

What factors determine the effectiveness of social media influencers in promoting a brand or product?

A systematic literature review



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Abstract

Many organizations have identified social media influencers as relevant intermediaries, because influencers connect the intended target groups with the brands while maintaining a direct communication with their followers and are able to influence these sometimes hard to reach stakeholders. This study was aimed to discover the factors that determine the effectiveness of these social media influencers when promoting a brand or product. This study has been done by executing a systematic literature study. A query has been made which led to 208 papers. Eventually, 19 final papers were examined and this led to a complete overview of results. Credibility was found to be the most significant factor. Attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise and similarity were also highly valued. Moreover, some underlying mechanisms can affect these factors as well, such as the amount of followers, disclosing the sponsorship and different kinds of posts. As these results are based on different kinds of product categories and social media platforms, further research needs to be done in order to compare and make these results more generalizable.

Introduction

The internet has become a convenient tool for young adults in which they can succeed in a wide variety of interests, such as socializing, entertainment, taking online classes and research (Budden et al., 2011). Social media usage is one of the most popular online activities (Statista, 2019). In 2018, an estimated 2.65 billion people were using social media worldwide. Moreover, the average daily social media usage of internet users worldwide was calculated at 136 minutes per day (Statista, 2019). Young adults are becoming one of the most popular target markets nowadays (Budden et al., 2011). However older adults are increasingly using the internet as well, in which Facebook is the most popular social platform (Greenwood, Perrin & Duggan, 2016). Because of these user growth in social media, marketers should find a way to use the internet to tap into the huge number of internet users (Budden et al., 2011).

There is thus an explosion of internet-based messages transmitted through social media in the 21st century. Social media platforms have become a major factor in influencing various aspects of consumer behavior including awareness, information acquisition, attitudes, purchase behavior and post-purchase communication and evaluation (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Because of the rise in social media, firms are able to talk to their customers through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). In 2008, for the first time, the amount marketers spent on digital advertising overtook print media and has continued to rise while spending in all other forms of media decreased (McMillan & Childers, 2017). However, customers are also able to talk to each other in social networks, which is an extension of traditional word-of-mouth communication. They now have the ability to tell their opinion to hundreds or thousands of other people. While companies cannot directly control the messages between consumers, they do have the ability to influence the conversations that consumers have with one another (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). One way of achieving this is influencer marketing. From a strategic communication perspective, social media influencers can be defined as third-party actors that have established a significant number of relevant relationships with a specific quality to influence organizational stakeholders through content production, content distribution, interaction and personal appearance on the social web (Enke & Borchers, 2019). They can write a blog post, share information on their social media accounts or they can post on the site of the business (Ranga & Sharma, 2014).

Many organizations have identified social media influencers as relevant intermediaries, because they provide access to hard-to-reach stakeholders, such as teenagers, young adults or special interest groups and might influence these consumers (Enke & Borchers, 2019). Firms are increasingly turning to these influencers to endorse their brands, because influencers also connect the intended target groups with the brands while maintaining a direct communication with their followers (Childers, Lemon & Hoy, 2018).

Engaging key influencers in the marketing strategy to influence potential customers may enhance interaction with customers, add value for them, increase the impact of marketing actions and therefore generate benefits for the firm (Ananda et al., 2016). In a survey conducted by the BVDW (Bundesverband Digitale Wirtschaft, 2018), 59% of the 102 companies in Germany that completed the survey, stated that they were already using social media influencers to market their product and 24% where planning to use them. 53% have already installed a specialized department within their companies and 61% plan to increase spending on influencer communication in 2019. Moreover, according to these companies, the most important advantages of influencer marketing with respect to classic online marketing are authenticity, improvement of communication with the target group, generating content and a greater reach of consumers (BVDW, 2018). According to the study of Faktenkontor & Institut für Management- und Wirtschaftsforschung (2017), 50% of teenagers and

33% of people aged between 20 and 29 years in Germany have already bought a product in response to a blog, audio, or video contribution created by an influencer.

Influencer marketing is quite a new term in marketing (Ranga & Sharma, 2014). However, it is one of the fastest growing communication platforms (Kadekova & Holienčinová, 2018). But is influencer marketing always effective? What are the factors determining the effectiveness of these social media influencers? According to Kapitan & Silvera (2016), certain source and message characteristics increase the likelihood of persuasion via the attributions that result in internalization. Perceptions of high source credibility, honesty, trustworthiness and expertise are key inputs into consumers' tendency to internalize an endorsement message. Moreover, the higher respondents rate the credibility of an endorser's, the more favorable attitudes tend to be towards the advertisement and brand and the higher consumers' purchase intentions (Goldsmith et al., 2000). Various research has thus already looked at different factors. However, a complete overview of all factors is missing. This research is aimed to provide an overview of factors that determine the effectiveness of social media influencers by performing a systematic literature study.

Theoretical framework

Prior studies have found that consumers perceive word of mouth as more trustworthy and persuasive than traditional media, such as print ads, personal selling, radio and TV advertising (Cheung & Lee, 2012). However, word of mouth has nowadays evolved into a new form of communication that exploits modern technology, which is called electronic word of mouth (eWOM) communication (Cheung & Thadani, 2010). According to Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), eWOM can be defined as any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the internet. This internet-based eWOM communication differs therefore from offline WOM, because it can take place through a variety of forms on the internet, like blogs, review sites and emails, by which consumers can exchange information. Moreover, because the internet is not limited to geographic and time constraints, eWOM is able to spread globally and quickly and enables consumers to reach large audiences simultaneously (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004).

Consumers have embraced this electronical change and utilize social media platforms to exchange their opinions, posting of comments, reviews and critiques on the digital platform (Cheung & Thadani, 2010). Social networking sites can thus play a significant role in sharing and distributing product-related information and can serve as an influential source for eWOM (Chu & Kim, 2011).

Consumers can obtain eWOM on both business-to-consumer (B2C) and consumer-to-consumer (C2C) sponsored social media platforms. Many companies are investing heavily in the use of social media networks and are working to increase the amount of eWOM activities. It has been found that posting on C2C-sponsored social media platforms are perceived as more credible and thus more influential than those on B2C platforms (Weisfeld-Spolter, Sussan, & Gould, 2014). These C2C interactions via social media have also been shown to substantially shape consumer purchase intentions (Wang, Yu, & Wei, 2012).

Method

To answer the research question “What factors determine the effectiveness of social media influencers in promoting a brand or product?”, various papers have been examined. These articles were found using a systematical search on Scopus. Access to Scopus is granted by the Wageningen University and Research center. Relevant articles were found using a query (figure 1). The first block of this query is ‘influencer*’. It is already a specific keyword and does not have or need any relevant synonyms. This word already reduced the results to 2613 and is the most important word. The next word in the query is ‘social media’ and reduces the results to 454. This word is added, to limit all the results to influencers using social media as a platform. Lastly, the keywords ‘Marketing OR brand OR product’ were added, which take the results down to 213. These words downsize the results, in order to focus on the marketing of a product or brand of social media influencers. Lastly, the papers were limited to the English language, which finally reduced the results to 208.

Block 1

Influencer*

AND

Block 2

“social media”

AND

Block 3

Marketing OR brand OR product

AND

Restrictions

(LIMIT-TO (language , "English"))

Figure 1: Final query entered in Scopus

After this query has been entered in Scopus, all the 208 papers were screened.

In the first stage, all titles and abstracts of all the papers were read and then viewed relevant or irrelevant, depending on the aim of the research. Relevant papers were included and irrelevant papers were excluded. The article was considered relevant when the research was aimed at finding what factors were successful or not when using social media influencers or when there were some findings about what is effective and when they were focused on product or brand marketing. Papers were excluded when they were not entirely focused on product marketing, like tourism or environmental practices. Moreover, this study is aimed to look into the effectiveness of social media influencers as a whole and articles were excluded when they were too focused on a specific group, brand or product. The results of these studies might not be representable. Likewise, more articles were excluded when they considered B to B selling, were focused on health and well-being or about the impact on food intake. The exclusions were classified in either; no product marketing, too product/brand/group specific or not entirely focused on influencers. This screening of the abstracts led to 45 relevant articles.

The next stage of screening was done by analyzing all the papers as a whole and determining them as important for the research or not. The articles that were not important were excluded.

Articles were examined with the following criteria.

- 1. Method. What exactly is examined and in what way?
- 2. Findings. Are the findings relevant for this research?
- 3. Discussions. What are the main conclusions and implications?

Articles were excluded when there results were not of importance to this research (20). Moreover, six articles were excluded, because they were not accessible.

Therefore, the final amount of papers used for this research is 19. All the steps are presented in figure 2.

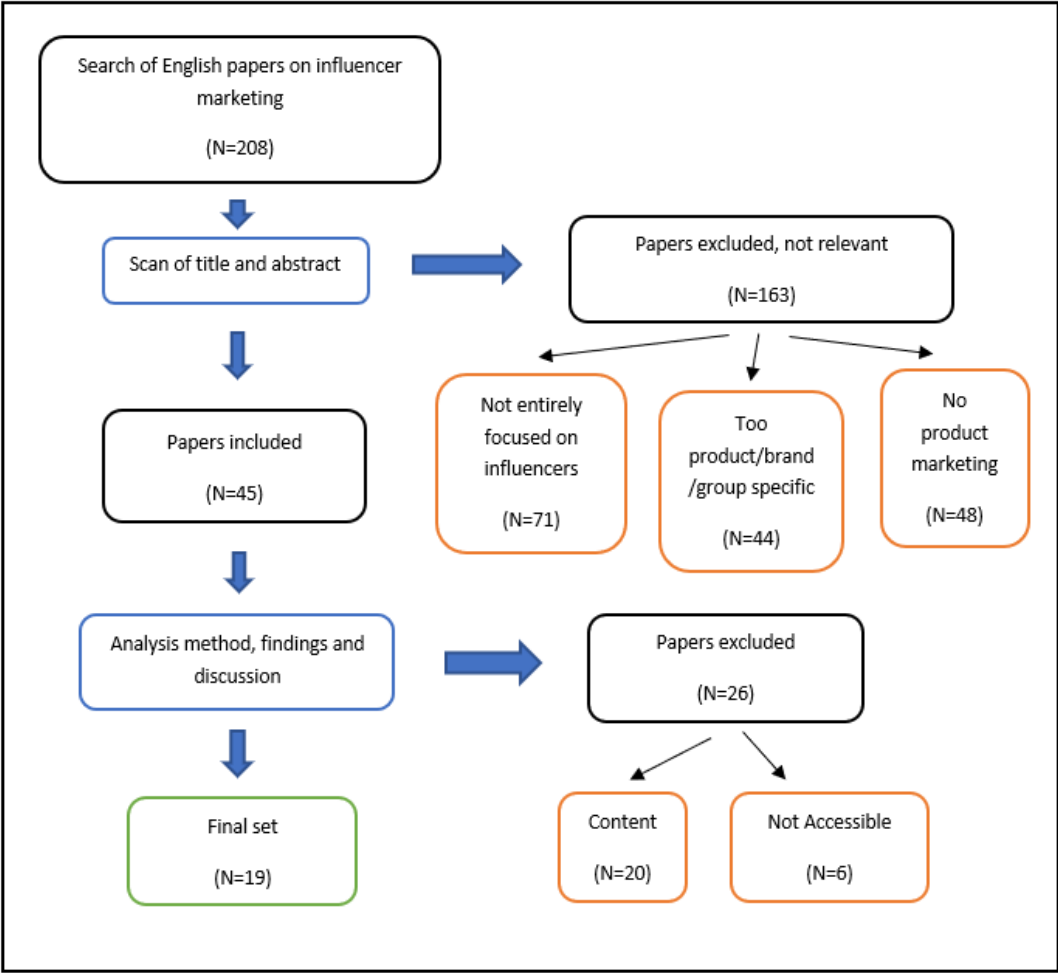


Figure 2: Prisma diagram

Findings

A final set of 19 papers were used for this research (Table 1). These papers were all published in recent years, 2019 (N=15), 2018 (N=2) and 2017 (N=2). These studies are almost all published in different journals. Only three papers came from the same publisher: international journal of advertising. Most of the studies were articles, but two studies were conference papers (Gräve, 2017; Vaiciukynaite, 2019). Remarkably, three of the studies were written by the same person (Jin, S. V.), but with different collaborators.

When you look into the content of these 19 papers, the papers can be divided in 6 categories.

- Four studies are mostly focused on the difference between the effectiveness of influencers and celebrities (Gräve, 2017; Istanina, Pratiwi, Yasmine & Ananda, 2019; Jin, Muqaddam & Ryu, 2019; Schouten, Janssen & Verspaget, 2019; Cooley & Parks-Yancy, 2019).
- Two articles specifically focus on the effectiveness of the amount of followers (De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017; De Vries, 2019).
- Three articles were focused on all the explicit factors affecting the effectiveness of social media influencers (Balaban & Mustăţea, 2019; Xiao, Wang & Chan-Olmsted, 2018; Ki & Kim, 2019).
- Three studies are focusing on the effectiveness of different kinds of posts influencing the factors (Jin & Muqaddam, 2019; Hughes, Swaminathan & Brooks, 2019; Jin & Ryu, 2019).
- Three studies that were focused on disclosing the sponsorship (Stubb & Colliander, 2019; De Veirman & Hudders, 2019; Dhanesh and Duthler, 2019).
- Three studies with the category: 'others', with the focus on gender differences (Vaiciukynaite, 2019), authenticity (Audrezet, De Kerviler & Moulard, 2018) and brand value (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019).

Effectiveness of influencers and celebrities

First of all, in the study of Istanina, Pratiwi, Yasmine & Ananda (2019) originality and uniqueness contribute to the perception of the celebrities opinion leadership, rather than the quantity and quality of the content. Celebrity opinion leadership influences all three consumer behavioral intentions, which are: intention to interact, recommend and follow advice. Therefore, the more celebrity influencers interact with their social media followers, the followers will actually follow their advice. On the contrary, for influencers to be considered as opinion leaders only originality and not uniqueness has an effect. Perceived originality is therefore the most relevant factor to obtain for influencers.

However, which endorser would be most effective? According to Jin, Muqaddam & Ryu (2019), traditional celebrity endorsement is still a reliable strategy, but for reaching out to consumers who prefer to engage with their brands on social media, influencers could be more effective in especially targeting consumers with different levels of appearance-related self-discrepancy (compare their true self with the internalized norms of the ideal self). The results of this study indicate that consumers perceive an Instagram influencer to be more trustworthy, show more positive attitude towards the endorsed brand, feel stronger social presence and feel more envious of the influencer than those consumers exposed to traditional celebrity's brand posts.

The study of Schouten, Janssen & Verspaget (2019) can agree with these results. Their researched showed that people identify more with influencers than with celebrities, because influencers are seen as ordinary people. As a result, consumers like their endorsement more and are more inclined

to purchase that product. It is likely that wishful identification explains the effectiveness of influencers endorsements only when consumers actually feel they may become like the endorser, which is easier in the areas of food and fashion, than it is in becoming fit or pretty. Moreover, trustworthiness was an important factor explaining why influencers are more effective endorsers. Consumers are more likely to trust an influencer than a celebrity, because influencers are more like them and hence trustworthy and as a result consumers are more persuaded by their advertisements. Expertise was not found as a factor explaining the difference between the effectiveness of these endorsers. Influencers, when endorsing a product, should thus be able to enhance feelings of similarity to their audience and wishful identification in order to be more successful.

The same factors were concluded in the study of Gräve (2017), celebrities scored higher in the most factors this study conducted (attractiveness, expertise, similarity, likeability). However, for a high level of familiarity, influencers are perceived to be significantly more trustworthy and similar to consumers than celebrities. This familiarity is achieved on social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube, where people deliberately choose to follow their activities and influencers are considered to be part of the community.

Thus, when choosing between a celebrity or influencer, the influencer is most effective in endorsing the product. However, Cooley & Parks-Yancy (2019) delivered a downside to this. Consumers find Instagram and YouTube credible sources of information for purchases of apparel and cosmetic/hair products, but being famous and having many followers is not enough to encourage millennial consumer spending. The results of this study indicate that when it comes to buying hair, cosmetic and clothing products, millennials still trust endorsements from the people they know in real life over celebrities/influencers, similar to earlier generations.

Effectiveness of the amount of followers

Furthermore, studies have researched what impact followers can have on the effectiveness of influencers. De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders (2017) found that a high number of followers may lead to higher perceptions of popularity and subsequently higher likeability, but it does not mean that the influencer is automatically perceived as an opinion leader. Moreover, this high number of followers may negatively impact influencer likeability for influencers who are following few accounts themselves, which might only be true for female Instagram users. That is because a low number of followees may have a negative impact on the trustworthiness and credibility of the endorser, because it can be an indicator of a false account created for advertising purposes or might provoke perceptions that the influencer is mainly aiming at commercial collaborations. When the influencer with a high number of followers would endorse a product with a divergent design, perceptions of uniqueness and eventually attitudes towards the brand are lower compared to an influencer with a moderate number of followers. This study therefore concludes that a high amount of followers does not always guarantee success.

De Vries (2019) also demonstrated that a high number of likes or followers is not necessarily a good thing. This study researched the effect of follower and followees ratios. Participants in the moderate likes-to-followers ratio condition indicated higher social media marketing effectiveness and credibility compared to participants in the low and high likes-to-followers ratio conditions, when few hashtags were used. However, this effect was not shown between the high and moderate likes-to-followers ratios, when many hashtags were used in the Instagram post. Thus, adding many hashtags to a post with a high likes-to-followers ratio significantly increases the perceived account credibility up to the level of the moderate ratio.

Effectiveness different factors

Credibility was a factor that was found many times in different articles. Balaban & Mustăţea (2019) found that credibility is an important asset for an influencer. Source credibility namely influences purchase intention. Attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise and similarity are perceived as important elements in order to achieve perceived credibility of social media influencers. This credibility can be diminished when influencers advertise too much for brands or with too expensive products. Trustworthiness is often related to the choice of the products the influencers advertise. There must be a compatibility between the product and the influencer, because each time an influencer promotes a product, he or she transfers an image. Moreover, influencers are perceived as friends who deliver insights into their daily lives via storytelling on social media platforms. For the public, influencers are people with a high degree of identification with their target audiences.

The study of Xiao, Wang & Chan-Olmsted (2018) also researched the factors that affect the influencers credibility, but more specific on the YouTube platform. Mostly the same factors were found as in the study of Balaban & Mustăţea (2019). This study revealed that expertise, trustworthiness and homophily (similarity between the information source and the message receiver) as well as social advocacy and interactivity are significant heuristic cues when people evaluate the credibility of contents in the heuristic information processing mode. Perceived information credibility was positively correlated with attitudes towards the video and brand. Source expertise reveals the viewers' acceptance of the YouTube influencer as a knowledgeable expert in a given field. The positive influence of homophily on perceived information credibility shows that video viewers incline to socialize with likeminded others. However, the absence of a connection between likability and perceived information credibility suggests a lack of information cues for YouTube users to know the influencers' persona or characteristics, resulting in its insignificance in determining consumer perceived information credibility. Trustworthiness was seen as the most important factor, as social media platforms give users of the internet so much power in information dissemination that it is easy for them to spread false information. Therefore, honest sources of information is cherished more than anything else by internet users. However, the importance of all these factors may change per video genre or type of product. Furthermore, interactivity and social advocacy were both positively correlated with perceived information credibility. As a social media platform with extensive social functions, YouTube encourages after all the interactions between its users. Lastly, argument quality and involvement were also identified as important systematic cues that expedited a similar process of credibility evaluation.

Ki & Kim (2019) also discovered factors that influences the effectiveness of social media influencers. The factors attractiveness, prestigious, expert, informative and interactive contents on Instagram, were related positively, both with respect to visual and verbal aspects, in order to look at the consumers attitudinal responses and then evaluate social media influencers as taste and opinion leaders. Attractiveness was the strongest quality that affected online peers' attitudes towards influencers as taste leaders, followed by prestige and expertise. Moreover, expertise was found to be the strongest factor that affected target consumers' attitudes toward influencers as opinion leaders, followed by information and interaction. Consumers' positive attitudes affected their desire to mimic the influencers and this affected their behavioral outcomes of social media WOM and purchase intentions. Taste leadership motivated consumers to mimic the influencers more strongly than opinion leadership. Therefore, it is important for marketers to focus more on the esthetically and visually pleasing elements.

Effectiveness different kind of posts

Research also suggested what kind of post is most effective in which situation in order to gain the factors shown in the articles before. In the study of Jin & Muqaddam (2019) posting a picture of an influencer with the product indicates higher perceived attractiveness and likability of the source than when only a picture of the product is posted, regardless of the source type. However, when the brand is the source, showing consumers a products-only picture led to more perceived expertise and trustworthiness than the influencer with the product picture. This indicates that brands actually do not need influencers to increase consumer's source expertise and trustworthiness perception. Moreover, there was in the brand source condition no difference in corporate credibility and brand attitude found, regardless of the product-placement types. In contrast, consumers exposed to the influencer with the product indicated higher perceived trustworthiness and expertise than when exposed to the product-only condition, when the source is the influencer. This means that the influencer on its own account should be physically present and appear with the product, rather than just listing brand/product pictures. Consumers also indicated higher corporate credibility and more positive brand attitude when exposed to the influencer-with-the-product than when exposed to the products-only conditions, with the influencer as source type. These effects thus suggest that it is important that product placement strategies need to be different in the case of source type (influencers or brands account), to be able to enhance attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise and likeability.

According to Hughes, Swaminathan & Brooks (2019). High blogger expertise is more effective when the advertising intent is to raise awareness versus increase trial. In contrast, when a sponsored post occurs on Facebook, posts high in hedonic content are more effective when the advertising intent is to increase trial versus raise awareness. Trial campaigns can benefit from featuring posts with high hedonic value in these high distraction environments, such as Facebook. It thus depends of the platform type which factor will be more effective.

The study of Jin & Ryu (2019) came to the conclusion that to increase brand recognition, it would be more effective to post product-centric images when a fashionista is used as the source and when the post has a consumer-centric image, it would be more effective to explicitly identify the brand as the source. Moreover, it was found that the higher consumers' physical appearance vanity, the higher brand recognition when consumer centric images are posted by the fashionista than by the brand. The higher women's vanity, the higher the brand trust when product centric pictures were posted by the fashionista. This was the opposite for men. They trust luxury brands more when these product centric images are posted by brands instead of a fashionista.

Differences between gender were also found in the study of Vaiciukynaitė (2019), but in this case between male and female influencers. A female influencer post receives more customer likes, while the post by a male influencer gets more customer views. Female influencer posts can be used to encourage passive customer participation. Female influencers should always make sure that their generated posts, especially sponsored product, attracts a customer's visual attention, which can shape their behavior further. Moreover, it was found that customers pay more attention to words from the beginning to the middle of a sentence and avoid words which are presented at the end of sentences.

The study of Audrezet, De Kerviler & Moulard (2018) goes more in dept about the behavior a social media influencer should attain in order to be viewed as authentic. Followers value the intrinsic motivations and noncommercial orientation of influencers. Brand collaborations may therefore result in tensions for the influencer's authenticity. It is important that influencers implement rules to maintain intrinsic motivations and success. To maintain self-gratification in an activity, collaborating

with brands they are passionate about is crucial. Apart from influencer marketing, it is also essential that influencers continue to produce content that follows their own inspirations by focusing on freely chosen topics and promoting things that they personally believe in. Creating personal content, opening up to new brands and sharing opinions openly may allow them to engage in a self-discovery process. This practice results in opportunities to develop a unique taste in comparison with other influencers.

Disclosing the sponsorship

There were also some articles mentioning the disclosure of a post as important to consider. According to Stubb & Colliander (2019), impartial disclosure ('this is not sponsored content') results in less persuasion knowledge than explicit exposure ('this is sponsored content') and no information at all. However, the perception of product review credibility and source credibility were higher when the participants were exposed to impartial disclosure compared to the other two conditions, because impartial disclosures are less likely to be perceived as advertising. Besides that, in the impartial disclosure condition, lower brand attitude and purchase intention were significantly shown when participants were directed to the product page compared to the start page of a web shop. Immediately directed to the product page that is focused on directly selling the reviewed product in the Instagram post, calls into question the influencer's impartiality. Therefore, influencers could better direct their followers to the start page of the web shop to avoid this.

De Veirman & Hudders (2019) also found more evidence about disclosing sponsorship. Sponsorship disclosures namely may induce advertising recognition, which results in heightened skepticism that may negatively affect the effectiveness of sponsored influencer posts and leads to more negative perceptions of influencer credibility. However, it is beneficial to disclose non sponsored posts, because this does lead to more positive brand and influencer effects and credibility. Moreover, bloggers were perceived to be less credible when they were more vague about the sponsorship. Material compensation can be perceived as less straightforward. Also, negative perceptions of influencer credibility appeared when the disclosed post used a one-sided message (only mentioning the positive aspects). Credibility perceptions were high when the post was one-sided, but not disclosed. However, two-sided messages (mentioning the positive and negative aspects) that were disclosed did not lead to higher credibility ratings compared to one-sided messages.

The study of Dhanesh and Duthler (2019) bought a bit more positivity about disclosing sponsorship. It was stated that when followers are made aware that the influencers they follow are being paid to endorse content, that disclosure could increase followers' perceptions of honesty, openness and transparency of the influencers, while building relationships with their followers. This in turn could strengthen trust in and satisfaction with the relationship. However, it still takes more than trust and satisfaction to induce behavioral intention. It takes a sense of commitment and control to consider purchasing the endorsed product. Although ad recognition does not correlate with influencer-follower relationship, it is positively correlated with purchase and eWOM intentions.

The study of Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández (2019) state that followers who perceive higher influential power from digital influencers will form more brand engagement in their self-concept (how they see themselves) and higher expected brand value and will have a greater intention to purchase the recommended brands. Influencers contribute to the value creation process enhancing appreciation of the brand's utility and value. These findings imply that the influence exerted by a digital influencer is critical in developing positive cognitive and affective connections to recommended brands.

Summary results

In this table the main conclusions of all the articles used for the research are presented.

Table 1: summary results

Article	Conclusion
Audrezet, A., De Kerviler, G., & Moulard, J. G. (2018).	It's important that the social media influencers can be viewed as authentic and that they implement passionate and transparency rules to maintain intrinsic motivations and success.
Balaban, D., & Mustăţea, M. (2019).	Attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise and similarity are perceived as important elements of the perceived credibility of social media influencers.
Cooley, D., & Parks-Yancy, R. (2019).	When it comes to buying hair, cosmetic and clothing products, millennials still trust endorsements from the people they know in real life more than celebrities/influencers.
De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L. (2017).	A high number of followers may lead to higher perceptions of popularity and subsequently higher likeability. However, it does not mean that the influencer is automatically perceived as an opinion leader.
De Veirman, M., & Hudders, L. (2019).	Including a sponsorship disclosure (compared to no disclosure) negatively affects brand attitude through enhanced ad recognition, which activates ad skepticism, which, in turn, negatively affects the influencer's credibility.
De Vries, E. L. (2019).	Moderate likes-to-followers' ratios are being perceived as more credible and being more effective than low or high likes-to-followers ratios, when few hashtags were used. This effect was less shown using many hashtags.
Dhanesh, G. S., & Duthler, G. (2019).	Awareness of paid endorsement relates to ad recognition, which is correlated with purchase and eWOM intentions. Moreover, awareness of paid endorsement is correlated with influencer-follower relationship, which is associated with purchase and eWOM intentions.
Gräve, J. F. (2017).	Celebrities are found to rate significantly higher in characteristics that determine endorser effectiveness. In contrast, for a high level of familiarity, influencers are perceived to be significantly more trustworthy and similar to oneself than celebrities.
Hughes, C., Swaminathan, V., & Brooks, G. (2019).	Sponsored blogging affects online engagement differently depending on blogger characteristics and blog post content, which are further moderated by social media platform type and campaign advertising intent.
Istania, F., Pratiwi, I. P., Yasmine, M. F., & Ananda, A. S. (2019)	Uniqueness and originality are important factors that contribute to consumers' perception of the influencer's opinion leadership in the case of celebrities. Originality only in the case of celebgrams.
Jiménez-Castillo, D., & Sánchez-Fernández, R. (2019).	Followers' perceived influence is positively associated with brand engagement, brand expected value and behavioral intention. Also, brand engagement raises brand expected value and both variables predict the intention to purchase recommended brands.
Jin, S. V., Muqaddam, A., & Ryu, E. (2019).	Consumers exposed to Instagram celebrity's brand posts perceive the source to be more trustworthy, show more positive attitude toward the endorsed brand, feel stronger social presence and feel more

	envious of the source than those consumers exposed to traditional celebrity's brand posts.
Jin, S. V., & Muqaddam, A. (2019).	Consumers exposed to the Instagram influencer as the source indicated higher corporate credibility and more positive attitude toward brand posts when exposed to the influencer-with-product conditions than when exposed to the product-only conditions.
Jin, S. V., & Ryu, E. (2019).	Brand recognition was higher for product-centric images when the source was the fashionista, whereas brand recognition was equivalent regardless of the image type when the source was the brand.
Ki, C. W. C., & Kim, Y. K. (2019).	Consumers' positive attitudes affected their desire to mimic SMIs and influenced their behavioral outcomes of sWOM and purchase intentions.
Schouten, A. P., Janssen, L., & Verspaget, M. (2019).	Participants identify more with influencers, feel more similar to them and trust them more than celebrities, which result in a more positive attitude to purchase the product endorsed.
Stubb, C., & Colliander, J. (2019).	Impartiality product posts generate higher source and message credibility. Additionally, participants' brand attitude and purchase intention are reduced when they are directed to a product page instead of a start page when being simultaneously exposed to an impartiality disclosure.
Vaiciukynaite, E. (2019).	There is a difference in effectiveness between male and female social media influencers.
Xiao, M., Wang, R., & Chan-Olmsted, S. (2018).	Trustworthiness, social influence, argument quality and information involvement are influential factors affecting consumer perceived information credibility on YouTube.

Discussion

Conclusions

The aim of this study was to find the factors that influence the effectiveness of social media influencers. This was done by executing a systematic literature review. Nineteen articles were reviewed and analyzed.

From the studies it can be concluded that the influencer is most effective in endorsing a product compared to a celebrity, because the influencer is seen as more similar to the audience. Moreover, an Instagram influencer is seen to be more trustworthy. Consumers therefore show more positive attitudes towards the endorsed brand, feel stronger social presence and feel more envious of the influencer than those consumers exposed to traditional celebrity's brand posts. As a result, consumers like their endorsement more and are more inclined to purchase that product. Similarity and trust were thus important factors for influencers. Furthermore, studies found that the most important and recognized factor is 'credibility'. Source credibility namely influences purchase intention. Attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise and similarity were in more studies viewed as important factors that have an impact on the credibility of influencers even as a direct impact on the effectiveness of influencers as well. Trust is really important to gain for an influencer, as so much fake news is distributed nowadays and deceive becomes easier. Attractiveness was the strongest quality that affected online peers' attitudes towards influencers as taste leaders, while expertise was found to be the strongest factor that affected target consumers' attitudes toward influencers as opinion leaders. Being original and authentic are also important for an influencer, but these factors were only explicitly mentioned in one study.

Moreover, there are underlying mechanisms that influence these important factors which therefore also affect the effectiveness of influencers. A high number of followers may lead to higher perceptions of popularity and subsequently higher likeability, but it does not mean that the influencer is automatically perceived as an opinion leader. The factor likeability was not significantly considered as a really important factor in the studies. The moderate likes-to-followers ratio condition indicated higher social media marketing effectiveness and credibility than high and low likes-to-followers' ratios. This indicates that using an influencer with a high amount of followers does not guarantee success. Influencers with moderate amount of followers can be more effective.

Posting a picture of an influencer with the product on its own account indicates higher perceived attractiveness, likability, trust, expertise and credibility than when only a picture of the product is posted. This is different in the case the brand is the source. Moreover, it would be more effective to post product-centric images when a fashionista is used as the source and when the post has a consumer-centric image, it would be more effective to explicitly identify the brand as the source.

Lastly, disclosing sponsorship leads to less perceived credibility, as consumers are aware of the advertising. So impartial disclosure, which is less likely viewed as advertising, leads to higher product review and source credibility. Source credibility and therefore brand attitude were negatively affected when the influencer used a one-sided message in the disclosed condition, but these were high in the not disclosed condition.

Practical implications

This research gives marketers more guidelines and factors to think about when choosing a social media influencer and a strategy to market their product. Marketers should take a look at their product they want to promote and think what kind of values they want to achieve. This is important, because different strategies results in different factors. Marketers should know that choosing an influencer with a high number of followers is not always the best option. Choosing an influencer who has a moderate amount of followers and likes can be much more effective. Besides that, a high number of followers, but a low number of followees may have a negative impact on the likeability, trustworthiness and credibility of the endorser, which affects the brand attitude and purchase intentions. They should also consider that the influencer's attractiveness or credibility is much more important than the amount of followers. Moreover, this study indicates that choosing an influencer for promoting their product will lead to more perceived trust and positive brand attitude, than choosing a celebrity. This study therefore concludes that choosing the most famous endorser is also not the best strategy. Also important, marketers should think whether they want to disclose the sponsorship or not. This can namely result in very different effects. Disclosing the sponsorship can lead to more perceived honesty and transparency, but it leads overall to less credibility, which is an important factor.

What is important for an influencer is to be physically present on its own account and appear with the product. This namely leads to more credibility and positive brand attitude, than just listing brand/product pictures. However, when the brand uses its own social media page, more perceived expertise and trustworthiness can be achieved. Therefore, it is important for marketers to understand that product placement strategies need to be different in the case of source type (influencers or brands account), to be able to enhance attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise and likeability.

Moreover, followers value the intrinsic motivations and noncommercial orientation of influencers. Too much brand collaborations and promoting too expensive products, may therefore result in tensions for the influencer's authenticity and credibility. An influencer thus needs to continue to produce content that follows their own inspirations by focusing on freely chosen topics and promoting things that they personally believe in and show compatibility between the product and themselves, to gain trust. Lastly, influencers, when endorsing a product, should be able to enhance feelings of similarity to their audience and wishful identification in order to be more successful.

Limitations and further research

This research provides a complete overview of what influences the effectiveness of social media influencers. It considers those factors and their underlying mechanisms. However, there are some limitations to this research. The term 'influencer' is relatively new and research about this phenomenon is therefore not really broad. This limits the study for a certain part that it was not possible to research and compare everything there could be to know about this subject. Studies have not yet been reviewed or executed again. Besides that, the results could only have been compared with a few other studies. Moreover, because influencer marketing is a fast growing subject, more studies are made available on Scopus after the systematical search for literature was executed. Another limitation is that most of the studies analyzed used specific product categories or social media platforms for their research. This signifies that the findings are not generalizable and might only be true for that certain category. Further research needs to be executed with other categories and platforms and comparing them can provide more insight whether the results are generalizable or different for another product category or platform. Moreover, this research was based on existing literature. Further research can execute a quantitative study which puts all these factors together, provides data and examine more of their true effects.

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