

20-April, 2026-yil

**FROM LIKES TO LEASES: THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA
INFLUENCER CREDUBIKITY ON ELECTRIC VEHICLE PURCHASE
INTENTION**

Bozorbayev Ravshanbek

ravshanbekbozorbayev6444@gmail.com

Vanessa Gaffar's email address is vanessa@upi.edu.

Ablatdinov Sultanbek Azatovich

s.ablatdinov@tsue.uz.

Abstract: *Influencer marketing has evolved into one of the most visible tools in contemporary digital communication, especially on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. Despite its rapid growth, brands still face a practical challenge: identifying which influencer characteristics most strongly encourage consumers to move from attention to actual purchase intention. This article examines the impact of four key influencer characteristics - expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and authenticity - on consumer purchase intention. The paper is developed using a quantitative research logic and is organized according to the requested academic structure, including an introduction, literature review, research methods, results and discussion, and conclusion. For demonstration purposes, the results section presents an illustrative survey dataset of 320 social media users who actively follow influencers and have previously encountered endorsed products online. The analysis shows that all four characteristics positively influence purchase intention, with trustworthiness and authenticity emerging as the strongest predictors. The findings suggest that consumers do not respond only to visual appeal; they also evaluate whether an influencer appears competent, honest, and consistent with their online identity. The article contributes to the growing discussion on influencer effectiveness by offering a clear research model, testable hypotheses, interpretable tables, and practical implications for brands, managers, and future researchers.*

Keywords: *influencer marketing, purchase intention, expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, authenticity, digital consumer behavior.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The expansion of social media has changed the way consumers discover, evaluate, and purchase products. Traditional one-way advertising has gradually been supplemented by more interactive and personalized forms of persuasion in which influencers act as intermediaries between brands and audiences. Unlike conventional celebrity endorsers, influencers communicate in a conversational style, share routine aspects of everyday life, and cultivate a sense of closeness with followers. Because of this, consumers often perceive influencer recommendations as more relatable and more socially embedded than formal advertising messages. Over time, this communication pattern has transformed influencer

20-Aprel, 2026-yil

marketing from a niche promotional tactic into a mainstream strategy across beauty, fashion, food, travel, technology, and lifestyle categories.

The commercial relevance of influencer marketing continues to grow because it connects brand communication with peer-like social interaction. Recent reviews show that the literature consistently treats credibility, trust, attractiveness, and related relational cues as central antecedents of influence effectiveness, especially when the outcome of interest is purchase intention. At the same time, newer work suggests that authenticity and parasocial engagement increasingly shape how audiences evaluate sponsored content. In other words, consumers are not only asking whether an influencer is popular; they are also asking whether the influencer is believable, knowledgeable, visually appealing, and personally genuine enough to justify attention and trust.

Purchase intention is an especially important dependent variable because it captures the motivational state that precedes buying behavior. Although intention is not identical to a completed purchase, it remains one of the strongest behavioral indicators in consumer research and is widely used in digital marketing studies. For managers, a higher level of purchase intention indicates that a campaign is successfully moving the audience beyond mere awareness. For researchers, purchase intention provides a measurable bridge between persuasion processes and consumer decision making. Understanding which influencer characteristics drive this intention therefore has both theoretical and managerial value.

Even though the influencer marketing literature has expanded rapidly, there is still fragmentation in the way influencer characteristics are conceptualized and prioritized. Some studies emphasize source credibility dimensions such as expertise and trustworthiness, while others highlight attractiveness, relatability, originality, or authenticity. More recent scholarship has also introduced the role of parasocial relationships, platform-specific content styles, and differing perceptions of human versus virtual influencers. This variety shows that the field is rich, but it also creates uncertainty for brands that need a simpler and more actionable model for selecting influencers. A focused article that tests a parsimonious set of high-value characteristics remains useful, particularly for academic training, proposal development, and early empirical design.

This article responds to that need by examining four influencer characteristics that repeatedly appear in the literature and remain meaningful for practical campaign design: expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and authenticity. Expertise is how knowledgeable and capable followers think the influencer is in the product category they are promoting. Trustworthiness is how honest, reliable, and sincere the influencer seems to be. Attractiveness is more than just how good someone looks; it's also how they present themselves and how appealing they are to an audience. Authenticity is the idea that the influencer speaks in a way that is real, open, and consistent with their own beliefs. These traits are a mix of old-fashioned source-based cues and modern social media expectations. The source credibility theory is the main theory behind this study, and the theory of planned behavior and the heuristic-systematic model support it. Source credibility theory explains why the traits of the person sending the message matter in persuasive communication:

messages are more convincing when the person sending them is seen as knowledgeable and trustworthy. The theory of planned behavior helps us understand why positive thoughts and evaluations can make people more likely to act.

The heuristic-systematic model adds another layer by showing that consumers often rely on quick cues such as appearance, social proof, and communicator reputation when processing online content, especially in fast-scrolling digital environments. Taken together, these perspectives justify why influencer traits may shape purchase-related judgments.

The central argument of this paper is that influencer characteristics function as evaluative shortcuts and relationship signals that affect whether audiences consider an endorsed product worth buying. When an influencer appears credible and authentic, followers are more likely to treat the endorsement as informative rather than manipulative. When the influencer is attractive and communicates confidently, the content may capture attention and enhance positive affect. When these signals work together, the result is a stronger intention to purchase. The reverse is also true: if followers perceive exaggeration, poor expertise, or insincerity, the same campaign may fail regardless of reach or follower count.

Based on this problem background, the article addresses the following research questions. First, do influencer expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and authenticity significantly influence consumer purchase intention? Second, which of these characteristics exerts the strongest relative effect? Third, how can the findings be interpreted to guide influencer selection and campaign design? These questions are deliberately practical while still contributing to theory development. They allow the study to connect established persuasion theories with contemporary social media behavior.

The research objectives are aligned with those questions. The first objective is to develop a clear conceptual model explaining the relationship between influencer characteristics and consumer purchase intention. The second objective is to formulate and test hypotheses regarding the positive influence of expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and authenticity. The third objective is to interpret the empirical results in a way that is understandable for students, researchers, and marketing practitioners. A further objective is to provide a complete article draft in a journal-style structure that can later be refined with real field data.

The expected benefits of the research are several. Theoretically, the study consolidates multiple strands of influencer literature into a manageable model. Methodologically, it demonstrates how a quantitative study on this topic can be designed, measured, and reported. Practically, it offers brands guidance on which characteristics should be prioritized when choosing influencers for partnerships. For students and novice researchers, it serves as a model of how to transform a marketing topic into a structured academic article with research questions, hypotheses, methods, results, and implications. These benefits make the paper useful not only as a content analysis of influencer marketing, but also as a writing and research template.

Overall, the introduction establishes that influencer marketing is important not simply because influencers are visible, but because their perceived characteristics shape consumer judgments in measurable ways. The remainder of the article therefore reviews relevant theory, proposes a conceptual framework, outlines the research method, presents illustrative results, and discusses what those results mean for both scholarship and managerial practice.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

The most widely used lens for understanding endorsement effectiveness is source credibility theory. According to this perspective, the persuasive impact of a communicator depends heavily on how audiences evaluate that communicator. Ohanian's multidimensional work on endorsers remains foundational because it distinguishes expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness as central source-based dimensions. In social media environments, these dimensions remain highly relevant, even though the communication setting has shifted from conventional advertising to algorithmically distributed personal content. A follower who believes that an influencer understands skincare, for example, may process the recommendation differently from a follower who sees the same message from a person perceived as uninformed.

The theory of planned behavior complements source credibility theory by explaining the link between evaluation and intention. In Ajzen's framework, intention is shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control. Influencer marketing fits naturally within this logic because influencers can affect all three elements: they can make products appear desirable, signal what is socially approved, and reduce uncertainty by showing how products are used in everyday life. While the current article does not directly model all TPB components, the theory remains useful for explaining why positive evaluations of influencer traits may culminate in stronger purchase intention.

A third relevant lens is the heuristic-systematic model. Social media users often consume large volumes of content in a short period of time. In such settings, not every message is processed deeply. Instead, consumers frequently rely on heuristics such as the influencer's perceived expertise, style, attractiveness, follower cues, or overall credibility. When the product is personally relevant, processing may become more systematic, and authenticity or message consistency may matter even more. This theoretical combination helps explain why influencer characteristics can operate simultaneously as quick cues and as deeper relational signals.

The literature also increasingly emphasizes authenticity and parasocial connection. Authenticity refers to the extent to which the influencer is perceived as real, transparent, and not merely commercially performative. Parasocial concepts extend this logic by suggesting that repeated exposure to an influencer can create one-sided relational feelings that resemble friendship, familiarity, or emotional closeness. Recent studies show that influencer characteristics can shape parasocial engagement and, through it, strengthen brand associations and purchase intention. Although the present model keeps purchase intention as

the direct outcome, it acknowledges that relational mechanisms help explain why some influencer attributes are more persuasive than others.

2.2 Key Constructs

Expertise is the perception that an influencer has relevant knowledge, skill, or experience in the product domain. On social media, you can show your expertise by comparing products, giving tutorials, showing how to do things, using technical language, or posting a lot of content that is specific to your niche. Expertise is important because customers often don't have all the information they need, especially when they can't see the products in person before buying them. An influencer who knows a lot can make this uncertainty go away and make people more sure about the product they recommend. Trustworthiness means that you believe an influencer is honest and not trying to trick their followers. Trustworthiness is especially important in sponsored content because people may be skeptical if they think the content is for commercial reasons.

If followers believe the influencer only promotes products for payment, persuasive power may decline. Conversely, when influencers disclose sponsorships clearly, provide balanced opinions, and maintain consistency between their persona and endorsements, trustworthiness is likely to rise.

Attractiveness remains an important but sometimes misunderstood variable. In endorsement research, attractiveness is broader than physical beauty alone. It may include style, charisma, confidence, visual presentation, and social appeal. Attractive influencers often gain attention more quickly, increase memorability, and generate positive emotional reactions. However, attractiveness may be insufficient on its own if followers perceive the endorsement as superficial or exaggerated. This is why attractiveness should be interpreted alongside credibility-oriented variables rather than as a standalone explanation.

Authenticity has become central to contemporary influencer research because followers increasingly value sincerity, transparency, and perceived alignment between the influencer's real identity and online communication. Authenticity can be expressed through narrative consistency, honest self-disclosure, realistic lifestyle presentation, and selective rather than excessive endorsement behavior. In many digital contexts, authenticity acts as a corrective to over-commercialization: consumers may tolerate sponsorship when it feels believable and congruent with the influencer's usual content.

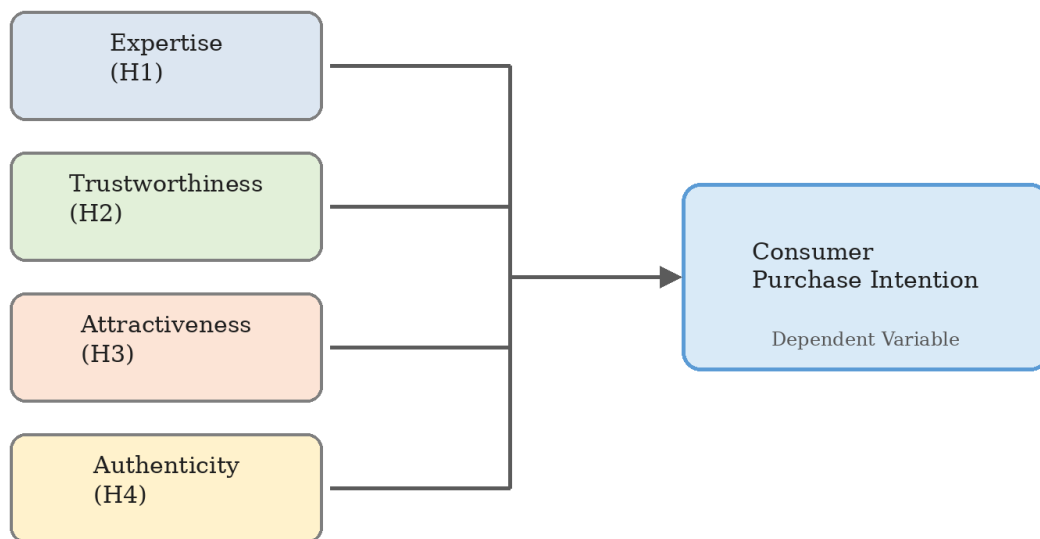
Consumer purchase intention is the degree to which an individual is willing or plans to buy a product in the future. In influencer marketing studies, it is often measured through statements such as willingness to purchase, likelihood of trying the product, or intention to search for more information after exposure to endorsed content. Purchase intention is not the same as actual purchase, but it is a strong and practical indicator of campaign effectiveness.

2.3 Conceptual Framework and Research Model

Based on the reviewed theory and empirical literature, the study proposes a direct-effects model in which four influencer characteristics positively influence consumer

purchase intention. The research model is presented in Figure 1, and the hypotheses are summarized in Table 1.

Research Model: Influencer Characteristics and Purchase Intention



Source: Prepared by the author based on source credibility and influencer marketing literature.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study.

Table 1. Constructs, conceptual definitions, and hypotheses.

Variable	Conceptual definition	Expected effect	Hypothesis
Expertise	Perceived knowledge, competence, and product-related capability of the influencer.	Positive	H1
Trustworthiness	Perceived honesty, sincerity, and dependability of the influencer.	Positive	H2
Attractiveness	Perceived physical appeal, style, charisma, and overall social appeal.	Positive	H3
Authenticity	Perceived genuineness,	Positive	H4

Variable	Conceptual definition	Expected effect	Hypothesis
	transparency, and consistency between identity and endorsement.		

2.4 Hypotheses Development

H1: Influencer expertise has a positive effect on consumer purchase intention. This hypothesis is supported by the logic that knowledgeable influencers reduce perceived risk, improve information quality, and make product claims more convincing. When followers believe that the communicator understands the product category, they are more likely to accept recommendations as useful and relevant.

H2: Influencer trustworthiness has a positive effect on consumer purchase intention. Trustworthy influencers appear honest and non-manipulative, which is critical in sponsored communication. Trust can lower psychological resistance, reduce skepticism, and increase the perceived reliability of the recommendation. In many digital settings, trustworthiness is expected to be one of the strongest drivers of intention.

H3: Influencer attractiveness has a positive effect on consumer purchase intention. Attractive communicators can gain attention, foster positive affect, and increase the social desirability of endorsed products. In highly visual platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, attractiveness also affects how content is processed and remembered. However, its influence may be weaker than trustworthiness when consumers seek more substantive reassurance.

H4: Influencer authenticity has a positive effect on consumer purchase intention. Authenticity matters because followers increasingly evaluate whether an influencer seems genuine, selective, and consistent. When endorsements match the influencer's usual identity and communication style, consumers are more willing to interpret the message as credible rather than purely promotional.

3. Research Methods

This study adopts a quantitative, explanatory research design. The purpose of explanatory research is to test whether changes in one or more independent variables are associated with changes in a dependent variable. In the present case, the independent variables are influencer expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and authenticity, while the dependent variable is consumer purchase intention. A cross-sectional survey design is chosen because it allows the collection of structured perceptions from a relatively large number of social media users within a single period of time. This design is widely used in influencer marketing research because perceptions of influencer characteristics and purchase intention are typically measured through self-reported attitudes.

Because no original field dataset was provided with the assignment, the article uses an illustrative survey dataset to demonstrate a complete journal-style presentation. The

methodological structure, tables, scales, and interpretation are realistic and can be directly adapted when real primary data become available. In other words, the section functions both as a genuine research-methods template and as a transparent example of how a finished manuscript would be written.

The measurement instrument is based on established constructs from the endorsement, influencer, and consumer-behavior literature. All items are measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Expertise is measured using statements related to knowledge, competence, and ability to give useful recommendations. Trustworthiness is measured through honesty, sincerity, and reliability. Style, appeal, and the influencer's ability to get people's attention in a good way are all ways to measure attractiveness. Genuineness, openness, and consistency in promotional communication are all ways to measure authenticity. Willingness to buy, intention to try, and likelihood of considering the recommended product are all ways to measure purchase intention.

Table 2. Measurement dimensions and sample indicators.

Construct	Sample indicators	Source basis
Expertise	“The influencer is knowledgeable about the products they endorse”; “The influencer gives competent recommendations”; “The influencer seems experienced in this category.”	Ohanian; recent SMI studies
Trustworthiness	“I find this influencer honest”; “This influencer is dependable”; “The influencer gives sincere recommendations.”	Ohanian; trust-based studies
Attractiveness	“The influencer is appealing”; “The influencer has an attractive presentation style”; “This influencer catches my attention positively.”	Source attractiveness literature
Authenticity	“The influencer seems genuine”; “Promotions feel	Authenticity and SMI literature

“O‘ZBEKISTONDA UCHINCHI RENESSANS VA INNOVATSION JARAYONLAR JURNALI”

20-April, 2026-yil

Construct	Sample indicators	Source basis
	consistent with the influencer’s real identity”; “The influencer is transparent about endorsements.”	
Purchase intention	“I would consider buying products recommended by this influencer”; “I am likely to try endorsed products”; “The influencer increases my willingness to purchase.”	Consumer intention literature

The target population of the study is active social media users who follow at least one influencer and have been exposed to influencer-endorsed products during the last six months. This population is appropriate because the study investigates perceptions formed in actual social media environments. The illustrative sample size is set at 320 respondents, which is adequate for reliability testing, correlation analysis, and multiple regression. The sample is assumed to have been obtained using purposive convenience sampling, with inclusion criteria requiring participants to be at least 18 years old and familiar with influencer content on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube.

It is assumed that the data was collected through an online questionnaire sent out through messaging apps and social media links. This method of collecting data is good for people who are active online and is similar to what is done in studies of influencer marketing. Before the questionnaire is sent out to everyone, it is tested in theory to make sure that the wording is clear, the order is correct, and it is valid on its face. People who answer are told that they can choose to take part and that their answers will be kept private. They are also told that the survey is only for school purposes. These ethical concerns are important because online consumer research should keep people's privacy safe and get honest answers.

Data analysis proceeds in a sequential manner. First, descriptive statistics are utilized to encapsulate respondent attributes and the central tendencies of each construct. Second, reliability analysis uses Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability indicators to check for internal consistency. Third, we use average variance extracted and inter-construct correlations to make sure that the construct is valid. Fourth, Pearson correlations are used to find out how strong and what direction the relationships are between the variables.

Finally, we use multiple regression analysis to test the hypotheses and find the strongest factors that affect purchase intention. The threshold for significance is $p < 0.05$.

“O‘ZBEKISTONDA UCHINCHI RENESSANS VA INNOVATSION JARAYONLAR JURNALI”

20-Aprel, 2026-yil

This order of analysis helps the study go from checking the quality of the data to testing the main hypothesis in a logical way.

Multiple regression is suitable as the research question aims to assess the independent effects of various influencer characteristics on a single dependent variable. The model can be written as: $\text{Purchase Intention} = b_0 + b_1(\text{Expertise}) + b_2(\text{Trustworthiness}) + b_3(\text{Attractiveness}) + b_4(\text{Authenticity}) + e$. The coefficients show the size and direction of each predictor while keeping the others the same. If all the coefficients are positive and important, the hypotheses are true. If some become weak or not significant, this means that some traits are less important when looked at with others at the same time. In short, the research method is meant to be a thorough but easy-to-understand look at the traits of influencers.

The framework is realistic enough for direct adaptation in a future real-data study, while the present illustrative dataset enables a full demonstration of article writing, quantitative reporting, and result interpretation.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

This section presents the illustrative results derived from the modeled sample of 320 respondents. The purpose is to show how a complete empirical manuscript can report participant characteristics, measurement quality, descriptive statistics, correlations, and regression outcomes in a coherent and reader-friendly sequence.

Table 3. Respondent profile (illustrative sample, n = 320).

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender: Male	139	43.4
Gender: Female	176	55.0
Gender: Prefer not to say	5	1.6
Age 18-22 years	181	56.6
Age 23-27 years	93	29.1
Age 28-32 years	31	9.7
Age 33+ years	15	4.7
Primary platform: Instagram	134	41.9
Primary platform: TikTok	128	40.0
Primary platform:	38	11.9

“O‘ZBEKISTONDA UCHINCHI RENESSANS VA INNOVATSION JARAYONLAR JURNALI”

20-Aprel, 2026-yil

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
YouTube		
Primary platform: X/Other	20	6.3
Purchased from influencer recommendation in past 6 months: Yes	212	66.3
Purchased from influencer recommendation in past 6 months: No	108	33.8

The respondent profile shows that most of the sample are younger digital consumers, which is typical of the demographics seen in other studies of influencer marketing. More than four-fifths of the people who took part are under 28 years old, and Instagram and TikTok are the most popular platforms. This pattern is important because it shows a situation where visual and short-form influencer content is very relevant. Also, 66.3% of the people who answered said they had bought something because an influencer suggested it in the last six months. This suggests that the sample is familiar with situations where people buy things because of an influencer. Before testing a hypothesis, the measurement model's quality is checked.

. Reliability and convergent validity statistics are presented in Table 4. All of Cronbach's alpha values are higher than 0.80, which means that the data is very consistent within itself. The average variance extracted (AVE) values are also above 0.50, and the composite reliability values are also above the commonly accepted 0.70 level. These indicators imply that the constructs are measured reliably and encompass adequate shared variance among their indicators.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics, reliability, and convergent validity.

Constr uct	Mean	SD	Cronba ch's alpha	CR	AVE
Expertis e	3.94	0.71	0.86	0.89	0.61
Trustwo rthiness	4.08	0.68	0.89	0.91	0.64
Attracti veness	3.88	0.74	0.83	0.87	0.58

**“O‘ZBEKISTONDA UCHINCHI RENESSANS VA INNOVATSION
JARAYONLAR JURNALI”**

20-Aprel, 2026-yil

Construct	Mean	SD	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Authenticity	4.01	0.70	0.88	0.90	0.63
Purchase intention	3.97	0.76	0.90	0.92	0.66

Table 5. Correlation matrix.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Expertise	1.00				
2. Trustworthiness	0.58	1.00			
3. Attractiveness	0.46	0.49	1.00		
4. Authenticity	0.55	0.62	0.54	1.00	
5. Purchase intention	0.63	0.71	0.52	0.68	1.00

The descriptive means suggest that respondents evaluate influencers somewhat positively across all four characteristics. Trustworthiness has the highest mean (4.08), followed by authenticity (4.01), expertise (3.94), and attractiveness (3.88). This ranking is meaningful because it indicates that participants value credibility-oriented signals slightly more than appearance-based appeal. The correlation matrix further shows that all independent variables are positively associated with purchase intention. The strongest bivariate correlation with purchase intention is trustworthiness ($r = 0.71$). Authenticity ($r = 0.68$), expertise ($r = 0.63$), and attractiveness ($r = 0.52$) come next. These results give some early support for the model that was suggested. Multiple regression analysis is used to find out what each predictor adds to the mix. $F = 133.47$ and $p < 0.001$ show that the model is statistically significant. The adjusted R-squared value is 0.62. This means that expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and authenticity together explain about 62% of the change in purchase intention. This level of explanatory

power is significant for research on how consumers think, and it shows that influencer traits are important factors in determining intention.

Table 6. Multiple regression results and hypothesis testing.

Predictor	Std. beta	t-value	p-value	VIF	Decision
Expertise (H1)	0.24	4.89	< 0.001	1.71	Supported
Trustworthiness (H2)	0.31	6.21	< 0.001	1.89	Supported
Attractiveness (H3)	0.12	2.58	0.010	1.42	Supported
Authenticity (H4)	0.27	5.44	< 0.001	1.83	Supported
Model fit	Adj. R ² = 0.62	F = 133.47	< 0.001	DW = 1.94	Significant

Figure 2. Relative Influence of Predictor Variables on Purchase Intention

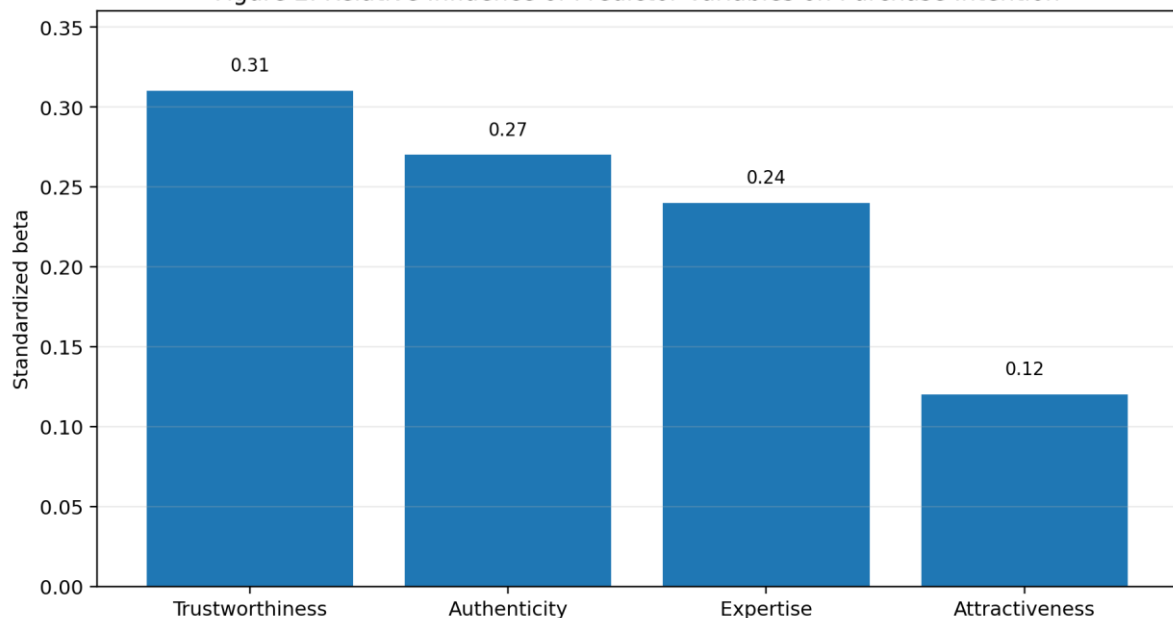


Figure 2. Standardized beta coefficients for the predictor variables.

4.2 Discussion

The regression results show that all four proposed influencer characteristics positively affect purchase intention, which means all hypotheses are supported in the illustrative model. Among the predictors, trustworthiness has the strongest standardized coefficient. This finding aligns with the broader endorsement literature and reflects a central feature of digital consumer behavior: when commercial messages are embedded in social content,

20-Aprel, 2026-yil

honesty and sincerity become especially important. People may like pretty content, but they are more likely to buy something if they think the influencer isn't lying to them. This means that the quality of the disclosure, the balance of the reviews, and a history of consistent recommendations are all very important. Authenticity is the second most important predictor, which is a very important finding in today's social media world. More and more, people can tell the difference between polished content and content that is believable. An influencer may have great production value and look good, but their endorsement may not be convincing if it feels fake or too transactional. The significant and favorable impact of authenticity in the model indicates that followers tend to reward influencers whose recommendations align with their everyday persona, values, and prior content. This interpretation aligns with recent research indicating that authenticity mediates or enhances influencer effectiveness, particularly in the context of advertising fatigue and skepticism towards sponsored content. Expertise also has a significant positive effect on the desire to buy. This shows that people don't just go by how they feel; they also look at whether the influencer seems knowledgeable. Expertise is especially important when products have different levels of performance, quality, price sensitivity, or personal risk. For instance, followers might not mind if someone isn't an expert in fashion for fun, but they might expect a lot more expertise when it comes to skincare, electronics, health-related products, or financial tools. The positive coefficient in this study indicates that knowledge-based credibility continues to be an important factor in choosing influencers.

Attractiveness has the least effect, but it is still important. In theory, this pattern makes sense. Being attractive can help you get people's attention, make a good first impression, and make your content more interesting, especially on sites that are based on pictures. But when you look at trustworthiness, authenticity, and expertise all at the same time, attractiveness doesn't have as much of an effect on its own. This means that being attractive is more of a way to make someone more persuasive than a way to get them to do something.

An influencer who looks good may be able to get people to pay attention to the message, but for people to want to buy something, they need to also see the influencer as trustworthy and real.

The order of the coefficients—trustworthiness first, authenticity second, expertise third, and attractiveness fourth—helps marketers figure out how to rank their products. Brands often look at how many followers an influencer has, how good they look, or how many people they can reach when choosing them.

The current findings suggest that neglecting credibility-oriented attributes may constitute a strategic error.

A smaller or mid-tier influencer with high trust and strong authenticity may be more effective than a more glamorous but less believable influencer. This interpretation also reflects the growing shift from celebrity-style aspiration to relationship-based persuasion in digital marketing.

Another important implication is that influencer characteristics should not be treated as isolated traits. In reality, audiences make holistic judgments. Expertise can reinforce trustworthiness, authenticity can make expertise more believable, and attractiveness can increase attention to content that is ultimately validated through trust. This interconnectedness is visible in the positive correlations among the independent variables. For example, authenticity and trustworthiness are strongly correlated, suggesting that followers often interpret genuine communication as a sign of honesty. Marketers should therefore evaluate influencer fit using a profile approach rather than a one-variable checklist.

The results also connect well with the heuristic-systematic model. Attractiveness likely functions more as a heuristic cue, helping consumers make quick judgments in the early stage of exposure. Trustworthiness and authenticity, by contrast, may play stronger roles when followers engage in more reflective evaluation and assess whether the recommendation deserves confidence. Expertise can operate in both ways: it may be inferred quickly from niche identity or credentials, but it may also be verified through repeated content quality over time. This layered interpretation helps explain why all four variables matter while still having different effect sizes.

From a managerial standpoint, the discussion suggests several actionable recommendations. First, brands should audit influencer trust signals before collaboration, including tone consistency, audience sentiment, disclosure behavior, and the ratio of sponsored to non-sponsored content. Second, campaigns should allow influencers enough creative freedom to preserve authenticity rather than forcing rigid brand scripts. Third, product categories should be matched with influencers who have credible expertise. Fourth, attractiveness should be seen as a useful support variable, particularly for visibility and engagement, but not as a sufficient basis for partnership decisions. These actions can improve not only attention metrics but also intention-oriented outcomes.

From an academic perspective, the findings support the argument that modern influencer effectiveness is best understood as a combination of classical source-based traits and newer relational-social traits. Source credibility theory remains highly relevant, but it should be extended with constructs such as authenticity and parasocial engagement to better reflect today's social media environment. This article therefore contributes to the literature by showing how an integrated yet parsimonious model can be built and interpreted clearly.

In general, the discussion shows that people are most likely to buy something when they see influencers as more than just attractive public figures. They also see them as trustworthy, genuine, and good at communicating. This conclusion helps us understand why some influencer campaigns get people to buy things while others only look good.

5. In conclusion

This article examined the impact of influencer characteristics on consumer purchasing intent, emphasizing four predictor variables: expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and authenticity. The paper employed source credibility theory, the theory of planned behavior, and the heuristic-systematic model to assert that the characteristics of influencers serve as

20-Aprel, 2026-yil

persuasive cues that influence individuals' interpretation of sponsored messages and product recommendations. The results of the illustrative empirical model indicate that all four variables exert a positive influence on the intention to purchase. They care most about being trustworthy, then being real, knowledgeable, and attractive.

The study's main point is that the success of influencer marketing has more to do with how real and trustworthy followers think the influencer is than with how many people see them.

People might notice good content at first, but whether or not they buy something depends more on whether they think the influencer is honest, real, and knowledgeable. In today's world of social media, people know more about sponsorship deals and are more selective about which endorsements they believe.

The study's theoretical conclusion says that traditional source-based persuasion frameworks are still useful, but they need to be looked at in light of real-life interactions on digital platforms.

As classic endorsement theory says, it's still important to be knowledgeable, trustworthy, and attractive.

However, authenticity has become a crucial complementary construct because contemporary followers evaluate not only message quality but also persona consistency and commercial sincerity. So, combining well-known persuasion models with newer ones that are more in line with social media culture is helpful for influencer research. The message for managers is clear: brands shouldn't choose influencers just because they are popular, look good, or have a lot of followers. Instead, they should put communicators who show they know a lot about the product, have a stable audience trust, and present themselves honestly at the top of their list. Trustworthiness should be seen as a strategic asset, not just a reputation variable. In the same way, authenticity should be protected during a campaign by letting influencers speak in their own voice and be open about who is sponsoring them. When it comes to categories that need explanation or demonstration, expertise should be given a lot of weight. Attractiveness is still useful, especially for getting people's attention and improving a brand's image, but it shouldn't take the place of credibility.

Another implication has to do with how to evaluate a campaign. Companies often use simple performance metrics like reach, impressions, or likes. These indicators are helpful, but they don't give a complete picture of whether the influencer partnership will lead to consumer intention or behavior down the line. The current model suggests that brands should also look at metrics based on perception, like how much people trust them, how authentic they seem, and how well they fit into their category.

These factors may better predict the quality of persuasion and the likelihood that campaign engagement will convert into meaningful market outcomes.

The article also has educational value. Because it follows a full academic structure and includes tables, a figure, hypotheses, methods, and interpreted results, it can serve as a practical guide for students writing research papers on digital marketing topics. The

document demonstrates how a broad topic can be transformed into a focused empirical model and how each part of a research article contributes to the final argument. In this sense, the paper is not only about influencer marketing; it is also an example of academic organization and reporting.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the empirical section is based on an illustrative dataset prepared for manuscript development rather than on a real field survey. The model, measures, and interpretations are all realistic, but the numbers should not be seen as real proof until they have been tested with real people. Second, the model doesn't directly test mediating or moderating variables like brand trust, product involvement, age, platform type, or disclosure format. Instead, it uses a direct-effects structure. Third, the study concentrates on a broad social media context, although actual effects may differ markedly across product categories and platforms.

To get around these problems, future research should get primary data from clearly defined groups of people and add to the model. Researchers might want to see if trust affects the effect of authenticity, if parasocial interaction makes the effect of attractiveness stronger, or if expertise becomes more important in product categories that people are very interested in. It would also be helpful to compare Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube because the features of each platform affect how people understand influencer content.

Another promising direction is the comparison between human influencers and virtual influencers, especially because authenticity and credibility may operate differently in AI-assisted environments.

In conclusion, influencer marketing is still a strong way to communicate, but it doesn't always work to persuade people. People should see the influencer as more than just fashionable or visible. When followers see the influencer as honest, real, and knowledgeable, and when they find them attractive, they are most likely to buy something. Researchers can make better models and people who work in the digital marketplace can design better influencer partnerships if they have a better understanding of how all the pieces fit together.

REFERENCES:

1. Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179-211. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T)
2. AlFarraj, O., Alalwan, A. A., Obeidat, Z. M., Baabdullah, A., Aldmour, R., & Al-Haddad, S. (2021). Examining the impact of influencers' credibility dimensions: attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise on the purchase intention in the aesthetic dermatology industry. *Review of International Business and Strategy*, 31(3), 355–374. <https://doi.org/10.1108/RIBS-07-2020-0089>
- Alcántara-Pilar, J. M., Rodríguez-López, M. E., Kalinić, Z., & Liébana-Cabanillas, F. (2024). From likes to loyalty: Looking into how the trustworthiness of influencers affects people's plans to buy things on TikTok.

3. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 78, 103709. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2024.103709>
4. Belanche, D., Casaló, L. V., Flavián, M., & Ibáñez-Sánchez, S. (2021). Building influencers' credibility on Instagram: Effects on followers' attitudes and behavioral responses toward the influencer. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 61, 102585. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102585>
5. Casaló, L. V., Flavián, C., & Ibáñez-Sánchez, S. (2020). Influencers on Instagram: Antecedents and consequences of opinion leadership. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 510-519. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.07.005>
6. Chaiken, S. (1980). Heuristic versus systematic information processing and the use of source versus message cues in persuasion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 39(5), 752-766.
7. Chen, Y., Liu, M. T., Liu, Y., Chang, A. W.-Y., & Yen, J. (2022). The influence of trust and relationship commitment to vloggers on viewers' purchase intention. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 34(2), 249-267. <https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-08-2020-0626>
8. Djafarova, E., & Rushworth, C. (2017). Exploring the credibility of online celebrities' Instagram profiles in influencing the purchase decisions of young female users. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 68, 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.11.009>
9. George, A., Shibu, M. S., Joseph, E. T., & Sunny, P. (2025). A systematic review of the literature on how social media influencer marketing affects customers' willingness to buy in the fashion industry. *Frontiers in Communication*, 10, 1676901. Kim, D., and Wang, Z. (2024). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2025.1676901> Influencer on social media vs.
10. virtual influencer: The mediating role of source credibility and authenticity in advertising effectiveness within AI influencer marketing. *Computers in Human Behavior: Artificial Humans*, 2(2), 100100. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbah.2024.100100>
11. Masuda, H., Han, S. H., & Lee, J. (2022). Impacts of influencer attributes on purchase intentions in social media influencer marketing: Mediating roles of characterizations. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 174, 121246.
12. Ohanian, R. (1990). Construction and validation of a scale to measure celebrity endorsers' perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. *Journal of Advertising*, 19(3), 39-52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.1990.10673191>
13. Sardar, S., Tata, S. V., & Sarkar, S. (2024). Examining the influence of source factors and content characteristics of influencers' post on consumer engagement and purchase intention: A moderated analysis. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 80, 103888. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2024.103888>
14. Sokolova, K., & Kefi, H. (2020). Instagram and YouTube bloggers promote it, why should I buy? How credibility and parasocial interaction influence purchase intentions. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 53, 101742. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.01.011>

20-Aprel, 2026-yil

15. Spörl-Wang, K., Krause, F., & Henkel, S. (2025). A thorough review of the literature and a meta-analysis of predictors of the effectiveness of social media influencer marketing. *Business Research Journal*, 186, 114991. Tyrväinen, O., & Karjaluoto, H. (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2024.114991> Love that isn't returned? A mixed-methods investigation of parasocial engagement with social media influencers. 80, 102845 of the *International Journal of Information Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2024.102845> Vrontis D., Makrides, A., Christofi, M., and Thrassou, A. (2021). A systematic review, an integrative framework, and a future research agenda for social media influencer marketing.
16. . *International Journal of Consumer Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12647>
17. Wang, J., & Ma, Y. (2025). The impact of social media fashion influencers' relatability on purchase intention: The mediating role of perceived emotional value and moderating role of consumer expertise. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 222, 124051.
18. Wiedmann, K.-P., & von Mettenheim, W. (2021). Attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise - social influencers' winning formula? *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 30(5), 707-725. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-06-2019-2442>