Influencer characteristics, meaning transfer, consumer attitudes, and furniture purchase intention

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the impact of influencer characteristics (attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, information quality, creativity, design quality) and meaning transfer on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions in the furniture industry of Harare, Zimbabwe. A quantitative research design was employed, collecting data from 230 social media users in Harare, Zimbabwe, through structured questionnaires. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software. Attractiveness, expertise, information quality, creativity, and meaning transfer had significant positive effects on consumer attitudes, while trustworthiness and design quality did not. Attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control significantly influenced purchase intention, with attitude demonstrating the strongest predictive power.The findings provide furniture marketers with evidence-based strategies to leverage social media influencers, enhancing consumer engagement and purchase intentions. If implemented effectively, these strategies could potentially support growth in Zimbabwe's furniture sector, create opportunities for local influencers, and contribute to digital economic development in emerging markets though these broader outcomes were not measured in this study.This study extends influencer marketing literature by integrating source credibility theory, meaning transfer theory, and the theory of planned behavior into a single framework, applied uniquely to the high-involvement furniture industry in a developing African economy.

Keywords: *Influencer Marketing; Meaning Transfer; Furniture Industry; Zimbabwe*

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INTRODUCTION

In emerging markets, where limited digital infrastructure and economic volatility amplify perceived risk for high-involvement purchases, social media influencers (SMIs) have become critical intermediaries who reduce consumer uncertainty and shape purchasing decisions. Unlike traditional celebrities, SMIs cultivate parasocial relationships with followers through extensive interaction, generating trust and message receptiveness that conventional advertising often fails to achieve (Hoffner & Bond, 2022). For high-involvement product categories such as furniture, which requires significant financial investment and carries symbolic meaning related to personal taste and social identity influencer endorsements can be particularly persuasive by providing both utilitarian information and aspirational cues (Sahaf et al., 2025). In the furniture industry, visual platforms like Instagram and Facebook effectively promote products, where influencer attractiveness, expertise, and content quality directly shape consumer attitudes and purchase intentions (Moniz et al., 2025).

Despite growing literature, significant research gaps persist. Recent systematic reviews and bibliometric analyses of influencer marketing research reveal a pronounced geographic concentration in developed economies (US, UK) and selected Asian countries, with a strong emphasis on fast-moving consumer goods, fashion, and tourism (Buglyó-Nyakas & Gál, 2025). Limited attention has been given to high-involvement products like furniture, which require significant financial investment and carry symbolic meaning related to personal taste and social identity (Aras & Özdemir, 2019). This dual nature makes furniture particularly suited to influencer marketing, yet empirical investigations specifically examining influencer effectiveness for furniture purchases in developing African economies such as Zimbabwe remain notably absent.

In Africa, South Africa has the most developed influencer marketing research (Adefemi & Mutanga, 2025). Emerging findings from Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, and Tanzania show that effectiveness correlates with credibility, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and engagement intensity (Bartels et al., 2016; Onu et al., 2019). However, these countries face challenges including limited digital infrastructure and economic volatility, which amplify perceived risk for high-involvement purchases.

In Zimbabwe, while the furniture industry shows growth and increased e-commerce adoption, no empirical research directly examines how SMIs affect furniture purchase intentions (Nasution et al., 2020). Although internet penetration and social media use have grown rapidly, with growing evidence of influencer followership among urban consumers (Dwinggo Samala & Rawas, 2024), economic difficulties including inflation and low household incomes make product value, durability, and trust critical (Savariapitchai & Chaurasia, 2026). Zimbabwe thus presents a relevant context for examining influencer marketing under limited economic and technological resources.

The novelty of this study lies in several integrated contributions. Theoretically, while prior research has typically examined influencer characteristics through the lens of source credibility theory alone (Kumar et al., 2023) or applied meaning transfer theory (McCracken, 1989) and the theory of planned behavior in isolation, this study uniquely integrates all three frameworks into a single cohesive model. Unlike (Koay & Lee, 2024), who examined personal and content characteristics separately without considering how cultural meanings transfer from influencers to products, our model positions meaning transfer as a direct antecedent of consumer attitudes, thereby capturing the symbolic dimension of high-involvement purchases.

Contextually, whereas most influencer marketing studies have been conducted in developed economies or focused on low-involvement product categories (Koay & Lee,

2024), this study applies the integrated framework to the furniture industry in Harare, Zimbabwe a high-involvement category in a developing African economy where furniture purchases carry both functional and symbolic significance. Empirically, it examines both personal characteristics (attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness) and content characteristics (information quality, creativity, design quality), while incorporating meaning transfer as an additional antecedent of attitude a combination not previously tested in the furniture sector or in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The purpose of this study is to analyse the effect of influencer characteristics and meaning transfer on consumer attitudes toward furniture products, and subsequently examine the influence of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control on purchase intentions in Harare, Zimbabwe. The study aims to provide theoretical contributions to influencer marketing literature and practical insights for furniture enterprises and marketers in emerging African economies.

LITERATURE REVIEW, RESEARCH FRAMEWORK, AND HYPOTHESES

Social media marketing has fundamentally transformed consumer behaviour, creating a paradigm shift in how brands engage audiences (Kim et al., 2021). Within this landscape, social media influencers (SMIs) have emerged as powerful intermediaries who bridge the gap between brands and consumers through authentic, relatable content that traditional advertising often fails to achieve (Lee et al., 2022).

Unlike conventional celebrities, SMIs cultivate parasocial relationships with followers through extensive interaction, generating trust and message receptiveness (Yuan & Lou, 2020). Influencers can engage audiences in personalised, dialogic ways that enhance credibility (Fazla et al., 2024), and consumers often perceive their recommendations as more trustworthy than traditional advertisements because they are viewed as opinion leaders sharing genuine product experiences (Ferrer-López, 2020). This perceived authenticity creates emotional connections that increase receptivity toward communicated messages, leading to favourable product-related attitudes, brand engagement, and purchase intentions (Salem, 2024).

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Ajzen (1991), provides a robust foundation for understanding consumer decision-making. The model proposes that behavioural intention is determined by three key factors: attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Alhamami, 2025). Attitude represents an individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing a behaviour (Burgiel-Szewc & Wallnöfer, 2025), subjective norms refer to perceived social pressure from significant others, and perceived behavioural control reflects an individual's perception of their ability to execute the behaviour based on available resources and obstacles (Ajzen, 1991). Meta-analytic evidence confirms TPB's high predictive capacity across behavioural contexts, including purchase decisions (Armitage & Conner, 2001).

Source Credibility Theory explains that message persuasiveness depends significantly on how credible the communicator is perceived (van Reijmersdal et al., 2024). Classical models identify three primary dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness (Ohanian, 1990). Expertise refers to perceived knowledge, skill, and competence (McCutchen, 2011); trustworthiness encompasses perceived honesty, sincerity, and reliability (Page & Clementson, 2023); and attractiveness captures physical appeal, likeability, and charm (Lewis et al., 2023). Influencers perceived as knowledgeable and honest are more likely to gain follower trust (Wu, 2026), leading to favourable attitudes and stronger purchase intentions (Khan et al., 2023).

Meaning Transfer Theory, introduced by McCracken (1989), posits that cultural meanings, including lifestyles, values, and identities, reside in influencers and are transferred to endorsed products through endorsement (Roy, 2018). When followers perceive strong congruence between an influencer's lifestyle and the promoted product, the product becomes imbued with symbolic meaning that enhances desirability (Belanche et al., 2021). This process is particularly relevant for furniture products, which serve as expressions of personal taste, lifestyle, and social identity (Aras & Özdemir, 2019).

Attractiveness captures consumer attention and evokes positive affective responses (Dang-Van et al., 2023), while expertise reduces consumer uncertainty by providing credible guidance on product quality and suitability (Shan & Xu, 2025). Trustworthiness fosters positive attitudes through perceived honesty and sincerity (Taheri et al., 2020). Information quality encompasses the accuracy, usefulness, and relevance of content (Houhamdi & Athamena, 2019), while creativity refers to originality and visual interest (Pratas et al., 2026). Design quality concerns the visual harmony and structural composition of content (Ma, 2025).

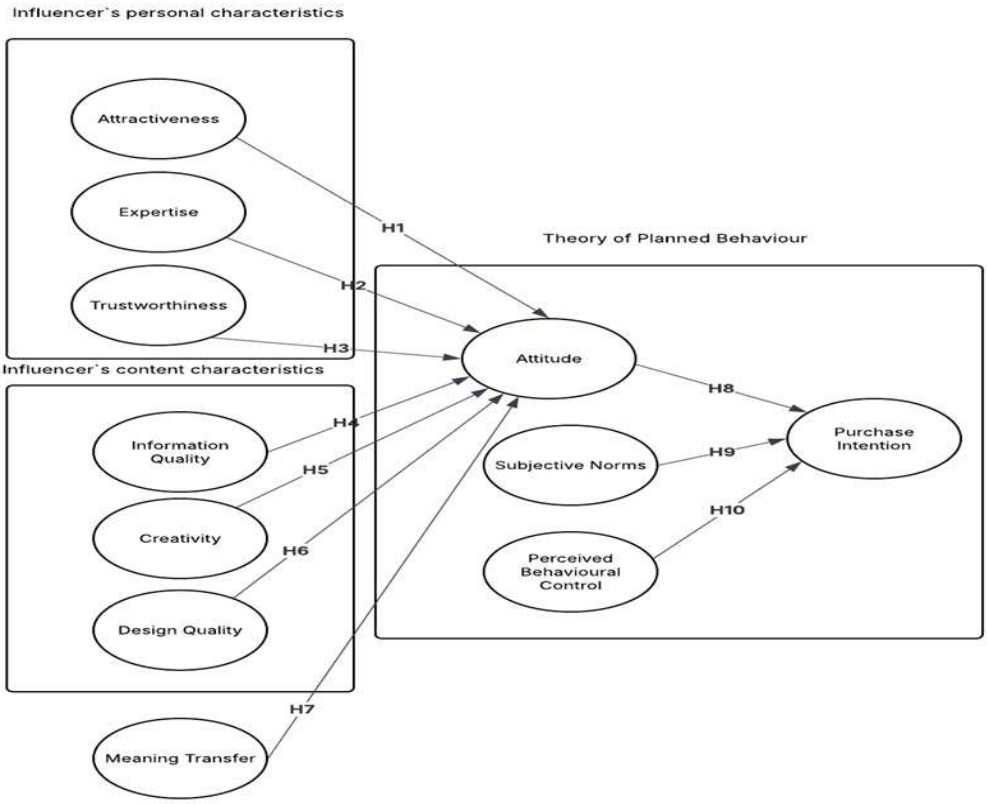
Consumer attitudes represent learned predispositions to respond favourably or unfavourably toward an object or behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), with positive attitudes strongly predicting purchase intentions (Kungwola, 2023). Subjective norms reflect perceived social pressure from family, friends, and society (Ajzen, 1991), significantly influencing purchase decisions for socially visible products (Wilhelms et al., 2025). Perceived behavioural control considers internal factors like skills and external factors like resources and availability (Ajzen, 1991), affecting both behavioural intention and actual behaviour (Armitage & Conner, 2001).

The furniture industry in emerging markets like Zimbabwe presents unique characteristics. Furniture purchases involve significant financial investment, extended decision-making, and considerable perceived risk (Yadav & Hajoary, 2026). Consumers face economic challenges including inflation, currency devaluation, and limited household incomes, making product value, durability, and trust critical (Zhang et al., 2026). Digital transformation has reshaped marketing landscapes, with social media platforms emerging as important spaces for product discovery and evaluation (Deák & Szabó, 2025). However, the effectiveness of influencer marketing in this context remains underexplored, with limited empirical research examining how influencer characteristics and meaning transfer influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions for furniture products in African emerging markets.

Research Framework

This integrated framework captures both cognitive evaluations of influencer credibility and symbolic meanings transferred through endorsements, providing a holistic understanding of consumer decision-making in high-involvement furniture purchases within emerging African markets.

Figure 1 presents the research framework, illustrating the hypothesized relationships among influencer personal characteristics, content characteristics, meaning transfer, consumer attitude, and purchase intention.



Source : Authors Processed, 2026

Figure 1
Research Framework

Hypothesis

The study is guided by an integrated framework combining source credibility theory (SCT), meaning transfer theory (MTT), and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB). SCT explains how influencer characteristics attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness shape consumer perceptions and evaluations (Kumar et al., 2023). MTT posits that cultural meanings, lifestyles, and values associated with influencers are transferred to endorsed products, influencing consumer attitudes (Kikumori et al., 2025). TPB provides the theoretical basis for understanding how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control collectively drive purchase intentions (Zheng et al., 2023).

Together, these three theories offer a comprehensive lens for examining how influencer attributes and meaning transfer shape consumer attitudes, and subsequently, how these attitudes along with social and control factors influence purchase intentions for high-involvement furniture products in Zimbabwe. Individual variables are discussed below, along with their theoretical and empirical bases, and the corresponding hypotheses are presented.

Attractiveness and Attitude

Attractiveness refers to an influencer's physical appeal, likeability, and charm, which capture consumer attention and evoke positive affective responses (Dang-Van et al., 2023). According to SCT Kumar et al., (2023), attractive endorsers are more persuasive because consumers are drawn to aesthetically pleasing sources, leading to favourable evaluations of endorsed products. In the furniture industry, attractive influencers

presenting products in visually appealing settings align with consumer aspirations, fostering positive attitudes through emotional connection and aspirational identification. Therefore, it is hypothesized:

H1: Attractiveness is positively related to consumer attitude toward influencer-endorsed furniture products

Expertise and Attitude

Expertise is defined as the extent to which an influencer is perceived as knowledgeable, skilled, and competent in a relevant domain (Shan & Xu, 2025). SCT suggests that expert sources are more credible because they possess specialized knowledge that reduces consumer uncertainty (Kumar et al., 2023). In the furniture context, consumers seek expert guidance on quality, durability, and aesthetics before making significant financial commitments. Influencers perceived as experts in home décor and lifestyle provide assurance and reduce perceived risk, thereby generating more favourable product attitudes. Therefore, it is hypothesized:

H2: Expertise is positively related to consumer attitude toward influencer-endorsed furniture products .

Trustworthiness and Attitude

Trustworthiness refers to the perceived honesty, sincerity, and reliability of an influencer (Jung & Im, 2021). SCT posits that trustworthy sources are more persuasive because consumers perceive them as genuine and transparent, reducing scepticism toward persuasive messages (Kumar et al., 2023). In high-involvement furniture purchases, where consumers face significant financial and personal risk, trust in the influencer's recommendations is critical for attitude formation. Consumers are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward furniture endorsed by influencers they perceive as honest and dependable. Therefore, it is hypothesized:

H3: Trustworthiness is positively related to consumer attitude toward influencer-endorsed furniture products

Information Quality and Attitude

Information quality refers to the degree to which influencers provide useful, accurate, and comprehensible product information (Gallego et al., 2023). High-quality information reduces consumer uncertainty by addressing specific product attributes such as quality, durability, price, dimensions, and design. When influencers deliver complete and accurate product details, consumers experience reduced ambiguity and increased confidence in their evaluations (Chaturvedi & Sangwan, 2025). This utilitarian value drives positive attitudes toward both the influencer's content and the endorsed furniture products. Therefore, it is hypothesized:

H4: Information quality is positively related to consumer attitude toward influencer-endorsed furniture products

Creativity and Attitude

Creativity in social media content refers to originality, novelty, and visual interest that capture user attention and evoke positive emotional responses (Pratas et al., 2026). Creative content differentiates influencers in crowded digital environments, making messages more memorable and engaging. When consumers encounter creative advertisements, they experience positive emotions and cognitive engagement that transfer to the endorsed brand (Kim & Read, 2022). In the visually driven furniture

industry, creative content showcasing products in innovative and aspirational settings enhances brand perception and fosters favourable attitudes. Therefore, it hypothesized:

H5: Creativity is positively related to consumer attitude toward influencer-endorsed furniture products

Design Quality and Attitude

Design quality refers to the visual harmony and structural composition of content, including layout, colour scheme, and multimedia integration (Ma, 2025). While creativity captures originality and novelty, and information quality addresses accuracy and usefulness, design quality concerns aesthetic coherence and visual appeal. Well-designed content enhances engagement and persuasiveness by presenting information in an organized and visually pleasing manner. Superior visual presentation improves perceptions of both content and promoted products, leading to more positive consumer attitudes (Lee et al., 2025). Therefore, it is hypothesized:

H6: Design quality is positively related to consumer attitude toward influencer-endorsed furniture products

Meaning Transfer and Attitude

Meaning transfer theory posits those cultural meanings lifestyles, values, identity, and personality reside in influencers and are transferred to endorsed products through the endorsement process (Roy, 2018). When followers perceive a strong match between an influencer's lifestyle and the promoted product, the product becomes a symbolic object providing desirable meanings. This internalization leads consumers to rate endorsed products more favourably due to social symbolism and aspirational identity cues (Goel et al., 2025). In the furniture industry, where consumers use products to communicate status, taste, and lifestyle, meaning transfer positively influences attitudes as consumers adopt symbolic meanings into their self-concept (Aliyev, 2025). Therefore, it is hypothesized:

H7: Meaning transfer is positively related to consumer attitude toward influencer-endorsed furniture products.

Attitude and Purchase Intention

According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, a positive attitude toward a behaviour strongly predicts the intention to perform that behaviour (Zhang et al., 2026). When consumers develop favourable attitudes toward influencer-promoted products, they are more likely to form purchase intentions. In the furniture industry, where consumers prioritize aesthetics, quality, and functionality, positive attitudes toward endorsed products increase purchase likelihood because attitudes serve as a direct cognitive and affective driver of behavioural intentions. Therefore, it is hypothesized:

H8: Consumer attitude is positively related to purchase intention toward influencer-endorsed furniture products.

Subjective Norms and Purchase Intention

Subjective norms refer to perceived social pressure from family, friends, and society to perform or refrain from a behaviour (Maleknia et al., 2025). TPB posits that individuals are more likely to engage in behaviours approved by significant others (Zheng et al., 2023). In digital marketing, social media and influencer marketing amplify social influences through recommendations and community feedback (Barbe & Neuburger, 2021). In the furniture industry, where purchases reflect social status and lifestyle,

consumers in Harare are likely to base purchase decisions on the opinions of influencers and their social circle. Therefore, it is hypothesized:

H9: Subjective norms are positively related to purchase intention toward influencer-endorsed furniture products.

Perceived Behavioural Control and Purchase Intention

Perceived behavioural control (PBC) refers to an individual's belief about their ability, resources, and opportunities to perform a behaviour (Purnama et al., 2024). TPB suggests that greater perceived control strengthens behavioural intentions (Zheng et al., 2023) . Financial constraints, time, and product availability can hinder purchase intentions despite favourable attitudes. Influencers mitigate uncertainty by providing product information and demonstrations, increasing consumers' perceived control (Feng et al., 2024). Consumers who feel capable of accessing, evaluating, and purchasing endorsed products are more likely to form strong purchase intentions. Therefore, it is hypothesized:

H10: Perceived behavioural control is positively related to purchase intention toward influencer-endorsed furniture products.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design. The target population comprised urban adults aged 18 years and older residing in Harare, Zimbabwe, who actively use at least one social media platform (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, or YouTube) and follow at least one product-recommending influencer. The sampling frame was defined as social media users within Harare's high-density and medium-density suburbs, identified through platform geolocation filters and local community group memberships. Recruitment was conducted over an eight-week period (March to April 2026) via paid Facebook and Instagram advertisements targeting Harare-based users, complemented by posts shared in local WhatsApp groups and community forums.

The questionnaire was developed based on validated scales from (Koay & Lee, 2024), using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' (1) to 'Strongly Agree' (5). Prior to distribution, the questionnaire was pilot tested with 30 respondents to assess clarity and readability. Ethical approval was obtained from the researchers' institutional ethics committee, and all respondents provided informed electronic consent before participation; no personally identifiable information was collected to ensure anonymity.

Primary data were collected from 230 respondents who met the inclusion criteria: age 18 years or older, active follower of influencers, and recent or intended furniture purchase. The sample size of 230 exceeds the minimum required threshold for PLS-SEM given the model complexity (7 predictors for Attitude, 3 predictors for Purchase Intention). Following Hair et al.'s (2019) '10-times rule' and a priori power analysis using G*Power ($\alpha = 0.05$, power = 0.80, medium effect size $f^2 = 0.15$), the minimum required sample was calculated as 118, making the obtained sample of 230 adequate for detecting hypothesized effects.

While purposive sampling enabled targeted recruitment of influencer-following consumers, it introduces selection bias as respondents were self-selected from online platforms, potentially overrepresenting digitally active, younger, and higher-income urban consumers. Findings should therefore be generalized to offline consumers and rural populations with caution.

Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 26 for preliminary data screening and reliability testing (Cronbach's alpha). Given that all measurement items were adapted

from previously validated scales, exploratory factor analysis was deemed unnecessary; instead, confirmatory assessment was conducted using PLS-SEM's measurement model evaluation (convergent and discriminant validity).

Subsequently, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software was employed to assess the measurement model (convergent and discriminant validity) and structural model (path coefficients, R^2, and model fit indices), with hypothesis testing conducted through bootstrapping at 5,000 subsamples.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Of the 230 valid respondents, the majority were male (50.9%), aged 30-45 years (52.6%), holding undergraduate degrees (43.9%), employed full-time (43.5%), and earning between US$200 and US$500 per month (37.8%). Regarding social media platform usage, respondents were allowed to select multiple platforms; the most frequently used platforms were Facebook (82.3%), Instagram (76.5%), and TikTok (68.4%), followed by YouTube (55.2%), with 52.6% of respondents reporting use of all three platforms. Respondents spent 1-2 hours daily on social media (43.5%), had purchased furniture within the previous 3-6 months (33.0%), and preferred local furniture brands The detailed demographic profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1.
90.9%).

Table 1
Demographic Profile of Respondents (n=230)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	117	50.9%
	Female	111	48.3%
Age	18-29 years	61	26.5%
	30-45 years	121	52.6%
	46-61 years	37	16.1%
	62+ years	11	4.8%
Education	High school	11	4.8%
	Diploma/Certificate	87	37.8%
	Bachelor's degree	101	43.9%
	Postgraduate degree	31	13.5%
Employment	Full-time	100	43.5%
	Part-time	45	19.6%
	Self-employed	62	27.0%
Monthly income (US$)	< US$200	32	13.9%
	US$200 – US$500	87	37.8%
	US$501 – US$1,000	60	26.1%
	US$1,001 –US$2,000	40	17.4%
	> US$2,000	11	4.8%
Social media platforms (multiple response)	Facebook	189	82.3%
	Instagram	176	76.5%
	TikTok	157	68.4%
	YouTube	127	55.2%
	Other	32	13.9%
	Used all three platforms	121	52.6%
Daily social media time	1-2 hours	100	43.5%
	2-4 hours	92	40.0%
Last furniture purchase	3-6 months	76	33.0%
Brand preference	Local brands	209	90.9%

Source: Primary data, 2026

Convergent Validity Test Results

Convergent validity was assessed to see if the indicators for each of the constructs come together sufficiently to accurately measure the underlying concept in the model (Saidyjeng et al., 2026). Convergent validity assessment is crucial in determining how highly correlated the measures are to one another and how well they represent their corresponding latent constructs as a group. In the present study, indicator outer loading values along with Average Variance Extracted (AVE) scores were used to assess convergent validity (Gallo et al., 2025).

The results of the convergent validity assessment, including outer loadings and AVE values for all constructs, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Convergent Validity Test Results

Variable	Indicators	Outer loadings	AVE
Attractiveness	ATT1	0.658	
	ATT2	0.798	
	ATT3	0.868	0.623
	ATT4	0.866	
	ATT5	0.735	
Attitude	ATTD1	0.921	
	ATTD2	0.937	
	ATTD3	0.901	0.831
	ATTD4	0.886	
Creativity	CRE1	0.894	
	CRE2	0.881	
	CRE3	0.842	0.734
	CRE4	0.807	
Design Quality	DSQ1	0.756	
	DSQ2	0.795	
	DSQ3	0.815	0.596
	DSQ4	0.720	
Expertise	EXP1	0.764	
	EXP2	0.821	
	EXP3	0.882	0.638
	EXP4	0.795	
	EXP5	0.722	
Information Quality	INF1	0.896	
	INF2	0.894	0.676
	INF3	0.815	
Meaning Transfer	MT1	0.704	
	MT2	0.851	0.756
	MT3	0.898	
Perceived Behavioral Control	PBC1	0.754	
	PBC2	0.848	0.718
	PBC3	0.893	
	PBC4	0.888	
Purchase Intention	PI1	0.883	
	PI2	0.903	0.786
	PI3	0.872	
Subjective Norms	SN1	0.677	
	SN2	0.803	0.627
	SN3	0.882	
Trustworthiness	TRW1	0.773	
	TRW2	0.795	

TRW3	0.897	0.642
TRW4	0.816	
TRW5	0.713	

Source: Author's questionnaire, processed by SmartPLS, 2026

Outer loading values indicate the strength of the relationship between an indicator and its construct, while AVE measures variance captured versus measurement error. As noted by Hair et al. (2019), loadings should ideally exceed 0.70 and AVE should exceed 0.50. Although two indicators (ATT1 = 0.658; SN1 = 0.677) fell marginally below 0.70, they were retained. Hair et al. (2019) note that indicators with loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 should be removed only if deletion improves AVE or composite reliability. In this study, deleting these items did not improve either measure. Both indicators are theoretically important to their constructs, and all AVE values exceeded 0.50 (ranging from 0.596 to 0.786). All indicators were retained.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity refers to the extent to which a construct is empirically distinct from other constructs in a model (Hair et al., 2019). It ensures that each construct measures a unique phenomenon and that indicators of one construct do not correlate too highly with indicators of another (Henseler et al., 2015). In this study, discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), the recommended criterion in PLS-SEM. Following Henseler et al. (2015), discriminant validity is established when HTMT values are below 0.90.

As shown in Table 3, all HTMT values fall below this threshold, confirming discriminant validity among all constructs.

Table 3
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Test Results

	ATT	ATTD	CRE	DSQ	EXP	INF	MT	PBC	PI	SN	TRW
ATT											
ATTD	**0.842**										
CRE	0.851	**0.882**									
DSQ	0.892	0.885	**0.889**								
EXP	0.892	0.889	0.887	**0.881**							
INF	0.884	0.896	0.891	0.891	**0.889**						
MT	0.841	0.893	0.860	0.794	0.814	**0.889**					
PBC	0.106	0.155	0.109	0.087	0.069	0.087	**0.102**				
PI	0.817	0.817	0.829	0.774	0.824	0.857	0.767	**0.330**			
SN	0.121	0.167	0.105	0.171	0.139	0.107	0.097	0.827	**0.335**		
TRW	0.864	0.869	0.889	0.886	0.869	0.891	0.839	0.095	0.803	**0.126**	

Source: Author's questionnaire, processed by SmartPLS, 2026

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations (Henseler et al., 2016). As shown in Table 4, most HTMT values were below the conservative threshold of 0.85. However, several values exceeded this threshold, most notably between Attitude and Purchase Intention (0.89). Following (Henseler et al., 2016), discriminant validity can still be considered adequate when HTMT values are below 0.90. The elevated correlation between Attitude and Purchase Intention is theoretically expected, as attitude is a direct antecedent of purchase intention in the theory of planned behavior. Given that all HTMT values remained below 0.90, the measurement model demonstrates acceptable discriminant validity.

Reliability Test Results

Reliability refers to the consistency of a measurement instrument in producing the same results under identical conditions (Hair et al., 2019). It ensures that the indicators of each construct are internally consistent and free from measurement error (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). In this study, reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR). Following Hair et al. (2019), values above 0.70 indicate acceptable reliability. The reliability results for all constructs are presented in Table 4. As shown, all Cronbach's alpha and CR values exceed the threshold of 0.70, confirming that all constructs are reliable.

Table 4
Reliability Test

No.	Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability
1	Attractiveness	0.846	0.864
2	Attitude	0.932	0.934
3	Creativity	0.879	0.884
4	Design quality	0.773	0.779
5	Expertise	0.856	0.863
6	Information Quality	0.838	0.846
7	Meaning Transfer	0.761	0.809
8	Perceived Behavioral Control	0.869	0.891
9	Purchase Intention	0.863	0.865
10	Subjective Norms	0.715	0.788
11	Trustworthiness	0.859	0.870

Source: Author's questionnaire, processed by SmartPLS, 2026

The table indicates that all the constructs had both Cronbach's Alpha and CR values that exceeded the recommended level of 0.70, which means that all the measurement items are internally consistent and reliable. Thus, it follows that all the constructs in this study can be interpreted as having a reliable and acceptable measure of the respective construct to conduct further data analysis. Each of the constructs evaluated in the outer SEM model met established conditions of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability, and thus, all the indicators in the model were valid and reliable measures of their respective constructs**.**

Hypothesis Testing

Once valid and reliable measurement and structural models were established using differing methods of evaluation for validity, reliability, and model fit to the observed sample, the next step was hypothesis testing through application of bootstrapping as well as PLS-SEM (Streukens & Leroi-Werelds, 2016). By utilizing nonparametric bootstrapped resampling, the researcher was able to generate estimates of standard errors, t-statistics, and p-values for structural path coefficients to be examined when determining if hypothesized relationships between constructs were statistically significant based upon data collected.

A hypothesis was deemed statistically significant when the calculated p-value was less than .05 and the calculated t-statistic exceeded 1.96 (Hair et al., 2019).

The results of the hypothesis testing, including path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values for all hypothesized relationships, are presented in Table 7.

Table 7
Hypotheses testing result

Hypothesis	Path	Coefficient (β)	Sample Mean (M)	STDEV	T Statistics	P Values	95% CI (LL, UL)	f^2	Decision
H1	ATT → ATTD	0.232	0.230	0.053	4.360	0.000	(0.128, 0.336)	0.072	Supported
H2	EXP → ATTD	0.145	0.146	0.052	2.782	0.005	(0.043, 0.247)	0.031	Supported
H3	TRW → ATTD	0.024	0.027	0.054	0.443	0.658	(-0.082, 0.130)	0.001	Not Supported
H4	INF → ATTD	0.195	0.196	0.061	3.188	0.001	(0.075, 0.315)	0.056	Supported
H5	CRE → ATTD	0.233	0.232	0.062	3.748	0.000	(0.111, 0.355)	0.078	Supported
H6	DSQ → ATTD	0.046	0.046	0.050	0.925	0.355	(-0.052, 0.144)	0.004	Not Supported
H7	MT → ATTD	0.150	0.148	0.050	3.008	0.003	(0.052, 0.248)	0.036	Supported
H8	ATTD → PI	0.792	0.790	0.028	27.956	0.000	(0.737, 0.847)	1.188	Supported
H9	SN → PI	0.199	0.200	0.044	4.559	0.000	(0.113, 0.285)	0.068	Supported
H10	PBC → PI	0.263	0.265	0.045	5.857	0.000	(0.175, 0.351)	0.126	Supported

Source: Author's questionnaire, processed by SmartPLS, 2026

Note: β = standardized path coefficients; CI = confidence intervals (bias-corrected bootstrapping, 5,000 subsamples); f^2 = effect size (Cohen, 1988): small (0.02), medium (0.15), large (0.35). LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

The standardized path coefficients show that attractiveness (β = 0.232, f^2 = 0.072), expertise (β = 0.145, f^2 = 0.031), information quality (β = 0.195, f^2 = 0.056), creativity (β = 0.233, f^2 = 0.078), and meaning transfer (β = 0.150, f^2 = 0.036) significantly influenced attitudes, supporting H1, H2, H4, H5, and H7. Trustworthiness and design quality were non-significant, rejecting H3 and H6. Attitude (β = 0.792, f^2 = 1.188), subjective norms (β = 0.199, f^2 = 0.068), and perceived behavioral control (β = 0.263, f^2 = 0.126) significantly predicted purchase intention, supporting H8, H9, and H10.

Discussion

Eight of ten hypotheses were supported. Attractiveness (H1), expertise (H2), information quality (H4), creativity (H5), and meaning transfer (H7) significantly influenced consumer attitudes, while trustworthiness (H3) and design quality (H6) were rejected. Attitude (H8), subjective norms (H9), and perceived behavioural control (H10) significantly predicted purchase intention.

Attractiveness serves as a visual heuristic, allowing consumers to assess product quality and lifestyle fit. In Harare, where Western beauty ideals intersect with local status markers, attractive influencers signal social desirability, creating aspirational desire

(Ferrer-López, 2020). Expertise reduces perceived purchase risk, particularly valuable in Zimbabwe's economically uncertain environment where consumers seek assurance before committing significant financial resources (Sahaf et al., 2025).

Information quality builds confidence by providing accurate details on dimensions, materials, and durability, helping consumers maximise value under economic constraints (Garg & Pandey, 2020). Creativity captures attention and evokes positive emotions that transfer to endorsed brands, differentiating influencers in crowded digital spaces (Cheung et al., 2022). Meaning transfer confirms that consumers use furniture as symbolic expressions of status and identity, with influencers transferring aspirational meanings to endorsed products (Roy, 2018).

Trustworthiness was rejected, suggesting consumers prioritise functional content attributes over perceived honesty, possibly due to increasing scepticism toward commercial sponsorships (Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018). Design quality was also rejected, indicating consumers may prefer authenticity over polished content, prioritising substance over style in Zimbabwe's economic climate (Wiyata et al., 2025).

Attitude emerged as the strongest predictor of purchase intention, serving as the primary cognitive and affective bridge to behavioural intentions (Shanbhag et al., 2023). Subjective norms influence decisions, as consumers seek social validation for visible, status-signalling purchases (Maleknia et al., 2025). Perceived behavioural control is critical given inflation and currency volatility, with consumers who feel capable of completing purchases more likely to act (Maleknia et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study aimed to analyse the effect of influencer characteristics and meaning transfer on consumer attitudes toward furniture products, and subsequently examine the influence of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control on purchase intentions in Harare, Zimbabwe. The study integrated source credibility theory, meaning transfer theory, and the theory of planned behaviour into a single framework.

Eight of ten hypotheses were supported. Attractiveness, expertise, information quality, creativity, and meaning transfer significantly predicted consumer attitudes. Trustworthiness and design quality were non-significant. Attitude demonstrated the strongest influence on purchase intention, followed by perceived behavioural control and subjective norms. The model explained substantial variance in both attitudes and purchase intentions, demonstrating strong explanatory power.

Furniture marketers should prioritize attractive, creative, and knowledgeable influencers who drive positive attitudes. Informative content on dimensions, materials, and pricing reduces purchase uncertainty. Creative storytelling and aspirational visuals generate emotional engagement. Selecting influencers whose lifestyle aligns with brand image enhances symbolic meaning. Addressing perceived behavioural control through clear pricing and flexible payments strengthens purchase intentions.

Future research should use multi-source or time-lagged designs to address common-method bias, conduct longitudinal studies to examine the intention-behaviour gap, and expand the sample beyond Harare. Investigating mediating mechanisms, comparing influencer types, and using qualitative methods to explore non-significant findings are also recommended.

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