Consumer Trust In Branded Content On Social Media Is Affected By Message Value And Credibility: A Case Study Of Varanasi

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper helps understand the effective and influenced marketing on consumers through social media. This social media influencer value model is proposed as an integrated model to account for the roles of advertising value and source credibility. The amount of money spent on influencer marketing has skyrocketed in recent years.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper is designed for an exploratory study using the open-ended approach of ground theory, which consists of 353 interviews with employees including students representing the millennial generation of Varanasi city. To estimate the linkage postulated in the current model, here a model partial least squares (PLS) route modeling technique is being used.

Findings – The results of partial least squares (PLS) path modeling show that the informative value of influencer-generated content, as well as the influencer's trustworthiness, attractiveness, and similarity to followers, all influence followers' trust in influencers' branded posts, which influences brand awareness and purchase intentions.

Research limitations/implications – Factors identified in this study helped us better understand the mechanism underlying effective influencer marketing, we recognize that other relevant factors, such as advertising literacy and followers' persuasion knowledge, could affect the process and were not included in this research. Second, this research looked at social media influencers and overall confidence in influencer-generated marketed postings. Because of message modality or influencer content variances across platforms, social media users may have various beliefs/attitudes towards influencers or influencer-generated branded posts on different social media platforms. Future research might look at influencer marketing on certain social media platforms.

Practical implications – Influencers will also benefit from the study's suggestions. They can choose to create educational posts and indicate attractiveness and resemblance to their followers, which can favourably shape their followers' faith in their branded articles, in addition to maintaining their expert standing.

Originality/value – This paper fulfils an identified need to study how consumers trust on social media is influenced by message value and credibility

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Introduction

Social media and social networking sites (SNSs) have had a significant impact on how people acquire information and news nowadays. According to a recent Pew Research Centre research, the majority of individuals in the United States rely extensively on social media for news, and this percentage has been steadily increasing over the last five years (Gottfried and Shearer 2016). Because of these new sources of information, people are now exposed to thousands of advertisings on a daily basis, the majority of which originate from social media sites (Ganguly 2015). Some age groups, particularly millennials and younger generations, have gotten accustomed to using social media (Gottfried and Shearer 2016).As a result, their demand for knowledge from social media and fellow customers has grown more urgent than ever.

According to recent research from Twitter and Annalect, approximately 40% of polled Twitter users had purchased something as a result of an influencer's post (Karp 2016).

Online personalities with a large number of followers across one or more social media platforms (e.g., YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, or personal blogs) who have an influence on their followers are known as social media influencers (Agrawal 2016; Varsamis 2018).

Social media influencers, unlike celebrities or public figures who are well-known through traditional media, are "ordinary people" who have become "online celebrities" by creating and posting content on social media.They usually specialise on one or more categories, such as healthy living, travel, cuisine, lifestyle, beauty, or fashion. According to a new Twitter survey, consumers may place the same amount of trust in social media influencers as they do in their friends (Swant 2016).

As a result, influencer marketing is a type of marketing in which marketers and companies pay influencers to develop and/or promote branded content to both the influencers' own following and the businesses' target consumers (Yodel 2017). Branded content created by influencers is seen to have a more organic, real, and direct connection with potential customers than commercials created by brands (Talavera 2015). Influencer marketing's popularity has skyrocketed in recent years.According to a recent research, 39 percent of marketers planned to raise their budget for influencer marketing in 2018, and 19 percent planned to spend more than $100,000 per campaign (Bevilacqua and Del Giudice 2018).

Despite the fact that several studies have looked at the impact of celebrity endorsers on advertising (e.g., Amos, Holmes, and Strutton 2008), the distinctiveness of social media influencers—in other words, content generators with "celebrity" status—has been overlooked.

Furthermore, while there has been some recent study on influencer marketing (e.g., De Veirman, Cauberghe, and Hudders 2017; Djafarova and Rushworth 2017; Evans et al. 2017; Johansen and Guldvik 2017), none of it has focused directly on the basic processes that make it effective.No complete theoretical model has been empirically tested (e.g., Djafarova and Rushworth 2017).

The current study supports McGuire's (2001) communication-persuasion matrix, which claims that the efficacy of persuasive communication is determined by numerous input components such as source, message, channel, receiver, and destination.

The impact of parameters related to source and message in influencer marketing are the subject of this research.This study proposes an integrated social media influencer value (SMIV) model to account for the impacts of influencer marketing on SNSs after defining the major characteristics and studying their interactions. Compared to previous studies that used advertising value models (e.g., Dao et al. 2014; Dehghani et al. 2016; Lee et al. 2016; Zha, Li, and Yan 2015), this SMIV model extends its theoretical arguments to account not only for the roles advertising content factors play (i.e., advertising value), but also for messenger features (i.e., source credibility), both of which are relevant to the influencer marketing phenomenon. Consumers' confidence in influencer branded content is identified and highlighted using the SMIV methodology.It also provides an integrated model to better comprehend this occurrence by adding the component of resemblance to the idea of source trustworthiness.

The findings of this study add to the growing body of knowledge on the advertising value model and the phenomena of influencer marketing. They also provide information to three key stakeholders in influencer marketing: businesses, consumers, and influencers.

Advertising or Influencer Marketing
Digital advertising (e.g., Brown and Hayes 2008; Scott 2015) is a marketing technique that relies on the power of prominent individuals or opinion leaders to influence customers' brand awareness and/or purchase decisions. The influencer's natural features are crucial in encouraging companies and marketers to pay careful attention to them. One advantage

is that marketers may choose less expensive influencers instead of paying extravagant costs to sign one or more well-known celebrity endorsers (Hall 2015).Furthermore, most social media influencers have already established themselves by focusing in a certain field. This implies that when influencers cooperate with companies that are relevant to their specific areas of expertise, customers are more inclined to accept or believe their ideas (Hall 2016).

According to a recent survey on social media trends, 94 percent of marketers who have employed influencer marketing efforts have found them to be successful (Ahmad 2018). Influencer marketing provided 11 times the return on investment (ROI) of traditional advertising, according to the same article.Television stations, radio stations, and newspapers are no longer the primary providers of information for consumers in today's media environment. Instead, for knowledge exchange and connection development, customers frequently turn to social media platforms or virtual communities (Hair, Clark, and Shapiro 2010). These same platforms are used by social media influencers, who provide distinct value to both users and advertising. Social media influencers, according to Freberg et al. (2011), are "a new form of independent third-party endorser who shapes audience opinions through blogs, tweets, and other social media" (p.90)."Any individual who has public notoriety and who leverages this recognition on favour of a consumer item by appearing with it in an advertising" is another word that has been used to describe them (McCracken 1989, p. 310). Unlike traditional endorsers, who are typically celebrities or public figures who rose to prominence through traditional media, social media influencers are typically "grassroots" individuals who have developed likeable online personalities and gained high visibility among their followers by creating viral content on social media (Garcia 2017). Influencers provide regular social media updates in their fields of expertise, in which they deliver fundamentally persuasive messages to their followers that are both informative and entertaining.

Previous research has yielded inconsistent results when it comes to the benefits of influencer marketing, as well as a lack of fundamental knowledge of the processes through which influencer marketing material and influencers themselves influence customer behaviour.

This work aims to bridge this knowledge gap. The sections that follow evaluate the literature on the model's constructs and then make hypotheses.

Theoretical Background

Advertising Content Value

From a marketing standpoint, Sheth and Uslay (2007) proposed that value is generated and transferred during marketing activities, and that marketing products may meet customers' demands. A "subjective judgement of the relative usefulness or utility of advertising to customers" is referred to as advertising value (Ducoffe 1995, p. 1). Ducoffe (1996) explored the factors of internet advertising value, including advertising informativeness, amusement, and annoyance, in seminal research.He claimed that consumers' opinions about internet ads were influenced by their perceptions of advertising value.Advertising's positive cognitive and emotional qualities are captured by informativeness and entertainment, whereas irritation indicates consumers' negative reactions to advertising rather than its value (Sun et al. 2010). Dao et al. (2014) investigated how the perceived value of social media advertising influenced consumers' online purchase intentions. They showed that the informativeness, amusement, and legitimacy of advertising affected customers' views of advertising value, which influenced their purchase intentions.

Influencers provide regular social media updates in their fields of expertise, in which they deliver fundamentally persuasive messages to their followers that are both informative and entertaining.

Influencer-created posts teach their followers about product alternatives or other useful information. Furthermore, influencers bring personal aesthetic flourishes and personality twists to their postings, which generally result in an entertaining experience (entertainment value) for their followers. Whether or not influencers choose to share sponsored branded posts with their audiences, the perceived educational and entertaining value of their material in general may impact how followers react to individual branded pieces.

As a result, we incorporate the first two components in the model: perceived informational value and perceived entertainment value of influencer-generated material.

Perceived Trust

Trust has been studied in a variety of fields, including communication, marketing, politics, sociology, and psychology, among others (Cowles 1997; Fisher, Till, and Stanley 2010). Moorman, Deshpande, and Zaltman (1993) defined trust in terms of marketing and trade as "a readiness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence" (p. 82). Consumers' trust in online product evaluations was explored by Racherla, Mandviwalla, and Connolly (2012), who claimed that message argument quality (a content aspect) and perceived background similarity

(representing a social feature) contributed to higher trust. Similarly, Lee and Chung (2009) wanted to figure out how the different quality criteria related to mobile banking may affect satisfaction and trust. Their findings revealed that the quality of the system and the information it provided were both important predictors of consumer trust and satisfaction. We suggest that influencer marketing's content factors—in other words, the perceived informativeness value and entertainment value of influencer generated posts—will effect consumers' confidence in their advertised content: branded posts, based on these findings. As a result, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: The value of (a) informativeness and (b) entertainment in influencer-generated content will favourably affect followers' perceived trust in influencer-branded content.

Influencer Credibility
The persuasiveness of a communicator or message source is influenced by their credibility (Hovland and Weiss 1951). Social media influencers, according to Hall (2015), are "microendorsers" (as opposed to "larger" celebrity endorsers). In most advertising, endorsers play the same function in the persuasive process that message providers do. Earlier studies (e.g., Giffin 1967; Hovland and Weiss 1951; McGuire 1985) employed source credibility to assess a source's influence on the efficacy of persuasive communications. Expertise and trustworthiness are two criteria of source credibility postulated by Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953). The competency or qualification of a source, including the source's knowledge or abilities, to make particular statements about a certain subject or issue is referred to as source expertise (McCroskey 1966).The receivers' view of a source's honesty, sincerity, or truthfulness is called source trustworthiness (Giffin 1967).

McGuire (1985) postulated a third factor in source credibility: attractiveness, which refers to the physical appeal or likeability of a source. Similarly, Ohanian (1990) defined source credibility as a three-dimensional construct, relying on strands from earlier literature such as trustworthiness, knowledge, and attractiveness.

Cunningham and Bright (2012), Dwivedi, Johnson, and McDonald (2015), Guido and Peluso 2009, Lee and Koo 2015, and others have looked at the impact of endorsers on customers. Based on Munnukka, Uusitalo, and Toivonen's (2016) research on peer endorsers, this study employs a four-dimensional definition of source credibility, which comprises trustworthiness, expertise, resemblance, and attractiveness, in light of influencer marketing practise. The term "source similarity" refers to the

source's perceived similarity to the receiver (e.g., demographic or ideological aspects).

Djafarova and Rushworth (2017), for example, utilised the findings of their in-depth interviews to claim that Instagram users' faith in celebrities' product evaluations was influenced by the celebrities' competence and knowledge about the items, as well as the celebrities' relevance to the users. We suggest four aspects of influencer credibility (Munnukka, Uusitalo, and Toivonen 2016) that will affect followers' confidence in influencers' branded posts in this study to evaluate such correlations empirically:

H2: Followers' confidence in influencers' sponsored material will be favourably influenced by their credibility components (a) knowledge, (b) trustworthiness, (c) attractiveness, and (d) resemblance.

Brand Awareness
Consumers' brand awareness refers to their knowledge of a particular brand and their ability to recall or recognise it (Keller 2008). Consumers are more inclined to include brands they are familiar with in their consideration set when making purchasing decisions (MacDonald and Sharp 2000). Brand awareness is crucial in customers' purchasing decisions (Barreda et al. 2015), and it might act as a heuristic cue or shortcut in decision making (Hoyer and Brown 1990). For minimal involvement consumer-packaged goods, Huang and Sarigollu (2012) found a link between brand awareness and brand market performance. SNSs have piqued the interest of numerous firms, who want to include SNSs into their marketing activities to increase brand recognition among their target customers (Langaro, Rita, and de Fatima Salgueiro 2018).

Influencer marketing efforts are primarily focused on increasing brand recognition, reaching new targeted audiences, and increasing sales conversion (e.g., Esseveld 2017; Statista 2018). Brands that invest in influencer marketing want to get brand mentions from influencers, which will raise brand recognition within their target audience and, as a result, increase sales. We opted to concentrate our study on brand awareness rather than other attitudinal evaluations of advertising or brands since brand awareness is one of the most important aims of influencer marketing and has a big effect in buying habits.

This is in accordance with the findings of a research by Dehghani and colleagues (2016), who looked at the impacts of YouTube advertising value on young customers. They also looked at the function of brand awareness, demonstrating that perceived advertising value increased brand awareness in a favourable way via YouTube. We propose that influencers'

content value (informativeness and entertainment) will positively influence followers' brand awareness (Dehghani et al. 2016): Because influencers deliver informative and/or enjoyable content to their followers on a regular basis, including information about alternative brands or products, we propose that influencers' content value (informativeness and entertainment) will positively influence followers' brand awareness (Dehghani et al. 2016):

H3: The (a) informativeness value and (b) entertainment value of influencer-generated content would favourably increase consumers' awareness of advertised companies.

Purchase Intention
Acquire intentions, according to Spears and Singh (2004), are "an individual's intentional plan to make an attempt to purchase a brand" (p. 56). De Magistris and Gracia (2008) believed that buying intentions preceded actual purchasing behaviour because they involve the potential or likelihood that customers will be inclined to acquire a specific product. Purchase intentions have long been used by advertisers and academics to assess customers' product perceptions (Spears and Singh 2004). Consumer attitudes toward commercials and brands, electronic word of mouth (eWOM), and/or brand awareness have all been shown to influence purchase intentions in previous studies (e.g., Alhabash et al. 2015; Lafferty, Goldsmith, and Newell 2002; Lee and Koo 2015). Acquire intentions, according to Spears and Singh (2004), is "an individual's intentional plan to make an attempt to purchase a brand" (p. 56). Because Dao and colleagues (2014) discovered that perceived advertising value influenced online purchase intentions among Vietnamese social media users. As a result, we expect that the two constructions of advertising value will have a comparable effect on consumers' buy intentions when it comes to social media influencer advertising:

H4: The (a) informativeness value and (b) entertainment value of influencer-generated content will favourably affect customers' purchase intentions.

Furthermore, past research has shown that the attributes of endorsers (such as knowledge, trustworthiness, and attractiveness) have a beneficial impact on customers' purchase intentions (e.g., Lafferty, Goldsmith, and Newell 2002; Lee and Koo 2015). As a result, we believe that influencer credibility will have a favourable impact on customers' purchasing intentions:
H5: Consumers' purchase intentions will be favourably influenced by influencer credibility, which includes (a) perceived knowledge, (b) trustworthiness, (c) attractiveness, and (d) resemblance.

Proposed Model

Many prior research (e.g., Kinard and Capella 2006; Salmon 1986) have looked at the role of participation, which reflects individual differences, in consumer decision-making and advertisement effectiveness. This study conceptualises and operationalizes engagement as social media users' involvement in following influencers' posts or updates in order to further investigate this. As a result, in our model testing, we incorporated individuals' engagement in influencer following as a covariate. Furthermore, demographic parameters such as age and gender, which are important variables for identifying social media users, are included as possible confounders. Figure 1 illustrates the integrated model.
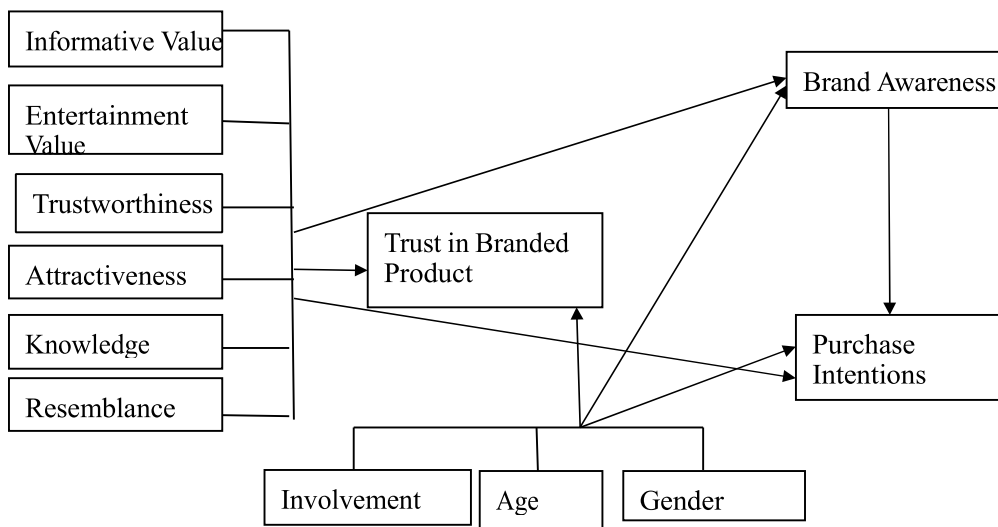

Figure 1. Proposed Model

Methodology

We have 353 participants for data analysis after excluding those who failed the attentioncheck questions. The average age of the participants was 33 years old (SD=9.80), and 62 percent of them were female.

Nearly half of the participants (47.2%) had a bachelor's degree, while about one third were high school graduates (32.9 percent).

Nearly 94 percent of the participants in the present study had Facebook accounts, and 85 percent had YouTube accounts; moreover, 70% of them had Instagram profiles. Over half of them (53 percent) have followed influencers on YouTube, followed by 49 percent on Facebook and 35 percent on Instagram. Around 60% of participants had followed influencers in the lifestyle category, followed by 44% who had followed influencers in the culinary area, and a further 35% who had followed influencers specialised in fashion.

Measurement

The participants' responses to the statement "Concerning the influencers that I am following on social media, I personally think their social media posts/updates are..." were used to assess the informativeness and entertainment value of influencer-generated material. Ineffective/Effective; Unhelpful/Helpful; Not functional/Functional; Unnecessary/Necessary; and Impractical/Practical for informativeness value; and Not fun/Fun; Dull/Exciting; Not delightful/Delightful; Not thrilling/Thrilling; and Unenjoyable/Enjoyable for entertainment value were the anchors for their responses (Voss, Spangenberg, and Grohmann 2003). With items taken from Munnukka, Uusitalo, and Toivonen, this study assessed the four characteristics of an influencer's believability (2016). We used twelve 7-point semantic differential scales anchored by Dishonest/Honest, Phony/Genuine, Unethical/Ethical, and so on to evaluate trust in influencer-generated sponsored messages (Wu and Lin 2017). We measured participants' agreement with five statements from Yoo, Donthu, and Lee to determine brand awareness (2000). We used the participants' agreement with four statements collected from Yuan and Jang to determine the participants' buying intentions (2008). We also asked the participants to rate their level of engagement in social media influencer following by indicating their agreement with five statements, such as "Following their posts/updates on social media is a substantial part of my life" (Choo et al. 2014).

Data Analysis

To estimate the linkages postulated in the current model, we used a partial least squares (PLS) route modelling technique. In route analysis (J. Hair et al. 2010), there are two ways to specifying or testing hypothesised relationships: covariance based structural equation modelling (CB-SEM) and PLS-SEM. To estimate model coefficients, CB-SEM employs a maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) approach "such that the disparity between the estimated and sample covariance matrices is minimised" (Hair et al. 2014, p. 27). CB-SEM is better for verifying or disproving a well-developed theory. PLS-SEM, on the other hand, is favoured for theory creation and prediction research because it estimates model parameters in a way that optimises the variation explained in endogenous variables (Hair et al. 2014, p. 14). When evaluating complicated models with multiple latent variables, PLS path modelling is preferred over CBSEM (Henseler, Ringle, and Sinkovics 2009). The suggested model in our study comprises 10 latent variables, compared to an average of 4.4 latent variables in a CBSEM (Shah and Goldstein 2006). Furthermore, rather than verifying or testing known ideas, the goal of this study is to investigate the impacts of influencer marketing's message characteristics and influencer credibility components on customer behaviours.

As a result, in the current investigation, a PLS path modelling technique is better appropriate for data analysis. The minimum sample size necessary for PLS path modelling, according to a rough guideline, should be at least 10 times the largest number of structural routes predicting a single construct—in this case, 90 in the current investigation. Despite the fact that PLSSEM works well with a small sample size, recent research has shown that it is also possible to employ PLS-SEM with a big sample size (Anderson and Swaminathan 2011).

Smart PLS 3 (Ringle, Wende, and Becker 2014) was utilised in the study for both measurement validation and structural modelling. The current model's latent variables all have reflecting measurements: indicators that predict one specific construct and are highly associated with one another, representing the latent construct's impacts (Hair et al. 2014, p. 43). Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values for all of the latent constructs were above.70 in our reliability assessments, indicating a trustworthy measuring instrument for this study (Table 1). The loadings on their measured constructs were substantially greater than the cross loadings on other constructs, and the average variance extracted (AVE) values for all of the latent constructs were over 50. Each construct's square root AVE was greater than its association to other hidden variables (Table 2). As a result, all concept measures were deemed to have sufficient convergent and discriminant validity. A collinearity test revealed no significant collinearity between any sets of predictive variables (with the variance inflation factor [VIF] lying between the tolerance range of.20 to 5.0). (Hair et al. 2014).

Hypothesis Testing
To estimate the model's path coefficients, we first used a PLS-SEM technique. Then we ran a second bootstrapping analysis with 5,000 subsamples and a 95% significance threshold to get the standard error and p value for each route coefficient (Henseler, Ringle, and Sinkovics 2009).

Hypotheses 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 2c, and 2d claim that the informative and entertaining value of influencer-generated posts, as well as the credibility components of influencers (expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and similarity), influence followers' trust in influencergenerated branded posts positively. Our findings revealed that the informative value of influencer postings (b=.19, SE=.06, t=3.37, p<.01), influencers' trustworthiness (b=.19, SE=.06, t=3.09, p<.01), influencers' attractiveness (b=.11, SE=.04, t=2.55, p<.05), and similarity (b=.10, SE=.05, t=1.98, p<.05) all positively They account for 39% of the variation in followers' confidence in influencer-generated sponsored posts (R2=.39, adjusted R2=.38). As a result, hypotheses 1a, 2b, 2c, and 2d were found to be true. Hypotheses 1b and 2a were shown to be false.

Hypothesis 3 proposes that the informational and entertaining value of influencer-generated content has a beneficial impact on brand awareness. Our results demonstrated that informative value (b=.04, n.s.) and entertainment value (b=.11, n.s.) did not significantly affect brand awareness. Hypothesis 3 was shown to be false.

Hypotheses 4a, 4b, 5a, 5b, 5c, and 5d assert that the value of influencer content and the legitimacy of influencers have a favourable impact on purchase intentions. In support of hypotheses 4a and 5b, data indicated that influencers' posts' informative value (b=.12, SE=.05, t=2.61, p<.01) and trustworthiness (b=.14, SE=.06, t=2.63, p<.01) significantly affected purchase intentions. The hypotheses 4b, 5a, 5c, and 5d were all shown to be false.

B=.41, SE=.05, t=8.91, p<.001) and purchase intentions (SE=.05, t=4.02, p<.001). Furthermore, participants' confidence in influencer-generated branded posts (b=.16, SE=.05, t=3.45, p<.01), brand awareness (b=.16, SE=.05, t=3.36, p<.01), and purchase intentions (b=.16, SE=.05, t=3.37, p<.01) were favourably impacted by engagement level. Consumer reactions were not significantly influenced by age or gender (Figure 2). The tested model's significant paths explained 32% of the variance in followers' brand awareness (R2=.32, adjusted R2=.31) and 62% of the variance in purchase intentions (R2=.62, adjusted R2=.61).

Constructs	Items	Standardized Loadings	Cronbach's a	CR	AVE
Informative value	info_1	0.796	0.884	0.915	0.684
	info_2	0.855			
	info_3	0.859			
	info_4	0.776			
	info_5	0.846			
Entertainment value	enter_1	0.842	0.89	0.918	0.693
	enter_2	0.868			
	enter_3	0.85			
	enter_4	0.816			
	enter_5	0.783			
Knowledge	know_1	0.903	0.912	0.938	0.79
	know_2	0.881			
	know_3	0.867			
	know_4	0.904			
Trustworthiness	trustworthy_1	0.947	0.951	0.964	0.871
	trustworthy_2	0.935			
	trustworthy_3	0.939			
	trustworthy_4	0.911			
Attractiveness	attract_1	0.928	0.911	0.938	0.79
	attract_2	0.871			
	attract_3	0.915			
	attract_4	0.84			

Resemblance	resem_1	0.937	0.91	0.943	0.847
	resem_2	0.912			
	resem_3	0.911			
Trust in branded posts	Trust_1	0.877	0.967	0.971	0.737
	Trust_2	0.906			
	Trust_3	0.801			
	Trust_4	0.879			
	Trust_5	0.896			
	Trust_6	0.879			
	Trust_7	0.852			
	Trust_8	0.904			
	Trust_9	0.806			
	Trust_10	0.793			
	Trust_11	0.818			
	Trust_12	0.878			
Brand awareness	brandAware1	0.902	0.938	0.953	0.801

Table 1. Model Assessment

	brandAware2	0.911			
	brandAware3	0.868			
	brandAware4	0.897			
	brandAware5	0.897			
Purchase intentions	PI1	0.939	0.938	0.956	0.844
	PI2	0.899			
	PI3	0.914			
	PI4	0.922			
Involvement	invol1	0.865	0.92	0.94	0.757
	invol2	0.831			
	invol3	0.87			
	invol4	0.898			
	invol5	0.884			

Note. CR = composite reliabilities; AVE = variance extracted. average Table 2. Correlations among the variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Purchase intentions	0.919									
2. Attractiveness	0.38	0.889								
3. Brand awareness	0.644	0.411	0.895							
4. Entertainment	0.391	0.324	0.378	0.832						
5. knowledge	0.356	0.196	0.348	0.549	0.889					
6. Informativeness	0.451	0.229	0.309	0.61	0.587	0.827				
7. Involvement	0.518	0.339	0.408	0.517	0.486	0.566	0.87			

8. Resemblance	0.365	0.198	0.289	0.467	0.48	0.542	0.579	0.92	
9. Trust in posts	0.636	0.279	0.404	0.465	0.434	0.53	0.506	0.458	0.858
10. Trustworthiness	0.311	0.167	0.256	0.551	0.713	0.62	0.522	0.561	0.51	0.933

Note. Diagonal elements are the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct.

Findings

The popularity of social media influencer marketing is developing at a rapid pace. This is the first study to explain the underlying mechanism and constructs that explain its effects on consumers, as well as to propose a comprehensive model. This study has expanded the use of the advertising value model and addressed the impact of source credibility by looking at influencer marketing from a holistic approach.

In addition, the suggested model postulated and evaluated the impact of customer trust in influencer marketing efficacy. The findings of this study demonstrate that the informational value of influencer-generated posts, as well as other aspects of influencer credibility, might influence followers' confidence in influencer-generated sponsored posts, affecting brand awareness and buy intentions. Our findings contribute to the literature on advertising value and influencer marketing, and they have theoretical implications for scholars interested in social media influencer marketing. Brands and customers are also informed on effective influencer marketing methods and knowledge as a result of the findings.

The impact of advertising message components, or advertising value in general, in influencing marketing results, as well as the link between influencer content value and consumers' confidence in branded content, are two key findings. This contributes to the body of information on advertising value models in regard to social media marketing, as well as our understanding of interactive advertising research (Daugherty et al. 2017). Our findings show that the informational value of influencer content has a favourable impact on followers' confidence in influencer-branded posts as well as their purchase intentions. This conclusion is only partially compatible with the findings of a previous study (Dao et al. 2014) that looked into the antecedents of the value of social media advertising. They found that three categories of social media advertising value—informativeness, entertainment, and credibility—all had a favourable impact on consumers' perceptions of advertising value, which influenced their purchase intentions.

Because influencers are continually creating and disseminating informative social media updates to grab followers' attention, it's no surprise that the informative value of their material has a big impact on

their followers' buy intentions. Our findings also imply that influencers' educational postings may increase followers' confidence in their promoted material, which may impact buy intentions. The entertainment value of influencers' posts, on the other hand, had no effect on their followers' faith in their branded posts or buy intentions. This might infer that social media is mostly to blame users regard influencers as reliable sources of information, and they place their faith in them or make purchases based on the informational value of the influencer's material rather than its entertainment value.

The impacts of source credibility (or influencer credibility) on followers' trust and brand awareness are a second important conclusion of this study, which is consistent with earlier studies (Djafarova and Rushworth 2017). Our findings revealed that influencers' trustworthiness, attractiveness, and perceived likeness (to their followers) increased their followers' confidence in their branded postings in a favourable way. Because influencers
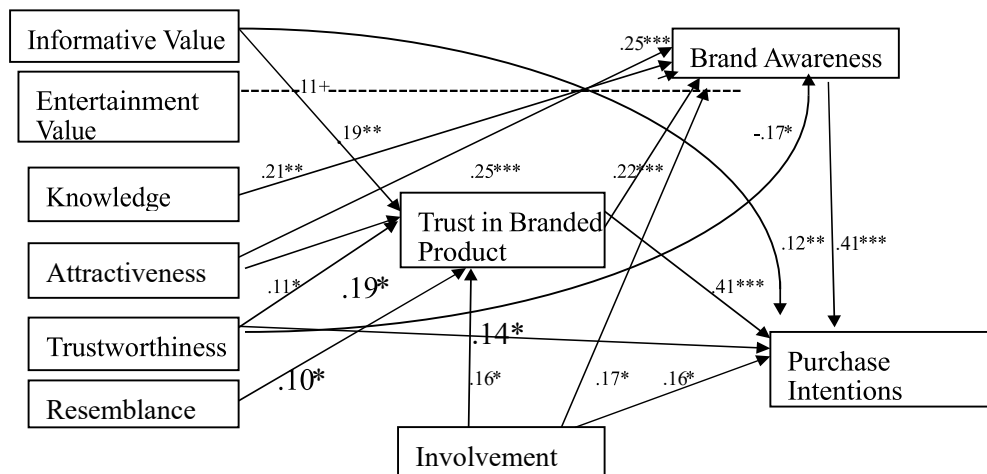

Figure 2. Partial least squares (PLS) path model. Only significant paths are shown; †p < .10; *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

typically build trustworthy and appealing online personas, it's not unexpected that their followers' confidence in sponsored material is influenced by their perceived trustworthiness and attractiveness. Furthermore, followers are more likely to follow influencers with whom they identify, therefore their perceived likeness to influencers has a favourable impact on their confidence in influencer-generated branded messages.

Surprisingly, followers' confidence in marketed material was unaffected by influencer competence. This might be because influencers have a position

of competence among their followers by default, but this does not guarantee that followers will believe their sponsored material.

Furthermore, our findings add to the growing body of evidence that there is a link between source trustworthiness and brand recognition. When followers view influencer-generated branded posts, their brand awareness rises as a result of their knowledge and attractiveness. It's possible that influencers' experience in certain areas qualifies them to effectively promote certain businesses or items. Their physical appeal also aids in attracting and directing followers' attention to those sponsored brands for recognition or recall. However, we discovered that influencer credibility had a detrimental impact on brand awareness and purchase intent in our research. This can be explained as follows: While the informative value of influencer-generated content generally carries over and influences followers' trust in their branded posts, followers may have ambivalent or sceptical beliefs about influencers' motives, and thus may discredit influencers when making consumption-related decisions. Nonetheless, this surprising discovery merits additional investigation. Furthermore, none of the source credibility factors positively affected purchase intentions, contrary to earlier research (e.g., Lafferty, Goldsmith, and Newell 2002; Lee and Koo 2015). Because prior study (Lafferty, Goldsmith, and Newell 2002; Lee and Koo 2015) focused on celebrity endorsers, the current findings show that the source credibility of social media influencers may differ from celebrity credibility during persuasive communication.

A third major finding of this study comes from our revisiting of the trust construct in an influencer context, specifically trust in influencer-generated branded posts, in addition to extending the framework of the advertising value model and explaining the role of source credibility on consumer behaviours. Our findings confirm the theory that trusts in sponsored commercials has a favourable impact on brand awareness and "willingness to act on adconveyed information" (Soh, Reid, and King 2009, p. 86). This research adds to the body of knowledge regarding the impact of trust on customer behaviour (Fisher, Till, and Stanley, 2010; Lewis and Weigert, 1985). When comparing the effects of content and source-related characteristics on purchase intentions, it's worth noting that followers' confidence in influencers' branded posts had the largest effect.

Finally, this study looked at the function of engagement, a vital personal aspect in the persuading process. Our findings support previous research on consumer engagement (e.g., Kinard and Capella 2006; Salmon 1986) and emphasise the significance of looking into or adjusting for individual characteristics when studying modern marketing strategies and advertising effects.

Conclusion

This research suggested a theoretical model for understanding the impacts of influencer marketing that combines the value of influencer content and source credibility into model testing and sets the framework for a more complete model. Despite widespread praise from the industry, influencer marketing is still in its early stages. In light of the ever-changing interactive advertising landscape, such as the current popularity of vertical video (e.g., Instagram's IGTV) and experiential advertising, additional issues about the consequences of influencer marketing will be investigated. Future study might look at not just the affordances of interactive platforms and the individual distinctions of consumers in influencer marketing, but also the crucial boundary conditions or mechanisms that drive brand building and consumer behaviour. When comparing the effects of content and source-related characteristics on purchase intentions, it's worth noting that followers' confidence in influencers' branded posts had the largest effect.

Finally, this study looked at the function of engagement, a vital personal aspect in the persuading process. Our findings support previous research on consumer engagement (e.g., Kinard and Capella 2006; Salmon 1986) and emphasise the significance of looking into or adjusting for individual characteristics when studying modern marketing strategies and advertising effects. This study addresses the gap between the ever-changing practises of creative marketing and the scarcity of previous research on the effects of social media advertising, and it adds to the repertory. This research also provides as a foundation for future empirical research in the field of influencer marketing.

Marketers and companies interested in influencer marketing may find some beneficial ideas in the present study. Because social media users' confidence in influencer-branded content is so important for brand recognition and purchase intent, firms may prioritise influencers whose material is well-received by their followers. Brands can assess trustworthiness, attractiveness, and/or similarity of influencers by measuring followers' opinions of their trustworthiness, attractiveness, and/or resemblance. Instead of depending on statistics about influencers' numbers of followers and engagement metrics, marketers might use this information to create possibly more successful influencer marketing campaigns. Furthermore, marketers looking to increase brand recognition among a big target audience may seek out social media influencers with an appealing presentation and stated expertise status that aligns with their company offers. Finally, content creators are social media influencers. As part of their cooperation, brands should constantly ensure that influencers provide educational material.

Limitation and Future Scope

There are certain limitations to the current study. First, while we believe that the factors we identified in this study helped us better understand the mechanism underlying effective influencer marketing, we recognise that other relevant factors, such as advertising literacy and followers' persuasion knowledge, could affect the process and were not included in our research. Second, this research looked at social media influencers and overall confidence in influencer-generated marketed postings. Because of message modality or influencer content variances across platforms, social media users may have various beliefs/attitudes towards influencers or influencer-generated branded posts on different social media platforms. Future research might look at influencer marketing on certain social media platforms. Third, the study's surprising findings (i.e., the negative impacts of influencers' trustworthiness on brand awareness and purchase intentions) necessitate additional investigation. Furthermore, while we supplied participants with thorough information regarding the phenomena of influencers and influencer marketing on social media, future research may wish to verify that participants grasp the concept of a social media influencer. Furthermore, for model testing, this study employed a U.S. sample. On the future, it might be worthwhile to investigate the influence of cultural elements in social media following. Future research might look into other characteristics related to the media channel (e.g., affordance, usefulness) or receivers, in addition to the message and source elements explored in this study (e.g., motivations, personality). Finally, future research can investigate causal correlations among stated variables using different methodologies, such as experimental designs.

Influencers will also benefit from the study's suggestions. They can choose to create educational posts and indicate attractiveness and resemblance to their followers, which can favourably shape their followers' faith in their branded articles, in addition to maintaining their expert standing.

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