The Impact of Travel Influencers on Followers' Attitudes and Visit Intention: A Study of Social Media Marketing in Tourism

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Abstract

Influencer marketing is an emerging trend in social media marketing. In the present study, we identified various factors which influence followers towards travel influencers and their impact on followers' attitudes and visit intentions. The research population includes all social media users who follow any travel influencers on social media. Based on Ducoffes' Advertising Value Model and Source Credibility Theory, three variables, such as entertainment, informativeness and source credibility, were identified and tested. The research employed a structured quantitative approach using a self administered questionnaire. 172 valid responses were collected and analysed using SPSS and AMOS SEM. The findings of the study show that the three factors entertainment, informativeness and source credibility have a significant positive impact on followers' attitudes. However, source credibility has a more significant impact, followed by entertainment and informativeness. Also, the study reveals that a positive attitude among followers enhances the intention to visit the destination recommended by travel influencers. These findings help destination marketers and tourism operators to create more useful influencer marketing campaigns. Further, future researchers can expand the current research model by adapting more factors which impact followers' attitudes and visit intention.

Keywords: *Influencer Marketing, Travel Influencers, Tourism Marketing, Attitude, Visit Intention*

Introduction

The technological development and easy access to the internet have led to the development of social media, which connects people all around the world (Werenowska, 2020. Due to the increased number of social media users, companies are being guided to take advantage of the new marketing platforms through social media and effectively engage and connect with

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their customers (Mangold, Faulds, 2009; Simerpreet, 2016). Social media is now an important tool for online marketing. Both individuals and companies utilise social media to advertise business opportunities and establish fan pages on internet platforms (Chen, Lin, 2019). Social media influencers are taking over the internet due to their amazing performance and engagement. Influencers are called online celebrities who have the power to influence the behavior of their followers. Their opinions have a significant impact on people, especially among the younger generation. They are a relatively new phenomenon, and their cooperation with marketing firms has significantly increased in recent years. These influencers are sought after by brands for recommendations, reviews, and mentions (Kadekova, Holoencinova, 2018). Many industries and brands attempt to work with influencers because consumers are interested in what they have to say and recommend.

Social media influencer marketing is a type of marketing that utilises prominent figures on social media channels to endorse brands, products, or services to their audience. It includes partnerships between brands and influencers who possess credibility and a loyal following in a particular niche. This approach seeks to improve brand recognition, trust, and interaction through genuine and convincing content (Evans et al., 2017). Influencer marketing has impacted every industry, including travel and tourism. For several reasons, including drawing tourists to particular locations, numerous Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) are leveraging the impact of internet celebrities (Femenia, 2020). Travel businesses have begun to rely on social media influencers. Travel and Tourism industry is one of the top industries investing in influencer marketing to promote consumer visit intention. Travel influencers are individuals who share their travel blog/vlogs through social media and inspire their followers to travel to the destination they recommend. Marketing through travel influencers is considered highly important for the travel and tourism industry. Many research studies have been conducted in this area, but there exist only limited studies that focus on followers' attitudes towards the travel influencers, and there is a lack of literature that identifies the factors that influence followers' attitudes and the impact of attitude on visit intention. Hence, the present study aims to address this research gap and contribute towards the existing literature. Based on a literature analysis, three important variables which influence consumers' attitudes were identified, and a conceptual model was developed and tested. Thus, this study is conducted to understand the diverse factors attracting followers towards travel influencers and to study the role of travel influencers in promoting a visit intention.

Theoretical framework

Ducoffes' Advertising Value model

Ducoffes' Advertising Value Model (1995) was put forth to understand the relation between advertising value, informativeness, entertainment, and irritation. The models' goal was to investigate advertising as a means of communicating with consumers, and the findings revealed that informativeness, entertainment, and irritation are factors in determining how people value advertising. Ducoffes' extended advertising value model (1996) explains how the perceived value of advertising influences consumer attitudes toward online advertising, stating that a good attitude towards web advertising correlates with a high perceived value of web advertising. The study of Blanco et al. (2010) which is based on Ducoffes' (1996) model, studies the informativeness and entertaining components of mobile marketing in relation to customer

attitudes, as well as the general publics' perception of advertising. The study found that informativeness and entertainment have a favourable impact on consumer attitudes.

Source Credibility Theory

The Source Credibility Model states that a communications' effectiveness is determined by the endorsers' perceived level of competence and reliability (Hovland, Weiss, 1951). This perspective holds that the credibility and experience of the source are the two main determinants of the messages' adoption. It is believed that audience acceptability is enhanced by the audiences' capacity to evaluate the product and the sources' level of expertise. Furthermore, using the same persuasive message Hovland and Weiss analysed whether credible and non credible sources influence the opinions of message recipients. The study found that credible sources create an impact on the audience.

Grounded in Ducoffes' Advertising Value model and Source Credibility Theory, the current research identifies three key variables: entertainment, informativeness and source credibility. These variables are deemed critical in the context of travel influencers, and an extensive literature review has been conducted to examine these variables in detail.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Social Media Influencers in Travel and Tourism

In todays' digitally connected world, social media plays a vital role in the tourism industry. Social media influences an individuals' travel decisions and also shapes social dynamics and every day experiences (Yazdanifard, Yee, 2014). Digital trust has a significant impact on the hospitality and tourism sector (Lee et al., 2025). Anticipating emerging trends and adopting innovative strategies on social media platforms will be essential for enhancing the effectiveness of marketing efforts (Singha, 2024). Social media is one of the most widely used information source in the tourism industry (Simms, 2012). According to Hudson and Thal (2012), social media plays an important and pivotal role at all stages of travelling. The para social relationships between social media influencers and followers enhance followers' trust towards influencers (Sarkis et al., 2024). It has been stated that people's everyday use of social media for habits and skills has 'spilled over' into the tourism business (Wang et al., 2014). Electronic word of mouth from peers, families, and friends who do not have commercial interests has been identified as a powerful source of information for travellers (Yoo, Gretzrl, 2011). The value of word of mouth in the travel environment is strengthened by influencer marketing in travel and tourism (Litvin et al., 2008). In the travel business, the rising presence of social media influencers (SMIs) is gradually influencing consumer behaviour (Pop et al., 2021). A study on SMIs found that the alignment of SMIs' perceived images with consumers' ideal self images is found to have a considerably beneficial impact on visit intentions to the endorsed destinations (Xu, Pratt, 2018). A literature study on influencer marketing in travel and tourism finds that there is an increasing interest in using influencer marketing as a strategy tool to promote destination tourism and inspire customers to travel (Sesar et al., 2021).

Entertainment and Informativeness

Ducoffee (1996) defined entertainment as "the ability to fulfill an audience's needs for escapism, diversion, aesthetic enjoyment, or emotional enjoyment". One important indicator of advertising value is entertainment. It is essential to the efficacy of online advertising. The ability of advertising to educate people about alternative product information is known as informativeness. It may help to strike a balance between the needs of consumers and the products that producers are offering (Ducoffee, 1996). Social media travel blogs have become more and more well known as trustworthy sources of travel information. Bloggers who post about their travel experiences are known as travel influencers (TIs), and their thoughts and perceptions of places have an effect on readers' decisions to travel (Ay et al., 2019). Since blogs soon became vital information sources for travellers and a powerful marketing tool, tourism marketers started working with them (Lin YS, 2006). As it offers entertainment, travel knowledge, professional guidance, and inspiration, the generated material has an impact on the followers of travel influencers (Katherine, 2020). Informative effects, motivating effects, effects as a role model, and community effects are the four categories of effects that travelling influencers have on their followers (Asan, 2021).

Source credibility

Credibility is described as "judgments about a communicators' reliability made by a perceiver (e.g., a message recipient)" (O'Keefe, 1990). According to a study on the influence of influencers' source credibility on travel intention, the sub dimensions of source credibility such as knowledge and trustworthiness had a significant effect on travel intention (Yilmazdogan et al., 2021). One of the most important factor that effectively influences travellers' destination choices is the influencers' credibility (Pop et al., 2021). Wellman (2020) investigates how travel influencers' perceptions of authenticity influence their ethical decision making when it comes to sponsored material. Their findings reveal that authenticity is transmitted in influencer content through identity performances and validated (or not) by audience impressions of influencers. Influencers rely on their belief in authenticity as an ethical ideal. In creating sponsored content, influencers give prior importance to their audience. Promotional material created and shared by another brand, influencer, or publisher but funded by an advertiser is known as sponsored content (Bump, 2019). Declaration of sponsorship details by influencers promotes more positive consumer perceptions towards the influencer and boosts source and message credibility (Stubb, 2019). Even if the influencers do not disclose sponsorship details, consumers are still interested in following their advice (Coco, Eckert, 2020). From the literature analysis, we assume that source credibility can be a factor which affects followers' intention to visit the destination.

Attitude

Zaman et al. (2025) state that consumer influencer equity enhances consumer product congruence, which in turn creates a positive consumer attitude. The concept of attitude towards social media influencers refers to peoples' general beliefs, opinions, and assessments about social media influencers. Conversely, unfavourable opinions may deter fans from using or pur-

chasing the brands' goods or services. Positivity typically makes people more likely to act in this way or recommend it to others (Ilieva, 2024). The results of numerous studies show that consumers' attitudes are influenced by information from credible sources (Wang, Scheinbaum, 2018).

Intention to visit

The decision to visit a place is partially based on a logical analysis of the costs and benefits of several different locations, obtained from outside information sources like e WOM (word of mouth) or traveler blogs (Chen et al., 2014). According to a study, E WOM positively affects visitor perceptions, travel intention, and destination image (Jalilvand, 2012). Travellers' perceptions to use the information to plan their trips were positively correlated with their opinions on user generated content (Ayeh, 2015).

Based on the literature analysis, our study assumes that entertainment value, informativeness value, and Source credibility in travel influencers' generated content can create a positive attitude among followers. Drawing on these assumptions, we develop the following hypotheses.

H1: Entertainment value has no significant impact on followers attitude towards travel influencers.

H2: Informativeness value has no significant impact on followers attitude towards travel influencers.

H3: Source credibility has no significant impact on followers attitude towards travel influencers.

H4: There is no significant relationship between followers attitude and intention to visit.

Figure 1. Proposed Research Model

Research Methodology

Research Design

A research design serves as the overall framework for a study, guiding the process of answering research questions. It encompasses elements such as the research philosophy, approach, strategy, time horizon as well as the methods and procedures employed (Upananda, Bandara 2022). This research is conducted based on deductive approach because, the study is focusing on an existing theory and model. The research strategy includes survey method of using questionnaire. The study adopts a cross sectional time horizon as data were collected at a single point in time.

Population and Sampling

The study population includes all social media users, who is a follower of any travel influencers on social media. The researcher used descriptive research with purposive sampling as the sampling tool to collect the data.

Data Collection Method

The study utilized both primary and secondary data. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data . It was prepared in Google forms and distributed through various online platforms. A total of 215 responses were received over a period of two months; after a through data screening 172 responses were found valid for final analysis. And secondary data were obtained from relevant scholarly articles, reports and previous research studies .

Questionnaire Design and Tools of Analysis

The researcher adapted existing scales to measure the variables such as Entertainment, Informativeness, Source credibility, Attitude and Visit Intention. All constructs are measured using a 5 point Likerts' scale. According to MacCallum et al. (1996) a sample of 150 - 200 gives adequate power (0.8) to detect model misspecification and test fit indices. Kline (2015) recommend a sample size of 100 - 200 for models with moderate complexity. AMOS uses maximum likelihood estimation with an assumption of multivariate normality and large sample size. However, a sample of 150-200 is generally accepted as sufficient for models with good indicator loadings and no missing data. Therefore, researchers used SPSS 21 and AMOS 26 for data analysis and model validation. The reliability values Cronbach alpha of all constructs were above 0.7 and this indicates that the construct reliability is pretty good.

Table 1. *Constructs and Measurements*

Constructs	Measurement Items	Reference
Entertainment	Travel Influencer's shared content are entertaining.	Blanco et al., 2010
	Travel Influencer's shared content are enjoyable.	
	Travel Influencer's shared content are pleasing.	
	Travel Influencer's shared content are exciting.	
Informativeness	Travel Influencers in social media are a good source for finding travel destinations.	Blanco et al., 2010
	Travel Influencers in social media gives a detailed review and information on different travel destinations.	
	I felt Travel Influencer always share authentic information.	
Source Credibility	I think the content shared by travel influencers are accurate.	Martins et al., 2018
	I think the content posted by travel influencers are reliable.	
	I think travel influencers will not share misleading content	
Attitude towards Travel Influencers	I continue to watch my favorite travel vloggers videos.	Acikgoz, Burnaz, 2021
	I continue to follow my favorite travel vlogger.	
	Seeing a sponsored content does not stop me to follow a travel influencer	

Constructs	Measurement Items	Reference
Visit intention	If I get the chance to travel, I intend to visit the destination mentioned in the travel influencer's posts.	Joyce, Han, 2022
	When I go on a trip, the chances that I visit the destination mentioned in the Travel Influencer's post is high.	

Source : previous literatures

Table 2. *Respondent Profile (n=172)*

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	67	39
Female	104	60.5
Prefer not to say	1	0.6
Age		
Below 25	67	39
25 – 34	101	58.7
35 44	4	2.3
Education		
SSLC	1	0.6
Plus Two	13	7.6
Graduate Degree	50	29.1
Post Graduate or Above	108	62.8
Marital Status		
Unmarried	119	69.2
Married	53	30.8
Occupation		
Student	73	42.4
Unemployed	10	5.8
Employed	70	40.7
Business	8	4.7
Professional	11	6.4

Source: Authors compilation

Results

Structural Equation Model

Notes for Model (Default model)

Computation of degrees of freedom (Default model)

Number of distinct sample moments: 120
Number of distinct parameters to be estimated: 45
Degrees of freedom (120 45):   75

Result (Default model)

Minimum was achieved
Chi square = 147.569
Degrees of freedom = 75
Probability level = .000

All required SEM assumptions were assessed and met. The data met the assumptions of normality and multicollinearity, supporting the suitability of dataset for analysis in AMOS. Structural equation modelling is used for analysing structural relationships between variables.. This approach combines component analysis and multiple regression analysis to investigate the structural relationship between latent constructs and measurable variables. Because it assesses the interrelated and many dependences in a single study, the researcher prefers this method. The suggested model's constructs were tested for expected relationships using a maximum likelihood estimation method with AMOS 26.0. The overall model achieves a good fit with Chi Square = 147.569, degrees of freedom = 75 and p value <0.001. The minimum discrepancy CMIN/DF = 1.968 is below the recommended threshold of 3.0, suggesting a good fit between the model and the data. The criteria for a goodness of fit model are follows, The **RMSEA** (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) is 0.075 with 90% confidence intervals ranging from 0.057 to 0.093, and a **PCLOSE** value of 0.013 suggests that the model is a good fit. RMR = 0.052, indicating a low residual value, GFI = 0.905, which is above the acceptable level of 0.90, reflecting a good fit. AGFI = 0.847, is slightly below the 0.90 threshold but still acceptable. The NFI (Normed Fit Index) of 0.897. The **CFI** (Comparative Fit Index) of 0.946 is above the recommended cutoff of 0.90, indicating excellent fit. The AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) and **BIC** (Bayesian Information Criterion) values are 237.569 and 379.206, respectively, which are useful for model comparison, with lower values indicating a better fit. IFI = 0.947 and TLI = 0.924 values close to 1 indicate a very good fit. The **HOELTER** index values of 112 at 0.05 and 124 at 0.01 suggest that the sample size is adequate for the model, providing confidence in the robustness of the fit.
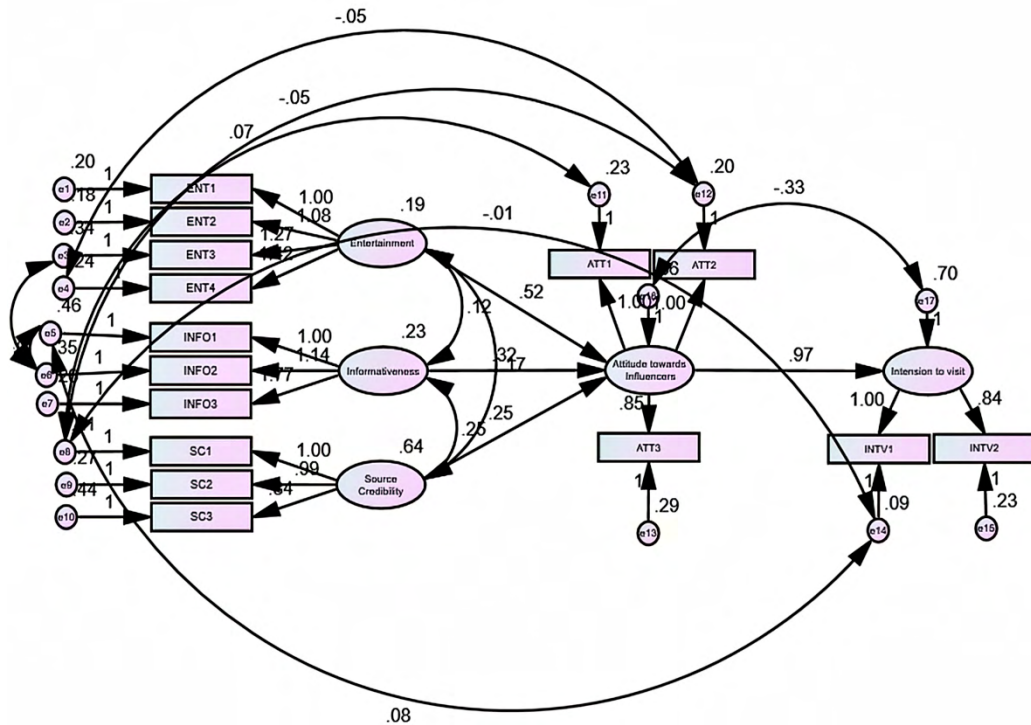
Fitted Structural Equation Model

Figure 2. Structural Equation Model

Table 3. *Goodness of Fit Summary for the Structural Model*

CMIN	NPAR	45
	CMIN	147.569
	DF	75
	P	0.000
	CMIN/DF	1.968
RMR, GFI	RMR	0.052
	GFI	0.905
	AGFI	0.847
	PGFI	0.565
Baseline Comparisons	NFI Delta1	0.897
	RFI rho1	0.856
	IFI Delta2	0.947
	TLI rho2	0.924
	CFI	0.946
Parsimony Adjusted Measures	PRATIO	0.714
	PNFI	0.641
	PCFI	0.675

NCP	NCP	72.569
	LO 90	41.888
	HI 90	111.042
FMIN	FMIN	0.863
	F0	0.424
	LO 90	0.245
	HI 90	0.649
RMSEA	RMSEA	0.075
	LO 90	0.057
	HI 90	0.093
	PCLOSE	0.013
AIC	AIC	237.569
	BCC	246.859
	BIC	379.206
	CAIC	424.206
ECVI	ECVI	1.389
	LO 90	1.210
	HI 90	1.614
	MECVI	1.444
HOELTER	0.05	112
	0.01	124

Source: Authors compilation

A Better model fit is indicated by decreasing values of the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), which goes from 0 to 1. A good model fit would be indicated by an RMSEA value of 0.05 or less. Additionally, a fair error of approximation would be indicated by an RMSEA value of 0.08 or below. The lower the Root Mean Square Residual (RMR), the better. A perfect match is indicated by an RMR of zero. Less than or equal to one is the GFI (Goodness of Fit Index). A perfect match is indicated by a value of 1, while a very good fit is shown by values near 1. The Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index, or AGFI, is less than or equal to 1 and considers the degrees of freedom available for evaluating the model. Comparative Fit Index (CFI): CFI is trimmed to fall between 0 and 1. A very excellent match is indicated by CFI values near 1. A very excellent fit is indicated by a TLI (Tucker Lewis Coefficient) of less than or equal to 1. A perfect fit is indicated by an IFI value of 1, while a very excellent fit is indicated by an IFI value of 1.

Table 4. *Standardized Regression Weights of the Structural Model*

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Attitude	<	Entertainment	0.520	0.144	3.609	***
Attitude	<	Informativeness	0.318	0.157	2.025	0.043
Attitude	<	Source credibility	0.254	0.085	2.974	0.003
Intention	<	Attitude	0.968	0.160	6.038	***
ENT1	<	Entertainment	1.000			

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
ENT2	<	Entertainment	1.078	0.128	8.396	***
ENT3	<	Entertainment	1.273	0.160	7.941	***
ENT4	<	Entertainment	1.424	0.163	8.747	***
ATT1	<	Attitude	1.000			
ATT2	<	Attitude	0.996	0.077	12.920	***
ATT3	<	Attitude	0.851	0.075	11.377	***
INTV1	<	Intention	1.000			
INTV2	<	Intention	0.841	0.092	9.163	***
INFO1	<	Informativeness	1.000			
INFO2	<	Informativeness	1.138	0.142	8.033	***
INFO3	<	Informativeness	1.772	0.271	6.543	***
SC1	<	Source credibility	1.000			
SC2	<	Source credibility	0.988	0.080	12.296	***
SC3	<	Source credibility	0.839	0.082	10.181	***

Source: Authors compilation

The table provides a summary of the regression weights for a structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis. Each entry shows the relationship between latent variables and their observed indicators, as well as between latent variables themselves.

Intention is significantly influenced by **Attitude** with a positive regression weight of 0.968 (S.E. = 0.160, C.R. = 6.038, p < 0.001), indicating that higher levels of **Attitude** lead to higher levels of **Intention**. Also, the influence of **Entertainment**, **Informativeness**, and **Source credibility** on **Attitude** appears positive regression. **Entertainment** has a positive regression weight 0.520 and statistically significant effect on **Attitude** (S.E. = 0.144, C.R. = 3.609, p <0.001), suggesting there is a positive impact. Similarly, **Informativeness** have positive and significant effects on **Attitude** (0.318, S.E. = 0.157, C.R. = 2.025, p = 0.043) and for **Source credibility** the regression weight is 0.254, S.E. = 0.085, C.R. = 2.974, p = 0.003. Indicating that these variables are significantly affect **Attitude towards Influencers** in the model.

Entertainment is represented by four indicators: **ENT1** through **ENT4**, each with significant loadings. **ENT2** has a loading of 1.078 (S.E. = 0.128, C.R. = 8.396, p < 0.001), **ENT3** has a loading of 1.273 (S.E. = 0.160, C.R. = 7.941, p < 0.001), and **ENT4** has a loading of 1.424 (S.E. = 0.163, C.R. = 8.747, p < 0.001), all of which are significantly different from zero, indicating strong and positive measurement relationships. With substantial loadings of 0.996 (S.E. = 0.077, C.R. = 12.920, p < 0.001) and 0.851 (S.E. = 0.075, C.R. = 11.377, p < 0.001), ATT1, ATT2, and ATT3 reflect the **Attitude** latent variable, suggesting that these indicators accurately measure Attitude.

Similarly, INFO1, INFO2, and INFO3 assess **Informativeness**. They exhibit strong correlations with significant loadings of 1.138 (S.E. = 0.142, C.R. = 8.033, p < 0.001) and 1.772 (S.E. = 0.271, C.R. = 6.543, p < 0.001). A robust measurement fit is confirmed by the substantial loadings of 0.839 (S.E. = 0.082, C.R. = 10.181, p < 0.001) and 0.988 (S.E. = 0.080, C.R. = 12.296, p < 0.001) for the source, which is measured by SC1, SC2, and SC3

Lastly, **Intention** is measured by **INTV1** and **INTV2**, with significant loadings of 0.841 (S.E. = 0.092, C.R. = 9.163, p < 0.001), confirming that these indicators effectively capture **Intention**.

In summary, while **Attitude** significantly influences **Intention**, its relationships with **Entertainment**, **Informativeness**, and **Source credibility** is also significant. The indicators

for each latent variable show strong and significant loadings, validating their measurement within the model. These results indicate that entertainment, informativeness and source credibility have significant impact on followers attitude. Thus, they can create an impact on the visit intention of followers.

Table 5. *Covariances between Latent Constructs and Residuals in the Structural Model*

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Entertainment	↔	Informativeness	0.116	0.028	4.206	***
Informativeness	↔	Source credibility	0.249	0.052	4.822	***
Entertainment	↔	Source credibility	0.166	0.037	4.509	***
e3	↔	e6	0.095	0.029	3.263	0.001
e4	↔	e12	0.054	0.024	2.253	0.024
e6	↔	e5	0.136	0.039	3.445	***
e11	↔	e8	0.066	0.03	2.205	0.027
e12	↔	e8	0.053	0.028	1.895	0.058
e14	↔	e5	0.083	0.027	3.123	0.002
e14	↔	e8	0.008	0.022	0.369	0.712
e17	↔	e16	0.331	0.084	3.957	***

Source: Authors compilation

The table presents the covariances between various pairs of latent variables and residuals in a structural equation modeling (SEM) framework. Covariance estimates reveal the extent to which two variables vary together, which provides insight into their relationships and potential associations beyond direct effects.

Entertainment ↔ Informativeness: The estimates of the covariance between the two variables are 0.116, with a critical ratio (C.R.) of 4.206 ($p < 0.001$) and a standard error (S.E.) of 0.028. A somewhat positive association between entertainment and informativeness is indicated by this positive and statistically significant covariance, which implies that when one level rises, so does the other.

Informativeness ↔ Source credibility: The estimates of the covariance between Informativeness and Source credibility are 0.249, with a critical ratio of 4.822 ($p < 0.001$) and a standard error of 0.052. This positive and significant correlation implies that Source credibility and Informativeness both have a tendency to move together, suggesting that these categories are positively associated.

Entertainment ↔ Source credibility: The crucial ratio is 4.509 ($p < 0.001$), the covariance between Entertainment and Source is 0.166, and the standard error is 0.037. Higher levels of Source credibility are linked to higher levels of Entertainment, suggesting that these two categories tend to rise together, according to this strong positive correlation.

Table 6. *Variances between Latent Construct and Residuals in the Structural Model*

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Entertainment	0.19	0.039	4.862	***
Informativeness	0.227	0.062	3.655	***
Source credibility	0.639	0.094	6.794	***
e1	0.198	0.026	7.581	***
e2	0.182	0.026	7.122	***
e3	0.344	0.045	7.695	***
e4	0.241	0.038	6.376	***
e5	0.458	0.057	8.068	***
e6	0.345	0.048	7.171	***
e7	0.264	0.077	3.45	***
e8	0.207	0.042	4.917	***
e9	0.267	0.045	5.993	***
e10	0.439	0.055	7.97	***
e11	0.228	0.039	5.785	***
e12	0.203	0.038	5.348	***
e13	0.29	0.039	7.372	***
e14	0.086	0.058	1.486	0.137
e15	0.234	0.047	4.947	***
e16	0.357	0.059	6.007	***
e17	0.704	0.15	4.681	***

Source: Authors compilation

The table presents variances for both latent variables and residuals in a structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis, offering insights into the dispersion and significance of these constructs. **Entertainment** has a variance of 0.190 (S.E. = 0.039, C.R. = 4.862, p < 0.001), indicating substantial variability, which reflects its diverse influence on observed indicators. **Informativeness** exhibits a variance of 0.227 (S.E. = 0.062, C.R. = 3.655, p < 0.001), which is significant and highlighting its relatively modest variability. **Source credibility** has the highest variance among the latent variables at 0.639 (S.E. = 0.094, C.R. = 6.794, p < 0.001), demonstrating a high level of variability and impact.

Regarding residuals, which represent the unexplained variance in the indicators after accounting for latent variables, **e1** to **e13** show significant variances, are 0.198, 0.182, 0.344, 0.241, 0.458, 0.345, 0.264, 0.207, 0.267, 0.439, 0.228, 0.203 and 0.290 respectively, with all estimates having high p value <0.001, indicating that these residuals capture substantial amounts of unexplained variance. Notably, **e14** has a variance of 0.086 (S.E. = 0.058, C.R. = 1.486, p = 0.137), which is not statistically significant, suggesting minimal unexplained variance or potential issues with the measurement of this residual. **e15** has a variance of 0.234 (S.E. = 0.047, C.R. = 4.947, p <0.001), which is not statistically significant. **e16** has a variance of 0.357 (S.E. = 0.059, C.R. = 6.007, p <0.001), which is not statistically significant. In contrast, **e17** has the highest residual variance at 0.704 (S.E. = 0.150, C.R. = 4.681, p < 0.001), indicating a significant amount of unexplained variance. This comprehensive view of variances sheds light on the distribution of variability within both latent constructs and residuals, helping to understand the models' fit and the extent of unexplained variance in the SEM analysis.

Discussion

The study is being conducted to identify the various factors attracting consumers towards travel influencers on social media. The study's demographic research reveals that the younger demographics – primarily those who between the ages of 25 and 34 (58.7%) are highly influenced by travel influencers. Additionally, most respondent are females (60.5%), majority (69.2%) are unmarried and 62.8% are with a high level of education. These numbers indicate that female followers of travel influencers are younger and better educated individuals. Credibility of the influencer.

Table 7. *Results of Path Relationships*

Hypothesis	Variable Relationship	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
H1	Entertainment > Attitude	0.52	0.144	3.609	***	Supported
H2	Informativeness > Attitude	0.318	0.157	2.025	0.043	Supported
H3	Source credibility > Attitude	0.254	0.085	2.974	0.003	Supported
H4	Attitude > Intention	0.968	0.16	6.038	***	Supported

Source: Authors compilation

Table 7 shows a brief summary of major hypothesis tested in the study. It explains that Entertainment value has a significant impact on followers attitude (β = 0.520, p≤ 0.000). Information values shared by influencers positively affects followers attitude (β = 0.318, p≤0.043). If the credibility of the influencer is higher it leads a positive attitude among followers (β = 0.254, p≤ 0.003). A positive attitude towards travel influencers increases the intention to visit the place recommended by them (β = 0.968, p ≤0.000). Previous literatures states that entertainment and informativeness in the advertising content have a significant impact on consumer behaviour (Wu et al., 2020; Mrtin, 2023). The results of the current study aligns with previous literatures stating that entertainment and informativeness has a significant effect on followers' attitude. Influencers' have to be credible in order to attract their followers' (Kim et.al, 2018). A research conducted by Nam and Dan (2018) states that influencers who are perceived as credible has the power to influence their follwers attitude and purchase intention. Similarly, current study confirmed that credibility of travel influencers highly influences followers' attitude and visit intention.

Overall, this study proves that the three independent varibles Entertainment, Informativeness and Source credibility hava a significant impact on followers attitude towards travel influencers and then creates an intention to travel to the destination recommended by the influencers which supports the findings of previous literatures (Filieri, Mcleay, 2013; Abbasi et al, 2022).

Practical and theoretical implications

This study seeks to explore a recent topic under the area of tourism marketing. As mentioned in the Theoretical framework, Ducoffes' Advertising Value model and Source Credibility Theory was guided to identify the independent variables of the study. Two variables – entertainment and informativeness was taken from Ducoffes' Advertising Value Model and source credibility from Source Credibility Theory. The study conceptualises a new model for analysing impact of travel influencer on followers' visit intention. The model get validated and added to

existing literature. The results of the study proves that these variables positively affects consumers attitude towards travel influencers on social media. Thus, current study offer valuable insights to the existing literature by identifying followers attitude towards travel influencers within the framework of Advertising Value Model and Source Credibility Theory. Researchers can include this theory and model in influencer marketing studies.

The findings of the study will help destination marketers and tourism operators to use influencer marketing as a powerful tool in promoting travel and tourism. Since, source credibility of the influencer have a significant impact on followers' attitude, destinations marketers should kept in mind that whether the selected influencers are credible or not. Also selecting an influencer who provide entertaining and informative content will helps to achieve target audience. Travel influencers can also derive practical implications from this study. They should carefully considered the three factors credibility,entertainment and informativeness when designing a promotional content to enhance audience engagement.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study is subject to some limitations that guides future research directions. The study employed a limited sample of respondents, further research can be focused with large sample size.The current study considered only three factors affecting followers attitude towards travel influencers. Future researchers can add more factors and expand the current research model. The study considered only travel influencers, there exist different categories of influencers on social media. So future research can apply this model to other category of influencers. This study examines the demographic profile of the respondents but not studied their moderating role in the research model. Therefore, further studies can be conducted using demographic variable as moderators in this conceptual model. Reseachers consider only two variables from Ducoffes' Advertising Value model, there is one more variable called 'irritation' which was not studied in this research. This can be studied to identify the negative effect of influencer marketing. Last but not least, this research has focused on visit intention of followers but not studied their actual behaviour and satisfaction on influencers' recommendations. Thus, it would be very useful contribution to the literature, if the study focus on followers behavioural outcomes and satisfaction level.

Conclusion

Travel influencers has a prominent role in social media which in turn creates a positive impact on the tourism industry. There exist several factors that attract followers towards travel influencers. The current study considered three important factors – entertainment, informativeness and source credibility, which influences followers attitude. This study is theoretically grounded in Ducoffes' Advertising Value Model and Source Credibility Theory, which together offer a robust framework for understanding followers attitude towards travel influencers. Our research developed a new conceptual model integrating factors influencing followers towards travel influencers and their impact on follower attitude and visit intention. Based on a sample of 172 respondents, we statistically proved that entertainment, informativeness and source credibility has significant positive impact on followers attitude and thus creates a positive intention to visit the destination recommended by travel influencers. Among these fac-

tors source credibility was found as the most significant factor followed by entertainment and informativeness. This research contributes to the existing body of literature by identifying three important fators that influence followers attitude towards travel influencers and their effect on visit intention. Because of the growing popularity of social media marketing, the role of social media influencers in varius promotional campaigns is becoming increasingly significant. Therefore, this study offers valuable insights for tourism marketers seeking innovative and effective marketing strategies.

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