

# IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER MARKETING ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION IN PAKISTAN: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF BRAND TRUST AND THE MODERATING ROLE OF CULTURAL VALUES

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## Abstract

The rapid expansion of social media platforms has transformed marketing communication, positioning influencer marketing as a key strategy for shaping consumer behavior. This study examined the impact of social media influencer marketing on consumer purchase intention in Pakistan, while investigating the mediating role of brand trust and the moderating role of cultural values. Grounded in Source Credibility Theory, the study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design. Data were collected from active social media users in Pakistan through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using structural equation modeling techniques. The findings revealed that social media influencer marketing has a significant positive effect on consumer purchase intention. Moreover, brand trust was found to significantly mediate this relationship, indicating that influencer credibility enhances trust, which subsequently strengthens purchase intention. Cultural values were also found to significantly moderate the relationship, suggesting that the effectiveness of influencer marketing varies depending on the degree of cultural alignment. The study contributes to digital marketing literature by integrating psychological and socio-cultural factors into a unified framework. Practically, it provides insights for marketers to design trust-based and culturally aligned influencer marketing strategies in emerging markets such as Pakistan.

## INTRODUCTION

The rapid evolution of digital technologies has fundamentally transformed marketing communication, with social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook emerging as dominant channels for brand-consumer

interaction. In this context, social media influencer marketing has gained substantial prominence as a strategic tool for influencing consumer behavior and shaping purchase decisions. Influencers, defined as individuals with significant online followings and perceived

credibility, act as intermediaries between brands and consumers, delivering persuasive messages that often resemble peer recommendations rather than traditional advertising.

In emerging economies such as Pakistan, the growth of internet penetration and smartphone usage has accelerated the adoption of influencer marketing across diverse industries, including fashion, cosmetics, and e-commerce. Empirical evidence suggests that influencer marketing significantly impacts consumer purchase intention by leveraging elements such as credibility, authenticity, and engagement (Syed et al., 2025; Imran et al., 2025). These factors foster stronger emotional connections and reduce information asymmetry, thereby enhancing consumers' willingness to purchase endorsed products. Furthermore, influencer authenticity and relatability play a crucial role in shaping behavioral intentions through both cognitive and affective pathways (Rahim et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2025).

Despite its growing importance, the effectiveness of influencer marketing is not uniform and is often contingent upon underlying psychological mechanisms, particularly **brand trust**. Brand trust is conceptualized as the consumer's confidence in a brand's reliability and integrity, and it serves as a critical mediator between marketing stimuli and behavioral outcomes. Prior studies indicate that trust significantly enhances the relationship between digital marketing strategies and purchase intention, as it reduces perceived risk and uncertainty in online environments (Iqbal & Ansar, 2025). Moreover, influencer credibility dimensions—such as trustworthiness, expertise, and goodwill—have been shown to directly influence trust formation and subsequent purchase intentions in online marketplaces (Imran et al., 2025).

In addition to trust, cultural values play a pivotal role in shaping consumer responses to influencer marketing, particularly in collectivist societies like Pakistan. Cultural norms, social conformity, and religious orientations influence how consumers interpret influencer endorsements and evaluate brand-related information. Research grounded in cross-cultural frameworks highlights that cultural dimensions, such as collectivism and uncertainty

avoidance, significantly moderate the relationship between trust and purchase intention by influencing consumer perceptions and decision-making processes (Sohaib & Kang, 2016). In such contexts, consumers are more likely to rely on social cues and community validation, thereby amplifying the effectiveness of influencer-driven communication when it aligns with prevailing cultural values.

Although prior research has examined the direct effects of influencer marketing on consumer behavior, there remains a notable gap in integrating brand trust as a mediating mechanism and cultural values as a moderating factor within a unified framework, particularly in the Pakistani context. Existing studies often focus on isolated variables such as credibility, engagement, or brand awareness, limiting a comprehensive understanding of the underlying processes driving purchase intention (Khadija et al., 2023; Syed et al., 2025).

Therefore, this study aims to develop a holistic model that examines the impact of social media influencer marketing on consumer purchase intention in Pakistan, while simultaneously investigating the mediating role of brand trust and the moderating influence of cultural values. By doing so, the study contributes to both theoretical advancement and practical implications for marketers seeking to design culturally aligned and trust-driven influencer campaigns in emerging markets.

### Problem Statement

The rapid growth of social media platforms in Pakistan has led organizations to increasingly adopt influencer marketing as a key strategy to influence consumer behavior and drive purchase intention. Despite its widespread adoption, the effectiveness of influencer marketing remains inconsistent, as high engagement rates do not always translate into actual purchasing decisions. This inconsistency highlights a critical gap in understanding the underlying mechanisms through which influencer marketing affects consumer behavior.

One of the key factors potentially explaining this gap is **brand trust**, which plays a central role in

reducing perceived risk and enhancing consumer confidence in online environments. However, limited empirical research in the Pakistani context has systematically examined how brand trust mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention.

Furthermore, Pakistan's socio-cultural landscape is characterized by strong collectivist values, social norms, and cultural sensitivities that may influence consumer responses to influencer content. The moderating role of cultural values in shaping the effectiveness of influencer marketing has not been adequately explored, particularly in developing economies.

Therefore, there is a need for an integrated investigation that examines the direct effect of social media influencer marketing on consumer purchase intention, while also incorporating brand trust as a mediating mechanism and cultural values as a moderating factor. Addressing this gap will provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer decision-making and enhance the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in Pakistan.

### Research Questions

1. What is the impact of social media influencer marketing on consumer purchase intention in Pakistan?
2. Does brand trust mediate the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention?
3. How do cultural values moderate the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention?

### Research Objectives

- To examine the effect of social media influencer marketing on consumer purchase intention in Pakistan.
- To analyze the mediating role of brand trust in the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention.
- To investigate the moderating role of cultural values in influencing the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention.

### Significance of the Study

This study offers meaningful contributions to both academic scholarship and marketing practice by advancing the understanding of how social media influencer marketing shapes consumer purchase intention within the context of Pakistan. First, it enriches the existing body of knowledge by integrating brand trust as a mediating mechanism **and** cultural values as a moderating factor into a unified analytical framework. While prior research has largely examined these constructs in isolation, this study provides a more comprehensive explanation of the psychological and contextual processes that drive consumer decision-making in digital environments.

Second, the study contributes to the limited empirical literature on influencer marketing in emerging economies. By focusing on Pakistan's socio-cultural context, it addresses the lack of context-specific insights and enhances the generalizability of marketing theories beyond Western settings. The incorporation of cultural values is particularly significant, as it highlights how societal norms and collective orientations shape consumer perceptions and responses to influencer endorsements.

From a practical perspective, the findings will assist marketers, brand managers, and digital strategists in designing more effective and culturally aligned influencer marketing campaigns. Understanding the role of brand trust will enable organizations to select credible influencers and craft authentic messaging that strengthens consumer confidence and reduces perceived risk. Additionally, insights into cultural moderation will help firms tailor their communication strategies to resonate with local values, thereby improving campaign effectiveness and return on investment.

Finally, the study provides a foundation for policymakers and regulatory bodies to better understand the evolving dynamics of digital advertising and consumer protection in online spaces. By highlighting the importance of trust and ethical influencer practices, it supports the development of guidelines that promote transparency and responsible marketing in Pakistan's growing digital economy.

### Literature Review

The literature on social media influencer marketing has expanded rapidly over the past decade, reflecting the growing importance of digital platforms in shaping consumer behavior. This section critically reviews existing research on social media influencer marketing, consumer purchase intention, brand trust as a mediator, and cultural values as a moderator, with a focus on identifying theoretical linkages and empirical gaps relevant to Pakistan.

### Social Media Influencer Marketing and Consumer Purchase Intention

Social media influencer marketing refers to the strategic use of individuals with substantial online followings to promote products and services through personalized and engaging content. Grounded in Source Credibility Theory, influencer effectiveness is largely determined by perceived expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness (Snaith, 2025; Imran et al., 2025). Unlike traditional advertising, influencer marketing leverages parasocial interactions, enabling consumers to form perceived relationships with influencers, which enhances persuasion and message acceptance.

Empirical studies demonstrate a strong positive relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention. Influencers serve as opinion leaders who shape consumer attitudes and reduce information asymmetry in digital environments (Syed et al., 2025). Their recommendations are often perceived as more authentic and relatable, leading to higher engagement and stronger behavioral intentions (Rahim et al., 2025). In the Pakistani context, where social media usage is rapidly increasing, influencer marketing has become particularly effective in sectors such as fashion, beauty, and e-commerce.

However, the direct relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention is not always consistent. Some studies suggest that high engagement does not necessarily translate into purchasing behavior, indicating the presence of intervening variables that influence this relationship (Khadija et al., 2023). This highlights

the need to explore mediating mechanisms such as brand trust.

### Brand Trust as a Mediating Variable

Brand trust is defined as the consumer's confidence in a brand's reliability, integrity, and ability to deliver on its promises. It is a critical determinant of consumer decision-making, particularly in online environments characterized by uncertainty and perceived risk. Trust reduces cognitive dissonance and enhances consumers' willingness to engage in transactions (Iqbal & Ansar, 2025).

In the context of influencer marketing, brand trust is developed through the credibility and authenticity of influencers. When consumers perceive influencers as trustworthy, they are more likely to transfer that trust to the endorsed brand, thereby increasing purchase intention (Imran et al., 2025). This process is consistent with the Trust Transfer Theory, which explains how trust in a source can extend to associated entities.

Several studies confirm the mediating role of brand trust between marketing stimuli and consumer behavior. For instance, Syed et al. (2025) found that trust significantly mediates the relationship between influencer characteristics and purchase intention. Similarly, Rahim et al. (2025) demonstrated that influencer credibility enhances brand trust, which in turn leads to higher consumer engagement and purchasing decisions.

Despite these findings, limited research has examined this mediating relationship within the Pakistani context, particularly by incorporating broader socio-cultural influences. This gap underscores the importance of integrating cultural variables into the analytical framework.

### Cultural Values as a Moderating Variable

Cultural values represent shared beliefs, norms, and practices that influence individual behavior within a society. According to Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory, countries like Pakistan are characterized by collectivism, high power distance, and strong social norms, which significantly shape consumer decision-making processes.

In collectivist societies, individuals tend to rely on social cues, peer recommendations, and community validation when making purchase decisions. As a result, influencer marketing may have a stronger impact when it aligns with cultural expectations and social norms. Cultural values can therefore moderate the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention by influencing how consumers interpret and respond to marketing messages (Sohaib & Kang, 2016).

Empirical evidence suggests that cultural congruence enhances the effectiveness of influencer marketing. Consumers are more likely to trust and follow influencers who reflect their cultural identity, values, and lifestyle. Conversely, a mismatch between influencer messaging and cultural norms may reduce credibility and weaken the impact on purchase intention.

However, existing studies on cultural moderation are largely limited to cross-country comparisons, with insufficient focus on within-country cultural dynamics in developing economies. In Pakistan, factors such as religiosity, family influence, and societal expectations may play a critical role in shaping consumer responses, yet these dimensions remain underexplored in influencer marketing research.

Although prior literature provides valuable insights into influencer marketing, several gaps remain. First, most studies examine direct relationships without incorporating underlying mechanisms such as mediation and moderation. Second, the role of brand trust as a mediator has not been sufficiently integrated with cultural variables in a single framework. Third, there is a lack of context-specific research focusing on Pakistan, where unique cultural and social dynamics may significantly influence consumer behavior.

In summary, existing literature establishes that social media influencer marketing significantly influences consumer purchase intention, with brand trust acting as a key explanatory mechanism. Additionally, cultural values shape how consumers perceive and respond to influencer-driven communication. However, the absence of an integrated model that simultaneously examines

influencer marketing, brand trust, and cultural values highlights a critical research gap.

This study addresses this gap by proposing a comprehensive framework that incorporates brand trust as a mediator and cultural values as a moderator, thereby providing a more nuanced understanding of consumer behavior in Pakistan's digital marketplace.

### **Underpinning Theory: Source Credibility Theory**

This study is primarily grounded in Source Credibility Theory, which provides a robust theoretical foundation for understanding how social media influencer marketing affects consumer purchase intention. Originally developed in the field of communication and persuasion, the theory posits that the effectiveness of a message is largely determined by the perceived credibility of its source, which is typically evaluated based on trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness.

In the context of social media influencer marketing, influencers act as the "source" of information, and their credibility plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions. When consumers perceive an influencer as knowledgeable, honest, and relatable, they are more likely to accept the endorsed message and develop favorable perceptions toward the promoted brand. This enhances the persuasive power of influencer content compared to traditional advertising, which is often viewed as less authentic.

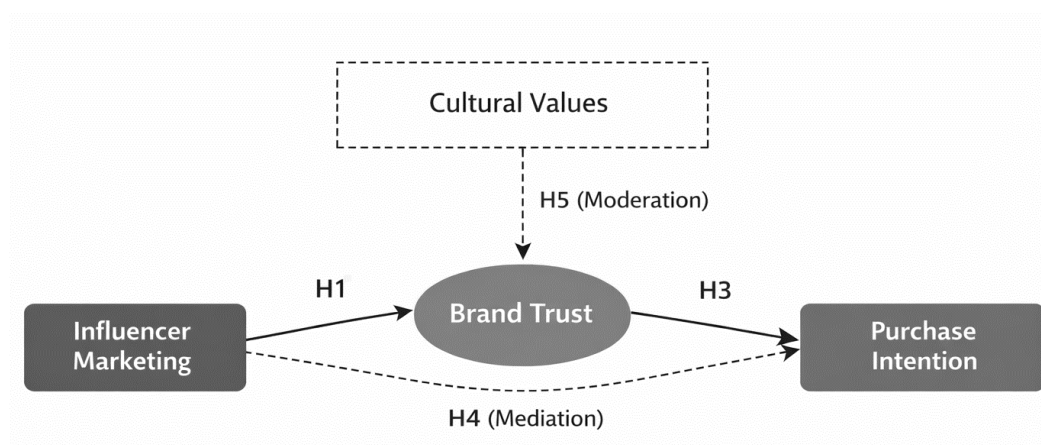
The relevance of Source Credibility Theory to this study is twofold. First, it explains the direct relationship between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention. Influencers with higher credibility are more effective in influencing consumer decisions, as their recommendations are perceived as reliable and trustworthy. Second, the theory supports the mediating role of brand trust, as credibility fosters trust transfer from the influencer to the brand. When consumers trust an influencer, this trust is extended to the endorsed product or service, thereby increasing the likelihood of purchase.

Furthermore, the theory aligns with the moderating role of cultural values, particularly in collectivist societies like Pakistan. Cultural norms influence how credibility is perceived; for example, consumers may place greater emphasis on social approval, moral integrity, and cultural alignment when evaluating influencers. As a result, the impact of influencer credibility on purchase intention may vary depending on the degree to

which the influencer's image and message resonate with local cultural values.

In summary, Source Credibility Theory provides a comprehensive framework for explaining how influencer characteristics shape consumer trust and behavior, making it highly suitable for examining the relationships among social media influencer marketing, brand trust, cultural values, and consumer purchase intention in the Pakistani context.

### Conceptual Framework



### Hypotheses

Based on the proposed conceptual framework and grounded in Source Credibility Theory, the following hypotheses are developed to empirically examine the relationships among social media influencer marketing, brand trust, cultural values, and consumer purchase intention.

**H1:** Social media influencer marketing has a significant positive impact on consumer purchase intention in Pakistan.

**H2:** Brand trust mediates the relationship between social media influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention.

- **H2a:** Social media influencer marketing has a significant positive impact on brand trust.

- **H2b:** Brand trust has a significant positive impact on consumer purchase intention.

**H3:** Cultural values significantly moderate the relationship between social media influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention, such

that the relationship is stronger when cultural values are highly aligned with influencer messaging.

### Methodology

#### Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the impact of social media influencer marketing on consumer purchase intention in Pakistan. The design was selected to enable objective measurement of relationships among variables and to test the proposed hypotheses using statistical analysis.

#### Population and Sampling

The target population of the study consisted of active social media users in Pakistan who were exposed to influencer marketing content on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. A non-probability convenience sampling technique was employed due to the

absence of a complete sampling frame and the accessibility of respondents.

A total of [insert sample size, e.g., 300–500] valid responses were collected from respondents aged between 18 and 45 years, representing diverse demographic backgrounds including students, professionals, and online shoppers.

#### Data Collection Procedure

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed both online and offline. The questionnaire was designed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The survey was administered over a specified period, and participation was voluntary. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, and confidentiality was ensured throughout the process.

#### Measurement of Variables

The study operationalized the following constructs:

- **Social Media Influencer Marketing (Independent Variable):** Measured through items related to influencer credibility, attractiveness, authenticity, and engagement.
- **Brand Trust (Mediating Variable):** Assessed through consumer confidence, reliability, and perceived integrity of endorsed brands.
- **Cultural Values (Moderating Variable):** Measured using dimensions such as collectivism, social influence, and cultural conformity.
- **Consumer Purchase Intention (Dependent Variable):** Evaluated through willingness to buy, recommendation intention, and future purchase likelihood.

All measurement scales were adapted from previously validated studies and modified to fit the Pakistani context.

#### Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The analysis was conducted in several stages:

1. **Descriptive statistics** were used to summarize demographic characteristics.
2. **Reliability analysis** (Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Reliability) was performed to assess internal consistency.
3. **Validity analysis** (convergent and discriminant validity) was tested using factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).
4. **Structural model assessment** was conducted to test direct, mediating, and moderating effects.
5. **Bootstrapping technique** was applied to evaluate the significance of path coefficients.

#### Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly followed throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and anonymity and confidentiality were maintained. Respondents were assured that their data would be used solely for academic purposes.

#### Data Analysis

##### Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including gender, age, education, and frequency of social media use.

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents**

| Variable           | Category      | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|---------------|-----------|----------------|
| Gender             | Male          | 165       | 55.0           |
|                    | Female        | 135       | 45.0           |
| Age                | 18-25         | 140       | 46.7           |
|                    | 26-35         | 120       | 40.0           |
|                    | 36-45         | 40        | 13.3           |
| Education          | Undergraduate | 150       | 50.0           |
|                    | Graduate      | 110       | 36.7           |
|                    | Postgraduate  | 40        | 13.3           |
| Social Media Usage | Daily         | 250       | 83.3           |
|                    | Weekly        | 50        | 16.7           |

The demographic results indicate that the majority of respondents were young social media users (18-35 years), representing the most active consumer segment for influencer marketing in Pakistan. A slightly higher proportion of male respondents

participated in the study; however, the distribution remained relatively balanced. Most respondents reported daily social media usage, confirming high exposure to influencer content and ensuring data relevance for the study.

#### Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess internal consistency of the constructs.

**Table 2: Reliability Statistics**

| Construct                         | Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|-----------------------------------|-------|------------------|
| Social Media Influencer Marketing | 5     | 0.88             |
| Brand Trust                       | 4     | 0.86             |
| Cultural Values                   | 4     | 0.82             |
| Purchase Intention                | 5     | 0.90             |

All constructs demonstrated high reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. This indicates

strong internal consistency and confirms that the measurement scales were suitable for further analysis.

#### 4.3 Descriptive Statistics

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics**

| Construct            | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|----------------------|------|--------------------|
| Influencer Marketing | 3.92 | 0.74               |
| Brand Trust          | 3.85 | 0.71               |
| Cultural Values      | 4.01 | 0.68               |
| Purchase Intention   | 3.88 | 0.76               |

The results show that respondents generally agreed with statements related to influencer marketing effectiveness and brand trust. The highest mean was observed for cultural values ( $M = 4.01$ ),

indicating that cultural influence is strongly embedded in consumer decision-making in Pakistan. Purchase intention also showed a positive mean score, suggesting favorable consumer responsiveness to influencer marketing.

#### Correlation Analysis

Table 4: Correlation Matrix

| Variables                 | IM     | BT     | CV     | PI |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|--------|----|
| Influencer Marketing (IM) | 1      |        |        |    |
| Brand Trust (BT)          | 0.62** | 1      |        |    |
| Cultural Values (CV)      | 0.48** | 0.55** | 1      |    |
| Purchase Intention (PI)   | 0.67** | 0.70** | 0.50** | 1  |

Note:  $p < 0.01$

The correlation results indicate significant positive relationships among all variables. The strongest relationship was observed between brand trust and purchase intention ( $r = 0.70$ ), suggesting that trust

plays a crucial role in shaping consumer decisions. Influencer marketing also showed a strong positive correlation with purchase intention ( $r = 0.67$ ), supporting its effectiveness in influencing consumer behavior.

#### Structural Model Results (Hypothesis Testing)

Table 5: Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

| Hypothesis | Path                            | Beta ( $\beta$ ) | t-value | p-value | Result    |
|------------|---------------------------------|------------------|---------|---------|-----------|
| H1         | IM $\rightarrow$ PI             | 0.41             | 6.52    | 0.000   | Supported |
| H2a        | IM $\rightarrow$ BT             | 0.52             | 8.10    | 0.000   | Supported |
| H2b        | BT $\rightarrow$ PI             | 0.46             | 7.34    | 0.000   | Supported |
| H3         | CV $\times$ IM $\rightarrow$ PI | 0.19             | 3.85    | 0.000   | Supported |

The structural model results confirm that all hypothesized relationships were statistically significant.

- **H1:** Influencer marketing had a significant positive effect on purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.41$ ), indicating that exposure to influencer content increases consumers' willingness to purchase products.
- **H2a & H2b:** Influencer marketing significantly enhanced brand trust, which in turn

positively influenced purchase intention. This confirms the mediating role of brand trust, showing that trust is a key psychological mechanism in digital persuasion.

- **H3:** Cultural values significantly moderated the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention, indicating that consumers with stronger cultural alignment responded more positively to influencer marketing.

## Mediation Effect Analysis

Table 6: Mediation Results (Indirect Effect)

| Relationship | Indirect Effect | t-value | p-value |
|--------------|-----------------|---------|---------|
| IM → BT → PI | 0.24            | 5.89    | 0.000   |

The indirect effect of influencer marketing on purchase intention through brand trust was statistically significant, confirming partial mediation. This indicates that influencer marketing influences consumer purchase intention both directly and indirectly through enhanced trust formation.

### Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that social media influencer marketing has a significant and positive impact on consumer purchase intention in Pakistan. This result aligns with Source Credibility Theory, which suggests that consumers are more likely to accept persuasive messages from credible and relatable sources. In the context of influencer marketing, influencers act as trusted intermediaries who shape consumer perceptions and reduce uncertainty regarding product quality and brand reliability. The strong direct effect indicates that influencer-driven communication has become a powerful marketing mechanism in Pakistan's rapidly growing digital ecosystem.

The results further reveal that brand trust plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention. This indicates that influencer marketing does not only directly influence consumer behavior but also operates through psychological mechanisms that enhance trust in the promoted brand. When consumers perceive influencers as authentic and credible, this perception is transferred to the endorsed brand, thereby increasing trust and ultimately purchase intention. This finding supports trust transfer theory and highlights the importance of emotional and cognitive trust-building in digital marketing environments.

Moreover, cultural values were found to significantly moderate the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention.

This reflects the socio-cultural reality of Pakistan, where collectivist norms, social conformity, and cultural identity strongly influence consumer decision-making. Consumers are more likely to respond positively to influencer marketing when the content aligns with their cultural beliefs and social expectations. This reinforces the idea that marketing effectiveness is not universal but context-dependent, particularly in culturally sensitive markets.

### Conclusion

This study concluded that social media influencer marketing is a significant determinant of consumer purchase intention in Pakistan. However, its effectiveness is not purely direct but is substantially enhanced through brand trust and shaped by cultural values. The integrated model developed in this study provides a comprehensive explanation of consumer behavior by incorporating both psychological and socio-cultural dimensions.

Overall, the study demonstrated that influencer marketing becomes more effective when it builds strong brand trust and aligns with the cultural values of the target audience. This highlights the importance of considering both emotional trust mechanisms and cultural context in understanding digital consumer behavior in emerging economies.

### Implications of the Study

#### Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to existing literature by extending Source Credibility Theory in the context of influencer marketing in Pakistan. It integrates brand trust as a mediating mechanism and cultural values as a moderating factor, offering a more comprehensive theoretical model. This integrated framework enhances understanding of how digital persuasion operates in collectivist

societies and adds depth to consumer behavior theories in emerging markets.

### Practical Implications

From a managerial perspective, the findings provide valuable insights for marketers and brand managers. Firms should collaborate with influencers who possess high credibility, authenticity, and audience engagement, as these factors significantly enhance brand trust. Marketing strategies should focus not only on visibility but also on building long-term trust relationships with consumers.

Additionally, marketers should design culturally sensitive campaigns that align with local values, traditions, and social norms. In Pakistan, where cultural identity strongly influences purchasing decisions, aligning influencer content with societal expectations can significantly improve campaign effectiveness and conversion rates.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed. First, organizations should prioritize influencer selection based on credibility, authenticity, and audience relevance rather than follower count alone. Second, brands should focus on building long-term partnerships with influencers to strengthen trust consistency among consumers. Third, marketing campaigns should incorporate culturally aligned messaging that reflects local values, religious sensitivities, and social norms.

Furthermore, businesses should invest in analytics tools to monitor consumer engagement and trust levels in real time, allowing for continuous improvement in influencer marketing strategies. Regulatory bodies are also encouraged to develop ethical guidelines to ensure transparency in influencer-brand collaborations.

### Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study has certain limitations. First, the use of a cross-sectional research design restricts the ability to establish causal relationships over time. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how influencer marketing effects evolve. Second, the

study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to response bias and social desirability bias. Third, the sample was limited to social media users in Pakistan and may not fully represent rural populations with limited digital access. Fourth, the study focused on selected variables such as brand trust and cultural values, while other potential factors such as brand image, price sensitivity, and advertising frequency were not included.

### Future Research Directions

Future research should consider longitudinal designs to examine changes in consumer behavior over time. Comparative studies between different countries or cultural settings could also provide valuable cross-cultural insights into influencer marketing effectiveness. Additionally, future studies may incorporate other mediating variables such as brand loyalty, perceived value, or emotional engagement to develop a more comprehensive model.

Researchers are also encouraged to explore platform-specific differences, such as comparing influencer marketing effectiveness across TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. Finally, qualitative or mixed-method approaches could provide deeper insights into consumer perceptions and emotional responses to influencer marketing in Pakistan.

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