



Customer Perception on Credibility of Social Media Influencers – Conceptual Framework

Dr. M. Robinson¹, Priyanka. S²

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies

²PG Student, Anna University, (BIT Campus), Tiruchirappalli.

ABSTRACT

Social media influencers are becoming increasingly popular these days, and customer perception towards them is uncertain. Many brands are shifting from traditional celebrity endorsements to partnering with social media influencers for promotions. Companies buy social media influencers to create content on platforms such as Instagram and YouTube, with influencers focusing on niches such as beauty, food, fashion, lifestyle, and fitness. Beauty influencers, for example, specialize in giving their opinion on beauty products and services. The credibility of the source is an essential factor in determining the success of social media influencers.

Keywords: Social media Influencers, Credibility, Content creator, Perception, Celebrity Endorser.

I. Introduction

Social media is a web-based technology that facilitates social interaction between large groups of people through a network. It is an interactive technology that enables the creation and sharing of information, ideas, interests, and other forms of expression within virtual communities. Social media is growing rapidly and becoming an important part of everyday life due to the latest technological revolution.

Social media influencers are individuals who have built a reputation for their knowledge and expertise on a specific topic. They regularly post about that topic on their preferred social media channels and generate large followings of enthusiastic, engaged people who closely follow their views. Brands love social media influencers because they can create trends and encourage their followers to purchase the products and services they promote. An influencer has the power to affect the purchasing decisions of others due to their authority, knowledge, position, or relationship with their audience. The size of their following depends on the size of their niche topic.

II. Types of Social media Influencers

Social media influencers are of four types they are i) Nano influencers usually have followers of (1k-10 k).ii)Micro-influencers usually have followers of(10k- 100 k) iii)Macro-influencers usually have(100 k-1million) and iv)Mega-influencers usually have followers of(1M+)

A. Nano-Influencers

Nano influencers have between 1K and 10K subscribers on their social media pages. They generally follow social media very closely and are highly engaged. Nano influencers are typically very vocal advocates of the brands and products they love and their followers appreciate their authentic recommendations and commentary. They have a very close relationship with their followers and take the time to engage with their followers to cultivate those relationships.

B. Micro-Influencers

Micro influencers have between 10K–100K followers. Even though they have a pretty large following, micro influencers are still viewed as relatable to their followers and tend to have an engaged audience. At this level, influencers tend to specialize in a particular niche. They also typically have [high engagement rates](#) and a targeted audience. This makes it easier for brands to create specialized sponsorships with these influencers.

C. Macro- Influencers

Macro influencers have between 100K–1M followers and tend toward a broader appeal than micro influencers. Macro influencers are typically internet-made celebrities and might be social media stars, bloggers, [vloggers](#), or podcasters. Macro influencers not only have a large audience but it's likely that they've developed that audience over months or years of nurturing relationships while growing followers. Because of their larger follower numbers, they will probably have a relatively low engagement rate.

D. Mega-Influencers

Mega influencers and celebrities have more than 1 million followers. Since they themselves are typically celebrities, you'll have to have a healthy marketing budget to afford them. It's important to understand that the audiences attracted by mega influencers are going to be very broad.

III. Six Types of Influencers Based on Content or Niche

A. Fitness Influencers

Fitness influencers are typically a source of motivation for their followers. They tend to endorse sports brands, food and drink brands that relate to the health and wellness industry, specific eating and workout programs, and more.

B. Bloggers/vloggers

Bloggers/vloggers are the two most popular types of influencers. They're typically macro and mega influencers thanks to their large follower counts on their blogs or [YouTube channels](#).

Bloggers and vloggers create high-quality content that keeps their followers engaged and sets them apart as authorities in their niches. In addition to the audience that follows their YouTube channel or blog, they're likely to have a large audience on other [social media platforms](#), too.

Bloggers and vloggers have SEO on their side and can usually result in high-quality backlinks and get a fair amount of [referral traffic](#) through sponsored blog posts and videos. These types of influencers can help you build brand awareness, drive website traffic, and improve your sales.

C. Photography Influencers

Photography influencers fall into the mega through micro influencer categories tend to be picked up by big-name camera companies to promote their cameras, lenses, and other accessories. These influencers are some of the best content creators around.

D. Travel Influencers

[Travel influencers](#) offer more than just a huge dose of FOMO. Many travel influencers offer travel tips, tricks, and hacks, as well as reviews on travel-related brands and recommended itineraries complete with places to eat. Travel, like gaming and fitness, can be broken down into several niches like gear, places to visit, how-tos and more.

E. Beauty Influencers

Beauty influencers share beauty tips, product reviews, how-tos, and more, and can easily increase your beauty brand's awareness and increase sales. Influencers of this type range from average people of any or no gender who love makeup to professional makeup artists.

F. Fashion Influencers

[Fashion influencers](#) focus on things like clothing, jewellery, shoes, watches, and other accessories, giving them a broad range of products to promote. They typically offer product reviews, promote products, work directly with fashion lines, post-shopping trip "haul" videos, and offer styling tips.

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Hoveland, Janis and Kelley 1953- conceived the credibility of the source being linked to the reliability of the source. They defined reliability as "the level of trust in the community.

McCroskey, 1966-Expertise is a source's competence or qualification to make such claims on a given subject, including the source's knowledge or the abilities of the influencers.

McGinnies and Ward 1980, He found that the trustworthiness is more impactful than the expertise. However, other studies have tends to show that the trustworthiness alone may or may not be enough than expertise.

Petty et al 1983-He established that celebrity endorsed advertisements is more effective when customers opt for the promoted product without in-depth consideration.

Kahle et al., 1985-The likeness between the communicator and the receiver is referred as dimension of believability. The perceived appeal of the source, i.e face, physical attractiveness, sensuality and liability are the source that conveys the message more effectively and it is referred to as source attractiveness.

Ohanian, 1990-According to this study, Trustworthiness refers to the faith that the buyers have a message source's and capacity to make assertions that he or she believes are real .

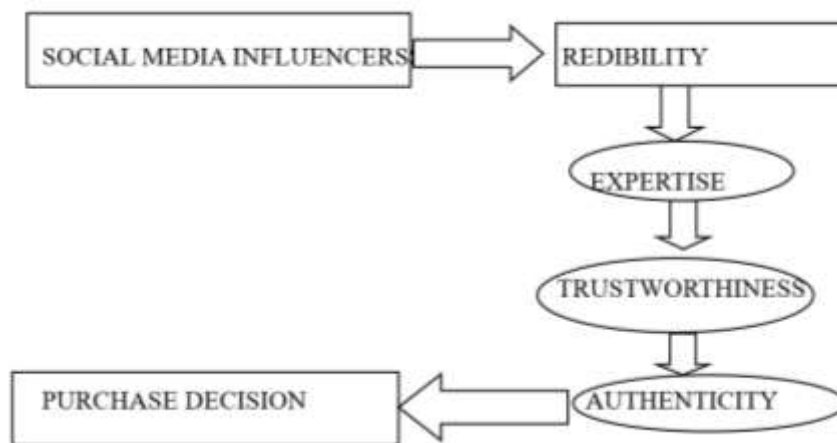
Debono and Klein 1993, According to this study, He found that the highly dogmatic individuals are equally persuaded by the strong and weak arguments. when the source was expert, Different individuals are influenced differently based on source credibility.

Lafferty et al., 2000- Several earlier studies have been employed trustworthiness and attractiveness to determine the reliability of source expertise.

Chaffey-2003-In order to get the exposure of merchant's advertisements at high number of websites it is crucial to persuade the content providers to join the affiliate program and offers them sufficient incentives to remain using it.

Silvera & Austad, 2004-Previously, brands used to consider only renowned people such as film stars (celebrities), sports players (brand ambassador), social activists, journalists, for endorsement and advertising purposes.

FRAMEWORK



V. CONCLUSIONS

This paper examines customers' perceptions of the credibility of social media influencers. Social media influencers provide brands with an efficient and targeted approach to reach their target audience across various social media platforms. Source credibility plays a vital role in buying products or obtaining services recommended by social media influencers. Thus, social media influencers positively influence customers' perceptions of brands and stimulate the repurchase intentions.

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