

The Role of Social Media Influencers in Shaping Entrepreneurial Intention: Evidence from Morocco.

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Abstract

This study examines the role of social media influencers in shaping entrepreneurial intention in Morocco by analysing the effects of influencer credibility, authenticity, inspirational capacity and informative content value. Grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior, social cognitive theory and the entrepreneurial role-model perspective, the study adopted a positivist, quantitative and hypothetical-deductive approach. Data were collected from 140 Moroccan social media users exposed to entrepreneurial or business-oriented influencer content and were analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling through SmartPLS. The measurement model demonstrates satisfactory reliability and convergent validity. The structural results indicate that credibility, authenticity, inspirational capacity and informative content value are positively associated with entrepreneurial intention. Together, these variables explain 80.8% of its variance, with inspirational capacity presenting the strongest effect, followed closely by credibility, authenticity and informative content value. The study extends influencer research beyond consumer behaviour by positioning social media influencers as potential sources of entrepreneurial learning, motivation and role modelling.

Keywords: social media influencers; entrepreneurial intention; influencer credibility; influencer authenticity; Morocco.

Introduction

Social media platforms have transformed how individuals access information, construct professional aspirations and evaluate career opportunities. Within this environment, social media influencers have emerged as visible opinion leaders whose impact extends beyond traditional product endorsement. Through personal narratives, educational content and repeated interaction with followers, influencers can communicate entrepreneurial experiences, demonstrate business practices and present entrepreneurship as a potentially attainable career choice. Their influence may therefore affect not only consumer decisions but also followers' perceptions of business creation, entrepreneurial feasibility and professional success.

Existing influencer research has predominantly examined commercial outcomes such as brand trust, engagement and purchase intention. It demonstrates that influencer credibility, content value and perceived similarity contribute to followers' acceptance of influencer-generated messages (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Parasocial interaction can further strengthen the relationship between influencers and their audiences, thereby increasing the persuasive effect of their content (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). However, these findings remain primarily situated within consumer-marketing contexts. Comparatively less attention has been devoted to influencers who produce entrepreneurial content and their potential role in shaping followers' career and venture-creation intentions.

Entrepreneurial intention represents a conscious orientation toward establishing a business and constitutes an important antecedent of planned entrepreneurial behaviour. The Theory of Planned Behavior explains this intention through attitudes toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). Social cognitive theory complements this perspective by emphasizing observational learning, role modelling and self-efficacy in behavioural development (Bandura, 2001). Entrepreneurial role models can provide motivation, knowledge and legitimacy, particularly when observers perceive their achievements as relevant and attainable (Bosma et al., 2012). Social media influencers may perform similar functions through accessible entrepreneurial narratives, practical information and visible demonstrations of entrepreneurial achievement.

This issue is particularly relevant in Morocco, where entrepreneurship is frequently promoted as a means of encouraging innovation, employment creation and economic participation. Previous Moroccan research has mainly examined entrepreneurship education, personal attitudes, perceived

entrepreneurial capacity and social norms as determinants of entrepreneurial intention (Boubker et al., 2021). Nevertheless, limited evidence explains whether social media influencers constitute an additional source of entrepreneurial learning and inspiration. The growing visibility of business-oriented content on social platforms consequently creates a need to investigate whether influencer characteristics can contribute to the formation of entrepreneurial intention in the Moroccan context. Accordingly, this study examines the role of social media influencers in shaping entrepreneurial intention in Morocco. More specifically, it analyses the direct effects of influencer credibility, influencer authenticity, inspirational capacity and informative content value on entrepreneurial intention. The study is guided by the following research question: To what extent do social media influencer credibility, authenticity, inspirational capacity and informative content value influence entrepreneurial intention in Morocco? By integrating influencer research with entrepreneurial-intention and role-model perspectives, the study seeks to extend the literature beyond consumption-related outcomes and provide a framework for understanding the entrepreneurial implications of influencer-generated content.

Literature review

This literature review examines how social media influencers function as sources of entrepreneurial inspiration, knowledge and role modelling. It subsequently analyses the mechanisms through which influencer credibility, authenticity, inspirational capacity and informative content may shape entrepreneurial intention, particularly within the Moroccan context.

1. Social Media Influencers as Sources of Entrepreneurial Inspiration and Learning

Social media influencers can be understood as independent content creators who accumulate visibility, credibility and relational influence through the continuous production of content for an identifiable online audience. Unlike traditional celebrities, whose influence generally originates outside social media, influencers develop their status through sustained interaction, perceived accessibility and the strategic presentation of their personal experiences. Their persuasive capacity therefore depends less on institutional authority than on perceived trustworthiness, expertise, similarity and authenticity. Research on influencer marketing shows that informative content, source trustworthiness, attractiveness and perceived similarity strengthen followers' confidence in influencer-generated messages (Lou & Yuan, 2019). However, expertise does not always produce

a significant effect, suggesting that followers may evaluate influencers through relational and identity-based criteria rather than formal qualifications alone. Similarly, credibility and parasocial interaction influence behavioural responses, although their relative importance varies according to the platform and the perceived similarity between influencers and followers (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). These findings indicate that an entrepreneurial influencer should not be treated merely as a transmitter of business information, but as a socially embedded source whose influence depends on the relationship developed with the audience.

The role of entrepreneurial influencers can be theoretically explained through social cognitive theory, which considers learning to be partly produced by observing the behaviour and consequences experienced by others. Individuals do not need to participate directly in an entrepreneurial activity to develop knowledge about it; they can acquire scripts, expectations and behavioural strategies by observing visible entrepreneurs and evaluating their successes and failures (Bandura, 2001). This mechanism is closely related to the entrepreneurial role-model literature. Entrepreneurial role models simultaneously perform learning, motivation, inspiration and legitimization functions, particularly when observers perceive them as similar and their achievements as attainable (Bosma et al., 2012). Consequently, social media expands the traditional role-model mechanism by allowing followers to observe entrepreneurial practices repeatedly and across geographical boundaries. Nevertheless, evidence that role models are frequently “close” or locally accessible suggests that visibility alone is insufficient: perceived proximity and identification remain essential to their influence (Bosma et al., 2012). Moroccan followers may therefore respond more strongly to influencers whose social background, language and entrepreneurial constraints resemble their own than to globally famous entrepreneurs whose achievements appear difficult to reproduce.

Beyond observational learning, influencers can function as informal or parasocial mentors. Parasocial interaction refers to the perception of an interpersonal relationship with a media figure despite the absence of a reciprocal relationship. In social media environments, self-disclosure, conversational communication and repeated exposure can intensify this perceived relational proximity. Evidence from consumer research indicates that parasocial interaction strengthens the persuasive consequences of influencer credibility (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Research conducted specifically in an entrepreneurial setting further demonstrates that entrepreneurship influencers

may provide parasocial mentoring that is associated with entrepreneurial self-efficacy, venture-related optimism and anticipated performance (D'Oria et al., 2025). Importantly, this mixed-method investigation—combining inductive evidence with a quantitative study of 613 entrepreneurs—also characterizes parasocial mentoring as a double-edged phenomenon. While it provides inspiration and perceived guidance, it can create social-comparison concerns and unrealistic expectations when influencers selectively display success. Thus, influencer exposure may reinforce entrepreneurial confidence, but it may also produce distorted evaluations of the resources, risks and time required to establish a business.

Influencer content can also facilitate entrepreneurial learning and opportunity recognition by communicating business models, market trends, financing alternatives and narratives of venture creation. Informative value is especially relevant because followers' trust in influencer content appears to depend more consistently on informativeness than on entertainment (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Furthermore, influencers' capacity to stimulate followers' desire to imitate them shows that influence extends from information acquisition to identity-oriented behavioural emulation (Ki & Kim, 2019). Nevertheless, most established evidence examines brand attitudes and purchase intentions rather than entrepreneurial career decisions. Consumer imitation cannot automatically be equated with the intention to create a business, because entrepreneurship involves substantially greater uncertainty, resource commitment and personal risk. The literature therefore leaves unresolved whether entrepreneurial influencer content produces durable knowledge and opportunity-recognition capabilities or merely short-term inspiration. Examining entrepreneurial self-efficacy, identification and perceived attainability as mediating mechanisms would address this limitation and clarify how influencer exposure becomes an entrepreneurial rather than exclusively promotional influence.

2. The Formation of Entrepreneurial Intention Through Influencer Content

Entrepreneurial intention represents an individual's conscious commitment or determination to establish a new venture and is commonly considered the most immediate cognitive antecedent of planned entrepreneurial behaviour. The Theory of Planned Behavior provides the dominant explanation of its formation by proposing that intention results from attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). In an entrepreneurial context, attitude reflects the perceived desirability of creating a business, subjective norms represent

perceived approval from significant social groups, and perceived behavioural control concerns the individual's assessment of their capacity to perform entrepreneurial activities. The Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire developed by Liñán and Chen operationalizes these components and demonstrates that their importance can vary across cultural settings (Liñán & Chen, 2009). Nevertheless, meta-analytic evidence shows that attitude and perceived behavioural control generally predict entrepreneurial intention more consistently than subjective norms (Schlaegel & Koenig, 2014). This asymmetry is important for influencer research: entrepreneurial influencers may not act only as sources of normative pressure but may shape intention indirectly by making entrepreneurship appear more desirable and feasible.

Integrating the Theory of Planned Behavior with social cognitive theory provides a more complete explanation of how influencer exposure could shape entrepreneurial intention. Credible entrepreneurial narratives may improve attitudes by presenting business creation as attractive, meaningful and socially valued. Observational learning may simultaneously enhance perceived behavioural control by demonstrating how entrepreneurial tasks are performed, while perceived similarity can enable followers to imagine themselves undertaking comparable activities. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy is particularly important because it reflects confidence in one's ability to perform the roles and tasks involved in venture creation. Empirical research demonstrates that entrepreneurial self-efficacy mediates relationships between learning-related individual factors and entrepreneurial intentions (Zhao et al., 2005). Evidence concerning entrepreneurial role models similarly indicates that their influence on intention depends on whether exposure strengthens self-efficacy and whether the model is perceived as relevant and attainable (Nowiński & Haddoud, 2019). Accordingly, the relationship between influencers and entrepreneurial intention should not be specified as a simple direct effect; identification, self-efficacy, attitudes and perceived behavioural control constitute theoretically plausible intervening mechanisms.

However, credibility and relational attachment do not necessarily guarantee positive entrepreneurial outcomes. Influencer persuasion research shows that followers may adopt influencers' recommendations because they aspire to reproduce their lifestyles and identities (Ki & Kim, 2019). Such mimicry may encourage entrepreneurial aspiration, but it can also blur the distinction between symbolic identification and informed entrepreneurial preparation. Moreover, commercial overexposure can weaken perceived authenticity, thereby reducing the behavioural

effectiveness of influencer communication (Cheah et al., 2024). This raises a central debate: entrepreneurial influencers may democratize access to entrepreneurial narratives and knowledge, yet their carefully curated presentations can conceal failure, structural inequalities and resource constraints. The positive relationship commonly assumed between influencer exposure and entrepreneurial intention may consequently depend on content quality, sponsorship transparency, perceived authenticity and followers' ability to evaluate entrepreneurial claims critically. Methodologically, the dominance of cross-sectional self-report surveys in both influencer and entrepreneurial-intention research further prevents strong causal conclusions. Experimental, longitudinal and multi-source designs are needed to determine whether exposure genuinely transforms intentions over time.

The Moroccan context makes these questions especially relevant. Research among Moroccan students confirms that entrepreneurship education, attitudes and perceived entrepreneurial capacity contribute to entrepreneurial intention, while the influence of subjective norms is less consistent (Boubker et al., 2021). Studies of Moroccan women also demonstrate that entrepreneurial intention is embedded in social and institutional conditions, including perceived capabilities and the support or constraints arising from the surrounding environment (Bouarir et al., 2023). Nevertheless, existing Moroccan studies concentrate primarily on formal entrepreneurship education, demographic characteristics and conventional antecedents derived from the Theory of Planned Behavior. They rarely consider entrepreneurial influencers as emerging sources of learning, normative information and role modelling. Conversely, the influencer literature remains dominated by consumption-related outcomes and research conducted outside North Africa. A substantial gap therefore exists at the intersection of these two research streams. Future research should examine whether influencer credibility and authenticity shape entrepreneurial intention directly or through identification, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, attitude and perceived behavioural control. It should also test whether these relationships differ according to gender, entrepreneurial education, social-media intensity and perceived similarity with Moroccan entrepreneurial influencers.

Although influencer marketing and entrepreneurial intention have each received considerable academic attention, their intersection remains insufficiently examined. Influencer research has primarily investigated consumer outcomes, including brand attitudes, trust and purchase intention, while entrepreneurial-intention research has traditionally concentrated on entrepreneurship

education, attitudes, perceived behavioural control and social norms. Consequently, limited empirical evidence explains whether the characteristics of entrepreneurial influencers directly shape followers' intentions to establish a business. This limitation is especially important in Morocco, where previous research has focused mainly on educational and psychological determinants of entrepreneurial intention (Boubker et al., 2021). Moreover, existing evidence on entrepreneurial role models does not adequately account for the distinctive relational characteristics of social media influencers, particularly their credibility, authenticity, inspirational capacity and informative content. Accordingly, the study is guided by the following main research question: ***To what extent do social media influencer credibility, authenticity, inspirational capacity and informative content value influence entrepreneurial intention in Morocco?***

Influencer credibility increases followers' acceptance of influencer-generated information by strengthening perceptions of trustworthiness and expertise (Ohanian, 1990; Lou & Yuan, 2019). In an entrepreneurial context, credible influencers can make business-related information more persuasive and relevant to followers' career intentions. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Social media influencer credibility has a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial intention.

Perceived authenticity reflects the extent to which an influencer is considered genuine, sincere and consistent with their expressed values (Moulard et al., 2015). Authentic entrepreneurial narratives may reduce uncertainty and strengthen followers' identification with the influencer, thereby encouraging entrepreneurial intention. Therefore:

H2: Social media influencer authenticity has a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial intention.

Social cognitive theory suggests that individuals develop motivation and behavioural confidence by observing relevant and attainable models (Bandura, 2001). Entrepreneurial role models can provide inspiration, motivation and legitimacy, particularly when observers identify with their experiences and achievements (Bosma et al., 2012; Nowiński & Haddoud, 2019). Therefore:

H3: The inspirational capacity of social media influencers has a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial intention.

The informative value of influencer content improves followers' understanding and acceptance of the communicated message (Lou & Yuan, 2019). In the entrepreneurial context, practical information concerning business creation and opportunity recognition may reduce perceived uncertainty and strengthen entrepreneurial intention. Therefore:

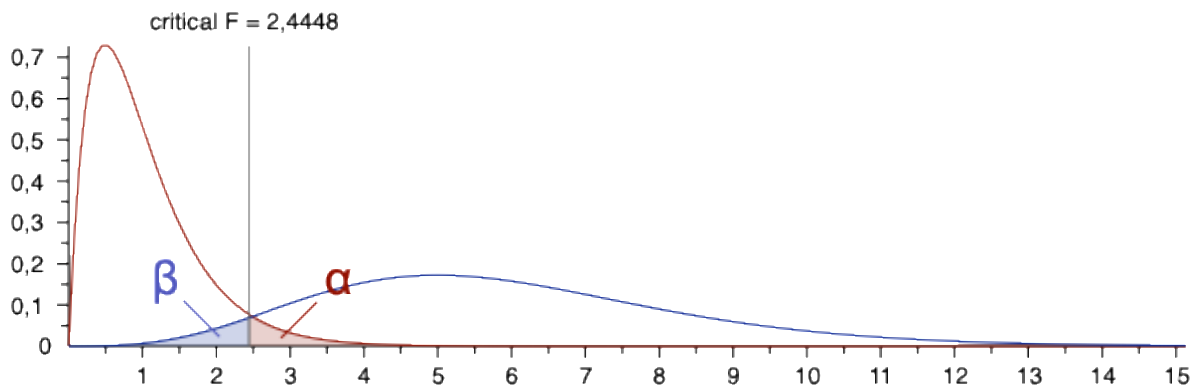
H4: The informative value of social media influencer content has a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial intention.

Based on the identified theoretical relationships and research gap, the proposed conceptual framework examines the direct effects of four influencer-related variables on entrepreneurial intention. The following methodology section presents the research design, target population, sampling strategy, measurement instrument, data-collection procedure and statistical techniques adopted to test the proposed hypotheses.

Method

This study adopts a positivist epistemological position, according to which the relationships between social media influencer characteristics and entrepreneurial intention can be objectively measured and empirically tested. This position is consistent with the explanatory purpose of the research, which seeks to test predefined hypotheses derived from the literature. A hypothetical-deductive approach is therefore employed to examine the direct effects of influencer credibility, authenticity, inspirational capacity and informative content value on entrepreneurial intention. Given the measurable nature of these constructs, the study follows a quantitative research design. Primary data are collected through a structured survey administered to Moroccan social media users exposed to content produced by entrepreneurial or business-oriented influencers. The questionnaire comprises items measuring influencer credibility, influencer authenticity, inspirational capacity, informative content value and entrepreneurial intention, together with questions concerning respondents' demographic characteristics and social-media use. All construct items are measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1, "strongly disagree," to 5, "strongly agree." The survey method enables the standardized collection of perceptions and intentions from a relatively large number of participants.

Figure 1. A priori sample-size calculation using G*Power



Source: Authors' calculation using G*Power 3.1.

An a priori statistical power analysis was performed using GPower to determine the minimum sample size required for hypothesis testing (Faul et al., 2009). The calculation was based on a linear multiple regression model with four predictors corresponding to the four independent variables included in the conceptual framework. A medium effect size of $f^2 = 0.15$, a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, and statistical power of $1 - \beta = 0.95$ were specified. The analysis indicated a minimum required sample of 129 respondents, with an actual power of 0.9506 and a critical F-value of 2.4448. After data screening, a final sample of 140 Moroccan social media users was retained for the empirical analysis. The final sample therefore exceeded the minimum requirement established by GPower and was considered sufficient to test the proposed relationships.

Influencer credibility was adapted from Ohanian (1990), influencer authenticity from Moulard et al. (2015), informative content value from Lou and Yuan (2019), and entrepreneurial intention from Liñán and Chen (2009). The inspirational-capacity items were developed from the social cognitive and entrepreneurial role-model literature, particularly Bandura (2001), Bosma et al. (2012), and Nowiński and Haddoud (2019).

Table 1. Constructs, measurement items and sources

Construct	Code	Measurement item
Influencer credibility	CRED1	I consider entrepreneurial influencers on social media to be credible.
	CRED2	The entrepreneurial information shared by these influencers is trustworthy.
	CRED3	These influencers appear knowledgeable about entrepreneurship.
Influencer authenticity	AUTH1	Entrepreneurial influencers present themselves genuinely on social media.
	AUTH2	The entrepreneurial experiences shared by these influencers appear sincere.
	AUTH3	These influencers remain true to their values when discussing entrepreneurship.
Inspirational capacity	INSP1	Entrepreneurial influencers motivate me to consider creating my own business.
	INSP2	Their entrepreneurial experiences increase my confidence in pursuing entrepreneurship.
	INSP3	Their achievements inspire me to develop an entrepreneurial career.
Informative content value	INFO1	Entrepreneurial influencers provide useful information about starting a business.
	INFO2	Their content improves my knowledge of entrepreneurial opportunities.
	INFO3	Their publications provide practical guidance for developing a business project.
Entrepreneurial intention	EI1	I intend to create my own business in the future.
	EI2	I am determined to establish a business one day.
	EI3	I will make a serious effort to start and manage my own business.

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the cited measurement literature.

The data are analysed using SmartPLS and partial least squares structural equation modelling. PLS-SEM is appropriate because the research is prediction-oriented and examines relationships among several latent constructs measured through multiple indicators (Hair et al., 2022). The measurement model is evaluated using indicator loadings, Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, composite reliability and

average variance extracted. Discriminant validity is assessed through the heterotrait–monotrait ratio, while collinearity is examined using variance inflation factors. The structural model is subsequently evaluated through path coefficients, bootstrapped significance levels, coefficients of determination, effect sizes and predictive relevance. Each hypothesis is supported when its corresponding path coefficient is positive and statistically significant at the 5% level.

Following the methodological procedures described above, the collected data were analysed to evaluate the measurement and structural models. The next section presents the sample characteristics, construct reliability and validity, and the results of the hypothesis tests. These findings determine whether the proposed influencer-related factors significantly explain entrepreneurial intention among Moroccan respondents.

Results

This section presents the empirical results concerning the role of social media influencers in shaping entrepreneurial intention among Moroccan respondents. It begins with the respondents' demographic characteristics before assessing the reliability and validity of the measurement model. The structural model is subsequently examined to determine the explanatory power of the proposed framework and test the direct effects of influencer credibility, authenticity, inspirational capacity and informative content value on entrepreneurial intention.

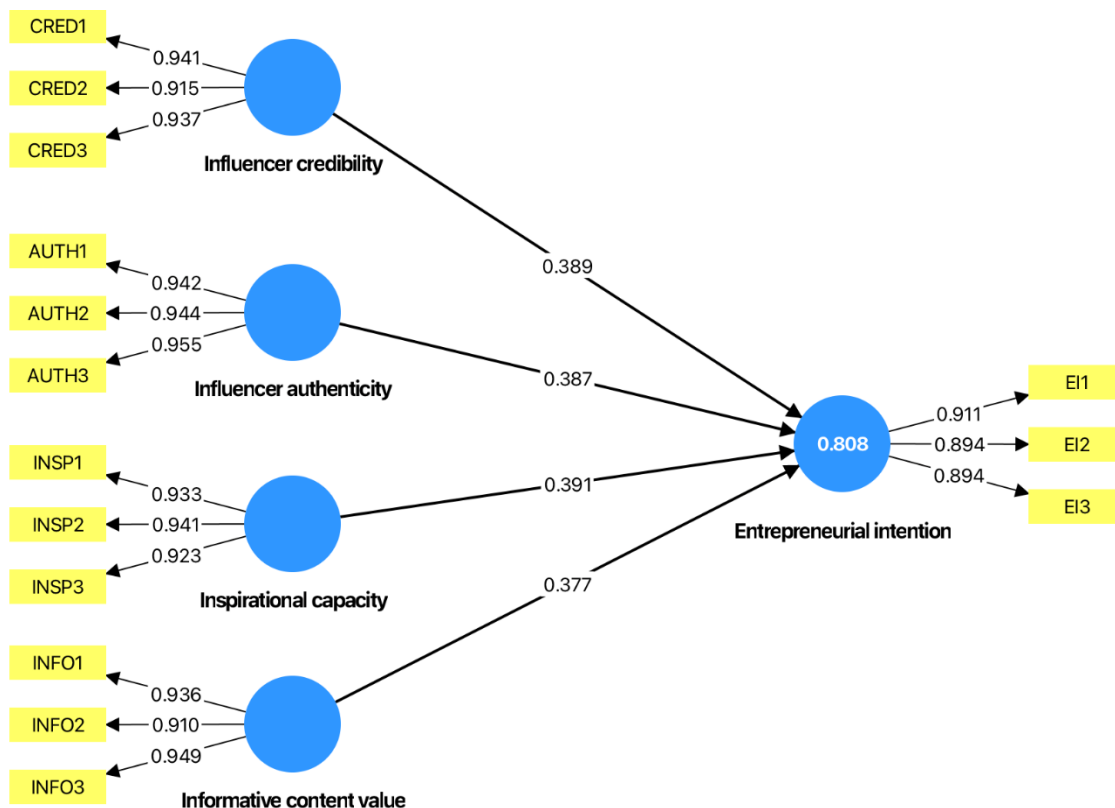
Table 2. Construct reliability and convergent validity

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_A)	Composite reliability (rho_C)	AVE
Entrepreneurial intention	0.882	0.883	0.927	0.810
Influencer authenticity	0.942	0.944	0.963	0.897
Influencer credibility	0.923	0.928	0.951	0.867
Informative content value	0.925	0.943	0.952	0.868
Inspirational capacity	0.925	0.926	0.952	0.869

Source: SmartPLS.

The results indicate that the measurement scales satisfy the recommended criteria for internal consistency and convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.882 for entrepreneurial intention to 0.942 for influencer authenticity, while rho_A values vary between 0.883 and 0.944. Similarly, composite reliability coefficients range from 0.927 to 0.963. All these values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating consistency among the indicators used to measure each construct. The average variance extracted values range from 0.810 for entrepreneurial intention to 0.897 for influencer authenticity, remaining above the minimum threshold of 0.50. Thus, each construct explains more than half of the variance in its respective indicators. Overall, the reported coefficients provide evidence of adequate construct reliability and convergent validity, supporting the subsequent assessment of the structural model.

Figure 2. Results of the PLS-SEM structural model



Source: SmartPLS.

The figure presents the indicator loadings, structural path coefficients and explanatory power of the model. All indicator loadings are above 0.70, ranging from 0.894 to 0.955, showing that the indicators are positively associated with their respective constructs. Regarding the structural

relationships, influencer credibility has a positive coefficient of 0.389, influencer authenticity has a coefficient of 0.387, inspirational capacity has a coefficient of 0.391, and informative content value has a coefficient of 0.377. Inspirational capacity presents the largest coefficient, although the differences among the four effects are relatively small. The coefficient of determination for entrepreneurial intention is , indicating that the four independent variables collectively explain 80.8% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention, while the remaining 19.2% is attributable to factors outside the model and residual variance. These coefficients describe the direction and relative magnitude of the proposed relationships; their statistical significance must be confirmed using the bootstrapping results.

Discussion

The structural model indicates that the four influencer-related characteristics positively influence entrepreneurial intention. Collectively, influencer credibility, authenticity, inspirational capacity and informative content value explain 80.8% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention ($R^2=0.808$). This result suggests that social media influencers may contribute to the formation of entrepreneurial intention through several complementary mechanisms rather than through a single characteristic. The relatively similar path coefficients, ranging from 0.377 to 0.391, also show that no individual predictor dominates the model. Instead, entrepreneurial intention appears to result from the combined contribution of the influencer's credibility, perceived genuineness, inspirational influence and ability to provide useful entrepreneurial information.

Influencer credibility has a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention ($\beta=0.389$), supporting H1. This result indicates that respondents who perceive entrepreneurial influencers as trustworthy, knowledgeable and credible are more likely to express an intention to establish a business. It is consistent with the argument that source credibility increases followers' acceptance of influencer-generated information (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Nevertheless, previous influencer research has mainly associated credibility with consumer trust and purchase intention. The present result extends this reasoning to an entrepreneurial context by suggesting that credibility may also influence more consequential career-related intentions. When followers trust an influencer's entrepreneurial knowledge and experience, they may perceive the communicated advice and opportunities as more relevant to their own venture-creation decisions.

Influencer authenticity also positively affects entrepreneurial intention ($\beta=0.387$), confirming H2. This finding suggests that entrepreneurial content is more influential when followers perceive the influencer's identity, experiences and values as genuine. Authenticity may reduce followers' uncertainty regarding whether the content reflects actual entrepreneurial experience or merely a commercially constructed online image. This result is consistent with research emphasizing authenticity as an important foundation of influencer effectiveness and relationship development (Moulard et al., 2015). In the entrepreneurial setting, authenticity may be particularly relevant because starting a business involves uncertainty and personal risk. Followers may therefore respond more favourably to realistic entrepreneurial narratives that include difficulties and learning experiences rather than exclusively idealized representations of success.

Inspirational capacity has the strongest positive coefficient in the model ($\beta=0.391$), thereby supporting H3. Although its effect is only slightly stronger than those of the other predictors, the result indicates that influencers' ability to motivate followers and strengthen their confidence contributes directly to entrepreneurial intention. This interpretation is consistent with social cognitive theory, according to which individuals develop behavioural expectations and confidence by observing relevant models (Bandura, 2001). It also supports the entrepreneurial role-model literature, which identifies inspiration, motivation and learning as central functions of entrepreneurial models (Bosma et al., 2012). Social media may intensify this process by providing repeated access to entrepreneurial experiences, making entrepreneurship appear more visible and attainable. However, inspirational content should be interpreted cautiously because highly selective success narratives may create unrealistic expectations concerning entrepreneurial outcomes.

Finally, informative content value has a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention ($\beta=0.377$), confirming H4. Although this relationship has the smallest coefficient, its magnitude remains close to those of the other predictors. The result suggests that practical information concerning business creation, opportunity recognition and project development can contribute to followers' entrepreneurial intentions. It is consistent with evidence showing that the informative value of influencer content strengthens followers' trust and behavioural responses (Lou & Yuan, 2019). In the present context, useful entrepreneurial information may reduce perceived uncertainty and improve followers' understanding of the activities required to establish a business. Consequently,

social media influencers may serve not only as inspirational figures but also as informal sources of entrepreneurial learning.

Table 3. Summary of hypothesis-testing results

Hypothesis	Proposed relationship	Path coefficient (β)	Direction	Decision
H1	Influencer credibility → Entrepreneurial intention	0.389	Positive	Confirmed
H2	Influencer authenticity → Entrepreneurial intention	0.387	Positive	Confirmed
H3	Inspirational capacity → Entrepreneurial intention	0.391	Positive	Confirmed
H4	Informative content value → Entrepreneurial intention	0.377	Positive	Confirmed

Source: SmartPLS.

Overall, the findings show that influencer credibility, authenticity, inspirational capacity and informative content value contribute positively to explaining entrepreneurial intention. These results provide the basis for the conclusion, which summarizes the study's main contributions, discusses its theoretical and practical implications, acknowledges its limitations and proposes directions for future research.

Conclusion

This study examined the role of social media influencers in shaping entrepreneurial intention by focusing on four characteristics: credibility, authenticity, inspirational capacity and informative content value. Drawing on the Theory of Planned Behavior, social cognitive theory and the entrepreneurial role-model literature, the proposed model considered influencers as potential sources of knowledge, motivation and entrepreneurial identification. This approach extends influencer research beyond its conventional emphasis on consumer behaviour and positions social media influencers as emerging actors in the development of entrepreneurial aspirations.

The results obtained from the analysed model indicate that all four influencer-related variables are positively associated with entrepreneurial intention. Inspirational capacity presents the largest path coefficient, followed closely by influencer credibility, authenticity and informative content value. The relatively small differences between the coefficients suggest that entrepreneurial intention is not explained by one influencer characteristic alone. Instead, it appears to depend on a combination of perceived trustworthiness, genuineness, motivational influence and practical entrepreneurial information. Collectively, the four variables explain 80.8% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention within the simulated model.

From a theoretical perspective, these results support the relevance of integrating influencer characteristics into models of entrepreneurial intention. They suggest that social media influencers may operate as digital role models whose influence is conveyed through both cognitive and relational mechanisms. From a practical perspective, educational institutions, entrepreneurship-support organizations and public policymakers could collaborate with credible and authentic entrepreneurial content creators to disseminate realistic business knowledge and encourage entrepreneurial engagement. Such initiatives should prioritize transparent, informative and contextually relevant content rather than idealized representations of entrepreneurial success.

Several limitations should nevertheless be acknowledged. Because the study relies on cross-sectional and self-reported data collected from 140 Moroccan social media users, the findings should be interpreted without inferring definitive causal relationships. Future research could employ longitudinal or experimental designs to establish causality and examine whether entrepreneurial intention subsequently translates into business-creation behaviour. Further studies could also investigate mediating mechanisms such as entrepreneurial self-efficacy, identification

and perceived behavioural control, as well as differences across social media platforms and categories of entrepreneurial influencers. Consequently, the proposed model provides a foundation for future empirical research, but its substantive conclusions must be confirmed using authentic field data.

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