



IMPACT OF INFLUENCER MARKETING ON PURCHASE INTENTION OF CUSTOMERS

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ABSTRACT

Influencer marketing on social media has drawn a lot of attention recently. The development of parasocial relationships (PSRs) between influencers and followers has been the subject of numerous research. Despite the abundance of PSR studies, PSR has not been frequently weighed against other popular relationship marketing frameworks. In order to determine the proportional weight of the PSR, this study created a research model based on the theory of persuasion. Three characterizations (trustworthiness, perceived expertise, and PSR) and three personal traits (attitude homophily, physical attractiveness and social attractiveness) were taken into consideration by the study as determinants of purchase intention. Information was gathered via a survey of participants who purchased goods or services following the influencer on YouTube. The study discovered that PSR was significantly correlated with the three personal traits and that it had a significantly positive impact on purchase intentions when compared to other characterizations. This paper discusses the factors that impacts on purchase intention of an individual while purchasing products or services recommended by the influencers.

1. Introduction



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Customers can initiate content generation on social media by actively creating and sharing personal stories and product reviews; these individuals are referred to as "social media influencers" by Freberg et al. (2011), Khamis et al. (2017), and Lim et al. (2017). Businesses and companies have been closely observing social media influencers, not only as potential marketing channels but also as social media assets that they may collaborate with. This could lead to enduring relationships based on sales and marketing (Augustine, 2019). Businesses are expected to spend \$15 billion a year on influencer marketing by 2022, according to Business Insider (Schomer, 2019). Brands who are utilising this new channel to reach their target consumers are increasingly collaborating with social media influencers. Compared to traditional marketing channels, they have a greater impact on consumers' purchasing decisions.

Social media users can become major creators by actively creating and sharing product and service reviews as well as personal narratives, given the proliferation of user-generated content on the platform. According to several studies (Freberg et al., 2011; Khamis et al., 2017; Lim et al., 2017), these users are known as "social media influencers. Companies and businesses have shown a great deal of interest in social media influencers as possible marketing partners as well as social media assets with whom they may work. This may result in long-lasting partnerships built on sales and marketing (Augustine, 2019).

In marketing, the influencer phenomena is not new. Long before the social media frenzy, well-known celebrities dominated traditional media as the main influencers of consumer behaviour (Erdogan, 1999). Celebrities have a great influence on the public because they are modelled after and followed, and because they promote goods and services on TV and in newspapers, they may do so directly or indirectly (Agrawal and Kamakura, 1995). Customers think that superstars are more reliable than producers' hired salesmen (Parsons, 1963). Furthermore, because the media shapes the personas of celebrities, the majority of them are seen as authoritative sources of viewpoints (Joseph, 1982). Credibility of traditional influencers appears to be defined by perceived competence and trustworthiness.

2. Literature review

2.1 Social media marketing

The client environment has become more complex due to the advancement of digital technologies. Businesses can accomplish their marketing goals at a comparatively low cost with the help of digital and social media marketing (Ajina, 2019). Businesses must look for best practises utilising digital and social media marketing techniques to maintain and grow market share in light of the demise of traditional communication channels and society's reliance on brick-and-mortar operations (Schultz and Peltier, 2012; Naylor et al., 2013). Businesses must take into account both new and innovative marketing tactics as well as consumer value propositions (such as value, brand, and relationship equity; Kannan and Li, 2017) in addition to their current marketing strategies,

which focus on sales, profits, growth rate, customer happiness, and loyalty. A new definition of social media marketing has been put forth in response to these circumstances. It is now understood to be an interdisciplinary and cross-functional process that uses social media to accomplish organisational goals by adding value for stakeholders. This definition is often used in conjunction with other communication channels (Felix et al., 2017). According to the new strategic definition, an organization's decisions regarding the scope of social media marketing (from explorers to defenders), culture (from modernism to conservatism), structure (from hierarchies to networks), and governance (from autocracy to anarchy) are all included in social media marketing. Social capital, defined as the social, non-monetary value of customers (community members) formed via relational exchanges in the community—behaviors like advocacy, openness, and honesty—is one novel facet of this process (Sanz-Blas et al., 2021). Rethinking online users as a stakeholder ecosystem, it has been suggested that research on social media should go beyond the traditional dyadic conception of the interaction between an online community and a corporation (Kapoor et al., 2018). This argument comes from an organisational perspective.

2.2. Source of information

Many businesses are concentrating on leveraging influencer marketing as a result of social media's widespread use (Audrezet et al., 2018; Boerman, 2020; Ki and Kim, 2019a, 2019b; Lou and Yuan, 2019). In the social networks where they operate, social media influencers are regarded as opinion leaders by their followers (De Veirman et al., 2017). Customers perceive them as providing information based on their own interests and sensitivities. As a result, they are seen as reliable, knowledgeable, and authentic information sources (DeVeirman et al., 2017; Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017; Schouten et al., 2020). Big data research has been suggested as a means of locating customers who are knowledgeable and skilled at disseminating information, referred to as "market mavens," for influencer marketing purposes (Harrigan et al., 2021). For example, six narrative strategies—advising, excitement, educating, assessing, amusing, and assembling—have been proposed to explain how social media influencers generate electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) to promote and advocate businesses and items to consumers (Zhou et al., 2020). A theoretical framework for the antecedents of social media trust was confirmed by Shareef et al. (2020) through their study of the trust formation process on social media platforms.

2.3. Advertisement in social media

Researchers have examined how well social media advertising works in terms of viral marketing using eWOM. Social exchange theory (SET), message effects, platform effects, and sharing motives have all been employed in a number of studies to explain viral referrals in social media. Nonetheless, Hayes and King (2014) argued that in order to understand the process of viral referrals, one must take into account the recipient of the information's relationship with the marketed company. Chu (2011) found that college-aged Facebook group members shared more personal information about themselves and had more positive views about advertising and social media than non-members. Participation in Facebook groups, however, had little effect on users'

viral advertising pass-on behaviours (the act of referring others to others). One study compared the efficacy of three social media product advertising campaigns and discovered some discrepancies in terms of the credibility levels of the various information sources (Shareef et al., 2019). Pentina et al. (2013) affirmed that followers' intents to patronise social media and the products presented on the platform are influenced by their level of trust in the platform. They also made the point that these correlations varies based on the nation and other cultural contexts.

Influencers in multiplatform social media come from a variety of backgrounds. With fewer followers than typical celebrities, they function as micro-celebrities (Jiménez-Castillo and Sanchez-Fernández, 2019). These unconventional superstars, who are only well-known to a select few people (Abidin, 2016), are starting to be seen as more significant than traditional celebrities. They are seen as more reputable and approachable in an online setting (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017). Customers' impressions of recommended brands and their intents to acquire those brands were positively impacted by the influence of followers, according to a poll conducted by Jimenez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernandez (2019) on the effects of social media micro-celebrities' advertising, with a focus on individuals aged 18 to 31. Furthermore, wishful identification and PSR significantly increased stickiness towards the influencer, or the amount of time spent watching the influencer, according to a survey of digital influencers on Weibo, China's counterpart of Twitter, which was mostly conducted among users under the age of thirty (Hu et al., 2020).

3. Theoretical framework and hypotheses development

Foundational theory and formulation of hypotheses The scales now employed to validate the marketing impact of social media influencers are insufficient in capturing the increasingly complex nature of the social media ecosystem, even with the explosion of social media research. Furthermore, the marketing efficacy of diverse social media influencers and numerous platforms has not been sufficiently investigated. We apply the theory of persuasion to social media influencer video advertising in order to fill up these research gaps. Here, we outline the theory's precise form as it has been modified for social media influencer study, drawing on underlying constructs found in earlier research. Next, we put up a paradigm for empirical study along with corresponding hypotheses.

3.1. Theory of persuasion

A person's attitude or behaviour can be changed through the process of persuasion. The elaboration likelihood model (ELM) is one tool used in persuasion theory. It identifies two paths of persuasion: central, with a higher elaboration likely, and peripheral, with a lower likelihood (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981). In the peripheral route, an individual evaluates the communication source's attractiveness without doing a thorough analysis, while in the core route, an individual evaluates the information supplied in relation to how well it supports their values. According to this ELM route theory, communications that don't need for serious consideration by individual value systems are more appropriate for the periphery route (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Dotson and Hyatt, 2000).

This diversion focuses more on heuristic-based persuasion, where appeals are used to manipulate attitudes or beliefs in order to define the information sources as credible. Research has also shown that simple indications are all that are needed to generate a positive impression of a social media target (Bacev-Giles and Haji, 2017). The following is how social media influencers can be analysed using the theory of persuasion: The followers' behavioural intentions—that is, their plans to make purchases—are influenced by how they perceive the influencer, such as their reliability. When followers believe an influencer is reliable, they make larger purchases. The followers create this mental image of the influencer's reliability based on their perceptions of their physical characteristics, such as beauty. Our hypothesis was that followers' perceptions of influencers on social media are influenced by their personal characteristics. These descriptions then set off the followers' secondary pathways, which result in the intention to behave.

3.2. Personal attributes versus perceived characterization

Research has not satisfactorily distinguished the characteristics of followers from the personal qualities of influencers. For instance, informational value, entertainment value, trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, and similarity were found to be significantly correlated with brand awareness and purchase intentions in Lou and Kim's (2019) analysis of online posts. The study's theoretical framework classified influencers' qualities as expertise and trustworthiness and personal qualities as likeness and attractiveness. Characterization is distinct from personal traits according to the persuasion theory modified for this study. The characteristics of the influencers themselves serve as the foundation for how their followers describe them. Influencers possess and demonstrate personal attributes; followers' perceptions are characterised by their use of these attributes.

3.3. Characterization

Three characterisation constructs were found in our literature review (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017; Lim et al., 2017; Ki and Kim, 2019; Lou and Kim, 2019; Schouten et al., 2020; Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). These include trustworthiness, perceived expertise, and PSRs. These play a crucial role in the explanation of followers' intents to make purchases in social media influencer marketing.

3.3.1. Trustworthiness

Similar to traditional media, social media influencer marketing heavily relies on a person's credibility. Credibility is typically understood to be a source's level of dependability and trustworthiness (Rogers and Bhowmik, 1970). According to Sternthal et al. (1978), a source's credibility is shaped by its knowledge and trustworthiness, with trustworthiness being the extent to which the listener believes the speaker's claims to be true. The speaker's perceived honesty is correlated with their trustworthiness. Their apparent concern for their audience is shown in their goodwill (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). In social media marketing, perceived competence and authenticity are typically associated with reliability in forecasting favourable results. (Chapple and

Cownie, 2017; Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017; Schouten et al., 2020; Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). Numerous research have looked into how followers' purchasing intentions are influenced by influencers' legitimacy, especially their trustworthiness. (Reichelt et al., 2014; Erkan and Evans, 2016; Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017; Schouten et al., 2020; Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). According to some research, PSR moderates the impact of likeness to influencers, knowledge, and trustworthiness on viewers' intentions to make purchases (Lee and Watkins, 2016). According to Lou and Kim (2019), purchase intention was found to be favourably correlated with perceived PSR between adolescent followers (ages 10-19) and their favourite influencers, indicating a favourable relationship between trustworthiness and PSR. Thus, the below hypothesis was developed:

H1. Trustworthiness is positively associated with followers' purchase intention.

3.3.2. Perceived expertise

Credibility is mostly based on competence, expertise, and experience in a particular field as well as reliability and kindness (Hovland and Weiss, 1951; Sternthal et al., 1978; McCroskey and Teven, 1999). Expertise can be described as the extent of the endorser's perceived comprehension, abilities, and knowledge (Hovland et al., 1953). Highly credible sources are likely to arouse confidence in the validity of their message due to their competence (Sternthal et al., 1978). The level of conviction required to convince customers to buy something that is endorsed is directly influenced by the knowledge of the endorser, which is comparable to a qualification (Wang and Scheinbaum, 2018). Accordingly, influencers' perceived trustworthiness may get affected by a lack of experience (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020:32).

According to Till and Busler (2000), expertise has a beneficial effect on both purchase intention and brand attitude. Purchase intention is positively correlated with credibility, especially competence. Purchases of the advertised products are more likely to come from devoted followers of reliable influencers who demonstrate subject-matter competence and show concern for their followers (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) conducted interviews with female Instagram users between the ages of 18 and 30, and discovered that social media influencers on YouTube and Instagram had a stronger correlation with purchasing behaviour and competence than did traditional celebrities.

Thus, the below hypothesis was developed:

H2. Perceived expertise is positively associated with followers' purchase intention.

3.3.3 Parasocial relationship

Exposure is thought to conceptually resemble relationships in real life (Dibble et al., 2016). Others might not be aware of such a relationship because it is self-established (Kelman, 1958). According to Kim et al. (2015), the creation of a PSR with celebrities was favourably correlated with the use

of social networking sites. By following bloggers on social media and subscribing to their blogs or channels, users of online social networking sites might establish a similar kind of relationship with these writers (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). Additionally, according to Yuan et al. (2016), PSR has a good impact on views on the use of social networking sites. As per Erkan and Evans, 2016; McCormick, 2016; Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017; Lim et al., 2017; Augustine, 2019; Ki and Kim, 2019; Lou and Kim, 2019; Woodroof et al., 2020, PSR appears to be highly related to the purchasing intentions of social media followers. PSI and credibility both influence social media influencers' inclination to buy on YouTube and Instagram. PSR has a beneficial impact on purchasing intention for followers of celebrities (Hwang and Zhang, 2018). Regarding brand viewpoints, a number of research have demonstrated that PSR between followers and influencers influences followers' inclinations to make purchases (Lee and Watkins, 2016, Chung and Cho, 2017). Thus, the below hypothesis was developed:

H3. PSR is positively associated with followers' purchase intention

3.4.1. Attitude homophily

Effective endorsement outcomes result from a high degree of congruence between a consumer's ideal self-image and the image of a social media influencer (Shan et al., 2019). Similarity is linked to attitude homophily, which is predicated on the idea that interactions between like-minded individuals happen more frequently than those between unlike-minded individuals (McPherson et al., 2001). People that share the same attitudes tend to talk to one other more frequently (Rogers and Bhowmik, 1970). Nevertheless, a study indicates that superstars who are well-known to their fans are more successful marketers (McCormick, 2016). Because of attitude homophily, social media influencers who are viewed as similar to them by their followers may also be more effective (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020) According to earlier research, influencers are more appealing to others when they resemble their followers (Byrne, 1961; Gonzales et al., 1983). Attitude homophily is a significant predictor of trustworthiness that can result in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) behaviour, according to research on WOM behaviour (Li and Du, 2011). Similar research on celebrity influencers has also revealed a strong correlation between attitude homophily and degree of trustworthiness (Al-Emadi and Yahia, 2020). According to Sokolova and Kefi (2020), homophily influences both PSI and credibility, which includes dependability in the context of social media influencers. Perceived credibility of influencers rises when they demonstrate attitude homophily with their audience. Thus, the below hypothesis was developed:

H4a. Attitude homophily is positively associated with trustworthiness.

The four homophily construct dimensions—attitude, value, background, and appearance—have been found to have an impact on vloggers' perceived expertise and to foster an emotional bond with them in the beauty sector (Ladhari et al., 2020). Wang et al. (2008) examined homophily and credibility as two underlying mechanisms of social influence with regard to online health behaviour. They discovered that homophily grounded perceptions of expertise and credibility,

which fueled the persuasive process in online discussion groups. The more homophilous the online health information stimuli were, the more likely it was that people would follow the advice given. Customers' PSR and trust transfers are highly impacted by both internal and external similarities, and these factors have a substantial impact on their social commerce behaviours (Fu et al., 2019). According to a study conducted by Harry Potter fans, attitude homophily played a significant role in determining PSRs with Potter (Schmid and Klimmt, 2011). In the meantime, attitude homophily as determined by a drinking-buddy scale was discovered to predict PSR perception ratings in a political study (Powell et al., 2012). Value sharing is a powerful component of persuasion, as demonstrated by the effects of homophily on PSI and believability (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). As a result, the following theory is put forth:

H4b. Attitude homophily is positively associated with PSR.

3.4.2. Physical attractiveness

Physical attractiveness has been an important topic in attitude change research (Berscheid and Walster, 1974). It is a critical attribute of vloggers because followers can see them all the time (Rubin and Perse, 1987; Rubin and Step, 2000). Recent studies of social media influencers have investigated physical attractiveness as an important impact factor along with audience participation and influencer transparency (Augustine, 2019; Munnukka et al., 2019; Woodroof et al., 2020). Traditional studies on physical attractiveness have analyzed the effects of the appearance of the model in advertising (Joseph, 1982). In a study of online dating profiles, perceived attractiveness was found to increase trustworthiness. For example, Airbnb hosts' physical attractiveness in online photographs affects their perceived trustworthiness (Ert and Fleischer, 2020). Physical attractiveness was also found to be positively related to credibility, including expertise (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5a. Physical attractiveness is positively associated with trustworthiness.

Advertising research has found that an information sender's physical attractiveness has a positive effect on perceived expertise and liking (Joseph, 1982; Patzer, 1983). Palmer and Peterson (2016) studied how citizens identify political experts. They reported that individuals who are more attractive are viewed as more knowledgeable and persuasive. The impact of online reviewers' physical attractiveness cues in profile photos was found to influence their perceived level of expertise, leading to positive brand evaluations (Ozanne et al., 2019). Physical attractiveness was also found to be positively related to the credibility, including expertise, of social media influencers in the beauty and fashion sector (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5b. Physical attractiveness is positively associated with perceived expertise.

The influence of physical attractiveness on PSR has been confirmed in studies on luxury brands (Lee and Watkins, 2016) and adolescent social media use (Lou and Kim, 2019). The physical

attractiveness of the influencer seems to have a strong effect on the formation of the PSR. However, Sokolova and Kefi (2020) reported that physical attractiveness was negatively related to PSI with social media fashion bloggers. Although physical attractiveness is related to credibility, seeking a perfect physical appearance may not be the main goal of followers. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5c. Physical attractiveness is positively associated with PSR.

3.4.3. Social attractiveness

Several studies have proposed that social attractiveness in the context of social media should be analyzed separately from physical attractiveness (Rubin and Perse, 1987; Rubin and Step, 2000). Three characteristics of a speaker are considered fundamental in persuasion: authority, credibility, and social attractiveness (Kelman, 1958). Social attractiveness refers to the likability of a speaker (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). In a study of anthropomorphic speaker interfaces, social attractiveness was found to promote users' social responses to computers, indicating a higher level of trustworthiness (Lee, 2010). Customers universally anthropomorphize brands (e.g., Brown, 1991) and often use them as sources of self-expression and definition (Bourdieu, 1984). Research has analyzed the characteristics of brand anthropomorphism, focusing on the concept of brand love (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). Brand love has been identified as an antecedent of loyalty and WOM (Batra et al., 2012), and such a concept may be adapted to marketing by social media influencers who disseminate brands in terms of attractiveness. Social attractiveness refers to the tendency of influencers to enhance emotional liking from their followers beyond just collecting "likes" on a social media platform. If this concept is highly valued, it may have characteristics similar to concepts such as brand love. Considering that very high social attractiveness may increase customer loyalty, it is also expected to positively affect credibility and PSR, which are considered intermediaries. Meanwhile, a study on personal profiles on social network sites found that social attractiveness was an important cue influencing Facebook users' perceived trustworthiness (Toma, 2014). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6a. Social attractiveness is positively associated with trustworthiness.

As discussed earlier, social attractiveness is a criterion that these individuals use to gauge the trustworthiness that forms credibility. A large number of followers associate great social capital with social attractiveness, leading to a positive evaluation of a person's expertise level (Jin and Phua, 2014). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed: H6b. Social attractiveness is positively associated with perceived expertise. According to Rubin and Perse (1987), the social attractiveness of favorite television performers is positively related to PSR. Moreover, in an online survey, the social attractiveness of social media fashion bloggers was found to positively affect the PSR of female respondents (Lee and Watkins, 2016). Furthermore, the social attractiveness of four fashion bloggers on Instagram and YouTube was found to be positively related to PSI, with the influence

rejected if the respondent was part of Generation Z (born after 1995; Sokolova and Kefi 2020). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6b. Social attractiveness is positively associated with PSR.

4. Methodology

4.1. Measures

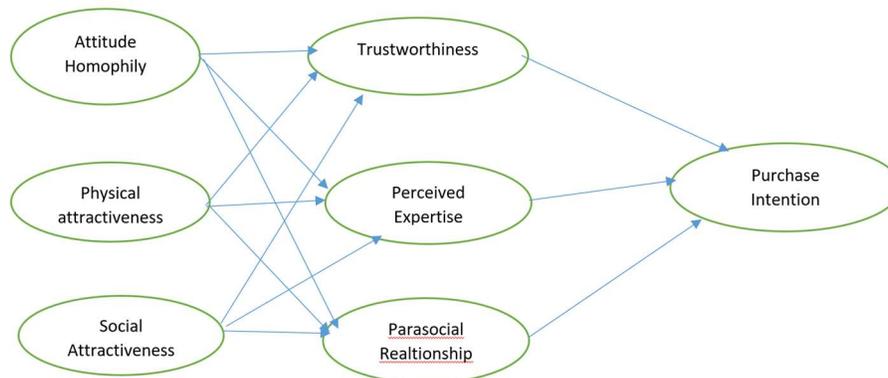
This study was a cross-sectional analysis that used a survey method to collect data from Delhi NCR. The variables used in the research model were operationalized by adapting the measures developed in prior social media studies. Some of the wording was changed to match the context of this research, such as “YouTubers” instead of “influencers” or “bloggers.” The survey consisted of closed-ended questions measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Respondents were asked to choose from five answers, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”

4.2. Sample, data collection, and validation method

This study investigated the roles of influencers and followers’ personal attributes in enhancing purchase intentions in the context of video advertising. YouTube has become the leading platform for promoting products through video (Schwemmer and Ziewiecki, 2018), and its effectiveness has been extensively analyzed (e.g., Djafarova and Rushworth 2017, Hwang and Zhang 2018, Sokolova and Kefi 2020). Therefore, this study examined YouTube as the target platform for video marketing by influencers. The population of this study represented all YouTube followers in Delhi NCR with experience in purchasing products or services after watching YouTube videos produced by an influencer.

where digital marketing is considered to be well penetrated in the market (Holroyd, 2019), was used as the market for this case study. The final sample size was 313. The responses were coded into SPSS version 25 for a descriptive analysis of the demographics and basic characteristics of the study sample. This study used SEM with partial least squares.

PROPOSED MODEL



Construct	Item	Measure
Attitude homophily (AH)	AH1	This YouTuber and I have a lot in common
	AH2	This YouTuber and I are a lot alike
	AH3	This YouTuber thinks like me
	AH4	This YouTuber shares my values
Physical attractiveness (PA)	PA1	I think this YouTuber is handsome / pretty
	PA2	This YouTuber is somewhat attractive
	PA3	I have a better relationship with this YouTuber than other YouTubers
	PA4	I find this YouTuber very attractive physically
Social attractiveness (SA)	SA1	I think this YouTuber could be my friend
	SA2	I want to have a friendly chat with this YouTuber
	SA3	We could be able to establish a personal friendship with each other
	SA4	This YouTuber would be pleasant to be with
Trustworthiness (Trust)	Trust1	I feel this YouTuber is honest
	Trust2	I consider this YouTuber trustworthy
	Trust3	I feel this YouTuber is truthful
Expertise (Exp)	Exp1	I feel this YouTuber knows a lot

	Exp2	I feel this YouTuber is competent to make assertions about things that this YouTuber is good at
	Exp3	I consider this YouTuber an expert on his / her area
	Exp4	I consider this YouTuber sufficiently experienced to make assertions about his / her area
Parasocial relationship (PSR)	PSR1	This YouTuber makes me feel comfortable as if I am with a friend
	PSR2	I see this YouTuber as a natural , down to - earth person
	PSR3	I look forward to watching this YouTuber in his / her next video
	PSR4	If this YouTuber appeared in a video on another channel , I would watch or read his / her post
	PSR5	This YouTuber seems to understand the kind of things I want to know
	PSR6	If I saw a story about this YouTuber in a newspaper or magazine , I would read it
	PSR7	I miss seeing this YouTuber when he / she is ill or on vacation
	PSR8	I want to meet this YouTuber in person
	PSR9	I feel sorry for this YouTuber when he / she makes a mistake
	PSR10	I find this You Tuber attractive
Purchase intention (PI)	PI1	I think I will buy products or services recommended by this You Tuber

	PI2	I will probably buy products or services after watching this You Tuber
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Table 1**Questionnaire measures**

0.7. Cronbach's alpha for each construct ranged from 0.744 to 0.915. Moreover, the smallest composite reliability was 0.884, which is much greater than the recommended threshold of 0.7. These assessments confirmed the internal consistency of the measures for each construct. In addition, all the AVE values were well above the required minimum level of 0.50, implying high levels of convergent validity for all measures. All values were below 0.90. Therefore, discriminant validity was verified.

5 Structural model assessment

The first step of the structural model assessment is to ensure that no significant levels of collinearity exist among the predictor constructs, which can create problems of redundancy in the analysis.

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE	Item	Outer Loadings	VIF
Attitude homophily	0.882	0.918	0.738	AH1	0.836	2.357
				AH2	0.876	2.782
				AH3	0.863	2.255
				AH4	0.86	2.14
Physical attractiveness	0.827	0.884	0.656	PA1	0.826	1.858
				PA2	0.827	1.65
				PA3	0.784	1.776
				PA4	0.801	1.847
Social attractiveness	0.878	0.917	0.734	SA1	0.857	2.303
				SA2	0.879	2.65
				SA3	0.881	2.656
				SA4	0.807	1.733
Trustworthiness	0.862	0.916	0.785	Trust1	0.869	2.135
				Trust2	0.917	2.704
				Trust3	0.871	2.088
Expertise	0.817	0.879	0.646	Exp1	0.771	1.555
				Exp2	0.824	1.837
				Exp3	0.808	1.832
				Exp4	0.811	1.741
Parasocial relationship	0.915	0.929	0.569	PSR1	0.751	1.991

				PSR2	0.796	1.821
				PSR3	0.707	2.157
				PSR4	0.764	2.376
				PSR5	0.792	2.035
				PSR6	0.732	1.784
				PSR7	0.718	2.591
				PSR8	0.773	2.668
				PSR9	0.75	2.023
				PSR10	0.753	2.321
Purchase intention	0.744	0.887	0.796	PI1	0.893	1.542
				PI2	0.892	1.542

Table 2
Results of measurement model analysis

	Hypothesis / Structural path	B	P value	Result
H1	Trustworthiness $\hat{\alpha}$ ' Purchase intention	0.225	0.006	Accepted
H2	Perceived expertise $\hat{\alpha}$ ' Purchase intention	0.181	0.012	Accepted
H3	Parasocial relationship $\hat{\alpha}$ ' Purchase intention	0.391	0	Accepted
H4a	Attitude homophily Trustworthiness $\hat{\alpha}$ '	0.062	0.422	Rejected
H4b	Attitude homophily $\hat{\alpha}$ ' Perceived expertise	0.048	0.5	Rejected
H4c	Attitude homophily $\hat{\alpha}$ ' Parasocial relationship	0.143	0.008	Accepted
H5a	Physical attractiveness $\hat{\alpha}$ ' Trustworthiness	0.172	0.01	Accepted
H5b	Physical attractiveness $\hat{\alpha}$ ' Perceived expertise	0.286	0	Accepted
H5c	Physical attractiveness $\hat{\alpha}$ ' Parasocial relationship	0.361	0	Accepted
H6a	Social attractiveness $\hat{\alpha}$ ' Trustworthiness	0.529	0	Accepted
H6b	Social attractiveness Perceived expertise	0.378	0	Accepted
H6c	Social attractiveness $\hat{\alpha}$ ' Parasocial relationship	0.446	0	Accepted

Table 3
Results of structural model assessment

6.1. Theoretical contributions and implications

This study shows the diversity of the PSR's impact on purchase intentions. We found that PSR had the greatest impact on purchase intentions in our analysis of video ads by social media influencers on diverse topics. In contrast, a study of marketing effectiveness among social media fashion bloggers and female followers found that credibility had a greater influence on purchase intentions than PSR (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). Thus, when considering PSR in social media influencer marketing, optimization based on more detailed comparisons is necessary because its impact on outcomes varies depending on the marketing context. The study's second theoretical contribution is showing the association between influencer type and PSR composition.

This study determined that the influencer type perceived by consumers influenced PSR formation in a broad range of influencer marketing on YouTube using professional YouTubers, celebrities/experts, and others as control variables. In general, PSR is thought to positively affect influencer marketing outcomes such as purchase intention. However, how PSR is formed might be influenced by how audiences position influencers.

In cases such as social media beauty and fashion bloggers, influencers may be seen by female followers as opinion leaders and an object of adoration. Farivar et al. (2021) explained that the marketing effect of Instagram influencers is that followers' purchase intentions are positively influenced not only by PSR but also by their characteristics as opinion leaders. However, this study found no significant effects of gender or age on PSR composition, but these are also expected to be affected by marketing type and data sampling. Hwang and Zhang (2018) argued that empathy and low self-esteem have significant effects on the formation of PSR and that loneliness has no effect on PSR. Thus, it might be necessary to consider the psychological state of followers in social media influencer marketing.

The third theoretical contribution of the study provides a perspective by which to analyze the impact of PSR on the use of new technological marketing channels. New technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and augmented reality (AR) are being applied to the service domain. This may produce new marketing channels using AI, robots, and AR. Rauschnabel (2021) surveyed consumer intentions regarding the widespread adoption of AR and found that the areas of acceptance for consumers, included consumer electronics, complementary daily functions (e.g., post-it notes, shopping lists, calendars), and toys, whereas recording personal memories and use as pets (e.g., virtual dogs) were less acceptable. In this context, video advertising is possible through new channels, such as the AR used in consumer electronics and handling daily errands. Influencer marketing is still useful in information dissemination because information credibility depends on the influencer's characteristics. Furthermore, the marketing effect created when an influencer employs AR to form a PSR with users may be stronger than the market effect without a PSR. The role of influencers in this type of AR advertising is likely to include something related to daily life, such as transmitting weather and traffic information, providing instructions for using home appliances, or tutorials for performing daily errands. Automated technologies such as AI

could be used if people were found to perceive credibility in and form PSR with influencers consisting of virtual avatars instead of real people.

6.2. Implications for practice

The study's first practical contribution is that PSR can be used to enhance marketing effectiveness. Focusing on a diverse types of video advertising, this study shows that PSR positively influences purchase intention in social media influencer marketing. By contrast, previous studies have shown that, in influencer marketing in the beauty and fashion field, factors such as influencer credibility have a greater impact on outcomes (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). Therefore, companies trying to use influencer video marketing can exploit the impact of the constructs of PSR and credibility on key performance indicators (KPIs), such as purchase intention to develop more optimal social media marketing strategies for their targets. The study's second practical contribution is to provide companies with a perspective on how to formulate PSRs. This study found that, in relatively general influencer video advertising, PSR was influenced by attitude homophily, physical attractiveness, and social attractiveness, with the influencer's social attractiveness exerting a particularly strong impact. Some studies of advertising in the beauty and fashion fields found a strong influence of attitude homophily on the formation of PSR. Admiration for influencers, such as celebrities and/or the psychological state of followers, is also considered to be involved in PSR composition. Therefore, further optimization of marketing effectiveness can be achieved by increasing PSR with consumers in video marketing using social media influencers after examining how the relevant constructs affect the construction of PSR in targeted consumers. The study's third practical contribution was to show that PSR could be examined as a marketing KPI when companies use new technologies in their marketing strategies. It is relatively easy to create AI-based robot chats and videos using virtual avatars. An increasing number of companies are considering introducing robots and virtual avatars into their customer touch points. In this new interface with customers, it is worthwhile examining from various perspectives whether a relationship similar to PSR can be established with customers. For example, when companies advertise their products and services, they could investigate how technologically created anthropomorphic objects affect PSR and marketing outcomes.

6.3. Limitations and future research directions

This study had two main limitations. First, further subdividing the influencer type and consumer attribute information used in this study could allow a more detailed analysis of the structure of PSR formation and its influence on marketing effectiveness. Using the research model examined here as a starting point, a more detailed explanation of the impact could be obtained by comparing the models by subdividing the influencer type and consumer attribute information. Second, the study's analysis did not sufficiently incorporate the product/service categories to which the influencers belonged. We considered only the advertising targets, but this perspective did not affect the formation of PSR or purchase intention. Future studies should create subcategories based on the product/service of each advertising target and compare marketing effectiveness levels across

the subcategories. We plan to expand this study's data collection in a way that enables us to verify social media influencer marketing effects and compare the model structures in more detail. In particular, we will classify influencer types, create subcategories based on the products/services associated with the influencers, and conduct data classification based on the consumer's demographic information. In addition, the literature has reported that the marketing effect varies depending on the cultural characteristics of the consumer (Pentina et al., 2013). Thus, we plan to examine the differences in marketing effects based on differences between influencers and consumers' cultural backgrounds (e.g., Asian, European, and American).

7. Conclusion

This study was undertaken to clarify the characteristics of the PSR, which is considered a critical construct in social media influencer marketing. The results show that PSR has a stronger influence on purchase intention than trustworthiness and expertise, and that social attractiveness has a greater influence on PSR formation than attitude homophily and physical attractiveness. Furthermore, PSR formation is also influenced by how consumers perceive the type of influencer (e.g., professional YouTuber, celebrity/expert). Thus, PSR might be a more important construct than credibility in terms of more general models based on the wide variety of foci of influencer advertising. We plan to examine the impact of such PSRs on social media marketing effectiveness based on a more detailed examination of influencers and consumer characteristics.

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