

# Effect of Social Media Influencer Characteristics on Purchase Intentions – Evidence from Pakistan

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## Abstract

The modern digital marketing landscape has seen the emergence of social media influencers as an essential part of marketing strategy. Social media influencers are people who can have an impact on how individuals perceive a certain brand or product through posts, videos, and other forms of content shared on social networks. This study examined the influence of certain characteristics of social media influencers on their credibility and consumers' purchase intention in Pakistan. A quota sample of 380 people completed an online questionnaire via Google Forms, and the data was analyzed through SmartPLS 3 using structural equation modeling. The results demonstrated that entertainment value, trustworthiness, and information quality had significant direct effects on the influencers' credibility and indirect effects on consumers' purchase intention. Additionally, the credibility and trustworthiness of social media influencers directly impacted the purchase intentions of consumers.

**Keywords:** Social media influencers, Influencer marketing, social media, Source credibility

## 1. Introduction

The digital age has been upon us for some time now, and social media has become a necessity in many people's lives (Vişlar, 2019). Each day, millions of people are scrolling through their phones or typing away on their computers. This has made social networks such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok increasingly important marketing platforms for businesses looking to build relationships with customers and strengthen their brand image (Wibowo et al., 2021). Statistics show that there were 71 million users of these platforms in Pakistan by 2022, with that number expected to reach 100 million by 2025 (*Digital 2022*, 2022). Thus it is clear just how popular social media is in the country.

The usage of social media platforms has increased, which in turn has led to a rise in the popularity of Influencer Marketing (Campbell & Farrell, 2020). As opposed to relying on famous celebrities to market their wares through conventional approaches, companies are now tapping into the potential of social media influencers who have developed a following due to their proficiency and insight on topics like tech, music, sports, etc. (Chopra et al., 2021). Freberg et al., (2011) defined influencers as "independent third-party endorsers", who influence public opinion through blogs, tweets, and other social networking platforms. These influencers typically share images, videos, and news related to their area in order to make it easier for people who are interested in that content to follow them.

Influencer marketing is on the rise due to its comparative affordability when compared to traditional celebrity endorsement (Li & Peng, 2021). Furthermore, since influencers typically have

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a reputation in their respective fields, consumers are likely more likely to trust and accept endorsements from those who are knowledgeable about the products or services being advertised (Masuda et al., 2022). This has encouraged brands to take advantage of social media influencers as an effective method for communicating with potential consumers (Ingrassia et al., 2022). There is now a wide range of people with expertise in various domains that can be utilized by companies looking to promote their products or services (Kapitan et al., 2022).

Influencer marketing could be very advantageous for businesses that want to create and maintain a positive rapport with their customers (Trivedi & Sama, 2020). Companies can exploit influencer marketing to meet their objectives, such as increasing awareness about a newly released product or boosting the sales of already existing items, or even promoting the company's reputation in the market (Campbell & Farrell, 2020). When brands post advertisements on social media regarding their products, they may not acquire much attention from people; however, if they pay an influencer to review said product positively, they may draw more consideration due to its lack of seeming like a conventional advertisement (Lou et al., 2019).

Previous research has investigated how different characteristics of endorsers on traditional media outlets can affect consumers' purchasing decisions (Agnihotri & Bhattacharya, 2021; Bazarova & Choi, 2014; Britt et al., 2020; Zarei et al., 2020). As social media becomes increasingly popular, researchers and marketers are actively exploring new ways to utilize it effectively and efficiently. Studies have shown that social media interactions can have a positive effect on marketing strategies and buying decisions (Devitt & Kenkel, 2020; Hudders et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021; Zhou et al., 2021). However, limited research currently exists regarding the advantages of influencer marketing. Studies on the influence of social media influencer marketing on consumer purchasing behavior have been relatively limited, and have yet to take into account the role that credibility plays in impacting consumers' purchase intentions in relation to influencer marketing. The purpose of this study is to explore the efficacy of social media influencers for marketing in a developing nation such as Pakistan. Specifically, the study looks into (1) how various traits of influencers influence their credibility and (2) how credibility can influence the relationship between these attributes and purchase intentions.

## **2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

This study utilized the source credibility and source attractiveness models to create a theoretical foundation that met the purpose of the research. Hovland et al. (1953) put forward that trustworthiness and expertise are two critical aspects in determining the credibility of a source. Later, McGuire (1985) suggested another element of source credibility, which is attractiveness or likability. These models have been considered to be crucial in understanding the impact of endorsements on consumer behavior. Ohanian (1990) suggested that, when dealing with celebrity endorsements, source credibility is made up of the three elements of likeability, trustworthiness and expertise.

Past studies have demonstrated that these source characteristics can lead to a greater likelihood of purchase when it comes to traditional media (Ding et al., 2011; Gong & Li, 2017; Tzoumaka et al., 2016; Zakari et al., 2019). Therefore, we anticipate that the same attributes will bring about an increase in credibility and higher purchase intent with influencer marketing as well. Additionally,

elements like the entertainment value and accuracy of information gained from engaging with the product can sway a customer's trustworthiness and their likelihood of buying the item.

Previous research has demonstrated that the link between source attributes and consumers' purchase intention is mediated by credibility (La Ferle & Choi, 2005; Spry et al., 2011; Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018). This has been established in the context of conventional celebrity endorsement. Therefore, one could infer that in the case of influencer marketing, consumer purchase intention would be shaped by factors such as expertise, trustworthiness, entertainment value, information quality and likability of the social media influencer, with credibility playing a mediating role. This gives rise to the following conceptual framework.

## 2.1 Hypotheses Development

Expertise is the term used to describe having knowledge in a certain area and being able to give information that is accurate (Chekima et al., 2020). Expertise involves the comprehension, awareness, and proficiency gained through regular involvement in the same field of study. For someone to be considered an expert, they must have a comprehensive understanding of the topic at hand, have developed applicable skills, or possess a credible position (Lou & Yuan, 2019). According to Hovland et al. (1953), a communicator's authority and perceived credibility are key factors in the effectiveness of an advertisement, regardless of whether they are an expert or not. The perception of the message by the recipient has a direct impact on how positively they view the ad, as well as their desire to purchase it (Ohanian, 1990).

**H1:** The expertise of the social media influencer has a positive effect on the credibility of that person.

**H2:** The expertise of the social media influencer has a positive effect on the purchase intention of customers.

Giffin (1967) proposed that trustworthiness is the evaluation by receivers of a source as being honest, sincere, and truthful. Over time, expert knowledge and trustworthiness have been identified as key elements which impact message effectiveness according to the source credibility model (Pornpitakpan, 2004a). Similarly, on YouTube consumers' perception of information credibility stemming from trustworthiness can significantly influence their purchase decisions (Xiao et al., 2018).

**H3:** The trustworthiness of the social media influencer has a positive effect on the credibility of that person.

**H4:** The trustworthiness of the social media influencer has a positive effect on the purchase intention of consumers.

The attractiveness of an influencer to the followers, be it through their charisma or friendly demeanor, is known as likability (Desarbo & Harshman, 1985). Having a likable endorser can be beneficial in terms of increasing trustworthiness, improving the opinion of the product, and increasing a person's desire to purchase the endorsed item.

**H5:** The likeability of the social media influencer has a positive effect on the credibility of that person.

**H6:** The likeability of the social media influencer has a positive effect on the purchase intentions of the consumers.

People use social media as a source of knowledge. The trustworthiness of the information is determined by how believable it appears to be (Alguacil et al., 2021). People are more likely to believe an influencer's promoted post if it contains helpful information, which promotes recognition of the brand and encourages people to purchase the associated product or service. (Cheung et al., 2012).

**H7:** The information quality of the social media influencer has a positive effect on the credibility of that person.

**H8:** The information quality of the social media influencer has a positive effect on the purchase intentions of consumers.

People are attracted to social media due to the entertainment it offers (Wijayaa et al., 2021). Consumers' attitudes towards advertisements on these sites depend on the informative value, entertainment value, and credibility of the message (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Shareef et al., 2019). This affects their loyalty, awareness, and intentions to buy a product or service (Lee & Kim, 2020; Reinikainen et al., 2020). The enjoyment factor in the content shared by influencers also impacts how credible it is seen as well as its potential for generating sales (AlFarraj et al., 2021).

**H9:** The entertainment value of the social media influencer has a positive effect on the credibility of that person.

**H10:** The entertainment value of the social media influencer has a positive effect on the purchase intentions of the consumers.

The level of trust people have in the person delivering a message affects how they perceive and interpret what is being said (Pornpitakpan, 2004b). Ohanian (1990) uses the term 'source credibility' to refer to factors such as likability and expertise that can make a person more likely to be believed. Research has demonstrated that people's intentions to buy products and their attitudes toward brands can be affected by how credible the endorser appears to them (Jin & Phua, 2014; McCormick, 2016).

**H11:** The credibility of the social media influencer has a positive effect on the purchase intentions of consumers.

In addition, we suggest that the trustworthiness of an influencer will act as a mediator between their characteristics and the consumers' purchase intentions, just like it has been seen to be the case with celebrity endorsements in traditional settings (La Ferle & Choi, 2005; Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018). Thus, we hypothesize that the credibility of an influencer will also influence the link between their features and consumer purchase intention.

**H12:** The credibility of the social media influencer mediates the relationship between the expertise of the social media influencer and the purchase intentions of consumers.

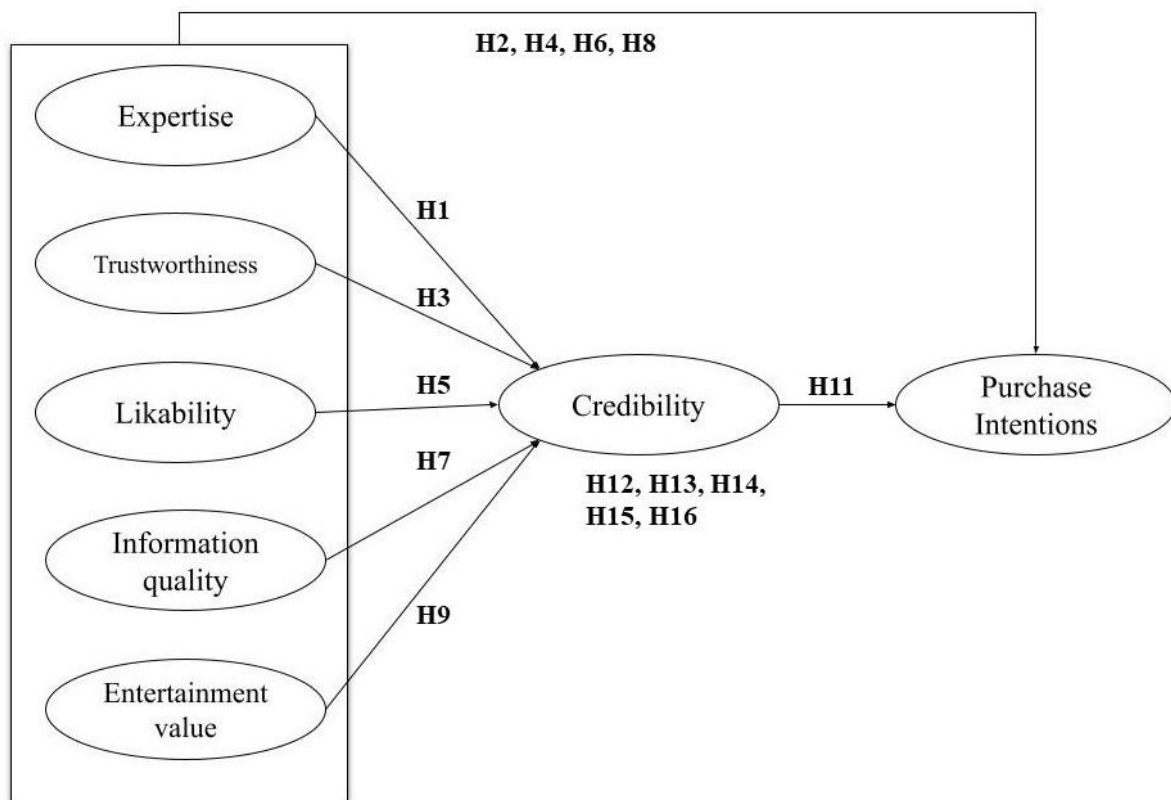
**H13:** The credibility of the social media influencer mediates the relationship between the trustworthiness of the social media influencer and the purchase intentions of consumers.

**H14:** The credibility of the social media influencer mediates the relationship between the likability of the social media influencer and the purchase intentions of consumers.

**H15:** The credibility of the social media influencer mediates the relationship between the information quality of the social media influencer and the purchase intentions of consumers.

**H16:** The credibility of the social media influencer mediates the relationship between the entertainment value of the social media influencer and the purchase intentions of consumers.

*Figure 1 Conceptual Framework*



### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Data Collection

A survey was conducted online among consumers in Karachi utilizing Google Forms. All participants were required to be frequent social media users, meaning they use one or more platforms (i.e. YouTube, Facebook and Instagram) at least once a day. The questionnaire included questions pertaining to whether the respondents followed any influencers on their social media accounts as well as some of their preferred influencers. Quota sampling was utilized so that only

active users and those that follow an influencer were included in the survey, with a total of 540 participants. Of these, 380 identified as having a relationship with influencers and their responses were used for the analysis.

### 3.2 Instrument Development

All the instruments of the questionnaire were adapted from prior studies. This study was conducted by using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. The measures of Expertise (4 items) and Trustworthiness (3 items) were adapted from, Information Quality (2 items) from Cheung et al. (2012), Ohanian (1990), Likability (2 items) from Reysen (2005), Source Credibility (2 items) was adapted from Xiao et al. (2018) and Entertainment value (4 items) from Voss et al. (2003). Purchase Intention (6 items) was evaluated using scales adapted from Kumar (2011).

## 4. Data Analysis

### 4.1 Demographic Profile

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of respondents, with 57.2% of them female and 42.8% male. The majority (57.1%) were aged 19-25, while 27.3% were 26-35 years old, 9.7% were above 35, and 5.7% were below 18 years old. 46% of the respondents used social media for less than an hour on a daily basis, while 30% were using social media for more than three hours a day. Respondents were also asked about the social media platforms that they use daily; 166 used Instagram, 54 Facebook, and 69 YouTube. The pages or channels they followed included 180 in Clothing and Fashion, 165 in Beauty and Cosmetics, 88 in Games, 111 in Technology, 125 in Sports, 166 in Travel, 66 in Comedy, 88 in Reviews, 44 in Education, 77 in Music and 61 for other topics.

Table 1 Demographic Profile

Profile	Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	163	42.8%
	Female	217	57.2%
Age	Up to 18	22	5.7%
	19-25	217	57.1%
	26-35	104	27.3%
	Above 35	37	9.7%
Frequency of use	>1 hr /day	177	46.5%
	1-3 hr/day	88	23.1%
	< 3 hr/day	115	30.2%
Social media platforms	Facebook	311	81.8%
	Instagram	166	43.6%
	YouTube	101	26.5%

## 4.2 Data Analysis and Procedure

A two-stage approach utilizing SmartPLS 3 was conducted to analyze the measurement and structural models of this study. PLS-SEM was chosen since it is more appropriate for smaller sample sizes. (Chin et al., 2003).

## 4.3 CMV

Harman's one-factor technique was utilized to assess the possibility of Common Method Bias in the data set, and this showed a minimal level of common variance (46.79%) that did not surpass 50%. Therefore, it can be deduced that there is no significant amount of Common Method Bias present. (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

## 4.4 Measurement Model Evaluation

An evaluation of discriminant validity, internal reliability, and convergent validity was conducted to analyse the measurement model. The Standard Deviation, Means, Loadings for all constructs can be seen in Table 2 (Dinev & Hart, 2006).

Table 2 SD, Mean, Loading of Constructs

Construct	Item	Mean	SD	Loading
Expertise	EP1	4.13	.820	.798
	EP2	4.31	.639	.812
	EP3	4.23	.722	.790
	EP4	4.39	.709	.833
Trustworthiness	TW1	3.97	.921	.812
	TW2	4.22	.911	.835
	TW3	4.22	.823	.923
Likability	LK1	4.11	.746	.921
	LK2	4.36	.769	.922
Information Quality	IQ1	4.31	.789	.951
	IQ2	4.22	.825	.936
Entertainment Value	ET1	4.29	.814	.856
	ET2	4.45	.716	.891
	ET3	3.81	.872	.761
	ET4	4.46	.731	.869
Credibility	CD1	4.35	.761	.961
	CD2	4.26	.771	.959
Purchase Intention	PI1	4.23	.871	.771
	PI2	4.11	.779	.856
	PI3	3.97	.971	.871
	PI4	3.89	.909	.893
	PI5	3.77	.935	.922
	PI6	4.25	.897	.869

Table 3 shows that all of the seven constructs had loadings greater than 0.708, Composite Reliability above 0.7, and Average Variance Extracted higher than 0.5, meeting the desired thresholds.(Hair et al., 2017). The reliability of the results was confirmed by Cronbach's Alpha, which had a value greater than 0.7 (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982), implying the convergent validity of all the constructs.

**Table 3 Reliability and Validity**

Construct	Cronbach's $\alpha$	Composite Reliability	AVE
Expertise	.812	.877	.678
Trustworthiness	.867	.921	.788
Likability	.834	.919	.897
Information Quality	.879	.951	.891
Entertainment Value	.871	.916	.720
Credibility	.919	.959	.919
Purchase Intention	.945	.950	.748

Discriminant validity requires that measures are able to distinguish themselves from any related concepts or variables so that they can be validly used for their intended purpose. (Dinev & Hart, 2004), this is done by examining and testing the relationship between correlated variables and determining if they are measuring the same concept or something different. It was assessed by examining the Heterotrait-Monotrait criteria, cross loading and Fornell-Larcker,. Table 4 displays the results of the Fornell-Larcker criterion, with square roots of Average Variance Extracted from the constructs being CD (.959), EV (.850), ET (.820), LK (.928), PI (.865), IQ (.942) and TW (.885). The Fornell-Larcker criterion was met since the correlation values between each construct and all other constructs were lower than expected, confirming discriminant validity.

**Table 4 Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion)**

	CD	EV	ET	LK	PI	IQ	TW
CD	<b>.959</b>						
EV	.709	<b>.850</b>					
ET	.701	.610	<b>.820</b>				
LK	.720	.700	.700	<b>.928</b>			
PI	.425	.430	.355	.426	<b>.865</b>		
IQ	.810	.649	.730	.710	.386	<b>.942</b>	
TW	.790	.620	.670	.731	.465	.740	<b>.885</b>

Table 5 shows that the individual variables of each construct had higher loadings than their correlations with other constructs, thus confirming discriminant validity.

**Table 5 Discriminant Validity (Loading and cross-loading)**

	CD	EV	ET	LK	PI	IQ	TW
CD1	.959	.670	.699	.669	.402	.769	.749
CD2	.965	.682	.629	.702	.419	.779	.769
EV1	.559	.852	.500	.586	.289	.560	.500
EV2	.625	.891	.568	.699	.349	.552	.479
EV3	.620	.762	.500	.479	.450	.542	.610
EV4	.609	.870	.500	.569	.360	.555	.506
ET1	.549	.410	.787	.569	.449	.550	.560
ET2	.525	.500	.846	.589	.315	.540	.499
ET3	.493	.439	.794	.490	.160	.610	.495
ET4	.661	.620	.837	.590	.199	.670	.629
LK1	.700	.649	.630	.936	.399	.659	.770
LK2	.619	.630	.649	.918	.389	.619	.569
PI1	.329	.369	.409	.479	.774	.350	.350
PI2	.252	.269	.240	.280	.864	.181	.302
PI3	.329	.370	.229	.305	.873	.260	.329
PI4	.409	.420	.269	.380	.894	.372	.399
PI5	.400	.356	.310	.350	.911	.310	.460
PI6	.439	.409	.320	.400	.876	.450	.501
IQ1	.833	.640	.702	.682	.391	.957	.701
IQ2	.662	.582	.663	.619	.321	.932	.679
TW1	.582	.440	.479	.499	.430	.523	.834
TW2	.791	.610	.680	.682	.420	.719	.897
TW3	.681	.559	.592	.710	.381	.680	.911

Table 6 reveals that the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio for all of the constructs was less than 0.9, as noted by Henseler et al. (2015), thus confirming the measurement model's discriminant validity.

**Table 6 Discriminant validity – Heterotrait-Monotrait criterion**

	CD	EV	ET	LK	PI	IQ	TW
CD							
EV	.792						
ET	.779	.699					
LK	.809	.811	.819				
PI	.450	.470	.389	.480			
IQ	.879	.739	.839	.801	.401		
TW	.875	.705	.776	.840	.510	.833	

### 4.5 Structural Model Evaluation

To ensure valid results, multicollinearity was checked using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values which were between 1.519 and 4.137- indicating no multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2014). Further, bootstrapping with 5000 resamples was used to evaluate the structural model and assess the significance of the hypotheses (see Table 7). All three hypotheses, namely H3, H7, and H9 were accepted as Trustworthiness ( $\beta=.379, t=2.701, p<.01$ ), Information Quality ( $\beta=.340, t=2.810, p<.01$ ) and Entertainment value ( $\beta = .240, t=.660, p<.01$ ) were found to have a positive correlation with Source Credibility. The results revealed that Trustworthiness and Credibility were positively linked to Purchase Intention ( $\beta=.320, t=2.100, p<.05$ ;  $\beta=.430, t=4.520, p<.001$ ). However, Expertise ( $\beta=.029, t=.379, \text{not significant}$ ), Likability ( $\beta=.001, =0.019, \text{not significant}$ ), Information Quality ( $\beta=.070, t=.400, \text{not significant}$ ), and Entertainment value ( $\beta=.249, t=1.139, \text{not significant}$ ) were not significant in influencing Credibility and Purchase Intention respectively; hence, H1, H2, H5, H6, H8, and H10 were not supported.

**Table 7 Hypotheses Testing**

Hypotheses	Path	$\beta$	S.E.	t-value	Result S = Supported NS = Not Supported
H1	EX – CD	.029	.089	.379	NS
H2	EX – PI	.069	.200	.369	NS
H3	TW – CD	.379	.139	2.701**	S
H4	TW – PI	.320	.149	2.100**	S
H5	LK – CD	.001	.099	.019	NS
H6	LK – PI	.035	.190	.190	NS
H7	IQ – CD	.340	.119	2.810**	S
H8	IQ – PI	.070	.176	.400	NS
H9	EV – CD	.240	.089	2.660**	S
H10	EV – PI	.249	.209	1.139	NS
H11	CD – PI	.430	.095	4.520***	S
H12	EX – CD – PI	.013	.039	.360	NS
H13	TW – CD – PI	.159	.080	2.101*	S
H14	LK – CD – PI	.001	.050	.020	NS
H15	IQ – CD – PI	.149	.060	2.449	S
H16	EV – CD – PI	.101	.049	2.049	S

EX = Expertise, TW = Trustworthy, LK = Likability, IQ = Information Quality, EV = Entertainment Value  
 CD = Credibility, PI = Purchase Intentions \* $p<.05$  \*\* $p<.01$  \*\*\* $p<.001$

### 4.6 Mediating Role of Credibility

The effect of credibility on the relationship between entertainment value, information quality, and trustworthiness with purchase intention was also tested. The findings showed that the level of credibility had a partial influence on the relationship between purchase intention and trustworthiness. ( $\beta=.160, t=.101, p<.05$ ), as well as fully mediating the relationships between information quality and purchase intention ( $\beta=.149, t=2.449, p<.05$ ), as well as entertainment value and purchase intention ( $\beta=.101, t=2.049, p<.05$ ), Hence, hypotheses 13, 15, and 16 were supported. On the contrary, credibility did not have a mediating role between the associations of Likability ( $\beta=.001, t=.020, \text{not significant}$ ) and Expertise ( $\beta=.013, t=.0360, \text{not significant}$ ), and with purchase intention, so both the hypotheses 12 and 14 were not confirmed.

The  $R_2$  value was used to gauge the explained variance of Source Credibility, which demonstrated that Entertainment value, Expertise, Likability, Trustworthiness, and Information Quality accounted for 76.5%. Furthermore, Purchase Intention was observed to be influenced by Source Credibility at 18.3%. Moreover, the effect size examination revealed that Information Quality and Trustworthiness had a partial effect on Credibility, while Entertainment Value had a low effect. Likability and Expertise were not found to have any effect. For Purchase Intention, Credibility had a partial impact while Trustworthiness and Entertainment Value had a low effect. Lastly, Information Quality, Likability, and Expertise had no effect. To evaluate the predictive effectiveness of the model, Stone-Geisser's Q2 was employed with the blindfolding method. The Q2 results were above zero for source credibility (.683) and purchase intention (.130), thus affirming the model's predictive utility. (Hair et al., 2014).

## 5. Discussion & Conclusion

### 5.1 Discussion

This research investigated the relation between social media influencers' characteristics and both their credibility and consumers' intention to purchase. Findings were in agreement with the source credibility model which highlighted trustworthiness as a major factor affecting influencer reliability and customers' purchasing decisions (H3 & H4 corroborated). Additionally, the quality of information presented by the influencers also significantly affected both variables (H7 & H8 endorsed). This is consistent with past studies. (Arli & Dietrich, 2017; Cheung et al., 2012). The findings showed that social media influencers' attributes affected their credibility and, ultimately, influenced consumers' purchase intention. Influencers strive to create and post interesting content consistently to keep their followers engaged. Research has found that the informative and entertaining value of influencer content plays a role in influencing followers' purchasing behavior (H9 and H10 supported). This finding is similar to previous studies were done by Gautam & Sharma (2017; Van-Tien Dao et al. (2014).

It is clear that social media users are looking for not just engaging but also high-quality content from influencers, which has an impact on their purchase decisions. The trustworthiness of the influencer was a crucial factor when it came to influencing consumers' purchase intent (H11 confirmed). This aligns with the findings from Carr & Hayes (2015) earlier research. Interestingly, unlike what other studies have suggested, the influencer's expertise did not appear to have any bearing on their credibility or buyers' intent to purchase (H1 and H2 not supported). It was found that the influence of an influencer's appearance and likability on their credibility and purchase intention was insignificant, which suggests that consumers focus more on the content shared by the influencers than their looks or personalities. The trustworthiness of the influencers had a significant positive indirect effect on purchase intention, which is in line with prior studies by La Ferle & Choi (2005) and Wang & Scheinbaum (2018). This study made a unique contribution as it was the first to focus on influencer marketing specifically. It found that information quality and entertainment value had an indirect effect on purchase intention, mediated by credibility. However, unlike what was anticipated, expertise and likability did not have any significant effects on purchase intention through credibility.

## 5.2 Conclusion

This study explored the impact of various elements of social media influencers on consumers' purchase intention, by looking at the mediating role of credibility. The results demonstrated that certain traits had a positive correlation with purchase intentions, while others did not. Credibility was found to have the most powerful direct influence on buying behavior, preceded by trustworthiness. It was determined that trustworthiness had the greatest effect on influencer credibility, followed by information quality and entertainment value. To result in increased credibility for an influencer among their followers and ultimately enhance a brand's purchase intention, it is necessary to select an influencer who has the capability to make reliable content in an entertaining way. Interestingly, neither expertise nor likability of an influencer had a direct or indirect effect on their credibility or purchase intention.

When it comes to influencers, they must be cautious in selecting which product or business to promote, so as not to compromise their own credibility. They should remain aware that modern customers are savvy when it comes to technology and if given false information, they can quickly lose trust and the value of the product will diminish. Consumers now have the capability to rapidly discover information through online searches, permitting them to make educated choices and investigate thoroughly before making a purchase. Consequently, if influencers offer false or deceptive content, people would simply look for another source as there is an abundance of alternatives on the internet. Therefore, it is essential for influencers to create authenticity, and quality over the long haul. If customers put their trust in the influencer, and they can provide helpful and high-quality content, then a strong bond between consumers and brands can be established through these influencers.

No doubt, the traits of an influencer alone are not enough to make a customer buy a product impulsively. But when used in combination with other elements, their attributes can either enhance or reduce their buying urge. Furthermore, purchase intention is based on many aspects besides the characteristics of an influencer, such as the necessity for the item, evaluated value, pricing, brand image, and more. Therefore, an influencer's traits alone may not be capable of making somebody buy a product but can certainly make them look into it when the necessity is there and all other elements are beneficial.

## 5.3 Implications of the study

This investigation presents an understanding of how Pakistani customers' views are impacted by influencer advertising. Only a few researchers have studied the influence of social media influencers on purchase choices in Pakistan until now. This research expands previous studies by supplying a complete structure to recognize the function that features of influencers play in driving purchase intentions. The findings indicated that authenticity, information quality and entertainment value had a considerable effect on an influencer's trustworthiness, as well as a noteworthy indirect effect on customers' purchase intention. Ultimately, this research emphasizes the necessity for influencers to be informative, entertaining, and credible in order to be successful in influencer marketing.

This study demonstrated the importance of credibility in affecting buyer goals when it comes to influencer marketing. Trustworthiness, information quality, and entertainment value were seen to be considerable components while expertise and likability did not affect purchase intention. This study makes a major contribution to comprehending how influencer marketing can be successful by exploring the role of credibility in affecting consumer buying intentions when certain features are present.

The results of our study provide useful guidance for companies in terms of which characteristics they should look for when selecting an influencer. It is essential for businesses to ensure that the influencers they employ possess certain attributes in order to make the most out of their investment and reach their marketing objectives. By selecting influencers with the right attributes, advertisers can feel confident that their expenditure will lead to enhanced sales and brand awareness. Marketers ought to take great care when selecting an appropriate social media influencer to bolster the reliability of promotional materials and increase consumers' desire to purchase. Emphasis should be placed on hiring an influencer whose content is well-regarded by their followers. Finally, it is important for marketers to select someone who can provide both informative and entertaining advertising content to their followers during their working relationship.

This study implies that influencers should strive to produce content of high quality, which is entertaining and reliable. As their popularity increases, it will be beneficial for them to maintain these qualities to continue fostering relationships with brands and growing their following. Hence, the possession of positive attributes and preservation of them over time is necessary if influencers want to remain successful.

#### **5.4 Future Research and Limitations**

There are a few limitations of the study that must be highlighted and taken into consideration. The sample size was small and largely composed of individuals aged 19-25; therefore, it may not accurately represent all people in Pakistan. Also, all the participants were from urban backgrounds with access to the Internet and social media. To gain a better understanding of the effect of social media influencers, further studies should include people from rural areas who may not have similar opportunities for using such technologies. This could raise questions about how successful this type of marketing would be in those target regions. Furthermore, to increase the generalizability of the results, it would be beneficial to use probability sampling techniques instead of quota sampling when collecting data in future studies.

This research found that expertise and likability were not significant in influencing the credibility of an influencer. Consequently, further research should take into account the area of knowledge possessed by an influencer and the type of products they promote to determine if different outcomes can be obtained. In addition, longitudinal research designs could be employed to investigate how influencer marketing has an impact on purchase intention over time, taking into account advances in technology and changes to social media platforms. Qualitative techniques can be employed to discover additional elements that play a role in consumer purchasing decisions or evaluate the effects of social media influencers on metrics such as recognition, recall, loyalty, and engagement.

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