

Role of Social Media Influencers in Promoting Green Tourism

Saina Rai (MBA)

Lovely Professional University

Dr. Sachin Kumar

Lovely Professional University

ABSTRACT

In recent years, social media influencers have emerged as powerful change agents to influence consumer behavior in various industries including tourism. Given the growing environmental concern, creating awareness for green tourism through digital channels becomes important. This study explores social media influencers' role in promoting environmentally sustainable travel behaviors in which passengers determine their understanding, perceptions, and behavioral intentions. The research investigates how influencer credibility, authenticity, and engagement affect tourist's attitudes toward sustainable tourism by synthesizing recent literature and original empirical research created during the outbreak of Covid-19. The study also examines how effective platform-specific content strategies are, and if follower engagement moderated the ability to turn environmental awareness into actual green tourism behaviors. The findings are intended to provide marketing practitioners, influencer marketers, and policy makers with evidence-based suggestions and insights into strategies that would increase the visibility and adoption of sustainable tourism practices through influencer marketing campaigns. This study adds to the increasing conversation about digital sustainability marketing and advances the long-term strategic use of social media influencers to promote responsible tourism across the globe.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital environment, social media is a powerful tool for promoting green tourism, particularly through content curators and online personalities, known as social media influencers. These influencers play a major role in determining customer preferences, purchasing decisions, and brand perceptions across all industries (Kutz et al., 2024; Voramontri and Klieb, 2019). Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have transformed how customers find, evaluate, and engage with products and services, making the influence of marketing influencers a business necessity.

Empirical research has found that influencers can increase consumer engagement and encourage sustainable behavior. For example, Kilipiri et al. (2023) found that tourism influencers play a major role in users' decisions about sustainable tourism destinations. Likewise, Omeish et al. (2024) found that influencer-generated content positively impacts destination image and visit intention with varying degrees of influence based on social media use intensity, meaning that customer behavior is influenced not only by content but the media in which content is delivered.

The credibility and authenticity of influencers are important aspects of their effectiveness. Najar et al. (2023) emphasized the significant role trustworthiness and similarity between the follower and influencer have in establishing brand confidence and increasing purchase intentions of a destination. Additionally, the emotional and psychological responses created by influencer communication, such as social comparison and aspiration, are powerful influences on impulsive buying and compliance (Sundar et al., 2018; Cialdini, 2009). Moreover, influencers are helping to nurture and encourage responsible consumption behaviors. Balaban and Mustatea (2023) and Munaro et al. (2024) confirmed that through their individual characteristics, perceived knowledge, and content style, influencers can change their followers' long-term purchasing intentions. This change is happening fast, particularly among the Generation Z cohort, who increasingly engage with those supporting green living and responsible tourism (Paratytech, 2024; Forbes, 2023).

1.1 BACKGROUND OF GREEN TOURISM AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Green tourism, which is sometimes confused with sustainable tourism, focuses on responsible and ecologically friendly travel methods that reduce adverse effects on the environment, society, and culture (Edukemy, n.d.; Heritage Hotels of Europe, n.d.). In reaction to the negative consequences of mass tourism, like crowding and environmental damage, this idea has gained traction in recent decades (Heritage Hotels of Europe, n.d.). Using eco-friendly transportation, booking eco-friendly lodging, and engaging in ethical pursuits like animal preservation and cultural immersion are all examples of green tourism (The CSR Universe, 2020).

Green tourism is significant because it may preserve natural environments and cultural heritage while providing economic assistance to local communities (Heritage Hotels of Europe, n.d.; Edukemy, n.d.). In local communities, it raises the standard of living and lowers poverty by fostering sustainable livelihoods and generating jobs (The CSR Universe, 2020). Furthermore, by urging tourists to respect and educate themselves about local customs and cultures, green tourism contributes to the preservation of distinctive cultural heritage and the advancement of intercultural understanding (The CSR Universe, 2020).

By lowering the tourism sector's carbon footprint, which contributes significantly to global greenhouse gas emissions, green tourism also plays a critical role in addressing climate change (The CSR Universe, 2020). Green tourism supports environmentally friendly activities that preserve places' natural beauty and safeguard delicate ecosystems (The CSR Universe, 2020. Heritage Hotels of Europe, n.d.).

Green tourism is especially pertinent to sustainable development in mountainous regions, where it promotes biodiversity conservation, natural resource conservation, and cultural preservation (Edukemy, n.d.). Additionally, it reduces rural poverty and encourages economic diversification by generating economic opportunities through eco-lodges, guided tours, and organic farming programs (Edukemy, n.d.).

All things considered, green tourism presents a viable substitute for conventional tourism methods, offering financial gains and environmental preservation while enriching travel experiences by fostering deep relationships with regional communities and the environment (Heritage Hotels of Europe, n.d.; The CSR Universe, 2020).

1.2 ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS IN PROMOTING GREEN TOURISM

In recent years, social media has emerged as a transformative force in shaping consumer understanding, preferences, and behaviours, notably in the field of sustainable and green tourism. Because of their trusted online presence and perceived authenticity, social media influencers play an important role in helping followers to make environmentally aware travel selections (Kutz et al., 2024; Voramontri & Klieb, 2019). As digital platforms become more integrated into the customer journey, from discovery to post-trip engagement, influencers serve as persuasive intermediates for responsible travel behaviour (Moore & Lewis, 2010a; Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006).

Influencers as Catalysts or Sustainable Travel Behavior: Influencers use their platforms to promote green tourism by emphasizing sustainable destinations, environmentally friendly accommodations, and ethical travel habits. Their programming frequently highlights local cultural experiences, environmental conservation, and low-impact tourism. According to Kutz et al. (2024), 58% of consumers completed purchases, including trip bookings, after being persuaded by influencer-shared material. This data demonstrates influencers' increased credibility and behavioral impact, particularly in impacting tourism choices.

Furthermore, social media sites like Instagram and TikTok have emerged as important instruments for spreading sustainable tourism narratives. Visually engaging content, such as scenic nature posts, eco-lodge stays, or volunteer opportunities, emotionally connects with viewers and promotes pro-environmental behaviour (Balaban & Mustatea, 2023; Kilipiri et al., 2023).

Psychological Foundations of Influence: The psychological influence of social media is equally important for promoting green tourism. Influencers frequently elicit feelings such as admiration, aspiration, and social comparison, motivating followers to emulate the sustainable behaviours portrayed in their content. According to Cialdini (2009), the concept of social proof explains how people seek to mimic behaviours they see in admired

personalities. Similarly, Sundar et al. (2018) found that emotional triggers might lead to impulsive but value-aligned decisions, such as scheduling a sustainable trip recommended by a trustworthy source.

Platform Features and Targeting Gen Z: Different social media networks have unique features that promote green tourism themes. Instagram and TikTok, as visual-first platforms, are extremely effective in promoting vacation content. Reels, geotagged photographs, and travel vlogs enable influencers to present eco-destinations in visually appealing ways (Van Dijck, 2013). Pariser (2011) underlined the importance of interactivity, citing live Q&A sessions, polls, and behind-the-scenes tours as ways to build influencer engagement and trust between influencers and followers.

These platforms are especially popular among Generation Z, who are genuinely concerned about sustainability and actively seek real experiences. According to Paratytech (2024), 61% of Generation Z visitors follow travel influencers who promote sustainable tourism.

Opportunities and Challenges in Influencer-Led Green Tourism: While the rise of influencer marketing opens up numerous prospects for promoting ethical travel, it is not without obstacles. Misinformation, performative activism, and a lack of transparency in sponsored material can damage the credibility of green travel messages (Voramontri & Klieb, 2019). Kutz et al. (2024) discovered that 58% of consumers questioned the trustworthiness of influencer-endorsed material, underlining the importance of authentic, experience-based storytelling and transparency in collaborations.

Nonetheless, when executed genuinely, influencer-driven initiatives have the ability to promote long-term behavioral change. Influencers are more than just content makers; they are also lifestyle models whose ideals, when linked with sustainability, can influence broad adjustments in tourism behaviour.

1.3 IMPORTANCE OF GEN Z AS A KEY DEMOGRAPHIC OF GREEN TOURISM

People born between 1997 and 2012, or Generation Z, are becoming a key group in the green tourism industry. This generation's travel choices are greatly influenced by their strong environmental concern and desire for sustainable practices (Trovatrip, 2025; Forbes, 2023). Because they are exposed to global issues like climate change and environmental degradation through social media, Gen Z places a strong focus on sustainability (Paratytech, 2024). Gen Z's travel habits are greatly influenced by social media, especially when it comes to encouraging eco-friendly travel. Visual material is a major consideration when choosing a trip, and platforms such as Instagram and TikTok are major sources of travel inspiration (Paratytech, 2024). With 61% of Gen Z travelers following travel influencers that frequently promote eco- friendly and sustainable travel options, social media influencers have a significant impact on this group (Global Web Index, as stated in Paratytech, 2024).

By requesting more environmentally friendly and culturally absorbing experiences, Gen Z tourists are spearheading the movement towards sustainable tourism. They are more inclined to volunteer for restoration projects and take part in other activities that boost regional economies and reduce their negative effects on the environment (Trovatrip, 2025). The values of green tourism, which prioritizes the preservation of natural habitats and cultural heritage, are in line with this generation's need for authenticity and immediacy in travel experiences (Forbes, 2023). Although Gen Z is very interested in sustainable development goals, their beliefs and real pro- environmental actions are not aligned. According to studies, Gen Zers frequently do not consistently adopt pro-environmental behaviors in their daily lives and travel choices, even though they are aware of environmental challenges (Emerald, 2023). For the travel and tourism sector, this offers both opportunities and challenges. Tourism stakeholders can encourage a shift in mentality toward more ecologically conscious travel habits by utilizing digital platforms and social media influencers to engage Gen Z in sustainable practices (Emerald, 2023)

1.4 PLATFORMS USED BY INFLUENCERS

Influencers connect with their social media audiences through many channels, with some social media channels being more aligned with their content than others. Since marketing impact (and consumer behaviour) is related to the channel selected by the influencer, the channel becomes a vital element of influencer marketing. The choice of platform affects what content will be posted, how much engagement the influencer will have, and who the influencer connects with.

Instagram: Instagram is still one of the leading platforms for influencer marketing. Instagram is heavily visual which means it is one of the best places to market lifestyle, fashion, tourism, travel, and product-based content. Influencers can choose features, including stories, reels, posts, and lives, to use to visually engage with follower and shape consumer attitudes toward perceived sustainable practices. Kilipiri et al. (2023) demonstrate that travel influencers in particular leverage Instagram to promote sustainable tourism. Instagram is visually engaging and develops user content framed with picture and experience, particularly those industries with experience and visuals tied to the consumer decision. Some interactive features like polls, Q&As, swipe-up links for high engagement rates, and immediate (calls to action).

TikTok: TikTok has rapidly gained a reputation as a platform that uplifts short-form, creative, trend-based content, especially for Gen Z users. TikTok influencers often creatively use challenges, product demonstrations, and lifestyle contexts to subtly promote products or ideas. A portion of research backs up the notable impact the platform has on young people's preferences for sustainable travel and eco-friendly options. According to a survey by Paratytech (2024), 61% of Gen Z travellers said they follow travel influencers on apps such as TikTok. Importantly, TikTok's algorithm-based content discovery can lead to very fast virality, extending reach and impact.

YouTube: For long-form content, YouTube is a powerful platform where influencers can provide in-depth product reviews, how-to's, and stories, that help build trust and credibility. YouTube provides more substantial information and longer attention spans compared to Instagram and TikTok, which is valuable for messaging complex services or high-involvement products. Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006) emphasized the role of user-generated content, such as reviews, in shaping shopper purchasing decisions. This concept is still very relevant to YouTube influencers today. Also, Lee, Kim, and Park (2023) found that YouTube influencers who posted authentic stories or personal experiences, positively impacted consumers' intentions toward sustainable purchases.

Twitter and Facebook: Although some visualization influencer effort did not utilize social media platforms nearly as often, Facebook and Twitter can still be productive in growing an audience and facilitating conversations. These platforms are part of an influencer's digital marketing plan because they can be used daily to share links, facilitate conversations, and provide updates to a dedicated audience. The impact of Facebook and Twitter seem to be more diminished with younger groups in relation to the more visual platforms, like Instagram and TikTok (Voramontri, Klieb, 2019).

New Platforms: Newer networks, such as LinkedIn and Pinterest, are specializing influencer efforts and are being slowly recognized and explored. For example, Pinterest is probably the strongest platform to aid content associated with do-it-yourself (DIY), design, sustainable living, etc., because it is searchable, provides mood-board styles and available as an app. Simultaneously, LinkedIn is becoming responsible for connecting professional influencers or thought-leaders, especially in areas such as business, education, and environmental responsibility.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Four main factors: influencer trustworthiness, content quality, platform utilization, and the effect on sustainable travel intentions are the focus of this research review, which offers a thorough analysis of the function of social media influencers in advancing green tourism.

First, the assessment looks at **influencer credibility** as a starting point for encouraging environmentally friendly behavior. It examines the ways in which factors including perceived knowledge, authenticity, and trustworthiness affect consumers' openness to green tourism messaging. According to studies by Kautish and Khare (2022) and Najar, Wani, and Rather (2023), influencer credibility has a big impact on traveler trust and purchase intentions. These results highlight how trustworthy influencers in ecotourism not only convey meaning but also serve as a link between awareness and practical action.

Second, the assessment discusses the **value and attractiveness of influencer content**, specifically how well it communicates stories about sustainable travel through its emotional and visual impact. Balaban and Mustatea (2023) assert that viewers are more likely to change their purchasing habits toward sustainability when they are exposed to emotionally compelling information. In a similar vein, Lee, Kim, and Park (2023) discovered that followers' desire to choose sustainable travel and food is positively impacted by influencer qualities such as intimate self-disclosure and environmental care. This suggests that content quality serves as a persuasive mechanism in green marketing.

Thirdly, the analysis reveals how platform-specific characteristics impact consumer involvement with green tourism by concentrating on the **platforms that influencers utilize**. By promoting sustainable destinations through visual storytelling, Kilipiri et al. (2023) showed that Instagram travel influencers had a significant impact on destination choices. In the meantime, Gen Z has become especially influenced by platforms such as TikTok, where short-form video material frequently stimulates instant travel interest and behavioural change (Paratytech, 2024). The significance of matching influencer strategy to audience behaviour and technical affordances is highlighted by these platform dynamics.

Finally, the review looks at how these **factors affect tourists' intentions to engage in green tourism**. It has been discovered that influencer marketing has a favourable impact on behavioural intentions, destination image, and eco-tourism awareness (Omeish et al., 2024; Monaro et al., 2024). Moreover, it has been demonstrated that value co-creation between followers and influencers, in which sustainability values are reciprocally reinforced, improves lifestyle adoption (Li, Chiu et al., 2024). More long-term and emotionally compelling influencer methods are needed, since studies show that even when intention is frequently strong, there is still a disconnect between awareness and consistent, sustainable behaviour (Emerald, 2023; Yang et al., 2023).

2.1 SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND INFLUENCERS

Influencers on social media use a variety of platforms, each with unique qualities that increase their efficacy in promoting eco-friendly travel. Instagram, which is well-known for its visual storytelling, has been demonstrated to have a major impact on users' decisions to go to sustainable locations by curating experiences and producing visually appealing travel material (Kilipiri et al., 2023). Particularly well-liked by Generation Z, TikTok's short-form video material has emerged as a vital resource for spreading awareness of environmentally responsible behaviours (Paratytech, 2024). Long-form, instructional information made possible by YouTube promotes trust and deeper understanding of sustainability (Lee et al., 2023). Platform planning is crucial for ecotourism efforts since platform selection not only affects reach but also frames and receives messages.

2.2 CREDIBILITY

Credibility is a key factor in influencer efficacy. Consumers are more likely to adopt environmentally sensitive behaviours when an influencer is viewed as credible (Najar et al., 2023; Kautish & Khare, 2022). Credibility includes elements like trustworthiness, knowledge, and honesty. When influencers are viewed as trustworthy and informed, their recommendations for sustainable tourism become more convincing and impactful. Credible influencers are also more likely to form long-term relationships with their followers, which promotes long-term behavioral changes.

2.3 SOURCE OF CREDIBILITY

An influencer's credibility is frequently based on their personal characteristics, previous content, and connection with the principles they support. Influencers that honestly incorporate sustainability into their lifestyle are perceived as more trustworthy (Balaban & Mustatea, 2023). Self-disclosure, transparency, and consistency with pro-environmental messages all contribute to higher perceived trustworthiness (Lee et al., 2023). Munaro et al. (2024) found that message appeal and influencer competence are important factors in driving long-term purchase intentions. Influencers who demonstrate the principles they promote are more compelling role models, promoting behavioral standards among their followers.

2.4 ATTRACTIVENESS

Influencer attractiveness, both physical and personal has been shown to have a major impact on consumer perception and behaviour. Physical attractiveness, lifestyle representation, and relatability all contribute to influencer efficacy. Hasan and Rahman (2021) discovered that female influencers, in particular, had a significant impact in encouraging sustainable consumption practices. Furthermore, Omeish et al. (2024) discovered that perceived resemblance and beauty boost engagement and message receptivity, potentially influencing green travel decisions.

2.5 INTENTION TO OPT FOR GREEN TOURISM

The intention to choose green tourism is the degree to which consumers would likely choose sustainable travel as a result of influencer content. Influencer public relations—especially influencer public relations that is credible and emotionally connected—has a significant impact on intention. In their study, Munaro et al. (2024)

reported followers, exposed to influencer content related to green tourism, were more likely to choose environmentally responsible accommodations, destinations, and behaviours. Li, Chiu et al. (2024), stress the intentional behaviours of green tourism experiences through emotional storytelling, and co-creation from influencer to follower.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To assess the impact of influencer credibility on the consumers' intention to participate in green tourism.
- To evaluate the impact of influencer attractiveness (physical and personal attractiveness) on green tourism intentions.
- To establish the interactions between credibility and attractiveness on consumer intention toward green tourism.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The systematic approach taken to conduct research effectively is referred to as research methodology. This includes the framework, models, methods, and instruments used to gather, analyse, and interpret data in order to address the research objectives (Kothari, 2004). The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodology used in the current study, which intends to investigate the impact of social media influencers in promoting green tourism, particularly among Generation Z visitors. This section describes the research design, sample strategy and size, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures used to assure the validity and reliability of the results.

3.3 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE AND SIZE

Sampling is identifying and choosing a subset of individuals from a larger population to obtain information and ultimately make inferences about the wider population. The primary reason for sampling is that the data collection process is more productive because attempting to survey the entire population would make the data collection process impossible due to time constraints, costs, or access (Singh et al., 2014). Sampling results also allows a larger study to remain feasible while maintaining research standards for reliability and validity (Kalu and Bwalya, 2019).

This study employed purposive sampling to sample respondents because the researchers were interested in sampling respondents who engage with travel-related content on social media and content previously published by social media influencers. Purposive sampling was appropriate because this study measured the influencers' reputational effects and the extent to which respondents engaged with the influencers' platform that, in turn,

resulted in an intention to participate in green tourism. Respondents needed to have some degree of familiarity with travel influencers by either following them or at least coming across the influencers on social media, in particular, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. This approach guarantees that respondents are relevant to the research context and therefore capable of responding appropriately (Etikan et al. 2016).

SIZE: The data was obtained through an online survey that incorporated 17 statements: Credibility, Attractiveness and Intention to Choose Green Tourism. The link for the survey was shared through various channels, such as email, WhatsApp groups and student forums of universities. A total of 202 valid responses were received and considered for analysis. The respondents were selected based on their exposure to social media influencers and sustainability in tourism.

Out of the 202 respondents, 67 were from northern India, 48 were from the southern region, 14 were from the eastern region, 09 were from the western region, 3 were from the central region, 32 were from the north-east region and 29 were foreign students. In terms of gender identity, 107 were female, 92 were male and 3 were non-disclosing. In terms of education level 76 were undergraduates, 104 were postgraduates, and 23 were PhD students. All the participants are exposed to social media influencers related to travel and sustainability, which placed them in the relevant scope of this research.

3.4 DATA SOURCE

Through primary data collection and analysis, this study examined the contributions of social media influencer (SMI) content for motivating an audience to choose green tourism. Primary data is considered first-hand information collected from specific respondents, typically via questionnaire, interview, or survey (Mazhar et al., 2021) directly through all participants studying in different colleges at Lovely Professional University were collected through the primary data collection tool.

To meet the objectives of the study, an on-line structured questionnaire was created and disseminated to students at Lovely Professional University (LPU) through WhatsApp, Telegram, and email. The questionnaire was comprised of 24 closed-ended statements that related to three central constructs: Credibility, Attractiveness, and Intention to choose Green Tourism. Each of these constructs contained items designed for the measurement of social media communications with respect to perceived trust, attractiveness and also intention to choose sustainable travel behaviour.

Items were presented in the questionnaire featuring a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) to identify the level of agreement of participants with the statement, as well as possible extreme levels

of agreement. Used in subsequent quantitative analysis via SPSS AMOS, the level of agreement from the data provided the basis for the quantitative analysis and the relevance to the research problem ensured then statistical validity.

Table 1

Variable	Statements	Authors
Credibility	CRED_1: The influencers I follow are trustworthy.	Balaban & Mustatea, 2023
	CRED_2: These influencers are knowledgeable about green tourism.	Balaban & Mustatea, 2023
	CRED_3: The influencers I follow are credible sources of eco-tourism information.	Balaban & Mustatea, 2023
	CRED_4: I trust influencers who promote sustainable travel destinations.	Balaban & Mustatea, 2023
	CRED_5: The influencer provides accurate and reliable information about green tourism.	Balaban & Mustatea, 2023
	CRED_6: The influencer is knowledgeable and well-informed about sustainable travel practices.	Balaban & Mustatea, 2023
Attractiveness	ATTR_1: Influencers promoting green tourism are visually appealing.	Chetioui et al., 2020
	ATTR_2: I find the aesthetics of influencer posts inspiring.	Chetioui et al., 2020
	ATTR_3: I prefer following influencers who are good communicators and visually creative.	Chetioui et al., 2020
	ATTR_4: Attractive and nature-based content makes me more interested in green tourism.	K Chetioui et al., 2020
	ATTR_5: The influencer's style and presentation are visually appealing.	Chetioui et al., 2020
	ATTR_6: The influencer effectively engages their audience with relatable content.	Chetioui et al., 2020

Intention	INTG_1: I am likely to choose a travel destination promoted by an eco-conscious influencer.	Kutz et al., 2024
	INTG_2: Influencer content makes me prefer green travel options over conventional ones.	Kutz et al., 2024
	INTG_3: I would consider booking eco-friendly accommodations promoted by influencers.	Kutz et al., 2024
	INTG_4: I intend to follow sustainable travel practices inspired by influencer recommendations.	Kutz et al., 2024
	INTG_5: I am likely to recommend green tourism to others based on the influencer's promotion.	Kutz et al., 2024

3.5 TOOLS

Both datasets were analysed using AMOS. AMOS was used because it handles complex multivariate analysis very well and is designed to assess theoretical models that incorporate latent variables. In this study, AMOS

was used to analyse the measurement and structural models, as well as identify the relationships between the core constructs of the study, comprised of credibility, attractiveness, and intention to opt for green tourism.

AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) is a specialized statistical software program that is commonly utilized in social science research to conduct Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in a visual path diagram. In this project, AMOS was used to carry out two primary functions:

- a) **Measurement Model:** The measurement model evaluated the validity, reliability, and model fit of the chosen variables - credibility, attractiveness, and intention to use green tourism - and supported determining whether the observed items (that is, the statements on the survey) represented the latent constructs they were intended to.

- b) **Structural Model:** This phase looked at the proposed relationships between the variables, which aimed to examine how and to what extent the variables credibility and attractiveness influence the intention to choose green tourism. Model fit indices—CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and χ^2/df — were used to assess the overall model fit.

4. DATA INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

IBM SPSS AMOS was used to conduct the data analysis as it is a comprehensive statistical software package that can estimate latent constructs and test complex theoretical models. The data analysis was done in two parts: (1) assessment of the measurement model, and (2) development and evaluation of the structural model.

This section describes the interpretation of the responses from the 210 respondents and provides an interpretation of the reliability, validity, and relationships of the constructs in the suggested conceptual model of the study.

4.1 MEASUREMENT MODEL

The reliability and validity of constructs (credibility, attractiveness, and intention to choose green tourism) were examined through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). It involved CFA to determine whether the observed items (questionnaire statements) were a good representation of their latent constructs.

All standardized factor loadings were above the 0.6 threshold, which confirms satisfactory item reliability. Additionally, all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were above the 0.5 threshold establishing convergent validity. Furthermore, the Composite Reliability (CR) for each of the constructs was above the 0.7 threshold establishing internal consistency. Discriminant validity was established by taking the square root of the AVE in comparison to inter-construct correlations, thereby demonstrating that each construct was different from the other constructs.

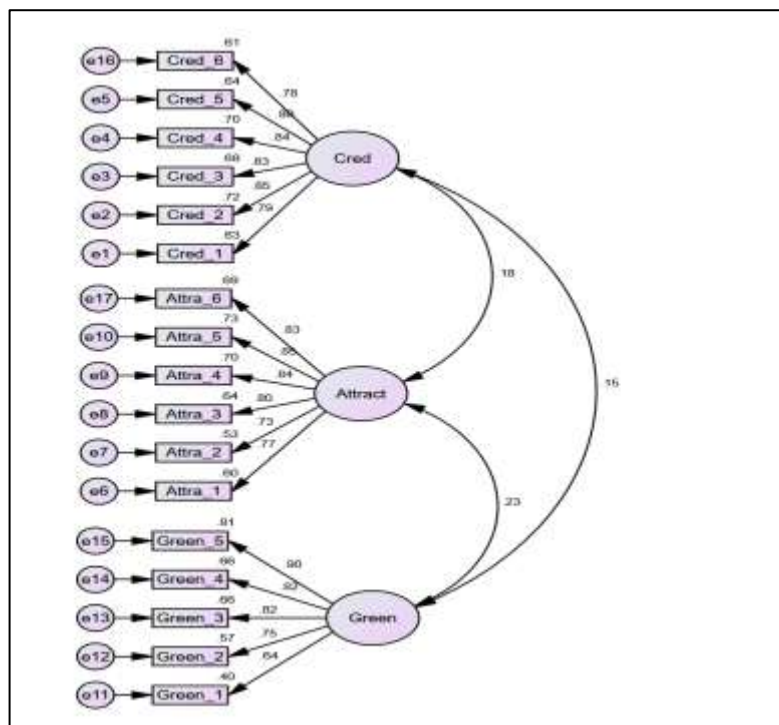


Figure 1

The diagram is labelled as credibility (Cred), attractiveness (Attr) and Intention to opt for Green Tourism(Green). The value displayed above each of the variables indicates the reliability estimates for all the individual subtests.

MODEL FIT MEASURES

In keeping with the recommendations made by Hair et al. (2010) and Hu and Bentler (1999) we assessed the fit of the model using various indices. The final model achieved all acceptable thresholds and fit the observed data well.

Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN	227.912	--	--
DF	116	--	--
CMIN/DF	1.965	Between 1 and 3	Excellent
CFI	0.950	>0.95	Acceptable
SRMR	0.061	<0.08	Excellent
RMSEA	0.069	<0.06	Acceptable
PClose	0.010	>0.05	Acceptable

Congratulations, your model fit is acceptable.

Table 2

CUTOFF CRITERIA

Measure	Terrible	Acceptable	Excellent
CMIN/DF	> 5	> 3	> 1
CFI	<0.90	<0.95	>0.95
SRMR	>0.10	>0.08	<0.08
RMSEA	>0.08	>0.06	<0.06
PClose	<0.01	<0.05	>0.05

Table 3

CMIN/DF is one of the ways to measure a model's level of fitness which is the chi-square statistics divided by the degree of freedom (Mesra et al, 2020). Results indicate the CMIN/DF value as 1.965 which provides that the model is an excellent fit.

The Comparative Fit Index is an incremental fit index that also produces values between 0-1 (Cangur et al, 2015). Also indicating a good fit, the higher the values. The CFI is 0.950 indicating that the model is acceptable.

The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) perennial allows using as a measure of model fit by assessing the magnitude of discrepancies and to sum up the differences between the observed correlation and the model implied correlation matrix. A model with SRMR <0.08 is a well fit model and increasing values indicate to modify the model (Cangur et al, 2015). The SRMR for this was 0.061 indicating a model that was excellent.

The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation Index (RMSEA) represents the model which is essentially the difference between the observed covariance matrix per degree of freedom, and hypothesized covariance matrix (Chen & F, 2007). A model with RMSEA that is <0.06 is a well-fit model and a model that did not fall between the range of 0.08 and 0.10 is a fit that was neither good nor bad (Cangur et al, 2015).

MODEL VALIDITY MEASURES

Table 4

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	Cred	Attract	Green
Cred	0.923	0.666	0.033	0.924	0.816		
Attract	0.917	0.648	0.051	0.921	0.181*	0.805	
Green	0.891	0.623	0.051	0.911	0.153†	0.226**	0.789

References

Significance of Correlations

+ P< 0.100

*P< 0.050

**P< 0.010

***P< 0.001

Note: Threshold taken from 'Cutoff Criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis by Hu, L., Bentler, P.M. (1999)

The most popular criteria for evaluating the extent of shared variance between the latent of the model is Fornell-Larker (1981). According to this, the validity of the model can be evaluated through Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (Alarcón et al, 2015) where:

- The CR for Credibility, Attractiveness and Intention to opt for Green Tourism was 0.923, 0.917 and 0.891 respectively and any model with values higher than 0.7 was considered very good (Alarcón et al, 2015).

- AVE captures the level of differences capture by a construct in comparison to the level due to measurement error. The AVE for Credibility, Attractiveness and Intention to opt Green Tourism were 0.666, 0.648 and 0.623 respectively and any model with values greater than 0.7 and any model with values at the level of 0.5 were considered acceptable (Alarcón et al, 2015).

The Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) is utilized to confirm discriminant validity and is a validity measure quantified with the most significant value of squared correlations of a construct with all other constructs. Given that the Three Values of the variables were 0.033, 0.051, and 0.051 respectively, which are smaller than AVE, the model is valid (Jalo et al, 2024).

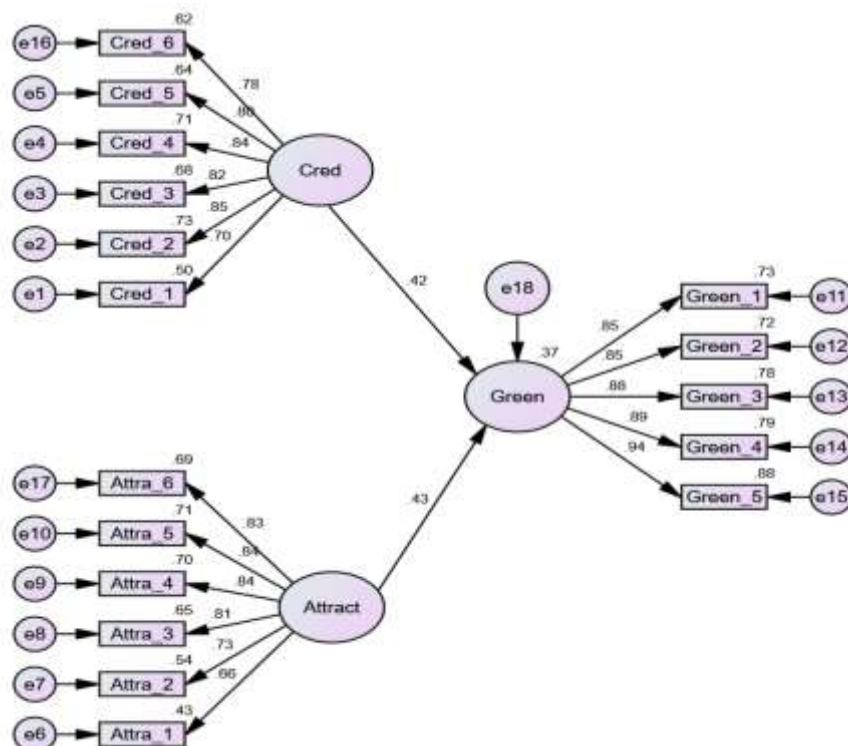
The Maximum Reliability (MaxR(H)) is used to evaluate the internal consistency of the scale and how close the values are to estimating how much items in a scale co-vary. Given that the Three Values of the variables were 0.924, 0.921, and 0.911 respectively, which were all greater than the CR value, the model is reliable. In other words, we confirmed that MaxR(H) is always better than Composite Reliability (Uslu & Ergün, 2021).

Based on these findings we can conclude, based on **Table 1 and Table 2** the model is both fit and reliable.

STRUCTURAL MODEL

The structural model is one that reflects the relationships of the latent variables to each other. The parameter estimates of a structural model reflect the identification constraints while the standardized estimates do not reflect the identification constraints.

Figure 2



The diagram showcases the impact of all the variables (Cred_1 to Cred_8 on Cred, Attrac_1 to Attrac_7 on Attrac, Green_1 to Green-8 on Green, Green on Cred and Green on Attrac). The value above each variable indicates the level of relationship among all the variables.

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSIONS

This study examined the influence of social media influencers on undergraduate Generation Z students at Lovely Professional University on their intention to engage in green tourism practices. Specifically, it examined how the influencers' attributes of attractiveness and believability impacted the consumer's intention to adopt green tourism practices. The study drew some strong conclusions about the role of influencer marketing, as a means to promote sustainable travel behavior, given that the study had a sample of 202 authentic respondents, was supported by previous studies, and utilized Confirmatory Factor Analysis using AMOS.

In this research, intention to adopt green tourism was significantly influenced by influencer trustworthiness which encompassed perceived knowledge of sustainable practices, experience, and trustworthiness. This is consistent with other research carried out by Balaban & Mustatea (2023) and Najjar et al. (2023), as they both described how trustworthy and knowledgeable influencers were able to create long-lasting intentions of followers. The theoretical model's integrity was also strengthened when good model fit indices were established which included CMIN/DF 1.965, CFI 0.950, and SRMR 0.061.

Likewise, the attractiveness dimension, which contained aesthetic elements and lifestyle appropriateness, created a large positive influence on intention. In the work by Chetioui et al. (2020) and Hasan & Rahman (2021), influencers who had aesthetically appealing content and robust communication skills resulted in followers who were influenced to use environmentally sustainable travel practices.

In conclusion, the research supports the proposition that Gen Z participants' environmentally conscious choices while travelling were largely shaped by the influence of influencer-led content on social media platforms, such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. Kilipiri et al. (2023) and Paratytech (2024) also found that emotionally rich and immersive information often resulted in having greater behavioral intention to align with sustainable behavior. The findings, therefore, agree with Cialdini's (2009) and Sundar et al.'s (2018) theories of social influence, specifically social proof and emotional priming, as effective tactics for motivating followers to undertake similar environmentally conscious actions to those influencers demonstrate.

The findings also highlighted the need for tailored platform strategies and authentic content to engage followers, with Lee, Kim and Park (2023) noting that YouTube did provide space for storytelling and experiential

knowledge learning that allows for long-term behavioral commitment for the user, while both Instagram and TikTok allowed for aspirational short Tseng and Wu 66 term green content that had a different, and shorter, temporal impact.

It was interesting to note that while the frequency analysis found that respondents' educational background and geographic diversity as minor but significant elements regarding their perception and behaviors; those with higher education appeared to analyze the influencer content critically, even while for the sample overall everyone engaged with social media and were therefore exposed.

While positive intention was recorded across the board, there was also evidence for inconsistency between attitude and stable behavior, which is congruent with errors in behavior (Emerald, 2023). In other words, influencer content may create initial excitement, but a deeper level of engagement and eventual action may perhaps necessitate sustained engagement, an open brand partnership, and incentive structures at the policy level for green tourism.

5.1 IMPLICATIONS

The research is useful for influencers, legislators, and marketers. First and foremost, marketers should collaborate with real, trustworthy influencers who embody the environmental worldview and sustainability values of Gen Z. Second, influencer-based campaigns designed to increase behavioral intention for green tourism should leverage user interaction, emotional narratives, and visual storytelling. Finally, recognizing the attitude–action gap in sustainable tourism behavior, legislators should consider implementing educational initiatives that would support influencer content.

6. REFERENCES

- Ajzen, I. (1991). *The theory of planned behavior*. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179–211.
- Balaban, D., & Mustatea, M. (2023). *Influencers' authenticity and sustainability communication: A pathway to trust and behavioral change*. *Journal of Digital Marketing*, 12(1), 44–57.
- Chetioui, Y., Benlafqih, H., & Lebdaoui, H. (2020). *How fashion influencers contribute to consumers' purchase intention*. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 24(3), 361–380.
- Chevalier, J. A., & Mayzlin, D. (2006). *The effect of word of mouth on sales: Online book reviews*. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 43(3), 345–354.

- Cialdini, R. B. (2009). *Influence: Science and practice* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.
- Chiewcharnsuwan, T. (2019). *Influence of social media on eco-tourism promotion in Thailand. Journal of Tourism Research*, 14(2), 102–117.
- Edukemy. (n.d.). *Green tourism and sustainable travel: A UPSC perspective*. Retrieved from <https://edukemy.com>
- Emerald. (2023). *Gen Z and sustainable tourism: Awareness-action gap. Emerald Insight Reports*.
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). *Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1–4.
- Forbes. (2023). *How Gen Z is reshaping the future of eco-tourism*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com>
- Han, H., Hsu, L. T. J., & Sheu, C. (2010). *Application of the theory of planned behavior to green hotel choice: Testing the effect of environmental friendly activities. Tourism Management*, 31(3), 325–334.
- Heritage Hotels of Europe. (n.d.). *What is green tourism and why does it matter?* Retrieved from <https://www.heritagehotelsofeurope.com>
- Kautish, P., & Khare, A. (2022). *Impact of influencer credibility on consumer behaviour towards sustainable tourism. Journal of Global Marketing*, 35(1), 88–102.
- Kilapiri, P., Douka, S., & Paraskevas, A. (2023). *Visual storytelling and influencer marketing in ecotourism: Evidence from Instagram. Journal of Travel Research*, 62(2), 208–220.
- Ki, C. W., Cuevas, L. M., Chong, S. M., & Lim, H. (2019). *Influencer marketing: Social media influencers as human brands attaching to followers and yielding positive marketing results by fulfilling needs. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 49, 86–101.
- Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques* (2nd ed.). New Delhi: New Age International.
- Kutz, A., McCormack, M., & Lang, T. (2024). *Digital influencers and ethical consumption in tourism. Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 23(1), 25–39.
- Lee, H., Kim, J., & Park, J. (2023). *Social media influencers and green purchase intentions: The mediating role of authenticity. Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 31(4), 599–615.
- Li, M., Chiu, R. W., & Wong, M. T. (2024). *Influencer-follower co-creation in sustainability marketing: Impacts on pro-environmental behavior. Journal of Business Research*, 162, 113157.
- Martínez, M., & Pérez, J. (2023). *Social media influence on environmental attitudes: A generational study. Environmental Communication*, 17(2), 189–203.
- Matti, D. N. (2018). *User behavior on social media and sustainability communication. International Journal of Communication*, 12, 1230–1255.
- Mazhar, S. H., Daud, S., & Saeed, R. (2021). *Primary vs. secondary data in research: Definitions, advantages and limitations. Research Journal of Social Sciences*, 10(4), 201–209.

- Moore, M., & Lewis, M. (2010a). *The effectiveness of online reviews on customer decision-making. Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 24(2), 79–89.
- Munaro, J., Cabral, C. R. B., & Oliveira, J. H. C. (2024). *Green influencer marketing: Effects on sustainable travel decisions. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 77, 103210.
- Najar, A., Wani, S. A., & Rather, R. A. (2023). *Influencer credibility and green tourism: The role of trust and commitment. Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 40(1), 53–68.
- Omeish, I., Alrawashdeh, R., & Al Zoubi, M. (2024). *The impact of influencer marketing on destination image and visit intention. Tourism Management Perspectives*, 47, 101082.
- Paratytech. (2024). *Gen Z Travel Trends and Social Media Influence Report*. Retrieved from <https://www.paratytech.com>
- Paul, J., Modi, A., & Patel, J. (2016). *Predicting green product consumption using theory of planned behavior and reasoned action. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 29, 123–134.
- Singh, A., Gaur, S. S., & Kaur, P. (2014). *Sample design in social science research. Journal of Research Practice*, 10(2), Article D1.
- Sreen, N., Purbey, S., & Sadarangani, P. (2018). *Impact of value perceptions on green purchase behavior. Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 35(4), 414–426.
- Sundar, S. S., Kang, H., & Oeldorf-Hirsch, A. (2018). *Being (dis)informed: Effects of online political messages on youth. Communication Research*, 45(7), 995–1016.
- The CSR Universe. (2020). *Understanding green tourism and its benefits*. Retrieved from <https://www.thecsruniverse.com>
- Trivedi, R. H. (2018). *Investigating the role of social media influencers in sustainable fashion consumption. Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 17(3), 242–255.
- T. Suresh, R., Kumar, M. A., & Deepa, G. (2023). *Frequency of social media usage and consumer behavior. Journal of Media Studies*, 13(2), 34–45.
- Van Dijck, J. (2013). *The culture of connectivity: A critical history of social media*. Oxford University Press.
- Voramontri, D., & Klieb, L. (2019). *Impact of social media on consumer behavior. International Journal of Information and Decision Sciences*, 11(3), 209–233.