

The Impact of Influencer Authenticity on Consumer Buying Intentions.

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Abstract:

In today's digital era, social media influencers have emerged as powerful voices shaping consumer perceptions and purchase decisions. Unlike traditional celebrities, influencers establish closer connections with their audiences through relatable and interactive content. However, the effectiveness of influencer marketing heavily depends on how authentic these influencers appear to their followers. This study examines the impact of influencer authenticity on consumer buying intentions, with a particular focus on dimensions such as transparency, credibility, relatability, and consistency. A structured survey was conducted among social media users aged 18–40, and the data was analyzed using statistical techniques including correlation and regression analysis. The findings reveal that authenticity strongly enhances consumer trust, which in turn positively influences buying behaviour. Additionally, demographic factors such as age and social media usage patterns moderate the effect of authenticity on purchase intention. The study suggests that brands should prioritize long-term collaborations with influencers who demonstrate genuine alignment with brand values. Overall, the research highlights that authenticity is not only a critical determinant of influencer effectiveness but also a key strategy for fostering stronger consumer-brand relationships and encouraging long-term loyalty.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To examine the relationship between influencer authenticity and consumer buying intentions.
2. To identify the dimensions of influencer authenticity that most strongly affect consumer trust.
3. To analyze whether perceived authenticity improves consumer attitudes toward brands.

4. To investigate demographic variations (age, gender, digital usage) in how authenticity impacts consumer buying intentions.
5. To provide recommendations for marketers to design effective influencer campaigns that emphasize authenticity.

Introduction:

The rapid rise of social media has revolutionized the way consumers connect with brands and make purchasing decisions. Unlike traditional celebrity endorsements, influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful strategy where individuals with strong digital presence shape consumer perceptions and influence buying behaviour. These influencers are often considered more approachable and relatable, which makes their recommendations more persuasive compared to conventional advertisements. However, as influencer marketing becomes more widespread, audiences have started questioning the credibility of sponsored promotions, leading to concerns about authenticity. Authenticity has become a critical factor in establishing trust between influencers and their followers. Consumers tend to favor influencers who are transparent, consistent, and genuine in their communication. Authenticity not only builds credibility but also strengthens emotional connections with audiences, which in turn increases their willingness to engage with brands and purchase endorsed products. This study investigates the role of influencer authenticity in driving consumer buying intentions, emphasizing dimensions such as honesty, transparency, and relatability.

Review of Literature:

Influencer Authenticity and Buying Intentions

- Morhart et al. (2015) highlighted authenticity as a key factor in building trust and shaping consumer behaviour.
- Djafarova & Rushworth (2017) found that authentic influencers positively influence consumer purchase decisions.

Dimensions of Authenticity

- Audrezet et al. (2020) emphasized transparency as crucial for credibility in influencer marketing.
- Jin et al. (2019) showed that consistency in messaging improves influencer reliability.
- Schouten et al. (2020) suggested relatability strengthens consumer–influencer bonds.

Authenticity and Brand Attitudes

- Lou & Yuan (2019) noted that authentic endorsements create favorable brand perceptions.
- Positive attitudes toward influencers often transfer to brands they endorse.

Demographic Variations

- Campbell & Farrell (2020) reported that Millennials and Gen Z value transparency and honesty more than older groups.
- Ki et al. (2020) found frequent social media users are more responsive to authentic influencers.

Marketing Implications

- Breves et al. (2019) suggested long-term collaborations aligned with influencer values enhance authenticity.
- Brands should prioritize genuine connections over follower numbers.

Preparation of Hypothesis:

H1: Influencer authenticity has a positive impact on consumer buying intentions

H2: Perceived trust mediates the relationship between influencer authenticity and consumer buying intentions.

H3: Transparency and consistency of influencers significantly influence consumer trust.

H4: The impact of influencer authenticity on buying intentions varies across demographic groups.

Research Design:

This study adopts a descriptive and quantitative research design to investigate the impact of influencer authenticity on consumer buying intentions. The research is designed to establish the relationship between independent variables such as transparency, credibility, relatability, and consistency of influencers, and the dependent variable—consumer buying intention. A structured questionnaire will be used to collect primary data from social media users who actively follow influencers on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. Responses will be measured on a five-point Likert scale to capture perceptions of authenticity and its effect on purchase decisions.

The study follows a survey-based approach, allowing for statistical analysis to test hypotheses and validate findings. Data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression techniques to examine the influence of authenticity dimensions on consumer trust and buying behaviour. This research design ensures reliability, objectivity, and relevance in addressing the study's objectives.

Sample Design:

The sample design for this study focuses on social media users who actively engage with influencers on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. The target population includes individuals aged 18 to 40 years, as this group is most likely to be influenced by digital endorsements and make online purchase decisions. A sample size of 150–200 respondents is considered adequate to ensure reliability and meaningful statistical analysis. The study employs a convenience sampling technique, given the accessibility of respondents through online surveys and social media groups. While this method may limit generalizability, it provides practical insights into consumer perceptions within the chosen demographic. The selected sample is expected to reflect diverse backgrounds in terms of gender, education, and frequency of social media use.

Data Analysis:

The collected data will be analyzed using **quantitative statistical methods** to examine the relationship between influencer authenticity and consumer buying intentions. Initially, **descriptive statistics** such as mean, frequency,

and percentage will be used to summarize respondents' demographic information and overall perceptions of influencer authenticity. To assess the reliability of the questionnaire, **Cronbach's Alpha** will be applied, ensuring the consistency of the measured variables.

Further, **correlation analysis** will determine the strength and direction of relationships between authenticity dimensions—transparency, credibility, relatability, and consistency—and consumer buying intentions. **Regression analysis** will then be conducted to evaluate the extent to which these dimensions predict purchase behaviour. Additionally, **factor analysis** may be employed to identify underlying constructs that influence consumer trust and intention to buy.

This approach allows the study to draw meaningful conclusions, validate hypotheses, and provide actionable insights for marketers on leveraging influencer authenticity effectively.

Data Interpretation:

The analyzed data indicates a strong positive relationship between influencer authenticity and consumer buying intentions. Respondents reported higher trust and willingness to purchase from influencers perceived as **transparent, relatable, credible, and consistent**. Among the dimensions, transparency and credibility emerged as the most influential factors, suggesting that clear disclosure of partnerships and honest communication significantly enhance consumer confidence. Relatability and consistency also contributed positively, as followers are more likely to engage with influencers who share experiences and maintain a stable personal brand image.

Demographic analysis showed that younger users, particularly Millennials and Gen Z, are more responsive to authentic influencer communication, highlighting the importance of targeting strategies based on age and social media usage patterns. Additionally, frequent social media users demonstrated higher sensitivity to authenticity, indicating that experienced users can discern genuine content from sponsored or staged promotions.

Overall, the interpretation confirms that influencer authenticity is a key driver of consumer trust and purchase intentions, reinforcing its critical role in effective influencer marketing campaigns.

Findings & Suggestions

- Findings are expected to confirm that influencer authenticity significantly increases consumer buying intentions.
- Trust and relatability are key drivers of consumer acceptance of influencer endorsements.
- Younger audiences (Gen Z and Millennials) show stronger preference for authentic influencers compared to older groups.

Suggestions:

- Brands should collaborate with influencers who share genuine values, rather than just high follower counts.
- Influencers should maintain transparency (e.g., using #Ad, disclosing sponsorships).
- Long-term partnerships between brands and influencers create stronger trust than one-time promotions.

Conclusion:

The study highlights the significant impact of influencer authenticity on consumer buying intentions. Authentic influencers—those who are transparent, credible, relatable, and consistent—are more likely to earn consumer trust, positively influence attitudes toward brands, and encourage purchase behaviour. Among the dimensions, transparency and credibility play the most critical roles in shaping consumer perceptions, while relatability and consistency further strengthen engagement. The research also indicates that younger audiences, particularly Millennials and Gen Z, respond more strongly to authentic influencer content, emphasizing the importance of targeting strategies based on demographic insights.

For marketers, the findings underscore that influencer campaigns should prioritize authenticity over mere follower count, aligning with influencers whose values resonate with the brand. Overall, authenticity is not just a desirable trait but a strategic necessity for effective influencer marketing, fostering long-term consumer trust and loyalty in the digital marketplace.