



THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER CHARACTERISTICS ON MOROCCAN CONSUMERS' PURCHASE INTENTION TOWARD FAST-MOVING CONSUMER GOODS (FMCG)

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Abstract: Social media influencers have become important marketing actors capable of shaping consumers' attitudes and purchasing behaviors. However, limited research has examined the determinants of influencer effectiveness in emerging markets and within the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector. Drawing on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), this study investigates the impact of influencer antecedents on Moroccan consumers' purchase intentions toward FMCG products.

Data were collected from 211 Moroccan consumers familiar with social media influencers and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings reveal that trust, credibility, influencer-product congruence, and subjective norms significantly and positively influence consumers' attitudes toward influencers. Trust emerged as the strongest predictor of attitude toward the influencer. Furthermore, attitude toward the influencer positively affects both attitude toward the brand and purchase intention, while attitude toward the brand also significantly enhances purchase intention.

This study extends the application of the Theory of Reasoned Action to influencer marketing in the FMCG context and provides practical insights for marketers seeking to enhance the effectiveness of influencer campaigns. The findings highlight the importance of selecting trustworthy, credible, and product-congruent influencers to strengthen brand perceptions and stimulate consumer purchase intentions.

Keywords: Social Media Influencers; Influencer Marketing; Purchase Intention; Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG); Theory of Reasoned Action; Attitude toward the Influencer; Morocco.

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1. Introduction

The rapid proliferation of social media platforms has profoundly transformed the communication landscape, reshaping the ways in which consumers interact with brands and make purchasing decisions. In this evolving digital environment, social media influencers (SMIs) have emerged as powerful intermediaries between brands and consumers. Defined as individuals who have developed a significant audience on social networking platforms and who possess the ability to influence the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of their followers, influencers have become key actors in contemporary marketing strategies (De Veirman et al., 2017). Through the continuous sharing of personal experiences, opinions, expertise, and product recommendations, influencers cultivate close relationships with their audiences, fostering a sense of authenticity and trust that often exceeds that associated with traditional advertising channels.

The growing importance of influencer marketing has attracted considerable attention from both practitioners and scholars. As consumers increasingly rely on social media as a source of information, inspiration, and product evaluation, organizations have allocated substantial resources to collaborations with influencers in order to enhance brand visibility, strengthen consumer engagement, and stimulate purchase intentions. Industry reports indicate a significant increase in investments in influencer marketing over the last decade, reflecting the perceived effectiveness of influencer endorsements in shaping consumer behavior. This trend was further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which intensified social media usage and reinforced the role of digital influencers in consumers' daily lives (Tanwar et al., 2022).

Despite the widespread adoption of influencer marketing, important questions remain regarding its effectiveness and the mechanisms through which influencers affect consumer decision-making. Selecting the most appropriate influencer to communicate brand messages and generate favorable consumer responses remains a major challenge for firms. While numerous studies have demonstrated the positive effects of influencer marketing on consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions, the specific characteristics that determine influencer effectiveness are still subject to ongoing debate (Araujo et al., 2016; Liu, 2021; Tsen & Cheng, 2021). Consequently, understanding the antecedents that enhance influencer persuasiveness represents a critical research issue for both academics and marketing practitioners.

This issue is particularly relevant in the context of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), a sector characterized by frequent purchases, low consumer involvement, intense competition, and strong dependence on communication strategies. In FMCG markets, consumers are regularly exposed to influencer-generated content promoting products related to food, beverages, personal care, beauty, and household consumption. As a result, influencers may play a significant role in shaping consumers' perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions toward these products.

Although influencer marketing has been extensively examined in developed economies, empirical evidence remains limited in emerging markets, particularly in the Moroccan context. Furthermore, existing studies have often focused on isolated influencer characteristics, while relatively little attention has been devoted to examining the combined influence of multiple antecedents such as trustworthiness, credibility, expertise, attractiveness, and social norms on consumers' purchase intentions. This gap is especially notable in the FMCG sector, where purchasing decisions are frequently influenced by social interactions and recommendations disseminated through digital platforms.

Drawing upon the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which posits that behavioral intentions are shaped by attitudes and subjective norms, this study seeks to investigate the mechanisms through which social media influencers affect Moroccan consumers' purchase intentions toward FMCG products. By integrating key influencer antecedents within a unified conceptual framework, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the determinants of influencer effectiveness in an emerging market setting.

Specifically, this research pursues three main objectives. First, it aims to identify the key antecedents of social media influencers that influence Moroccan consumers' purchase intentions toward FMCG products. Second, it seeks to examine the applicability of the Theory of Reasoned Action in explaining the relationship between influencer characteristics and purchase intention. Third, it explores how FMCG brands can leverage influencer attributes to enhance the effectiveness of their marketing strategies and stimulate consumer purchase intentions.

Accordingly, the study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: Which social media influencer antecedents significantly influence Moroccan consumers' purchase intentions toward FMCG products?

RQ2: How does the Theory of Reasoned Action explain the relationship between influencer antecedents and purchase intention?

RQ3: What are the relative effects of trust, credibility, influencer-product congruence, and subjective norms on consumers' attitudes toward influencers?

RQ4: How can FMCG brands leverage influencer characteristics to enhance purchase intentions?

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature and develops the theoretical foundations of the study. Section 3 presents the conceptual framework and research hypotheses. Section 4 outlines the research methodology. Section 5 reports the empirical findings, while Section 6 discusses the theoretical and managerial implications of the results. Finally, Section 7 concludes the study, highlights its contributions, and proposes avenues for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), is one of the most influential theoretical frameworks for explaining and predicting human behavior. Rooted in social psychology, the theory posits that an individual's behavior is primarily determined by his or her behavioral intention, which represents the immediate antecedent of actual behavior. Behavioral intention, in turn, is influenced by two fundamental determinants: attitude toward the behavior and subjective norms.

Attitude refers to an individual's overall positive or negative evaluation of performing a specific behavior. It is formed through behavioral beliefs regarding the expected outcomes of the behavior and the evaluation of those outcomes. Subjective norms, on the other hand, reflect perceived social pressure from significant others, such as family members, friends, peers, and reference groups, regarding whether a particular behavior should be performed. These norms emerge from normative beliefs and the individual's motivation to comply with the expectations of others (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

According to TRA, individuals are more likely to engage in a behavior when they hold favorable attitudes toward it and perceive social approval from relevant reference groups. Consequently, behavioral intention is considered the most immediate predictor of actual behavior. Numerous empirical studies have validated the explanatory and predictive power of TRA across a wide range of contexts, including consumer behavior, health-related decisions, technology adoption, and marketing communications (Sheppard et al., 1988).

In the context of digital marketing, TRA provides a valuable framework for understanding how social media influencers affect consumer decision-making processes. Influencers contribute to the formation of favorable attitudes by providing information, recommendations, product demonstrations, and personal experiences that shape consumers' evaluations of products and brands. Simultaneously, influencers can act as important social referents, contributing to the development of subjective norms through social endorsement, community engagement, and perceived popularity.

Given the growing importance of influencer marketing in contemporary consumption environments, TRA offers a robust theoretical lens for examining how influencer-related factors translate into purchase intentions. By influencing both attitudinal and normative dimensions, social media influencers may significantly affect consumers' intentions to purchase Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), particularly in highly connected digital environments where social interactions increasingly shape consumption decisions.

2.2 Social Media Influencer Marketing

The emergence of social media has fundamentally transformed the way brands communicate with consumers. Unlike traditional marketing channels, social media platforms enable direct, interactive, and personalized communication between organizations and their target audiences. Within this digital environment, influencer marketing has emerged as one of the most effective strategies for reaching consumers and shaping their purchasing decisions.

Influencer marketing refers to the practice of leveraging individuals with significant social media presence and credibility to promote products, services, or brands. According to Brown and Hayes (2008), influencers are individuals capable of affecting consumers' purchasing decisions because of their authority, knowledge, position, or relationship with their audience. Through social networking platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok, influencers regularly share opinions, experiences, recommendations, and product-related content with their followers, thereby contributing to the formation of consumer attitudes and behaviors.

The growing popularity of influencer marketing is largely attributable to changing consumer preferences. Contemporary consumers are increasingly skeptical of traditional advertising messages and tend to place greater trust in recommendations originating from individuals they perceive as authentic and credible. Consequently, influencers have become important opinion leaders capable of reducing consumers' uncertainty and facilitating decision-making processes (Freberg et al., 2011). Their ability to establish close relationships with followers allows them to communicate marketing messages in a manner that is often perceived as more personal and trustworthy than conventional advertising.

Businesses have rapidly recognized the strategic value of influencer marketing. According to Conick (2018), organizations increasingly collaborate with influencers to create authentic connections with consumers and strengthen brand engagement. Industry reports also indicate a substantial increase in influencer marketing investments over the past decade, reflecting marketers' growing confidence in the effectiveness of influencer endorsements. Furthermore, influencer-generated content enables brands to reach specific market segments that may be less responsive to traditional promotional activities (Chopra et al., 2020).

The effectiveness of influencer marketing is closely linked to several influencer-related characteristics. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of credibility, trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, and congruence in determining consumers' responses to influencer recommendations (Ohanian, 1990; Choi & Rifon, 2012). Influencers perceived as knowledgeable and trustworthy are more likely to generate favorable attitudes toward promoted products and increase consumers' purchase intentions. Similarly, perceived similarity and congruence between influencers and their followers can strengthen identification processes and enhance persuasive effectiveness.

Recent research further suggests that influencer marketing positively affects brand awareness, brand attitudes, consumer engagement, and purchase intentions (Vrontis et al., 2021; Chetioui et al., 2022). However, the magnitude of these effects varies according to the characteristics of both influencers and consumers, highlighting the need for further investigation into the antecedents that determine influencer effectiveness. Understanding these antecedents is particularly important in highly competitive markets where consumer purchasing decisions are increasingly influenced by digital interactions and social recommendations.

Consequently, social media influencer marketing has become a significant area of academic inquiry and managerial interest. Examining the factors that contribute to influencer effectiveness is essential for understanding how influencers shape consumer purchase intentions and for helping organizations develop more effective marketing strategies.

2.3 Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG)

Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), also referred to as Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG), represent a category of products characterized by frequent purchases, rapid consumption, relatively low prices, and widespread availability. These products typically include food and beverages, personal care items, household

cleaning products, and other everyday consumer goods that are purchased on a regular basis (Helsen & Schmittlein, 1993; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999).

The FMCG sector is distinguished by intense competition, low consumer involvement in purchasing decisions, and limited differentiation among competing brands. Given the abundance of alternatives available in the marketplace, consumers often rely on external sources of information to simplify their decision-making process. Marketing communication therefore plays a crucial role in influencing consumer preferences and encouraging product selection (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010).

Unlike high-involvement products, FMCG purchases are generally associated with lower levels of perceived risk and reduced information-search efforts. Consequently, consumers frequently make purchasing decisions based on habit, convenience, brand familiarity, promotional activities, and recommendations from trusted sources (Guichard & Vanheems, 2004). In recent years, digital media and social networking platforms have emerged as influential sources of information, significantly affecting consumers' perceptions and purchasing behaviors.

The growing integration of social media into consumers' daily lives has created new opportunities for FMCG brands to communicate with their target audiences. Through product reviews, demonstrations, recommendations, and lifestyle-related content, social media influencers have become increasingly important in shaping consumer attitudes toward FMCG products. Their influence is particularly relevant in categories such as food and beverages, personal care products, cosmetics, and household goods, where purchasing decisions are often spontaneous and strongly affected by social recommendations.

Given the characteristics of FMCG products and the increasing reliance on digital information sources, understanding the role of social media influencers in shaping consumers' purchase intentions has become an important research issue. Investigating this relationship may provide valuable insights for both academics and practitioners seeking to understand consumer behavior in contemporary digital marketplaces.

2.4 Social Media Influencer Antecedents

The effectiveness of social media influencer marketing largely depends on the characteristics perceived by consumers. Previous research suggests that influencers' ability to shape attitudes and behavioral intentions is not solely determined by the size of their audience but also by a set of personal and social attributes that enhance their persuasive power (Ohanian, 1990; Vrontis et al., 2021). These attributes, commonly referred to as influencer antecedents, represent the factors that influence how consumers perceive, evaluate, and respond to influencer-generated content.

Within the influencer marketing literature, several antecedents have been identified as critical determinants of influencer effectiveness. Although the literature identifies several influencer antecedents, including expertise and attractiveness, the present study focuses on four antecedents that are most closely aligned with the Theory of Reasoned Action and the FMCG context: trust, credibility, influencer-product congruence, and subjective norms. These factors influence consumers' perceptions of influencers and contribute to the development of favorable attitudes toward promoted products and brands. Consequently, they play a crucial role in shaping consumers' purchase intentions.

Building upon the Theory of Reasoned Action, influencer antecedents may affect both attitudinal and normative dimensions of consumer decision-making. On the one hand, characteristics such as trust, credibility, and influencer-product congruence can positively influence consumers' evaluations of endorsed products. On the other hand, social norms generated through influencer communities may create social pressure that encourages consumers to adopt similar purchasing behaviors.

Given their theoretical and managerial relevance, the present study focuses on four major influencer antecedents: trust, credibility, influencer-product congruence, and subjective norms. These antecedents are integrated into the proposed conceptual framework to explain Moroccan consumers' attitudes toward influencers and their purchase intentions toward FMCG products.

3. Conceptual Framework and Research Hypotheses

3.1 Conceptual Model

Drawing upon the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and prior research in influencer marketing, this study proposes a conceptual framework to examine the determinants of Moroccan consumers' purchase intentions toward Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG). The proposed model integrates four key antecedents of social media influencer effectiveness, namely trust, credibility, influencer-product congruence, and subjective norms.

According to TRA, behavioral intentions are shaped by individuals' attitudes and perceived social influences. In the context of influencer marketing, consumers' attitudes toward influencers are expected to be influenced by the extent to which influencers are perceived as trustworthy, credible, congruent with the promoted products, and socially endorsed. These perceptions contribute to the formation of favorable attitudes toward influencers, which may subsequently influence both brand attitudes and purchase intentions.

Furthermore, attitude toward the brand is expected to play a mediating role between attitude toward the influencer and consumers' purchase intentions. Consequently, the proposed framework provides a comprehensive understanding of how influencer-related antecedents shape consumer responses and purchasing behavior in the FMCG sector.

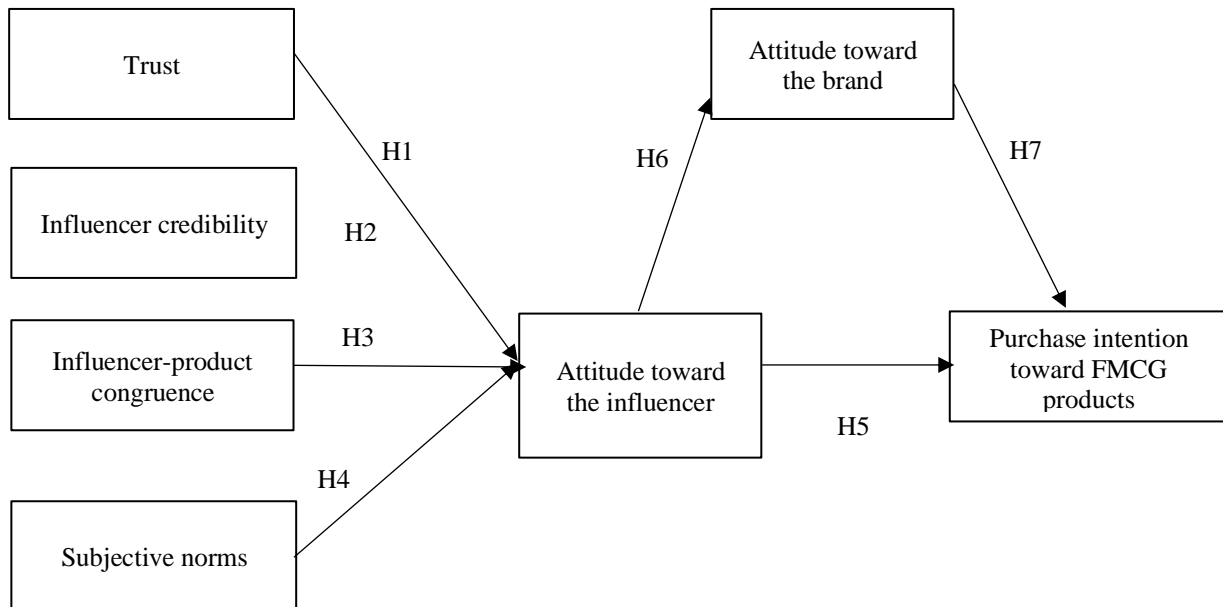


Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Framework and Research Hypotheses

Developed by the authors based on Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), Vrontis et al. (2021), and Chetioui et al. (2022).

Figure 1 illustrates the proposed conceptual framework of the study. Based on the Theory of Reasoned Action and prior research in influencer marketing, a series of hypotheses are developed to examine the relationships between influencer antecedents, attitudes, and purchase intention toward FMCG products.

3.2 Research Hypotheses

3.2.1 Trust in the Influencer

Trust is a fundamental element in consumer decision-making and relationship building. It refers to consumers' confidence in the reliability, honesty, and integrity of a source of information. In the context of influencer marketing, trust plays a crucial role because consumers often rely on influencers' recommendations when evaluating products and making purchasing decisions. Trust helps establish long-term relationships with consumers (Keen, 1997), encourages future purchases (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999), and increases consumers' willingness to engage with endorsed brands (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2001). Previous studies suggest that consumers frequently perceive influencers as authentic and trustworthy sources of information, which positively affects their evaluations and attitudes. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Trust in the influencer positively and significantly affects consumers' attitude toward the influencer.

3.2.2 Influencer Credibility

Credibility is widely recognized as one of the most important determinants of persuasive communication. Influencers perceived as credible are more likely to influence consumers' attitudes and behavioral intentions because their recommendations are considered reliable and convincing. Ohanian (1990) argues that source credibility enhances persuasive effectiveness, while Nam and Dan (2018) found that consumers tend to place greater trust in influencers perceived as credible. Similarly, De Veirman et al. (2017) highlighted the importance of influencer credibility in shaping followers' responses on social media platforms. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Influencer credibility positively and significantly affects consumers' attitude toward the influencer.

3.2.3 Influencer–Product Congruence

Influencer–product congruence refers to the perceived fit between an influencer and the products he or she promotes. A high level of congruence contributes to the authenticity of endorsements and strengthens consumers' confidence in influencer recommendations. Previous research suggests that congruence positively influences consumers' attitudes toward both the influencer and the promoted brand (Ekinici & Riley, 2003; Choi & Rifon, 2012). Consumers are more likely to respond favorably when the influencer's image, expertise, and lifestyle are consistent with the characteristics of the endorsed product. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Influencer–product congruence positively and significantly affects consumers' attitude toward the influencer.

3.2.4 Subjective Norms

According to the Theory of Reasoned Action, subjective norms represent the perceived social pressure that influences an individual's behavior (Ajzen, 2011). They reflect the extent to which important reference groups, such as family members, friends, and peers, encourage or discourage a particular behavior. In social media environments, influencers can contribute to the formation of subjective norms by shaping opinions and creating social endorsement. Previous studies have demonstrated that subjective norms significantly affect consumers' attitudes and behavioral intentions (Rhodes & Courneya, 2003; Hegner et al., 2017). Consequently, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Subjective norms positively and significantly affect consumers' attitude toward the influencer.

3.2.5 Attitude toward the Influencer

Attitude toward the influencer reflects consumers' overall evaluation of an influencer and represents an important determinant of consumer behavior in influencer marketing contexts. Positive attitudes toward influencers are generally associated with favorable evaluations of their recommendations and increased responsiveness to endorsed products. De Veirman et al. (2017) found that favorable perceptions of influencers positively affect consumers' attitudes and behavioral intentions. Consequently, consumers who hold positive attitudes toward influencers are more likely to develop purchase intentions and favorable attitudes toward promoted brands. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H5: Attitude toward the influencer positively and significantly affects consumers' purchase intention toward FMCG products.

H6: Attitude toward the influencer positively and significantly affects consumers' attitude toward the FMCG brand.

3.2.6 Attitude toward the Brand and Purchase Intention

Attitude toward the brand refers to consumers' overall evaluation of a brand based on cognitive, affective, and behavioral considerations (Fishbein, 1963; Jean et al., 2014). Positive brand attitudes are generally associated with stronger purchase intentions and greater consumer preference. Previous research suggests that favorable attitudes toward a brand significantly influence consumers' willingness to purchase products associated with that brand. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H7: Attitude toward the FMCG brand positively and significantly affects consumers' purchase intention toward FMCG products.

4. Methodology

4.1 Measurement Scales

All constructs included in the research model were adapted from previously validated scales in the literature, with minor modifications to fit the context of social media influencer marketing and Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG). The questionnaire was originally developed in English and subsequently translated into French. French was selected because it is widely used in higher education, business, and professional communication in Morocco and is commonly understood by the target population (Benzakour, 2007). To ensure semantic equivalence between the original and translated versions, the back-translation procedure was employed, following the recommendations of Chetioui et al. (2020b).

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section included measurement items related to the study constructs, namely trust, influencer credibility, influencer-product congruence, subjective norms, attitude toward the influencer, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intention. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). The second section gathered demographic information, including gender, age, educational attainment, occupation, and time spent on Instagram.

4.2 Sample and Data Collection

The target population of this study consisted of Moroccan consumers familiar with social media influencers. To ensure respondents possessed the required level of familiarity, a screening question was included at the beginning of the questionnaire. Respondents who indicated that they were unfamiliar with social media influencers were excluded from the study.

Data were collected through an online survey administered to Moroccan social media users. A total of 211 valid responses were obtained and retained for analysis. All completed questionnaires were considered usable and were subsequently analyzed to assess the reliability and validity of the measurement scales, as well as to test the proposed research hypotheses.

Regarding the demographic profile of the respondents, the sample comprised 193 females (91.5%) and 18 males (8.5%). This gender distribution reflects the profile of Instagram users who responded to the survey and should be considered when interpreting the findings. In terms of age distribution, 173 respondents (82%) were under 35 years old, 31 respondents (14.7%) were between 35 and 44 years old, 6 respondents (2.8%) were between 45 and 54 years old, and only 1 respondent (0.5%) was between 55 and 60 years old.

A detailed summary of the respondents' demographic characteristics is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Survey respondent profile (n= 211)

<i>Measure</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage(%)</i>	<i>Mesure</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Gender	Female	193	91,5	Job	Retired	1	0,5
	Male	18	8,5		Looking for a job	13	6,2
Age	18-24	62	29,4	Housewife	3	1,4	
	25-34	111	52,6	Teacher/professor	1	0,5	
	35-44	31	14,7	Employed	124	58,8	
	45-54	6	2,8	Student	69	32,7	
	55-60	1	0,5	Time spent in Instagram	Less then an hour	23	10,9
Education	Bac	22	10,4	1 to 2 hours	91	43,1	
	Bac+2	25	11,8	3 to 4 hours	67	31,8	
	Bac+3	46	21,8	More than 4 hours	30	14,2	
	Bac+5	81	38,4				
	Doctorate	37	17,5				

The demographic profile indicates that the sample is predominantly composed of young female respondents. This profile is consistent with previous studies highlighting the strong presence of younger consumers on social media platforms and their higher engagement with influencer-generated content. Consequently, the sample appears particularly relevant for investigating the impact of social media influencers on consumers' purchase intentions.

4.3 Data Analysis Procedure

To test the proposed conceptual model and the associated hypotheses, this study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM is a multivariate statistical technique widely used in marketing and consumer behavior research to examine complex relationships among latent constructs measured through multiple indicators. The method is particularly appropriate for predictive research and theory

development, as it allows the simultaneous assessment of both measurement and structural models (Hair et al., 2010).

The analysis was conducted using the PLS-SEM approach, which comprises two complementary stages. The first stage involves the assessment of the measurement model to evaluate the reliability and validity of the constructs. The second stage focuses on the assessment of the structural model to examine the hypothesized relationships among the study variables (Gefen et al., 2000).

The reliability of the measurement model was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). Following established recommendations, Cronbach's alpha values above 0.60 and CR values above 0.70 indicate satisfactory internal consistency (Bagozzi et al., 1991; Chin, 1998; Henseler et al., 2009). Convergent validity was evaluated through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with values above 0.50 indicating an acceptable level of convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Discriminant validity was assessed using both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). According to Henseler et al. (2015), discriminant validity is established when the square root of the AVE exceeds the correlations between constructs and when HTMT values remain below the recommended threshold of 0.85.

The structural model was evaluated through the examination of path coefficients, coefficients of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and effect sizes (f^2). The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates the proportion of variance explained by the predictor variables, while Q^2 values assess the predictive relevance of the model. Effect sizes (f^2) were examined to determine the relative contribution of each exogenous construct to the explanatory power of the endogenous variables. Together, these indicators provide a comprehensive assessment of the model's explanatory and predictive capabilities.

4.4 Assessment of the Measurement Model

The assessment of the measurement model was conducted to evaluate the reliability and validity of the constructs included in the study. Following the recommended PLS-SEM procedure, the evaluation began with the examination of indicator reliability through the analysis of outer loadings, followed by the assessment of construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

As shown in Table 2, all indicator loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, demonstrating satisfactory indicator reliability. Furthermore, the values of Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.774 to 0.859, while Composite Reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.869 to 0.915. These results exceed the recommended thresholds of 0.60 and 0.70, respectively, confirming the internal consistency and reliability of the measurement scales.

Convergent validity was assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The AVE values ranged from 0.657 to 0.783, all exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Therefore, the constructs demonstrate adequate convergent validity, indicating that the indicators effectively measure their corresponding latent variables.

Discriminant validity was evaluated using both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). As presented in Table 3, the square roots of the AVE values are greater than the inter-construct correlations, satisfying the Fornell-Larcker criterion. In addition, all HTMT values remain below the recommended threshold of 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015), providing further evidence of discriminant validity.

Brand attitude and subjective norms were operationalized using single-item measures; therefore, reliability coefficients were not applicable for these constructs.

Overall, the results confirm that the measurement model exhibits satisfactory reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, thereby supporting the adequacy of the constructs for subsequent structural model assessment.

Table 2. Loadings, Reliability, and Convergent Validity

<i>Construct</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Outer loadings</i>	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>AVE</i>
Brand attitude	ATT_BRAND	1,000			
Attitude toward the influencer	ATT_INF_1	0,788	0,829	0,887	0,664
	ATT_INF_2	0,899			
	ATT_INF_3	0,821			
	ATT_INF_4	0,741			
Congruence	CONGRU_1	0,813	0,774	0,869	0,689
	CONGRU_2	0,853			
	CONGRU_4	0,824			
Credibility	CRED_1	0,816	0,827	0,885	0,657
	CRED_2	0,763			
	CRED_3	0,853			
	CRED_4	0,809			
Purchase intention	PUR_1	0,838	0,845	0,896	0,684
	PUR_2	0,789			
	PUR_3	0,811			
	PUR_4	0,867			
Subjective norms	SN	1,000			
Trust	TRUST_1	0,808	0,859	0,915	0,783
	TRUST_2	0,921			
	TRUST_3	0,920			

Table 3. Fornell and Larcker criterion and HTMT

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
(1) ATT_BRAND	1,000	0,342	0,381	0,677	0,776	0,765	0,660
(2) ATT_INF	0,601	0,815	0,700	0,271	0,658	0,760	0,509
(3) CONGRUENCE	0,447	0,615	0,830	0,732	0,272	0,820	0,553
(4) CREDIBILITY	0,500	0,637	0,618	0,811	0,638	0,422	0,638
(5) PUR_INT	0,588	0,687	0,533	0,573	0,827	0,752	0,222
(6) SUBJECTIVE NORMS	0,222	0,384	0,240	0,247	0,348	1,000	0,720
(7) TRUST	0,667	0,635	0,519	0,618	0,596	0,317	0,885

Note: Diagonal and italicized are the square roots of AVE. Below the diagonal elements are the correlations between the construct's values. Above the diagonal elements are the HTMT values.

4.5 Assessment of the Structural Model

Following the validation of the measurement model, the structural model was assessed to examine the proposed relationships among the study constructs and to test the research hypotheses. The significance of the path coefficients was evaluated using the bootstrapping procedure with 500 resamples, as recommended in PLS-SEM studies (Tenenhaus et al., 2005).

The results indicate that the four antecedents of social media influencers explain 57.2% of the variance in attitude toward the influencer ($R^2 = 0.572$). More specifically, trust ($\beta = 0.287$, $p < 0.01$), influencer-product congruence

($\beta = 0.271$, $p < 0.01$), influencer credibility ($\beta = 0.251$, $p < 0.01$), and subjective norms ($\beta = 0.166$, $p < 0.01$) all exert positive and significant effects on consumers' attitudes toward influencers. Therefore, hypotheses H1, H2, H3, and H4 are supported.

These findings suggest that consumers develop more favorable attitudes toward influencers whom they perceive as trustworthy, credible, and congruent with the products they promote. Furthermore, the significant effect of subjective norms highlights the importance of social influence in shaping consumers' perceptions of social media influencers.

The results also reveal that attitude toward the influencer has a positive and significant effect on both attitude toward the FMCG brand ($\beta = 0.601$, $p < 0.01$) and purchase intention toward FMCG products ($\beta = 0.274$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, hypotheses H5 and H6 are supported. These findings indicate that favorable evaluations of influencers contribute not only to stronger purchase intentions but also to more positive attitudes toward the promoted FMCG brands.

Furthermore, attitude toward the FMCG brand positively and significantly influences purchase intention toward FMCG products. Therefore, H7 is supported. This result confirms the important role of brand attitudes in explaining consumers' purchasing behavior and suggests that consumers who develop favorable perceptions of FMCG brands are more likely to express purchase intentions.

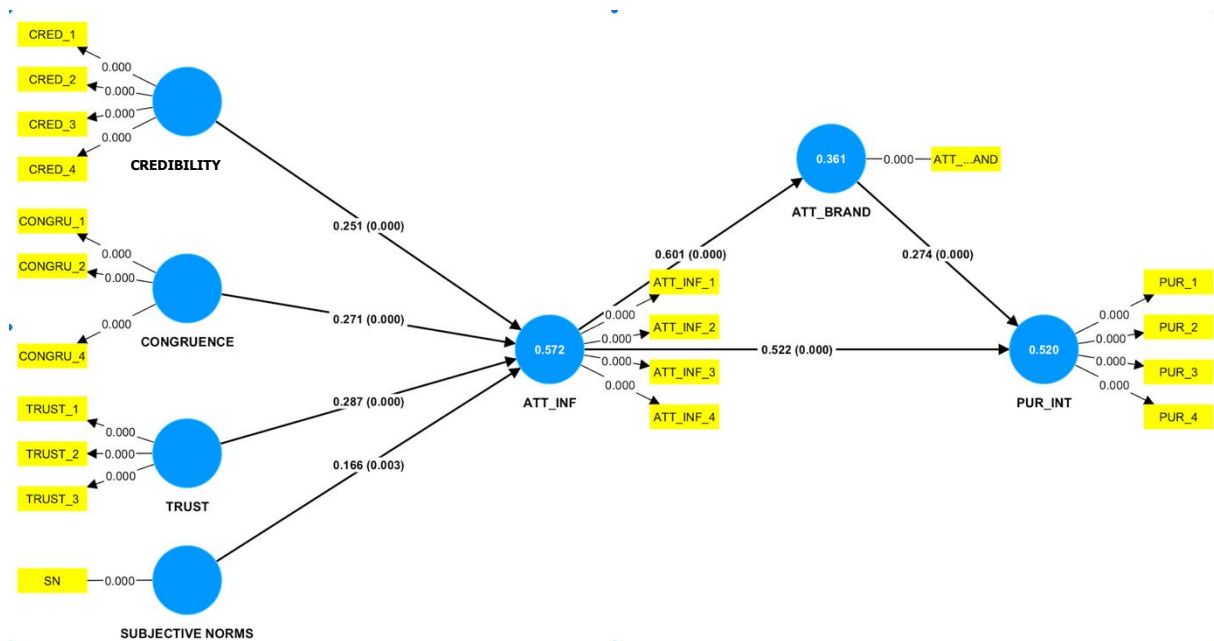
Overall, the structural model results provide empirical support for the proposed conceptual framework and confirm the significant role of influencer-related antecedents in shaping attitudes and purchase intentions toward FMCG products.

Table 4. Structural Model Results and Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses	β value	t value	P value	f ²	Interpretation	Conclusion
H1: TRUST → ATT_INF	0.287	4.665	0.000	0.109	Weak effect	Supported
H2: CREDIBILITY → ATT_INF	0.251	3.620	0.000	0.073	Weak effect	Supported
H3: CONGRUENCE → ATT_INF	0.271	4.616	0.000	0.101	Weak effect	Supported
H4: SN → ATT_INF	0.166	3.015	0.003	0.057	Weak effect	Supported
H5: ATT_INF → PUR_INT	0.522	7.846	0.000	0.363	Strong effect	Supported
H6: ATT_INF → ATT_BRAND	0.601	12.520	0.000	0.566	Strong effect	Supported
H7: ATT_BRAND → PUR_INT	0.274	4.227	0.000	0.100	Weak effect	Supported

Note: significance level is 1%.

Figure 2. Structural Model Results



4.6 Explanatory Power

The explanatory power of the model was assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2). The coefficient of determination (R^2) measures the proportion of variance in an endogenous construct explained by its predictor variables. Higher R^2 values indicate greater explanatory power of the model (Shmueli & Koppius, 2011).

According to Cohen (1988), R^2 values of 0.26, 0.13, and 0.02 can be interpreted as substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. As presented in Table 5, all endogenous constructs exhibit R^2 values exceeding 0.26, indicating substantial explanatory power. These results suggest that the proposed model effectively explains consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions toward FMCG products.

To further evaluate the contribution of each predictor variable, effect sizes (f^2) were examined. The f^2 statistic measures the impact of an exogenous construct on an endogenous construct by assessing the change in R^2 when the predictor is removed from the model. Following Cohen's (1988) guidelines, f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effects, respectively. The obtained effect sizes confirm the meaningful contribution of the predictor variables to the explanatory power of the model.

Finally, predictive relevance was assessed using the Stone-Geisser Q^2 criterion. All Q^2 values were greater than zero, indicating satisfactory predictive relevance and confirming the model's ability to predict the endogenous constructs. Therefore, the proposed model demonstrates both substantial explanatory power and adequate predictive capability.

Table 5. Explanatory Power of the Model

Predictors	Outcomes	R ²	f ²	Q ²
CREDIBILITY	ATT_INF	0.572	0.073	0.550
CONGRUENCE	ATT_INF	0.572	0.101	0.550
TRUST	ATT_INF	0.572	0.109	0.550
SUBJECTIVE NORMS	ATT_INF	0.572	0.057	0.550
ATT_INF	ATT_BRAND	0.361	0.566	0.358
ATT_BRAND	PUR_INT	0.520	0.100	0.431
ATT_INF	PUR_INT	0.520	0.566	0.431

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of social media influencer antecedents on Moroccan consumers' purchase intentions toward Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG). Drawing upon the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), the proposed model investigated the effects of trust, credibility, influencer-product congruence, and subjective norms on attitude toward the influencer, as well as the subsequent effects on brand attitude and purchase intention.

The findings reveal that trust significantly and positively influences consumers' attitudes toward influencers. This result confirms the central role of trust in influencer marketing and supports previous studies emphasizing that consumers are more likely to develop favorable attitudes toward influencers whom they perceive as reliable, honest, and authentic (Chopra et al., 2020). In digital environments characterized by information overload, trust appears to reduce uncertainty and increase consumers' confidence in influencer recommendations.

Similarly, influencer credibility was found to positively influence attitude toward the influencer. This finding is consistent with the work of Ohanian (1990), Nam and Dan (2018), and De Veirman et al. (2017), who highlighted the importance of credibility in enhancing persuasive effectiveness. Consumers tend to value influencers who are perceived as knowledgeable and competent, particularly when evaluating products promoted through social media platforms.

The results also indicate that influencer-product congruence positively affects attitude toward the influencer. This finding supports previous research suggesting that consumers respond more favorably to endorsements when there is a clear fit between the influencer's image and the promoted product (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Ekinci & Riley, 2003). A high level of congruence enhances the perceived authenticity of influencer recommendations and strengthens consumer confidence in the endorsement.

In addition, subjective norms were found to exert a significant positive influence on attitude toward the influencer. This result is consistent with the Theory of Reasoned Action, which emphasizes the role of social influence in shaping individual attitudes and behavioral intentions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). The findings suggest that consumers are influenced not only by the characteristics of influencers themselves but also by the opinions and behaviors of their social environment.

A closer examination of the path coefficients reveals that trust emerged as the strongest antecedent of attitude toward the influencer ($\beta = 0.287$), followed by influencer-product congruence ($\beta = 0.271$), credibility ($\beta = 0.251$), and subjective norms ($\beta = 0.166$). This finding suggests that Moroccan consumers place greater emphasis on the perceived authenticity and trustworthiness of influencers than on social pressure or perceived expertise alone. In the FMCG context, where purchasing decisions are often routine and characterized by low involvement, consumers may rely more heavily on trusted recommendations from influencers than on extensive information processing. This highlights the importance of building authentic and transparent relationships between influencers and their audiences in order to maximize marketing effectiveness.

The study further demonstrates that attitude toward the influencer significantly affects both attitude toward the FMCG brand and purchase intention. These findings highlight the strategic importance of influencers as intermediaries between brands and consumers. Consumers who hold favorable attitudes toward influencers are more likely to transfer these positive perceptions to the brands endorsed by those influencers and subsequently express stronger purchase intentions.

Furthermore, attitude toward the FMCG brand was found to positively influence purchase intention, confirming the importance of brand perceptions in consumer decision-making. This finding suggests that favorable evaluations of FMCG brands increase consumers' likelihood of purchasing products endorsed through influencer marketing campaigns.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the growing literature on influencer marketing by extending the Theory of Reasoned Action to the FMCG context in an emerging market. The findings confirm the relevance of both attitudinal and social factors in explaining consumers' responses to influencer-generated content. From a managerial perspective, the results suggest that FMCG brands should carefully select influencers who are perceived as trustworthy, credible, and congruent with the products they promote. Building collaborations with such influencers may enhance brand perceptions and strengthen consumers' purchase intentions.

Overall, the findings suggest that consumers' attitudes toward influencers constitute a central mechanism through which influencer characteristics translate into favorable brand perceptions and stronger purchase intentions.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of social media influencer antecedents on Moroccan consumers' purchase intentions toward Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG). Drawing upon the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), the study examined the influence of trust, credibility, influencer-product congruence, and subjective norms on consumers' attitudes toward influencers, as well as the subsequent effects on brand attitude and purchase intention.

The findings demonstrate that all four influencer antecedents significantly and positively affect consumers' attitudes toward influencers. In turn, attitude toward the influencer positively influences both attitude toward the FMCG brand and purchase intention. Furthermore, attitude toward the brand positively affects purchase intention, highlighting the importance of favorable brand evaluations in shaping consumers' purchasing decisions. These results highlight the

important role of social media influencers in shaping consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior within the FMCG sector.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on influencer marketing by extending the application of the Theory of Reasoned Action to the FMCG context in an emerging market. The findings provide empirical evidence regarding the mechanisms through which influencer-related antecedents affect consumers' attitudes and behavioral intentions.

From a managerial perspective, the results suggest that FMCG brands should carefully select influencers who are perceived as trustworthy, credible, and congruent with the products they promote. Such collaborations can contribute to more favorable brand evaluations and stronger purchase intentions among consumers. Marketing managers should therefore focus not only on the popularity of influencers but also on the quality of the relationship they establish with their audiences.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the data were collected using a convenience sampling approach, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, the study was conducted exclusively in Morocco, restricting the applicability of the results to other cultural contexts. Third, the sample was predominantly composed of younger respondents and female participants. Finally, the research focused solely on Instagram influencers, while other social media platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook may generate different consumer responses.

Future research could extend this work by examining additional influencer characteristics, investigating other product categories, and conducting cross-cultural comparisons between developed and emerging markets. Further studies may also explore the influence of emerging social media platforms and analyze how evolving influencer marketing practices continue to shape consumer behavior in digital environments.

Overall, the study confirms the growing importance of influencer marketing as a strategic communication tool capable of shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions in the Moroccan FMCG market.

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