

Perceived Social Media Influencers' Reputation of a Beauty Cosmetics Company: A Perspective of Customers

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Received: January 3, 2024

Accepted: February 18, 2024

Online Published: February 24, 2024

doi:10.11114/smc.v12i2.6663

URL: <https://doi.org/10.11114/smc.v12i2.6663>

Abstract

In the digital age, social media influencers (SMI) have become a pivotal promotional strategy to persuade and influence consumers. However, many of the previous studies only focused on the characteristics and traits of the influencers, but lack of studies was examined on the reputation aspect of the influencer. Thus, this study aims to examine the consumers' perception of SMI's reputation of a beauty company, which comprised of Communication Skills, Influence, Authenticity, and Expert. The study applied a quantitative design through a survey method to solicit 190 usable responses via purposive sampling. The findings demonstrated that the four dimensions of SMI's reputation are positively perceived by the respondents, where the Expert dimension was highly perceived by the consumers of the beauty company, followed by Influence, Communication Skills, and Authenticity. Thus, the beauty brand and marketing managers should examine the qualities and reputation of the SMIs before allowing them to endorse or promote the products, to ensure they have favorable images in the public eye. Conclusion, implications, and future research were discussed.

Keywords: social media influencers' reputation, communication skills, influence, authenticity, expert, decent work and economic growth, beauty industry

1. Introduction

Collaboration between companies and social media influencers (SMI) has been mushrooming in the digital age (Ao et al., 2023; Bell, 2023). SMIs play a significant role as key opinion leaders who promote products or services on social media (Joshi et al., 2023; Zak & Hasprova, 2020), where many companies employ SMIs as a promotional strategy to engage with customers. SMIs promote product information and recent promotions to online audiences using a range of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube (Ao et al., 2023; Zaidi & Hayat, 2021). Thus, SMI is an influential and persuasive communicator who influences consumers' attitudes and behaviors toward the brand or product (Balaban et al., 2022; Mir & Salo, 2024).

The beauty sector has mushroomed in line with the effects of advertising and promotional communication (Tian, 2023). The beauty market's revenue generated approximately \$430 billion in 2022 and the sector is expected to increase to \$580 billion by the year 2027 (McKinsey, 2023). As highlighted by Schouten et al. (2020), beauty businesses would be more successful if they choose influencers over traditional celebrities, as influencers are more credible than celebrities due to their similarity with the consumers and influencers engage customers and build close bonds better than typical celebrities (Barta et al., 2023; Borges-Tiago et al., 2023; Crnjak-Karanović et al., 2023).

Beauty influencers are people who provide beauty-related information and share opinions, knowledge, and word-of-mouth on social media platforms (Wang & Lee, 2021). Companies employing SMIs to market their cosmetics products due to the emerging popularity of beauty gurus (Hassan et al., 2021). For instance, L'Oréal, MAC, Estée Lauder, NYX, Glossier, Lush, Becca, Milk Makeup, Kylie Cosmetics, and Melt Cosmetics are among the top beauty companies that frequently employ SMIs as part of their strategic marketing initiatives (Hassan et al., 2021).

Although there are plenty of studies that have been conducted on celebrities and SMIs, they are mostly on the influencer's characteristics and attributes (Lu & Chen, 2023; Chan et al., 2021; Sharipudin et al., 2023), however, the reputation of