

Influencer Attributes and Customer Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Brand Attitude and the Influence of Perceived Authenticity and Materialism



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Abstract: *This study examines the influence of Influencer Attractiveness, Interactivity, Credibility, and Professionalism on Customer Attitude toward the Brand and Consumer Purchase Intention among social media users in Karachi, Pakistan. It further investigates the direct effect of Perceived Influencer Authenticity and the moderating roles of Perceived Authenticity and Consumer Materialism. A cross-sectional quantitative design was employed using data collected from 206 social media users through a structured Google Forms questionnaire based on established scales. Convenience sampling was adopted, and the data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Influencer Interactivity ($\beta=0.216$), Credibility ($\beta=0.227$), and Professionalism ($\beta=0.121$) significantly improved Customer Attitude toward the Brand, which subsequently enhanced Purchase Intention. Perceived Influencer Authenticity directly increased Purchase Intention ($\beta=0.235$). Furthermore, Perceived Authenticity positively moderated the Brand Attitude-Purchase Intention relationship ($\beta=0.139$), whereas Consumer Materialism negatively moderated it ($\beta=-0.076$). The findings demonstrate that interaction, credibility, professionalism, and authenticity are important drivers of influencer marketing effectiveness and provide practical insights for digital marketers operating in Pakistan's growing social-commerce environment.*

Keywords: Influencer Attributes, Attractiveness, Interactivity, Credibility, Professionalism, Brand Attitude, Perceived Authenticity, Consumer Materialism, Purchase Intention, PLS-SEM, Pakistan

Introduction

The world's retail market has entered a new stage of development that is mainly dominated by a concept such as social commerce (Masuda et al., 2022; Hasan et al., 2024). It represents an upgraded version of traditional e-commerce that has been changed and tuned due to the Internet's pervasive development and people's increasing use of social media. Today, more and more companies are integrating social commerce into their work to make their goods and services sold online easier to find, evaluate, and buy. At the same time, the role of conventional marketing tools, such as brand placement and celebrity endorsements, has gradually decreased. Nowadays, the so-called internet influencers have become dominant social media figures whose primary role is to promote and advertise goods and services and build relationships between organizations and their clients in the social media ecosystem.

Problem Statement

Despite the explosive growth of influencer marketing in recent years, brand managers and social media agencies continue to confront challenges in securing a positive return on investment (ROI) from their expenditures on internet influencers (Han & Balabanis, 2024). Although research literature has emphasized the persuasive power of digital personalities, there is still limited information on what specific characteristics of an influencer lead to purchases in the target audience (Caiado et al., 2025). In other words, it is unclear what influencer attribute, among such variables as Attractiveness, Credibility, Interactivity, and Professionalism, impacts consumer behavior most directly and indirectly, ultimately motivating them to purchase (Mehmood et al., 2025).

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Research Objectives

- To examine the effects of Influencer Attractiveness, Credibility, Interactivity, and Professionalism on Customer Attitude toward the Brand.
- To investigate the effect of Customer Attitude toward the Brand on Consumer Purchase Intention.
- To examine the mediating role of Customer Attitude toward the Brand in the relationships between Influencer Attractiveness, Credibility, Interactivity, and Professionalism and Consumer Purchase Intention.
- To investigate the direct effects of Consumer Materialism and Perceived Influencer Authenticity on Consumer Purchase Intention.
- To examine the moderating effects of Consumer Materialism and Perceived Influencer Authenticity on the relationship between Customer Attitude toward the Brand and Consumer Purchase Intention.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do internet influencer Attractiveness, Credibility, Interactivity, and Professionalism influence customer attitude toward the brand in peer-to-peer e-commerce?

RQ2: Does a positive customer attitude toward the brand predict the consumer's purchase intention?

RQ3: To what extent does the customer's attitude toward the brand moderate the effect of influencers' attributes on the consumer's purchase intention?

RQ4: How do consumer materialism and perceived authenticity impact the consumer's online purchase intention?

RQ5: Do materialism and perceived authenticity moderate the effect of customer attitude toward the brand on the final purchase intention?

Gap Analysis

It is hard to disagree that research on social commerce and internet influencer marketing has been blooming in recent years. However, the majority of contemporary studies exploring the phenomenon are missing a crucial point. They still concentrate on direct and deterministic influence that an influencer has on the consumer's choice regardless of any mediating processes (Sardar & Vijay, 2025). However, S-O-R models require more careful consideration of the processes occurring in the organism of a consumer when exposed to a certain stimulus than just a direct link between stimulus and behavior. Some studies attempt to address this gap by introducing customer brand attitude as a mediating variable (Zhao et al., 2024). However, there are theories that state that brand attitude is not the sole determinant of buying behavior and therefore brand attitude may be only one of the possible moderators between an influencer and a consumer who makes a purchase (Cheah et al., 2024).

Literature Review

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Due to the paradigm shift from traditional e-commerce to social commerce, there has been a surge of research in the domain of online marketing. In particular, the phenomenon of internet influencer marketing has attracted an increasing number of scholars' attention (Aw & Agnihotri, 2024). Influencer marketing differs from celebrity marketing in that it relies on interpersonal relationships and "grassroots" market reach (Fan et al., 2024). The increasing allocation of resources by firms to internet influencers makes it vital to understand the psychological mechanisms that determine their effectiveness and to address the "why" question (Beichert et al., 2024).

Internet Influencer Attributes (The External Stimuli)

According to the S-O-R framework, the attributes and traits of an internet influencer represent S (stimuli) that stimulate an organism (consumer) to process and interpret information in a particular way (Hasan et

al., 2024). Unlike the retail system and static e-commerce platforms where stores' interior design, structure, website design, and brand packaging serve as the critical stimuli, social commerce relies solely on humans as the key mediator (Ye et al., 2021). It has been argued that the Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM) of information processing explains the mechanisms through which modern consumers interact with people in the context of social commerce best. Such a model highlights the different ways an audience uses to evaluate arguments presented by influencers (Koay et al., 2024). For instance, while systematically assessing the content of the provided messages, consumers also process superficial heuristic cues integrated by a person to increase their credibility and the probability of a purchase decision (Imran et al., 2025). Therefore, to understand how such a complex code of dual strategies influences consumers' intentions, this study will focus on four types of factors associated with the influencer's traits: Attractiveness, Credibility, Interactivity, and Professionalism.

Attractiveness

In the current literature on digital persuasion, source attractiveness includes not only physical appeal but also social desirability, charm, beauty, and similarity to the target audience (Dinh & Lee, 2022; Koay et al., 2024). According to the Heuristic-Systematic Model of persuasion, attractiveness is a peripheral cue that carries significant influence. With the explosion of content on social media, audiences face information overload and turn to peripheral cues to reduce the cognitive effort required for processing content on these platforms (Giuffredi et al., 2022).

Credibility

While attractiveness may draw in the audience to a certain post heuristically, credibility plays the key role in the systematic (central) route of digital persuasion, requiring heavy processing from the consumer (Koay & Lee, 2024). The influencer's credibility is multifaceted, incorporating the public's perception of an individual's expertise on the topic, level of trust in them, and general objectivity about the promoted category (Koay & Lee, 2024; Zhao et al., 2024). In the current digital landscape where there is an explosion of sponsored posts without clear indications, AI-generated media, and overall higher levels of misinformation, credibility has become a key asset for social commerce (Chen et al., 2023). By having an honest opinion about the given product, an influencer reduces the consumer's functional, financial, and psychological risks attached to online buying behaviors (Zhao et al., 2024). In the modern context, credibility is often produced through the influencer's extreme specialization in a given product niche. For instance, the public would trust a given YouTuber reviewing and testing cars more than a generic lifestyle vlogger (Koay & Lee, 2024; Kim & Kim, 2022). As such, the credibility of the opinion leader reduces the consumer's trust risks and provides the brand with a strong, positive imagery association.

Interactivity

Interactivity is a concept that differs considerably from the one-way communication of traditional celebrity endorsements and television advertisements. Interactivity, generally defined, refers to the level and quality of bidirectional communication between the digital influencer and his or her audience (Yang et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2023). For instance, social commerce sites often involve interactivity as a critical engagement mechanism where influencers constantly read and respond to comments left by their viewers in real-time and directly address them by name while answering some specific questions (Yang et al., 2023; Shamim et al., 2024).

Professionalism

Professionalism, in the case of internet influencers, is their technical proficiency demonstrated through carefully constructed narratives and high production quality of their performance (Chen et al., 2023). In the traditional marketing and advertising literature, this characteristic of social media celebrities has been associated positively with corporate quality and image (Macheka et al., 2024).

Customer Attitude Toward Brand (The Mediating Organism)

Within the framework of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, customer attitude toward the brand is regarded as the key “Organism” (O) that mediates the influence of digital stimuli (influencer attributes) on consumer responses (purchase intention) (Zhao et al., 2024). Customer attitude toward the brand is defined as “a consumer’s general impression of a particular business, formed by the individual’s beliefs and feelings about the company, as well as the thoughts and emotions evoked by the business through direct or indirect experience” (Kim & Kim, 2022; Zhao et al., 2024).

Customer Purchase Intention (The Behavioral Response)

In the final aspect of the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework, customer purchase intention represents the ultimate “Response (R)” to the overall persuasive influence of the digital sphere (Zhao et al., 2024). Purchase intention is defined as the individual’s planned, probabilistic, and cognitive desire to purchase a specific item or service from a certain brand via social commerce (Shamim et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2024).

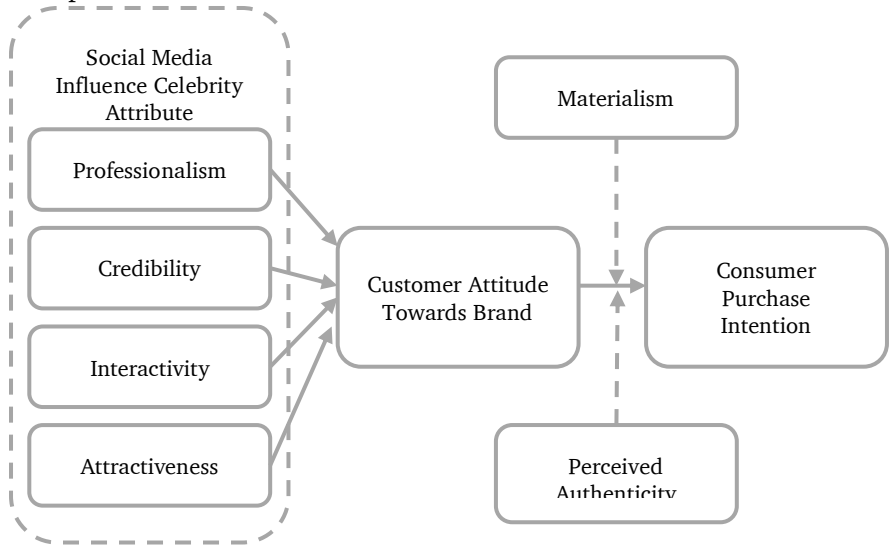
Consumer Materialism (Direct and Moderating Boundary Condition)

Materialism can be frequently observed when customers shop through social commerce, e.g., when they get exposed to highly appealing visual content created by various digital influencers (Koay et al., 2022). Such behavior is particularly common among materialistic consumers who tend to buy trendy and prominent items promoted by influencers in order to express their identity, gain social acceptance, and demonstrate their wealth and power (Koay et al., 2022). Accordingly, materialism is likely to have a direct impact on purchase intention, resulting from the consumer’s positive attitude toward the promoted brand, as well as act as a psychological motivator (Koay et al., 2022). From this perspective, the level of brand interest is expected to mediate the relationship between consumer materialism and buying behavior (Gilal et al., 2024).

Perceived Authenticity (Moderating Boundary Condition)

From this perspective, authenticity may be considered a key moderating variable that determines the relationship between a consumer’s attitude toward the brand and their ultimate choice behavior. In other words, while an effective influencer campaign may shape favorable views and perceptions toward the promoted product or service, actual buying intent will only emerge if the consumer believes that the influencer’s stance was authentic and sincere throughout the process (Chen et al., 2023). From a more theoretical perspective, perceived authenticity as a boundary condition moderating the attitude-choice relationship has also been supported in the work of Chen et al. (2023).

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework



Hypotheses Development

Influencer Attributes and Customer Attitude Toward Brand (H1a–H1d)

Professionalism (H1a): It refers to the ability to perform the job of an influencer and demonstrate product expertise during a live-stream (Zhao et al., 2024). In traditional marketing, product expertise by the marketer was considered a good practice to assure customer confidence in the product. However, consumers today are more empowered and can punish marketers for being too “professional” and “corporate”; they prefer authenticity over conventional ways of selling (Chen et al., 2023). Thus,

H1a: The professionalism of live-stream influencers positively influences customer attitude toward the brand.

Credibility (H1b): It denotes the trust inspired in the consumer by the influencer (Koay & Lee, 2024). It acts as a systematic processing cue that reduces the perceived risk associated with the purchase by vouching for the quality and value of the endorsed brand (Zhao et al., 2024). Thus,

H1b: The credibility of live-stream influencers positively influences customer attitude toward the brand.

Interactivity (H1c): Interactivity in this study includes real-time exchange of information and receptivity between the influencer and the audience (Yang et al., 2023). As such, high levels of interactivity promote parasocial relationships and a sense of community around the influencer’s brand, resulting in more parasocial acceptance of the promoted brand by the audience (Shamim et al., 2024). Thus,

H1c: Interactivity of live-stream influencers positively affects customer attitude toward the brand.

Attractiveness (H1d): Attractiveness covers the physical and other appealing characteristics of the influencer impacting the perception of the audience through halo effects (Gilal et al., 2024). Influencers who are more attractive draw the attention of the target market faster and promote positive attitudes toward the brand (Macheka et al., 2024). Thus,

H1d: Attractiveness of live-stream influencers positively affects customer attitude toward the brand.

The Mediating Role of Customer Attitude Toward Brand Hypothesis

It is critical to consider the S-O-R model where external stimuli should enter the internal cognitive system to elicit behavioral responses through an intervening process (Zhao et al., 2024). Earlier studies have demonstrated the direct link between attributes of internet influencers and customer purchasing intentions. However, contemporary research views customer attitude toward the brand as an intervening role that determines the relationship between influencer attractiveness and commercial outcomes (Hasan et al., 2024). In such a scenario, if the marketer employs a credible, interactive, attractive, and professional model, it triggers a positive image in the mind of the viewer, which, in turn, leads to buying behavior (Masuda et al., 2022).

H2: Customer attitude toward brand mediates the relationships between internet influencers’ attributes (professionalism, credibility, interactivity, and attractiveness) and customer purchase intention.

Consumer Materialism: Direct and Moderating Roles Hypotheses

In general, consumer materialism is defined as an independent factor that determines the scope of digital consumption among individuals (Duan & Brechman, 2025). Researchers stipulate that materialism has become a central philosophical belief for individuals who prioritize the acquisition of possessions as the ultimate indicator of their satisfaction and self-worth (Lee et al., 2022; Koay et al., 2022). Such an assumption is explicitly relevant to the context of social commerce since the influencers’ aspirational behavior tends to stimulate the audience’s materialistic predispositions, resulting in their readiness to purchase desirable objects (Mehmood et al., 2025).

H3: Consumer materialism positively influences customer purchase intention.

However, some scholars argue that the key impact of materialism concerns the mediating role of customer attitudes toward the promoted brand, which is explained by the high involvement of individuals with possessions as a source of gratification and self-esteem (Duan & Brechman, 2025; Koay et al., 2022). Accordingly, the study hypothesizes the following moderating effect:

H4: Consumer materialism moderates the relationship between customer attitude toward the brand and purchase intention, with a stronger connection between the variables than in the case of individuals with low materialism.

The Moderating Role of Perceived Authenticity (H5)

At the turning point of influencer marketing development, perceived authenticity turns out to be a critical boundary condition/gatekeeping mechanism that determines commercial outcomes (Chen et al., 2023). Because of consumers' rising digital literacy/persuasion knowledge, their engagement with digital endorsements is characterized by a heightened ability to discern attempts to manipulate their judgment (Giuffredi-Kähr et al., 2022). As a result, any "authenticity penalty" by the influencer who fails to maintain appropriate levels of authenticity and sincerity in their content diminishes the likelihood of the positive attitudes toward the brand being translated into purchase intentions (Hasan et al., 2024).

H5: Perceived authenticity moderates the influence of attitude on purchase intentions, with a stronger effect when authenticity is high

Research Methodology

Research Design

Research design is the overall plan for the research that determines the logical sequence of a scientific investigation process. It connects an abstract idea and research hypothesis to actual data collection and statistical analysis (Hair et al., 2022). A properly chosen research design is essential to achieve internal and external validity and yield reliable research results in business and management research (Hair et al., 2022; Zhao et al., 2024).

Population, Sampling, and Sample Size

Defining the target population, choosing the appropriate sampling technique, and determining the sample size are essential aspects of quantitative research. These factors directly impact the statistical accuracy, scope, and overall success of a study (Hair et al., 2022; Zhao et al., 2024). Therefore, for this research, it is proposed to take active social commerce users as the target population. The key inclusion criteria are the following: age eligibility (18+ years), active use of social commerce platforms (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube), subscription to social media influencers, and engagement in live shopping on social commerce networks. Karachi is suggested as the setting for this study due to its status as the economic center of Pakistan, a high level of smartphone penetration, and the presence of a young population that actively engages in shopping via social media (Imran et al., 2025; Shamim et al., 2024).

As for the sampling strategy, it is recommended to use a non-probability method due to the impracticality of compiling an exhaustive list of social commerce users. In this regard, a mixed approach of purposive and convenience sampling could be implemented to meet the requirements of time, cost, and accessibility while ensuring that the sample represents the target population adequately (Caiado et al., 2025). In particular, purposive sampling is preferred for the initial screening of participants to ensure that they fulfill all inclusion criteria. For instance, participants who follow social media influencers and have made a purchase via social commerce in the last six months would be eligible for the study (Shamim et al., 2024; Sardar & Vijay, 2025).

Determining an adequate sample size is paramount in partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) research since the number of observations has significant implications for both precision and

power while assessing the given model (Hair et al., 2022). Thus, the sample size collected from N = 206 participants was sufficient for the analysis, as it considerably exceeded the minimum number of 206 observations, which would allow for achieving good power to test the given model.

According to current research practices, a sample size of 206 observations surpasses the established recommendations for the minimum number of observations for PLS-SEM analysis. It meets all requirements set by the 10-times rule, the inverse square root rule, and the a priori power analysis using G-Power for medium complexity structural models (Hair et al., 2022; Cheah, Koay, & Lim, 2024). As a result, it can be stated that it is sufficient to evaluate any structural relationships, estimate specific indirect effects, and test moderated effects with a high level of confidence and power while minimizing the possibility of Type II error.

Research Instrument

Designing the research instrument was an important step in the present study, which aimed to operationalize the latent variables identified by the structural model accurately and enhance construct validity (Zhao et al., 2024; Masuda et al., 2022). The primary data collection method involved designing a self-administered questionnaire. The research tool comprised several sections for ease of completion to avoid respondent fatigue, ensure comprehensiveness, and facilitate faster data collection compared to other methods (Caiado et al., 2025).

Table 1
Summary of Latent Constructs and Source References

Variable / Construct	Role in Model	Primary Base Papers & Scale References
Professionalism	Independent Variable (Stimulus)	Zhao et al. (2024); Ohanian (1991); Bristor (1990)
Credibility	Independent Variable (Stimulus)	Zhao et al. (2024); Goldsmith et al. (2000); Ohanian (1990)
Interactivity	Independent Variable (Stimulus)	Zhao et al. (2024); Liu et al. (2020)
Attractiveness	Independent Variable (Stimulus)	Zhao et al. (2024); Carroll (2008); Ohanian (1990)
Customer Attitude Toward the Brand	Mediating Variable (Organism)	Zhao et al. (2024); Mitchell & Olson (1981)
Purchase Intention	Dependent Variable (Response)	Zhao et al. (2024); Brown et al. (2003)
Perceived Authenticity	Moderating Variable (Boundary Condition)	Wijerathna & Wijesundara (2022); Audrezet et al. (2020)
Consumer Materialism	Moderating Variable (Internal Trait)	Beccari et al. (2024); Richins & Dawson (1992)

Analytical Strategy: PLS-SEM

To test the multifactorial and multihypothesis structural model described in Chapter 2 that includes multiple exogenous influences, one intervening mechanism, and two moderating conditions, a partial least squares–based structural equation model (PLS-SEM) will be used as a powerful multivariate data analysis technique (Hair et al., 2022). PLS-SEM is considered an advanced variance-based structural equation modeling technique that is particularly suitable for complex theoretical models common in predictive-causal marketing research, as well as for data containing latent constructs that cannot be measured on normal distributions (Cheah et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2024).

Data Analysis and Results

Demographics Profile

The aim of this chapter is to report the study findings with the collected data sets of the selected participants from Karachi (N = 206). The PLS-SEM analysis through SmartPLS was performed to examine the measurement model of the study and test the proposed hypotheses of the study (Cheah, Koay, & Lim, 2024; Zhao et al., 2024).

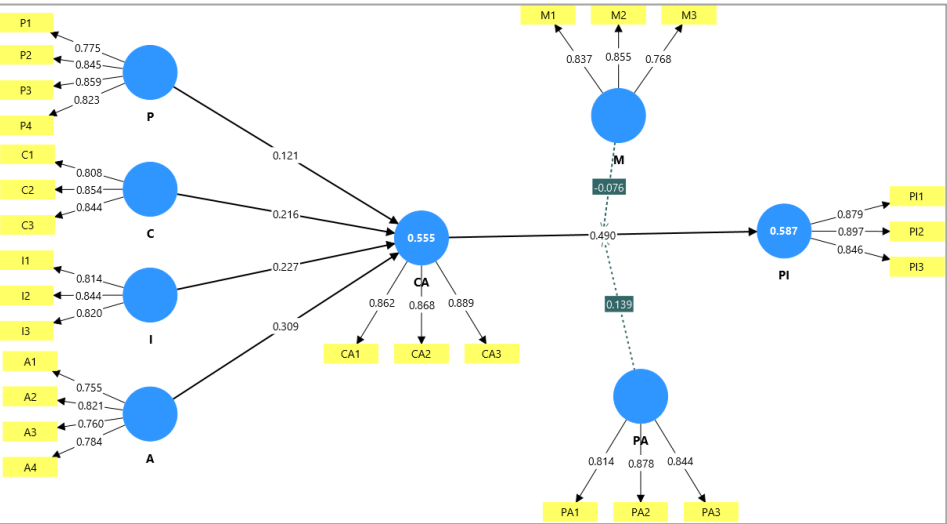
Table 2
Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N = 206)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Gender	Male	114	55.34	55.34
	Female	92	44.66	100.00
Age Group	18 to 24 years	78	37.86	37.86
	25 to 34 years	91	44.17	82.03
	35 to 44 years	27	13.11	95.14
	45 years and above	10	4.86	100.00
Education Level	Intermediate / Higher Secondary	24	11.65	11.65
	Undergraduate / Bachelor's	118	57.28	68.93
	Postgraduate / Master's and Above	64	31.07	100.00
Social Commerce Usage Frequency	Daily	128	62.14	62.14
	3 to 4 times a week	54	26.21	88.35
	1 to 2 times a week	24	11.65	100.00

Measurement Model Assessment

The initial step in PLS-SEM involves examining the measurement model (outer model) in order to evaluate indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity based on recent statistical practices.

Figure 2
Measurement Model



Internal Consistency and Convergent Validity

Internal consistency reliability of the study constructs was determined using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (rho_a and rho_c). According to methodological guidelines, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability should exceed the 0.70 threshold for reliable evaluation of construct reliability (Cho & Kim, 2022). In turn, the convergent validity of the constructs was assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and was found to be higher than 0.5, which means that the constructs explain more than half of the variance associated with the items. Table 2 below provides an overview of construct reliability and validity.

Table 3

Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Attractiveness (A)	0.787	0.793	0.862	0.609
Credibility (C)	0.785	0.794	0.874	0.698
Customer Brand Attitude (CA)	0.844	0.845	0.906	0.762
Interactivity (I)	0.767	0.767	0.866	0.682
Materialism (M)	0.757	0.761	0.861	0.674
Professionalism (P)	0.844	0.846	0.896	0.682
Perceived Authenticity (PA)	0.800	0.800	0.883	0.715
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.845	0.848	0.907	0.764

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity evaluates how different a particular latent construct is compared to other constructs in the structural model. In this study, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations was used to examine discriminant validity in the measurement model (Roemer et al., 2022). The method is recommended for variance-based SEM studies and shows excellent results. In Table 3 below, all HTMT ratios are below the threshold of 0.85, which indicates that discriminant validity was achieved since all items lack substantial similarity.

Table 4

HTMT Ratio Matrix

Construct	A	C	CA	I	M	P	PA	PI
Attractiveness (A)	-							
Credibility (C)	0.791	-						
Customer Brand Attitude (CA)	0.811	0.756	-					
Interactivity (I)	0.864	0.726	0.778	-				
Materialism (M)	0.708	0.618	0.637	0.644	-			
Professionalism (P)	0.749	0.817	0.696	0.723	0.602	-		
Perceived Authenticity (PA)	0.791	0.747	0.805	0.741	0.714	0.667	-	
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.788	0.799	0.835	0.723	0.697	0.751	0.756	-

Indicator Reliability (Outer Loadings)

The criterion used to assess indicator reliability is given by the values of the indicators' outer loadings. Outer loadings of items that are reflective indicators (i.e., measure constructs) should be higher than the recommended threshold of 0.708 to confirm the item's reliability (Sharma et al., 2022). According to Table

4, the outer loadings of all reflective indicators used in the measurement model are well above the threshold, which confirms their high reliability.

Table 5
Matrix of Outer Loadings

Indicator Item	Attractiveness (A)	Credibility (C)	Customer Brand Attitude (CA)	Interactivity (I)	Materialism (M)	Perceived Authenticity (P)	Purchase Intention (PI)
A1	0.755						
A2	0.821						
A3	0.760						
A4	0.784						
C1		0.808					
C2		0.854					
C3		0.844					
CA1			0.862				
CA2			0.868				
CA3			0.889				
I1				0.814			
I2				0.844			
I3				0.820			
M1					0.837		
M2					0.855		
M3					0.768		
P1						0.775	
P2						0.845	
P3						0.859	
P4						0.823	
PA1							0.814
PA2							0.878
PA3							0.844
PI1							0.879
PI2							0.897
PI3							0.846

Structural Model Assessment and Hypothesis Testing

After establishing the measurement model validity, the structural model was assessed by applying a non-parametric bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 samples to evaluate the theoretical direct effects, moderating processes, and indirect relationships.

Path Coefficients (Direct and Moderating Effects)

Table 5 below provides an overview of the path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values for both direct and interaction effects. In general, the results confirm the positive effect of attractiveness, credibility, and interactivity on brand attitudes, as well as the positive influence of materialism and perceived authenticity on purchase intentions. Furthermore, the results also demonstrate that perceived authenticity is a strong moderator in the relationship between brand attitudes and purchase.

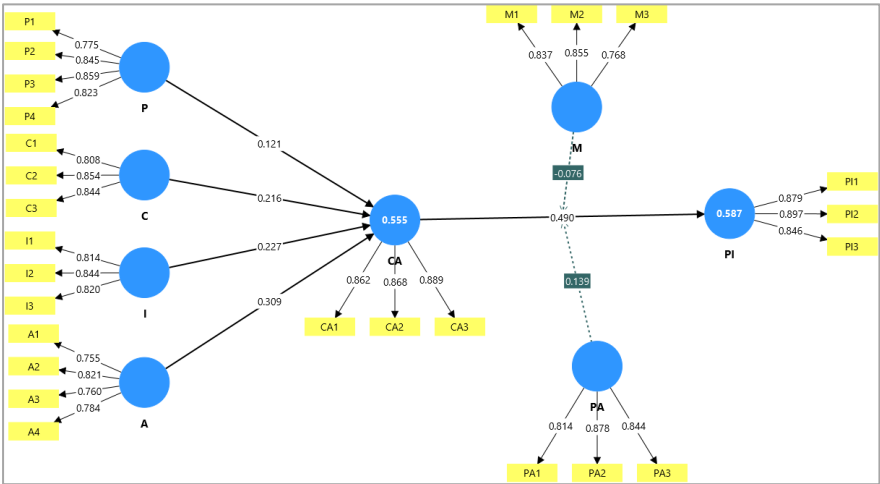
Table 6
Structural Model Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Results

Hypothesized Structural Path	Beta Value	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
Attractiveness to Customer Brand Attitude	0.309	0.087	3.554	0.000	Supported
Credibility to Customer Brand Attitude	0.216	0.079	2.721	0.007	Supported
Interactivity to Customer Brand Attitude	0.227	0.084	2.704	0.007	Supported
Professionalism to Customer Brand Attitude	0.121	0.079	1.527	0.127	Not Supported
Customer Brand Attitude to Purchase Intention	0.490	0.072	6.832	0.000	Supported
Materialism to Purchase Intention	0.192	0.061	3.117	0.002	Supported
Perceived Authenticity to Purchase Intention	0.235	0.076	3.095	0.002	Supported
Materialism x Customer Brand Attitude to Purchase Intention	-0.076	0.068	1.113	0.266	Not Supported
Perceived Authenticity x Customer Brand Attitude to Purchase Intention	0.139	0.062	2.232	0.026	Supported

Path Diagram and Structural Model Overview

The structural path diagram below encapsulates the intricate interrelationships estimated between the exogenous, mediating, moderating, and endogenous latent constructs in the context of the respondents in Karachi (N = 206). Consistent with the S-O-R framework, the structural model depicts the path from the influencer-related external stimuli, including Professionalism, Credibility, Interactivity, and Attractiveness, to the consumer’s organism and their Customer Attitude Toward Brand, leading to the ultimate response, namely, Purchase Intention.

Figure 3
Path Diagram and Structural Model Overview



Specifically, Figure 3 below reflects the results of the structural model in SmartPLS 4 software. In particular, the diagram below illustrates the R-squared values placed in the circles next to the endogenous constructs. In other words, the structural model accurately predicts 55.5% of the Customer Attitude Toward Brand variance and 58.7% of the Purchase Intention variation. The relationships between the constructs are depicted with arrows that indicate the direction of influence, whereas the numbers reflect the corresponding Beta coefficients or standardized path coefficients.

Mediation Analysis (Specific Indirect Effects)

To establish the mediation role of Customer Attitude Toward the Brand between influencer attributes and purchase intention, specific indirect effects were examined and computed for mediating relationships. A 95 percent bias-corrected confidence interval was calculated for each indirect effect. Therefore, brand attitude partially mediates the relationships between influencers’ attractiveness, credibility, and interactivity but not professionalism. The details were presented below in Table 6.

Table 7
Mediation Analysis Results (Specific Indirect Effects)

Path	Effect Size (Beta)	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values	95 percent LLCI	95 percent ULCI
Attractiveness to Customer Attitude to Purchase Intention	0.152	0.048	3.187	0.001	0.072	0.263
Credibility to Customer Attitude to Purchase Intention	0.106	0.044	2.434	0.015	0.030	0.198
Interactivity to Customer Attitude to Purchase Intention	0.111	0.047	2.382	0.017	0.028	0.209
Professionalism to Customer Attitude to Purchase Intention	0.059	0.040	1.495	0.135	-0.011	0.150

Predictive Accuracy and Effect Size Assessment

After assessing the model’s structural paths, the predictive accuracy and the influence of the exogenous variables on the entire model were evaluated using the Coefficient of Determination (R-squared) and the Effect Size (f-squared).

Coefficient of Determination (R-squared)

The R-squared indicates how much variance of the endogenous constructs is explained by the independent variables. It demonstrates that R-squared values of 0.75, 0.5, and 0.25 are categorized as substantial, moderate, and weak levels of explanatory power of the structural equation.

Table 8
presents the Coefficient of Determination results

Endogenous Construct	R-squared	Adjusted R-squared	Predictive Power
Customer Brand Attitude	0.555	0.546	Moderate
Purchase Intention	0.587	0.576	Moderate

The results presented in Table 8 indicate that independent influencer attributes account for 55.5 percent of the variance in Customer Brand Attitude. On the other hand, Customer Brand Attitude and independent, direct, and moderation factors account for 58.7 percent of the variance in Purchase Intention. In both cases, the structural model demonstrates a sufficient level of prediction accuracy.

Effect Size (f-squared)

Effect size (f 2 indicates the predictive power of each independent construct. Therefore, if the results demonstrate that the values are 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, it implies that an independent variable explains a small, medium, and large effect size, accordingly.

Table 9

Effect Size

Structural Path	f-squared Value	Effect Size Rating
Attractiveness to Customer Brand Attitude	0.094	Small
Credibility to Customer Brand Attitude	0.049	Small
Interactivity to Customer Brand Attitude	0.057	Small
Professionalism to Customer Brand Attitude	0.015	Negligible
Customer Brand Attitude to Purchase Intention	0.293	Medium to Large
Materialism to Purchase Intention	0.056	Small
Perceived Authenticity to Purchase Intention	0.062	Small
Materialism Interaction to Purchase Intention	0.009	Negligible
Perceived Authenticity Interaction to Purchase Intention	0.034	Small

Summary of Hypotheses Testing

The model proposed in Chapter 2 consisted of eight structural hypotheses (H1a-H5). Table 9 below provides a summary of all structural hypotheses that were successfully tested in this study.

Table 10

Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Structural Path and Relationship	Beta Value	p-value	Decision
H1a	Professionalism to Customer Brand Attitude	0.121	0.127	Not Supported
H1b	Credibility to Customer Brand Attitude	0.216	0.007	Supported
H1c	Interactivity to Customer Brand Attitude	0.227	0.007	Supported
H1d	Attractiveness to Customer Brand Attitude	0.309	0.000	Supported
H2	Customer Brand Attitude mediates Influencer Attributes and Purchase Intention	-	-	Supported (Partial)
H3	Consumer Materialism to Purchase Intention	0.192	0.002	Supported
H4	Consumer Materialism moderates Customer Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention	-0.076	0.266	Not Supported
H5	Perceived Authenticity moderates Customer Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention	0.139	0.026	Supported

Discussion

The overarching objective of this study was to investigate the mechanisms and processes through which internet influencer attributes affect consumer purchase intentions in the context of digital social commerce in Karachi. The study’s conceptual framework was developed based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) perspective and the Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM), which provided a theoretical basis for advancing eight research hypotheses. These hypotheses were related to direct and indirect effects as well as moderating roles, including consumer materialism and perceived authenticity (Zhao et al., 2024; Koay et al., 2022; Hasan, Zahid, & Qayyum, 2024).

H1a: Professionalism to Customer Brand Attitude

As hypothesized, the professionalism of live-stream influencers has a positive effect on customer attitude toward the brand. However, the results showed that it has $\text{Beta} = 0.121$, $t = 1.527$, $p = 0.127$. Since the p -value is greater than the significance level of 0.05, Hypothesis 1a was rejected.

This result is counter-intuitive and somewhat surprising given the existing literature on celebrity endorsement. Celebrity endorsements typically focus on achieving technical competence and professionalism, as these factors are positively associated with consumer respect and brand attitude (Macheka, Quaye, & Ligaraba, 2024; Fan et al., 2024). Technical competence and professional presentation are critical in traditional advertising, as they increase brand value and consumer perception of quality (Beichert et al., 2024; Rosengren et al., 2024). Thus, the lack of professionalism in streamers' presentation may be viewed by the audience as a negative and turn them away from the brand.

H1b: Credibility to Customer Brand Attitude

Hypothesis 1b stated that the credibility of live-stream influencers significantly predicted the customer's attitude towards the brand. The test results confirmed the initial statement since the path coefficient was positively significant, $\text{Beta} = 0.216$ ($t = 2.721$, $p = 0.007$). As a core component of the Heuristic-Systematic Model, influencer credibility helps mitigate the risks associated with online buying decisions. In particular, influencers' trustworthiness, professional expertise, and impartiality signal to customers that product claims are credible and reduce buying doubt (Mehmood et al., 2025; Wang & Weng, 2024; Imran et al., 2025).

H1c: Interactivity to Customer Brand Attitude

As hypothesized in Hypothesis 1c, the interactivity of live-stream influencers has a substantial positive effect on customer attitude toward the brand. The results fully supported this claim, as evidenced by the strong positive path coefficient of $\text{Beta} = 0.227$ ($t = 2.704$, $p = 0.007$). Therefore, Hypothesis 1c was supported by the results.

H1d: Attractiveness to Customer Brand Attitude

As hypothesized in H1d, the attractiveness of live-stream influencers significantly drives customer attitude toward the brand. The analysis revealed that this construct had the strongest direct stimulus effect on the dependent variable, resulting in a positive path coefficient of $\text{Beta} = 0.309$ ($t = 3.554$, $p = 0.000$), thereby partially supporting Hypothesis 1d.

H2: The Mediating Role of Customer Brand Attitude

As hypothesized, customer brand attitude partially mediated the associations between the internet influencer attributes and customer purchase intention. This was established using the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 samples to estimate indirect effects. Indeed, the indirect effects through brand attitude were found to be significant for Attractiveness ($\text{Beta}: 0.152$, $p = 0.001$), Credibility ($\text{Beta}: 0.106$, $p = 0.015$), and Interactivity ($\text{Beta}: 0.111$, $p = 0.017$). In turn, the specific indirect effect of Professionalism was non-significant ($\text{Beta}: 0.059$, $p = 0.135$), which was explained by the lack of a direct influence of this predictor on brand attitude.

H3: Consumer Materialism as a Direct Predictor

Hypothesis 3 that consumer materialism positively predicted customer purchase intention was partially supported by the result of the structural analysis. Indeed, the study revealed a positive path coefficient of $\text{Beta} = 0.192$ ($t = 3.117$, $p = 0.002$).

Materialism is recognized as a powerful individual value that drives the key forces shaping modern consumer behavior (Duan & Brechman, 2025; Koay et al., 2022). In the context of social commerce, which typically uses highly visual content and encourages social interactions, materialistic motives can be considered as drivers of spontaneous customer engagement with brand content. Moreover, for customers

who prioritize material values, engaging in social commerce activities predicts a quick generation of interest in popular and visually attractive products (Lee et al., 2022; Mehmood et al., 2025; Dinh & Lee, 2022). Such purchasing decisions allow customers to express their identity, status, and the pursuit of material happiness through the selection of desirable items purchased and openly displayed on social media.

H4: Consumer Materialism as a Moderator Essay

Hypothesis 4 suggested that consumer materialism would moderate the link between customer brand attitude and customer purchase intention, with a positive relationship being stronger for consumers with a high degree of materialism. The result revealed that the moderating role of consumer materialism was not supported, as the interaction term had a negative and insignificant path coefficient (Beta = -0.076; $t = 1.113$, $p = 0.266$). Thus, Hypothesis 4 was rejected.

H5: Perceived Authenticity as a Moderator

As hypothesized by Hypothesis 5, the influence of customer brand attitude on customer purchase intention was positively moderated by perceived authenticity, resulting in an increased positive attitude level being transformed into purchase intentions. Indeed, the structural interaction term was positive and statistically significant, with a path coefficient of Beta = 0.139 ($t = 2.232$, $p = 0.026$), thus confirming Hypothesis 5.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although this work contains valuable theoretical and practical implications for social commerce and internet influencer marketing, it has several limitations that need to be recognized and discussed. Firstly, acknowledging these shortcomings makes the current findings more reliable. Secondly, discussing limitations can help provide some guidelines for future research in the chosen field of marketing (Aw & Agnihotri, 2024; Sardar & Vijay, 2025).

Methodological and Temporal Constraints. Firstly, the study was based on a cross-sectional design, which was found to be appropriate for the posed research questions. However, influencer marketing is a complex and fluid phenomenon that involves audience engagement in a parasocial relationship and trust development with the influencer (Lou, 2022). Therefore, the current approach was limited in terms of analyzing the dynamism of the process. A cross-sectional survey cannot account for gradual changes in target customers' attitudes over time, which is especially relevant in the context of influencer fatigue and long-term cooperation (Koay et al., 2023; Cheah et al., 2024). Future studies should apply a longitudinal design to understand how customers' trust and attitudes evolve in the long run and influence their purchasing behaviors (Hsu, 2023; Wang & Weng, 2024).

Conclusion

The transformation of retail into interactive social commerce has significantly advanced the understanding of consumer behavior and marketing. Internet influencers are now at the forefront of the marketing world and serve as a critical link between buyers and sellers (Aw & Agnihotri, 2024; Caiado et al., 2025). The current dissertation undertook the momentous task of delineating the underlying social psychological mechanism that connects selected internet influencer characteristics with actual consumer buying intentions. In this regard, the research utilized the Stimulus-Organism-Response theory and the Heuristic-Systematic Framework to develop a comprehensive theoretical model (Zhao et al., 2024; Hasan et al., 2024). As opposed to direct influence, emphasis was placed on customer brand attitude as a key intervening variable, while consumer materialism and perceived authenticity were incorporated as moderating processes (Koay et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2023). The analysis of active digital consumers through the lens of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling unveiled invaluable insights that can guide future research endeavors. Indeed, contemporary customers have a set of complex and multifaceted buying behaviors that appear to be influenced by a wide range of contextual factors (Han & Balabanis, 2024; Sardar & Vijay, 2025).

The findings of this study contribute significantly to contemporary research in digital marketing, yielding several key conclusions that challenge previous beliefs about the characteristics of celebrity influencers. As such, it was found that influencer physical and social attractiveness, credibility, and interactivity significantly contribute to the formation of positive customer attitudes towards the promoted brand (Akhtar et al., 2024; Koay & Lee, 2024). These factors effectively reduce the perceived risks of online transactions by establishing parasocial relationships and trust with the buyer (Koay et al., 2024; Hsu, 2023; Wang & Weng, 2024). However, the ability of an influencer to demonstrate technical proficiency and act professionally does not appear to have a considerable effect on brand attitude, which showcases the changing nature of social commerce (Fan et al., 2024; Rosengren et al., 2024). This outcome reflects the growing degree of persuader knowledge among consumers, who no longer respond positively to traditional forms of corporate advertising (Giuffredi-Kähr et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2023; Mahmood et al., 2025). To satiate their rising persuasion knowledge, buyers seek authenticity and relatability from influencers, which is achieved through their ability to effectively communicate with peers in an informal and unscripted manner.

The partial mediation results demonstrated that external influencer cues cannot override the consumer's internal cognitive processes. The influencer marketing paradigm is not one of direct influence. Digital opinion leaders should first influence the consumer's internal favorable attitude toward the brand. The customer's brand attitude acts as a necessary precondition for turning initial engagement with influencers into a commercial purchase (Zhao et al., 2024; Hasan et al., 2024; Wijaya Handranata & Kalila, 2025). The two important boundary conditions were successfully isolated in this study, thus adding clarity to the general understanding of the mechanism of digital persuasion. The role of consumer materialism as a direct and independent predictor of purchase intention was successfully demonstrated (Duan & Brechman, 2025; Mahmood et al., 2025). The consumer's materialism level is positively related to the likelihood of buying a product with enhanced status. However, no differences were found in the cognitive conversion process between the two groups. Thus, materialism should be regarded as a consumption accelerator but not a demand enhancer. A highly materialistic consumer is not predisposed to develop a different attitude toward the brand than their peers with low levels of materialism (Lee et al., 2022; Koay et al., 2022).

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