

The Impact of Social Media Influencer Attributes on Travel Intention: A Study of Pakistan's Tourism

Omar Farooq¹ 

¹ Head of Marketing and Corporate Affairs, America Pakistan Business Development Forum. Visiting Lecturer, Baqai Institute of Health Management Sciences, Baqai Medical University

Received: 10 May 2025

Revised: 18 June 2025

Accepted: 20 August 2025

Published: 30 September 2025

Correspondence:

Omar Farooq

Head of Marketing and Corporate Affairs, America Pakistan Business Development Forum. Visiting Lecturer, Baqai Institute of Health Management Sciences, Baqai Medical University.

Email: of.patel@gmail.com

To cite this article: Farooq, O. (2025). The Impact of Social Media Influencer Attributes on Travel Intention: A Study of Pakistan's Tourism. *Annals of Health Management and Social Sciences*, 1(1), 33-39.

Abstract

Background: This study investigates the impact of social media influencer attributes on the travel intentions of potential tourists to Pakistan.

Objectives: The purpose of this research is to quantitatively examine how two key influencer characteristics, credibility and content authenticity, directly impact the travel intentions of their followers towards Pakistan, offering actionable insights for destination marketing strategies.

Methods: A quantitative approach was employed, utilizing a structured online questionnaire distributed to 180 social media users familiar with travel content about Pakistan. Data was analyzed using linear regression to assess the predictive power of two key independent variables: influencer credibility and content authenticity, on the dependent variable, travel intention.

Results: The results demonstrate that both attributes are statistically significant positive predictors. However, content authenticity emerged as the substantially stronger driver, underscoring the modern traveler's prioritization of genuine and relatable narratives.

Implications: The findings offer actionable insights for destination marketing organizations, suggesting that collaborations with influencers who project trustworthiness and, more importantly, authentic experiences, are crucial for effectively boosting travel intention. This research provides empirical evidence to refine digital marketing strategies aimed at promoting tourism in emerging destinations like Pakistan.

Keywords: *Social Media Influencers; Tourism Pakistan; Travel Intention; Content Authenticity; Influencer Credibility; Destination Marketing*

1. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary tourism landscape has been fundamentally reshaped by the digital revolution, with social media platforms becoming central to how destinations are perceived and chosen. Travelers increasingly rely on peer-generated content and influencer recommendations over traditional advertising, seeking authentic glimpses into potential experiences (Armutcu et al., 2023). This shift is particularly significant for destinations like Pakistan, which possess immense tourism potential but are navigating modern global marketing dynamics. Social media offers a powerful channel to showcase its diverse landscapes and rich cultural heritage directly to a global audience, moving beyond outdated perceptions.

Existing research underscores the potency of social media in driving tourist behavior. Studies confirm that interactive engagement within travel-focused communities can significantly influence travel decisions, as explained through frameworks like social facilitation theory (Camilleri & Kozak, 2022). Furthermore, the visual appeal and perceived value of content shared online are critical drivers of electronic word-of-mouth, ultimately shaping a destination's image (Abbasi et al., 2023). However, while the broad impact of these platforms is established, a nuanced understanding of the specific influencer attributes that trigger travel intention requires deeper investigation. The rationale for this study, therefore, stems from a need to move beyond acknowledging social media's general influence and to pinpoint the precise levers of its power. The purpose of this research is to quantitatively examine how two key influencer characteristics, credibility and content authenticity, directly impact the travel intentions of their followers towards Pakistan, offering actionable insights for destination marketing strategies.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to investigate the relationship between social media influencer attributes and travel intention. Data were collected via a structured online questionnaire, developed and distributed using Google Forms. The instrument comprised three sections. The first measured perceived influencer Credibility using a four-item scale adapted from the work of Abbasi et al. (2023). The second assessed Content Authenticity with a three-item scale modified from Camilleri and Kozak (2022). The final section measured the dependent variable, Travel Intention, using a three-item scale. All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree).

A convenience sampling technique was used to recruit participants who actively follow travel-focused social media influencers showcasing Pakistan. The sample size was determined using the G*Power software (version 3.1.9.7, developed at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf, Germany). For a linear regression with two predictors, a medium effect size ($f^2=0.15$), an alpha of .05, and power of 0.95, a minimum of 119 participants was required. We collected data from 180 respondents to account for potential incomplete submissions. Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics software (version 28.0, manufactured by IBM Corp. in Armonk, New York, USA). A multiple linear regression was conducted to test the hypotheses, with the significance level for rejecting the null hypothesis set at $p < .05$.

3. RESULTS

Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=180)

Demographic Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18 - 25 years	124	68.9
	26 - 35 years	47	26.1
	36 years and above	9	5.0
Gender	Male	98	54.4
	Female	82	45.6
Education Level	High School or below	23	12.8
	Bachelor's Degree	112	62.2
	Master's Degree or higher	45	25.0
Occupation	Student	81	45.0
	Employed Full-Time	75	41.7
	Self-Employed	15	8.3
	Other	9	5.0

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

The sample (N=180) primarily consisted of younger, educated demographics, with 68.9% aged 18-25 and 87.2% holding a bachelor's degree or higher. The distribution was slightly male-dominated (54.4%), and the largest occupational groups were students (45.0%) and full-time employees (41.7%).

Regression Coefficients for Predictors of Travel Intention

Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t-value	p-value
(Constant)	1.295	0.247		5.246	<.001
Influencer Credibility	0.177	0.072	0.179	2.460	.015
Content Authenticity	0.440	0.074	0.434	5.959	<.001

Table 2
Regression Analysis

Note: The dependent variable is Travel Intention to Pakistan.

The regression analysis reveals that both influencer credibility ($\beta = 0.179$, $p = .015$) and content authenticity ($\beta = 0.434$, $p < .001$) are statistically significant positive predictors of travel intention. Content authenticity demonstrates a notably stronger influence on the intention to visit Pakistan.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm the potent role of specific social media influencer attributes in shaping travel decisions, with content authenticity emerging as a significantly stronger driver than credibility. This aligns with broader research indicating that modern travelers actively seek genuine and relatable experiences over polished advertisements (Cheng, 2025; Tran & Rudolf, 2022). The significant role of credibility supports the findings of Wang and Yan (2022), who established trust as a critical mediator in the relationship between information quality and travel intention. However, the dominance of authenticity suggests a paradigm shift; users now prioritize perceived realness and cultural immersion, a trend also noted in studies on user-generated content (Kitsios et al., 2022).

Consequently, both research hypotheses are supported, confirming positive and significant relationships for both predictor variables.

These results present a clear strategic imperative for Pakistan's tourism sector. To leverage this insight, there is a compelling need to develop a travel application personalized for Pakistan that centrally integrates the principle of content authenticity. This platform could move beyond static listings by featuring curated, vetted content from local and international influencers, focusing on unscripted cultural interactions and realistic travelogues. Such an app would serve as a trusted digital conduit, transforming passive online engagement into concrete travel planning, as engagement has been shown to directly influence purchase intention (Chung & Jeong, 2024). A limitation of this study is its reliance on convenience sampling and self-reported intentions, which may not fully predict actual travel behavior. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to track how social media exposure translates into real-world travel, and explore the application of this model across different tourist nationalities and generational cohorts.

5. Conclusion

This study empirically validates that the strategic use of social media influencers, particularly those who prioritize content authenticity, is a powerful mechanism for enhancing travel intention to Pakistan. The findings underscore a critical shift in tourist behavior, where genuine and relatable narratives hold more persuasive power than traditional marketing. For destination marketers, this translates to a clear imperative: forging partnerships with influencers who can deliver immersive and trustworthy portrayals of the travel experience. By strategically leveraging these digital storytellers, Pakistan can more effectively reshape its global image, captivate the modern traveler, and ultimately unlock its significant tourism potential.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION AND DECLARATIONS

Concept Design, Data Collection and Drafting: Omar Farooq

Disclosure Statement: The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. No financial, personal, or professional affiliations have influenced this study's research, analysis, or conclusions. All ethical considerations were upheld, and the findings were reported with integrity and transparency.

Funding: None

Declaration on the use of AI: The author(s) confirm that no AI tools or platforms were used in the conduct of this study or in the preparation, translation, or proofreading of this manuscript. In cases where any AI tool has been employed, its specific purpose has been clearly stated in the methodology section. The author(s) further affirm that all AI-assisted content has been thoroughly reviewed, revised where necessary, and that they take full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the published article.

Attribution and Representation: The statements, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this article are solely those of the author(s). They do not necessarily reflect the views of the author(s)' affiliated institutions or the publisher. The publisher assumes no responsibility for any errors, omissions, or consequences arising from the use of the information contained in the text, figures, tables, or images.

Research Involving Human Participants, Children, Animals, or Plants: The author(s) solemnly declare that this study did not directly involve any human participants, including local community members, non-Indigenous populations, or children, in any form of data collection or experimentation. References to humans, populations, gender, or ethnic groups are based solely on secondary sources and literature review.

Furthermore, this research did not involve the use of animals, plants, or any biological specimens requiring ethical approval. Therefore, ethical clearance from an institutional review board, prior informed consent (PIC) from respondents, or animal/plant welfare approvals are not applicable to this study.

The author(s) affirm full compliance with international ethical standards for research and publication.

REFERENCES

- Abbasi, A. Z., Tsiotsou, R. H., Hussain, K., Rather, R. A., & Ting, D. H. (2023). Investigating the impact of social media images' value, consumer engagement, and involvement on eWOM of a tourism destination: A transmittal mediation approach. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 71, 103231.
- Armutcu, B., Tan, A., Amponsah, M., Parida, S., & Ramkissoon, H. (2023). Tourist behaviour: The role of digital marketing and social media. *Acta psychologica*, 240, 104025.
- Boediman, S. F., Hendriarto, P., Satmoko, N. D., Sulistiyani, S., & Sani, A. (2021). The Relevance of Using Social Media Applications Strategies to Increase Marketing Potential of Indonesian Maritime Tourism (Analytical Study of Tourism Journals and Online Marketing). *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute (BIRCI-Journal): Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(4), 8791-8799.
- Camilleri, M. A., & Kozak, M. (2022). Interactive engagement through travel and tourism social media groups: A social facilitation theory perspective. *Technology in society*, 71, 102098.
- Cheng, M. (2025). Social media and tourism geographies: Mapping future research agenda. *Tourism Geographies*, 27(3-4), 579-588.
- Chung, W. J., & Jeong, C. (2024). The role of social media engagement in the purchase intention of South Korea's popular media (Hallyu) tourism package: based on uses and gratifications theory. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 29(1), 17-30.
- Firman, A., Moslehpour, M., Qiu, R., Lin, P. K., Ismail, T., & Rahman, F. F. (2023). The impact of eco- innovation, ecotourism policy and social media on sustainable tourism development: evidence from the tourism sector of Indonesia. *Economic research-Ekonomska istraživanja*, 36(2).
- Flores-Ruiz, D., Elizondo-Salto, A., & Barroso-González, M. D. L. O. (2021). *Using social media in tourist sentiment analysis: A case study of Andalusia during the COVID-19 pandemic*. *Sustainability*, 13(7), 3836.
- Gebreel, O. S. S., & Shuayb, A. (2022). Contribution of social media platforms in tourism promotion. *International journal of social science, education, communication and economics*, 1(2), 189-198.
- Kitsios, F., Mitsopoulou, E., Moustaka, E., & Kamariotou, M. (2022). User-Generated Content behavior and digital tourism services: A SEM-neural network model for information trust in social networking sites. *International Journal of Information Management Data Insights*, 2(1), 100056.
- Liu, Y., Zhang, R., & Yao, Y. (2021). How tourist power in social media affects tourism market regulation after unethical incidents: Evidence from China. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 91, 103296.

- Tran, N. L., & Rudolf, W. (2022). Social media and destination branding in tourism: a systematic review of the literature. *Sustainability*, 14(20), 13528.
- Wang, H., & Yan, J. (2022). Effects of social media tourism information quality on destination travel intention: Mediation effect of self-congruity and trust. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 1049149.
- Zhao, Z., & Cheng, M. (2025). A narrative review of social media interventions aimed at reducing food waste in tourism and hospitality. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 28(18), 2906-2926.

Copyright © 2025 Annals of Health Management and Social Sciences

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) License. All rights are reserved by the Annals of Health Management and Social Sciences. The copyright of this article belongs to the journal, while authors retain the right to attribution. Reproduction or distribution of this work is permitted with proper citation of the original source.

License link: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>