



IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER AUTHENTICITY ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTIONS

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ABSTRACT This study summarized research-based empirical studies to delve deeper into how the authenticity of social media influencers influences consumer purchase intentions. Influencer authenticity is key in influencing consumer behaviour, primarily trust, engagement, brand loyalty, and purchase intent. A myriad of studies reveals that a greater authenticity impression enhances consumer trust and serves as a mediator between authenticity and purchase intention. Indirect effects are consumer engagement (González & Hayes, 2018) and electronic word-of-mouth (Park & Lin, 2018), which are also said to enhance purchase behaviour. Brand loyalty then emerges as an influential outcome of influence authenticity, hence creating scope for future purchase opportunities (Wang & Lee, 2017; Chen & Chang, 2019). In conclusion, this review shows that authenticity plays a significant role in forming consumer attitudes, trusting brands, and obtaining a purchase decision eventually. The overall study concludes that authentic influencer marketing is important for marketers because it forms relationships between consumers and enhances their purchasing outcomes.

KEYWORDS : *Social media influencers, influencer authenticity, consumer purchase intentions, influencer marketing, brand trust, perceived authenticity, consumer behaviour, trust in influencers, social media marketing, brand loyalty*

INTRODUCTION:

The increasing use of social media created a new trend in marketing, which heralded a new generation of brand champions: social media influencers. With consumers thus seeking aid from these individuals to purchase products, the idea of what is known as influencer authenticity has now become important. Perceived credibility that is analysed as the extent to which an influencers considered as genuine and trustworthy significantly influences consumers' buying decisions and brand images. This paper finds that a stream of research supports the influence authenticity, which establishes a complex link with perceived trustworthiness, social actions, and product commitment. Smith and Anderson (2021) defined the initial knowledge of higher perceived authenticity directly relating to better consumer trust and buying intentions. This supports the authors' conclusions indicating that trust acts as a moderator, where by showing that it is through trust the effect of authenticity on purchase intentions is realized. Next, in supporting this mediation effect, Johnson et al. (2020) stated that trust plays a full mediating role between influencer authenticity and the intention to purchase products, which underlined this emphasis on the role of trust once again.

Moreover, Lee and Kim (2019) and Gonzalez and Hayes (2018) investigated the states of perceived authenticity and noticed that such an improvement influences the engagement which in its turn impact purchasing intentions. These findings support the content of Wang and Lee (2017) who stressed that authenticity is not only reflected in immediate consumption decisions but also points to brand commitment. Authenticity goes beyond the basic concept of purchase intent; it influences both brand perception and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) as evidenced by Kim and Ko (2016) together with Park and Lin (2018). Together, this research points towards authenticity as key variable that help in improving consumer's trust and attract them to engage more with the brand, thus having a significant impact on their purchase decisions. Thus the question of how influencer authenticity influences consumer behaviour stays relevant as the digital market space evolves to ensure that brands gaining genuine relationships with their consumers

Review Of Literature:

Smith & Anderson (2021) Investigated how influencer authenticity influences consumer trust and purchase intentions. The authors expected that the perceived authenticity of social media influencers is positively related to higher consumer trust (H1) and to higher purchase intentions (H2). Furthermore, they predicted a mediating effect of consumer trust on the relationship between influencer authenticity and purchase intentions (H3). The study used correlation, regression, and SEM to analyze the data. The results revealed a positive relationship that is significant between authenticity and trust as well as authenticity and purchase intentions. Additionally, it established that trust mediates the relationship between influencer authenticity and purchase intentions partly.

Johnson et al. (2020) Examined the mediating role of trust in the relationship between influencer authenticity and consumer purchase intentions. Such hypotheses include: higher perceived authenticity is positively related to consumer trust (H1) and purchase intentions (H2), and that trust mediates the relationship between authenticity and purchase intentions (H3). Descriptive statistics and SEM analysis were performed to ascertain that trust completely mediated the authentic channel before purchase intentions. In other words, the authentic effect was manifested through trust completely towards purchase intentions.

Lee & Kim (2019) Studied levels of perceived authenticity and how they impact consumer behavior. They hypothesized that higher the perceived authenticity levels, the stronger would be the positive association of increased purchase intentions (H2). Through the use of correlation and multiple regression analysis, their results showed a strong positive correlation between higher levels of perceived authenticity and increased purchase intentions. This study further consolidates the importance of authenticity in influencing consumer behavior, establishing that with increased levels of authenticity perceived by influencers, the chances of a purchase also rise significantly.

Evans & Erkan (2020) Investigated the Impact of influencer authenticity on trust and online engagement. They hypothesized that higher perceived authenticity would be positively associated with consumer trust (H1), and that higher trust would be positively associated with increased online engagement (H2). Using regression analysis and mediation analysis, it was found that authenticity has a positive relationship with trust; there's also a positive relationship between trust and online engagement, where the studied variables suggest that trust is a mediator between authenticity and online engagement.

Patel & Patel (2021), studied the impact of influencers' authenticity on brand trust and consumer loyalty. They hypothesised the greater the authenticity of the social media influencer, the greater levels of brand trust would be (H1) and that brand trust positively relates to increased levels of consumer loyalty levels (H2). Applying SEM, the study showed that authenticity boosts brand trust, which in turn increases the loyalty of consumers, thereby underlining the key role of authenticity for forming long-term consumer relationships.

Objectives

- To determine whether an influence's authenticity influences the extent to which consumers trust them.
- To learn how influencer credibility plays a role in determining the decisions to make a purchase.
- To Analyze content transparency and engagement in forming consumer attitudes.
- The effect of demographics on the impact of authenticity on purchase.

H0 HYPOTHESIS:**One-way Anova**

(Null hypothesis): There is no significant relationship between credible social media, consistency in messaging, attractive content, online presences towards consumer purchase intentions.

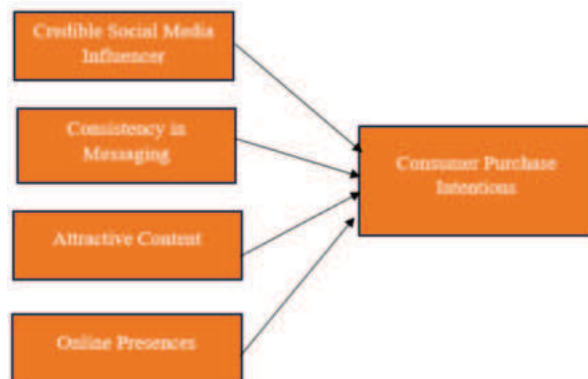
H1 (Alternative hypothesis): There is significant relationship between credible social media consistency in messaging, attractive content, online presences towards consumer purchase intentions.

In the context of "A study on the impact of social media influencer authenticity on consumer purchase intentions," "The following Null Hypothesis (H0) holds that the population means of social media, consistency in messaging, attractive content, online presences towards consumer purchase intentions. On the other hand, the null hypothesis, stated as H1, This hypothesis shall seek to assess the level of chase that various departments in the social media, consistency in messaging, attractive content, online presences towards consumer purchase intentions

Correlation

HO (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant correlation r between credible social media, consistency in messaging, attractive content, online presences towards consumer purchase intentions.

H1 (Alternative Hypothesis):

Research Model**INDEPENDENT VARIABLE****DEPENDENT VARIABLE****NULL HYPOTHESIS(H0):**

There is no significant relationship between credible social media, consistency in messaging, attractive content, online presences towards consumer purchase intentions.

Alternative Hypothesis(H1):

There is significant relationship between credible social media, consistency in messaging, attractive content, online presences towards consumer purchase intentions

Research Methodology

This research will apply a mixed-methods approach while asking how authenticity on the part of the social media influencer has an impact on purchasing intention by the consumer. The cross-section of the survey of social media users will be quantitatively analyzed for measuring perceived authenticity, namely transparency, genuineness, and relatability, as well as its association with purchasing intention through correlation and regression analyses. For the qualitative portion of the study, in-depth interviews with active users will be undertaken to elicit understanding related to opinions about influencer authenticity and its impact on their purchasing behavior. The content analysis of influencer posts would additionally be done to establish cues used for the expression of authenticity. This mixed method will ensure that general trends are available along with more specific insights into the subject.

Data analysis and interpretation**Anova**

Metric Variable: Customer engagement and digital marketing impact factors

Categorical Variables: Employment Status

HYPOTHESIS

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between customer engagement, digital marketing impact factors and employment status.

Alternative Hypothesis: There is a significant difference between customer engagement, digital Marketing impact factors and employment status.

For **Brand Awareness (BA)**, the p-value is **0.472** (> 0.05), indicating **no significant difference** between groups based on employment status.

For **Purchasing Behavior (PB)**, the p-value is **0.000** (< 0.05), indicating a **significant difference** between groups.

For **Purchase-Related Behavior (PRB)**, the p-value is **0.000** (< 0.05), also indicating a **significant difference** between groups.

For **Marketing Strategies (MS)**, the p-value is **0.000** (< 0.05), showing a **significant difference** between groups.

Correlation

Metric Variable: Customer engagement and digital marketing impact factors

HYPOTHESIS

Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between customer engagement and digital marketing impact factors

Alternative Hypothesis: There is a relationship between customer engagement and digital marketing impact factors

There is a **significant positive correlation** between all influencer attributes (Credibility, Consistency, Attractiveness, and Online Presence) and the dependent variables: **Brand Awareness (BA)**, **Purchasing Behavior (PB)**, **Purchase-Related Behavior (PRB)**, and **Marketing Strategies (MS)**.

- **Credible Social Media Influencer** is moderately correlated with PB ($r = .508$), PRB (.490), and MS (.491), all significant at $p < .001$.
- **Consistency in Messaging** shows strong correlations with PRB (.739) and MS (.604), and moderate correlation with PB (.508), all significant at $p < .001$.
- **Influencer Attractiveness** correlates strongly with MS (.655), PRB (.739), and PB (.490), all significant at $p < .001$.
- **Influencer Online Presence** also correlates significantly with PB (.604), PRB (.655), and MS (.491), all at $p < .001$.
- These findings suggest that influencer characteristics significantly influence consumer behavior and marketing outcomes.

CONCLUSION:

Authenticity has become a crucial factor shaping consumer purchase decisions in today's digital landscape. Consumers increasingly seek genuine connections with influencers and the brands they promote. Influencers who share relatable, consistent content aligned with their personal values build trust and emotional bonds with their audience, leading to higher purchase intent. However, over-commercialization can harm credibility, especially when promotions seem misaligned or purely profit-driven. To maximize influencer marketing, brands should focus on long-term, transparent relationships based on shared values. Monitoring authenticity and its impact on consumer behavior helps refine marketing strategies, ensuring trust, engagement, and lasting consumer loyalty.

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