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How Influencer Marketing Shapes Tourist Citizenship Behavior for Sustainable Tourism Destinations? The Mediating Role of Brand Attitude

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how influencer marketing shapes tourist citizenship behavior (TCB) in sustainable tourism through the mediating role of brand attitude. Building on social exchange theory and consumer–brand relationship literature, the study addresses a gap in understanding the mechanisms by which digital influence extends beyond purchase intentions to pro-social tourist behaviors. Survey data from 250 visitors to sustainable destinations in North Sulawesi, Indonesia, were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SmartPLS). Results show that influencer marketing significantly enhances brand attitude, which directly fosters TCB dimensions such as advocacy, feedback, helping, and tolerance, and mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and TCB. These findings highlight the strategic role of brand attitude in translating digital influence into sustainable, community-oriented tourist practices. Theoretically, the study advances knowledge by integrating influencer marketing with behavioral outcomes in sustainable tourism, moving beyond traditional attitudinal or intention-based measures. Practically, it offers insights for policymakers and destination marketers on designing authentic and ethical influencer campaigns that strengthen sustainable brand–consumer relationships. Limitations concerning geographic scope and cross-sectional design suggest directions for broader and longitudinal investigations.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Tourist Citizenship Behavior, Brand Attitude, Sustainable Tourism
JEL Classifications: M31, Z32, Q01

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital era, influencer marketing has emerged as a transformative force in shaping consumer behavior, particularly within the tourism sector. Social media influencers, perceived as credible, authentic, and relatable, affect how tourists discover, evaluate, and engage with destinations (Hernández-Méndez et al., 2024; Rajput and Gandhi, 2024; Marti-Ochoa et al., 2025). Unlike traditional advertising, influencers generate trust and emotional engagement through storytelling, visually rich content, and interactive communication, which in turn shape tourist attitudes, motivations, and behavioral intentions (Chawla et al., 2024; Awad and Alharthi, 2025). Recent studies highlight that these digital interactions are not merely transactional; they can influence pro-social behaviors such as environmental mindfulness, cultural respect, and community participation (Omeish et al., 2023; Swadhi et al., 2025). Consequently, understanding how influencer marketing translates into meaningful behavioral outcomes remains both theoretically and practically urgent.

A critical lens for understanding these dynamics is Social Exchange Theory (SET), which posits that social behavior is the outcome of an exchange process aimed at maximizing benefits and minimizing costs (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958). Within tourism, SET suggests that tourists evaluate the perceived value of experiences, information, and social interactions before engaging in voluntary or reciprocal behaviors. Influencer marketing can thus be conceptualized as a form of social exchange: influencers provide

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informative and entertaining content that generates perceived benefits (e.g., knowledge, trust, inspiration), and in return, tourists may reciprocate through engagement, loyalty, or pro-social behaviors (Rodriguez-Sanchez et al., 2024; Candan and Dölarslan, 2024). Anchoring the study in SET provides a theoretical rationale for investigating tourist citizenship behavior (TCB) as a voluntary, value-driven response to influencer-mediated exchanges.

Tourist citizenship behavior, defined as voluntary actions that benefit destinations beyond transactional consumption, such as advocacy, feedback, helping, and tolerance, plays a pivotal role in promoting sustainable tourism (Rodriguez-Sanchez et al., 2024). Empirical evidence indicates that tourists with stronger identification and attachment to destinations are more likely to engage in behaviors that support environmental sustainability, cultural preservation, and local community development (Candan and Dölarslan, 2024). However, while prior research has explored psychological determinants of TCB, the role of digital influencers in catalyzing these behaviors remains underexplored. Most studies emphasize influencers' effects on destination image, travel motivation, or intention to visit (Rajput and Gandhi, 2024; Marti-Ochoa et al., 2025), but few investigate how influencers actively encourage sustainable and pro-social behaviors through emotional engagement and value-based content, leaving a gap in both theory and empirical validation.

A key mechanism linking influencer marketing to TCB is brand attitude, conceptualized as a positive evaluative judgment of a tourism destination shaped by marketing communications (Balli, 2024; Gong and Yi, 2019). SET suggests that favorable brand perceptions increase the likelihood of reciprocal behaviors; tourists who perceive a destination positively are more inclined to contribute actively to its sustainability and social well-being (Boutros and Muhammad, 2022). Influencer marketing can enhance brand attitude by fostering trust, authenticity, and perceived social value, which in turn encourages tourists to engage in TCB (Chawla et al., 2024; Mandagi et al., 2025). Despite this conceptual relevance, empirical studies integrating influencer marketing, brand attitude, and TCB remain scarce. Specifically, the mediating role of brand attitude in translating digital influence into voluntary, pro-social tourist behavior has not been systematically examined. Addressing this gap is essential for advancing theoretical understanding of the mechanisms through which digital marketing fosters sustainability-oriented outcomes in tourism.

In response to these gaps, the present study investigates the interplay between influencer marketing, brand attitude, and tourist citizenship behavior within the context of sustainable tourism destinations. Guided by SET, it examines how influencer-driven content generates perceived value and trust, which strengthen brand attitudes and, in turn, foster TCB. Focusing on visitors to sustainable destinations in North Sulawesi, Indonesia, this study contributes theoretically by extending SET to the domain of digital influence in tourism, moving beyond conventional outcome metrics such as visitation or purchase intention. Practically, the findings offer actionable insights for destination marketers and policymakers seeking to design authentic, trust-based, and ethically responsible influencer campaigns that promote sustainable and community-oriented tourism behaviors. By empirically testing these relationships, the study provides a robust framework for understanding how digital influence can cultivate socially responsible and engaged tourist communities, thus bridging a critical gap at the intersection of influencer marketing, brand management, and sustainable tourism behavior.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Social Exchange Theory

SET posits that individuals engage in behaviors based on an evaluation of costs and benefits derived from social interactions, with reciprocity as the guiding principle (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Cook et al., 2013). In essence, individuals are motivated to respond positively when they perceive that they have received value, creating a cycle of mutual benefit. SET has been widely applied in consumer behavior, service management, and organizational research, particularly to explain discretionary, voluntary behaviors that extend beyond formal obligations.

In tourism, SET provides a compelling lens to understand TCB, which involves voluntary actions such as advocacy, feedback, helping, and tolerance (Rodriguez-Sanchez et al., 2024). Tourists perceive psychological or informational benefits from interactions with service providers or digital content creators, and in response, reciprocate with behaviors that support the destination or brand. In this study, SET underpins the conceptual model: influencer marketing delivers perceived value (trustworthy information, relatability, emotional engagement), which strengthens brand attitude, leading tourists to engage in TCB. This framework positions brand attitude as a psychological mediator translating perceived value into pro-social behaviors, consistent with SET's reciprocity principle.

2.2. Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing leverages credible and relatable social media figures to shape consumer perceptions and behaviors, often outperforming traditional advertising in engagement and trust (Lou and Yuan, 2018; Bu et al., 2022). Influencers act as opinion leaders, using storytelling, interactive content, and community engagement to create authenticity and emotional resonance with followers (Mandagi and Centeno, 2025). The perceived authenticity of influencer content is crucial: audiences respond positively when recommendations appear genuine rather than overtly promotional (Jin and Phua, 2014; Pozharliev et al., 2022).

In tourism, influencers are instrumental in shaping destination brand perceptions, travel intentions, and sustainable behavior awareness (Abate et al., 2025; Han and Chen, 2022).; Hernández-Méndez et al., 2024; Mandagi and Centeno, 2025). Empirical studies suggest that tourists rely on influencer-generated content to guide destination choice, engage with local culture, and adopt responsible travel practices (Pop et al., 2021; Kilipiri et al., 2023). However, most prior research focuses on short-term outcomes like visitation intent, overlooking how influencer marketing drives deeper, voluntary behaviors such as TCB. Moreover, studies remain largely concentrated in Western contexts, with limited evidence from culturally diverse destinations (Urbaite, 2024).

From a SET perspective, influencer marketing can be seen as a form of social exchange: followers perceive psychological and social benefits from engaging content, and reciprocate through positive attitudes and behaviors toward the brand or destination. This leads to the first hypothesis:

H_1: Influencer marketing positively affects brand attitude.

2.3. Brand Attitude

Brand attitude refers to a consumer's overall evaluative judgment of a brand, encompassing cognitive beliefs and affective feelings (Mitchell and Olson, 1981). In tourism, favorable brand attitudes strengthen destination credibility, attractiveness, and loyalty, influencing both initial visitation and post-consumption behaviors (Rather et al., 2020; Pongoh and Mandagi, 2025). Social media and influencer content enhance brand attitudes by offering personalized, experiential representations that engage emotions and foster trust.

While research has primarily treated brand attitude as a mediator between marketing stimuli and purchase intentions (e.g., Haq et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2022; Kunja et al., 2022), its role in facilitating voluntary, citizenship-like behaviors is underexplored. Positive brand attitudes generate relational benefits perceived by consumers, which encourage reciprocity in the form of advocacy, feedback, helping, and tolerance (Segarra-Moliner and Moliner-Tena, 2023). In the SET framework, brand attitude represents the psychological mechanism through which perceived influencer-driven value motivates pro-social tourist behavior.

H_2: Brand attitude positively affects TCB dimensions (feedback, advocacy, helping, tolerance).

2.4. Tourist Citizenship Behavior (TCB)

TCB extends the concept of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) to tourism, highlighting voluntary actions by tourists that benefit destinations beyond formal consumption (Torres-Moraga et al., 2021; Singh and Gupta, 2025). Examples include providing constructive feedback, sharing positive word-of-mouth, assisting other tourists, and engaging in environmentally responsible behaviors (Martínez García de Leaniz et al., 2025; Rantung et al., 2025).

TCB contributes to co-creation of destination value and enhances collective experiences, while reducing operational and marketing costs through voluntary advocacy and engagement (Mandagi and Centeno, 2025; Rantung et al., 2025). Despite its importance, the digital antecedents of TCB, especially the role of influencers, are underexplored. SET suggests that TCB arises from perceived relational benefits: when tourists receive value from influencer-mediated interactions, they reciprocate through citizenship behaviors. This theoretical grounding supports the following hypothesis:

H_3: Influencer marketing positively affects TCB dimensions (feedback, advocacy, helping, tolerance).

2.5. The Mediating Role of Brand Attitude

Brand attitude likely serves as a key mediator linking influencer marketing to TCB. Influencers shape both cognitive and affective evaluations of brands through credibility, authenticity, and parasocial engagement (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020; Zhao et al., 2024). Favorable brand attitudes, in turn, increase the likelihood of engaging in voluntary behaviors, consistent with SET's reciprocity principle. Empirical studies in hospitality and tourism demonstrate that positive brand evaluations mediate the relationship between marketing stimuli and extra-role behaviors, such as advocacy and tolerance (Lin and Choe, 2022; Tang et al., 2023).

Although previous research confirms the direct effects of influencer marketing on brand perception and loyalty, the mediating mechanism through which brand attitudes translate influencer influence into pro-social, citizenship-like behaviors remains insufficiently examined. Addressing this gap, the final hypothesis is proposed:

H_4: Brand attitude mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and TCB.

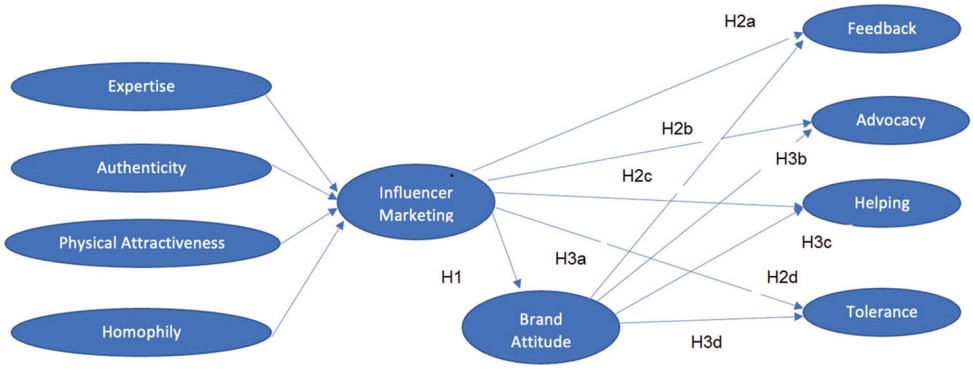
Figure 1 illustrates the proposed conceptual framework, summarizing the relationships and interactions among the variables analyzed in this study.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design to examine the impact of influencer marketing on brand attitude and tourist customer citizenship behavior

Figure 1: Conceptual model



(TCB) in sustainable tourism destinations. A structured survey was used to measure the core variables: influencer marketing, brand attitude, and TCB. Survey-based methods with Likert-type scales are widely recognized for capturing attitudes and behavioral intentions in tourism and consumer behavior research (Intuluck et al., 2024), providing reliable and comparable results across diverse respondent groups.

3.2. Sampling and Data Collection

The study focused on tourists visiting two prominent sustainable marine tourism destinations in North Sulawesi, Indonesia—Bunaken Island and Siladen Island—between February and April 2025. These sites were deliberately chosen due to their high international recognition, exceptional marine biodiversity, and active engagement with digital tourism promotion, which makes them highly relevant contexts for examining influencer marketing effects. Targeting these destinations also ensured access to a heterogeneous pool of domestic and international tourists.

The target population included tourists aged 16 years and above who were visiting for leisure purposes and had been exposed to tourism-related influencer marketing. The age threshold was set to ensure cognitive maturity and ethical appropriateness for responding to questions on attitudes and behavioral intentions, consistent with prior studies (Deb et al., 2022).

A purposive sampling technique was applied to ensure participants had relevant exposure to influencer marketing campaigns. Tourists were approached at piers, resorts, and other leisure areas, and a trained research team explained the study's purpose, voluntary participation, and confidentiality. Informed consent was obtained verbally, with additional parental/guardian consent for participants under 18.

A total of 317 valid responses were collected. This sample size was deemed adequate based on the recommendations of Hair et al. (2017) for PLS-SEM analyses, which suggest a minimum of 10 times the largest number of formative indicators or paths in the model, and confirmed via power analysis (G*Power 3.1), which indicated a statistical power >0.80 for detecting medium effect sizes. Data collection prioritized inclusivity and respondent comfort: questionnaires were administered via tablets, with enumerators assisting participants who preferred oral responses, thereby reducing response bias and fatigue.

3.3. Measurement Instrument

Data were collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire prepared in both Bahasa Indonesia and English. A bilingual review process ensured conceptual equivalence, minimizing misinterpretation across respondent groups (Rabiah-Mohammed et al., 2024). The survey employed a seven-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree), consistent with behavioral and attitudinal research favoring higher scale sensitivity. The questionnaire consisted of demographic information and items measuring three main constructs: influencer marketing (IM), brand attitude (BA), and TCB.

Influencer marketing was operationalized across four dimensions: expertise, authenticity, physical attractiveness, and homophily, measured using 25 indicators adapted from Kim and Kim (2021) and Ladhari et al. (2020). Brand attitude was assessed with five items adapted from Jayanti et al. (2004) and Faircloth et al. (2001). TCB was measured using 20 items covering advocacy, feedback, helping, and tolerance, adapted from Torres-Moraga et al. (2021), Liu and Tsaur (2014), and Rantung et al. (2025). Minor contextual adjustments were made to align with tourism settings while retaining the original meaning, and a pilot test with 30 respondents confirmed item clarity, comprehension, and content validity.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS, which is suitable for complex models, mediation testing, and non-normal data distributions (Hair et al., 2017). Analysis followed a two-stage approach:

1. Measurement model assessment: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) evaluated construct reliability and validity. Internal consistency reliability was assessed via Cronbach's alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR), while convergent validity was confirmed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE > 0.50). Discriminant validity was assessed with the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio (<0.85), following Hair et al. (2017). Factor loadings were inspected to ensure indicator adequacy (>0.70).
2. Structural model evaluation: Hypothesized relationships among influencer marketing, brand attitude, and TCB were tested, including mediation effects. Model fit and predictive power were assessed using R^2, Q^2, and effect size (f^2). Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples tested the significance of path coefficients and indirect effects, ensuring robust estimation of direct and mediated relationships.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and respondents could withdraw at any stage without penalty. Anonymity was guaranteed by avoiding collection of personally identifiable information, and data were securely stored in password-protected files accessible only to the research team. The study complied with Bryman's (2016) ethical guidelines for social science research involving human participants, safeguarding respondent rights, dignity, and confidentiality.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Demographics

The study obtained 317 valid responses. The majority were female (69.4%), with domestic tourists forming 27.8% and local tourists 66.2%, while international tourists represented 6%. Most respondents were aged 31–35 (58%), predominantly residing in North Sulawesi (66.2%). The sample was generally well-educated, with 76% holding a bachelor's degree and nearly 10% a master's degree, reflecting a digitally literate profile suitable for assessing influencer marketing effects. Occupations were diverse, with substantial representation from the service sector, entrepreneurship, healthcare, and household management (Table 1).

Table 1: Demographics data of respondents

Variable	Category	n	%
Age	15–25	24	7.57
	26–30	73	23.03
	31–35	184	58.04
	36 and above	36	11.36
Gender	Male	97	30.60
	Female	220	69.40
Types of Tourist	Local	210	66.25
	Domestic	88	27.76
	International	19	5.99
Occupation	Service sector worker	36	11.36
	Entrepreneur	33	10.41
	Medical personnel	33	10.41
	Full-time mother	52	16.40
	Government employee	28	8.83
	Student	15	4.73
	Others*	120	37.85
Education	Senior High School	38	11.99
	Diploma (D2–D4)	8	2.52
	Bachelor's (S1)	241	76.03
	Master's (S2)	29	9.15
	Doctorate (S3)	1	0.32

4.2. Measurement Model

The constructs: Influencer Marketing (IM), Brand Attitude (BA), and TCB, were evaluated for reliability and validity using PLS-SEM. IM was modeled as a higher-order construct comprising four dimensions: expertise, authenticity, physical attractiveness, and homophily.

All indicators had factor loadings above 0.70 after removing weak items, confirming convergent validity. Composite reliability (CR) ranged from 0.906 to 0.955, Cronbach's alpha (CA) from 0.870 to 0.950, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) from 0.520 to 0.766, exceeding recommended thresholds (Hair et al., 2017), thus confirming internal consistency. Discriminant validity was supported by the Fornell-Larcker criterion, HTMT (<0.85), and cross-loadings, indicating that constructs were conceptually distinct.

CFA was conducted to evaluate convergent and discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2017). The model included three constructs: influencer marketing (HOC with four LOCs), brand attitude, and customer citizenship behavior (with four LOCs: feedback, advocacy, helping, and tolerance). Five items with factor loadings below 0.70 were removed; the remaining indicators exceeded recommended thresholds, confirming strong validity and reliability. Results are summarized in Figure 2 and Table 2.

Additionally, discriminant validity was assessed using three established criteria: The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), cross-loadings, and the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The Fornell-Larcker test was conducted by comparing the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct with its correlations with other constructs. Discriminant validity is confirmed when the square root of the AVE for a construct is greater than its correlations with other constructs. Table 3 presents the results, where the diagonal values represent the square roots of the AVE, exceeding the corresponding inter-construct correlations. This systematic assessment, reinforced by HTMT ratios and cross-loading analysis, provides strong evidence of discriminant validity and confirms the conceptual distinctiveness of the study's constructs.

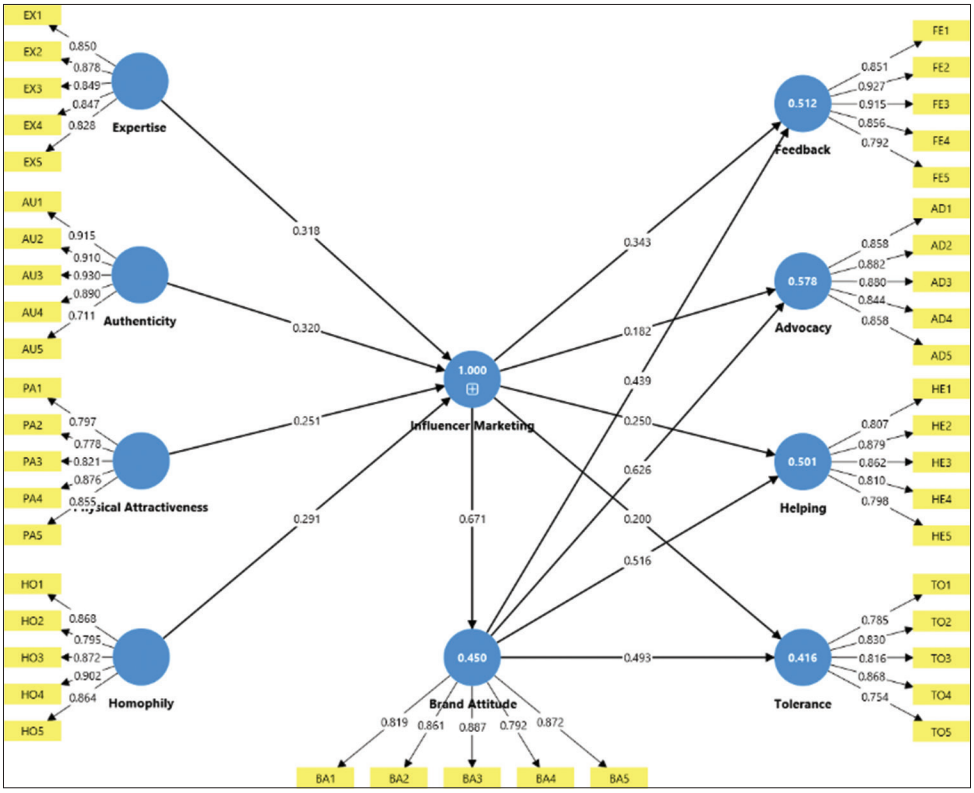
Table 2: Factor loading factor measurement model

Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Factor loading
IM	EX	EX1	0.850
		EX2	0.878
		EX3	0.849
		EX4	0.847
		EX5	0.828
	AU	AU1	0.915
		AU2	0.910
		AU3	0.930
		AU4	0.890
		AU5	0.711
	PA1	PA1	0.797
		PA2	0.778
		PA3	0.821
		PA4	0.876
		PA5	0.855
	HO	HO1	0.868
		HO2	0.795
		HO3	0.872
		HO4	0.902
		HO5	0.864
	BA	BA1	0.819
		BA2	0.861
		BA3	0.887
		BA4	0.792
		BA5	0.872
TCB	FE	FE1	0.851
		FE2	0.927
		FE3	0.915
		FE4	0.856
		FE5	0.792
	AD	AD1	0.858
		AD2	0.882
		AD3	0.880
		AD4	0.844
		AD5	0.858
	HE	HE1	0.807
		HE2	0.879
		HE3	0.862
		HE4	0.810
		HE5	0.798
	TO	TO1	0.785
		TO2	0.830
		TO3	0.816
		TO4	0.868
		TO5	0.754

According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, discriminant validity is established when the square root of each construct's AVE exceeds its correlations with other constructs. The results confirm that this condition was met across all constructs, demonstrating strong discriminant validity within the measurement model. Given HOCs are derived from LOCs, their values are inherently influenced by the LOCs. Including HOC values in the Fornell-Larcker analysis may therefore introduce redundancy, as LOCs already capture the specific dimensions of HOCs (Sarstedt et al., 2017). Accordingly, the constructs and indicators in this study effectively satisfy the Fornell-Larcker criterion, reinforcing both discriminant validity and the reliability of the measurement model.

Discriminant validity was further evaluated using the HTMT, with results presented in Table 4. HTMT assesses the degree of distinction among constructs and is particularly relevant for confirming the validity of LOCs. In this study, the dimensions

Figure 2: Results of the measurement model test



Source: SmartPLS output

Table 3: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
AD	0.865								
AU	0.534	0.875							
BA	0.748	0.575	0.847						
EX	0.560	0.799	0.607	0.851					
FE	0.727	0.557	0.669	0.619	0.870				
HE	0.789	0.507	0.683	0.555	0.763	0.832			
HO	0.483	0.689	0.503	0.648	0.536	0.491	0.861		
PA	0.441	0.484	0.583	0.528	0.420	0.453	0.523	0.826	
TO	0.552	0.432	0.627	0.439	0.510	0.555	0.449	0.483	0.812

of expertise, authenticity, physical attractiveness, and homophily were analyzed to ensure they were conceptually and empirically distinct. Consistent with recommended thresholds, HTMT values below 0.85 (or the more lenient cutoff of 0.90) indicated adequate discriminant validity. These findings collectively provide strong evidence that the constructs are sufficiently distinct, thereby supporting the robustness and reliability of the measurement model.

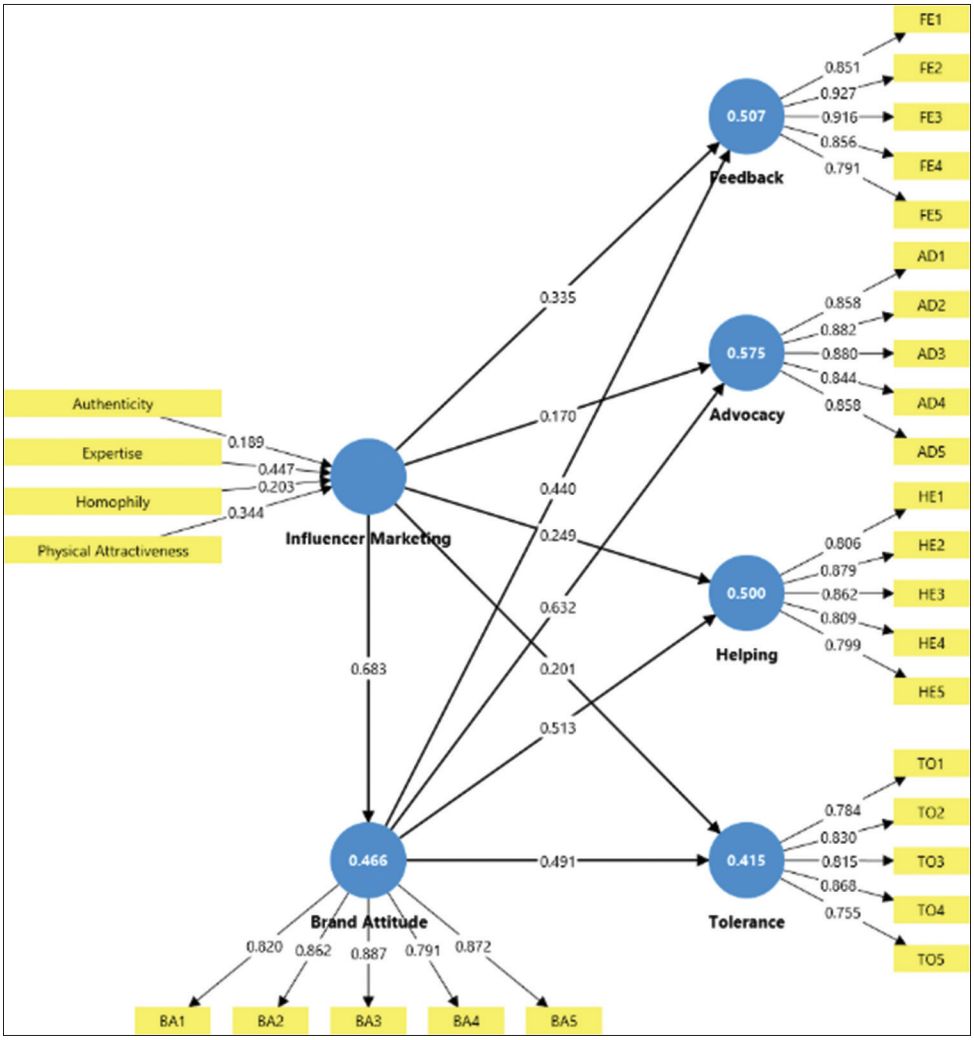
Composite Reliability (CR), Cronbach's Alpha (CA), and AVE were used to assess the construct's reliability in this study. When AVE values are higher than 0.5 and CR and CA values are larger than 0.7, a construct is deemed dependable. The results presented in Table 5 show that all indicators meet these criteria, with values surpassing the recommended thresholds. Notably, all indicators demonstrate reliability with factor loadings exceeding 0.7, verifying the measurement model's resilience.

4.3. Structural Model

Once the measurement model satisfied all validity and reliability requirements, the structural model was tested. This phase emphasized examining the significance of path coefficients to identify relationships among constructs and evaluate the proposed hypotheses. Statistical significance and the strength of these associations were determined using the PLS bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS. The results of the structural model assessment are presented in Figure 3 and Table 6, providing insights into the hypothesized relationships and their implications.

The explanatory power of the structural model was evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2), which represents the proportion of variance in the dependent variables explained by the predictors. As presented in Table 7, the R^2 value for advocacy is 0.575, indicating that 57.5% of its variance is accounted for by the model. Brand attitude recorded an R^2 of 0.466, suggesting that the predictors

Figure 3: Test results of the PLS bootstrapping structural model for HOC



Source: SmartPLS Test Result

Table 4: HTMT matrix

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(9)	(10)
AD									
AU	0.583								
BA	0.814	0.633							
EX	0.614	0.875	0.671						
FE	0.791	0.607	0.735	0.677					
HE	0.876	0.563	0.762	0.618	0.845				
HO	0.527	0.751	0.552	0.709	0.586	0.545			
PA	0.483	0.537	0.650	0.586	0.463	0.507	0.578		
TO	0.603	0.478	0.700	0.487	0.565	0.622	0.503	0.543	

Table 5: Variable reliability test

Variable	CA	Rho A	CR	AVE
AD	0.916	0.921	0.937	0.747
AU	0.921	0.924	0.942	0.766
BA	0.901	0.902	0.927	0.718
EX	0.904	0.905	0.929	0.724
FE	0.918	0.922	0.939	0.756
HE	0.888	0.891	0.918	0.692
HO	0.912	0.913	0.935	0.742
IM	0.950	0.953	0.955	0.520
PA	0.883	0.885	0.915	0.683
TO	0.870	0.873	0.906	0.659

Table 6: R-square

Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted
Advocacy	0.575	0.572
Brand Attitude	0.466	0.465
Feedback	0.507	0.504
Helping	0.500	0.497
Tolerance	0.415	0.412

explain 46.6% of its variance. Similarly, the R^2 value for feedback is 0.507, meaning that 50.7% of its variance is explained by the model. The construct of helping yielded an R^2 of 0.500, indicating that half

of its variance is explained, while tolerance recorded the lowest R^2 value of 0.415, showing that 41.5% of its variance is attributable to the model. Overall, these results demonstrate that the model exhibits moderate explanatory power across the dependent variables.

F-square measures the impact of a predictor variable on an endogenous variable. This study shows that brand attitude has a major impact on a number of constructs. As shown in Table 7. The F-Square value for advocacy is 0.502, which shows a big effect size and emphasizes how strongly brand sentiment influences advocacy. Likewise, brand attitude has a significant impact on assistance (F-square value of 0.281) and feedback (F-square value of 0.210). The F-Square value for tolerance is 0.220, which once more shows a significant impact size, demonstrating that brand attitude significantly impacts tolerance as well.

Influencer marketing exhibits varying levels of impact on different constructs. Its F-square value for advocacy is 0.036, reflecting a small to medium effect size and indicating a noticeable but modest influence on advocacy. On brand attitude, with an F-square of 0.874, influencer marketing exhibits a significant impact with a sizable effect size. The F-square score for feedback is 0.122, indicating a small to medium effect size, and for helping, it is 0.066, indicating a similar small to medium size. Lastly, influencer marketing shows a small to medium effect on tolerance, with an F-square value of 0.037. These values provide insights into the relationships and the significance of the relationships beween the model's constructs.

All of the study's hypotheses were supported, as shown in Table 8. The first hypothesis (H1) proposed that influencer marketing positively affects brand attitude. The results confirm this relationship, with a t-statistic of 16.148, a standard deviation (STDEV) of 0.042, and a P = 0.000, indicating a highly significant effect well below the alpha threshold of 0.1. These findings corroborate prior research demonstrating the influence of influencer marketing on brand perception (Nafees et al., 2021).

Hypotheses H_{2a}–H_{2d} examined the impact of influencer marketing on dimensions of TCB. Influencer marketing significantly influenced feedback (H_{2a}: t = 4.992, STDEV = 0.067, P = 0.000), advocacy (H_{2b}: t = 3.047, STDEV = 0.056, P = 0.002), helping (H_{2c}: t = 3.849, STDEV = 0.065, P = 0.000), and tolerance (H_{2d}: t = 2.947, STDEV = 0.067, P = 0.003). These results highlight the role of social media influencers in fostering trust, relatability, and positive consumer engagement, consistent with the findings of Bansal (2024).

The third set of hypotheses (H_{3a}–H_{3d}) assessed the effect of brand attitude on TCB. Brand attitude significantly enhanced feedback (H_{3a}: t = 5.922, STDEV = 0.074, P = 0.000), advocacy (H_{3b}: t = 11.553, STDEV = 0.055, P = 0.000), helping (H_{3c}: t = 7.545, STDEV = 0.068, P = 0.000), and tolerance (H_{3d}: t = 8.464, STDEV = 0.058, P = 0.000), confirming its positive influence on these dimensions. These results align with Segarra-Moliner and Moliner-Tena (2023), who emphasize the role of brand attachment and social value in fostering voluntary, discretionary customer behaviors.

Finally, the mediating role of brand attitude in the relationship between influencer marketing and TCB was supported across all dimensions. As reporten in Table 9, brand attitude significantly

Table 7: F Square

Variable	Advocacy	Brand Attitude	Feedback	Helping	Influencer Marketing	Tolerance
Advocacy	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brand Attitude	0.502	-	0.210	0.281	-	0.220
Feedback	-	-	-	-	-	-
Helping	-	-	-	-	-	-
Influencer Marketing	0.036	0.874	0.122	0.066	-	0.037
Tolerance	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 8: Structural model testing results

Path relationship	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
IM -> Advocacy	0.170	0.178	0.056	3,047	0.002
IM -> Feedback	0.335	0.344	0.067	4,992	0.000
IM -> Helping	0.249	0.255	0.065	3,849	0.000
IM -> Tolerance	0.201	0.203	0.067	2,974	0.003
IM -> BA	0.683	0.685	0.042	16,148	0.000
BA -> Advocacy	0.632	0.628	0.055	11,553	0.000
BA -> Feedback	0.440	0.434	0.074	5,922	0.000
BA -> Helping	0.513	0.511	0.068	7,545	0.000
BA -> Tolerance	0.491	0.489	0.058	8,464	0.000

IM: Influencer marketing, BA: Brand attitude

Table 9: Mediating analysis results

Path relationship	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
IM -> BA -> Advocacy	0.431	0.050	8,668	0.000
IM -> BA -> Feedback	0.298	0.057	5,302	0.000
IM -> BA -> Helping	0.350	0.053	6,573	0.000
IM -> BA -> Tolerance	0.336	0.051	6,595	0.000

mediated the effects of influencer marketing on feedback (H_{4a}: β = 5.302, P = 0.000), advocacy (H_{4b}: β = 8.668, P = 0.000), helping (H_{4c}: β = 6.573, P = 0.000), and tolerance (H_{4d}: β = 6.595, P = 0.000). These findings underscore the pivotal role of brand attitude in amplifying the influence of influencer marketing on customer citizenship behavior.

4.4. Discussions

The findings of this study provide strong empirical support for the proposed hypotheses and offer important theoretical and practical insights into the mechanisms through which influencer marketing fosters TCB.

First, the results confirm that influencer marketing positively shapes brand attitudes (H_1). This aligns with prior research demonstrating the power of influencers in enhancing brand perceptions through credibility, authenticity, and parasocial interactions (Nafees et al., 2021; Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). By leveraging trust and relatability, influencers function as social referents whose endorsements reduce uncertainty and strengthen cognitive and affective evaluations of brands. This outcome reinforces the premise of Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which posits that individuals are more likely to reciprocate when they perceive relational value. In this context, influencers create symbolic and experiential value that consumers reciprocate with positive brand evaluations.

Second, influencer marketing was found to directly influence all four dimensions of TCB (i.e., feedback, advocacy, helping, and tolerance) (H_{2a}–H_{2d}). These results highlight that influencers not only shape brand perceptions but also motivate customers to engage in voluntary, extra-role behaviors that benefit both the brand and its community. This supports Bansal's (2024) observation that influencers facilitate trust and engagement that extend beyond transactional exchanges. From a SET perspective, such behaviors reflect reciprocity norms, where consumers "return the favor" by offering discretionary support that enhances collective brand experiences (Cook et al., 2013).

Third, brand attitude was shown to significantly enhance all dimensions of TCB (H_{3a}–H_{3d}). These findings align with existing literature emphasizing the role of brand attachment and social value in encouraging advocacy, tolerance, and other discretionary behaviors (Segarra-Moliner and Moliner-Tena, 2023; Lin and Choe, 2022). Favorable brand attitudes represent a form of psychological capital that motivates consumers to contribute beyond contractual obligations. This is consistent with SET, which suggests that positive evaluations of exchange relationships lead to a higher likelihood of voluntary, pro-social behaviors.

Finally, the mediating role of brand attitude (H_{4a}–H_{4d}) provides key insights into the process by which influencer marketing translates into TCB. The results demonstrate that influencer marketing's impact on citizenship behaviors is amplified when consumers first develop favorable brand evaluations. This mediation underscores brand attitude as a pivotal psychological mechanism connecting influencer-driven stimuli to consumer reciprocity behaviors. Importantly, this finding bridges influencer marketing and TCB research streams, highlighting that influencers' effectiveness lies not merely in driving immediate consumer responses but also in cultivating enduring attitudinal foundations that sustain voluntary contributions to brand communities.

Taken together, these findings extend prior work by integrating influencer marketing, brand attitude, and TCB into a unified framework grounded in SET. Consumers perceive influencer endorsements as valuable social and informational exchanges, respond with favorable brand attitudes, and ultimately reciprocate through citizenship behaviors that enhance brand equity and community vitality. This reciprocity-based explanation adds a relational dimension to existing theories of consumer behavior, suggesting that influencer marketing effectiveness is best understood not only in terms of persuasion but also as an exchange process that fosters mutual benefits.

5. CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the role of influencer marketing in shaping TCB through the mediating mechanism of brand attitude within the tourism context. The findings provide strong empirical support for all proposed hypotheses. Influencer marketing was found to significantly enhance brand attitude, as well as directly foster feedback, advocacy, helping, and tolerance behaviors. Likewise, brand attitude itself positively influenced all dimensions of TCB, and importantly, mediated the relationship between influencer marketing and TCB. These results confirm that influencers not only shape consumer perceptions of brands but also catalyze discretionary, voluntary behaviors that strengthen brand communities and contribute to the collective value of service ecosystems.

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on influencer marketing and consumer behavior by advancing the application of SET. SET posits that individuals engage in reciprocal behaviors when they perceive benefits from a social interaction. In the context of this research, influencers act as exchange partners by providing informational, emotional, and social value. Consumers reciprocate these benefits by forming favorable brand attitudes, which subsequently translate into citizenship behaviors such as advocacy and helping. By confirming brand attitude as a mediating mechanism, the study clarifies the psychological process through which influencer marketing outcomes extend beyond transactional responses to encompass pro-social, discretionary actions. This finding enriches influencer marketing research, which has traditionally focused on brand loyalty, purchase intentions, or electronic word-of-mouth, but less often on citizenship behaviors that sustain brand and destination communities.

In addition, the study integrates three domains (i.e., influencer marketing, brand attitude, TCB), into a unified framework. While previous research has examined these constructs independently, few have empirically tested their interconnections in tourism settings. By doing so, the study highlights how influencers, as relational agents, are capable of fostering not only brand attachment but also collective, community-oriented outcomes. This aligns with the broader service-dominant logic of marketing, which emphasizes co-creation of value between consumers and firms, and positions TCB as a critical driver of competitive advantage in highly experiential industries such as tourism.

The findings also carry practical implications for brand managers, destination marketers, and practitioners in digital marketing. First, the results affirm the strategic importance of carefully selecting influencers who embody credibility, authenticity, and relatability. Such qualities strengthen brand attitudes and encourage consumers to move beyond passive consumption toward active community contribution. Second, the results suggest that influencer campaigns should not be designed solely around short-term sales or promotional goals, but rather should focus on cultivating long-term brand attitudes. Strategies such as authentic storytelling, experiential content, and transparent engagement are likely to generate deeper consumer attachment, which in turn stimulates voluntary behaviors like advocacy and tolerance that are difficult to purchase directly through traditional marketing. Finally, the study highlights the potential for influencers to act as community builders rather than merely promotional agents. By encouraging feedback, helping behaviors, and tolerance among consumers, influencer-driven strategies can create resilient brand communities that enhance service quality and long-term sustainability in tourism destinations.

Despite its contributions, this study is not without limitations. The use of cross-sectional survey data constrains the ability to draw causal inferences. Future research could adopt longitudinal or experimental designs to provide stronger evidence of causality and temporal dynamics. Additionally, the study was conducted within a specific tourism context, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other industries or cultural settings. Comparative studies across different service sectors and countries could further validate the robustness of the proposed framework. Another limitation lies in the singular focus on brand attitude as the mediator. While brand attitude proved to be a significant mechanism, future studies could expand the model to include additional mediators such as trust, emotional attachment, or consumer engagement to develop a more nuanced understanding of the influencer–TCB relationship. Finally, while the study is grounded in SET, future research may benefit from integrating complementary theoretical lenses such as signalling theory, which explains how influencers communicate credibility and expertise, or relationship marketing theory, which can account for long-term relational dynamics between influencers, brands, and consumers.

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