Effectiveness of Healthcare and Fitness Influencers during COVID Times

Tushar Kumar Roy¹ and Smita Mehendale¹*

¹Symbiosis Institute of Management Studies, Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Khadki, Pune, Maharashtra, India.

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/JPRI/2021/v33i35B31894

Editor(s):
(1) Dharmesh Chandra Sharma, G. R. Medical College & J. A. Hospital, India.
(2) P. Veera Muthumari, V.V. Vanniaperumal College for Women, India.
(3) Giuseppe Murdaca, University of Genoa, Italy.

Reviewers:
(1) Gustavo Duarte Ferrari, University of São Paulo, Brazil.
(2) Valu Suresh Kumar, H.H. The Rajah’s College, India.
(3) Murtadha Almusaber, University of Basrah, Iraq.

Complete Peer review History: http://www.sdiarticle4.com/review-history/69519

Received 01 May 2021
Accepted 05 July 2021
Published 06 July 2021

ABSTRACT

Influencer marketing has played a significant role in marketing to present its products on a digital platform. In this study, we are trying to gauge the effectiveness of healthcare and fitness influencers on Instagram. More specifically, the researchers are trying to find how the one-way interaction and the influencer’s credibility are related to purchasing intention. Also, the researchers are trying to find the indirect relationship between purchase intention and social attractiveness, physical attractiveness, and attitude homophily. The researchers have used a linear regression process to analyse the data. This research paper studied the effect on purchase intention due to both source credibility and PSI. We also found the indirect relationship between purchase intention and attitude homophily, physical attractiveness and social attractiveness. Again, these outcomes will benefit both the companies and the bloggers to gain a competitive advantage over other market players. In this research paper, we have studied the consumer buying behaviour of a particular segment (healthcare and fitness) on Instagram. Also, our respondents are located in various parts of India. Due to these reasons, the researcher cannot generalize their results to other media platforms and other segments. The authors find that the source’s credibility has a greater
impact on purchase intention than a single source of interaction between the user and the influencer. Both credibility and para social interaction displayed a positive relationship to purchase intention.

Keywords: Influencer marketing; healthcare; fitness; Instagram; COVID-19.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social networking sites have gained so much popularity in so little time. Individuals worldwide are eager to open their social media accounts across all types of networking sites. Mentioned in their study three major reasons why a person gets attracted to social media platforms. The first reason is that the user is interested in gathering some information. The second reason is that the user is looking out for some entertaining content [1]. And finally, the third reason is that the user is searching for those contents which might help him/her to change their current mood [2]. Currently, in the year 2020, there are more than 65 social networking sites present online. Some of the famous names are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc [3]. These media users are present across most of the social networking sites to increase their connectivity and, in turn, increasing the ease of gathering information about anything and everything they are passionate about [4].

Nowadays, social media platforms are flooded with posts from different fan pages [5]. These users who manage such fan pages are keenly producing and publishing multimedia content on these platforms [6]. These contents usually include their thoughts or reviews on a particular brand or about a particular product [7]. These types of posts generated by social media users are often referred to as User-Generated Content. "These contents have proven to be far more admired and successful as compared to normal advertisements," as pointed out. Other researchers have also stated that due to this revolutionary change, traditional word of mouth has been replaced by electronic word of mouth [8], as stated in the article [9]. These content creators are valuable assets for all businesses. The post can hugely impact the brands and their products that they are promoting [10]. And not only that their posts also influence the potential customers of the brand, positively or negatively [11]. Hence, we call these people Influencers. Influencers' presence can be felt across all sectors of social media platforms: healthcare and fitness, travel and tourism, fashion, technology, etc. [12]. These content creators have introduced us to a different kind of marketing process called Influencer Marketing which reports that in such kind of marketing, brands collaborate with influencers so that these influencers can promote their products [13].

Celebrity endorsers are the main focus of many researchers. But these social media influencers are no celebrities, nor are their posts resemble conventional advertisements. Surprisingly, before 2018, there was little research done on influencer marketing [14]. However, since 2018 there has been a heightened interest in influencer marketing, with the Google Scholar database showing over 26,000 research papers published in marketing journals in influencer marketing. Research conducted by Business Insider has stated that. This goes to show the potential of influencer marketing in the coming years. Amid all this information, an important question arises: how do content creators be so effective towards influencing their followers. To get the answer to this complex question, every business needs to understand the process behind the influencer phenomenon to make the right investments in marketing strategies and generate a return of investment [15].

The whole process begins like this; firstly, a channel has been created on any social media platform like Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc. The user uses his/her account like any other individual on social media. The user occasionally posts some pictures or videos about products that he/she might have used recently. He/she shares his/her experience with the product, giving the viewers his/her honest opinions and reviews on it. The intent behind posting such content is to make the viewers aware of the product's unique features or point out the flaws. If the viewers love their content, they start attracting followers, creating a small follower base. Due to this, both the user and the channel acquire popularity and fame. And all this happens within a couple of weeks. Companies notice such users, and after a lot of analysis, they approach them. They request the user to promote their product on their channel. The user accepts the offer only if the product falls under their perceived area of expertise. There are only
two ways to promote the products on their channel, either by direct marketing or by indirect marketing. In direct marketing, the user advertises the product at the starting or the end of the video by saying that a particular brand sponsored the video. If the viewers buy the product using their promo code, they will get an additional discount. In the case of indirect marketing, the user doesn't talk about the product but, in turn, uses the product for them. For example, if the user wants to advertise a new hand sanitizer brand in an unboxing channel, he/she will use the hand sanitizer in front of the camera [16].

The user must make sure that the product they are advertising should be of good quality because if the product doesn't meet the viewers' expectations, then the viewers will give them a negative review, which might hurt their reputation and credibility. These bloggers are really popular among their followers across all social media they are present in. Their contents are also highly admired, liked, and shared within their followers and their peers. Brands and other companies are determined to find new and innovative ways to get hold of famous figures to become their brand ambassador on online social media platforms. These famous figures are not necessarily renowned singers or actors. Still, more information about the persuasive capabilities of an Instagram blogger is yet to be uncovered.

During these covid times, many brands are emerging with their own set of anti-covid products, for example, facemask, disposable gown, protective goggles, face shields, hand sanitizer, gloves, etc. Most of these brands are new to this sector, for example, facemasks made by Allen Solly and U.S. Polo Assn., or hand sanitizer made by Dabur and Godrej, etc. As the economy of the whole world is going down and revenue generated from these brands is at its minimum, it is not feasible for such companies to opt for traditional advertisements. They may use social media as their new way of promoting their new anti-covid product lines. In this paper, the researchers focus on healthcare and fitness bloggers on Instagram. Because other social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, etc., are full of influencers and had been thoroughly researched. However, the one area that became extremely important during these covid times is healthcare and fitness, which largely remains unexplored from a social media influencer perspective on Instagram.

In this research paper, the authors are going to research how these variables. The above constructs are the major factors that we are going to focus on this article. The researchers will be focusing on Indian social media users who are present and active on Instagram and follow at least one healthcare and fitness blogger. There are two objectives that this article will shed light on. The first objective aims to determine that will the buying decisions of the social media users gets influenced by the opinions of the healthcare and fitness influencer. And the second objective is how much of an impact Para social interaction and credibility will have on the purchase intention of the media users. This paper is organized as follows; the first section introduces the readers to the topic. The second section is the literature review, where we talk about each of the constructs individually and generate a hypothesis that will be studied in this research paper. The third section is all about the research methodology used in this paper, along with how the questionnaire was developed. The fourth section of this article will showcase the analysis and the results which were obtained. And finally, the fifth section concludes the paper and identifies the limitation of this paper. These limitations can open new paths for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Healthcare and Social Media Influencers

Mentioned in his study, when different social media platforms were launched, most people only thought of posting entertaining and informative content but slowly, others realized that social media platforms could also be used for other purposes, one of which was educating their followers about their health and how to stay fit. This thought process is in complete alignment, and that's how health and fitness influencers came into play.

As this covid threat slowly rises, people are doing everything in their power to keep this virus at bay. Due to this sudden outburst of panic, people have bought countless hand sanitizers, masks, and other anti-covid related products to keep themselves and their families safe. However, the level of awareness may be low in terms of genuineness and effectiveness of the product being sold as anti-covid [17]. For example, there are hand sanitizers in the market that don't contain 70% to 80% of alcohol though they claim
otherwise; hence such sanitizers won’t be enough to kill the germs. Others who are out into the streets are using thin cloth instead of masks. Also, some people are using masks, but these masks are not of standard quality. Hence the influencers help create awareness regarding the genuineness and effectiveness of the anti-covid products. They post videos or pictures with a bit of information about these specific anti-covid products so that at least their viewers will know what specifications or features to look for when they go and buy the product. Moreover, they can also promote a certain brand that makes these products based on these specifications.

2.2 Attitude Homophile

Similarly, the more similarities the user identifies between their opinions and the opinions of the influencers, the more frequently they will try to interact with them and will continue to interact with them. On Instagram, there are countless health and fitness influencers, but the viewers will follow those personalities whom they can relate to due to the similarities between them. These similarities can be in social behaviour, values, opinions, etc. Moreover, these viewers not only follow these personalities because of their knowledge of the subject but also for the reason that they want to look physically just like them [18]. These similarities are also one of the predominant reasons which make the post of an influencer more credible than the rests, which makes it easier for the influencer to persuade them.

2.3 Para Social Interaction (PSI)

Explains PSI as the “Relationship between the influencer and social media users”. From a marketing perspective”. Considers PSI as a ‘friendship’ between the user and the influencer. Furthermore, long-time followers of these media influencer act as if these influencers are their long-time friends and will ask for their advice for their problems.

Often the Instagram influencer being followed is the one recommended by peers or has been seen in movies or magazines. As time passes by, the user develops a preference towards this influencer and feels that there is a special connection between them. Moreover, the follower may feel obliged to always like, comment, and share their post. Due to the sheer number of followers, it becomes impossible for the influencer to acknowledge each one of them for their support. So, they will thank the whole follower base for their support. This makes the user think that these influencers are their friends [19]. This, in turn, increases their willingness to interact. Not only will they seek out their advice but also, in turn, implement it, which might have a positive impact on purchase intention towards the said product. This article proposes that the interaction between the vloggers and the social media users will have a positive impact on the purchase intention of the users.

2.4 Credibility

"The credibility of a communicator or message source is an important factor in its persuasiveness.” The term ‘Credibility’ or more popularly known as ‘Source Credibility,’ is generally defined as how reliable a particular post is by the influencer. In this case, the term reliability means how well a viewer can trust the information posted by the influencer. Researchers used source credibility as a scale to measure how a particular source creates an influence on the effectiveness of a message. Expertise and trustworthiness were the two important factors that impacted source credibility. Along with the physical attractiveness of the influencer, similarities between the viewers and the vlogger can also influence the credibility of the influencer (as mentioned earlier) [20]. The physical attractiveness of the media influencer ensures that the viewers get attracted to their posts; however, the similarities between the user and the influencer ensure that the viewers keep coming back to their page to check their posts. Due to this reason, their post becomes more credible, and the chance of getting their posts recommended to other users increases, which also increases their popularity too. This study proposes that the credibility of the influencer will have a positive influence on the purchase intention of the users.

2.5 Physical and Social Attractiveness

Further explained the definition of the individual factors connected to source credibility. Familiarity was defined as how much knowledge the followers have about these channels on the media platforms. Likeability was also defined as how likable the influencers are based on their opinions or behaviour. And finally, Similarity was defined as how similar the followers and the influencers are, concerning their behaviour, habits, and way of thinking. Many researchers have claimed that if the influencer is attractive in
in the followers' eyes, this, in turn, makes their channel more reliable or credible. But on the contrary, others have also proven that attractiveness may not impact their source credibility.

As mentioned earlier, physical attractiveness makes sure that viewers get attracted to their posts. Moreover, in the health and fitness area, it is of paramount importance that the influencer should be physically attractive and fit so that the viewer gets the idea that if they want to look like them, they have to follow the instructions provided by them. On the other hand, social attractiveness makes sure that the media influencer is approachable outside the world of social media so that if the viewers ever get the chance to meet these influencers, they can have a pleasant interaction, which in turn will develop their relationship and further increase the trust towards their channel [21]. Hence, this study aims to establish that physical attractiveness will positively influence both credibility of the influencer and the one-way interaction. Similarly, social attractiveness will also have a positive impact on these interactions between the viewers and the influencer.

2.6 Purchase Intention

Described purchase intentions as "An individual's conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a brand." It has also been noted by de Magisterial that before the buying behaviour of a consumer came into play, it was first the purchase intention that came into effect. According to Spears, during these covid times, many health and fitness influencers might promote anti-covid products for the sake of awareness. This study is trying to find out if such a marketing process can impact the viewers' purchase intentions towards these products, provided that physical attractiveness, social attractiveness, attitude homophily, PSI, and Credibility all get influenced positively.

2.7 Research Hypothesis

The above review help leads us to the following research hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Social Attractiveness will have a positive influence on Para social Interaction
Hypothesis 2: Attitude homophily will have a positive influence on one-way Interaction
Hypothesis 3: Attitude homophily will have a positive influence on credibility
Hypothesis 4: Physical Attractiveness will have a positive influence on credibility
Hypothesis 5: Physical Attractiveness will have a positive influence on single Interaction
Hypothesis 6: Credibility will have a positive influence on Purchase Intention
Hypothesis 7: Para-Social Interaction will have a positive influence on Purchase Intention

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Measures

The following articles were analysed to measure these constructs. Para social Interaction, Attitude Homophily, Social Attractiveness, and Physical Attractiveness have been operationalized. Fig. 1 shows the Research Framework.

Purchase Intention was measured using Source Credibility regarding Sokolov. Specific questions were selected from these articles, and each of these questions was tweaked to suit the research objectives. The researchers have developed 19 questions. Each of these questions was evaluated using a 5-point Likert Scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. Based on the respondents' experience on social media, they were requested to select one of the above options. The data was collected using an online form. This form was distributed amongst all social media users in India interested in content related to health and fitness.

3.2 Data Collection Procedure

The survey questionnaires can only be filled by those present and active on Instagram and follow at least one health and fitness influencer. Keeping that in mind, the survey was distributed to 320 respondents, out of which all the 320 questionnaires were usable for further analyses. Hence a 100 percent response rate was achieved. The summary of the respondents is presented in Table 1.

Out of 320 respondents, all of them follow at least one health and fitness influencer. As for the age group, 80 % of the respondents were in the age bracket of 15 years to 25 years; 16.9 % were in the age bracket of 26 years to 35 years; 2.5 % were in the age bracket of 36 years to 45 years,
and 0.6% was above 45 years. All 320 responses will be used in the analysis, out of which 206 respondents were students; 13 respondents were homemakers; 86 respondents were salaried employees; 13 respondents were self-employed; 2 respondents were retired.

![Research framework diagram](image)

**Fig. 1. Research framework**

**Table 1. Profile of respondents**

| Groups                               | Number | Percent |
|--------------------------------------|--------|---------|
| **Gender (n=320)**                   |        |         |
| Male                                 | 153    | 47.81   |
| Female                               | 159    | 49.69   |
| Prefer not to say                    | 8      | 2.50    |
| **Age (n=320)**                      |        |         |
| 15-25                                | 256    | 80.00   |
| 26-35                                | 54     | 16.90   |
| 36-45                                | 8      | 2.50    |
| Above 45                             | 2      | 0.60    |
| **Employment status**                |        |         |
| Student                              | 206    | 64.37   |
| Home Maker                           | 13     | 4.06    |
| Salaried Employee                    | 86     | 26.89   |
| Self Employed                        | 13     | 4.06    |
| Retired                              | 2      | 0.62    |
| **Highest educational qualification**|        |         |
| Doctorate                            | 8      | 2.50    |
| Post Graduate                        | 211    | 65.94   |
| Graduate                             | 91     | 28.44   |
| Higher Secondary (12th)              | 8      | 2.50    |
| Secondary (10th)                     | 2      | 0.62    |
| **Do you follow at least one health and fitness influencers on Instagram?** |        |         |
| Yes                                  | 320    | 100     |
| No                                   | 0      | 0       |
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Regression Analysis

Regression analyses were performed on each of the hypothesizes to test them. As the significance value of all the regression models is less than 0.05 (p < 0.05), all the models are statistically significant, shown in Table 2.

The results of the regression analysis for each of the hypotheses are presented in Table 2. In the first regression analysis, we tested our first hypothesis. This regression equation accounts for 48.6 percentage of the variance (F = 300.985, p < 0.05). Hence, the independent variable, i.e., social attractiveness, is statistically significant and positively correlates with parasocial interaction.

In the second regression analysis, we tested our second hypothesis. This regression equation accounts for 47.0 percentage of the variance (F = 282.410, p < 0.05). Hence, the independent variable, i.e., the attitude homophily, is statistically significant and has a positive relationship with credibility.

In the third regression analysis, we tested our third hypothesis. This regression equation accounts for 38.7 percentage of the variance (F = 200.755, p < 0.05). Hence, the independent variable, i.e., physical attractiveness, is statistically significant and positively correlates with credibility.

In the fourth regression analysis, we tested our fourth hypothesis. This regression equation accounts for 34.0 percent of the variance (F = 163.462, p < 0.05). Hence, the independent variable, i.e., physical attractiveness, is statistically significant and positively correlates with credibility.

In the fifth regression analysis, we tested our fifth hypothesis. This regression equation accounts for 36.7 percentage of the variance (F = 184.334, p < 0.05). Hence, the independent variable, i.e., physical attractiveness, is statistically significant and positively correlates with parasocial interaction.

In the sixth regression analysis, we tested our sixth hypothesis. This regression equation accounts for 38.7 percentage of the variance (F = 202.489, p < 0.05). Hence, the independent variable, i.e., credibility, is statistically significant and positively relates to purchase intention.

And finally, in the seventh regression analysis, we tested our last hypothesis. This regression equation accounts for 49.0 percentage of the variance (F = 305.513, p < 0.05). Hence, the independent variable, i.e., the Parascal interaction, is statistically significant and positively relates to purchase intention.

The sixth hypothesis was the most important dimension with the largest unstandardized beta coefficient, followed by the seventh hypothesis, the fifth hypothesis, the first hypothesis, the second hypothesis, the fourth hypothesis, and the third hypothesis.

4.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

After the separate regression analyses, we performed group regression analyses to test the dependent variable's impact when there is more than one independent variable. As the significance value of all the regression models is less than 0.05 (p < 0.05), hence all the models are statistically significant. This is shown in Table 3.

The reason for doing a group regression analysis was to check the impact on the dependent variable when there is more than one independent variable. In the first group regression analysis, we wanted to measure credibility due to physical attractiveness and attitude homophily. This regression equation accounted for 44.4 percent of the dependent variable's variance (F = 126.498, p < 0.05). As the value of VIF and tolerance is within the accepted limits, we can very well say that there was no multicollinearity between the two independent variables. Hence, we can say that the independent variables, i.e., physical attractiveness and attitude homophily, are statistically significant and positively impact credibility.

In the second group regression analysis, we wanted to measure the impact on parasocial interaction due to physical attractiveness, social attractiveness, and attitude homophily. This regression equation accounted for 47.0 percent of the variance of the dependent variable (F = 137.597, p < 0.05). As the value of VIF and tolerance is within the accepted limits, we can very well say that there was no multicollinearity between the independent variables. Hence, we can say that the independent variables, i.e., physical attractiveness, social attractiveness, and attitude homophily, are statistically significant
and have a positive impact on parasocial interaction.

In the third group regression analysis, we wanted to measure the impact on purchase intention due to both credibility and parasocial interaction. This regression equation accounted for 54.7 percent of the variance of the dependent variable ($F = 191.445, p<0.05$). As VIF and tolerance's value is within the accepted limits, we can very well say that there was no multicollinearity between the two independent variables. Hence, we can say that the independent variables, i.e., credibility and parasocial interaction, are statistically significant and positively impact purchase intention.

These results are also beneficial for the vloggers who wish to make a name for themselves on social media. This study pointed out that the younger generation value credibility, which can be perceived as source reliability more than Para social interaction. Although credibility has a bigger influence than the PSI, both companies and bloggers must realize that transparent communications and trust are the key factors in influencing customers to buy any product.

This study shows that attitude homophily, which is also known as the perceived Similarity between the blogger and the media users, is strong associated with both Credibility and PSI. From this, the companies should try to understand that the values portrayed by the media influencers are being acknowledged and adored by the potential customers. Therefore, these companies should advertise their products in such a way that these same values get reflected in them. As far as the bloggers are concerned, they can adopt attractive values. These values can be showcased to the community, which would enhance the influencer's credibility and the interaction between the viewer and the influencer. If the bloggers adopt values that don't suit them, this might have the opposite effect on the followers.

### Table 2. Regression results

| Constructs | $\beta$ Value | $R^2$ | p-value |
|------------|--------------|-------|---------|
| Social attractiveness | | | |
| Social Attractiveness $\rightarrow$ Para-Social Interaction | 0.687 | 0.486 | 0.000* |
| Attitude Homophily $\rightarrow$ Para-Social Interaction | 0.577 | 0.470 | 0.000* |
| Attitude Homophily $\rightarrow$ Credibility | 0.402 | 0.387 | 0.000* |
| Physical attractiveness | | | |
| Physical Attractiveness $\rightarrow$ Credibility | 0.543 | 0.340 | 0.000* |
| Physical Attractiveness $\rightarrow$ Para-Social Interaction | 0.735 | 0.367 | 0.000* |
| Credibility | | | |
| Credibility $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intention | 0.917 | 0.387 | 0.000* |
| Para social Interaction | | | |
| Para social Interaction $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intention | 0.791 | 0.490 | 0.000* |

**Notes:** *p< 0.05

### Table 3. Group regression

| Constructs | $\beta$ Value | $R^2$ | p-value |
|------------|--------------|-------|---------|
| First group regression | | | |
| Physical Attractiveness $\rightarrow$ Credibility | 0.290 | 0.444 | 0.000* |
| Attitude Homophily $\rightarrow$ Credibility | 0.273 | | |
| Second group regression | | | |
| Physical Attractiveness $\rightarrow$ Para-Social Interaction | 0.193 | 0.470 | 0.000* |
| Attitude Homophily $\rightarrow$ Para-Social Interaction | 0.275 | | |
| Social attractiveness $\rightarrow$ Para-Social Interaction | 0.347 | | |
| Third group regression | | | |
| Credibility $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intention | 0.450 | 0.547 | 0.000* |
| Parasocial Interaction $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intention | 0.575 | | |

**Notes:** *p< 0.05
Finally, social and physical attractiveness also have a positive impact on both credibility and PSI. This suggests that the influencers need to have a unique social and physical look to better influence their followers, but the influencer should also keep in mind that their followers don't seek a perfect physical appearance from them. Before this pandemic started, companies started to move more and more towards digital media to advertise their brands and products, so it is impossible to avoid social media and influencer marketing when it comes to marketing strategies.

This research paper studied the effect on purchase intention due to both source credibility and PSI. Furthermore, we also found the indirect relationship between purchase intention and attitude homophily, physical attractiveness, and social attractiveness. Again, these outcomes will benefit both the companies and the bloggers to gain a competitive advantage over other players in the market. In this research paper, we have studied the consumer buying behaviour of a particular segment (healthcare and fitness) on Instagram. Also, our respondents are located in various parts of India. Due to these reasons, the researcher cannot generalize their results to other media platforms and other segments. Future work could research consumer buying behaviour on other social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, etc., separately. Moreover, the buying behaviour portrayed in this study might be majorly influenced by this pandemic. Hence when the covid scenario gets over, the same research can be done to see if similar results are observed or not. Also, it will be interesting to see the consumer buying behaviour in other sectors. In our study, we used a survey-based method to measure our constructs. Future articles could adopt other improved methodologies to extract more insights and information. Influencer marketing is a complex and dynamic marketing process because it involves human behaviour, which is unpredictable in nature. Hence, more research needs to be done in this sector to shed light on this dynamic and complex process.

5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to find whether the social media users, trust media influencers and buy healthcare and fitness products during covid times. And from the above results, it is very well evident that social media users trust the expertise and advice of these media influencers. Hence the purchase decisions of the viewers might get influenced, which means that they are more likely to go and buy the featured products. Therefore, we can say that credibility and Para social interaction are both creating a positive impact on purchase intention, which is exactly what the results were showing. Due to this covid scenario, things might not go back to normal for a long time, so businesses need to find some alternative ways to keep the revenues flowing so that they could sustain their business. Due to this very reason, managers should consider influencer marketing as a sustainable alternative over traditional advertisement marketing in this current situation. The outcomes of the study could be helpful for small companies as well as those who started their business recently and are not financially capable. They can use the results of this study to advertise their product strategically.

CONSENT

As per international standards or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

ETHICAL APPROVAL

Ethical clearance taken from Symbiosis Institute of Management Studies (SIMS) Symbiosis International (Deemed University) (SIU), Pune, Maharashtra, India

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

REFERENCES

1. Abidin C. Visibility labour: Engaging with Influencers’ fashion brands and# OOTD advertorial campaigns on Instagram. Media International Australia. 2016;161(1):86-100.
2. De Vries NJ, Carlson J. Examining the drivers and brand performance implications of customer engagement with brands in the social media environment. Journal of Brand Management. 2014;21(6):495-515.
3. Giffin K. The contribution of studies of source credibility to a theory of interpersonal trust in the communication process. Psychological Bulletin. 1967;68(2):104.
4. Hovland CI, Weiss W. The influence of source credibility on communication effectiveness. Public opinion quarterly. 1951 Jan 1;15(4):635-50.
5. Hovland CI, Janis IL, Kelley HH. Communication and persuasion.
6. Weismueller J, Harrigan P, Wang S, Soutar GN. Influencer endorsements: How advertising disclosure and source credibility affect consumer purchase intention on social media. Australasian Marketing Journal (AMJ). 2020;28(4):160-70.
7. Kapoor KK, Tamilmani K, Rana NP, Patil P, Dwivedi YK, Nerur S. Advances in social media research: Past, present and future. Information Systems Frontiers. 2018;20(3):531-58.
8. Lee JE, Watkins B. YouTube vloggers’ influence on consumer luxury brand perceptions and intentions. Journal of Business Research. 2016;69(12):5753-60.
9. Lober WB, Flowers JL. Consumer empowerment in health care amid the internet and social media. InSeminars in Oncology Nursing. WB Saunders. 2011;27(3):169-182.
10. McCroskey JC. Scales for the measurement of ethos.
11. McGuire WJ. Attitudes and attitude change. The handbook of social psychology. 1985;233-346.
12. Perse EM, Rubin RB. Attribution in social and parasocial relationships. Communication Research. 1989;16(1):59-77.
13. Rubin AM, Perse EM, Powell RA. Loneliness, parasocial interaction, and local television news viewing. Human communication research. 1985;12(2):155-80.
14. Shao G. Understanding the appeal of user-generated media: A uses and gratification perspective. Internet Research; 2009.
15. Smith T, Coyle JR, Lightfoot E, Scott A. Reconsidering models of influence: The relationship between consumer social networks and word-of-mouth effectiveness. Journal of Advertising Research. 2007; 47(4):387-97.
16. Sokolova K, Kefi H. Instagram and YouTube bloggers promote it, why should I buy? How credibility and parasocial interaction influence purchase intentions. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services. 2020;53.
17. Labrecque LI. Fostering consumer–brand relationships in social media environments: The role of parasocial interaction. Journal of Interactive Marketing. 2014;28(2):134-48.
18. Till BD, Busler M. The match-up hypothesis: Physical attractiveness, expertise, and the role of fit on brand attitude, purchase intent and brand beliefs. Journal of Advertising. 2000;29(3):1-3.
19. Turner JR. Interpersonal and psychological predictors of parasocial interaction with different television performers. Communication Quarterly. 1993;41(4):443-53.
20. Welbourne DJ, Grant WJ. Science communication on YouTube: Factors that affect channel and video popularity. Public Understanding of Science. 2016;25(6):706-18.
21. Aldassory, F. Health observation system using cloud computing. International Journal of MC Square Scientific Research. 2017;9:08-16.

© 2021 Roy and Mehendale; This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
http://www.sdiarticle4.com/review-history/69519