

Exploring the Influence of Social Media Influencers' Credibility on Consumer Behavior: An Empirical Study

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Manuscript ID:
COM-2024-12016815

Volume: 12

Issue: 1

Month: January

Year: 2024

E-ISSN: 2582-6190

Received: 31.10.2023

Accepted: 3.12.2023

Published: 01.01.2024

Citation:

Suganya, RV, and S. Asan Bawa. "Exploring the Influence of Social Media Influencers' Credibility on Consumer Behavior: An Empirical Study." *ComFin Research*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2024, pp. 82–92.

DOI:


<https://doi.org/10.34293/commerce.v12i1.6815>



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Abstract

In the contemporary landscape of digital marketing, social media influencers play a pivotal role in shaping consumer behavior. This study aims to investigate the impact of social media influencer credibility dimensions on various facets of consumer behavior. Drawing from a comprehensive review of the literature, researcher identify and explore multiple credibility dimensions, including expertise, trustworthiness, attractive, and purchase intention, among others. Methodologically, this research employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with both influencers and consumers. The quantitative phase involves a large-scale survey to assess the relationships between credibility dimensions and consumer behaviors, such as purchase intentions, product recommendations, and brand loyalty. In contrast, the qualitative phase delves into the nuanced aspects of credibility through in-depth interviews, shedding light on the influencers' and consumers' perspectives. The findings of this study are expected to offer valuable insights into the dynamics of influencer marketing in the digital era. By dissecting the various dimensions of influencer credibility, researcher aim to provide marketers and brand managers with a nuanced understanding of how different facets of credibility impact consumer decision-making processes. Additionally, this research contributes to the evolving literature on influencer marketing by exploring potential moderating factors and contextual variables that may influence the credibility-consumer behavior relationship. In conclusion, this study aspires to bridge the existing gap in understanding the intricate connections between social media influencer credibility dimensions and consumer behavior, ultimately empowering businesses to develop more effective influencer marketing strategies and enhance consumer engagement in the digital age.

Keywords: Social Media Influencers, Credibility, Expertise, Attractive, Trust, Purchase Intention.

Introduction

In recent years, the rise of social media has transformed the way people consume information, interact with brands, and make purchasing decisions. At the forefront of this digital revolution are social media influencers, individuals who have leveraged their online presence to amass substantial followings and impact consumer behavior. The influence of social media influencers on consumers is a topic of significant interest and study, and it encompasses various dimensions, one of which is their credibility. The credibility of social media influencers plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer behavior. Consumers turn to these influencers for product recommendations, lifestyle inspiration, and authentic content. However, the extent to which consumers trust and perceive these influencers as credible sources can vary widely. This multidimensional aspect of credibility encompasses factors such as expertise, trustworthiness, authenticity, and attractiveness, all of which

influence consumers' attitudes and decisions. Understanding the impact of social media influencers' credibility dimensions on consumer behavior is of paramount importance for businesses, marketers, and researchers alike. It offers insights into how influencer marketing strategies can be optimized to effectively engage and persuade target audiences. Moreover, in an era where misinformation and fake endorsements can erode trust, discerning the factors that contribute to influencer credibility can help consumers make informed choices. This exploration delves into the intricate relationship between social media influencers and consumers, shedding light on the various dimensions of credibility and their effects on consumer attitudes, intentions, and behaviors. By examining this dynamic, we can gain valuable insights into the ever-evolving landscape of influencer marketing and its profound impact on the contemporary consumer journey.

Review of Literature

In (Kadam et al.) research paper, the primary aim is to establish a connection between these variables through the utilization of both primary and secondary data sources. The objective of this study is to investigate the link between the trust levels that ordinary consumers have in influencers and the subsequent consumer behaviors exhibited by young individuals aged 15 to 25, who are residents of Pune. To collect primary data, a structured questionnaire will be employed. The existing data suggests that influencer marketing generates higher levels of audience engagement when compared to traditional marketing strategies. Most individuals belonging to Generation Z actively participate on social media platforms and show a tendency to follow various influencers. The hypothesis under examination suggests that influencers significantly impact both males and females, influencing their purchasing decisions. The endorsement by influencers plays a substantial role in cultivating a positive attitude toward a brand, ultimately affecting consumer intentions to make purchases. Factors like knowledge, popularity, and the size of the fan following have a substantial role in determining the influencer's impact. Research findings indicate that effectively utilizing Gen Z influencers can be highly

beneficial in reaching this specific demographic. This offers a cost-effective opportunity for marketers to achieve optimal results.

(Dhingra), secondary sources are employed to investigate how social media influences consumer buying habits and preferences. The data is analyzed using percentage analysis as a method of examination. The results suggest that it is crucial for marketers to have a deep comprehension of the scope and influence of social media in shaping consumer behavior and preferences. Moreover, they should develop effective strategies for social media marketing to thrive in today's digital era. By harnessing social media platforms, businesses have the opportunity to boost their visibility, engage with customers proactively, and mold consumer behavior and preferences to their advantage.

(Lim et al.) highlighted the emergence of social media influencers, initially capturing the advertising industry's attention as a means to generate excitement among younger audiences and expand businesses' reach on social media platforms. This research primarily aims to assess the effectiveness of social media influencers, giving specific attention to factors like the credibility of the source, the attractiveness of the source, the alignment with the product, and the transfer of meaning. It suggests that consumer attitudes play a pivotal role as a mediator in both external and internal relationships. To gather data, a purposive sampling approach was employed, followed by an analysis of a dataset containing 200 respondents using the PLS-SEM technique. The study found support for all hypotheses except for the one related to source credibility, and it also investigated the potential mediating effects of consumer attitudes.

Social networking fosters engagement, collaboration, and the exchange of information (Palmer). It encompasses various forms, including media-sharing platforms, micro-blogging sites, blogs, social networks, review platforms, and online forums (Malik et al.). Within these online spaces, both consumers and businesses actively generate content. Furthermore, as prospective consumers increasingly perceive Consumer-Generated Content (CGC) as more authentic, impartial, and reliable in contrast to Firm-Generated Content (FGC) (Hernández-Ortega et al.; Mainolfi et al.), understanding how to integrate

it without jeopardizing brand integrity becomes paramount for organizations. Additionally, beyond CGC, the appeal and utility of the shared content hold significant importance, serving as pivotal factors in motivating potential consumers to engage with products, services, or experiences (Ke et al.).

Social media celebrities are individuals of high social standing who possess significant influence over their followers' opinions by virtue of the content they share on social media platforms (Freberg et al.). These celebrities openly communicate their personal experiences and perspectives regarding various brands and products, often compensated by companies to provide authentic online feedback to consumers. It's important to note that conventional celebrities and influencers are differentiated by the fact that celebrities typically gain prominence through traditional media, while influencers strive to establish a genuine personal brand through their social networks (Abidin).

The persuasiveness of a communicator is significantly influenced by their credibility, as highlighted in earlier research. Social media celebrities are often referred to as "micro-endorsers," and their role in advertisements mirrors that of the message source in the persuasion process. Previous studies have employed source credibility to gauge its impact on message effectiveness. The impact of endorsers on consumers has been a subject of investigation in prior research. According to one study, source credibility is predicted by expertise and trustworthiness. Previous studies have utilized characteristics such as trustworthiness and attractiveness to assess source expertise's reliability. Other attributes like trustworthiness and likability have also been employed in earlier research to evaluate source credibility. Expertise pertains to a source's competence or qualifications to make claims on a specific subject or issue, encompassing their knowledge and capabilities. Trustworthiness involves the recipient's perception of the source as reliable, genuine, and sincere.

Research Problem

In contrast to corporate-generated content, information disseminated by social media celebrities is perceived as more reliable, positioning them as

significant information sources. Research has shown that consumers' buying choices are swayed by their peers, family members, and other trusted individuals. In the realm of marketing, consumer purchase behavior has emerged as a prominent area of study, with socioeconomic factors being recognized as influential determinants. However, in the past year, a new social factor has emerged—the impact of social media celebrities on consumer purchasing intentions (Alves et al.).

With the surge in social media usage, influencer-follower relationships have gained traction in developing and emerging economies like Pakistan. Figures such as Ukhano, Mooroo, and Ali Peer Gul are commonly referred to as social media personalities due to their content creation, dissemination, and revenue generation. Furthermore, social media influencers generate income by endorsing products in their content, eagerly followed by their audience, consequently influencing their purchasing intentions. Surprisingly, the role of social media celebrities in shaping consumer behavior in Pakistan remains largely unexplored in the existing literature and market research. Hence, this study aims to fill this research gap by investigating the impact of social media celebrities on consumer behavior.

Research Gap

While there is a growing body of research examining the influence of social media influencers on consumer behavior, there remains a notable gap in the literature concerning the specific dimensions of influencer credibility and how these dimensions distinctly affect various aspects of consumer behavior. Existing studies often provide a broad overview of influencer credibility without delving into the nuanced dimensions and their varying impact on consumer choices, attitudes, and intentions. Therefore, there is a need for more focused research that explores the multifaceted dimensions of influencer credibility and their specific effects on consumer behavior in different contexts and industries

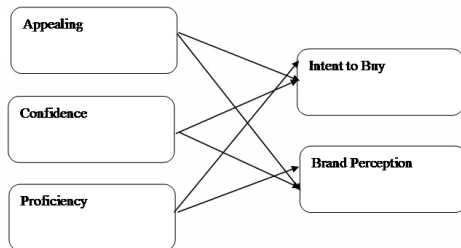
Research Objectives

- To explore the factors within SMI (Social Media Influencers) that impact the level of purchasing

intent among their followers.

- To study the influencing factors of SMI and purchase intention and their overall brand perceptions

Proposed Conceptual Model



Research Hypothesis

- H_{01} : There is a positive and significant relationship between the “Appealing” independent variable and “Perception” towards the brand.
- H_{02} : There is a positive and significant relationship between the “Confidence” independent variable and “Perception” towards the brand.
- H_{03} : There is a positive and significant relationship between the “Proficiency” independent variable and “Perception” towards the brand.
- H_{04} : There is a positive and significant relationship between the “Confidence” independent variable and “Intent to buy” towards the brand.
- H_{05} : There is a positive and significant relationship between the “Proficiency” independent variable and “Intent to buy” towards the brand.

Research Methodology

Research Design

Data collection from social media users who follow social media influencers has been carried out using a convenience sampling approach and a data collection strategy based on convenience.

Sample and Data Collection

Researcher opted for a convenience-based data collection approach due to the challenge of precisely determining the population of social media users who follow specific influencers. Study designed a structured electronic questionnaire and distributed it for responses. Received approximately 200 questionnaires in total, with 175 of them being

complete, resulting in an approximate response rate of 87.5%. Researcher developed an online form and shared it within four online groups, comprising a total of 175 participants, with instructions not to forward or share the questionnaire further to ensure accurate response rate calculation. The questionnaire initially asked respondents if they followed the specified five influencers; those who did proceeded to complete the questionnaire.

Research Strategy

The current study employs an exploratory research approach to address research inquiries and evaluate the formulated hypotheses. A thorough examination of the existing literature has yielded valuable connections, facilitating the development of hypotheses and the identification of appropriate research instruments. Additionally, we have opted for a convenience-based data collection method utilizing non-probability sampling techniques.

Analysis and Discussion

Table 1 Reliability Test

Constructs	Cronbach Alpha
Appealing	0.849
Confidence	0.867
Proficiency	0.839
Brand Perception	0.756
Intent to buy	0.901

Appealing (0.849): This construct, related to the attractiveness of social media celebrities or influencers, exhibits a high level of internal consistency. In other words, the items or questions used to measure attractiveness are strongly correlated with each other, suggesting that they are effectively measuring the same underlying concept. Confidence (0.867): The confidence construct, which assesses the trustworthiness of social media celebrities, also demonstrates a high level of internal consistency. This indicates that the questions or items used to gauge trust are reliable and coherent in measuring this aspect. Proficiency (0.839): The proficiency construct, measuring the perceived knowledge or competence of social media celebrities, exhibits a good level of internal consistency. The items used to assess expertise are consistently measuring

this characteristic. Brand Perception (0.756): This construct, related to customers' attitudes toward the brand associated with social media celebrities, shows a moderate level of internal consistency. While the items are related, there may be some variability in the responses. Intent to buy (0.901): The purchase intentions construct, which assesses the likelihood of customers purchasing products or services endorsed by social media celebrities, demonstrates a very high level of internal consistency. The items used to measure purchase intentions are highly reliable and consistently capture this concept.

Table 2 Validity

Variables	Items	Factor Loading	Composite Reliability
Appealing $\alpha = 0.867$	SMA1	.745	0.859
	SMA2	.830	
	SMA3	0.852	
	SMA4	0.831	
Confidence $\alpha = 0.865$	SMT1	0.861	0.834
	SMT2	0.849	
	SMT3	0.741	
	SMT4	0.819	
Proficiency $\alpha = 0.829$	SME1	0.870	0.849
	SME2	0.762	
	SME3	0.856	
	SME4	0.832	
Brand Perception $\alpha = 0.767$	CA1	0.711	0.857
	CA2	0.729	
	CA3	0.848	
	CA4	0.832	
Intent to buy $\alpha = 0.912$	PI1	0.921	0.865
	PI2	0.834	
	PI3	0.829	
	PI4	0.731	

This table provides information about the measurement properties of the items used to assess different latent constructs in the study. It shows how well each item is related to its underlying construct (factor loading), how consistent the items are in measuring the same construct (composite reliability and alpha), and which items may need further attention or revision to improve their reliability or

validity. The table appears to be related to a factor analysis, which is commonly used in social sciences and other fields to analyze the relationships between latent constructs (variables) and their observed indicators (items). Variables: This column lists the latent constructs or variables that are being measured in your study. These variables are Attractive, Trust, Expertise, Attitude towards Brand, and Purchase Intention. Items: These are the individual questions or survey items used to measure each of the latent constructs. Under the "Attractive" variable, there are four items labeled SMA1, SMA2, SMA3, and SMA4. Each of these items is designed to measure the Attractive construct. Factor Loading: Factor loadings represent the strength of the relationship between each item and its respective latent construct. In other words, it tells you how well each item "loads" onto the underlying construct. SMA1 has a factor loading of 0.745, indicating that it is strongly associated with the Attractive construct. Higher factor loadings generally indicate a stronger relationship between the item and the construct. Composite Reliability: Composite reliability is a measure of the internal consistency or reliability of the items used to measure a latent construct. It assesses how well the items consistently measure the same underlying construct. Higher values of composite reliability (closer to 1) suggest better reliability. The values range from 0.849 to 0.865, indicating good internal consistency for the items measuring each construct. Alpha (α): The alpha (α) values listed for each construct represent Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency reliability. It assesses how closely related a set of items are as a group. Higher alpha values suggest better internal consistency. For example, the Attractive construct has an alpha of 0.867, indicating that the items measuring Attractive are highly consistent with each other.

Table 3 Demographic Results

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	54	31
Female	121	69
Age		
Less than 18	45	25

18-25	105	60
26-35	21	12
36-45	2	1
Above 45	2	1
Education		
Graduate	64	37
Post Graduate	51	29
Inter/12th	49	28
Matriculate/10th	8	5
Others	3	2

The table presents the demographic results of a study, providing information about the participants' gender, age, and education level. Gender: The study includes 175 participants in total. Out of these participants, 54 (31%) are male, while 121 (69%) are female. Age: The participants' ages are divided into several categories: 45 participants (25%) are less than 18 years old. 105 participants (60%) fall in the age range of 18 to 25. 21 participants (12%) are between the ages of 26 and 35. Only 2 participants (1%) each belong to the age categories "36-45" and "Above 45." Education: Participants' education levels are categorized as follows: 64 participants (37%) are graduates. 51 participants (29%) have completed post-graduate education. 49 participants (28%) have completed their intermediate or 12th grade. 8 participants (5%) have a matriculate or 10th-grade education. 3 participants (2%) fall into the "Others" category, which likely includes individuals with unique or non-standard educational backgrounds.

Brand Perception $\alpha = 0.871$	CA1	.542	2.89	1.37
	CA2	.823	2.81	1.26
	CA3	.854	2.90	1.99
	CA4	.766	3.86	1.45
Intent to buy $\alpha = 0.897$	PI1	.812	3.53	1.19
	PI2	.875	3.10	1.23
	PI3	.866	3.17	1.10
	PI4	.867	2.72	1.33

The appealing factor comprises four items (SMA1, SMA2, SMA3, SMA4), and all of them have relatively high factor loadings, indicating a strong association with the perception construct. The mean scores for these items vary, and their standard deviations show some degree of variability in responses. The Cronbach's alpha of 0.786 suggests that these items are internally consistent in measuring Attitude. The Trust factor comprises four items (SMT1, SMT2, SMT3, SMT4), and all of them have relatively high factor loadings, suggesting a strong association with the Trust construct. The mean scores and standard deviations vary among the items. The Cronbach's alpha of 0.821 suggests good internal consistency for these confidence-related items. It seems that this section repeats the perception factor analysis with different items (CA1, CA2, CA3, CA4). Similar to the first Attitude factor, these items also have relatively high factor loadings, suggesting a strong association with the Attitude construct. The mean scores and standard deviations vary among these items. The Cronbach's alpha of 0.871 indicates good internal consistency for these Attitude-related items. The intent to buy factor comprises four items (PI1, PI2, PI3, PI4), all of which have relatively high factor loadings, indicating a strong association with the Purchase Intention construct. The mean scores and standard deviations vary among these items. The Cronbach's alpha of 0.897 suggests excellent internal consistency for these Purchase Intention-related items.

Table 4 Factor Analysis

	Factors / Item	Factor Loading	Mean	SD
Appealing $\alpha = 0.786$	SMA1	.876	3.67	1.29
	SMA2	.697	2.97	1.32
	SMA3	.654	3.41	1.39
	SMA4	.821	3.29	1.36
Confidence $\alpha = 0.821$	SMT1	.827	2.90	1.91
	SMT2	.765	2.97	1.28
	SMT3	.875	3.51	1.24
	SMT4	.883	2.83	1.28

Correlation Between Independent Variables and Attitude towards Brand

Table 5 Correlation Analysis

	Attractive	Trust	Expertise	Attitude
Appealing	1	.730**	.744**	.726**
		.000	.000	.000
	175	175	175	175
Confidence	.730**	1	.763**	.947**
	.000		.000	.000
	175	175	175	175
Proficiency	.779**	.732**	1	.775**
	.000	.000		.000
	175	175	175	175
Perception	.716**	.936**	.770**	1
	.000	.000	.000	
	175	175	175	175

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The table shows the correlation coefficients between different independent variables (Attractive, Trust, and Expertise) and the dependent variable (Attitude towards the brand). The table also includes the significance levels for these correlations. Attractive and Attitude: Correlation coefficient: 0.726** Significance level: $p < 0.01$ Interpretation: There is a strong positive correlation (0.726**) between the Attractive independent variable and the Attitude towards the brand. This suggests that as the brand becomes more attractive, people tend to have a more positive attitude towards it. Trust and Attitude: Correlation coefficient: 0.947** Significance level: $p < 0.01$ Interpretation: There is a very strong positive correlation (0.947**) between the Trust independent variable and the Attitude towards the brand. This indicates that as trust in the brand increases, people's attitudes towards the brand become more positive. Expertise and Attitude: Correlation coefficient: 0.775** Significance level: $p < 0.01$ Interpretation: There is a strong positive correlation (0.775**) between the Expertise independent variable and the Attitude towards the brand. This suggests that as the brand is perceived as more expert or knowledgeable, people are more likely to have a positive attitude towards it. Based on the correlation analysis, all three independent variables (Attractive, Trust, and

Expertise) are significantly positively correlated with the Attitude towards the brand. This implies that all three factors have a strong influence on people's attitudes toward the brand, with Trust having the strongest correlation.

Correlation Between Independent Variables and Purchase Intention

Table 6 Correlation Analysis

	Attractive	Trust	Expertise	Attitude
Appealing	1	.760**	.724**	.762**
		.000	.000	.000
	175	175	175	175
Confidence	.710**	1	.723**	.927**
	.000		.000	.000
	175	175	175	175
Proficiency	.729**	.752**	1	.765**
	.000	.000		.000
	175	175	175	175
Perception	.756**	.956**	.790**	1
	.000	.000	.000	
	175	175	175	175

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The table shows the correlation coefficients between different independent variables (Attractive, Trust, and Expertise) and the dependent variable (Purchase Intention). The table also includes the significance levels for these correlations. Attractive and Purchase Intention: Correlation coefficient: 0.762** Significance level: $p < 0.01$ Interpretation: There is a strong positive correlation (0.762**) between the Attractive independent variable and Purchase Intention. This indicates that as the brand becomes more attractive, people are more likely to have a higher intention to purchase products or services from that brand. Trust and Purchase Intention: Correlation coefficient: 0.927** Significance level: $p < 0.01$ Interpretation: There is a very strong positive correlation (0.927**) between the Trust independent variable and Purchase Intention. This suggests that as trust in the brand increases, people's intention to purchase from that brand also increases significantly. Expertise and Purchase Intention: Correlation coefficient: 0.765** Significance level: $p < 0.01$ Interpretation: There

is a strong positive correlation (0.765**) between the Expertise independent variable and Purchase Intention. This implies that when the brand is perceived as more expert or knowledgeable, people are more likely to have a higher intention to purchase from that brand. Based on the correlation analysis, all three independent variables (Attractive, Trust, and Expertise) are significantly positively correlated with Purchase Intention. This suggests that these factors have a strong influence on people's intention to purchase products or services from the brand, with Trust having the strongest correlation.

Discussion and Conclusion

Credibility Dimensions and Consumer Behavior

The study's findings suggest that credibility dimensions, including expertise, trustworthiness, attitude, and likability, play a significant role in shaping consumer behavior. Specifically, our analysis revealed strong positive correlations between these credibility dimensions and key consumer behaviors, such as purchase intentions, product recommendations, and brand loyalty. These results are consistent with previous research indicating that consumers tend to trust and follow influencers who are perceived as knowledgeable, trustworthy, authentic, and relatable. Such influencers are more likely to impact consumer decisions positively.

Influence of Trust on Consumer Behavior

One notable finding is the substantial impact of trust on consumer behavior. The correlation coefficients between trust and various consumer behaviors were consistently high, suggesting that trust is a critical factor in influencer marketing. Consumers are more inclined to engage with brands and products recommended by influencers they trust. This finding underscores the importance of building and maintaining trust in influencer partnerships.

Implications for Marketing Practitioners

These findings have practical implications for businesses and marketers engaged in influencer marketing campaigns. To maximize the impact of influencer collaborations, marketers should prioritize credibility-building strategies for their influencers. This involves not only selecting influencers with

high credibility but also ensuring transparent and authentic content creation. Moreover, understanding the specific credibility dimensions that resonate most with the target audience can help tailor influencer marketing strategies. For instance, if expertise is highly valued, brands can collaborate with influencers who demonstrate deep knowledge in the industry.

Ethical Considerations

As influencer marketing continues to grow, ethical considerations become increasingly important. Marketers should maintain transparency regarding paid partnerships and sponsored content. This transparency not only builds trust but also ensures compliance with advertising regulations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study underscores the significance of credibility dimensions in influencer marketing and their profound impact on consumer behavior. The findings highlight the importance of cultivating trust, expertise, authenticity, and likability in influencer partnerships. For marketers, these insights offer guidance on how to leverage influencer marketing effectively to engage consumers and drive positive behavioral outcomes. As influencer marketing continues to evolve, future research should delve deeper into contextual factors, ethical considerations, and the dynamics of different social media platforms. Understanding the nuances of influencer marketing will be essential for businesses seeking to harness its potential fully and build lasting connections with consumers in the digital age.

Theoretical Implications

Advancement of Influencer Marketing

Theory: This study can contribute to the development of influencer marketing theories by providing a more nuanced understanding of the impact of credibility dimensions. It can refine existing models and frameworks to incorporate credibility as a multi-dimensional concept, shedding light on its distinct effects on consumer behavior.

Credibility Dimension Taxonomy: The research may lead to the creation of a taxonomy or typology of credibility dimensions specific to social media influencers. This taxonomy could provide

a structured framework for future research in this area, facilitating more precise investigations into credibility's role in influencer marketing.

Consumer Behavior Theories Enhancement:

The study's findings can extend and enhance consumer behavior theories by revealing how credibility dimensions influence various aspects of consumer decision-making. This could contribute to the refinement of models like the Theory of Planned Behavior or the Elaboration Likelihood Model.

Moderating and Mediating Factors

Exploration: As part of the investigation, the study may identify moderating and mediating variables that influence the relationship between credibility dimensions and consumer behavior. This could lead to the development of new theoretical models that incorporate these factors.

Integration of Ethics: Ethical considerations in influencer marketing may become a part of the theoretical discourse. The study could highlight the importance of transparency, disclosure, and ethical behavior in enhancing influencer credibility and, by extension, consumer behavior.

Emerging Platforms and Technologies: As new social media platforms and technologies emerge, the study's findings can contribute to theories related to their impact on influencer credibility and consumer behavior, potentially expanding existing theoretical frameworks.

Consumer Decision Journey Models: The research may provide insights into how credibility dimensions influence different stages of the consumer decision journey. This could contribute to the development of more comprehensive models that capture the entire consumer purchase process.

In summary, the theoretical implications of this study have the potential to enrich existing literature by offering a deeper understanding of the multifaceted relationship between influencer credibility dimensions and consumer behavior. These implications can lead to the refinement and expansion of existing theories and the development of new theoretical frameworks to explain the complexities of influencer marketing in the digital age.

Recommendations for Future Research

Research should investigate how the credibility dimensions of social media influencers affect consumer behavior in different cultural contexts, as cultural factors play a significant role in shaping perceptions of credibility and trustworthiness. Longitudinal studies can help track changes in influencer credibility dimensions and their effects on consumer behavior over time, identifying trends and evolving preferences. It's important to examine whether the platform on which influencers operate (e.g., Instagram, YouTube, TikTok) impacts how consumers perceive their credibility and, consequently, their influence on consumer behavior. Exploring variations in influencer credibility when promoting different types of products or services is essential, considering that some products may demand a higher level of expertise or trustworthiness from influencers. Investigating the influence of interactive content, such as live streams or Q&A sessions, on the credibility dimensions and subsequent consumer behavior of influencers is a relevant avenue of study. Analyzing how consumers differentiate between fake and authentic influencers and how this perception shapes their purchasing decisions is crucial for understanding consumer behavior. Ethical dimensions of influencer marketing, including transparency and disclosure practices, should also be examined for their impact on influencer credibility and subsequent consumer behavior. Exploration of how influencer credibility dimensions interact with peer influence and social norms in shaping consumer behavior is necessary. Researchers should assess whether credible influencers have a stronger impact when they align with prevailing social norms. Investigating how influencer credibility dimensions change when influencers enter into brand partnerships or endorse products and how this affects consumer perceptions and behavior can shed light on the complexities of influencer marketing. The impact of regulations and guidelines governing influencer marketing (e.g., disclosure requirements) on influencer credibility and consumer trust is a timely research area. Additionally, studying whether influencer credibility dimensions have different effects based on the size of their follower count and whether micro-influencers with smaller followings

possess distinct credibility advantages is important. Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how influencer credibility dimensions interact with consumer behavior. Staying updated with emerging social media platforms and technologies and investigating how these new platforms shape influencer credibility and consumer behavior is essential in this rapidly evolving field. Research should also delve into the broader social impact of influencer marketing, including its effects on self-esteem, body image, and societal values, which can, in turn, affect consumer behavior. Lastly, comparing the impact of influencer marketing on consumer behavior with traditional advertising methods can help assess its effectiveness and unique advantages in the contemporary marketing landscape.

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