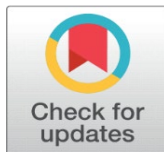
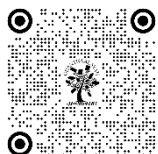
HOW INFLUENCERS WEAVE THE DIGITAL WEB OF PURCHASE INTENTION: TRUST, EXPERTISE, SIMILARITY AND ATTRACTION

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Influencer marketing has evolved from the Pre-internet era to the era of advanced technology and artificial intelligence (Dwivedi et. al 2021) from the perspective of the larger evolution of marketing.

PURPOSE: This paper aims to investigate the impact of influencer credibility, i.e., trustworthiness, attractiveness, expertise, and Similarity, on consumer purchase intention.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: The data from 179 respondents were collected using a structured questionnaire through a convenient sampling method and gathered data were analysed through (CFA) Confirmatory factor analysis and Structure Equation Modelling using SPSS Amos version 23.

FINDINGS: The Result demonstrated that attractiveness, expertise, and similarity have a significant positive correlation with intent to purchase. H1 (Attractiveness), H3(expertise), and H4(similarity) were accepted. On the other hand, trustworthiness did not have a significant positive correlation with the intent to purchase. Therefore, H2(trustworthiness) was not supported. The trustworthiness did not impact the purchase intention, and H2 was rejected

Keywords: Attractiveness, Trustworthiness, Similarity, Expertise, Influencers credibility, Purchase Intention

1. INTRODUCTION

Today's world is undergoing a revolutionary transition that can be traced back to multiple considerable eras in marketing evolution. Influencer marketing has evolved from the Pre-internet era to the era of advanced technology and artificial intelligence (Dwivedi et al., 2021) from the perspective of the larger evolution of marketing. The marketing environment was dominated by conventional advertising channels like radio, television, print media, and outdoor advertising before the Internet. Before the emergence of influencer marketing, companies relied mostly on celebrity endorsements, mass media, and endorsements to reach consumers (Shivani-Talan, 2023).

According to Rustam (2020), Digital media emerged in the late 20th century. The development of digital technology and the internet in the 2nd half of the 20th century impacted the marketing environment by allowing companies to interact with customers online easily. Influencer marketing developed to take off

as people uncovered new ways to share their thoughts and content through blogs and early social media platforms. Early to Mid-2000s Social Media Pioneers and social media sites like Facebook, YouTube, and Myspace began to appear in the early to mid-2000s, facilitating the creation and sharing of information. Initially referred to as bloggers, vloggers and social media celebrities, influencers became well-known for their genuine and interesting content (Ortner C. et al., 2018). Instagram was introduced in 2010 and significantly contributed to the development of influencer marketing. According to Leaver T. et al. (2020), the growth of visual influencers with Instagram in the 2010s with its emphasis on visual content and aesthetics. Influencers in the domains of fashion, beauty and lifestyle became popular on Instagram by highlighting products and lifestyles through photo sharing. From the mid-2010s to the present, micro-influencer and niche communities, the influencer environment reshaped as social media grew older. The micro-influencers, people with smaller but extremely engaged followings, became more prevalent. Micro-influencers assist marketers in more successfully and authentically targeting particular demographics by concentrating on specific interests and communities (Soto-Vásquez et al., 2022). As social media influencers gain greater prominence, platforms and governing bodies have created rules and regulations to safeguard authenticity and integrity in influencer marketing. Influencers must abide by advertising guidelines and laws by disclosing sponsored material and being open and honest with their audiences (Chawla et al., 2022). Current technological developments and new platforms that gave rise to new social media sites like TikTok, Snapchat, and YouTube have led to further evolutions in immersive influencer brand experiences. The influencer collaboration is made possible by emerging technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality. Influencers' credibility and customers' purchase intentions are significantly impacted by trustworthiness, information quality, and entertainment value. Additionally, a consumer's desire to buy is directly impacted by the credibility and dependability of an influencer (Saima & M. Altaf Khan, 2021). Perceived trust, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and a favourable correlation with purchase intentions both directly and indirectly through partial mediation all together positively impact attitudes toward fashion influencers (Tiwari et al., 2024). The transformations in marketing toward digitalisation, authenticity, Communication and customer involvement are reflected in the development of influencer marketing. Due to continuous technological upgradation, influencer marketing will be a powerful and dynamic force in modern advertising and brand promotion, especially as consumer preferences and technology continue to change. This study examines influencers and their capacity to amass a sizable following on social media, as well as previous investigations into the emergence of influencer marketing and its impact on consumer intent. The following empirical analysis focuses on the influencers' credibility, i.e., Source Attractiveness, Trustworthiness, similarity, expertise and a discussion on the result.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the world of savvy technology, Lavanya (2021) the effects of digital marketing and its significance for marketers as well as consumers as technology is advancing day by day, the world is shifting toward more digital and less analogue. As a result, people are using the internet more frequently, and their purchasing habits are changing. They are also becoming more interested in digital, social media, and search engine marketing. Influencer marketing has emerged as a highly effective marketing tactic, with corporations investing enormous sums of money in social media influencers in recent years. The content influencers share on social media platforms has created a captivating following (Saini et al.; R., 2023). Social media platforms are shaking up marketing by offering new ways to reach and engage customers, conduct sales, harvest customer data, along with giving services. (Lamberton, C., & Stephen, A. T., 2016). Jayanto et al. (2021) state that online influencers significantly affect consumer purchasing intention; marketers must select the most effective platform to connect with the intended audience. Batra et al. (2022) state that influencers might affect consumers' propensity to purchase, paying particular attention to experts, trustworthiness, resemblance, and source attractiveness. The experts could be more appealing and reliable even though they greatly influence buying intention. This would help marketers create effective marketing campaigns by helping them discover target markets, establish strategies, and work with influencers. Saputra et. al (2022) social media influencers, specifically focusing on their reputation, the propensity to buy, and attitude toward marketing and items. Social media influencers are vital to marketers and beneficial in many ways. Marketers can evaluate the impact by examining how the reliability of influencers impacts customers' perceptions of commercials and products and their intentions to purchase. Marketers can also ascertain the most important aspects of influencer marketing by looking at consumers' purchase intentions which are influenced by their opinions about commercials and products. Yee Wei et al. (2021) Malaysian women's inclination to buy is influenced by the influencer's strategies, i.e. trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, respect, similarity, and purchase intention. Purchase intention is most impacted by source similarity, source trustworthiness, and expertise. Saima et al. (2020) attribute social media

influencers to their credibility and eventually to consumers' purchase intention, indicating that influencers' dependability, quality of information, and entertainment value have a considerable direct and indirect impact on customers' purchase intentions. The credibility and dependability of an Influencer have a direct effect on a customer's willingness to purchase. Koay et al. (2021) the stimulus-response (S-O-R) theory-based mediating function of source credibility—attractiveness, knowledge, and trustworthiness affects online impulsive purchases in the context of Instagram influencer-only social media marketing. Instagram influencers' perceived trustworthiness and attractiveness acted as moderating components in the relationship between perceived social media marketing activity and online impulsive buying. The Instagram influencers' successful social media marketing campaigns are crucial in encouraging impulsive online purchases because of the mediating effects of beauty and dependability. Instagram influencers must control their postings carefully to build a solid reputation. Kumavat's (2023) effects of influencer marketing on consumer behaviour highlight how well it raises brand awareness, strengthens brand perception and generates more sales and exposure to influencer marketing, which impacts brand awareness, perception, and purchase behaviour. Influencer marketing is appropriate for businesses looking to boost sales, enhance consumer engagement, and establish their brand. Zak et al. (2019) indicate that influencers impact consumers' purchase decisions by using social media and advertising campaigns to promote products and brands multiple times a day, which ultimately benefits the brand and positively impacts sales of its products. Companies that use these strategies should be aware of the risks associated with collaborating with influencers.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY: There is a need to study the impact of influencers on consumers, as influencer marketing has created an explosion of attention and radically changed the meaning of marketing worldwide. Indian influencers are getting a captive audience because of their enormous diversity and larger country. Influencer marketing's effect on consumers' buying intentions has been the subject of numerous studies. However, it would be interesting to see how consumer purchase intentions evolve and how marketing techniques might adapt to meet these changes.

OBJECTIVES

To investigate the impact of influencer marketing strategies on consumer buying behaviour.

THEORETICAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT:

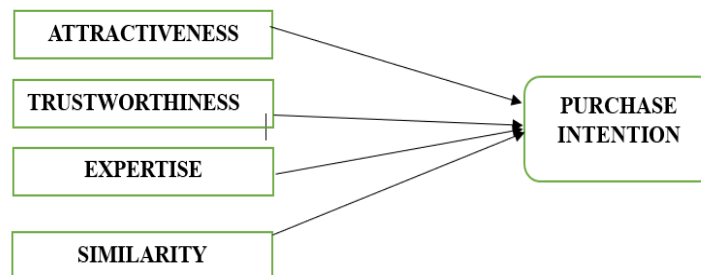


Fig.1 THEORETICAL MODEL

THE THEORY OF SOURCE CREDIBILITY MODEL

The "source credibility" is frequently used to suggest a communicator's favourable traits that influence the target audience's acceptance of a message (Ohanian,1990). Four factors make up credibility, according to (Lou & Yuan, 2019) similarity, expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. The communicator's personality and positive traits are linked to source credibility and impact the message's persuasiveness (Ohanian,1990), (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). The reliance on consumers' intent to buy on a single social media network, like as Instagram. Prior studies mostly examined the relationship between purchase intention and the efficacy of advertisements through the mediating influence of source credibility (Munnukka et al., 2016), (Pornpitakpan,2004), (La Ferle, C. and Choi, 2005) (Spry et al., 2011) encouraging social media usage broadly.

DIMENSION OF SOURCE CREDIBILITY

PURCHASE INTENTION

Purchase intention measures the chances that customers will intend to acquire a specific good or service in the future (WU et. al 2011). In the context of advertising, purchase intention describes the process by which customers decide to

buy a good or service as a result of seeing commercials in advertising-related media (Lee et al., 2017). A customer's ultimate objective regarding a certain good or service may be viewed as the consumer's purchasing intention. The following may be considered "the mental stage", where the target customer forms an opinion and becomes genuinely willing to take action toward a product (Dodds et al., 1991).

ATTRACTIVENESS

The Theory of source attractiveness (McGuire, 1985) suggests that an endorser's physical appeal increases the impact of an endorsement advertisement because consumers identify attractive people with positive stereotypes about them and the advertised product or brand. The endorsement's physical attributes impact the advertisement's acceptance favourably (Erdogan, 1999). Erdogan (1999) defined "appeal" as the "pattern of favourable associations, including physical attractiveness but also other attributes like the person's temperament and skills in the physical domain." Attractiveness is also thought to be a key component in creating effective messaging (Schlecht, 2003).

H1: INFLUENCERS' ATTRACTIVENESS HAS A SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE IMPACT ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness is the quality of being deserving of trust or confidence, dependability, and reliability. Followers rely on and trust influencers' branded posts due to the informative value of their content (Lou et al.; S., 2018). Racherla et al. (2012) examined the researcher evaluated customers' trustworthiness in online product evaluations and concluded that perceived background similarity indicated a social feature and message argument quality enhanced consumers' trust. According to Van der Waltd et al. (2009), trustworthiness is the degree to which the endorser's honesty, integrity, and credibility are confirmed.

H2: INFLUENCERS' TRUSTWORTHINESS HAS A SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE IMPACT ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION.

EXPERTISE

Specialised knowledge or skills obtained through experience, study, or training are called expertise. Expertise means acquiring the right skills and Knowledge. (Bourne LE Jr et al., 2014) A person's level of expertise is determined by a combination of their innate abilities, genetic makeup, and natural talent. (K. Anders Ericsson, et. al 1993). Expertise can be defined as the extent to which a product advocate is thought to have the information, experience, or skills required to market the product. Expertise is the extent to which a product advocate is thought to have the information, experience, or skills required to market the product (Van der Waltd et al., 2009). Since knowledge is often considered the most substantial variable in the success of an endorsement, influencers are perceived as having more experience than produced spokespersons. In other words, when Instagram users perceive an influencer as knowledgeable, experienced, professional, or skilled, they consider that influencer's competence (Ohanian, 1990).

H3: THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE IMPACT OF INFLUENCER'S EXPERTISE ON INTENT TO PURCHASE.

SIMILARITY

When consumers believe an influencer aligns with their beliefs and interests, they follow their ideas, attitudes, and behaviours (K. et al., et. al 1993). By incorporating a personal touch, an influencer can appear more "ordinary," believable, friendly, genuine, and reliable on social media. In other words, influencers who "downplay" their status and open up more about their personal lives appear more relatable to their fans. In their posts, influencers often interact with their fan following (Erz et al. (2018).

H4: INFLUENCER SIMILARITY EFFECT HAS A SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE IMPACT ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research examined various social media users and their attitudes towards attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, and similarity of the influencers and influencers' effect on their user's purchase intention. Convenience

sampling was used to assemble data using an online survey through Google Forms to evaluate the study's research model and hypothesis critically. The questionnaire items were developed on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree to agree strongly". The scale includes 21 items, of which 1 item has been dropped due to reliability and adopted through literature. The data from 179 respondents were collected, and gathered data were analysed through (CFA) Confirmatory factor analysis and Structure Equation Modelling using SPSS Amos version 23.

ANALYSIS

Table. 1 Demographic Profile

DEMOGRAPHIC	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
AGE		
12-27	85	47.5
28-43	72	40.2
44-59	19	10.6
60 & above	3	1.7
GENDER		
Male	107	59.8
Female	72	40.2
EDUCATION		
High School	19	10.6
Intermediate	15	8.4
Graduate	70	39.1
Post-Graduate	59	33.0
Ph.D.	16	8.9
OCCUPATION		
Student	68	38.0
Salaried	63	35.2
Self- Employed	11	6.1
Business	21	11.7
Homemakers	16	8.9
MONTHLY INCOME		
Less than 10,000	80	44.7
10,001-25,000	36	20.1
25,001-50,000	32	17.9
More than 50,000	31	17.3
MARITAL STATUS		
Single	103	57.5
Married	76	42.5

Table 1 discusses the age of the respondents out of 179 majority of consumer falls within the age group of 12-27 (47.5%), followed by 28-43(40.2%), 44-59(10.6%), and 60 & above (1.7%). This implies that the respondents are primarily young adults and middle-aged people, with a considerable proportion falling into the youthful demographic category. As per the gender distribution, the population is slightly more male (59.8%) than female (40.2 %). The respondents had diverse educational attainment, with graduates making the biggest percentage (39.1%), followed by postgraduates (33.0%), intermediates (8.4%), high school (10.6%) and PhD holders making up a lesser share (8.9%). The distribution of respondents' occupations shows that the majority of people are students (38.0%) or work as salaried employees (35.2%), followed by a minority of people working in business (11.7%), at home (8.9%), or as self-employed (6.1%). According to the monthly income distribution, the largest percentage of people make less than Rs. 10,000 (44.7%), followed by those who earn between Rs.10,001-25,000 (20.1%), Rs.25,001-50,000(17.9%), and more than Rs. 50,000 (17.3%). This suggests that the population is heterogeneous regarding income distribution, with a substantial proportion having lower incomes. Based on the distribution of marital status, a slight majority of individuals are single (57.5%), while the remaining are married (42.5%).

2. CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS (CFA) MEASUREMENT MODEL

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) verified the measurement model's Uni-dimensionality construct. CFA was evaluated using the model fit summary suggested by (Chau et al., 1997), the significance of considering both absolute and relative fit indices to better understand how effectively a CFA model fits the data. The summary contains the suggested fit index value as follows: The following listed below are deemed appropriate and acceptable. If the CMIN/DF is one of the measurement fit models, it results from dividing the chi-square (CMIN) statistics value by the degree of freedom. If the value comes < 3 , it indicates an acceptable fit (Kline, 2005). A value of < 5 indicates a reasonable fit (Marsh et al., D.1985). This recommended criteria value depends on the context and complexity of the model. Further assessments of model fit, include comparative fit indices (CFI > 0.90), Normal fit Indices (NFI > 0.90), Goodness of fit indices (GFI > 0.90), and Adjusted Goodness of fit indices (AGFI > 0.90) (Hair. et. al 2013).

To ensure convergent validity in confirmatory factor analysis, it is necessary to make sure that the composite reliability is at least 0.70 (Bagozzi et al.; Y.,1988), the average variance extracted (AVE) is at least 0.50 (Fornell et al.; D. F.,1981), and the factor loadings are relatively high (> 0.50) (Hair et al.,2009). Through the use of these criteria, convergent validity is demonstrated by showing that the items have a strong correlation with the relevant construct. The Discriminant Validity is verified by using the Fornell -Larcker (1981) criterion, which emphasises that the square of the correlation between latent variables should not be larger than the average variance extracted (AVE) for each variable. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), they illustrate the differences between diverse constructs. Standardised loading estimates should be 0.7 or above, but at least 0.5 is acceptable. The CMIN/DF obtained value for the measurement model is 1.848, favourable and acceptable. Therefore, this model is considered to be a good model. The obtained values for the model fitness are CFI=0.95, NFI=0.89, GFI= 0.873, and AGFI = 0.830, and these values are close to 0.90. Hence, this model is considerable and acceptable (Kline, 2011), (Hoyle, 2012), (Byrne, 2016). Table 2 presents the measurement model's path estimates (CFA loadings), showing values greater than 0.80, indicating a powerful relationship between the observed variable and their latent construct, high factor loading signifying excellent convergent validity (Hair et al.,2010), high composite reliability and internal consistency of the construct (Bagozzi et al.; Y.,1988).

Additionally, table 2 shows that the average variance extracted exceeds 0.50 or higher is considered acceptable, indicating good convergent validity for the construct suggested by Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981) and the Construct reliability value equal to or greater than 0.70 indicates adequate internal consistency and reliability of the construct (Nunnally et al.; I.,1994).

Table 3 provides the evidence for Discriminant validity, usually evaluated by comparing the squared correlation between each construct and the variance extracted by each construct by Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). According to Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981), the discriminant validity is supported if each construct's AVE (average variance extracted) is greater than the squared correlation between that construct and any other construct. An AVE value of 0.50 or higher for each construct is considered acceptable (Fornell et al.; D. F.,1981). According to Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015), The Heterostrait and Monostrait ratio a value below 0.90 or 0.85 is considered acceptable discriminant validity. The AVE of the Attractiveness is 0.551, Trustworthiness=0.748, expertise=0.600, similarity=0.619, and purchase intention = 0.706, which is greater than 0.50 and fulfils the requirement of convergent Validity (Fornell et al.; D. F.,1981) and the HTMT ratio below 0.90 or 0.85 is considered acceptable discriminant validity (Henseler et al.; M., 2015).

Table: 2 Measurement model for the reflective construct

Construct	Scale Items	Path Estimates*	Construct Reliability	Average Variance Extracted	Maximum Shared Variance
Trustworthiness	T1	0.99	0.921	0.748	0.981
	T2	0.84			
	T3	0.91			
	T4	0.69			
Expertise	E1	0.76	0.817	0.600	0.447
	E2	0.68			
	E3	0.87			
Attractiveness	A1	0.83	0.830	0.551	0.446
	A2	0.63			
	A3	0.77			
	A4	0.71			
Similarity	S1	0.96	0.860	0.619	0.429
	S2	0.96			

	S3	0.74			
	S4	0.88			
Purchase Intention	PI1	0.80	0.904	0.706	0.447
	PI2	0.99			
	PI3	0.81			
	PI4	0.72			

3. DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

Table: 3 Discriminant Validity Results

	Trustworthiness	Expertise	Purchase Intention	Attractiveness	Similarity
Trustworthiness	0.865				
Expertise	0.573***	0.775***			
Purchase Intention	0.455***	0.669***	0.840		
Attractiveness	0.551***	0.636***	0.668***	0.743	
Similarity	0.553***	0.573***	0.601***	0.655***	0.786

Note: Variance Extracted

Significance of Correlations:

† $p < 0.100$, * $p < 0.050$, ** $p < 0.010$, *** $P < 0.001$

The researchers used the criteria of Fornell & Larcker (1981) and Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015) to uphold discriminant validity. The values in bold on the diagonal indicate the extracted average variance square root (AVE), and the other numbers are the inter-variable correlation values. The table demonstrates that the requirement for the diagonal bold value to be greater than other values in its corresponding rows and columns is accomplished. The researchers conclude that our variables exhibit good discriminant validity as a result.

4. STRUCTURE EQUATION MODEL RESULT

The study examined several causal connections between the hypotheses. The study employed structural path modelling to investigate the hypotheses. The purchase intention was the endogenous (dependent) variable, whereas similarity, attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness were the exogenous (independent) factors. This procedure is shown in Figure 1. There is also the aspect of influencer credibility (Attractiveness, Trustworthiness, expertise, Similarity) as an exogenous variable and purchasing intention as an endogenous variable. To determine whether the proposed conceptual model and the hypothesised model satisfy the data, the model summary must be assessed as part of the analysis technique for testing hypotheses.

PATH DIAGRAM

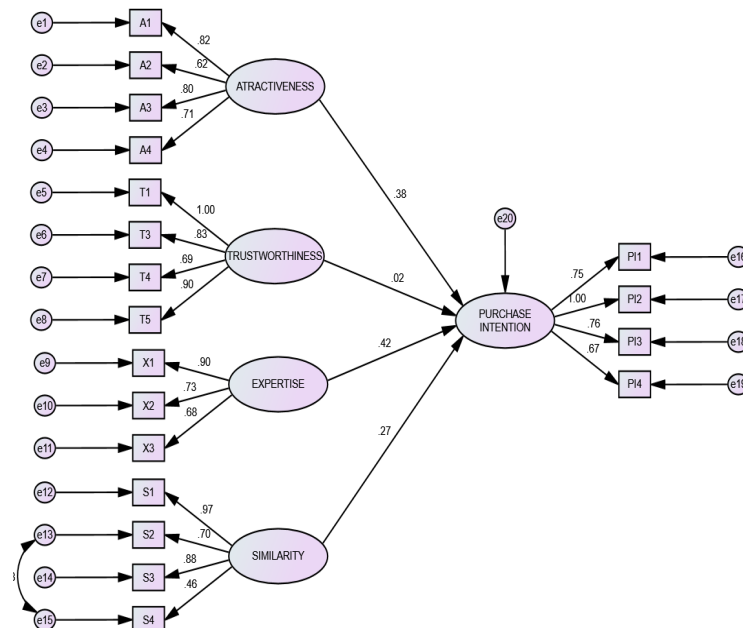


Fig. 2: Structural Model (Path diagram)

As shown in Figure 2, the results show that the suggested model fits the observed data quite well.

The findings indicate that the proposed model fits well with the observed data, as shown in Figure 2. The current model was evaluated using several fitness metrics. The relationships were examined through the use of AMOS structural equation modelling. A model is considered to fit well if the CMIN/df value is below five (<5) and < 3 . It indicates an acceptable fit (Kline, 1998). The goodness-of-fit indices, including the CFI, NFI GFI, and AGFI either close to or exceed 0.90 (Hair et al., 2013). The fitness indices of the present model show that the CMIN/DF obtained value for the measurement model is 1.848, which is favourable and acceptable. Therefore, this model is considered to be a good model. The Obtained value of CFI= 0.95, NFI=0.89, GFI=0.87, AGFI=0.83 were close to 0.90. Hence, this model can be considered to be a considerable and acceptable model (Kline, 2011), (Hoyle, 2012), (Byrne, 2016).

5. MODEL FIT INDICES

Table:4 Model fit indices

Fit Indices	Recommendation Value	Obtained Value (For structural model)	Obtained Value (For measurement model)
P- value	Insignificant	.000	.000
CMIN/DF	3-5	3.064	1.848
CFI	>0.90	0.875	0.950
NFI	>0.90	0.826	0.899
GFI	>0.90	0.771	0.873
AGFI	>0.90	0.704	0.830

HYPOTHESIS

H1: Influencer attractiveness has a significant positive impact on consumer purchase intention.

H2: Influencers' trustworthiness has a significant positive impact on consumer purchase intention.

H3: There is a significant positive impact of the Influencer's expertise on intent to purchase.

H4: Influencer similarity effect has a significant positive impact on Consumer purchase intention.

Table 4. Hypothesis Results

Hypothesis	Regression Weight	Beta Coefficient (β)	t- value	p-value	Hypothesis
H1	PI<---A	0.407	4.930	***	Accepted
H2	PI<---T	0.012	0.260	0.795	Rejected
H3	PI<---E	0.476	5.244	***	Accepted
H4	PI<---S	0.210	4.145	***	Accepted

Notes: All Path are significant at $P < 0.05$ except Trustworthiness > 0.05 .

A(Attractiveness), T(trustworthiness), E(Expertise), S(Similarity), PI (Purchase Intention).

6. CONCLUSION

The hypothesis test was used to validate the suggested theoretical model further. This study investigated the purchase intention impacted by the influencers' expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and similarity. The hypothesis testing based on path analysis shows that Attractiveness is positively and significantly associated with purchase intention ($\beta=0.407$, $p<0.05$) and attractiveness of the influencer's positive impact on customer intention to purchase.

The hypothesis of trustworthiness has been rejected ($\beta=.012$, $p=0.795>0.05$), i.e., there is no impact of trustworthiness on the consumer's intention to purchase. In this study, the consumers acknowledge that the influencer's source trustworthiness does not influence the consumer's purchase intentions. The result was consistent with Batra et al. (2022), who revealed that the source of trustworthiness did not impact consumers' purchase intention. The hypotheses resulting based on path analysis show that the expertise ($\beta=0.476$, $p<0.05$) and similarity ($\beta=0.210$, $p<0.05$) are positively associated with purchase intention and have a positive impact on customer's intention to purchase.

The result demonstrated that attractiveness, expertise, and similarity significantly positively correlated with intent to purchase, and H1, H3, and H4 were accepted. On the other hand, trustworthiness did not have a significant positive correlation with the intent to purchase. Therefore, H2 was not supported. The trustworthiness did not impact the purchase intention, and H2 was rejected (Table 4).

IMPLICATION

The study's conclusions offered marketing professionals several useful applications. Specifically, the impact of attractiveness, expertise, and similarity on consumer purchase intention is a strong positive influencer credibility, suggesting that marketers should carefully choose influencers trusted by their audience. This aligns with Ohanian's (1990) source credibility theory, which holds that an influencer's knowledge, reliability, and attractiveness play a significant role in influencing their audience's behaviour. This provides managers with information about consumers' opinions and perceptions of influencers, which is useful for marketers. This will facilitate the development of their marketing efforts by helping them to target audiences, devise strategies, and collaborate with influencers. Brands should prioritise collaborating with influencers who have proven to be expert in their industry. This knowledge increases credibility and raises the possibility of favourably affecting the decisions made by customers while making purchases (Hovland et al.; H. H., 1953). Furthermore, the study emphasises the importance of credibility. Brands may improve trustworthiness by increasing transparency in their partnerships with influencers, for instance, by using obvious disclosure information (Evans et al.; H., 2017). Transparent business procedures positively impact consumer purchase intention by preserving and enhancing influencer credibility, such as trustworthiness.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

- A total of 179 social media users provided data for this study. A more extensive study with more respondents might be carried out to investigate this subject further and provide thorough findings.
- Young adults made up the majority of the study's responders. To provide an in-depth understanding future studies may look at the effects of influencers on individuals from diverse age groups residing in different regions of India.
- Future research endeavours could potentially investigate the influence of diverse personality types on consumers' purchase intentions.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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