



DOES ZANZIBARIS' TRUST IN INFLUENCERS HAVE AN IMPACT ON IMPULSIVE TRAVEL?

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ABSTRACT

Social media influencers have emerged as paramount opinion leaders in contemporary society. This research endeavors to scrutinize the impact of trust in social media influencers on destination branding and impulsive travel decisions. The study population comprises indigenous social media users residing in Zanzibar. A quantitative research methodology was employed to administer a questionnaire to 271 participants. Findings indicate a substantial correlation between trust in social media influencers and perceived credibility within the tourism sector. Influencers with significant industry standing exert considerable influence on followers' perceptions, fostering enhanced audience confidence. Moreover, impulsive travel intentions are linked to destination brand trust, with potential travelers exhibiting a greater inclination towards spontaneous trips when they harbor confidence in the destination's brand. A robust destination brand cultivates a sense of security and optimism, inspiring individuals to contemplate more inclusive and dynamic travel experiences. The study presents avenues for further exploration into the intricate dynamics of influencer marketing and its repercussions on travel behaviors across diverse cultural contexts, as it offers valuable insights into the social media landscape of Zanzibar.

1. INTRODUCTION

The growth of social networking sites in 2000, social media saw a notable increase in popularity (Edosomwan et al., 2011). Several factors have accelerated the popularity of social media. Primarily, advancements in technology, such as improved software, wider internet access, and more powerful computers and mobile devices, have fueled its rapid growth. Social factors include the young people rapid adoption of social media and economic considerations like the decrease in the cost of computers and software and the rise in commercial interest in social media sites (Boyd, 2009). The expansion of online social networks has led to the rise of social media influencers (Cox et al., 2009). Social media influencers (SMIs) are independent promoters who use platforms like blogs, tweets and others to shape public opinion. (Freberg et al., 2011). SMIs are a sub-category of digital content creators who are characterized by online prominence, distinct brand personalities and established partnerships (Hadjadj et al., 2020).

They use information, advice, and inspiration to promote and offer their fan base trademarked goods and services.

Considering to the emergence of social media influencing, it has recently gone through a process of modernization as a result of social media recruiters and management companies that facilitate agreements between marketers and influencers. Particularly, sponsor advertisers are promoted as tools to aid content producers in “monetizing” their marketing initiatives. Users of social media can demonstrate curiosity about goods worn or displayed by their favorite influencers through their social media pages (Law & Xiang, 2013). On consumer behavior and decision-making, it is stated that trust among customers and the propensity to purchase online when planning online travel are significantly influenced by interactions between consumers and social media influencers and are positively correlated (Arsal et al., 2008; Wen et al., 2009). Tourist behavior is influenced by demands for both direct and indirect levels of quality of service, making travel towards the destination increasingly probable (Pop et al., 2022). Additionally, influencers appeal to a greater cultural attraction to sincerity because they are viewed as more sincere or trustworthy providers of information and advice. It is undeniable that the travelers are impacted by the impulsive travel plans of social media celebrities. Many destinations have seen an increase in popularity as a result of their abilities to persuade and influence travel decisions through captivating visual assets and compelling stories (Dimitriou & AbouElgheit, 2019).

SIMs are a subset of the numerous influencers on various platforms that hold great sway over their followers' attention and trust. By investigating the credibility of social media travel influencers and the resulting impact on destination brand trust and impulsive travel intentions, this study aims to investigate the complex dynamics of this influence. This research attempts to add to the body of knowledge that is currently available in the literature on tourism by offering an in-depth understanding of the relationships between the credibility of travel influencers on social media, destination brand trust, and impulsive travel intentions. While research has explored how social media impacts travel planning, the connection between the perceived trustworthiness of these platforms and impulsive travel decisions remains understudied. However, the combination of social media influencer trust leads to different outcomes to fill this gap. The significance of the research provides further understanding of these relationships so that academics and professionals in the field may better understand the manner in which travel decision-making changes in the digital age. Additionally, this study addresses a distinct

gap in the literature by providing the basis for further investigations and providing useful information to improve destination marketing strategies' efficacy.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The relationships between the variables used in the research are primarily investigated in a theoretical context. A thorough literature review is conducted in this context. After the evaluation of the related variables in the literature, hypotheses are created to examine the correlations between all the variables. The evaluations of the relevant studies in the literature and the hypotheses created in line with these evaluations are given.

2.1. Social Media Influencers, Perceived Credibility and Destination Brand Trust

As online social networks have grown, social media influencers (SMIs) have come into existence (Cox et al., 2009) consequently, various schools and practitioners started to pay attention to the concept. Researchers have defined SMIs as ordinary individuals with notable social media communities who engage with their fans online by publishing content about their own lives and lifestyles and who grow their following by incorporating branded content (Borchers, 2019; De Veirman et al., 2017). SMIs that provide honest evaluations foster authentic relationships with their followers and improve engagement, all of which have the potential to build trust (Pop et al., 2022). A number of studies have been conducted recently on Instagram marketing and how it affects travel (Borchers, 2019; Eken et al., 2022; Gon, 2021; Granberg, 2019; Razak and Mansoor, 2022).

The effectiveness of SMIs in the tourism industry has been influenced by the accuracy of the information they produce through their blogs, posts and videos (Varkaris & Neuhofer, 2017).

Social media influencers can leverage the powerful and engaging nature of these platforms to share their travel adventures with a wide audience. Their recommendations and experiences can significantly influence the travel decisions of potential tourists. Despite their effectiveness in engaging consumers, social media and its influencers can also damage the reputations of travel companies and destinations (Varkaris & Neuhofer, 2017). Additionally, given that SMIs are more likeable, believable, and cost-effective than traditional advertising, they have developed into a vital component of social media marketing efforts in destination marketing (Law & Xiang, 2013). The effectiveness of SMIs in the tourism industry has been influenced by the accuracy of the information they produce through their blogs, posts and videos (Magno & Cassia, 2018). To foster customer loyalty and support, SMIs cultivate strong emotional bonds

with their followers by creating engaging and meaningful content. (Turri et al., 2013). Credibility is a primary method used to evaluate the authenticity of marketing endorsements (Taghipoorreyneh & De Run, 2016). Customers' views, behaviors, routines, and strategies can all be influenced by a reliable source (Pop et al., 2021). Hence, SMIs who are regarded as authorities and reliable have a bigger effect on the opinions of their followers. By creating unique and genuine material, SMIs can maintain a connection with their followers (Verma et al., 2023). The decision to follow a particular social media influencer is influenced by their perceived credibility and authenticity, which involves being genuine, relevant, and honest with their followers (Piskorski, 2016; Glucksman, 2017). Consumers' willingness to visit a destination can be influenced by destination branding, which is based on their trust in travel influencers (Kim & Kim, 2020). SMIs might obtain greater credibility from customers when compared to user-generated content from regular users on the platforms. SMIs' reviews are typically thought to provide high-quality content (Chen, et al., 2022). The customers may come to trust a brand by virtue of the endorser's credibility being transferred to it (Spry et al., 2011). In accordance with the opinion above, the following hypotheses have been presented:

H1. Social media influencers trust (SMI) has a statistically significant effect on perceived credibility (PC).

H2. Social media influencers trust (SMI) has a statistically significant effect on destination brand trust (DBT).

2.2. Impulsive Travel Intention

Since audiences rely on the credibility of social media influencers through interaction, they can experience uncertainty; as a result, they require reassurance and indicators (Walther et al., 2009). Internet comments can clarify misunderstandings and, when filled with positive feedback from other viewers, enhance audience perception of social media influencers (Lim & Van Der Heide, 2015). Additionally, positive emotion increases perceived credibility and encourages brand trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Pavlou, 2003). Social media platforms and destination brand trust in online travel agencies are highly influenced by the credibility of the source (Chen et al., 2021). Source credibility, influenced by factors such as the perception of a personal connection, similarity to the audience, and genuine authenticity, boosts consumer trust in both destination brands and online travel agency platforms (Chen et al., 2022). The study also showed that travelers' inclination to travel to tourist spots increases with time and that they are increasingly interested in reliable, compelling, and high-quality ratings.

The relationship between brand credibility and its authenticity was also examined by Portal et al. (2019), and it has been found to be favorable. These results suggest a significant correlation between consumers' views of brand authenticity and brand trust levels. The focus of this study is on whether the travel influencers' extensive travel experiences enable them to provide reviews that are accurate, dependable, and well-founded (Jiménez-Barreto et al., 2020). Based on Lou and Yuan (2019) research, influencers' trust in branded posts is influenced by factors such as perceived similarity, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and the informational value of the content generated by SMIs. Furthermore, it was discovered that followers' desire to buy is positively influenced by their trust in influencer-branded posts (Lou & Yuan, 2019). In addition to believed trust has the ability to predict post-credibility (Martínez-López et al., 2020). This predicts a larger interest in the influencers' posts. Likewise, it was pointed out that trust influences information credibility favorably and may result in a favorable brand attitude (Xiao et al., 2018). In light of this, the following hypothesis has been presented:

H3. Social media influencers trust (SMI) has a statistically significant effect on impulsive travel intention (IT).

2.3. Perceived Credibility, Destination Brand Trust and Impulsive Travel Intention

Impulsive behaviors are frequently referred to as unplanned behaviors (Chang et al., 2014). (Guerreiro et al., 2019) argue that people who are devoted to SMIs frequently visit destinations and appreciate their reputation for credibility, integrity, and other qualities. According to (Fotis et al., 2012), customers are more likely to change their vacation plans the more social media influences their choice of destination. Additionally, social media's influencers not only influence planned purchases (Hwang & Zhang, 2018); Mousavi and Roper, (2023), but they also have a big impact on impulsive purchases (Zafar et al., 2021). In this context, "impulsive buying" refers to unexpected purchases made by consumers after encountering product or service recommendations from social media influencers (Hu et al., 2019). These results support the notion that products are necessary to keep up relationships with social media and show that these influencers have the power to persuade people to buy things they otherwise might not have seen (Xiang et al., 2016). The study conducted by (Yao et al., 2021) it has been approved that not every decision about where to travel is the result of a thorough information search. Travelers are more likely to make impulsive decisions like this now because social media is so widely used. The findings suggest that when visitors view shared travel experiences as

prominent consuming, they are more likely to have impulsive travel intentions. This relationship might result from travelers feeling more relative deprivation when they see other people's conspicuous trip experiences that they have posted on social media. Based on that, the current research makes the following hypothesis:

H4. Perceived credibility (PC) has a statistically significant effect on destination brand trust (DBT).

Relevant to the current study, (Marinao et al., 2012) defined destination trust as a multidimensional construct based on visitors' assessments of the degree of competence, kindness, and honesty displayed by locals and organizations. Destination trust, according to (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016), is the degree to which a tourist is prepared to depend on a place of tourism's ability to carry out its stated purposes. From a practical standpoint, destination trust gives travelers the confidence that the services they receive will be clear-cut, dependable, hassle-free, and risk-free (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016). According to Su et al. (2021), reciprocal and ongoing social interaction can elicit destination trust, which supports long-lasting social bonds and people's helpful actions. Therefore, the ability and desire of a location to deliver on its promises to tourists is reflected in the tourist's overall assessment of the destination's competence, reputation, and credibility, or destination trust.

According to Zheng et al. (2022), reducing tourists' perceptions of risk and uncertainty can be achieved through the establishment of destination trust. Travelers are more likely to go to places that they believe to be reliable and trustworthy (Filieri et al., 2015; Filieri et al., 2021; Pop et al., 2022). Although trust has been identified as a significant determinant of travelers' satisfaction (Koo et al., 2017; Olson and Ahluwalia, 2021), loyalty (Su et al., 2017), commitment (Dong et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020), and travel habits, there is an absence of research examining the relationship between destination brand trust and impulsive travel intention. Review valence (positive vs. negative) is expected to cause an assortment of online travel consumers' trust in a destination, which will have an impact on travel impulses in line with the mentioned earlier study. In light of the body of existing literature. Based on that, the current research makes the following hypothesis:

H5. Perceived credibility (PC) has a statistically significant effect on impulsive travel intentions (IT).

H6. Destination brand trust (DBT).has a statistically significant effect on impulsive travel intentions (IT).

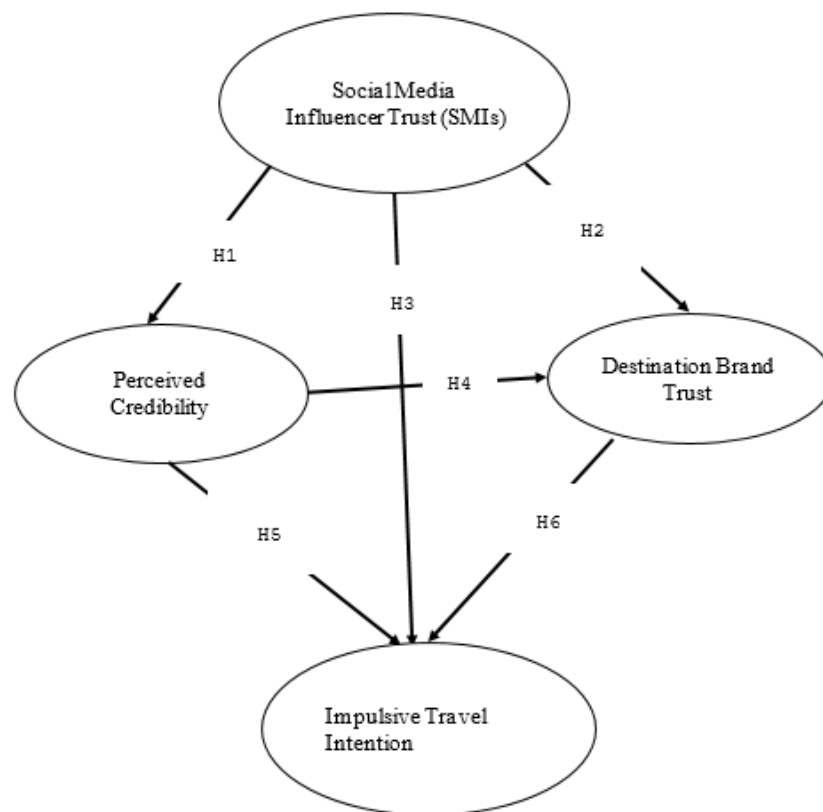


Figure 1. Research Model

3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the current study is to examine the relationships between trust in SMIs, perceived credibility of destination brands, and impulsive travel intentions among their followers. To test the suggested theories, an empirical study was carried out among social media users, particularly generation Y and Z residents of Zanzibar who appeared to use social media regularly.

3.1. Population and Sample

This research took place on the Zanzibar. Zanzibar is a popular destination for tourists due to its natural beauty, pristine environment, safety and security, hospitable and inviting people, and world-class historical sites. Zanzibar was designated as one of the World Heritage Sites by UNESCO in 2000. Zanzibar has historical and cultural sites and unique building architecture. Additionally, Zanzibar is an irresistible destination among the most popular destinations in terms of leisure tourism, with beautiful natural surroundings for tourist events, including

festivals, theater, and concerts, as well as an accessible geographical location (Ziddy, 2013). The population of the study consists of social media users from the local community living in Zanzibar. This study utilized an online survey questionnaire targeting Zanzibar residents, accessible through a Google Form link. In total, data was collected from 271 participants.

3.2. Data Collection Instrument and Analysis

A questionnaire form was used to collect the research data. The questionnaire form used in the research consists of two parts. The first section includes statements regarding the demographic characteristics of the participants. In the second part, there are statements to measure participants' trust in SMIs (Goldsmith et al., 2000; Cox et al., 2009; Fotis et al., 2012), perceived credibility (Su et al., 2021), destination brand trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001) and impulsive travel intention (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Dey & Srivastava, 2017; Yao et al., 2021). The statements in the scale are rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly disagree; 5= Strongly agree). After the data were collected, they were transferred to the SPSS. SPSS was used for descriptive statistics, validity and reliability. Subsequently, the model proposed within the scope of the research was examined.

4. RESULTS

The findings presented in this section were obtained based on the study of sample. First, the demographic structure of the participants with whom the evaluation was conducted was determined, and then the procedure for putting the research model to the test began. Finally, evaluations were made about whether the study's hypotheses were verified or not, as were the interpretations of the results.

4.1. Findings on the Demographic Characteristics

Under this heading, the findings showing the demographic characteristics of a total of 271 students who responded to the three demographic questions in the last part of the questionnaire and participated in the research are shown in Table 1.

Table 1.
Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

		Frequency	Percentage			Frequency	Percentage	
Gender	Male	182	67.2	Income	Less than 2000	190	70.1	
	Female	89	32.8		2001-4000	52	19.2	
Age	18-25	30	11.1	(USD)	4001-6000	22	8.1	
	26-35	125	46.1		More than 6001	7	2.6	
	36-45	95	35.1					
	46+	21	7.7					
Total		271	100	Total		271	100	

According to the results of Table 1, 46.1% of participants were between the ages of 26 and 35 (125). When the genders of the respondents were analyzed, a sizable portion of the participants 67.2% were male (182) and 32.8% were female (89). Additionally, when participants' monthly incomes in USD are examined, it becomes obvious that most visitors have middle-class incomes, representing 70.1% of participants (190).

4.2. Reliability and Validity of the Measurement Model

Reliability is the extent to which results are consistent over time and a precise reflection of the full population under study. If the results of the study can be verified using a similar methodology, the research tool is considered reliable (Suhr, 2006). The level of similarity between various measures of a variable is referred to as reliability. Internal consistency is the idea that since each item or component of a scale measures the same structure, they are all related to one another and follow the same logic (Hair et al., 2010). The most used testing technique for testing internal fit reliability is the evaluation of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (CA). Through reliability analysis and the overall reliability level, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was evaluated and discovered to be 0.824. Considering this situation, the level of reliability obtained in the research shows that the scale used in the research has a high structure in terms of internal consistency and that the measurement performed with the said scale is reliable. Additionally, Table 2 provides the Cronbach's alpha scores, Composite reliability (CR) and Average variance extracted (AVE) for each measure utilized in the study. Since the values of the criteria calculated for the reliability and validity of the measurement model are within the acceptance limit values, it can be said that the model and factor structure are reliable.

Table 2.
Reliability Analysis Result

Factors	CA	CR	AVE
SMI	0.808	0.791	0.654
PC	0.816	0.742	0.592
DBT	0.813	0.821	0.696
IT	0.815	0.834	0.716

The values in Table 2 show that the measurement model provides construct validity and reliability.

Table 3.
Discriminant Validity

Factors	DBT	IT	PC	SMI
DBT	0.835			
IT	0.415	0.846		
PC	0.444	0.380	0.769	
SMI	0.414	0.396	0.493	0.809

Table 3 presents the discriminant validity data analyzed through the Fornell-Larcker criterion. When the relevant data are analyzed, it is seen that discriminant validity is ensured.

4.3. Structural model

PLS-SEM was used to determine the coefficient of determination, path significance, and estimated path coefficients in the structural model. The PLS-SEM test results, including the path coefficients and accompanying t-values, are reported in Table 4. Structural model analysis results are given in Figure 2.

Table 4.
Hypothesis, path coefficient and result

Hypothesis	Path coefficients	t-value	p-values	Results
H ₁ . SMI→PC	0.493	6.453	<0.001	Supported
H ₂ . SMI→DBT	0.258	4.136	<0.001	Supported
H ₃ . SMI→IT	0.210	3.200	<0.001	Supported
H ₄ . PC→DBT	0.317	4.693	<0.001	Supported
H ₅ . PC→IT	0.164	2.409	<0.05	Supported
H ₆ . DBT→IT	0.255	3.422	<0.001	Supported

***p < 0.010; **p < 0.050; *p < 0.100

When the analysis's findings are compared to the proposed hypothesis framework, it becomes clear that the independent H1 social media influencers' trust variable had a significant effect on the dependent variable's perceived credibility ($\beta=0.493$; $p<0.01$). The H2 variable should have a significant impact on the dependent variable even though the social media influencer shows significance with destination brand trust ($\beta=0.258$; $p<0.01$). This is supported by H3 the finding that the effect was found to be statistically significant with impulsive travel intention ($\beta=0.210$; $p<0.01$). Unlike Yao et al., (2021) study found that travelers who view shared travel experiences as a prominent form of consumption, rather than an unobtrusive one, are more likely to have impulsive travel intentions. This association may be due to visitors feeling a sense of deprivation when they see other people's extravagant travel experiences posted on social media. H4 has a considerable impact on destination brand trust ($\beta=0.317$; $p<0.01$), this supported by (Xu & Pratt, 2018) that both endorser-destination and SMI endorser-consumer congruence strongly influence visit intentions toward the endorsed destinations. SMIs are recommended for usage by tourism marketers when target markets and destination images correspond. H5 The results of this study showed a statistically significant correlation between perceived credibility and impulsive travel intention ($\beta=0.164$; $p<0.05$) which supported by previous study indicate that Young travellers are primarily influenced by the attractive photos, perceived information, and sense of popularity and interaction of travel influencers on Instagram (Anuar et al., 2021) Respondents reported to trust the destination recommended with

social media influencers, this supported with H6 ($\beta=0.255$; $p<0.01$). Cooley and Parks-Yancy, (2019) has indicated that millennial consumer purchasing choices are influenced by information gained from celebrities, social media influencers, and real-world acquaintances.

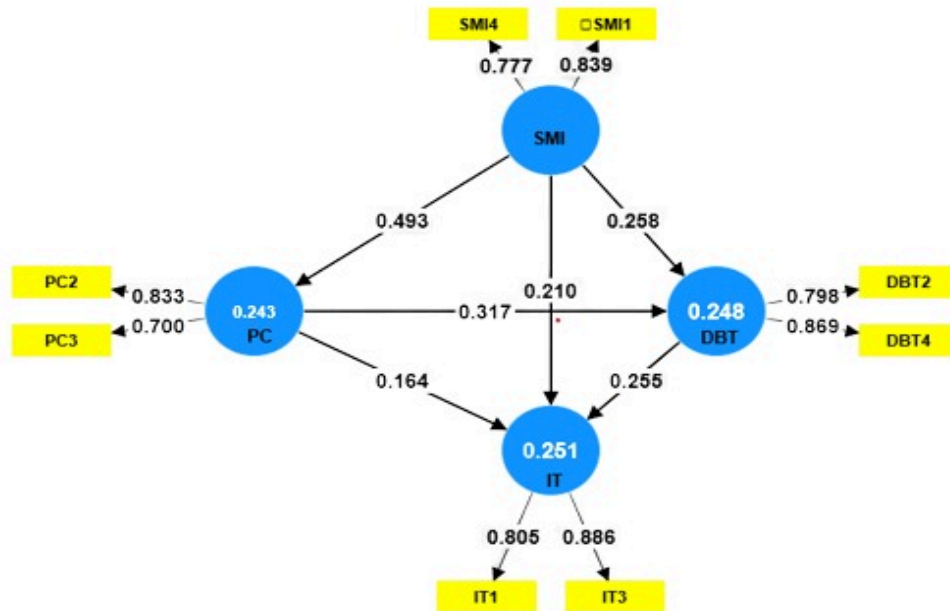


Figure 2. PLS model SMI Trusts Effects on Destination Brand Trust and Impulsive Travel Intentions.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings of the study provide strong evidence in support of the hypothesis that credibility is strongly influenced by the trust of social media influencers. Influencers in the travel industry have a significant impact on followers' impressions, and audience trustworthiness is enhanced when followers place a high value on influencers. This result is consistent with the body of research that has been done on how influencers affect consumer behavior. First, this study addresses a large research vacuum by shedding light on the circumstances surrounding impulsive travel intention. Since impulse purchase is infrequently examined in tourist research, although receiving a lot of attention in the consumer and marketing domains (Ahn et al., 2020). However, this research discovered that external situational elements can also trigger compulsive buying when it comes to travelling (Thoumrungrroje, 2018; Yao et al., 2021; Zafar et al., 2021). Second, despite the fact that consumer research and social media influencer trust have clearly demonstrated the connection between social media influencers and trust, impulsive travel intentions remain unclear. The current study's social media influencer trust was considered an independent variable aimed at promoting the perceived credibility of destination brands and

stimulating materialistic tourists' impetuous vacation desires. This demonstrates that people who are more materialistic are not only susceptible to temptation from appealing but unachievable items (Dittmar et al., 2014). In addition to other people's travel experiences, this broadens the body of research on the connection between SMI trust and impulsive travel intention. Third, this study contributes to the body of research on the influence of relative social media influencer trust in inducing impulsive purchases by examining the role of such trust in the context of impulsive travel. This study empirically verifies that social media influencer trust has a dual role to influence generation Y and Z on destination brand trust and taking decision on unplanned travel, in contrast to previous studies that demonstrated that relative social media influencer enhances tourists' travel intention (Zhai et al., 2020). Additionally, by demonstrating that tourists utilize impulsive travel as a mechanism to cope with perceived limitations in their lives, this research underscores the idea that impulsive travel can serve as a self-regulating strategy. Finally, this study's impulsive travel intention is comparatively more intense and irresistible than visit intention in the literature currently in publication (Liu et al., 2020; Yao et al., 2021).

As a result of the research, it was also contributed to business managers to understand the ways of attracting tourists. Social media influencers' posts may capture the interest of potential travelers, so managers should encourage travelers to share their positive travel experiences on social media networks by offering rewards or emotionally convincing them. This is particularly relevant for information regarding the perceived credibility of the destination. Travel experiences in these places are often seen as more symbolic and alluring, leading to significant comparisons between the viewer and the sharer. Marketers should encourage travellers to share their travelogues with specific audiences, such as friends and peers, rather than the general public, as people seek the "good life". Also, the results of the current study suggest that social media impact may have a self-enhancement effect by motivating users to reach the same position. Shared travel experiences have the potential to significantly increase the stimulating effect by promoting comparisons between social media influencers and their followers.

There are certain limitations to this study that need to be acknowledged. First, the other traveler generations may be impacted by social media influencers trust in their impulsive intentions. These variables might be taken into account in subsequent studies. Second, the study results may not be as generalizable if destination marketing plans solely rely on Instagram social media influencers. This is an issue that should be investigated in follow-up research employing influencers from various social media platforms, including TikTok and Instagram. Third, the

Zanzibar demographic, which includes generations Y and Z, makes up the majority of the sample in this study. Future researchers would benefit from expanding the current study to include additional age groups and geographic areas.

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